

The Role of Community Organizations for Place Design in Bali Aga Pengotan's Vernacular Settlements

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Abstract

The Balinese Aga Pengotan community's vernacular settlements were built by their ancestors to accommodate daily activities and ritual activities. The Pengotan community undergoes religious activities as part of their daily life, even placing religious ritual activities above everything. The Pengotan community has many ritual agendas and must be attended by all members of the community. The temple is prepared as a place to accommodate ritual ceremonies. A temple as a holy place is a collection of buildings connected by open spaces. The making of holy places is possible to happen because of the involvement of holy people in the ritual organization. This paper discusses the relationship between community organizations to maintain the continuity of the place as a place for ritual ceremonies. This behaviour research uses descriptive exploratory methods with the Observing Physical Trace (OPT) and Observing Environmental Behaviour (OEB) methods. The results show that the holy place was created and maintained for its sustainability by holy people in which the marriage institution was used by the ancestors as the guardian of the place sustainability. Through marriage, a ritual organization is formed to prepare, carry out, and supervise the course of the ritual.

Keywords: Bali Aga, vernacular settlement, place, community organization, ritual.

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1. Introduction

In Reuter's (2005) research, Pengotan Village is mentioned as one of the Bali Aga villages which are located close to Mount Batur. As a Bali Aga village, Pengotan has a unique socio-cultural device and is different from other villages. Pengotan village has a village government system and a typical Hindu religious ritual where a long history of village formation is the main factor affecting the village structure.

Religious life underlies all aspects of life for Pengotan residents. They follow Hindu teachings and worship their ancestors and local gods (Dwijendra, 2009). Basically, this worship aims to maintain good relations between people who are still living and the spirit world, so that their safety and welfare are well maintained.

In line with the traditions of Bali Aga village, Pengotan maintains ancestral traditions established through *awig awig* village and controlling the socio-religious citizens to establish an implementing body ritual or village council called *dulun* village or *peduluan* that functioned as guardians, caretakers and protectors of tradition, and customs that are carried out in Pengotan. Careful handling all matters related to sacred life, *Peduluan* members are selected based on the *Lulu Apad* system which is a characteristic of the Bali Aga village. In addition, the traditional village Pengotan has village management organization *prajuru* custom which is headed by a *bendesa* assisted by some locals/manners that have quality in leading or handling certain occupations.

A temple is a sacred place consisting of a collection of sacred buildings. Buildings in the temple area during no religious ceremonies are empty spaces without walls and furniture. Worship activities are held in open spaces that are prepared as places for ritual ceremonies. The open space is laid out in such a way that it displays a sacred place in accordance with the needs of the ritual ceremony. In an effort to form a sacred place, human involvement is needed as an element of forming a place. The elements forming the place is controlled by community organizations so that the appearance and performance of the place are in accordance with the intended ritual ceremony.

2. Literature Review

Vernacular settlements are human efforts to make friends with nature as their place of life. Vernacular settlements are influenced by socio-cultural aspects in which the community defines space not only as a physical element but as a place that involves various elements to make it happen, so that it meets the needs, for example, the need to worship something unseen, a place of worship is created, and so on.

The places are built according to their nature and beliefs. Shelters and settlements are formed with an arrangement that refers to sacred things. Regardless of the meaning of other factors, religion, and ritual become the main references in the formation and meaning of dwellings and settlements (Snyder and Catanese, 1984).

The form that can be found in traditional residential architecture in Indonesia is always associated with a deeper meaning, which is behind the formation that occurs and does not stop at the express or visible. Traditional houses have a significant meaning, usually describing their importance to residents, and the shape of the building

reflects the world view of the creator (Waterson, 1990; Fox, 1966; Waterson, 1998).

Placemaking or the formation of a place is the art of making a place for humans (Sepe, 2013). The place is created for humans to be in it, enjoy the atmosphere, remember memories, and be part of the place (Wycoff and Heidel, 2012). The establishment of a place to focus on human-oriented design (Silberberg, 2013). A place has a structure created from daily activities/events carried out by individuals or groups/communities.

Montgomery (1998) in Carmona (2003) illustrates that the process of place formation occurs through activities, forms, and views. These three basic elements cannot be reduced from each other and cannot be separated in the human experience of place. However, in explaining the human experience of place, it can be identified with different focuses. Physical elements can be identified as earth, sea, sky, and the built environment, each of which offers its character for the spatial experience. The spaces are not only formed physically but also socially; thus, it influences human behaviour. Meanwhile, appearance is greatly influenced by human perceptions and tastes which influence the character of the place.

Religious ritual ceremonies are sacred and they require spaces that have a sacred meaning or sacred places. Sacred places must be created to make a sense of sacredness that humans can feel. According to Eliade (1959), a place is called sacred because there is divine power that moves the community to orient itself to that place. This divine power requires a space with a distinctive arrangement to become a sacred place for ritual activities.

The implementation of a ritual ceremony cannot be separated from the role of the actor (Koentjaraningrat, 1990). A role is a set of behaviours or actions carried out by someone as their duty and responsibility in which these actions are expected by many people (Biddle and Thomas in Sarwono, 2013). Each actor has a role in the ritual ceremony which jointly performs the function to achieve the goal. The cooperation mechanism of the actors systematically delivers the results according to the needs in the ritual ceremony. The performance of the actors can be felt by everyone who is involved in the ritual ceremony.

3. Methods

This research is qualitative research with a descriptive exploratory study to understand and describe the concept of a place found in Pengotan village. Exploratory research is carried out by looking at phenomena in the field, making documentation of existing conditions, observing the use of space and space in the field, and then verifying it through interviews with the space users.

Graphical data obtained from the results of recording and physical measurements were analysed using the Observing Physical Trace (OPT) method, while observations of behavioural traces were analysed using the Observing Environmental Behaviour (OEB) method developed by John Zeisel (1984). According to Zeisel, the physical environment and its surroundings are observed systematically based on the physical traces and behaviour of people towards the surrounding environment. This method is used to read the environment based on traces that are intentionally or not left behind from previous activities. Behavioural observation (OEB) is watching people interact with their environment, either alone or in groups. From these traces, researchers can conclude the process of place formation, decisions made by the actors of activities, use of space, and various information needed by researchers such as culture and how to present themselves. Observation of physical traces and behaviour relies on photos and sketches of traces that are seen because images can be very useful in analysis and reporting.

4. Results and Discussion

The interaction between residents forms their socio-cultural life in which their activities and behaviour are important factors in the realization of the place. Attitudes, behaviour, human activities, and values that exist in society give identity to settlements. The social and cultural life of the Pengotan community is governed by several rules in which regulate, control, and give direction to the attitudes and behaviour of citizens in social life. For the Pengotan community, these rules mean respecting the ancestors who have founded the village, which functions to ensure good relations among residents and residents with their ancestors. The realization of this good relationship is expressed in ritual ceremonies, celebratory traditions, or *odalan*. Ritual ceremonies for the Pengotan community are very important to be seen as a way to strengthen social relationship between individuals and the social structure of the group (social relations) and with their ancestors and gods. These ritual ceremonies must be carried out according to a predetermined time and place. These places are created to accommodate ritual ceremonies following the rules set by the ancestors.

4.1 Placemaking Ritual

In general, space has characters that are formed from the quality of space such as proportion and scale, path shape and pattern, texture, sound, light intensity, etc. In reality, the space used for spiritual activities has different characteristics from the common space due to the existence of a fixed point which means a lot to humans in presenting spiritual experiences. Generally, a fixed point is an object of worship in space giving the meaning of holiness and virtue where the presence of the object of worship causes holiness to spread around it (Eliade, 1959).

A holy place is a place for community worship activities (ritual ceremonies) that residents use together at an event and in a physical setting that is following the needs of worship activities. This means that the ritual ceremony as a place filler is a major factor in the existence of a holy place that is equipped with all its accessories (settings). By identifying activities or behaviours that occur in a place, the system settings associated with the existence of elements in space will also be identified. Settings consist of space, humans, or groups as actors and their activities that represent their behaviour (Rapoport, 1997; Lawson, 2001).

The Pengotan community carries out more ritual ceremonies in open spaces. Efforts are made to provide open space that becomes a place for activities to meet the possible needs of residents by providing a space that gives satisfaction to the wearer. A holy place as a human need is a place of divinity. The Pengotan Society presents 'the one being worshiped' in two ways, namely using a statue (physical) or a non-physical one that can be felt by His presence. For example, the object of worship in the form of a *Menjangan* statue (*Menjangan Seluang*) as a tribute to *Mpu Kuturan*, a brahman/priest who has united three major religious groups (sects) in Bali into one understanding, namely Hinduism. Meanwhile, the object of non-physical worship is marked by the presence of offerings as a medium for encounters between gods/ancestors and their people.

To welcome the Holy One, the Pengotan community creates a festival concept at *Natar Agung Pura Penataran Agung*. Various symbols of holiness as decorative elements were installed, namely *penjor*, banners, colourful umbrellas, flags, heirloom weapons, and colourful fabrics affixed to buildings (Figure 2-a). Offerings are served as dishes, sacred line dances, dance-dramas, and shadow puppets as entertainment for gods, gods, and ancestors. Ritual ceremony attributes are placed in certain places based on the direction of the ceremony organizing committee. The entrance gate is decorated with coconut leaves as a sign of ritual ceremonial activity (Figure 2-b).

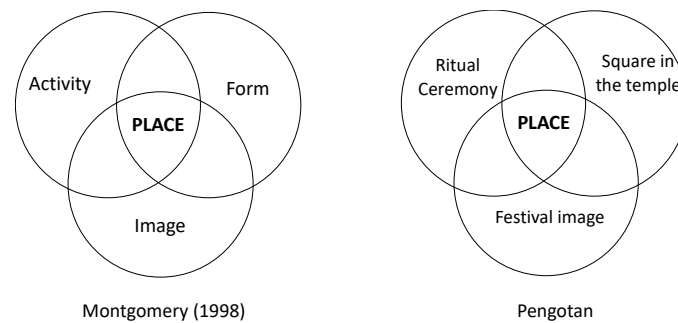


Figure 1. The concept of place formation by Montgomery (1998) implemented in Pengotan



Figure 2 (a) The courtyard of the temple is prepared for a place of prayer, (b) the gate is decorated as a sign of ritual ceremonial activities

4.2 Community organizations involved

In village ritual ceremonies held at *Pura Penataran Agung*, the implementation of ritual ceremonies is manifested through the collaboration of organizations or community groups, consisting of *peduluan* (*Gelagah*

and *Bedawan*) as the ritual executing body, traditional *prajuru* as organizers and providers of activity equipment, and manners as participants in the ritual ceremony (Figure 3). These three elements of the ritual ceremony facilitate the running of the ritual ceremony.

The agenda of the ceremony has been arranged by the *peduluan* and *prajuru* (core and main) according to the calendar of the good days in the Balinese calendar. The conditions in the village affect the implementation of village ritual ceremonies so that the ritual ceremonies do not always occur precisely according to the determination of the good day (*dewasa ayu*). However, with deliberation (*sangkepan*) between the elements organizing the ritual ceremony, problems can be resolved, and the community can participate in every ritual activity properly and get the benefits.

Professionalism is needed to be able to separate the duties in the position that are carried out with personal interests. Compared to personal and group interests, the public interest must take precedence. Kinship in the preliminary and *prajuru* organizations upholds honesty, strengthens the Lulu Apad system following the goal, namely that people can relate to ancestors as a force that helps in the welfare of their lives. Ritual ceremonies carried out by residents, *peduluan*, and *prajuru adat* strengthens their social or kinship relations.

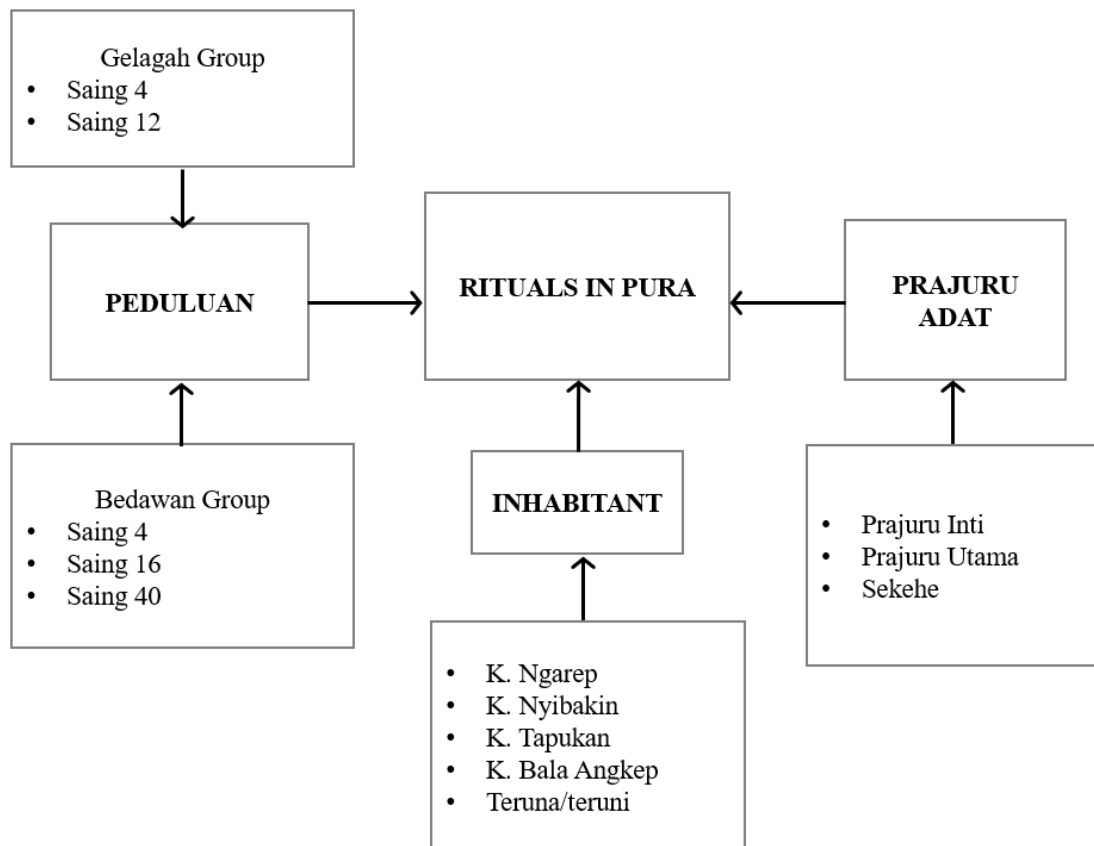


Figure 3. Social groups involved in ritual ceremonies at the *Penataran Agung* temple

4.3 The working mechanism of community organizations in the formation of sacred places

The division of duties in the ritual ceremony in the Pengotan community requires juniors to always learn from the seniors. On the contrary, the seniors guide their juniors, so that leadership regeneration can take place. Transfer of knowledge is prepared from a young age to become a cadet and is sharpened as long as it becomes *krama*. Thus, when the individual becomes a leader, his knowledge is complete. In addition, knowledge about very complex ritual ceremonies is not owned only by one person, but all citizens are prepared to accept this responsibility. The process of becoming the head of the ritual executing body (*peduluan*) takes a long time depending on a natural selection where death and marriage as the human life cycle determine changes and shifts in social institutions or organizations. The *lulu apad* system used by the Pengotan community supports the regeneration process.

Tracing the history of the formation of Pengotan village shows that residents are divided into two groups, namely *Bedawan* and *Gelagah*. This division is based on the responsibility of residents in maintaining and preserving the village temples, namely the *Panti Bedawan* temple and *Panti Gelagah* temple, and continuing the ritual tradition of the village of origin. Village founders form organizations/groups to increase the ability to carry out multiple tasks or jobs more efficiently and save time. In addition, this division of labour groups can benefit

from the accumulated knowledge, so that the next generation can absorb the knowledge formed by the previous generation. The Pengotan community passes on knowledge from generation to generation through oral and communicated actions in the form of ritual ceremonies. Thus, the division of this group has an impact on the division of tasks, rituals/procedures in religious ceremonies, and the location of activities carried out.

Based on the history of Pengotan Village, the original inhabitants of village founders consisted of 200 heads of families known as *krama ngarep*. The early inhabitants were bound by the values of unity and integrity, the joys and sorrows of being shared, based on a sense of kinship (*menyame beraya*) which expressed togetherness and social solidarity, based on the spirit of cooperation and the principle of kinship. The division of groups based on tasks in *nyungsurung pura* resulted in a different division of tasks carried out by the ritual executing body (*peduluhan*), namely the ritual supervisor was the *Gelagah* group, while the ritual implementer was the *Bedawan* group. Likewise, religious rituals are related to this grouping. The residents of *Bedawan* and *Gelagah* perform rituals led by the stakeholders in their respective temple areas, but the last ritual is a prayer carried out together at *Natar Agung Pura Penataran Agung*. On the other hand, the two groups jointly inhabit the Customary Yard residential area without any differentiation in location.

The *Lulu Apad* process is the process of appointing and shifting members of the village council first in a sequential and tiered way from the lowest to the highest membership position. *Lulu* means “push” using the head (butting), while the word “*apad*” means pulled. The combination of the words *lulu* and *apad* implies that the person sitting at Bale Agung pushes with his head to occupy an earlier position. The order of the candidates for the village council members is based on their seniority in marriage. Whoever gets married first ranks above the candidate members of the village council who marry later. All the main citizens (*krama ngarep*) take turns according to the order of their marriage numbers, are promoted to the office, and become first members, starting from the lowest position, gradually reaching the highest position, namely competing for *patpat*.

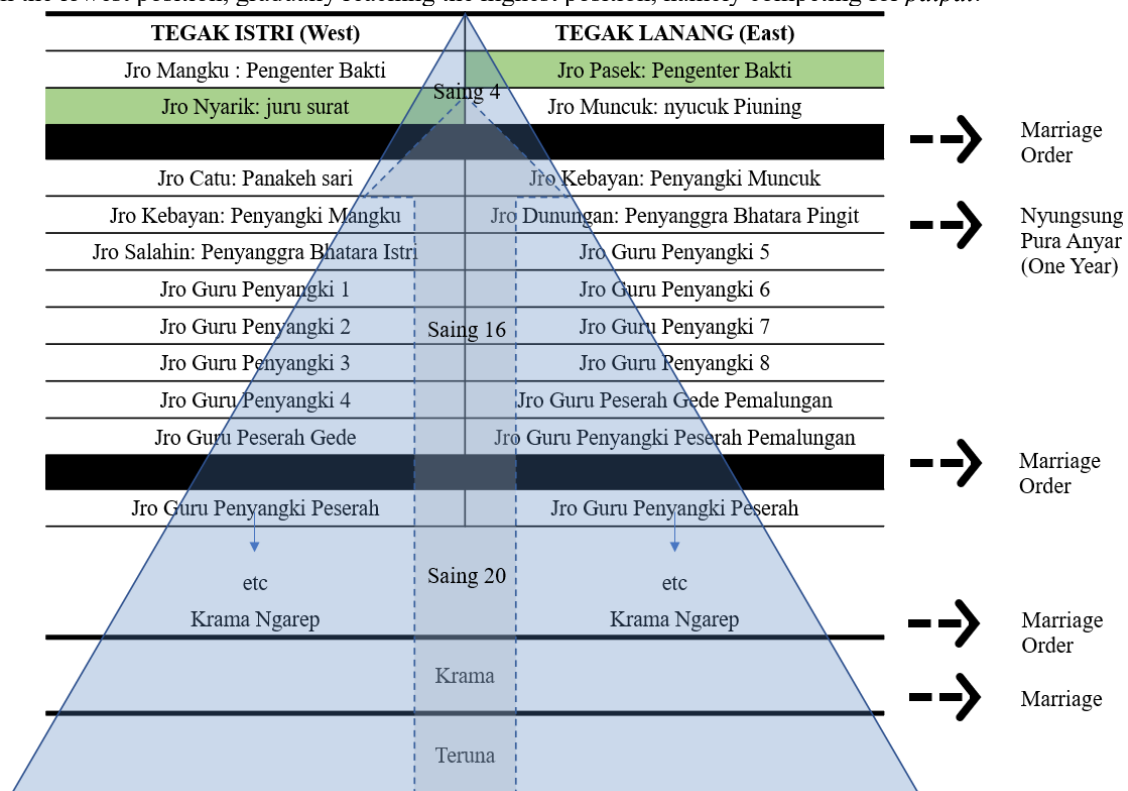


Figure 4. Hierarchy in *Peduluhan* (Ritual Implementing Body) and *Lulu Apad* Process (displacement and member replacement)

Replacement of members should be decided in a plenary meeting (*sangkep*) which is attended by the villagers (*krama*). The inauguration of members of the village council or preliminaries through a ceremony held on the sixth month/*sasih kanem* of the Balinese calendar, while the certainty of the day of the ceremony (good day or *dewasa ayu*) depends on the results of the calculation of the saints or precedents. In the ritual ceremony of *sasih kanem*, young men (*teruna*) who have reached puberty (adults) perform self-purification rituals to be able to live the lives of adult humans who are responsible for preparing themselves to become manners.

4.4 The role of mass organizations for the place sustainability

Marriage and kinship are the basis for presenting and maintaining the sacred value of supernatural powers

through ritual ceremonies. Customary organizations as executors of ritual ceremonies are formed from the idea of basic needs and human nature as social beings. The village founders realized that if basic human needs are channelled properly, activities on various scales can run smoothly and the main goal of achieving a harmonious life can be achieved. Cadets or unmarried youths have the potential (motivation) to grow and develop based on their capacities. Through marriage, they are considered as adult humans who can develop their potential and are responsible for all obligations imposed by the family and society. Through marriage, young men have more opportunities to serve Sang Hyang Widi and preserve the customs and kinship inherited from their ancestors.

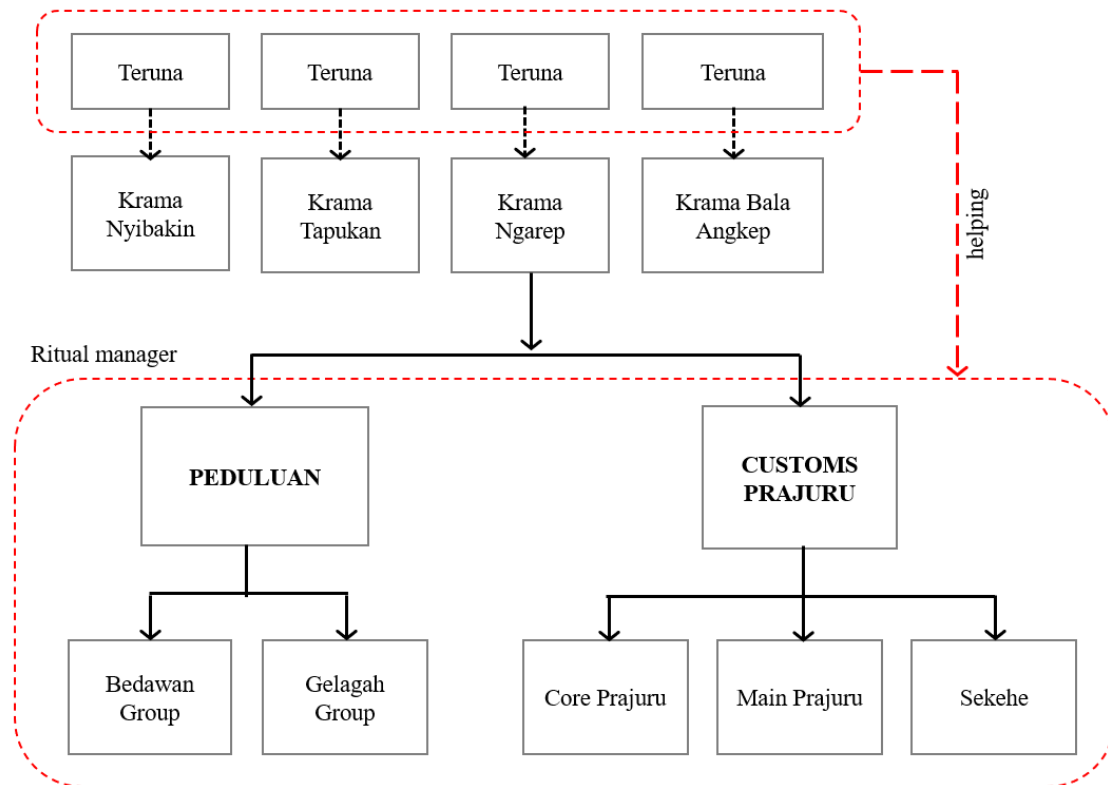


Figure 5. Ritual managers are determined because of the reasons for marriage and kinship which in turn form various roles in community organizations

5. Conclusion

The formation of sacred places in vernacular settlements requires the involvement of its citizens to manage and create a sense of sacred following the purpose of holding ritual ceremonies. The sense of the sacred from the place is formed by the existence of the object of worship which is the core of the formation of the sacred place which spreads the aura of holiness around it. The residents emphasize the existence of the object of worship with various symbolic attributes placed in the space which in turn displays extraordinary aesthetics.

The involvement of community organizations has an important role in shaping the place from preparing to arranging the space into a ritual place and carrying out ritual ceremonial activities. The role of each actor in the ritual had been prepared by the village founder with the aim that the relationship with the ancestors would continue for the sake of living in the future.

The village founders prepared their residents to be able to receive the relay of management and ritual management based on the journey of human life. Through marriage, every citizen is given the responsibility for building relationships with humans or groups and maintaining sustainable relationships with ancestors. It is considered a smart way to preserve the sustainability of the life of the Bali Aga community.

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