

SUNDANESE TRADITIONAL HOUSES IN KAMPUNG NAGA, WEST JAVA AS A PART OF INDONESIAN CULTURAL TOURISM

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Abstract: *Cultural tourism become a promising sector and one of it comes from West Java, Indonesia known as Kampung Naga. Kampung Naga is one of Sundanese traditional villages known as Kampung Adat. The village has its own characteristics which enable to conveyance of tremendous ancient tradition be upheld until today. Traditional houses in Kampung Naga as the belief in the existence of “soul” and “breath” that may embody the cosmological values. Tritangtu known as Sundanese cosmology is possible to bring another perspective to look in-depth into Indonesian cultural tourism, especially through traditional houses embodiment. This qualitative article use Sundanese cosmology approach which will give a positive contribution in documenting Sundanese traditional buildings as sacred spaces when the founder, the belief, and the nature spirit are interrelated. Therefore, it may deliver Indonesian cultural knowledge to the worldwide.*

Keywords: *Sundanese Cosmology, Kampung Naga, Cultural Tourism.*

Introduction

Traditional house or *Rumah Adat* of Kampung Naga is a cultural process, that's one of reason become a part of cultural tourism which focus on the various elements of culture, both tangible and intangible. The embodiment of traditional houses becomes a very important issue in traditional community since it allows the community to expose their existence. The Sundanese traditional house has an invisible “energy” that moves both horizontally and vertically, and outside also inside the house. They are purposed to connect three different cosmological worlds, upper world - *Dunia Atas*, middle world - *Dunia Tengah* and under world - *Dunia Bawah*. Based on history, in the fourth century, when Hindu Kingdom ruled Sundanese region in West Java, it was believed that the kingdom served as the cosmological centre, and now Sundanese people have believed that the house is the center of their ‘universe’. This tiny ‘universe’ is an orderly-harmonious system known as cosmos, whereas the Sundanese cosmos itself is called as cosmological mythic-spiritual culture since it always contains the theological thought (Sumardjo, 2015; Darmayanti, 2018).

The study focuses on architecture as a scope of research that is supported by the aspects of cultural traditions. This study is important because in general, tourists who visit a tourist destination only see the tangible value even though there is an intangible value on it. The study can be an educational platform for tourists, both domestic and international. This study will explore the existence of a traditional house building of Kampung Naga which is categorized as a heritage building so that its existence is included in the cultural tourism component. The main objective of this study is to study the cosmological aspects that affect the existence of traditional houses in Kampung Naga by analyzing the surrounding environment

Methodology

Sundanese culture has existed for more than 15 centuries and has become one of the ancient cultures in Indonesia, especially West Java. Animist Hindu-Buddhist was the earlier beliefs and followed by Islam that has close relation to the existence of Sundanese Traditional Villages - Kampung Naga. This study is based on the research that has been initiated since January 2016, and is still being studied in order to achieve extensive analysis for the purpose of understanding the cosmological meaning in the embodiment of Kampung Naga's traditional houses as the tourism icon of Kampung Naga and to raise the awareness on Sundanese culture especially through cultural tourism. Based on the explanation, the traditional houses become the key within this research and qualitative is the perfect method to explore the research object through visual data collection. In order to obtain specified data, observation and interviews with local people were required. In addition, it also implemented the approach of *tritangtu* theory known as Sundanese cosmology in order to improve the results of the research. Another feature of the qualitative method according to Robert Bogdan and Taylor (1975), that qualitative research results in the decomposition of information not only from individual observations and habits, but also through written verses. Therefore, literature review will also be used to support the research process.

The Uniqueness of Ancestral Heritage: Sundanese Culture and Kampung Naga

“Budaya Sunda nyaeta budaya nu dipimilik ku urang Sunda nu biasana cicing di tatar Sunda” and the translation is Sundanese culture is a culture owned by the Sundanese who usually live in the land of Sunda. Sundanese culture is unique, they are concentrated in the western part of Java island and they are the second largest ethnic group in Indonesia after Javanese. According to RW. Van Bemelan in 1949, Sunda is one terminology that used for the area in the northwestern part of eastern India. After the fall of Padjajaran Kingdom in the 16th-century, the Sundanese or *Urang Sunda* (*Urang* means people, *Sunda* means Sundanese) had lost their powerful cultural and spiritual centre. The absence of the powerful culture centre does not mean Sundanese cultures disappear. This can be reflected in the presence of Kampung Naga as Sundanese traditional village (Fig.1).



Figure 1. Sundanese Traditional Village: Kampung Naga.
Source: Author, 2017.

Kampung Naga. *Kampung* means village and *Naga* means dragon. However, there is no dragon within the village, the word ‘*naga*’ itself is derived from the abbreviation of two Sundanese word *dina gawir*, which means in the valley. The village is surrounded by fields, lying either in the oxbow of a river or in the sacred forest called *hutan keramat*. In the forest lies the grave of the village’s ancestors called *nenek moyang* and a place where the spirits of nature are concentrated (Ganda, 1983; Atmowiloto, 1986). The eyes will be welcomed by the beauty of rice fields, *leweung karamat* or sacred forest and Ciwulan river when you go down more than 400 of stairs to the village and the entrance is opposite to the river and the forest. (Fig.2)



Figure 2. The Hundreds of Stairs and Ciwulan River.
Source: Author, 2016.

The people of Kampung Naga strongly believe the noble values that their ancestors already taught; therefore, the ancient traditions are still preserved and actualized in everyday life to present day. Since the rebellion of DI/TII, known as local community, led by Karto Suwiryo, the worst tragedy happened in 1956, Kampung Naga had no written manuscript because DI/TII people burnt not only all documents, but also the whole village. After 1956, the people of Kampung Naga have tried to rebuild the village in accordance with their memory about the last establishment. Thus, they do not seem to lose their identity (Maria, et. al, 1995). Since then, the history of Kampung Naga has mostly been maintained through language as oral tradition, and therefore language becomes an important media for Sundanese people. This statement is supported by Memed Sastrahadiprawira (1929), a well-known Sundanese intellectual of the time, saying that language forms a norm: the most evidential entity and the most comprehensive

symbols to distinguish one ethnic group from another. If the characteristics of a language disappear, the distinguishing features of an ethnicity will fade away as well. If an ethnicity no longer exists, the language of the ethnic group will also disappear in due course of time (Moriyama, 2005).

The Sundanese Cosmology: Tritangtu

In Sundanese culture, the universe is divided into three parts based on the most ancient Sundanese cosmological concept called *tritangtu*. Based on the interview with Mr. Cahyan, the tourists who visit to Kampung Naga usually do not aware that the houses have a philosophical value which is as the basic concept of Sundanese life. The concept was born based on primordial farmers' thought. They believe everything in this world is always connected to something opposite or dualistic. In order to avoid conflict, dualistic becomes trinity thought, thus the third principle was born to balance it to make them harmonious. Therefore, *tritangtu* has an idea of trinity or in Sundanese called *tilu sapamula*, *tilu* (three) *nya* (is) *hiji* (one), *hiji nya tilu* that means three is one, one is three. The expression's value is that the differences (three parts) unite and complement each other into one entity. The term of *tritangtu* is derived from Sanskrit, *tan* means spider web and in the holistic perspective; *tritangtu* can be seen as one of networking that expands outside but strongly fuses inside (Sumarjdo, 2015). Its concept may apply in Kampung Naga's traditional houses.

Based on that concept, the Sundanese world are divided into three vertical 'spaces,' there are *Buana Larang – Dunia Bawah* or under world, *Buana Panca Tengah – Dunia Tengah* or middle world and *Buana Nyuncung – Dunia Atas* or upper world. *Dunia Bawah* in Kampung Naga consists of field, fishpond, rice field, and *saung lisung* – a place where rice is husked. Houses, gathering building or *Bale Patemon*, mosque, granaries known as *leuit*, and sacred houses called *Bumi Ageung* are placed in the middle world. The upper world is the space for the grave of *Eyang Singaparna* who is believed as the ancestor of Kampung Naga and also the holy spirit who supports the universe (Hermawan , 2014).

Cultural Tourism Attractiveness: Traditional Houses of Kampung Naga

House in Sundanese is called in various names such as *bumi*, *imah* or *rorompok*. *Bumi* can also mean world or territory. Interestingly, the number of house in Kampung Naga cannot be extended. Based on the interview with Mr. Cahyan in January 2016, he said that in 1981 there was 92 houses only in Kampung Naga. The people keep built the houses based on tradition until the *kuncen* or the care taker of sacred place said to stop it. Since then to the present, Kampung Naga consists of 113 buildings, including *Bumi Ageung*, the traditional houses, the gathering building, and the mosque. If there are any new family members who do not have any inheritance from their parent, it is possible for them to build a house outside the traditional village. Another unique attraction in Kampung Naga is the house position. All buildings' main doors always face either south or north side and that the second door must be in the same side. The door is usually near to the *pawon* or kitchen area. Placing doors in the opposite walls are forbidden, similarly when all buildings face to the east.

Initially, the design of traditional house was based on *Bumi Ageung* building. Its building does not have any window and provides one door only. However, after 1956, the house has had window and two doors, the first door which directly connected to guest room and second door connected to the kitchen. Kampung Naga house is built by the material from the nature. For the people in Kampung Naga, life is not in the nature but it is to live with the nature (Hermawan, 2014). It is taboo or *pamali* to use other materials except those from the nature. It means that it is against the ancestors' tradition. The type of Kampung Naga house is called *rumah panggung*

(Fig 3). Interestingly, taking the picture of *Bumi Ageung* was not allowed and the only person who is allowed enter the house is *kuncen*. *Kuncen* will visit the house occasionally to perform some rituals. The area of the house is surrounded by bamboo fence and two meters high of *hanjuang merah* plants-*cordyline terminalis*. Actually, this plants still play a role in the tradition and belief in many places in Indonesia, including in Kampung Naga. The plants serve as a “barrier” both literally and philosophically; meaning that they protect the house from bad forces outside. Another perspective about the value of *hanjuang merah* was argued by Adry Padma (2001). He stated that *hanjuang merah* plants are sign of good fortune.



Figure 3. Kampung Naga Traditional House.
Source: Author, 2016.

Kampung Naga’s traditional house is included into tropical building. Tropical building usually has design strategies. Firstly, the strategy is about building orientation for maximizing natural ventilation in order to avoid the direct facing to east and west. Secondly, the longer sides of the building will face north or south to catch prevailing breeze. To maximize natural ventilation, house is elevated on stilts to achieve thermal comfort. Lastly, the strategy is about the choice of building materials. The traditional houses rest on large stone stilts, called *umpak*, the posts are elevated to 40-60 cm above the ground. The walls are traditionally made of two types of plaited bamboo matting, called *bilik kepang* and *bilik sasag*. The floors are made of wooden planks, whereas the ceilings are also made of *bilik kepang*. The frame of the roof assembly is made of bamboo and timbers covered by *injuk* and wild plant that is locally known as *daun tepus* (Fig. 4).

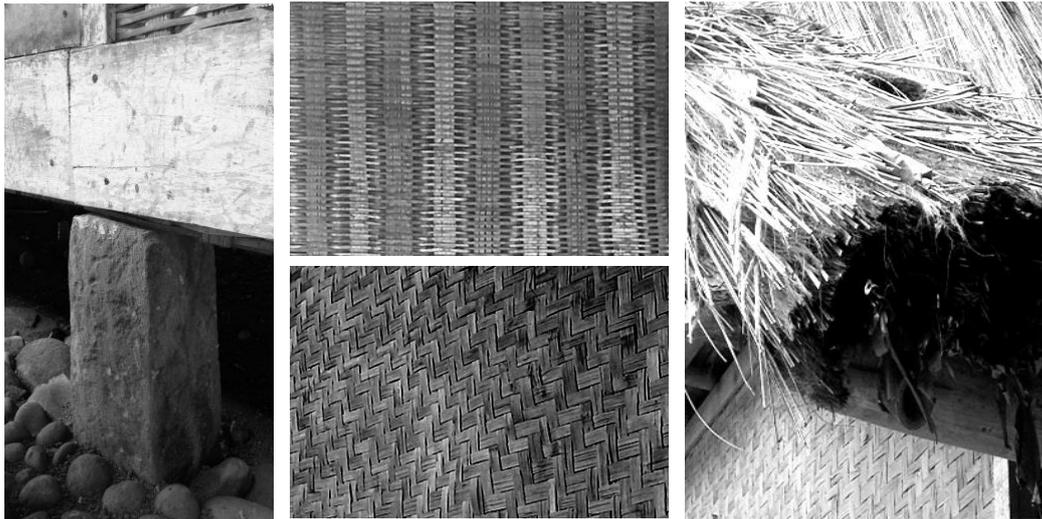


Figure 4. The *Umpak* (left), The *Bilik Sasag & Kepang* (middle), The *Injuk* (right).
Source: Author, 2016.

The traditional houses in Kampung Naga not only serve as living space, but it also has in-depth meaning both vertically and horizontally. Its vertical meaning represents the relationship between man and God, whereas horizontal meaning is about interactions among human beings and nature. The culture in Kampung Naga retains many ceremonies, include building house rituals. This kind of ceremony is also become a cultural attraction. Based on interview with Mr. Cahyan (2016), the ceremony before building a new house called *Ngajarah Bumi* is commonly upheld. Ritual offerings known as *sesajen* should be provided; chicken's head and herbs are buried in the middle of the house that will be built. This is aimed at giving salvation to the land and the nature spirits during the construction. Another ceremony is known as *Salametan Bumi*. It is the ceremony after completing the construction of a house in order to assure harmony and good fortune. Some explanations about *Salametan Bumi* exist. They are expressed in Sundanese :

“saatos bumi beres, kedah aya syukuran, nyayagikeun kupat, dupi sareng tumpeng isi koneng. Bumi nu tos janten di doakeun ku pemangku adat teras bumi dipasang kale sareng sawen, janten tolak bala”

The statement means, after the house is ready to inhabit, the household should offer *syukuran* or *salametan*, communal feast that provides meal. The *kuncen* will bless the house with invocation or a prayer muttered over anything or called *jajampe*, in order to produce some beneficial result, at the same time he gives *kale* and *sawen* as a ritual of *tolak bala* (Darmayanti, 2016 & 2018). *Tolak bala* is known as ritual activities aimed at avoiding something troublesome which may come through the involvement of a spirit, as well as some misfortune happening to a person or the community (Yousof, 2016). Usually, *kale* that is made from bamboo will be put in every corner of the house and *sawen* which is the combination of certain leaf and grass, will be placed in the front door.

For Kampung Naga's people, traditional houses become the center of the “universe”, the central cosmos for Sundanese daily activities. Thus, it can be said as the microcosmos or macrocosmos within the Sundanese culture. This is the center of “universe” for the surrounding environments; it gives “the contents” for “the emptiness”. The natures of the house are changed into microcosmos when the inhabitants leave the house. They switch position with the inhabitants

as the macrocosmos, and therefore the house returns to become the center of cosmos for the surroundings. Vertically, traditional house is divided into three spaces. The attic is known as *para*, the ceiling is called *lalangit*, and the space under the house is called *kolong* or *kokolong*. The space between *lalangit* and *kokolong* is the actual house called *bumi* or *imah*. The attic represents heaven, place of God and ancestors is also known as *langit*, the *bumi* as the middle world represents life, place for human and other creatures. The space under the house as an underworld represents death (Fig. 6). Horizontally, the house is also divided based on *tritangtu*, there are front area, called *tepas*, is known as male territory and serves for guest reception room, middle area consists of *tengah imah* which has similar function to family room and *pangkeng* or known as bedroom, and back area serves as female territory, consist of *pawon* or kitchen, and rice storage called *goah* (Fig7 & Fig.8).

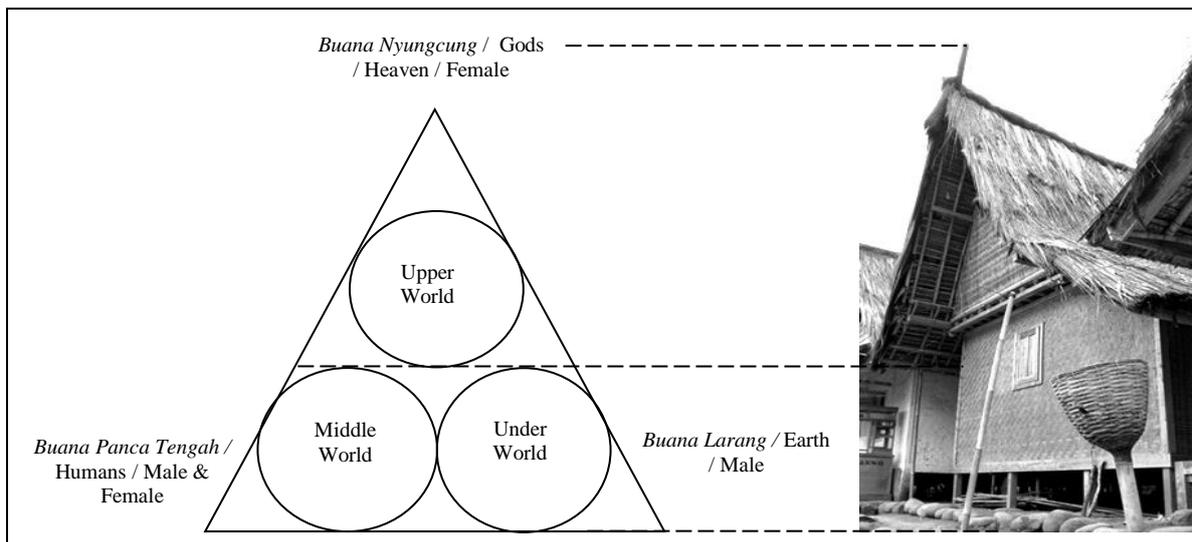


Figure 6. The Cosmological Value of Kampung Naga's Traditional Houses.
Source: Modified from Sumardjo, 2011 & Private Documentation, 2016.

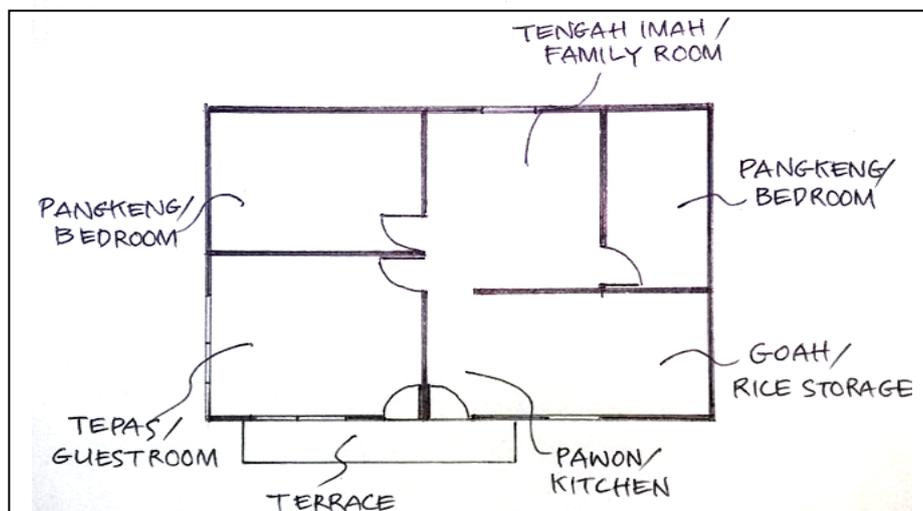


Figure 7. The Layout of Kampung Naga's Traditional House
Source: Private Documentation, 2016.



Figure 8. Tepas as a Male Territory (left) and Pawon as a Female Territory (right).

Source: Private Documentation, 2016.

In Sundanese culture, female has special area that she can represent her particular life, becoming “the content” or “*isi*” and also become the “soul” of the house. House is considered as place or “container” known as “*tempat* or *wadah*” of life. In Sundanese culture, the terms “*isi*” relates to “*Dunia Atas*” representing female and the term “*wadah*” relates to “*Dunia Bawah*” representing male. Why has female become important role in Sundanese culture? As an introduction, ancient Sundanese people are included in the farmer category, therefore rice field and farmers are important for Sundanese society. This kind of rice (*padi*) – in *Dunia Bawah* relies heavily on rainfall, therefore the existence of the “*Dunia Atas*” are significantly important. For more understanding, the detail explanation for that is that in Sundanese culture, the *Dunia Atas* is known as wet areas identical with sky. This *Dunia Atas* has the nature of female. On the contrary, the *Dunia Bawah* is known as dry areas that are identical with land, which has the nature of male.

Summary

Traditional houses as a cultural product are draw attention as interest in both learning and experiencing about rural culture within Kampung Naga. Heritage is shaped in the present time in which globalization may possibly activate the irreversible impacts on it, such as urbanization and migration. On the contrary, the people of Kampung Naga have to deal with globalization, yet they succeed in sustaining their identity with their unique traditions and philosophies. Through the traditional houses, they believe it can reflect the “wider” world, give, and spread life to the surroundings, both vertically and horizontally. It also represents harmonious relationship among human, nature, and their communication with God as the divine power. The value of *tritangtu* as sundanese cosmology may be explored through the embodiment of traditional houses in Kampung Naga. *Tritangtu* as a legacy is part of intangible cultural heritage that brings the traditional houses with special value. Not everyone is concerned with something abstract; nevertheless, to make people understand the valuable heritage will bring them appreciation over it. The existence of Kampung Naga depends on the houses embodiment. There are no limitations for preserving the traditional houses because the power of *tritangtu* as the local wisdom makes the presence of traditional houses in Kampung Naga be automatically protected and preserved as heritage buildings, through which the value of the past is presented to the present. By looking at the existence of this kampung as cultural tourism destination and also become a promising sector, they show evidence about the contribution to social and economic development and also environmental protection. Despite the findings, this paper is

expected to give contribution in terms of another perspective on the traditional house with ancient Sundanese principle cosmology. Additionally, this paper may provide an overview and also a knowledge about the attraction in cultural tourism in West Java, Indonesia and also be a reference for future research with more extensive analysis.

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