

Home as a Mirror

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Abstract The old traditional architecture of a Balinese homes reflect the deeply rooted cultural character of the inhabitants. Balinese homes are often characterised by spiritual beliefs, that reflect Balinese culture and religion. In addition, these traditional homes are often part of communities where a sense of community and togetherness are highly valued. In contrast, people in Europe often plan and build their homes according to personal values and needs. Modern European architecture often emphasises functionality, individuality and aesthetic preferences. The houses are often the result of a personal design decision and reflect the lifestyle of their inhabitants. Attention is often paid to a high degree of individualisation in order to reflect personal expression and philosophy of life. The contrast between traditional Balinese homes and modern European dwellings not only shows different architectural approaches, but also different values and priorities. Whereas in Bali, community and spiritual connectedness take centre stage, people in Europe nowadays value personal freedom, self-development and individuality. These differences in residential architecture illustrate the diversity of human culture and the way in which people design their surroundings to reflect their way of life. At the same time, it also shows that the different living spaces inevitably lead to the development of different characters in the respective inhabitants.

Index Terms— changes, personal development, traditions

I. INTRODUCTION

Despite the steady increase in international tourism, the Balinese have largely preserved their faith and the resulting culture. The underlying religion is Hinduism, which is characterised by a deep connection with nature, spiritual practices and a close-knit community.

Religious practice played a central role in the lives of the Balinese. Hinduism, in a unique form, characterised their beliefs and rituals. Every Balinese house has its own temple, and religious ceremonies are an integral part of daily life. The people believe in the presence of gods and spirits in nature, and their rituals are centred on creating harmony between man and nature. The temple architecture is very ornate, often with detailed carvings and decorations that reflect the spiritual depth of Balinese culture.

Offerings, also known as „canang sari“, are an important part of religious practice. These elaborately designed offerings are placed in front of houses and temples every day and contain, for example, flowers, rice, fruit, cash, snacks and cigarettes and often also incense sticks. Balinese believe that three levels exist in the cosmos. Heaven, earth and hell. The offerings honour the Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa (God) in heaven and appease the demons in hell. This is to maintain the balance between good and evil and preserve peace on earth. It is a ritual act that has not only spiritual

but also social significance and strengthens the community spirit. The making of the canang sari is performed by Balinese women and has become part of their daily lives. The ritual is repeated every morning.

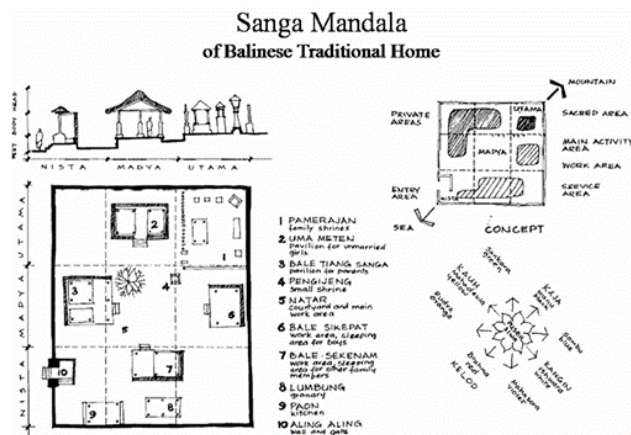


Figures 1. Canang Sari

Balinese architecture refers mainly to temples and homesteads. The architecture differs greatly according to meaning and purpose, but is strictly defined in terms of layout and furnishings. For example, the temple is always orientated towards the sacred mountain „Gunung Agung“ and divided into different courtyards. They are also surrounded by walls and open at the top. This opens up the space to the sky and thus also to the gods. The narrow entrance gate is on the sea side so that the temple is entered

in the direction of the mountains. The entrance is adorned with stone guardian figures. The demon figures serve as guardian deities to protect the temple from evil influences.

The striving for a balance between human life and its natural environment is always present when talking about traditional Balinese architecture. Almost all courtyards in Bali are built according to a common basic pattern. The family homestead is enclosed by walls made of mud or brick and is accessed through a gate via high stone steps. The wall protects the family from evil spirits. A typical homestead is designed to resemble a human body. In the upper part of the property, which represents the head, is the family shrine for deified ancestors. Next to it are the living and sleeping houses, which represent the arms. The courtyard corresponds to the navel and the legs and feet form the large granaries and the kitchen, which is always separate. The buildings correspond to half-open pavilions, which are loosely arranged in the courtyard and are available to the entire family.



Figures 2. The Sanga Mandala (from Tri Mandala) in The Balinese Houses

In modern times, a fixed spatial ordering system developed in Bali, which follows the principles of space based on heaven-earth (Mula period); mountain-sea (Aga period), and sunrise and sunset (Arya - Majapahit period). Balinese homes have since been organized with the Tri Mandala and Sanga Mandala in mind to create a harmonious relationship between the macrocosm (Bhuana Agung) and the microcosm (Bhuana Agung). The Tri Mandala concept, translated as „triple universe“, divides space into three main areas: Utama Mandala (upper and sacred), Madya Mandala (middle and human) and Nista Mandala (low and unholy). Utama Mandala is dedicated to the saints and gods, Madya Mandala represents the world of humans and daily life, while Nista Mandala represents the most unholy realm. The Sanga mandala is based on a zoning into 9 areas. The areas are based on alignments. They are divided into eight main directions and the central zenith. The most sacred, important or private parts of the house are oriented as far as possible towards the Kaja (mountain). Everything that is oriented towards Kaja is also oriented towards the sunrise. The rooms of everyday life are located in the middle area and the most impure areas are oriented towards the Kelod (sea), which are therefore also oriented towards the sunset.

The close connection with nature is reflected not only in the fundamental importance of many design themes, but also in their everyday activities. Agriculture was an important part of traditional life in Bali. People practised rice farming and cultivated a sustainable relationship with nature. This approach to agriculture was not only focused on their own needs, but also on providing for the community and maintaining a balance with the surrounding nature.

II. METHOD

In comparing Balinese and German architecture, I use an interdisciplinary method that takes into account both architectural and socio-cultural elements. Based on an analysis that describes the traditional and modern architectural features of both cultures, I examine how this influences the lifestyles and community structures of the respective groups. I focus on the connection between architecture, cultural values and resulting personalities. Drawing on a quote from Oliver Marc, I would now like to look more at the spiritual significance of the subject. Based on what I have learnt so far, I assume that the architectural differences between Bali and Germany have a formative influence on the personalities of the inhabitants. In the following, I would therefore like to develop a hypothesis as to what consequences it could have for the personality of the Balinese if Western ideas are increasingly adopted in their homes in the future.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Description of Traditional German Houses and Life

Traditional house living in Germany reflects the historical development, cultural values and practical needs of its inhabitants. A classic German house, especially in the countryside, shows a careful combination of architecture, functionality and social life. Traditional German homes are made of robust materials such as half-timbering, bricks or wood. The half-timbered house, characterised by visible wooden beams, is emblematic of German architecture, as it was primarily built using timber, not only because of the availability of wood, but also due to craftsmanship and regional traditions. The houses were often two-storey, with a characteristic split roof that allowed the snow to slide off easily in winter.

Life in German houses was historically characterised by a strong family structure. The arrangement of the rooms and the layout of the house took into account the needs of the family members. A central point was the „Stube“ or living room, which often managed a tiled stove and served as a place to gather. The kitchen was traditionally an important area, not only for cooking, but also as a social meeting place.

In Germany, seasonal farming played a major role in traditional life. Farmhouses integrated many stables and barns to ensure proximity to agricultural activities. The garden around the house was often a versatile space for growing crops, flowers and as a recreational area.



Figures 3. Half-timbered houses in Germany



Figures 4. Floorplan of a Half-timbered houses in Germany

The room layout of a house is based on the individual needs of the occupants, whereby bedrooms, kitchen and living areas used to be clearly separated from each other. The ground floor housed the rooms used during the day, such as the kitchen and living area, while the bedrooms were located on the upper floor. Windows and doors were positioned in such a way that they allowed optimal light to enter and at the same time provided protection from the weather.

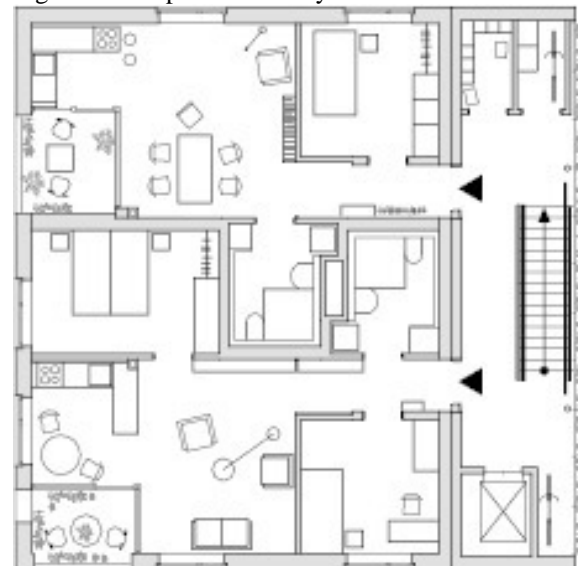
B. Description of Modern German Houses and Life

Modern architecture has turned away from the traditional style, which is predominantly characterised by craftsmanship, and is now pursuing new approaches. Innovative building materials such as steel, glass and concrete made it possible to construct buildings with striking structures. Modern structures are characterised by the functional philosophy of 20th century modern architecture, with clear lines, open floor plans and minimalist design taking centre stage. In urban areas, increasing population density led to an increased verticalisation of architecture. This has resulted in a large number of high-rise buildings and apartment complexes that make efficient use of the limited space available in cities. Another striking architectural change lies in the integration of technology. Modern buildings are often equipped with advanced systems for energy efficiency, security and communication. Socially, modern life in architecture has been characterised by a change in work culture and lifestyle. The possibility of working from home

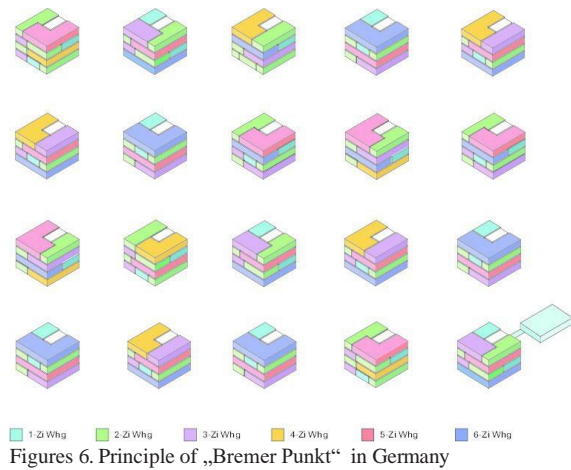
has redefined the meaning of living spaces. Flats and houses serve not only as personal retreats, but also as multifunctional workspaces. As a result, changing social requirements have had a significant impact on the design of floor plans in modern architecture. The increasing flexibility and individuality of lifestyles have led to a move away from rigid, traditional floor plans. Modern floor plans are now geared towards adapting to the rapidly changing needs of residents.

The example of the pilot project „Bremer Punkt“ reveals many of the modern demands that society places on architecture. This is a modular building that can offer various options in terms of flat sizes, shapes and fittings (see Figure 5). Accessibility is demonstrable in all modules and the materials used are predominantly wood and glass. The principle of environmentally friendly, flexible living for predominantly older people has been realised in a large number of variations throughout Germany. The community aspect is taken into account both inside and outside the residential units. Inside the unit, the open-plan layout ensures good communication across the different areas, while outside the residential unit, the communal rooms and the open, spacious stairwell provide plenty of room for communal activities of all kinds.

Open-plan concepts are gaining in popularity as they create a fluid connection between different areas of the home and encourage social interaction. Living areas, kitchens and dining rooms often merge into one generous space that meets the needs of modern families and social dynamics. At the same time, the multifunctionality of rooms is becoming increasingly important. One room can now fulfil several purposes, be it as a work area, playroom or fitness room, thus enabling maximum use of the available space. In addition, modern floor plans increasingly take into account the need for privacy. Well thought-out room layouts and the integration of places of retreat allow residents to create individual areas and organise their personal lifestyles.



Figures 5. Floorplan of „Bremer Punkt“ in Germany



Figures 6. Principle of „Bremer Punkt“ in Germany

C. Different Forms of Building and Living = Different Forms of Personalities

The changes in the meaning of architecture, living and life in Balinese culture compared to German architecture reflect the different cultural values and historical developments in general. In terms of their personalities, some differences can also be recognised in this respect.

In Bali, traditional architecture plays a central role in the cultural and religious context. Balinese houses are still characterised by spiritual beliefs and these beliefs are still honoured and lived by the inhabitants of the houses today. The open-plan design of the houses and the integration of communal spaces promote social interaction and spiritual exchange. This can also be recognised in the openness and friendliness of their personalities. The building style is characterised by craftsmanship and is often artistically decorated. The Balinese also embody this detailed work on a daily basis in the form of their offerings, which involve a great deal of manual labour and attention. Traditional architecture is deeply rooted and remains strongly characterised by tradition in many parts of the island. Although modernisation is taking place, it is mainly shaped and carried out by tourists. Although foreign influences characterise the lives and attitudes of the Balinese to some extent, they remain largely true to their traditions. One could assume that the existing house, which is already well filled with traditions, determines in advance.

In Germany, on the other hand, the significance of architecture has changed over time, particularly as a result of different historical periods and the influence of modernism. Modernism reflects functionality, efficiency and aesthetic principles. Private residential buildings are often the result of individual design decisions and reflect personal lifestyles. Through the detailed examination of the planning of their own home, residents of such buildings also strive for a strong individualisation of their personality. The social structure emphasises the privacy of individual households. Germans, especially in comparison to the Balinese, are much more private and self-centred. Modern technologies and energy-efficient solutions are integrated into the architecture. This endeavour is also reflected in the working attitude of many Germans. It is increasingly about

optimising oneself and one's work. Robust materials such as half-timbering, brick and stone are being replaced by innovative, energy-efficient materials in modern German architecture. In general, manual labour in Germany has been increasingly neglected due to industrialisation, so that there are hardly any leisure activities based on manual labour. German architecture has modernised considerably over time, with a focus on innovation and sustainability. It is a similar story with the personalities of Germans.

Overall, the comparison illustrates how the architecture in Bali and Germany not only has different aesthetic approaches, but is also deeply embedded in the cultural, religious and social contexts and that these points also have a direct influence on the personal values and attitudes to life of the respective inhabitants. While Bali preserves its traditions despite modernisation influenced by tourism, Germany strives for a balance between modern requirements and constant improvement.

To summarise, the picture that emerges is that Balinese are born into a house full of personality, which people adopt, and in Germany people are born into a house full of opportunities, where they build their own house and thus their own personality in the course of their lives.

D. . Result

Are we perhaps on the verge of grasping that the environment is ourselves, for it has given us form, and that creation is nothing but a dialogue between the inside and outside? Do we not have to exhale and inhale in order to live? ... Our unconscious self prompts us to act, produce and do. It is through our actions and their products that we reveal ourselves to ourselves.“

- Oliver Marc, the Psychology of the house.

The quote encourages us to question the connection between the environment and human existence in the original sense. If you look at traditional Balinese houses in Bali, where the architecture is strongly influenced by nature, it becomes clear that the inhabitants are also in constant dialogue with their surroundings in their everyday lives. The use of natural materials not only connects people physically with their environment, but also creates a deep spiritual connection. The traditional Balinese house is a symbol of the dialogue between inside and outside, between man and nature. People are aware of their personality because they are born into a house full of traditions and beliefs, which they embrace and live by.

This contrasts with life in modern houses in Germany, where architecture is often characterised by functional considerations and individual needs. Modern houses often represent a separation from nature, with clear divisions between indoor and outdoor spaces. People increasingly favour the illusion of nature, which can be created by technology, rather than turning to original nature. This lifestyle may reflect a different kind of dialogue, with an emphasis on individual autonomy and efficiency.

The different architectural approaches could have a profound impact on the personalities of the residents. In Balinese communities living in traditional houses, a strong

emphasis on community spirit, spiritual mindfulness and ecological responsibility can contribute to harmonious personality development. The close connection to nature can lead to a deeper understanding of one's own existence and the environment. If you look at the architectural history of Balinese architecture, you will notice that its architecture has hardly changed at all. The belief in the old traditions is still so present that the people of Bali live exactly as they did many years ago.

If you look at the history of German architecture, on the other hand, you can recognise a great

deal of change, which is particularly evident in large cities. In Germany and Europe in general, architecture reacts very strongly to the current needs of the population. As a result, architecture and, consequently, people are constantly evolving.

Viewing the environment as a part of the self and recognising that our actions and creations reveal ourselves leaves room for the assumption that the architecture we live in has a profound influence on our personalities. In traditional Balinese homes, this leads to a consolidated spirituality and sense of

community, while modern German homes emphasise individuality and efficiency. These perspectives reveal how our environment is not just external space, but an extension of our inner world and identity.

If Balinese were to increasingly integrate European values into their way of life and architecture, various consequences could occur. It is important to note that this is a hypothetical assumption and that cultural changes are complex and multi-layered. Firstly, the adoption of European values could lead to changes in the Balinese way of life. This could entail a greater emphasis on individualism, autonomy and personal success, which could cause traditional Balinese values based on community, spirituality and harmony with nature to fade into the background, could fade more and more into the background. This can already be seen from the fact that the Balinese no longer produce their own opera offerings these days, but buy them from other people.

In an architectural sense, the adoption of European values could lead to a modernisation of Balinese houses, which could take the form of a change in traditional construction methods, materials and room layouts. A stronger orientation towards European values could also influence the social dynamics in Balinese society. Traditionally strong community ties could be tempered by a greater emphasis on individual interests and career goals. In general, changes in Balinese values could lead to a strong demand for more education and personal success. Traditional practices, rituals and customs could become less important, while westernised lifestyles and views could gain influence. Such cultural shifts could also bring tensions and challenges as different value systems clash. The balance between preserving cultural identity and integrating new values is not so simple.

After this analysis, I ask myself why the Balinese should adopt Western values at all. To me, the Balinese seem very

content with themselves and their lives. Perhaps we should learn something from their attitude to life, which influences their character as well as their demands and views on a home.

IV. CONCLUSION

When analysing the changes that international tourism has brought to Bali, it becomes clear that the changes on Bali not only affect the development of the island, but also have a profound impact on social structures and cultural values. Although Balinese culture is still very much present, especially in the architectural sense, and continues to be lived, adapting to a globalised world is a challenge. The transition from a secluded traditional life to a globalised world has brought both positive and challenging aspects to Balinese society. It certainly became clear that the homes we live in can have a big impact on us as residents. People who are born into a very traditional home, like Balinese people, take on the ingrained views from which their character develops. Whereas Europeans, and Germans in particular, are born into a home full of opportunities, which affects their personality to the same extent.

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