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Chapter 33
Tourism and the Architecture of Home: Changes in Spatial and Philosophical Formations of Puri in Bali

Anak Agung Gde Djaja Bharuna and Gusti Ayu Made Suartika

33.1 Introduction

33.1.1 Overview

Puri in Bali constitutes a palace – the residence of the king and his family, an embodiment of a complete traditional Balinese architectural concept and form. A puri embraces the concepts of territory, environment, and structural arrangements reflecting the “Tri Hita Karana” conception (Rumawan 1993). The form and function of the puri have changed and have developed from time to time. In general, however, the existence of the puri form in Bali still exists. New adaptations of some palaces may have had no effect on building form and have been limited to improving the quality of the building and its uses.

The changes of status of the king since the abolition of monarchy in Bali, during the colonial period and the integration of Bali into the Republic of Indonesia, transformed profoundly to the traditional environment. As the designation of Bali as a tourism destination is considered a way out, palaces are transformed in such a way that they accommodate tourists. More than physical and spatial transformation, it also diverts the philosophical value of space and architecture. Over time, the transforming castles, as heritage and cultural asset of Bali, are at risk.

Based on the idea of conserving palaces as architectural products of the past, this paper first examines variations of spatial formations of palaces in Bali, not only in terms of their physical existences but also philosophical attributes each explicates. The second part describes changes that take place in palaces, inevitably resulted from either turning palaces into tourist attractions or venues for tourism-related

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activities. The last part manifests in human beings. It proposes a policy framework outlining preventative measures in extending the presence of puri in Bali.

33.1.2 Spatial Formation and Philosophical Attributes of Puri in Bali

The word puri is rooted from Sanskrit language, absorbed into the Old Javanese Language (Bahasa Jawa Kuno) which means “fortress, palace, where a king resides” (Zoetmulder 1983). Fundamentally, puri is a collection of unique buildings and spaces confined within a defined area. These spaces are often associated with certain symbolic as well as ritual meanings, especially of those pertaining to beliefs in Balinese Hinduism. Many believe the king as God representation on earth. He is seen as God’s holy sparkle and is blessed with heavenly strength. As puri is a place for the king to live in, it is subsequently a holy place, conceived and portrayed in accordance with this value system.

In general, palaces are divided into several palebahan or plots (land/space) within a palace where the certain function (building) stands on. Each palebahan has a specific name and function. Building constructed on a palebahan often has the same name as its palebahan. The existence of the palebahan remains unchanged, although many puris may have gone through partial renovation or even a full reconstruction. Palebahan in Balinese language means a site used for construction (Gelebet 1985).

As a form of home, the construction of puri also conforms to the spatial formation of the settlement in which the puri is located. In the case of Bali’s mainland area, it is usually laid out in accordance with catus patha formation (Suartika 2013). It is also called pempatan agung formation or nyatur desa/nyatur muka (two crossed roads – east-west line intersects with the north-south line to form an intersection), which then becomes the center of settlement as a whole. Such a formation is then developed into nine directions that lead to the formation of Sanga Mandala (nine zones) concept. According to this concept, each zone is dedicated only for certain function and building. Zone allocated for puri is the northeastern mandala (Figs. 33.1 and 33.2).

The Sanga Mandala principle recognizes nine palebahan, such as:

1. Ancak saji or bencingah is the most front area (first hall), whose function is a preparation zone before entering a puri. This is usually located in the southwestern direction.
2. Sumanggen is palebahan for conducting ritual activities pertaining to deaths (pitra yadnya). This zone has Bale Sumanggen built on it and is usually located in the southern direction.
3. Rangki is a name for both palebahan and a building whose function is either to receive guests or to do a check on them for security reason.
4. Pewaregan is the area where the kitchen and food preparation and storing-related activities take place. It is generally located at the southeast corner.
5. Lumbung is a granary, in which grain and rice are kept, and is usually located in the northwest area of the palace complex.
6. Saren Kaja is palebahan for the king’s wife(s) accommodation. It is generally located in the northern area.
7. Saren Kangin also called Saren Agung is a core area of the palace, as is palebahan where the king resides daily.
8. Paseban is a part of palebahan used as a waiting area for monarchy officials. It also can be used as a grand royal court.
9. Pamerajan Agung is a part of palebahan where the sacred buildings to glorify the ancestors of the royal family are constructed. Its scale is relatively grand since it is a ritual zone for a monarchy family. It sometimes resembles a temple and is usually located in the northeastern region (kaja kangin).

The division of sanga mandala conception is based upon the environmental conditions and land availability. Each puri has its own variation in accordance with the ability of the undagi and the views of the king who will reside in the palace (Gelebet 1985). Sanga mandala principle is mostly applied by puri of the southern part of Bali, such as Puri Gianyar, Klungkung, Karangasem, and Ubud. The palebahan Saren Kangin – the king’s residence – of these four puris is located in the eastern part of the puri complex. This corresponds with the idea of God Indra being the King of Gods who resides in the east direction.

33.2 Changes in Spatial and Philosophical Formations of Puri in Bali

33.2.1 Tourist Development

It is well recognized that tourist development in Bali has been characterized by the richness of its culture. While the industry has financially contributed to the both local and national economies, there is a concern over the excessive commercialization of the Balinese cultural elements and values within the process. The abstract or intangible cultures, such as customs, norms (awig-awig), philosophy, Hinduism, and so forth, tend not to be widely understood and inadequately transformed. They are merely used to support Bali’s tourist development with no and/or little concern to conserve them at the same time (Sutjipta 2005). There is a fear that the tourist industry, together with globalization and modernization, will degrade traditions and symbolic meanings associated within to a point of no return. Contact with foreign cultures in this circumstance is inevitable. When development of the tourist industry is uncontrolled, it makes the fear of losing traditions become more apparent. This situation is worsened when the goal of tourist development is designed to merely generate economic contribution.

Social interactions in Bali are based on communal ways of life, grounded in the Tri Hita Karana principle. This involves three contributing factors in achieving harmony and welfare in life. These include (1) harmony between human beings and God, (2) harmony between human beings and the natural environment, and (3) harmony between human beings and others. Implementation of these three forms of harmonious interaction entails both specific actions and symbols passed down from generation to generation. In terms of positive and negative impacts of the tourism development in Bali, the architecture of homes in Nusa Dua, Sanur, and Kuta can be considered as phenomenal evidence. They have been globalized of which characteristics are complementing each other. Nusa Dua is an exclusive tourist resort
(enclosed development), Kuta is a people-based tourism (spontaneous development), and Sanur is in between (mixed development). However, due to various factors, in fact, the three areas were finally growing together as oligopoly business centers. Kuta has changed into a global tourist area with shattered modernity and locality and does not represent a resort-based tourism. Ubud area is an exception (mixed development). In Ubud, all residents/communities get the life, share prosperity, and develop sustainable arts and culture.

If we look back, the relationship between human and architecture goes in line with the development of our civilization, from an era when writing was not yet invented, up to the present time, when information technology leads our daily life. Architecture is a reflection of culture, traditions, ideas, and knowledge that has been handed down both orally and in writing for generations. Architecture is there to contain human activities. One of the very important functions of architecture is to accommodate activities undertaken at home. The architecture of a home is very personal. This represents many messages and meanings that are unique and specific. Suartika (2006) categorizes the meaning of home into eight classifications. It is said that a home is closely linked to nature, as a security system, as a journey, as an art, as a cloister, as part of a spiritual activity, and as a facade.

A home, which in Balinese context is referred to as rumah adat for the traditional communities, not only served as a forum for their daily activities but also a sacred place used to worship both ancestors and deities. In the viewpoint of people of Bali, a residential architecture is considered to have the same components as those of human beings (that each has a soul and physical elements) and meaning. The latter component is often analogized as the soul of the architecture. A puri, which is viewed as a place to shelter for the Balinese noble families, is also used as a center for government by either the monarchy or one (or group of people) who is/are respected by the community (Gelebet 1985). Statistical data shows that Bali has a number of puris, in which some are damaged and not in a good state, while others are well maintained. The idea of conserving the existence of the puri is not a mere message coming from the noble families residing within, but it is a must since such form of home offers resources to the future generation to learn from about their architecture, culture, as well as history.

In the aftermath of the colonial era and Bali’s integration into the Republic of Indonesia, the legal position of puri falls into the category of a private property. As is the case of other private premises, this implies that puri’s survival is on the hand of its owner. However, many puris cannot afford the high cost it involves to survive. The tourist industry that was developed in Bali offers solutions alternatively by turning the puri into (1) a tourist attraction for its uniqueness, (2) a venue for tourism-related activities, and (3) a place to accommodate tourists when they are holidaying on the island. In consequence, these trigger puri to do some adaptations. All of these options are expected of being able to generate revenues that could be used to sustain the puri. As a result, there are changes in the spatial and architectural formations of various puris. It is not limited only to changes in the physical/spatial formations (tangible) but also in the philosophy and value system that the puri embeds within (intangible). However, over time, a continuous process of adaptation
has created a serious concern; if it becomes one of Bali’s cultural heritages, puri will be destroyed or become extinct.

33.2.2 Tourism and Adaptations of Spatial Formation and the Philosophy of Puri in Bali

There are probably many puris in Bali, but only few are still considered to “have a soul,” and its visual and physical representation still contains supernatural and philosophical values, namely, “sanga mandala.” The rapid developmental changes, due to the tourism development, may give impact to the puri in Bali. Based on the visual record of experience and observation over time, some representative cases would be discussed, namely, Puri Pemecutan Badung located in downtown Denpasar as well as Puri Saren Ubud located in suburban of Gianyar, Bali.

33.2.2.1 Puri Pemecutan Denpasar

Puri Pemecutan is located at the northeast of a major catus patha of downtown Denpasar. This is the old monarchy complex and composed of several buildings constructed in a close distance between one and another. Some buildings, however, were destroyed during the war between the Kingdom of Badung and the Dutch government in 1906, which was well known as Puputan Badung war. Puri Pemecutan lies at a crossroad in the city of Denpasar (Fig. 33.3), whose surrounding area has been developed into a commercial complex. One can find all kind of shops, lodging facilities, and private offices within. This has also affected how the Puri Pemecutan is developed from time to time. Most parts of this puri have been transformed into a hotel, in which new buildings are constructed in different physical appearances compared with those of the previous ones. Part of ancak saji (Fig. 33.4: site plan of Puri Pemecutan) has been adapted into parking area and small buildings used for
Fig. 33.4 The layout of 
Puri Pemecutan

Fig. 33.5 The Puri 
Pemecutan hotel

waiting station by both taxi and bus drivers. The only part of the puri that remains intact is the Penerajan Agung.

The hotel building is in a modern style but furnished with Balinese architectural style (Fig. 33.5). The form of the building is basically a long rectangle consisting of second floor and for first floor, in which buildings are arranged in rows. A reinforced concrete frame is the structure and construction of the building completed with red brick. Then it is painted. The parapet is structured with rock print, the mixture of sand and cement to be printed in accordance with the size of the modules, widely developed in the area of Kapal (Sempidi). The original walls are made of red brick, very thick and high so that they are like fortress walls (Fig. 33.6).
33.2.2.2 Puri Ubud

Puri Ubud is built as a result of the split in Sukawati Gianyar Monarchy, between two brothers who wanted to take the place of his father as a king in Sukawati. The war ended with the victory of the first child named Dewa Agung Gede. As an expression of the victory of the war, he gave gifts to one warlord named Cokorde Tangkeban which still represents an own brother for control of an area that is considered critical of Ubud.

Puri Ubud is located in the kaja kangin (northeast), at the crossroads of the village (Fig. 33.7). The market is located in front of the puri, wantilan and bale kul-kul are on its right side, and some other parts are people’s residential houses, predominantly already started to develop into places of business. The development tends to be a result of the development of tourism. Some kinds of developed facilities are shops, restaurants, pubs, art shops, galleries, inns, home stay, and so on.

Spatial layout of Puri Ubud (Fig. 33.8) still meets the layout of (Nawa Sanga), in which pamerajin (temple) is located on kaja (the north) – the most sacred area. In general, the whole building foundations are in rectangular shape. Up to now, there is no change on it. The changes are of building material used for floor, walls, and roof of the new building. This change is necessary for several reasons including (1) the age of the building, (2) efficiency in building maintenance, and (3) to make
up the building in order to give it a more modern look, since it is now turned into a homestay. This is done to all the buildings, with an exception of the Saren Agung. When it is required, a bathroom and restrooms are also added to the existing building to complete the lodging facilities.

The function of Puri Ubud has changed accordingly. It serves as lodging facilities instead of the royal family residence (Fig. 33.9). It can generate income for building maintenance. The overall buildings on each area in Puri Ubud are well maintained. It is one of the examples of how the puri utilizes tourism to survive in life. Buildings are constructed on wooden stilts. On certain parts, they are decorated with carvings to add to the aesthetics. The floor is made of tile. The roof is partly made of tile and alang-alang – grass. The outer walls of buildings are constructed using red brick combined with gray sandstone, while the inside walls are decorated with flora-based decorative elements (Fig. 33.10).
33.3 Conclusion

In the postindependence era and in the aftermath of Bali integration into the Republic of Indonesia, some puris as one of the architectural masterpieces of the traditional home in Bali are struggling to meet the high costs of routine maintenance. In line with Bali’s mass tourist development, many puris have gone through various spatial adaptations following their decision to accommodate tourism and its related functions. The main objective, of course, is to generate revenue in order to prolong their existence. As a result, there have been adaptations in the spatial and architectural formations of various puris. This study has demonstrated that the overall changes do not amend the overall spatial layout of the puri.

The two case studies presented here have informed us that adaptations are done in order to accommodate new functions. This is carried out without changing the overall layout but to accommodate new functions within the existing buildings. Thus, there may be adaptations within the spatial layout of the interior of the chosen building, but it does not affect the position of the building in relation to others that also exist on the same site of a puri. Adaptations taking place in Puri Pemecutan may seem as an extreme case, as the premise has been converted into a hotel – a
permanent function. In the case of Puri Saren Ubud, however, attempt to accommodate tourism is temporary. It is done when circumstances are appropriate to do so. When this puri has to have all the spaces to perform its traditions and ritual activities, the puri will no longer be available for tourism. Tourists are welcome to observe the processions, but they will be treated as guests.

In conclusion, adaptations in spatial formation of puri do not in principle change the philosophy and meanings imbedded within. However, this does not imply that a degrading impact will not happen any time in the near future. It will likely take place sooner when adaptation is carried out without a conscious effort to conserve puri as a historical legacy. The question here is how adaptations and conservation can be done simultaneously, so one does not undo the other. In order to answer this query, further research studies need to be conducted.

Bibliography


