

TRANSMISSION OF TRADITIONS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE TRADITIONAL BALINESE HOUSE

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1. Introduction

The traditional Balinese house has various functions to accommodate both domestic and socio-cultural activities. People perform these activities within the spaces of the house and previously, were a way of handing down traditions. However, the economic benefits from tourism have encouraged Balinese people to transform their house and to accommodate additional functions, namely in the way of tourist activities. This article discusses how the transformation of these spaces has caused the adjustment of ceremonial activities and has influenced the transmission process of traditions in the new setting.

Transmitting traditions in the traditional house involves a particular collaborative learning process among members of different generations [1]. In this process, traditions are transmitted through family dissemination, where parents and grandparents play a predominant role. Young generations observe, help and imitate the old who perform the traditions. Old generations transfer their traditions to the next by performing them together in the house, from the initial preparations to the main ceremony. As a consequence, young generations experience and learn traditions by being actively involved in them from an early age.

Ceremonial activities and their preparation, therefore, have a significant role in the different spaces of the house. A family temple, for example, is a place where young members can learn about performing rituals related to religion and family ancestors. Indoor and outdoor spaces are stages where the young generation are not only able to witness the rituals that are performed, but also be involved in them by helping their parents or grandparents. The young carry out particular tasks as a way of learning family traditions. The pavilions and the courtyard, called *natah*, are places where people perform ceremonial activities related to the human life cycle: birth – life – death – re-birth [2]. It is where people prepare the ceremonies, for which they make offerings, ceremonial equipment and food. During the activities, all family members have time to witness, help and imitate the activities carried out by the older generations; performing these collaborative activities helps to keep these traditions alive.

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However, development of the tourism industry has encouraged people to transform the spaces [3] where traditionally Balinese people carried out their family rituals, a transformation which can influence the process of transmitting traditions in Balinese communities. The aim of this paper is therefore, to explore the continuity of traditions in the transformation of the traditional house in four tourist destinations: Ubud, Taro, Kendran and Peliatan, through documentation and examination. To this end, the historical dynamics of the specific activities were collected to contextualize and reconstruct the process of transformation and transmission of traditions. The paper begins by exploring traditions in Balinese communities and the role of spaces in houses and then moves on to present and explain how these traditions are performed and transmitted. The last part presents a picture of the physical transformations in the house and their impact on the transmission of traditions.

2. The transmission of Balinese traditions

A tradition is not defined as static but is a process of gradual transformation [4]. This gradual transformation is influenced by the interaction of the members of a society with foreign cultures, and the growth of social and cultural movements [5]. The concept of tradition is flexible and might be reformulated in the process of transmission [6, 7]. Shils suggested that the transmission of traditions refers to the idea of people's reactions to old traditions with or without alterations. This theory focuses on the interaction that happens in intergenerational communication, which acts as a "chain" and a "bridge" in the handing down of traditions in a society [6]. Using this theory, the transformation of the house and related traditions are examined to understand the way people construct their houses as a physical form of culture and as a response to new social conditions.

The traditional house represents traditional building practices in a society. Tradition is not stable. It can change, based on the demand of the people. The change can be influenced by people's interactions in a society with other cultures. In this interaction, the new tradition is not only transferred but also analysed. The recipients might receive a tradition without analysis and perform it unconsciously [6]. On the other hand, some traditions are accepted after being analysed to determine whether they accommodate new conditions through an adaptation process. In this process, the old might be adjusted or be used for new purposes [8]. This process of analysis shows that tradition changes over time. The changes become an on-going process of transformation or renewal and modification [9] in which a connection between "an invented present" and "imagined past" is formed [10].

In a transmission process, the new traditions consist of "memory" or a "record of the past" as a medium to maintain the connection and to pass on former icons as elements of "present attachment" [7]. The memory of the old icons can be presented in new objects, such as buildings. There is still a bond and a sense of sharing the old traditions in contemporary construction practices, as architectural traditions provide people with "profitability, convenience, and desired opportunities" [7].

As part of architectural production, a house experiences a process of reformulation. This reformulation process parallels the reformulation process in the beliefs of a community, which in turn are translated into forms in architectural production. In ancient traditions, the house is simply an unselfconscious physical form representing the demands, desires, and passions of people, where the assistance of a designer or ar-

chitect is unnecessary [11]. All members of a community are familiar with the local building practices so that in this “primitive” tradition, everyone can design and/or build their own house [12]. The process of constructing a building changed when artisans began to help people with the task. These practices reveal that primitive architecture was reformulated into vernacular architecture. In the vernacular, the owner actively participates in the design process [11, 13]. Based on Shils’s theory [6, 7], this is a method for assessing and reviewing where the old patterns have changed in the process of transmission and is based on the new generations’ critical thought and actions as recipients, to suit new demands and conditions. In a vernacular tradition, few changes occur within a framework of a given common heritage and hierarchy of values [14, 15].

Culture is comprised of a whole series of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features [16]. It has a role in developing the character of a society. The characters of some groups might differ, though they live in similar natural conditions. These differences cause a variety of cultural forms [11, 17]; the different societies of South-east Asia, for example, offer an incredible range of religions, kinship systems, as well as traditional architectural structures [18].

3. The traditional house, socio-cultural activities and the transmission process

Balinese culture, which was inspired by the Hindu religion, is represented by the performance of socio-cultural practices both in the village and in the house. These practices are a medium to show identity and create boundaries with others. This identity is handed down over generations [19 - 23]. Culture, as noted by Raymond Williams [24], is a form of communal activity demonstrating a unique reaction to facing new social circumstances. A culture cannot simply repeat the concepts of the past, the response involves an endless process of adaptation and adjustment [25]. Parallel to these theories, the continuous renewal of Balinese culture involves the collaboration of social relationships among the Balinese authorities with Javanese kingdoms, and colonial and postcolonial orders to express their superiority [26, 27]. The transformation does not imply that the Balinese totally adopted the new culture. Nor were the old cultures rejected or replaced. Rather, the transformation involved a selective adoption, where the new was filtered and modified to address the novel situation of the Balinese.

The traditional Balinese house is ordered within the framework of a religious ceremonial procession that holds a complex meaning [2]. The use of spaces shows the divine symbolism of the positions and movements used in religious ceremonies. These spiritual symbols indicate that the spaces in the house are interrelated and understood as places having different levels of holiness [2, 28].

The traditional Balinese house consists of a family temple, a courtyard, many pavilions and a backyard. For houses located in the southern part of Bali, the family temple (①) is located in the north-east corner and consists of shrines and at least one pavilion called *piyasan*. The family temple gate is in the south-western part of the family temple facing the *natah* (⑦). Near the family temple gate is a shrine facing west, located between the *bale daja* (②) and the *bale dangin* (④). The *bale dauh* (③), located near the kitchen, is called *paon* (⑥) and the rice barn (⑤) is called *jineng*. The backyard, called *teba* (⑨), is situated at the back of the house and is used for planting coconut, banana and many kinds of fruit trees. A pigpen also, is located in the *teba*, near the kitchen (Figure 1).

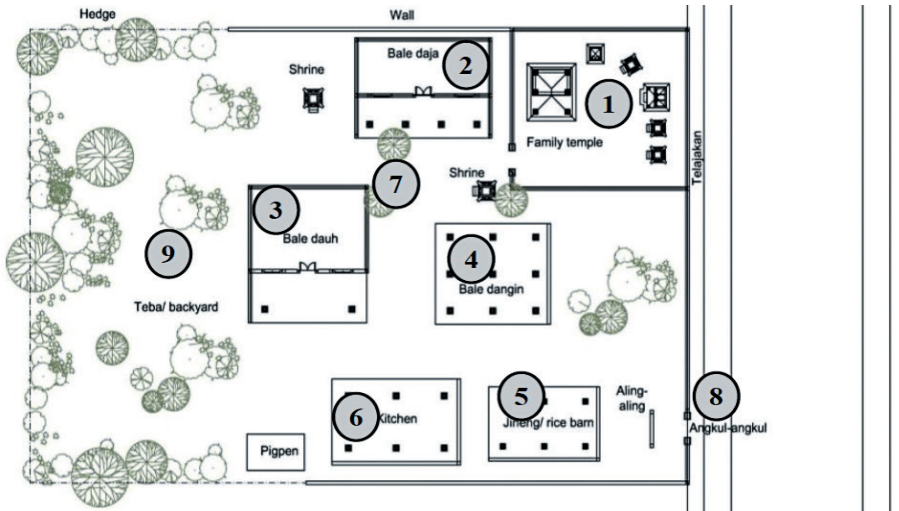


Figure 1. Typical layout of the traditional Balinese house.

Related directly to the teaching of the Hindu religion, pavilions and spaces in the traditional Balinese house were designed to accommodate not only ceremonial activities but also the preparation of the ceremonies. Represented in ritual activities, the house is an assembly point for Balinese people, who are the members of the kinship group, to prepare, organize, and perform rituals [29]. The family temple in ideal traditional Balinese houses, for example, is not only a place for worship but also a representation of the family formation as a social group and its kinship relationship [30]. The arrangement of domestic activities and rituals has therefore colored social relations inside the house.

Domestic activities in the Balinese house involve the compound spaces and the backyard, where the occupants are preoccupied with daily practices. Women's activities take place mostly in the house moving across different places: from the kitchen to the pigsty, to the backyard, to the granary for pounding or husking un-hulled rice, and sometimes to the rice field to help the men, as well as to the market. In their spare time, they sit in the pavilions or under the shade of a tree to chat with other women and watch their children playing in the *natah*. Men, on the other hand, move across spaces in the house to help women prepare for their daily needs. They collect materials from trees in the backyard, such as coconuts, go to the granary to take the un-hulled rice and dry it in the *natah*, and then go to the field. In their spare time, the men also move across the places: to the front of the house for chatting and cockfighting, to a pavilion for painting or carving, to the backyard for planting or cutting trees for building materials. In these domestic activities, women and men produce separate spaces that express particular characteristics [31]. The activities are not just the specific layering of domestic spaces, which, in the end, produce a system, but, as suggested by Lozanovska [32], the binding of the domestic spaces occurs through the repetitive nature of these activities by and through the continuous movement of the occupants. The spaces become meaningful through the interaction that occurs between the architectural spaces, objects and activities therein. Without such activities, the spaces would be abstract and without meaning.

Rituals in the family temple are a demonstration of the main social and religious events for the entire paternal kin group. The rituals are a moment for family members to work together in the preparation of the rituals. Those who relied on agriculture as their main occupation and source of income had enough freedom and leisure time for spiritual activities [33]. In ritual activities, especially in *odalan* ceremonies, the members of the paternal kin group go to the house, especially the house of origin, to make offerings, decorate the family temple, and perform other activities to prepare for the ceremonies. This moment is a proper time for parents to hand down traditions in their house to their children (Figure 2).

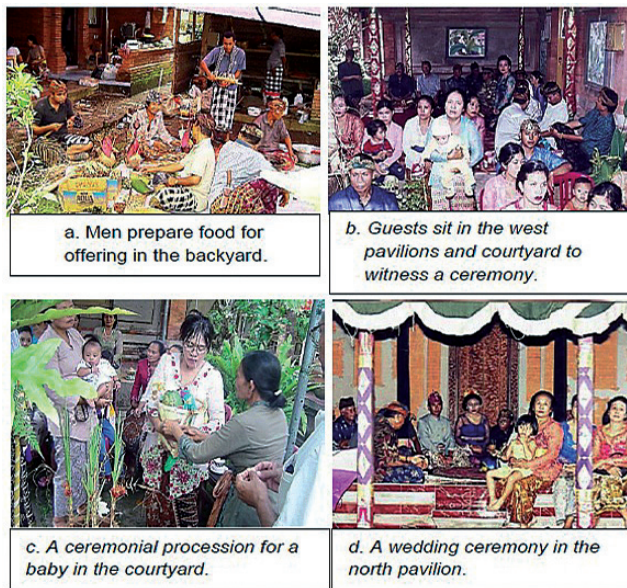


Figure 2. The use of space in the Balinese house.

Traditionally, ceremonies dedicated to God and ancestors were performed in the family temple; ceremonies related to the human life cycle were performed in the *bale dangin*, the *natah* and the *bale daja*. The *bale dangin* is a place where people lay a dead body in a cremation ceremony. In this pavilion, many kinds of ceremonies related to the human life cycle, including *telu bulanan* (ceremony for a three-month-old baby), *otonan* (the birthday ceremony), wedding and tooth filing ceremonies, were also performed. The *natah* is a place for many kinds of ceremonies, such as the rituals for the dead, weddings, and *telubulan* ceremony. The *natah* is also a place for temporary buildings for high priests and offerings.

Preparations for the ceremonies were also performed in the backyard, called *teba*, where the owner planted different kinds of trees and raised animals. During the preparations, the house became a crowded place where women sat in some of the pavilions to make offerings and men assembled in the *teba* to prepare food for the offerings and the feast. The *teba* also supplied many materials for offerings and food. For women, the main activity during the preparation of the ceremonies was *mejejahitan*, that is, a pro-

cess to make the parts of the offerings. They cut materials such as young coconut leaves called *busung* and mature coconut leaves called *slepan*. After being cut into various shapes, the cut leaves were then folded and skewered together with a sliver of bamboo or the central spine of a coconut leaf; they were then used as part of the offerings. Each shaped item was put into one or several containers with flowers, leaves, rice, fruits and other items. This activity, called *metanding*, produced offerings called *banten*.

In the past, the abovementioned moments were a good time for mothers to transfer and hand down traditions. Mothers and other relatives (women) made the more complex, detailed components of the *banten*, while their daughters helped to prepare the materials and made the simple components. Gradually, the daughters learned how to make the more complicated offerings. This process came about from generation to generation, where the old generation handed down their skills to the next in a natural family environment. This shows how the many spaces of the traditional houses played an important role in handing down family traditions.

While women made offerings using leaves, flowers and many kinds of fruit, fathers accompanied by their sons and other male relatives with their sons, made offerings using animals and vegetables. They worked together in the pavilions or the backyard to prepare food for the offerings and feast. They also decorated the shrines using leaves or cloth. Some men climbed the coconut trees to collect coconuts, coconut leaves, or flowers to use as materials for offerings or food. They also picked bananas, banana leaves or other materials from trees in the *teba*. The others slaughtered pigs, chickens and ducks for food and offerings. Similar to the women, these intergenerational collaborative activities were a good moment for the men to teach their sons and young people to do many of the activities related to the rituals in the house. However, since the transformation of the spaces in the traditional house, these preparatory and ceremonial activities are no longer performed in the house. They are now performed in village facilities or bought in markets or offering sellers. This transformation has altered the transformation process of traditions.

4. The transformation of the house and the transmission process of Balinese traditions

Tourism in Bali has impacted the economy encouraging people to transform their traditional houses. Thus, in spite of tourists' desire to witness local customs, which has had a positive influence and encouraged the Balinese to use traditional architectural styles as an attraction [34], there have still been several negative consequences. Some structures have installed air-conditioning devices, resulting in the traditional elements of cross ventilation being closed, for example, by installing glass. Modern devices have been installed to replace old models because they indicate a lack of progress or are seen as being out of date [35], so as to represent an image of modernity. This consequently increases social prestige and creates more luxurious and comfortable facilities to entice tourists and to provide the thermal comfort that meet tourists' standards of well-being. This modernization has become a way of gaining economic benefits [36].

It is evident then that tourism has contributed to the transformation of the traditional Balinese house. In general, the front part of the house has experienced the most massive transformation. Seen from the street, most of the houses, especially in some tourist villages in Bali, have no gate, but the passage next to the kiosks, which sell many clothes and handicrafts, is the entrance to the house [37]. Tourism has changed

the setting of the house, where these kiosks have been built at the front by demolishing the walls and traditional gates. In some, pavilions have also been demolished and new buildings constructed in their stead. Other structures have also been added adjacent to the traditional pavilions or in the backyard.

The house is an example of the transformation that has helped to discourage the transmission of traditions in the house. The transmission of tradition typically occurs in almost all parts of the house during the preparation of the ceremonies and the ceremonial days themselves. A *natah* (④) and a *bale dangin* (⑤) would be full of preparatory activities, offerings and rituals. In some big ceremonies, such as the cremation (*ngaben*) and purification of the soul (*nyekah*), temporary bamboo structures would be built in the *natah* called *bale pemiosan* (A) and *petak* (B). All extended families accompanied by their children and members of the neighborhood came to the house to witness it and help the family. The pavilions, including the kitchen (⑥), the *bale daja* (②) and the *bale dauh* (③), were places for women to prepare the offerings (Figure 3A). The *teba* ⑨, were places for the adult men, who were helped by the younger men and boys, to prepare food and any supported activities, such as making ceremonial equipment and elements for decorating the family temple and house. Many kinds of raw materials were taken from the *teba*, other extended families' houses or the families' fields.

The transformation of this house is the result of a sequence of demolition and construction, to accommodate the growth in family numbers and its struggle to survive in today's tourist economy. The new constructions that have substituted some of the old pavilions have become more practical in their utilization, rather than retaining the socio-symbolic function and setting of the old house. The house no longer has a granary and a backyard since the area has often been sold (Figure 3B). Seen from the street, the house has no gate, but the passage next to the four kiosks selling clothes, handicrafts, and traditional sculptures (⑩) is actually the entrance to the house. At the end of the passage is a gate (⑪) near a new kitchen (⑫) that has been built by demolishing the old (⑥). The house no longer has an *aling-aling*, which spiritually is a barrier to stop evil spirits, and visually, is a partition to screen off the interior [33].

A new structure (⑬) has been constructed next to the family temple (①) to accommodate the increase in the size of the household since the paternal sons of the owner are now married and live in the house. The new *bale daja* (⑮) and *bale dauh* (⑭) have also been constructed by demolishing the old ones (② and ③). The house is the result of a self-motivated act of configuring and celebrating the owners' preferred status and condition. The status of the family, from a peasant one – represented by the granary (⑦) – has been transformed into a business status, represented by the commercial activities in the house (Figure 3B).

In spite of the new structures in the house, a few socio-cultural spaces are still maintained in the new setting, where many ceremonial activities are still performed, especially in the *natah* and *bale dangin*. The rituals related to *niskala* have been maintained or simply adjusted, based on the suggestions of a high priest. In order to maintain essential components of the rituals, people adjust some of the pavilions so that they can accommodate additional functions. In the process of the transformation, people try to create new features to address their needs, not only for the purpose of facilitating domestic and tourist activities, but also rituals. It is a creative movement, so people can more easily accommodate the increase in family numbers and tourist activities without losing the spaces where they perform their rituals. Despite this, some of the preparation for the ceremonial activities is no longer done in the house because the space is more limited.

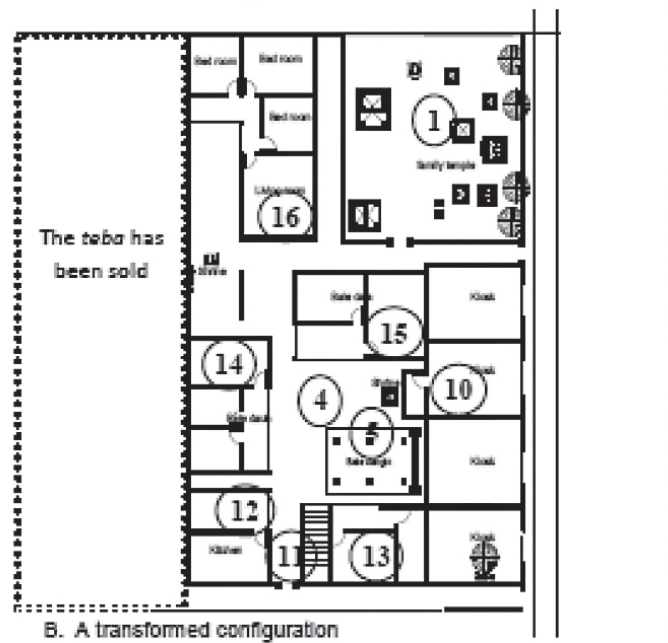
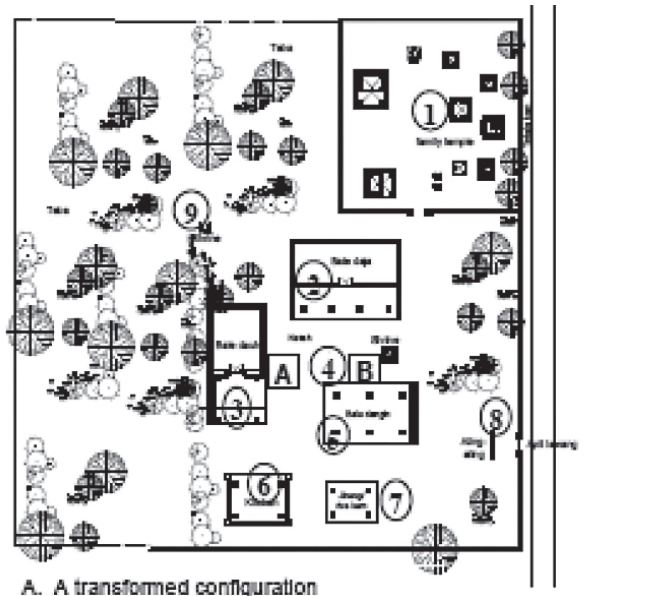


Figure 3. Example of the transformations in a traditional Balinese house.

Several socio-cultural activities are no longer performed in the house, such as the *ngaben* and *nyekah* ceremonies, but take place in village facilities. With other village members, they manage and perform *ngaben* and *nyekah* called *ngaben ngerit*. The village board supervises this activity. The village facilities therefore become crowded places, while the houses become quiet places. Women make many offerings in these village buildings or even in temporary buildings built just for ceremonies, while men use them to prepare food or other offerings.

The materials used in the ceremonies are bought in markets. In some cases, ready-made offerings are bought from people who make and sell them, called *tukang banten*. The places where the ceremonies are held are very busy places where all village members work together to prepare for the occasion. During the days of the ceremony, the family members of the dead, the relatives, and the members of the village, men and women, go to a ceremonial avenue to attend the rituals.

The limited space in the house is not the only factor to have influenced the preparation of offerings in the era of tourism. The development of tourism in the area has additionally created many variations in various workplaces [38], including employees in hotels, restaurants and cafés. While traditionally in the agricultural economy, Balinese people had adequate “freedom and leisure time for spiritual activities” [33], in today’s tourist economy, it is difficult for them to have the same conditions. The increasing number of tourists has stimulated local people to become increasingly involved in the tourist sector as employees in many companies. As employees, they work to a tighter schedule which makes it difficult to arrange a time to work together.

Balinese people have only a limited time to perform voluntary work to help their relatives or neighbours in preparing ceremonies such as *mejejahitan* (skewering coconut leaves to be part of the offerings). The limitation of time has already caused this domestic activity to decrease. The Balinese prefer to buy the many parts of the offerings in markets and then assemble them (known as *metanding*), to produce complete offerings. In some cases, people buy ready-made offerings in marketplaces, and only put the offerings in the many shrines and family temples called *ngungahin banten* assisted by experts in offerings called *tukang banten*. Therefore, *mejejahitan* and *metanding*, and even *ngungahin banten*, formerly the traditional domain of the members of the family and extended families, often falls to “specialized professionals” [21]. Preparation of the offerings, which was once a voluntary social activity, and therefore priceless, has now become a marketable activity. The offerings as “part of things that constituted gifts and the spirit of sociability now constitute profit-oriented things and calculated spirit related to the circulation of commodities” [39]. The change in employment from agriculture to the service sector, including tourism, has changed people’s habits and their way of preparing rituals. The change in occupation from agriculture to tourism has also changed people’s approach to doing voluntary communal works as in the past, since it has become difficult and almost impossible to carry them out because of limits, such as time and cultural spaces [21].

Balinese people today, therefore, tend not to have enough time to actively engage in the time-consuming work of traditional responsibilities in traditional houses, which consequently means there is little time to hand down in-house traditions. Therefore, the process of acquisition of behaviours and attitudes through imitation and active learning in a society [40] has been difficult to accomplish. In addition, the practices of transmission through learning and teaching by doing collaborative activities during which young generations observe, help, or imitate the old who perform the traditions [41] are in a vulnerable state. This condition influences the transmission sys-

tem in the house, in which, as stated by Bruner [42], the predominant role is played through family dissemination. The role that involves collaboration between parents and grandparents is challenging to perform. Traditions, including the preparation of ceremonies, that was once voluntary work, has now become a marketable activity, in which traditions are performed by experts who offer their services and can be bought in the market.

The combination of a shortage of raw materials and people's lack of free time has changed people's habits regarding the preparation of rituals. Nowadays, young people learn traditions when they become members of a village or sometimes never learn them, especially those relating to how to prepare offerings. It means they often start to learn when they are already adults. By applying the Bruner [42] theory above, the sustainability of Balinese traditions will be gradually threatened because they are not being learned from infancy and early childhood. The number of people who are able to perform Balinese traditions, including the preparation of offerings, are consequently decreasing. They are concentrated only in particular people or groups. People are now more dependent on experts and are not able to act independently, as their predecessors did. It is a sign in the process of waning traditions in the traditional house and is likely to affect the continuity of Balinese culture in the future.

5. Conclusion

The tourist industry has caused the spaces in traditional Balinese houses, to undergo a process of transformation. Ceremonial spaces in the house have been reduced and the limited free time left to people means that some traditions and voluntary communal work, have become a thing of the past. Young people learn traditions in village facilities, rather than in the family house or even never learn them, which generally means they start to learn when they are adults. Performing activities that were previously a time for handing down traditions from parents or older generations to children or younger generations has been made difficult today.

The family has lost the ability to transmit traditions in the house, especially the learning process from infancy and early childhood as happened in the past. The substantial changes that have taken place in the house have affected the transmission process of traditions in Balinese society. Since the family has a predominant role through family dissemination in transmitting Balinese traditions, the transformation of the house can be linked to the process of waning traditions within the traditional house. The diminished role of the family in transmission traditions is therefore likely to affect the continuity of Balinese culture in the future.

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Biographical notes

I Dewa Gede Agung Diasana Putra has twenty years of experience as an architectural lecturer in the School of Architecture, Universitas Udayana, Bali. He holds a Ph.D. from Deakin University, Victoria, Australia and a Master's degree from the Institut Teknologi Bandung, Indonesia. He teaches and does research on architectural issues, such as architectural building technology, cultural ecology in architecture and architectural design. His most significant contribution to education is how architecture, especially traditional Balinese architecture, represents and can become a part of Balinese identity, traditions and culture. His Ph.D. research on the "Impact of Tourism on the Transformation of the Traditional Balinese House" established a new cultural framework for rethinking traditional Balinese architecture and its relation to traditional practices in a new environment. His work is driven by attention to the techniques that architecture can provide, as a way to present human dignity and cultural identity. This attention has shaped his approach to design, architectural education and research.

Summary

Spaces in the traditional Balinese house were not only places for accommodating domestic and socio-cultural activities, but also locations for handing down traditions. In this transmission process, people taught and learned by participating in collaborative activities where the young generation observed, helped or imitated their elders. Central to this argument is an exploration of how the old generations transfer their traditions to the next, based on new conditions. This transmission was a learning process which started from an early age in which parents and grandparents played a predominant role. However, along with the growth of tourism, there are now known to be a substantial number of houses that have been transformed into tourist facilities by demolishing and relocating social and ceremonial spaces in the house. As a cultural phenomenon, the transformation involves an interrelated complexity of aspects and gives rise to the question about the continuity of the transmission process in these new settings. Using visual documentation and interviews, dynamic cultural activities over time could be collected and inventoried to reconstruct the transformation of the house and contextualize the handing down process of traditions. This article found that the transformation has happened in various ways, both as physical and socio-cultural aspects. The change in the tourist industry has meant the space and the time people dedicate to voluntary work to perform traditions is limited, so that their preservation is at risk. It is an indication of the process of waning traditions in the traditional house and is likely to affect the continuity of Balinese culture in the future.

Riassunto

Gli spazi nella casa tradizionale balinese non erano solo luoghi per ospitare attività domestiche e socioculturali, ma anche luoghi per tramandare tradizioni. In questo pro-

cesso di trasmissione, le persone hanno insegnato e imparato partecipando ad attività collaborative in cui le giovani generazioni osservavano, aiutavano o imitavano i loro anziani. Al centro di questo argomento c'è un'esplorazione di come le vecchie generazioni trasferiscono le loro tradizioni a quelle successive, sulla base di nuove condizioni. Questa trasmissione è un processo di apprendimento iniziato fin dalla tenera età in cui genitori e nonni hanno svolto un ruolo predominante. Tuttavia, con la crescita del turismo, un numero considerevole di case sono state trasformate in strutture turistiche demolendo e modificando spazi sociali e cerimoniali. In quanto fenomeno culturale, la trasformazione implica una complessità di aspetti e fa sorgere l'interrogativo sulla continuità del processo di trasmissione culturale in questi nuovi contesti. Mediante documentazione visiva e interviste, è stato possibile raccogliere e inventariare attività culturali nel tempo per ricostruire la trasformazione della casa e contestualizzare il processo di trasmissione delle tradizioni. Questo articolo evidenzia che la trasformazione è avvenuta in vari modi, sia sotto l'aspetto fisico che socioculturale. Il cambiamento nel settore turistico ha significato perché lo spazio e il tempo, che le persone dedicano alla trasmissione delle tradizioni, sono limitati: quindi la loro conservazione è a rischio. È un'indicazione del processo di declino delle tradizioni nella casa tradizionale ed è probabile che influenzi la continuità della cultura balinese in futuro.