Physical systems - Balinese cultural meaning in Three Monkeys Restaurant architecture in Sanur Bali

Alwin Suryono Sombu1*, Ryadi Adityavarman2, John Petrus Talan3

1 Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Universitas Katolik Parahyangan Jl. Ciumbuleuit, no. 94, Bandung, Indonesia
2 Interior Architecture Program at Colorado State University, USA
3 Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London (UCL)

ABSTRACT

Bali's Sanur tourism sector is home to many well-known structures with unique, non-Balinese architectural styles. This paper aims to expose the Balinese physical-meaning system found in the Three Monkeys restaurant's architecture in Sanur. The approach is descriptive; first, the "physical" architecture is explained, followed by the "purpose of existence" and "essence." Open frontage, bottom level raised over the terrace, and an alang-alang roof supported by bamboo poles. There is an open figure to the left and north, with bamboo trees around it and a glass-block wall atop. A blend of Balinese traditional and modern architecture. The arrangement: an open pool acts as a mediator between the dining room, kitchen, and bathroom; the terrace is shaded by frangipani trees, and there is a place of prayer in the northeast corner. The upper rooms are conditioned, enclosed by glass walls, modern compared to the lower rooms. The terrace materials are traditional (alang-alang roof, parasol stone wall - bamboo), the lower dining room is a mix of traditional (bamboo wall, alang-alang roof, wooden furniture) and modern (polished concrete floor, glass-block wall), and the upper room is modern (frameless glass wall, stainless-steel railing). The traditional-modern Balinese blend is displayed through the building's figure, layout and materials.

Introduction

As one of the most popular travel destinations worldwide, Bali Island has gained popularity over the years, in part due to its natural beauty (Sunarta and Arida 2017; Budihardjo 2019) and the distinctive culture and traditions of its people, which are still practiced today (Siwalatri 2019; Budihardjo 2019). It has been demonstrated that the centuries-old traditional architecture of Bali serves as a global symbol of Balinese identity (Salain 2019; Setiawan, Salura, and Fauzy 2020). Not merely for vacation, the majority of visitors to Bali come to witness the local wisdom, which includes the customs, culture, and distinctiveness of the Balinese people (Aridiantari, Lasmawan, and Suastika 2020; Pranajaya, Rijasa, and Dewi 2023).

However, tourism has many implications, positive and negative, in all aspects for almost all Balinese society (Wahyundaria and Sunarta 2020). This unavoidable influence from outside Bali brings changes to the form of Balinese architecture, especially those related to culture/traditions that have existed for a long time, namely shapes, natural colors, decorative elements, building materials and modern technology (Gunawan 2017). This has given rise to a new phenomenon, namely the values of freedom of aesthetic expression which are gaining
a greater share, even suppressing elements of local culture (Maharani and Yupardhi 2014; Lalu and Fauzy 2020).

In addition, people find it harder to uphold traditions due to the nature of independence, efficiency, and society's growing busyness (Siwalatri 2019). The architectural industry is pushing traditional ideas through industrialization and education in the name of efficiency, effectiveness, hygiene, and other reasons. This has an impact on many spatial patterns and traditional architecture being abandoned by residents and turning to non-traditional architecture or contemporary architecture." (Saputra, Herwindo, and Kusliansjah 2020) The conflict between "tradition" and "newness of change" will give rise to several fresh identities that may eventually lose their significance (Salain 2019).

Problems arise when something that still survives with a profane (traditional) nature meets forms of profit (modern). Balinese people who still strongly believe in cosmology encounter forms that follow form follows function (Maharani and Yupardhi 2014).

However, Balinese society's social and cultural framework is exceptionally resilient and dynamic, which allows it to remain somewhat flexible in adjusting to a variety of environmental changes (Subawa 2018). Therefore, when different influences restrict and undermine traditional assets in the name of renewal, it becomes imperative to promote Balinese identity through architecture (Salain 2019).

In 2015, Travel World's Best Award magazine ranked Bali as the second-best island globally and the best island in Asia. This recognition helped Bali become a popular tourist destination both domestically and internationally (Pramesti, Iswarini, and Adi 2023). Bali's potential includes physical system, social system, and associated Balinese cultural system to the core ideas.

The Sanur subdistrict in Bali, particularly Jalan Danau Tamblingan, is one of the tourist sites that is growing quickly due to its accessibility to other tourist attractions, dining options, lodging options, and other business establishments. Despite having well-known names, certain facilities merely exhibit their features rather than Balinese ones (Wardantara, Prajna wrdhri, and Muktiwibowo 2020). Balinese architectural concepts are not used in more than 50% of the commercial buildings along this road corridor (Pratama and Suardita 2018).

The challenge is in comprehending the architectural design of the Three Monkeys Sanur restaurant, which was designed by architect Ketut Arthana and differs greatly from traditional Balinese architecture. The physical components of the architecture are discussed in this article, followed by a revelation of the components of "Balinese Culture," which goes from the visible system to the core ideas.

The existence of the Three Monkeys restaurant on Jalan Danau Tamblingan, Sanur, with an external appearance of traditional Balinese architecture but an internal appearance that is a combination of traditional and modern, which is liked by foreign and local tourists, is an interesting topic for discussion.

People are cultural beings with an innate desire for positive change (Waggoner, Bering, and Halberstadt 2023). Changes are indeed necessary, but they must be carefully considered to preserve the customs that our forefathers left us. Balinese architecture needs to have historical roots to be sustainable (Lombard 1996).

Balinese architecture is part of the embodiment of Balinese culture with principles that focus on harmony between humans and their environment or the universe (Parwata 2011; Wijaya, Warnata, and Mustika 2022).

Literature review

The architectural style of Sanur's Three Monkeys Restaurant is Critical Regionalism. Appreciating Balinese culture from the perspectives of its physical system, social system, and meaning/value system is essential to understanding Balinese culture as it is expressed in architecture (Koentjaraningrat 1988).

Traditional Balinese architecture represents the physical system, restaurant activities constitute the social system, and associated Balinese cultural ideas and philosophies embody the meaning/value system of Balinese culture.
The architecture of critical regionalism

The modernization of Balinese architecture that honors what came before—nature and local wisdom—forms the basis of critical regionalism (Frampton in Wihardyanto and Sherlia 2011; Gunawan 2017). This provides Balinese architecture with its own local identity. Architecture based on critical regionalism adapts to the climate, topography, and culture of the area. The restaurant is situated on Jalan Danau Tamblingan in Sanur, which is indicative of the Balinese culture prevalent in the area.

In question is modern architecture that showcases industrial materials in their raw, uncoated state (Modern Brutalism), typically concrete (Esther 2022). Similar to people, buildings can endure if they can adapt to changing circumstances without losing their unique characteristics (Frampton in Wihardyanto and Sherlia 2011).

Traditional Balinese architecture

The principles of traditional Balinese architecture (Siwalatri 2019; Askara 2018; Widhiarini, Permanita, and Oktavian 2019; Aritama and Wiryawan 2020) regarding this restaurant, located in the South of Bali, are as follows:

1. Cosmology-based architectural orientation: the sea, which is both a source of life and a purifying location, is the natural north-south axis (mountain-sea). The sunrise to sunset is the east-west axis of the rite. The higher realm (gods) - middle realm (humans) - and lower realm (animals) is the vertical axis.

2. Balance according to the aforementioned cosmology, specifically balance in the vertical direction (upper realm - middle realm - lower realm) and balance in the horizontal direction (north-south and east-west). This balance applies on a village or household scale and is dynamic based on the circumstances rather than inflexible with the same proportions.

3. The spatial hierarchy is based on three axes: The further north you go, the more important it is, the middle area is middle, and the south is lower. The further you go to the east, the more mainstream it is, the middle is middle, and the West is despicable. The higher you go, the more important it is, in the middle, it's medium, towards the bottom it's despicable. In architecture, the top area/roof has the main meaning, the middle area/walls have the middle meaning and the bottom area/floor has a low meaning. The concept of main-madaya-nista is not a dichotomy of good and bad, but more about suitability/appropriateness.

4. As a representation of balance, the eight cardinal directions—north, south, east, and west—plus one central direction—combine to form the Sanga mandala zoning, or the gods' orientation, or nawa sanga. The most significant direction is north-east.

5. Structures are categorized using a hierarchy of meaning: Pura in the village and Sanggah Merajan at home are examples of places of worship; residential buildings denote the middle class; and public buildings, located in the general village area, denote profane or disrespectful buildings (bale banjar, bale jineng, bale gambang). Bale Jineng provides a place to rest in the lower chamber and food supplies (rice) in the upper room/roof.

According to traditional Balinese architecture, structures are seen as spiritual and physical entities, just like people. The soul is comparable to the meaning, while the bodily form is the expression (Susanta 2017). The pattern of the figure is head-body-foot (roof-pillar/wall-floor).

Activities in restaurants

According to Utami (2018), culinary arts facilitate cross-cultural communication. This is consistent with the effects of globalization. Restaurants and other culinary dining establishments should adapt to the space requirements and atmosphere of their patrons to make themselves comfortable. In the framework of this study, restaurants should have a Balinese identity that appeals to patrons from a variety of cultural backgrounds, with both the architecture and the cuisine contributing to the establishment's allure. Balinese, Italian, and Balinese-Italian fusion cuisine is offered.

The staff of Three Monkeys restaurant participates in traditional Balinese rituals that are both spiritually necessary and distinctive. These rituals include: a) the daily offering of offerings at Merajan before activities, which is a way to thank God for the blessing of food; and b) the Mebanten canang offering, which is a way to express gratitude for life's opportunities before the afternoon service. b) The regular wearing of simple to medium-sized traditional Balinese garments by restaurant employees. The location (Merajan) and ambiance of this eatery are connected to this custom.

The meaning of Balinese culture
The meaning of Balinese culture as the soul of traditional Balinese architecture is the philosophical basis for its form/image (Siwalatri 2019), and the meaning of Balinese culture (Susanta and Wiryawan 2017) regarding this restaurant is as follows:

1. The concept of "dualism" in life, which is based on the laws of balance (Rwa Bhineda philosophy) and refers to the two opposing but equal aspects of reality (main-nista and open-closed). The architectural form is a crossroads (Catus patha) in a traditional Balinese hamlet, an inner garden (Natah) in a traditional Balinese house, and an empty space (symbol of meeting).

2. The Nyegara Gunung philosophy defines "noble" as "mountains and sea," which serve as directional markers. The sea is in a low position (mouth of water), while mountains are in a high position (origin of water).

3. The "three layers of nature" have a high, medium, and lower meaning, respectively. The "upper nature" layer, which is the sky (the divine world), the "middle nature" layer, which is the earth's surface (human nature), and the 'lower nature' layer/under the earth have low value (Tri Loka philosophy).

4. The concept of "local natural harmony," as expressed in the Maki Ring Cucupu philosophy, is achieved through the harmonious utilization of local resources.

5. The concept of harmony in life as it relates to "place-time-pattern," as understood by constant re-interpretation and improvisation (Kala Patra Village philosophy).

6. The Tri Hita Karana philosophy explains the meaning of the causes of peace, happiness, and prosperity, which are produced through a balanced and harmonious interaction between humans and God, between humans and other humans, and between humans and nature (Nabilah, Prabowo, and Wijayanto 2022).

Methods

Descriptive approaches are employed to portray Balinese culture in the architecture of the Three Monkeys Sanur restaurant, where the building is perceived as a real-life space (Sudaryono 2017) identified three layers of existence in architecture: 1) Physical existence, which can be observed through field observations of building figures, spatial layout, building materials, and Balinese traditional rituals (Ratnasari and Sudradjat 2023); 2) Awareness of 'purpose/purpose', or the 'what/why' of physical existence, can be discovered through field observations and interviews with architect-restaurant owners; 3) Awareness of 'essence', or the meaning/soul/philosophy of Balinese culture of physical existence, is accessible through in-depth observation and contemplation of physical existence and awareness of purpose (Sudradjat 2020).

Results and discussion

The study of Balinese culture in the architecture of the Three Monkeys Sanur restaurant begins with a description of the 'physical' aspect (building figure, spatial layout, building materials), then the 'purpose' aspect (about 'what/why'), and finally the 'essence' aspect (cultural meaning Bali and philosophy).

Building figure

The ground floor of the restaurant is elevated from the floor of the front terrace, and the alang-alang roof, which is open towards the front and supported by slanted bamboo poles, dominates the front. Bamboo trees surround the left and north sides of the open ground floor, while the top is covered with a glass block wall with triangular ventilation slots beneath the roof. The figure of the bottom-up plaster wall and ventilation hole under a roof to the right/south. Bamboo and komboja trees provide shade for the front terrace, which is bordered on the right by a bamboo wall and the right by a parapet wall (figure 1).
According to the 'head-body-foot' pattern of traditional Balinese architecture, which represents the 'Tri Loka' doctrine of 'three layers of nature' ('higher nature' for God, 'middle nature' for humanity, and 'bottom nature' for humans), the roof-pillar-floor figure is evident.

The facade's primary goal is to accentuate the contemporary Balinese features in the otherwise subdued Sanur tourist destination area by incorporating traditional Balinese architectural elements (sandstone walls, alang-alang roofs, and frangipani trees) over modern elements (raw concrete, glass railings). The North figure creates contemporary Balinese characteristics and serves as a medium for natural lighting and ventilation by striking a balance between Modern features (glass-block walls, top window glass) and Traditional features (open-surface stone columns, surface stone walls, front terrace-back garden).

The fusion of modern Brutalism and Traditional Balinese architecture represents a symphony of past and present life through the improvisation of architectural styles connected to 'place' (the popular tourist destination Sanur), 'time' (past - present), and 'pattern' (the architectural style) of Kala Village Patra. The emergence of "traditional" and "modern" traits indicates a "dualism" of existence, which is the foundation of the law of balance (Rwa Bhineda philosophy) and is one and inseparable from one another.

Results: The head-body-foot pattern's facial features are easily discernible, highlighting the distinctive qualities of Balinese architecture in the Sanur tourist hotspot. The left figure has modern Balinese traits because it is patterned with a blend of traditional and modern Balinese architecture.

Spatial

The frangipani trees that shade the front terrace are surrounded by a paras wall on the south, a bamboo wall on the north, and a meerajan, or place of worship, in the northeast corner. A small pool and restaurant area flank the terrace, while a fish pond with a fountain and restroom at the back, as well as a narrow open area on the extreme back/west side, border the inside area. The kitchen and service yard are located to the south, and the bamboo garden stretches from the front to the back on the internal room's north side.

The mezzanine floor dining area is covered in frameless glass walls with air conditioning and a ceiling with a sky light. The terrace is open to the front and left, limited by stainless steel railings (figure 2).

![Figure 2. Three Monkeys Restaurant spatial layout.](image)


This spatial layout aims to display a combination of modern - traditional Sanga Mandala (critical regionalism) spatial patterns, namely that the position of the entrance is adjusted to the position of the site from the East side (road), but the position of the place of worship/Merajan must be in the North or East.
The dining room is located in the quieter, center zone, with quick and simple access to the restroom and kitchen (the south and west profane zones). Similar to the open space (Natah) in the Sanga Mandala zoning of a traditional Balinese house, the horizontal-vertical open pool garden serves as a link between the dining area, kitchen, and toilet as well as a source of natural sunlight and ventilation. This pool garden represents the harmony of the Rwa Bhineda ideology and is a necessary component of the dining room, kitchen, and restroom functions that must be present in a restaurant.

While the open garden south of the kitchen serves as a place to expel kitchen smoke outside and provides natural lighting and ventilation, the open garden on the north side of the dining room serves as a refreshing space as well.

The above spatial arrangement represents the idea of the Balinese cultural village of Kala Patra, which is the harmony of past and present life and is the outcome of reinterpreting and improvising the spatial layout of traditional Balinese architecture for a modern restaurant.

The modern architecture's upper room, with its glass walls air conditioning, and skylight ceiling, is regarded as providing precedence to the top room above the ground floor and lower room, in line with the Balinese Tri Loka Culture idea. This "open" and "closed" area is required because of the high temperatures in the Sanur tourism area. Certain guests prefer cold rooms, while others prefer open, natural areas. This design represents the Rwa Bhineda idea of "dualism," or the conditions that are intrinsic to one another in this eatery.

One may say that the spatial arrangement is closed at the top and open at the bottom, the principle is similar to the Balinese traditional Bale Jineng (closed space at the top for food, open space at the bottom for relaxing for the village community) (figure 3).

Figure 3. Closed-open space
Top-left: Closed section (T) and open space (B), kitchen (D). Above-right: Image of the front and back sections, showing the closed room and terrace. Bottom-left-right: Figure of Bale Jineng Tenganan Village

Reinterpreting and improvising the "place-time pattern" is what led to Bale Jineng's idea of a closed space above - open below, which eventually became a closed dining area above - open dining/casual space below the restaurant. The original 'place' was a traditional village, which is now a popular tourist destination in
Sanur; the 'period' was the past for the present; and the 'Pattern' was closed-open spaces. This phenomenon represents the ideology of Kala Patra's Balinese cultural village: the balance between the past and present.

Results: The horizontal spatial arrangement demonstrates how modern-traditional Balinese motifs are integrated and support one another. The vertical spatial arrangement takes the shape of zoning, with special/modern sections with a distinct mood on the top floor and public areas on the ground floor.

Building materials
Building materials related to the critical regionalism style of this restaurant. Sandstone on the south side wall and bamboo on the north side are examples of traditional materials used on the terrace. The roof is thatched. The dining chairs' synthetic white rattan is the only contemporary material.

Inside: Thatched ceiling, teak wood chairs, bamboo poles—traditional building materials. Glass block, raw Benton impression walls, and polished concrete floors are examples of contemporary materials.

Mezzanine floor: Stainless steel railings, exposed concrete walls and floors, frameless glass walls, and ceiling skylights (figure 4). There are no traditional materials available.

Figure 4. Building materials for this restaurant
Above: Lower front terrace - frangipani trees, upper floor facing terrace. Bottom-left: Bamboo pole-roof frame, natural stone terrace walls, glass balustrade, glass-block walls, open alang-alang roof

This restaurant's identity is determined by the natural elements discovered nearby. Skylights are employed to provide natural lighting for the space using glass blocks, glass walls in higher rooms, and skylights to conserve energy and create a sense of closeness to nature. This restaurant, which is a popular tourist site in Bali's Sanur district and is going through a local identity crisis, places a lot of importance on Balinese identity. The contemporary features of this eatery are in keeping with the needs of the current day for eateries in the prominent Bali tourist destination of Sanur.

Findings: The front terrace's traditional materials provide a Balinese feature that is fitting for the neighborhood. The space's hybrid materials, which combine traditional and modern elements, define modern Bali. The upper chamber has modern elements that provide it with a unique feel.

The building, spatial arrangement, and materials are a fusion of modern brutalism and traditional Balinese style, creating a modern Bali that is appropriate for the Sanur tourism destination.

Conclusions
The dominant facial features are traditional Balinese architectural characteristics compared to modern architectural characteristics, to strengthen the contemporary Balinese characteristics in the Sanur tourist destination area. The North Figure is a balance between Modern and Traditional characteristics, creating contemporary Balinese characteristics as well as a medium for natural lighting and ventilation.

Typical Balinese architecture follows the 'head-body-foot' pattern, which refers to the 'three layers of nature' of Tri Loka philosophy. By combining modern brutalism with traditional Balinese architecture, the Kala Patra Village philosophy's architectural improvisation brings harmony to the past and present.

This restaurant's layout is a contemporary interpretation of the classic Sanga Mandala design. The place of worship is located in the northeast, with an entrance that is tailored to the site's orientation. In addition to providing natural lighting and ventilation, the open pool garden serves as a tie or balance between the eating area, kitchen, and bathroom. The meaning is found in Rwa Bhineda's philosophy, which balances many functions.

Tri Loka philosophy asserts that contemporary, confined, conditioned upper space
might be called 'special' in comparison to the places below. This design represents the Rwa Bhineda philosophy of "dualism," which is integral to this eatery. According to Kala Patra Village's philosophy, the open layout at the bottom and the closed pattern at the top, like Bale Jineng, symbolize the balance of past and current life.

Three distinct ambiance possibilities are offered by the lower terrace's traditional materials, the lower interior space's combination of traditional and modern materials, and the mezzanine floor's modern elements. According to the ideology of Kala Patra Village, the traditional-modern, 'Balinese' qualities can be appreciated in a modern atmosphere, and the material features of this restaurant's critical regionalism are evident.

Acknowledgements

I express my deep gratitude to the honorable:
2. Head of the institute for Research and Community Service, Parahyangan Catholic University for the opportunity given.
3. Resource person for the research above: Prof. Dr. Josef Prijotomo, MArch., Dr. IGN. Putu Wijaya, SH., Ir. Ktut Arthana, IAI. for his input and discussions during the research process.

Hopefully, this article can be useful and enlightening.

References


https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.30822/arteks.v4i1.80.


https://doi.org/10.30822/arteks.v4i1.80.


https://doi.org/10.30822/arteks.v5i1.187.


Jalan Danau Tamblingan’. *Space* 7 (2): 129–44.


Author(s) contribution

Alwin Suryono Sombu contributed to the research concepts preparation, methodologies, investigations, data analysis, visualization, and revisions.

Ryadi Adityavarman contributed to the research concepts preparation and literature reviews, data analysis, of article drafts preparation and validation.

John Petrus Talan contributed to the research concepts preparation and literature reviews, data analysis, of article drafts preparation and validation.