

PUBLIC USE IN TRADITIONAL COMMON SPACE OF TENGANAN PEGERINGSINGAN

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ABSTRACT

The village of Tenganan Pegeringsingan has been widely known for the uniqueness of its community life and ritual traditions throughout the year. The ritual dance of Mekare kare (warrior dance) has attracted many tourists to come over to the village and to experience the well preserved tradition of harmonious living. The village has a remarkable large open space which is being surrounded by row of walled houses in a linear way. In contrast to the houses, which can only be accessed via a small gate, the open space stands by itself as an appealing place where people are welcomed to move around and undertake public affairs. Interestingly, this common space has a philosophical meaning of the sacred place for the indigenous people of Tenganan. This paper would like to reveal how a multi-used open space is perceived by inhabitants and visitors, and in what sense a sacred space can be used as a public space as well. Ritual performances are the key issue in Tenganan village, and all activities (formal and informal, ritual and non-ritual, public and private) are defined respecting the local custom of practising rituals. Kerama desa as guard of the community life play a significant role in devising the spatial layout of physical environment of the village. They stand as a reference for all ritual activities and social standing of the inhabitants. Nevertheless, they are unable to withstand recent development of tourism industry in Bali. The people of Tenganan in this case, exhibit an exemplary model of sustaining traditional living environment in its confrontation to modern development.

Keywords: *Tenganan Pegeringsingan, common space, public place, rituals.*

INTRODUCTION

The village of Tenganan Pegeringsingan is located approximately 85 km east side of Denpasar, and approximately 17 km from Amlapura, the capital of Karangasem Regency. This village is well known as one of the famous villages in Bali since it has a unique settlement pattern that has been preserved for more than 800 years. The people of Tenganan Pegeringsingan are called Bali Aga people, the prehistoric Hindu Balinese. They practice communal art of living following the Tri Hita Karana philosophy: living in harmony with God, human being and nature. People of Tenganan produce pegeringsingan cloth which is believed can protect people from diseases. The village has a tradition of performing rituals of Mekare kare (a sort of warrior dance) which involves two young men fighting each other using thorny

pandanous leaves on the right hand and a rattan armour on the left hand. Nowadays, this village is very popular as a tourist destination.

This paper is written based on several field observations and literature review on the philosophy of Tenganan people about the cycle of life that is manifested in ritual performances. The field observation concerns with the uses of common space in the village during the ritual and non-ritual activities in order to identify the meaning of common space for Tenganan people.

COMMON SPACE IN RESIDENTIAL COMPOUND

Common space in a residential compound is perceived as a shared space which its use is limited to residents. The Common space is defined as an extension of the living space which is only dedicated for the residents (Dillman & Dillman, 1987) in Shabak (2012). Regarding the privacy level, common space in a residential compound serves also as the private space for its residents. Since the space is used by all residents of different families, the space functions as a semi-public space as well.

To comprehend the common space in a traditional village we should understand common space as a communal space, because a village is idealized as a designed community (Lang, 1987). In a village, the local community grows up overtime along with the communal space.

In terms of Etymology, communal space regards space as a place that enfold shared activities of group of people within a region or community. Communal living is understood as sharing way of life and activities by group of people voluntarily. People decided for a communal living with the conviction that it would be better when they live together rather than individually. In the context of community, group attachment is more important than individual interest (Simpson, 2008).

Communal space in a built environment has a correlation with the social organization among people. The availability of a communal space in the built environment will make a social organization better developed than in any other environment (Lang, 1987). A built environment plays a role in developing formal and informal social organization. A built environment influences physical activities and interaction pattern among people, the privacy and proxemic behavior of people, which in turn figure out patterns and design of social interaction among people. Social organization in a traditional context is comprehended as the kinship structure in the society which establish a network system that relates ancestor to the resident.

Social organization in the traditional village of Tenganan Pegeringsingan is differentiated into adat (custom) and dinas (government) organization. Dinas organization is subordinate to the central governmental system in that social activities and its organization is designed top-down. On the other hand, the adat organization has a long tradition of being organized bottom-up and involving all members of the community. In case of the village Tenganan Pegeringsingan, some communal activities are performed based on obligation, and some other based on voluntary approaches. The traditional common space of Tenganan Pegeringsingan has been occupied by activities that can be differentiated as ritual activities

consisting of *adat* (custom) and sacred rituals, and non-ritual activities consisting of daily and tourism activities.

THE LAYOUT OF COMMON SPACE

People of Tenganan Pegeringsingan believed that their cycle of life is based on the principle of law of purity. This principle determines the ritual handling in the village, in which life stages and holy objects are cleansed by means of purification rituals in order to avoid bad influences. All people of Tenganan participate in the ritual performances to keep their purity and their life unhurt. The ritual performances take place at the common space of the village

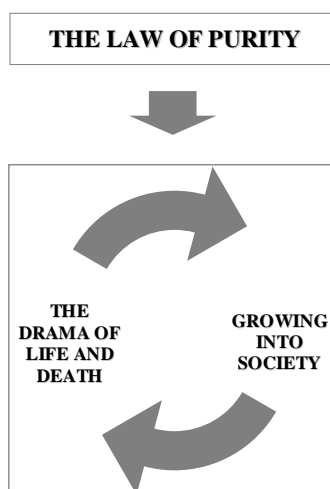


Figure 1. Cycle of Life
Source: Ramseyer (2009)

The village of Tenganan Pegeringsingan has 3 *banjar* (association of inhabitants) which is spatially defined to the North–South (Kaja–Kelod) axis of the settlement. *Banjar 1* is called the *Banjar Kauh* (Western *Banjar*), *Banjar 2* the *Banjar Tengah* (Middle *Banjar*) and *Banjar 3* the *Banjar Kangin/ Pande* (Eastern *Banjar*). *Banjar 1* is the origin dwelling compound in the village where descendants of the founding father are raising up their family. *Banjar 2* is the expansion of *banjar 1* as more dwelling areas are needed to meet the population growth. *Banjar 3* was built up to accommodate people who are not eligible to dwell in the *Banjar 1* and 2. The northern part of *Banjar Kangin/ Pande* is inhabited by Tenganan people who have violated local custom such as marrying people from outside Tenganan, rebellious to local regulation, defiant of local custom and people who are from other origins. The southern part of it is inhabited by invited skilled people (*pande*) from outside Tenganan.

There is only one entrance to the village namely at the southern end of the common space in *Banjar Kauh*. The village consists of individual houses enclosed by walls, religious buildings, meeting hall, elementary school, and open space between

buildings. The village is bordered by natural environment: a river, agriculture land and natural forest.

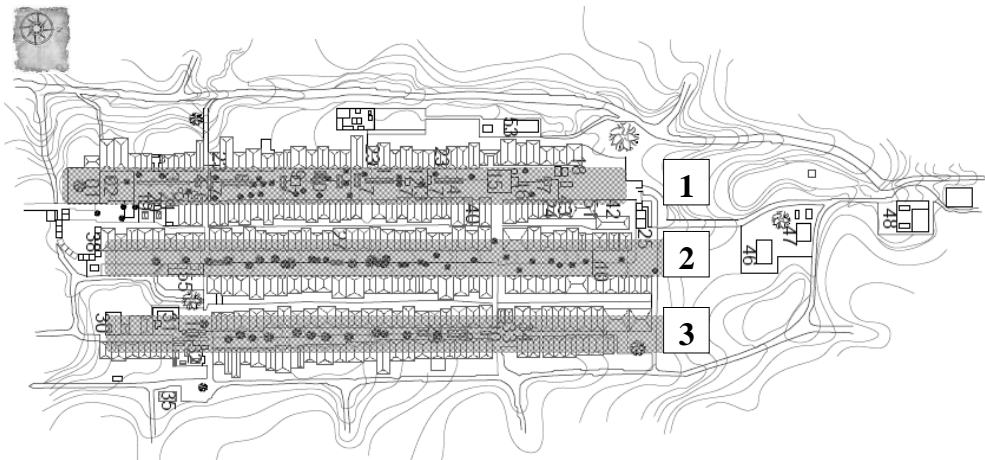


Figure 2. Layout of the traditional common space
Source: Ramseyer (2009)



Figure 3. Entrance to the Common Space
Source: Author

RITUAL ACTIVITIES OF *KERAMA DESA*

Kerama desa is the principal inhabitants of the village which will be entitled to a married couple when both husband and wife are descendants of Tenganan people. In case the husband or wife is passed away, the status of *Kerama desa* will be ended. This status will also be finished when children of the parent is getting married. The newly married couple replaces the position of the old couple as *Kerama desa*. The tradition of *Kerama desa* at Tenganan village is rather unique since its status is held not by the man himself as the head of the family but also by his marriage status. There are 4 (four) requirements in that a *Kerama desa* might be

acknowledged as member of the society and might participate in ritual performances. 1. A *Kerama desa* must be of the right lineage and birth; 2. A *Kerama desa* must obey the rules of village endogamy; 3. A *Kerama desa* must have accomplished rituals of purification at birth or in early childhood; 4. A *Kerama desa* must have crossed several thresholds to the attainment of ritual capability and competence within initiation rites and phases.

People of Tenganan Pegeringsingan who live in *Banjar Kauh* and *Banjar Tengah* are eligible to be involved as *Kerama Desa*. Inhabitants of *Banjar Kauh* who is married to inhabitants of *Banjar Pande* or outsider are obliged to move to *Banjar Pande*. They are not allowed to live in their origin house and lost their right to be a *Kerama Desa*. The *Kerama Desa* has the responsibility to carry out ritual performances and organize the governance and physical development of the village.

Table 1. The ritual agenda for 2014

NO.	RITUAL ACTIVITIES	PLACE
I.	RITUAL USABA KASA (First Month Ritual)	
1.	Usaba Kasa Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pura Bale Agung • Other buildings in Banjar Kauh and Banjar Tengah
2.	Usaba Kasa Day 2	
3.	Usaba Kasa Day 3	
4.	Usaba Kasa Day 4	
5.	Usaba Kasa Day 5 (last day)	
6.	Abuang Peteng	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other buildings outside Pura Bale Agung
7.	Abuang Lemah	
II.	RITUAL USABA KARO (Second Month Ritual)	
1.	Usaba Karo Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other buildings outside Pura Bale Agung
2.	Usaba Karo Day 2	
III.	RITUAL USABA KETIGA (Third Month Ritual)	
1.	Usaba Ketiga Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other buildings outside Pura Bale Agung
2.	Usaba Ketiga Day 2	
3.	Usaba Ketiga Day 3	
IV.	RITUAL USABA KAPAT (The Fourth Month Rituals)	
1.	Ritual bulan keempat diisi dengan upacara bulan purnama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other buildings outside Pura Bale Agung
V.	RITUAL USABA SAMBAH (Fifth Month Rituals) The biggest ritual along the year, celebrated 1 full month.	
1.	Ritual Mamiut	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other buildings in Banjar Kauh and Banjar Tengah • Pura Bale Agung
2.	Ritual Usaba Sembangan	
3.	Mati Ombo Sanghyang	
4.	The last day of Mati Ombo Sanghyang ritual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other buildings in Banjar Kauh and Banjar Tengah
5.	Pebani	
6.	Medaha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pura Bale Agung
7.	Mulan Saat	
8.	Muran Truna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other buildings in Banjar Kauh and Banjar
9.	Mekare-kare simbolis	

NO.	RITUAL ACTIVITIES		PLACE
10.	Mekare-kare Patemu Kaja	(GIS)	Tengah
11.	Mekare-kare Patemu Tengah (Pengrame)	(DLD)	
12.	Sembahyang di Pura Banjar		
13.	“Nyajah”		
VI.	RITUAL USABA KEENEM (Sixth Month Rituals)		
1.	Ritual bulan keenam	(DLD)	• Other buildings in Banjar Kauh and Banjar Tengah
2.	“Mesangguh Jumu”		
VII.	RITUAL USABA KEPITU (Seventh Month Rituals)		
1.	“Mesanggah Tengah”.	(DLD)	• Pura Bale Agung
2.	“Muhu-muhu” acara hari kedua Usaba Kepitu.		
VIII.	RITUAL USABA KOLU (Eighth Month Rituals)		
1.	“Mesanggah Gedepong”	(GIS)	• Pura Bale Agung • Other buildings in Banjar Kauh and Banjar Tengah
2.	“Mesabatan Bongkot”		
3.	“Mesabatan Bongkot” Day 2		
4.	Full Moon ritual and last day of “Mesabatan Bongkot”		
IX.	RITUAL USABA KESANGA (The Ninth Month ritual)		
1.	The Ninth Month ritual	(GIS)	• Other buildings in Banjar Kauh and Banjar Tengah
X.	RITUAL USABA KEDASA (The Tenth Month ritual)		
1.	The beginning of Usaba Kedasa	(DLD)	• Pura Bale Agung • Other buildings in Banjar Kauh and Banjar Tengah
2.	The closing of Usaba Kedasa		
3.	Celebrating Pura Dadia Bale Agung anniversary		
XI	RITUAL USABA DESTA (The Eleventh Month ritual)		
1.	Sign the eleventh month ritual	(DLD)and Death	• Other buildings in Banjar Kauh and Banjar Tengah
2.	Same as day 1		
3.	End of Usaba Desta ritual.		
XII	RITUAL USABA SADDA (The Twelfth Month ritual)		
1.	Sign of the twelfth month ritual	(DLD)	• Other buildings in Banjar Kauh and Banjar Tengah
2.	Main ritual		
3.	End of Usaba Sadda ritual		

All major ritual performances of the village take place at the common space in the middle of the first residential compound (*Banjar Kauh*). Some minor rituals might be performed at the second common space of *Banjar Tengah* whereas no rituals are to be performed at the third common space of *Banjar Pande*. What is meant as the common space here is a wide and long open space between row of houses in which a series of sacred and public buildings are erected. Besides ritual activities, many other non-ritual activities are to be found too in this common space.

It is in the tradition of Tenganan people to perform ritual activities every month, and some rituals even take several days to accomplish. Each ritual has its own

symbolical meaning which serves to the social processes or the matter of death and life experienced by a human being. The local custom has defined precisely terms and conditions for using the common space. The position and orientation of sacred buildings are categorized according to symbolical spatial hierarchy following the cosmology. Pura Bale Agung (Figure 4), that stands nearest to the entrance gate is the most important sacred building for ritual activities. The ritual agenda for one year is described in Table 1.



Figure 4. Pura Bale Agung
Source: Author

The open space surrounding the sacred buildings is being used for preparing the rituals and supporting activities undertaken by *Kerama Desa*. During the ritual performances, only the men are permitted to sit in the Pura Bale Agung. The women are only allowed to stand next to the seating place except in two spans of the northern part of Pura Bale Agung. They may sit in Bale Kencan at the east side of Pura Bale Agung or somewhere else in the common space. The sitting arrangement in Pura Bale Agung is following the ranks of social status i.e. *Luanan*, *Bahan Roras*, *Tambalapu Roras*, *Peneluduan*, and the seniority of their assignment being *Kerama Desa*. Pura Bale Agung is the main focus of ritual activities and *Kerama Desa* are the actors involved in the process as a group. All processes are well distributed among the participants and every person has a definite role in the process. Ritual activities obviously exhibit the spirit of communal life of Tenganan people in which everyone is obliged to participate in a regulated manner. There is no personal rule but social consensus in the event.

NON RITUAL ACTIVITIES

On the other hand, outside the ritual activities, the common space will be experienced in a completely different atmosphere. The Pura Bale Agung becomes an empty building that divides the common space into left and right area of activities. The common space, thereafter, express the linear open space directing people to move around and to interact one to another. The sacred buildings stand as

background objects for the people's activity and not the central point of events. The focus of the activities is the people themselves in which open space accommodates people's movements and interaction. The open space stands for the functional meaning of public place. The common space in this sense conveys a place for everyone without considering his or her social status and position. The life of egalitarian society and unregulated space are visibly well articulated here.

According to the prominent figure of Tenganan, I Wayan Mangku Widya, the problem to be faced at present is the increasing use of information technology and motorcycles that is out of control. The motorcycles have endangered the serenity of the village and degraded the safety of people moving around in the common space. People who ride on motorcycles do not care of other's presence and do not pay any attention to sacred buildings and ritual activities taking place. The traditional sacred common space has not been appreciated as it was previously perceived, yet, it is regarded as simple as an urban street where vehicles dominate the space.

In the last few years Tenganan Pegeringsingan has been endorsed by the government to be developed as a tourist destination. People of Tenganan disagree to the government's program and rejected the construction of hotels and tourism facilities in the area. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of the village could not withstand the influx of tourism industry in Bali. They can only persevere their original environment by keeping the village entrance narrow as it was and visually insignificant from the main road. People of Tenganan nowadays tolerate the incoming flows of tourist visiting their village although it has troubled their peaceful living environment. The impact of tourism is obvious in the common space of *Banjar Kauh* and *Banjar Pande/ Kangin*. Inhabitants of this area are now being involved in producing handicrafts and souvenirs out of their traditional weaving skills. Most houses facing the major open space are transformed into a gallery or shops selling various kinds of traditional art and crafts. Some houses offer contemporary art products such as pottery and painting. The new activities certainly have changed the way of life from nature-dependent community to individual-based creative society.

Physically, the appearance of the traditional common space is intensely changed. Along the linear way of the open space in *Banjar Kauh* people see a variety of hanging cloth locking in people to enter the individual houses. The traditional village of Tenganan Pegeringsingan was well known for the production of unique art of fabric (tenun ikat geringsing). In *Banjar Kangin* people see a variety of crafted leather products are being laid out along the linear open space for sun exposure. In this case, the production process and material display are intermixed in that it creates a unique spatial experience for the tourists.

The non-ritual activities in the common space involve individuals to use the space without collaborative process among inhabitants. The spirit of communal life in this case is articulated by uniformity of commodities being displayed in the area. Each individual has the freedom to organize activities in his/ her own territory. The common space is nonetheless respected as a common access to the individual territory and as a point of reference for his/ her individual state of being.

In addition to inhabitants' private activities, the traditional common space attracts people from the neighbourhood to set up mobile small-scale business. In this case,

common space is interpreted as an accessible space for everybody to do any activities. People put a small table and chair under the tree and display handicrafts while the vendor exhibits the art of production. Tourists are invited to have a look and do some talk, by which a temporary area of activities is created in the common space. Tourists moving around between buildings and watching ritual performances in a distance brings a new scene to the traditional common space. The previous sacred character of the space is changed into a functional public space where people feel free to move around, have a look, take a rest, enjoy the events while *Kerama Desa* undertake their religious activities.

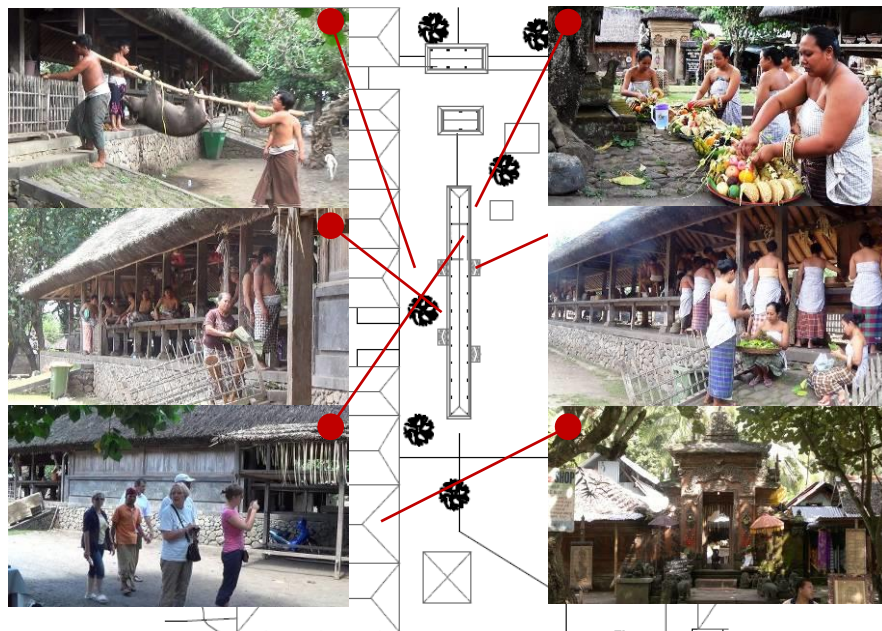


Figure 5. Pura Bale Agung and the activities surround.
Source: Author

Notes: Clockwise – Ritual preparation outside Pura Bale Agung – The women are only allowed to stand next to seating place – Most houses facing the major open space are transformed into a gallery or shops – Tourists at ritual performance – Only the men are permitted to sit in the Pura Bale Agung – Ritual preparation in Pura Bale Agung.

CONCLUSION

The people of Tenganan Pegeringsingan has updated the meaning of traditional common space into a public place without disregarding its role as a sacred terrain. They preserved their tradition, yet, at the same time accommodated the increasing needs of the inhabitants towards a better standard of living. On one hand, the social status and role of *Kerama Desa* has been sustained in that egalitarian way of life is still well experienced and enlivened. On the other hand, incoming people from the outside are welcomed and admitted to take part in the village activities without

violating the local custom. The village of Tenganan Pegeringsingan has exhibited the creation of a public place which incorporated religious activities and ritual performances as background as well as main attraction.

Recent development of technology and tourism has influenced the physical condition of traditional settlements. The traditional common space which was highly respected and appreciated has to go through a problematic situation: sustaining the motor free area or responding to new standard of comfort living. More elaborate research has to be undertaken to scrutinize this situation, in order that the sustainable model of a common space can be devised.

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