

## Philosophy of Bale Tani as a Traditional House of the Lombok Sasak Tribe in the Sade Traditional Village

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**Abstract .** *Bale Tani is one of the traditional houses with a unique architectural form typical of Lombok and still survives to this day. Full of philosophical meaning, the traditional Bale Tani house is proof of the high philosophy of life of the Lombok people, especially the Sasak tribe. However, with increasingly rapid development, the meaning of building a house with a design based on philosophical values is now becoming increasingly rare. The purpose of this article is to find out the symbolic meaning or philosophy contained in every architectural design and construction of the typical Lombok Bale Tani traditional house which is always held in high esteem. The research method is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This research was conducted in Sade Hamlet, Rambitan Village, Pujut District, Central Lombok Regency, the informants in this research were the community, traditional leaders and cultural observers. Data collection methods use observation, interviews and documentation with data analysis techniques using interactive analysis models. Based on research results obtained in the field, building houses with designs based on philosophical values is now becoming rare, especially for modern houses. However, for the people of Lombok, the design and architecture of the traditional Bale Tani house is still being preserved. We can see this directly in the Sade Tourism Village. In this tourist village there are around 150 traditional Bale Tani houses which are still original.*

**Keywords:** *Bale Tani Philosophy; Architectural Design; Traditional House*

### INTRODUCTION

The tourism potential on Lombok Island is very important. Not only is the natural beauty stunning, the cultural charm of Lombok is also very interesting to explore. This cannot be separated from the high cultural output of the local community, one of which can be seen in the Bale Tani traditional house of the Sasak tribe. The Sasak tribe is an indigenous population on Lombok Island, West Nusa Tenggara. As a native community, the Sasak tribe has a cultural system, as recorded in the book *Nagara Kartha Gama* written by Empu Nala from Majapahit. The Sasak people already have an established cultural system, so their ability to continue to exist today is proof that this tribe is able to maintain and preserve its traditions (Anggraeny, 2011).

Bale Tani as a residence for the Sasak people has aesthetic values, philosophy and simple life in the past which relied on natural resources as a livelihood, as well as material for building houses. In Sasak society, the Bale Tani traditional house is in a sacred (sacred) and profane worldly dimension simultaneously. This means that the Bale Tani traditional house, apart from being a place of refuge and gathering for family members, is also a place where sacred religious rituals are carried out which are a manifestation of belief in God, ancestral spirits, and so on.

Quoted from the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy website, the Bale Tani traditional house is one of the traditional houses with a unique architectural form typical of Lombok and still survives to this day. Full of philosophical meaning, the Bale Tani traditional house is proof of the high philosophy of life of the Lombok people, especially the Sasak tribe. For the people of Lombok, the Bale Tani traditional house is more than just a place to live. In this building there are various hopes and traditional values that are upheld. These traditional values are represented through the architectural design and construction of traditional Lombok bale tani houses.

Building houses with designs based on philosophical values is now becoming rare, especially for modern houses. However, for the people of Lombok, the design and architecture of the Bale Tani traditional house is still being preserved. We can see this directly in the Sasak Sade Tourism Village. In this tourist village there are around 150 Bale Tani traditional houses which are still original. The interesting thing about the Sasak Sade Tourism Village is that we can see the oldest Bale Tani traditional house which has been lived in for more than 15 generations.

## **METHOD**

The research method is qualitative with a descriptive approach. This research was conducted in Sade Hamlet, Rambitan Village, Pujut District, Central Lombok Regency, the informants in this research were the community, traditional leaders and cultural observers. Data collection methods use observation, interviews and documentation with data analysis techniques using interactive analysis models.

The qualitative research approach is research to understand phenomena regarding what is assessed based on the research subject, for example behavior, perception, motivation, action. Using descriptive methods in the form of words and language, in a special scope using several natural methods. Qualitative research is able to produce research results in the form of in-depth descriptions of speech, writing or behavior that can be observed in a certain scope seen from a comprehensive perspective (Moleong, 2014).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Typical of Sasak Tribe Buiding**

The Sasak tribe is an indigenous population and the majority tribe in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. As an indigenous population, the Sasak tribe has a cultural system as recorded in the

book Nagara Kartha Gama written by Empu Prapanca from Majapahit. In the book, the Sasak tribe is called "Lomboq Mirah Sak-Sak Adhi". If when the book was written, the Sasak tribe already had an established cultural system, then its ability to continue to exist today is proof that the Sasak tribe is able to maintain and preserve its traditions. One form of evidence of Sasak culture is the form of the Bale Tani traditional house.

### **Cultural Values in the Bale Tani Traditional House**

Cultural values are values that already exist in people's lives and are useful for human life. The cultural values in the Bale Tani traditional house are as follows:

1. Religious value, the Bale Tani traditional house also has religious value which can be seen from the construction of the house which must have a size. The date and day for building the house is determined by the oldest community members and traditional leaders.
2. The value of mutual cooperation, the value of mutual cooperation is very firmly held by the community as seen from the construction of the Bale Tani traditional house so that the construction of the house does not take a long time but within a month the community has started to adhere to it because it is done together and without reward (wages).
3. Ethical values are used as guidelines for community members on how to behave, where the Bale Tani traditional house contains very strong ethical values, seen from the shape of the building which has meaning, such as when entering the house you have to bow and say hello to the owner of the house.
4. Aesthetic value which is the value of beauty where many things are related to aesthetic value, such as the beauty of the traditional Sasak tribe houses in the Sade hamlet community which is still visible today, but with the times and globalization, the Sasak tribe community has become more numerous. who started using modern buildings.

### **Bale Tani Traditional House Building Shape**

The Bale Tani traditional house building in Sade hamlet has the characteristics of a very traditional Sasak tribe building, walls made of woven bamboo (bedek), poles and nails made of bamboo wood with a roof made of dry reed leaves (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The Walls made of woven bamboo in Bale Tani House

Meanwhile, the floor is made of clay mixed with straw ash and buffalo dung. This mixture makes the dirt floor hard, as hard as cement (Figure 2). In fact, to clean the floors, residents still use buffalo dung mixed with a little water once a week, once it is dry, then sweep it and rub it with a stone. This method is intended to clean the floor from dust, strengthen the floor, and cover any cracks that appear. However, when you enter the house, you will not smell the stench of cow or buffalo dung.



**Figure 2.** The Floor of the Bale Tani House

The distance from one building to another is very close and is only connected by a footpath that cannot be passed by motorized vehicles. The doors in each house have the same shape but there are differences according to their use:

### **1. Bale Gunung Rate/Tani**

Bale Gunung Rate/ Tani is a residence for residents who earn their living as farmers and as a place to store rice, usually also known as a rice barn. This bale is shaped like a pyramid or joglo. Consists of two rooms, namely the inner bale and the outer bale. Meanwhile, the inner bale or inner room is used as a bed for girls and doubles as a kitchen. Consists of two stoves that are integrated with the floor. Usually residents use wood as fuel because residents do not use kerosene, gas and others for cooking. They only use firewood and the majority of residents still make their living as farmers. This room has no windows and only one door for exit and entry. This room is closed tightly until it is completely dark, so that girls are not easily kidnapped. Outer bale (sesangkok) sesangkok in the sense of outer bale, the sesangkok becomes a bed for other family members and functions as a living room between these two bales, separated by a sliding door and three stairs.

### **2. Bale Bonter**

Bale bonter is owned by village officials. Usually built in the middle of a settlement. This bale is used as a place for traditional trials, such as a place to resolve problems involving violations of customary law and so on. Bale bonter is also called an inauguration drum and a place to store historical objects or family heirlooms.

The buildings of Sade hamlet are very natural and still maintain the traditional houses of

the Sasak tribe from the past which had a building structure called bale tani. The farmer's bale has several rooms called inner bale, outer bale, row bale and bonter bale, each of which has its own use and function. So Sade hamlet has become a tourist attraction in Central Lombok because of the authenticity of the houses of the Sasak tribe in Sade hamlet.

### **Bale Tani Traditional House Building Philosophy**

The philosophy contained in the Sade hamlet buildings is the aesthetic value (beauty value) of the local wisdom of the community. In each room, the shape of the building, building materials and direction have their own meaning and philosophy. The shape of the building whose roof rises is like Mount Rinjani. Confessing that God is Almighty and the highest of all creatures on the face of the earth is the meaning contained in the towering roof of the house. In more detail, the researcher tries to explain some of the values and philosophies contained in the buildings in Sade hamlet:

The alang-alang roof will provide a cool feeling during hot weather, and conversely will provide a warm feeling at night. Reeds are also often found around the rice fields of the people of Sade hamlet. Clean the floor using buffalo dung. The people of Sade Village believe that it can make their homes warm, protect them from insects and is said to ward off magical and mystical attacks aimed at the occupants of the house. While the house door is built not to exceed the height of an adult, the door of the house is also not like house doors in general, the door of Sade's house is made with a hole in the middle. It is intended that every guest who comes must bow as a sign of respect to the host. The three steps that separate the bale indicate wetu telu, namely that in the past the Sade people held animist beliefs which at that time developed into Hinduism, and also in the past, if they wanted to pray, they were usually represented by the teacher (ustad). Apart from that, it is also a symbol of birth, development and death as well as a symbol of the family, namely father, mother and child.

The use of houses with the same direction and size shows that people live in harmony. Therefore, if someone builds an existing house, it indicates that the residents of the hamlet are not harmonious. Meanwhile, the four supporting pillars of berugaq have the meaning or meaning of truth which must be prioritized, trust in holding the trust, in conveying something you should be honest and innocent, and as a believer you should be clever/intelligent in responding to problems (responsive). Meanwhile, the roof depicts the belief that God knows everything, both implicit and explicit. There are also those who think that the message from the four-pillar berugaq is a symbol of Islamic law: Koran, Hadith, Ijma, Qiyas. Apart from that, the berugaq in front of the house is a form of gratitude for the good fortune given by God, and also as a place to interact with other people. The existence of rice barns shows that Sasak people

must live frugally and not be wasteful, the ingredients stored in them can only be taken out at certain times, for example once a month in preparation for sudden needs, for example because the harvest has failed or because a family member has died.

The values and philosophies that exist in the traditional houses of the Sade hamlet community are very strong from the life of the Sasak tribe in the past who still adhere to human values such as doors, doors illustrate that we must respect each other between communities, religious communities and home owners. The door must be made to bend down and still show the values of mutual cooperation which if you make a house it is still mutual cooperation.

### **Element that form the Room of the Bale Tani Traditional House**

Rooms cannot be separated from human life, both psychologically, emotionally and dimensionally. Humans are in space, moving, experiencing, thinking and also creating their own form and also space is very necessary in the house, where the Sade community house has its own use and philosophy behind the room itself. In general, a room is formed by three room elements, namely: The base/floor, the floor supports all activities in the room. The floor of the house is made from a mixture of soil, tree sap and ash and then smeared with buffalo dung. According to Sade residents, buffalo dung functions to remove soil moisture and also functions as a mosquito repellent. The residents of Sade hamlet have a unique habit which is still maintained to this day, namely mopping the floors using buffalo dung every two weeks. In the past, when there was no cement plaster, the Sasak Sade people smeared buffalo dung on the base of the house just mixed with water.

Meanwhile, the wall area/wall area divider can be integrated with the floor area or as a separate area. The walls are made of woven bamboo (bedek). Building materials such as wood and bamboo are obtained from bamboo. The use of bamboo for house walls has its own philosophy which still maintains the authenticity of past houses which are still steeped in cultural values. Likewise the roof area, the roof area is the main protective element of a building and protects against climatic influences. The roof of a traditional Sasak house is designed to be very low with a small door, with the aim that guests who come have to bow down, indicating an attitude of mutual respect and respect between the guest and the host. The roof of the roof is made of straw or reeds and also thatch.

They still preserve the culture of mutual cooperation to this day. Their culture of mutual cooperation can be seen when one of the residents' house is damaged, the neighbors volunteer to help repair it, from weaving reeds to raising the roof and replacing walls, they do all this together in mutual cooperation and voluntarily without expecting anything in return.

Tradition is a legacy from our ancestors, and must be maintained in a sustainable way so that it is not lost by the times. Traditions also regulate us on how we behave with other groups of people based on the cultural values that exist in society, where traditions contain life values that must be maintained so that our children and grandchildren will still see these traditions.

The house has an important position in human life, namely as a place for individuals and their families to take physical refuge and fulfill their spiritual needs. Paying close attention to traditional house buildings, we will find that traditional houses are built based on the aesthetic values and local wisdom of the community, just like the traditional houses of the Sasak tribe, Sade village in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Traditional houses are used as residences and also as places for holding traditional rituals and religious rituals. There are eight architectural religious values found in Sasak traditional houses, namely:

### **1. Bale Tani Traditional House (*Bale Gunung Rate*)**

The traditional Lombok house form developed during the reign of the Karang Asem kingdom (17th century), where Lombok architecture was married with Balinese architecture. Apart from being a place of shelter, houses also have aesthetic value, philosophy and the simple life of residents in the past who relied on natural resources as a source of daily income, as well as materials for building houses. Basically Sasak traditional houses are the same as houses in general, what differentiates them from buildings from other places is that they do not have windows. The floor of the house is also made from a mixture of clay and buffalo dung. Everything does have meaning. A house without windows contains a philosophy, humans must be grateful for the gifts they have and do not need to look at what other people have.

### **2. Direction of the House**

The Sasak traditional house building faces east and west which illustrates the agreement and unity that exists between the residents of the traditional house. As stated by Selake, the traditional Sasak cultural house has two directions facing West and East (Sasak language: *penewok jelo and absorb jelo*). This means that the house facing east depicts us as humans being born in the world to work and struggle to find provisions (*sango*). towards the afterlife. The house facing west illustrates that life in the world has an end, namely "death" leaving the world. Apart from that, what is interesting to note about the traditional Sasak houses in Sade hamlet is the construction pattern. If there is a traditional house facing another direction, traditional leaders and the community have the right to destroy the building by force because building it does not comply with the agreement left by their ancestors.

In the past, if someone wanted to make a house facing the other direction, the houses could be damaged by traditional and community leaders, because our ancestors told us to face east and west and not in other directions. If the house faces another direction then we are said to not follow

society and therefore it can be damaged. The process of building this traditional house is carried out in a cooperative and family manner without any wages or fees for everyone who helps build the traditional house. The home owner or person who will build the house only prepares the materials needed in the process of building the traditional house itself, such as preparing wood, bamboo, fences, thatch, Banten tree sap, Bajur tree sap, straw, tapen leaves and other things that are needed. for the purposes of building a house.

### **3. The Back of the House**

The Sasak Sade people consider the house in a sacred (sacred) and profane worldly dimension simultaneously. The meaning of the Sasak traditional house is that apart from being a place of refuge and gathering for family members, it is also a place where sacred rituals are carried out which are a manifestation of belief in God, the spirits of the papuk block bale (ancestors who guard the house), and so on.

Our ancestors from the past until now strongly believe in supernatural things, such as believing in spells, magic or the spirits of ancestors who have long left us. Likewise when we build a house. Not all times are good for building a house. There are good times to build a house and there are also bad times to build a house. If we build a house at a bad time then the process of building the house will not go smoothly, there will be something missing and there will also be obstacles. Once the house is finished, it will always be bad luck. A good time to build a house is in the third and twelfth months of the Sasak calendar which coincide with the month of Rabiul Awal and the month of Zulhijjah. The months that are not good for building a house are Muharram and Ramadan.

The people of Sade hamlet believe that a good time to start building a house is in the third and twelfth months of the Sasak calendar, namely the month of Rabiul Awal and the month of Zulhijjah on the Islamic calendar. There are also those who determine good days based on the name of the person who will build the house. Meanwhile, the months that are most avoided (abstinence) for building a house are the months of Muharram and Ramadhan. In these two months, according to local people's beliefs, houses that are built tend to invite disaster, such as disease, fire, lack of sustenance and so on.

### **4. Roof of the House**

Materials for making a house roof include: supporting wood, bamboo, woven bamboo for walls and thatch (figure 3). The dominant Sasak Sade traditional house measures around 7 x 5 meters and has a mountain-shaped roof, swooping down at a distance of around 1.5-2 meters from the ground surface (foundation). One form of proof of the existence of Sasak tribal culture is the form of traditional house buildings. A house is not just a multi-functional residence, but also has aesthetic value and philosophical messages for its residents, both in architecture and spatial layout. The roof and flower (bungus) are made of thatch (re), the walls are made of woven



bamboo. All traditional houses in Sade hamlet are called Bale Gunung Rate, which is a combination of the shape of a mountain and a rate. Religious philosophy: As a micro/macrocosm realm where the house is used as a household activity. The roof of the house, the mountain shows the majesty of the divine/great realm, while the level of human existence is as a weak creature and has the same level or level before God Almighty.



**Figure 3.** The Roof of the Bale Tani House

## 5. House Stairs

Traditional Sasak house construction is also related to the perspective of the Islamic religion. The three steps of the ladder are a symbol of the human life cycle: birth, development and death, while the five steps of the ladder symbolize the five pillars of Islam, namely (reading the shahada, praying five times a day and night, fasting in the month of Ramadan, paying zakat and going on the hajj if necessary). capable).

Our ancestors who built houses did not simply make the house just a place to live or live in, but rather a traditional house was built as a place to remember the creator who created us (humans). Like making three or five steps. Making stairs is not merely a tool used for passing by, but when we pass by we must remember ourselves and remember God who created us. The three steps mean that humans are born, develop and then die. Meanwhile, the five steps of the ladder remind us of the five pillars of Islam, namely (reading the shahada, praying five times a day and night, fasting during the month of Ramadan, paying zakat and going on the hajj if able).

## 6. House Door

Bale Gunung Rate has three doors (lawang), namely lawang angkok (outer door), lawang dalem bale and lawang bale dalem which measures 125 cm, about 70 cm long and 10 cm wide. The shape of the Lawang Bale Gunung Rate is in the form of a Lawang Pelung. Lawang pelung is a door that connects the outer bale and the inner bale which is round and has two handles to open and close the door by pushing and pulling to the right and left. The low size of the door means that every time you go in and out of the house for the home owner it is an expression of gratitude to the creator, while for guests, it is an expression of greeting and respect towards the home owner. This traditional house building also has 3 short or low doors. The meaning of a low

door is that guests who enter must respect the owner of the house by bowing their heads. In ancient times, when people didn't know greetings, if they wanted to enter a house, people had to say excuse me while bowing their heads and bowing slightly.

## **7. Bale Inner Room (Dalem Room)**

The bale dalem room (inner room) is further divided into two rooms, namely the bed room, the body where the body is buried and the birthing area. Because the room where the body is buried and the mother giving birth is not used every day, for the time being the room is used to store property and agricultural tools. The bale dalem room is equipped with an amben, kitchen and sempare (a place to store food and other household utensils) made of bamboo with a size of 2x2 square meters or can be rectangular (Figure 4). The function of the bale dalem room or sakal room is a place for giving birth, a place for traditional weapons, a place for rice, and a place for contemplation/khaluwat. The function of the inner bale is as a bed for women. Apart from that, there is a sesangkok (living room) and an entrance with a sliding system. Between the outer bale and the inner bale there is a door and stairs (three or five steps) and the floor is a mixture of soil with buffalo or cow dung, rubber and straw ash. The steps (stairs) are used as a connection between the outer bale and the inner bale.



**Figure 4.** The Inside of the Bale Tani House

The traditional houses in Sade can also be used as homestays or accommodation for tourists who want to stay overnight to learn more about the life of the Sade people. This proves that making Sade hamlet a cultural tourism village has no effect on the local wisdom contained in the Sade traditional house. The continued implementation of traditional ceremonies from the past until now proves that the Sade people still maintain the local wisdom of the Sade traditional house to this day. The role of the community in maintaining and developing traditional houses in Sade hamlet is by working together in renovating traditional houses which will be repaired because every year there will be residents' houses which are repaired in a mutually cooperative manner in order to maintain and preserve the traditional houses in Sade as one of the legacies of their

ancestors

## CONCLUSION

For the people of Lombok, the existence of the traditional bale tani house is more than just a place to live. In this building there are various hopes and traditional values that are upheld. These traditional values are represented through the architectural design and construction of traditional Lombok bale tani houses. However, with increasingly rapid development, the meaning of building a house with a design based on philosophical values is now becoming increasingly rare.

All changes that occurred in the Sasak people's residence, namely Bale Tani, included changes in layout function, changes in material use which affected changes in the shape of other building elements. This change is mostly caused by time factors and the development of human needs from social, economic and cultural aspects.

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