

ABSTRACT

The traditional Balinese house is not only a physical structure but also a representation of a social and spiritual expression. Spatially, the house is organised according to a particular arrangement based on ritual positions and movements. In this context, Balinese classify all existence to become a critical distinction between sekala and niskala. Sekala is visible things and niskala is invisible related to supernatural forces or religious values. This concept is usually used as a guidance to organize spaces so that they present spiritual symbols of ritual processions and locations. However, tourism economy has caused the transformation of the house. New structures have been built in the house for tourist facilities. The new additional functions to serve tourists present an architectural struggle between obtaining economic benefit and maintaining spiritual expression of the house.

In order to explore the struggle, the physical transformations of the traditional house were investigated. Spatial stories and the narrative of cultural activities in the house are contextualized to reconstruct the process of transformations for spatial examinations. This article explores the consideration of Balinese’s actions in the process of the transformation and the reasons behind the process. It argues that the transformation is evaluation process that involves sekala and niskala concept. This process, especially the transformation of the family temple, involves a high priest to ensure that the transformation meets the teaching of Hindu Balinese religion without losing its traditional values. However, far from maintaining the essence, the new configurations have waned their functions and meaning. Some architectural components, representing socio cultural and environmental contexts, have vanished from the house.

Keywords: Niskala, Sekala, Tourism, Traditional House, Transformation.
1. INTRODUCTION

Bali is one of major tourist destinations in Indonesia in which its traditional cultures, amongst other attractions, have formed a capital economy (Prameswari, 2005; Ardika, 2007). Cultural activities that attract tourists have stimulated the villagers to participate in a new tourist economy that has involved the transformation of the traditional house.

The traditional Balinese house is a house-compound. It is divided in three divisions, namely a head, a body, and feet. The first is the family temple; the second consists of some pavilions and the third is the front part and the backyard (teba) for planting vegetations, raising animals, processing garbage and preparing offerings. Traditionally, the house was able to serve its occupants independently who regularly performed many domestic and religious activities. In this context, Balinese classify all existence to become a critical distinction between sekala and niskala. Sekala is visible things and niskala is invisible related to supernatural forces or religious values. This concept is usually used as a guidance to organize spaces so that they present spiritual symbols of ritual processions and locations.

However, the greater impact of the external force of tourism has changed many parts of the house. Many existing pavilions that used to be places for performing domestic and socio-cultural activities have been demolished and new structures have been constructed in their place or adjacent to them. The new constructions and additional functions have resulted in a variation of physical configurations. The new additional functions to serve tourists present an architectural struggle between obtaining economic benefit and maintaining spiritual expression of the house. This architectural struggle gives rise to the question about the consideration of Balinese’s actions in the process of the transformation and the reasons behind the process. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to examine the role of sekala and niskala concept in an evaluation process of transformation.

In order to achieve the purpose, the variety of constructions was investigated by observing the traditional Balinese houses in four tourist villages including Ubud, Kuta, Sanur and Kamasan. Since the transformation is a complex phenomenon, many factors were examined and various data collection approaches were used to gather information that addresses inquiries from each aspect. From a visual and contextual examination, implementations of socio-cultural activities over time were investigated. The implementations along with the process of house transformations were used to examine the continuity or adjustment of socio-cultural activities in the new settings.

In the subsequent section, the method that was used to examine the role of the sekala niskala concept in the transformation is explored. The values of space in the traditional Balinese house then become initial reference to understand a representation of a social and spiritual expression of the house. By looking the physicals configuration of the house, the variety of the physical transformations is presented as an inventory of the new setting of the house. Eventually, in the last parts, the evaluation process of the transformation in the new setting of the house are presented.
2. METHODOLOGY/EXPERIMENTAL

The role of the sekala and niskala concept in the reconstructions of the transformed houses was investigated by observing the traditional Balinese houses in four tourist villages including Ubud, Kuta, Sanur and Kamasan. The reconstructions of the houses were recorded and analyzed through architectural documentations and examinations. Architectural documentation was not merely an artificial, illustrations and additional components rather it was a way of investigating the dialects of traditional Balinese architecture. It was used to trace a narrative of architecture’s entanglement with and dependence on the spatial practices of occupants (Lozanovska 2002).

3. THE TRADITIONAL BALINESE HOUSE: THE STAGE FOR RITUAL

The traditional Balinese house is one of the local traditions and cultures of Balinese people. In general, local traditions and cultures reflecting common historical experiences and shared cultural code can be seen as resources to create the boundaries and identity of a community (Hall 1990; Derek & Japha 1991; Proshansky 1983). The identity expresses people understanding about the sameness of the tradition and culture among the members of society and otherness (or sharp distinctiveness) from non-members [Brubaker & Cooper 1983]. For Balinese, the culture inspired by the Hindu Balinese religion is presented by performing socio-cultural activities in the village and the traditional Balinese house as the media for expressing the identity of the society and creating the boundaries with others. This identity is also presented in the form of the village and the traditional house. The house is handed down from generation to generation especially from father to sons and other descendents living in the house and performing domestic and socio-cultural activities. As a vernacular house, the house can be seen as the intersection of the inheritance of property and the heritage of tradition (Lozanovska 2011) where the Balinese inherit properties including the house as well as traditions including socio-cultural activities.

The house is likened to human body and is divided in three parts: the head represented by the family temple, the body represented by a courtyard called natah and pavilions and feet represented by a back yard called teba (Figure 1). The family temple (indicated by ) called sanggah or merajan is located in northeastern corner of the house. For Balinese, it is classified as niskala in which it is the most sacred place that is a place to perform ceremonial activities dedicated to God and ancestors. In the ceremonial days, the Balinese decorate the shrines and pavilions in the family temple with special clothes and offerings.

The body of the house consists of many pavilions and a courtyard. The pavilions are places to perform domestic activities as well as ceremonial activities. The pavilions are designed as multifunction spaces so that they can accommodate many activities. The northern pavilion called bale daja (indicated) and western pavilion called bale dauh (indicated) are the two pavilions in the house used for sleeping activities. The bale daja is a bedroom for the oldest people, daughters and children, and the bale dauh is a bedroom for other adults. The veranda of the bale dauh is used for both living room and dining room. The
The veranda is occasionally used to perform puppet shadow (wayang) performances related to ceremonial activities in the house. The bale daja is also related to niskala in which it is used for nyekeb, the processes of keeping the people who will participate in the ceremony performed a day before the main ceremony. This room is also utilized to ask in marriage called mesuaka or ngidih in a wedding ceremony. The eastern pavilion called bale dangin (indicated □) is a special place for ceremonial activities, so that the bale dangin is related to niskala. A granary called jineng (indicated □) is a place to store un-hulled rice located near a kitchen called paon (indicated □). The kitchen is a place for cooking, keeping food material, storing firewood and cooking equipment, and performing purification activities performed after attending funeral rituals in another house. An empty space in the middle of the pavilions is a courtyard called natah (indicated □). The natah is a central orientation of the house that is a place to perform ceremonial activities including ceremonies for newborn babies, wedding, funeral, cremation, and purification of the soul ritual.

The feet of the house is the backyard called teba (indicated □) is a space behind the pavilions where the people plant trees, raise animals and process household garbage. In the teba, people perform preparation activities related to ceremonial activities in the house. Traditionally, the teba provides many materials for daily needs and offerings.

During ceremonial activities, the traditional house is used for activities that involve all members of family, extended families and members of a community called krama banjar (Figure 1). The activities consist of rituals and supporting activities such as traditional dances, music, and song. Spiritually, the supporting activities presented by many performances are dedicated and honoured to God and deities, as well as ancestors. The performances are also for demons so that they do not disturb the rituals. Physically, the performances will amuse guests during ceremonial processes so that they still stay and witness the ceremonies.

![Figure 1](image)

**Figure. 1, The traditional balinese house as a stage of socio-cultural activities**

Ritual activities are main activities in ceremonies reflecting the traditional belief practices of the Balinese. These activities are related to panca yadnya, the five sacrificial rituals of the Hindu Balinese religion. These rituals consist of dewa yadnya dedicated to God and deities, resi yadnya consecrated and honoured for priests and priestesses, pitra yadnya dedicated to ancestor, manusa yadnya associated with human lifecycle ritual ceremonies, and butha yadnya dedicated to spirits and demons. The dewa yadnya is performed in the
family temple; the *pitra yadnya* and the *manusa yadnya* are performed in *natah* and pavilions; and the *butha yadnya* is performed in the *natah*.

4. RESULT: THE ARCHITECTURE FOR LIVING, RITUALS, AND TOURISTS

Tourist activities in Bali have influenced many cultural practices. This phenomenon, like other tourism destinations in many countries, shows that tourism has changed some aspects of cultures (Cano and Mysyk, 2004). Many imitations of traditional arts are produced for tourists causing quality degradation creating a cultural pollution and commercialisation of rituals and traditions (Hanna 1972, Bugnicourt 1977, Hitchcook, King, and Parnwell 1993). Learning from these, this thesis argues that the tourism has transform the traditions of Bali including the physical form of the traditional house where the intensity of the interaction between the local and tourist influence the degree of the transformation.

Putra, Lozanovska & Fuller (2013: p. 123) suggested that “the more popular the tourist destination, the greater the number of the traditional houses have been transformed for tourist facilities.” This phenomenon can be seen in the four selected tourist destination. Kuta, as the most popular area, has experienced the higher number of traditional house transformed as tourist facilities. On the other hand, Kamasan that was visited by few tourist has the lowest number. Moreover, “the location of tourist activities has influenced the degree of transformation” (Putra, Lozanovska & Fuller (2013: p. 123). It can be seen if we compare Ubud and Sanur in which tourist activities in Ubud is in the village while in Sanur is on the outskirts of the village. In these two village, the number of the traditional house transformed for tourist facilities in Ubud (61%) was much more than the house transformed in Sanur (31%).

Interestingly, more traditional gate (*angkul-angkul*) in Ubud (79%) still exists than those in Sanur (17%), Kuta (11) and Kamasan (34%). This data indicates that the loss of *angkul-angkul* was not entirely caused by the number of tourists in the villages. This was related to the phenomenon that cultural tourists want stylistic representation of traditional Balinese architecture. This phenomenon can be seen in Ubud and Kamasan. Ubud, which is visited by more visitors, had more *angkul-angkul* than Kamasan.. The traditional Balinese architecture including the elements of the traditional house was one of cultural components that used by the local people in Ubud to attract tourists. From the economic benefit of tourist activities, they were able to reconstruct and repair the old in the traditional style. On the other hand, the people in Kamasan were not able to rebuild the traditional *angkul-angkul* and applied non-natural materials to repair the old. On the other side, as popular destinations in Bali, people in Kuta and Sanur are also able to use the economic benefits from tourism to build the *angkul-angkul* in their houses. However, the complete traditional gates consisting of *angkul-angkul* and *aling-aling* were fewer in number. This phenomenon present that the people in Ubud tried to maintain and preserve their culture including the element of traditional house to attract tourist. On the other hand, Kuta and Sanur were confidence to employ the beach to attract tourist, so the architecture identity especially *angkul-angkul* was not much more important for them to attract tourists.
This phenomenon is related to the theory, as suggested by Wood (1993) that the external force of the tourism is not like a billiard ball model where tourism analogized as a ball that hit the passive object (culture). Tourism is a continuous process of cultural invention that influence by many historical dynamic process of acculturation of culture (Wood 1993). Learning from this, this thesis also argues that the traditional house is not passive or an inert phenomenon but it is dynamic influenced by many cultures. They change over time based on the recent condition of the occupants. In the process of analyses, the historical dynamic processes of the transformations including the increase of family size and tourists were investigated to understand how people could still follow their traditions forced by the external force of tourism.

Using Wood’s theory above, many studies on tourism in Bali including those McKean (1973) and Picard (1996) suggested that the Balinese have protected their culture by distinguishing their traditions between the arts for religious and commercial purposes where the second is used to finance the first. Central of these are the re-readings of the impact of tourism on the Balinese culture in which the people use the economic benefit from tourists to preserve and reinvent their traditions. New traditions have been a part of, and enriched, the original culture. This aspect establishes the theoretical framework for the analysis of the physical transformation of the house. This study then argues that the historical backgrounds and reputations within tourism in Bali influence the degree of the transformation of the traditional Balinese house.

Ubud, regarded as the cultural capital of Bali, as explain above, maintain the angkul-angkul in the house as a component to attract tourists. They also built new constructions in compound house without changing the setting of natah. The natah has been maintained and employed as an asset and parts of tourist facilities. The tourist facilities, built in the front, compounds and backyard, have been designed in such a way that tourists can enter the house and experience the traditional architectural style. This high percentage contrasts with the houses having tourist facilities just in their front. In such transformation, the natah has undergone massive transformation. In Kuta, Kamasan and Sanur, the tourist facilities which are mostly kiosks, cafes and restaurants were designed in such a way that tourists have no opportunity to explore inside. The compounds are still private areas and just accommodate the domestic and socio-cultural activities. However, new constructions have been built adjacent to and by demolishing existing pavilions to accommodate an increase in family size and the modern lifestyle of occupants. These constructions have utilised parts of the natah so that its size, form, and setting have been transformed.

The backyard was traditionally an open space for preparing ceremonial activities, planting and raising many species that supply materials for domestic and ceremonial activities, processing garbage, and sometimes for defecation. This area is now transformed into an environment where the people have built constructions to accommodate an increase in family size and business facilities. In the four villages, all the backyards have been massively transformed so that now they have insufficient space for planting trees or raising animals. Inevitably, these changes decrease their traditional functions.

The other area of the house is the family temple. This area is the most sacred and is related to a belief that the ground and a house belong to God and the ancestors. It therefore
becomes the most important area to perform all socio-cultural activities dedicated to them. However, similar to other areas, it cannot always avoid the transformation process and a few have been transformed. The old temple was demolished and the new one was built in another location or elevated to the second floor with the same arrangement of shrines.

Such transformation describes the history and evolution of the dynamic household lifestyle and identity. The house, which was once only a place to perform domestic and socio-cultural activities, now has an additional function, namely tourist activities. The trading activities that used to be carried out in the market, now also take place in the traditional Balinese house. Many kinds of tourist facilities have been built in the houses to anticipate the increase in the number of tourists. The house has become a home-based enterprise where new buildings have been constructed either adjacent to existing pavilions, around a courtyard (by demolishing old pavilions), in a front of the house, or in a back yard. These constructions have changed the setting, space, and form of the house, which are components of an architectural identity into an asset to attract tourists. The traditional house becomes a potential asset to obtain economic benefit from tourist activities and a place to do domestic activities as well as perform rituals.

5. DISCUSSION: MAINTAINING AND ADJUSTING THE TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE HOUSE

The Balinese culture is the result of the response and interaction of local people with other cultures. The response and interaction are not static and tend to be a dynamic reality of human life that changes either gradually or rapidly over time. This restless reformulation involving the contestation of power relations not only by external but also internal authorities has been suggested in many studies of Bali such as those of Schulte Nordholt (1986), Vickers (1990), Agung (1991), Dharmayuda (1995), and Picard (1996).

The external force of tourism that has produced negative impact on Balinese culture such as quality the degradation of classical artworks, the profanation of sacred performances and places, and the commoditization of rituals have been recorded by many studies of Bali such as those of Bugnicourt (1977), Hitchcock, King, and Parnwell (1993) and Hanna 1972). Therefore, Balinese try to reinterpret and reformulate their culture, based on desa kala patra philosophy, to conform to novel conditions. To do so, people re-order their traditions and make distinctions between sacred activities, performances as a part of religious activities, and performances as secular practices that can be performed as commercial attractions for tourists (Dibia 1996, Picard 1996). By doing so, Balinese are able to share their traditions to others and get economic benefit without polluting the purity of rituals that perform for God, and ancestors.

The reformulation of traditions also occurs in the traditional Balinese houses where people transform the physical configuration of the houses to get economic benefit from tourism. The highly dynamic situations under external for of tourism along with advance technologies and communication that bring modernization have stimulated Balinese to reformulate their social practices and ceremonial activities in the houses. This reformulation is a phenomenon when old traditions might become, as suggested by Shils
(1971), ‘unfitting’ with the needs of their receivers. Balinese then evaluate and analyse the unfitting traditions as a creative movement to produce new traditions meeting new desire and conditions. To do so, in an analysing process, people apply their traditional wisdoms especially the sekala and niskala concept. Sekala is related to physical things that can be perceived by human senses, while niskala is related to the supernatural forces or religious values (Eiseman 1989, Covarrubias 1974). For Balinese, rituals are niskala. Since Balinese believe that God and ancestors are the owners of the ground, this study argues that people continue to perform rituals with some adjustment as their honour and dedication to God and ancestors.

The family temple was relocated to other part or top of the building. The setting and form of the shrines are built as always. In some cases, the materials are different to the old where the people tend to choose materials that are more durable. Since it is a place for God and ancestor, it is a place of niskala, the place that related to supernatural force. Therefore, to avoid any mistakes in the process of transformation, the owner go to griya, the high priest house, to get advices and guidance related to measurement of the new family temple and the ceremonies that should be done. In Balinese society, the high priests have devoted their live to study of the niskala power that is written in the sacred palm leaf books (Eiseman Jr,1989). In the relocation process, the owner built temporary shrines as temporary places for God and ancestors followed by rituals. After this, the old shrines were demolished and the new shrines were built. When the shrines finished and new family temple is physically ready, many particular rituals are performed so that it is spiritually ready to be used as a place for praying. Adjustment of family temple is along with the spiritual processes that involve the high priest.

In the new settings, rituals dedicated to God and ancestors are performed as always because the alterations, in a few houses, are just relocations without changing the setting of the shrines. Such changes do not alter the ritual processions including those performed on a daily, monthly, and six-monthly basis. Such ceremonies are categorized as dewa yadnya, the sacrificial ritual dedicated to God and deities. In the houses, families and their relations, including married sons and daughters and their families, come to the house, attend rituals, and pray in the family temple as always. The rituals still produce a network and relationship between the families who live in the house and those who live outside as a social group of a paternal kinship.

On the other hand, some other rituals that are categorized as manusa yadnya, the rituals that related to human lifecycle, and pitra yadnya, the rituals dedicated to ancestors, have been relocated to other part of the house. In such houses, the rituals are performed in other pavilions or places in the house. Based on the desa kala patra concept, the ceremonies have moved to other parts in the house that provide enough spaces to perform the ritual of the ceremonies. Based on this concept, the ceremonies can be adjusted as far as the essence of the rituals can be performed. In this case, the ceremonial activities have undergone an internal relocation where they move from one part to another part of the traditional Balinese house. However, before the people relocate the rituals, they go to the high priest’s house called griya to ask advices and suggestion related to the adjustment. In this process, the high priest, again, is still an important part of the rituals in the traditional Balinese house.
The relocation of the rituals is not just internal, but also external. An increase in tourist activities and family size has reduced the space for rituals in some houses. *Ngaben*, the cremation ceremony, the most dramatic ceremony, is now no longer performed in the house. Traditionally, *ngaben* that was usually followed by *nyekah*, the purification of the soul, used almost all parts of the spaces in the house. A *natah* and a *bale dangin* would be full of offerings. Temporary bamboo structures would be built in the *natah*. The *teba* and other undeveloped spaces were places for food preparation and any other activities. The other pavilions were places for women to perform *mejejahan*, making traditional cake and *metanding*. Many kinds of raw materials were taken from the *teba*, other extended families’ houses, or fields.

In the new setting, *ngaben* and *nyekah* are no longer performed in the house especially in Kuta and Ubud. Although the rituals have been relocated, essential components of the ceremonies are still maintained. Rituals, offerings, clothing and supported activities during the ceremonies such as traditional performances are performed as always but in a different place. The people maintain the rituals inherited by their predecessors in different ways. As suggested by Certeau (1984), generally, beliefs gradually transform based on the recent condition of communities.

*Ngaben*, which was household affairs that took place in the house, now is seen as the village event, run by a committee formed and centred in the village facilities, known as *ngaben ngerit* and usually followed by *nyekah*. Many activities, from preparations to main rituals, are held in the village facilities. Such rituals have produced a new type of social practice whereby the village plays an important role as a central place, pulling people into revitalized rituals and traditions. All activities in such rituals have produced a layered sense of traditions whereby religious festivals and social festivals have become intertwined (Lozanovska, 2011). Women and men prepare offerings or food for offerings and feasts. A particular place during the ceremony becomes the busiest place in the village where all members of the *banjar* and village prepare and are involved in the rituals. These have become an alternative way for the people who have no ideal traditional house in which to perform ceremonies for their family. The village facilities have substituted for the functions of the house. As a result, these new social practices have become paradoxical where they have gradually reduced the roles and functions of the traditional house. The gradual disappearance of many functional structures associated the ceremonies present a real erosion of the cultural functions of the traditional house.

However, the people are not forced to perform such rituals in the village facilities. The people are free to choose the location of the ceremony whether in their traditional house or in the village facilities together with others. The *ngaben ngerit* is just alternative way for the people. In case they want to perform in the house, the people are allowed to do so. In this case, the people can choose the level of rituals based on their condition. The Balinese can choose the scale of the ceremonies whether they are *utama*, *madia* or *nista*. *Utama* means high and lofty, *madia* means middle and *nista* means below (Gelebet 1986, Meganada, 1990; Hobart, 1996; Eiseman 1989). The *utama* is the highest scale, where it needs much more offerings, while the *nista* scale is the lowest where it needs just simple and less offerings. However, spiritually, all scales of the ceremonies have same meaning.
and purposes. Based on this concept, same people still perform the ceremonies in the house especially the people in Sanur. The people in Sanur have never performed such ceremonies in the village facilities and still perform them in the house. The lack of spaces and times have caused they perform the rituals in nista or they perform in the griya as followers of the rituals performed in griya called ngiring ka griya. For preparation, most of them rely on the professional sellers.

As niskala that related to supernatural force, the rituals have been either maintained as always or adjusted based on the recent condition of the house. The people are afraid to avoid the rituals because, based on their beliefs, if they do so, they will get bad consequences from supernatural force. Therefore, the adjustment of rituals does not change their essential components, where they still perform the procession of the rituals based on the teaching of the Hindu Balinese religion. In this adjustment process, the high priest still plays an important role where his/her advices, suggest and give permission to the people to perform their traditions.

6. CONCLUSION

The transformation of the house, involves a high priest to ensure that the transformation meets the teaching of Hindu Balinese religion without losing its traditional values. In the transformation, spaces related to niskala activities such as the family temple, the ceremonial pavilion (bale dangin) and the courtyard (natah) tend to be maintained with some adjustment. The adjustment process involved an analysing process in which People apply sekala and niskala concept. For Balinese, this concept is a guidance of evaluation traditions so the new practices fit with the new setting without being loss the significant and meaning of rituals based on Balinese Hindu teachings. People adjust some ceremonial spaces to ensure the continuity or rituals with some adjustment as their honour and dedication to God and ancestors. In contrast, people feel free to transform spaces and activities related to sekala.

However, far from maintaining the essence, the new configurations have waned their functions and meaning. Some architectural components, representing socio cultural and environmental contexts, have vanished from the house.

7. REFERENCES

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LIST OF PRESENTED ABSTRACTS