

RE-INTERPRETATION THE CARDINAL ORIENTATION NOTION IN CHINESE TEMPLES IN BALI

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ABSTRACT

Chinese traditional cardinal orientation is one of the vital concepts in Chinese traditional architecture as it conveys philosophical and practical meanings, though here, this concept has been altered in Chinese temples in Bali. This article explores the implementation of cardinal orientation notion in Chinese temples in Bali contributing to the valuable insight upon how the architectural and cultural identity of Chinese traditional architecture is maintained. The spatial layout data of Chinese temples in Bali's regencies will be examined to understand how the notion of Chinese traditional cardinal orientation is re-interpreted and applied. It shows that Chinese temples in Bali mostly adopted the Chinese traditional geomancy faced the buildings to the waterways instead of north-south or east-west orientation due to local geographical re-orientation. In addition, these Chinese temple orientations have also been influenced by the site characteristic and the temple's historical background. This article concluded that the essential notion of cardinal orientation in Chinese traditional temple layouts has been re-interpreted by adopting the local context to maintain its architectural and cultural identities.

Keywords: *architecture, Bali, Chinese temple, layout, cardinal orientation*

OVERVIEW

The Chinese temple is a physical expression of Chinese religious practice designed according to the Chinese traditional approaches. These approaches encompass profound notions of interconnection between macrocosm and microcosm; the fundamental teachings and beliefs of three religious' doctrines (Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism); the Chinese empire authorities and their policies shifting. In addition, these approaches also emphasise the implementation of cardinal orientation that form Chinese temple's layout planning. In this respect, the Chinese traditional cardinal orientation essentially derived from the geographical characteristics of China, where the local climate has been changing drastically every year, affecting its architecture.

There is also a belief in the superpower of nature amongst Chinese people (Mou et al., 2017). In one hand, they believed the nature provides vast sources to establish a place to live. In the other hand, nature is also able to devastate their inhabitation. Accordingly, the implementation of traditional cardinal orientation into Chinese traditional temple's layout planning has been considered the local climates change, local landscapes characteristics, and local belief influences.

Basically, the layout arrangement of the Chinese temple is not much different comparing to a palace or housing (Lip, 2009). Their differences can be identified through the number of courtyards and roof elaborations. The prominent notion of Chinese traditional cardinal orientation is also implemented in the Chinese temple layout planning as it conveys practical and symbolical meanings. Nevertheless, the implementation of cardinal orientation in Chinese temples with different geographical characteristics is critically questioned; it takes a case study in the Chinese temples in Bali. In this respect, the local climates and landscape features

of Bali are different from China. Moreover, it has been identified that most of the Chinese temples in Bali have been adopted Balinese traditional architecture; one of significant evidence is the adoption of Hindu-Balinese shrines into Chinese temple. Essentially, Hindu-Balinese shrines can be found in Hindu-Balinese temples in which their spatial layout and building planning are following Balinese traditional approaches.

In this article, Chinese temples in Bali will be the case studies to investigate how their architectural and cultural identities are maintained through the implementation of cardinal orientation. In particular, these Chinese temples' layouts in Bali will be examined to understand how the notion of Chinese traditional cardinal orientation is re-interpreted and applied.

METHODOLOGY

This article will be presented descriptively along with illustrations of Chinese temple's layout planning in Bali. There are two types of qualitative data in this article, primary and secondary data. The primary data has been collated by conducting on-site observation in Chinese temples distributed in seven regencies of Bali. These primary data are focused upon Chinese temples' layout planning. The secondary data encompassed Chinese and Balinese traditional architecture sources, particularly the spatial layout orientation. The empirical data of Chinese temple spatial layouts in Bali will be analysed using Chinese and Balinese traditional approaches in answering how the Chinese religions adherents in Bali re-interpret and implement the notion of cardinal orientation in Chinese temples.

CHINESE TEMPLE CARDINAL ORIENTATION

The Chinese temple's layout and building are essentially designed according to the Chinese fundamental practice of geomancy, namely *Feng Shui* (refers to Wind and Water, respectively). According to Skinner (1989), this ancient Chinese geomancy emphasises upon the cardinal orientation to create a harmonious built environment. In addition, the teaching of Daoism is also parallel to *Feng Shui* emphasising the worship of nature and its powers as well as encouraging human not to alter nature (Kao, 2000). This cardinal orientation notion is generated based on the local Chinese geographical characteristics and has a prominent role in considering the Chinese temple's layout and building orientation. Moreover, this cardinal orientation reflects the pragmatic and symbolical meanings.

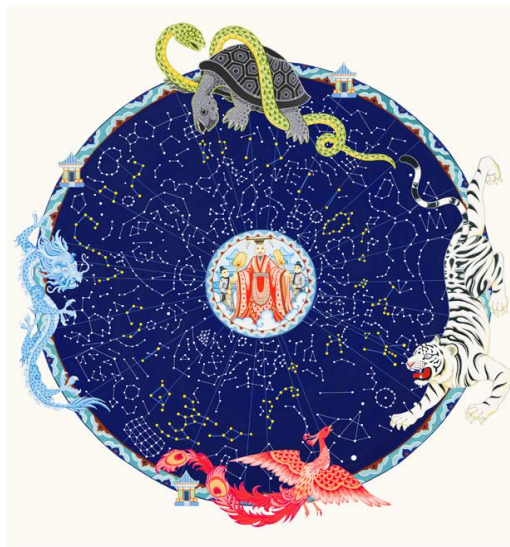


Figure 1. The Four Cardinal Points of the Compass and Mythical Animal Symbols
Source: Teams, 2016

The Chinese traditional cardinal orientation comprises of four directions and sets up according to the position of lakes or rivers, mountains or hills, and the local climates. These four cardinal orientations are depicted in the interrelationship between the cardinal points of the compass and mythical animal symbols (figure 1). This notion is implemented broadly in the city-scales, palaces, temples, and houses by facing the buildings to the south to absorb the cosmo-geographical advantages. In this respect, the mountains or hills in the north protect the site against evil forces, and south lake view provides blessings (Lip, 1994, 2009). Practically, the buildings face to the rivers or lakes at the south receive a warmth temperature from the sun and cool summer breezes, and also avoid the cold and dusty wind from the mountains or hills at the northern hemisphere.

As the result of north-south orientation in Chinese traditional architecture, the layout planning is divided in symmetrical balance by an imaginary line of axis indicating an essential hierarchy of the spatial as the most private, the most powerful, or the most sacred (Jiang, 2014). The principle of this axuality is implemented in the Chinese temple layout to represent a sense of monumentality due to the temple is the abode of the God or deity of Chinese religions (Lip, 1983). Additionally, the north-south and east-west are the best orientations to layout the Chinese temple's roads. A good Chinese temple also must avoid the north-west or south-west orientation with the main road must be placed on the west or south of the temple. These orientations are believed as 'the doors of evils' (Guanhua, 1982).

RESULT: CASE STUDIES OF CHINESE TEMPLES IN BALI

The Chinese temple layouts in Bali will be analysed according to three basic principles of Chinese traditional temple layout. These principles are derived from the geomancy of four cardinal orientations: the Chinese temple lays in north-south and east-west orientation; the main road of a Chinese temple in the west or south orientation; and the Chinese temple must not be oriented along north-east or south-west orientation.

Table 1. The Implementation of Three Basic Principles of Chinese Temple Layout in Bali

Chinese Temples in Bali	Three Basic Principles of Chinese Temple Layout		
	North-south or east-west orientation	The main road on the west or south	Not oriented along north-east or south-west
Denpasar			
Khongcu Bio	X	X	√
Oong Tay Jen	X	√	√
Kwan Kong Bio	X	√	√
Cao Fuk Miao	X	X	√
Satya Dharma	X	X	√
Tabanan			
Kongco Bio	X	X	√
Kongco Batu Meringgit	√	√	√
Jembrana			
Cung Ling Bio	X	X	√
Buleleng			
Leeng Gwan Kiong	X	X	√
Seng Hong Bio	X	X	√
Gianyar			
Amurva Bhumi	X	√	√
Ong Ya Kong	√	X	√
Badung			
Caow Eng Bio	X	√	√
Leeng Gwan Bio	X	X	√
Klungkung			
Zhong Yi Miao	X	X	√

✓: Meet the requirement

✗: Not meet the requirement

Source: Author, 2018

The table above shows only Ong Ya Kong and Kongco Batu Meringgit temples designed in north-south orientation (figure 2). In contrast, Caow Eng Bio, Leeng Gwan Kiong, and Seng Hong Bio temples mostly oriented to the north, and the rest of the Chinese temples faced to the east and west. Mostly, the Chinese temples in Bali are located amidst an urban environment. In this case, Oong Tay Jen, Kwan Kong Bio, Batu Meringgit, Amurva Bhumi, and Caow Eng Bio temples followed the basic principle of Chinese temple layout by having the main road in the west or south of the temple, whereas the others mostly have the main road in the north or east. Furthermore, all these Chinese temples met the requirement to have not oriented along north-east or south-west.

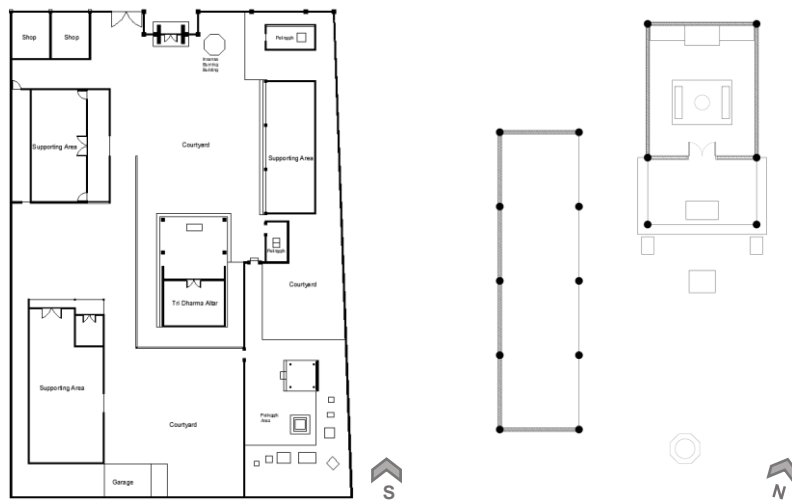


Figure 2. The Orientation of Ong Ya Kong and Kongco Batu Meringgit Temples

Source: Author, 2018

DISCUSSION

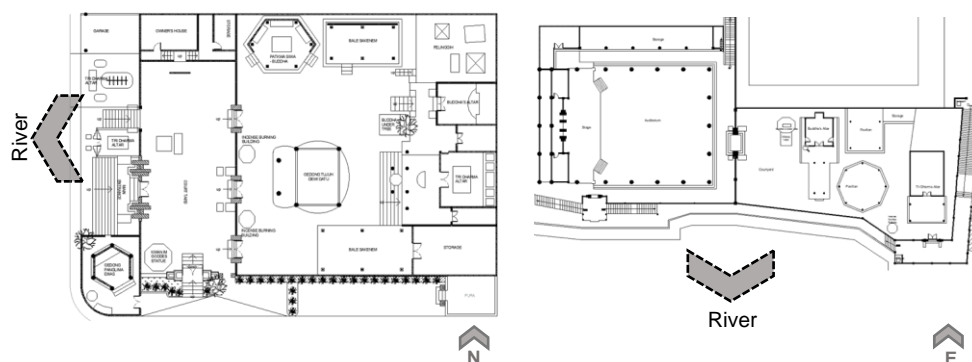


Figure 3. The Orientation of Oong Tay Jen and Amurva Bhumi Temples

Source: Author, 2018

The Chinese temples orientations in Bali mostly considered facing towards rivers or nearby lakes instead of north-south or east-west orientation (figure 3). These orientations suggested the pragmatic purposes to obtain a cool breeze amidst

Bali's warm climate. Moreover, these orientations are also believed able to protect the Chinese temple against the evil forces within local geographical characteristics. Although the north-south or east-west orientations were not followed by most of the Chinese temples in Bali, they have successfully avoided the orientation to along east-west and north-south as it is believed as "doors of the devil."

Additionally, the layout orientation of some Chinese temples in Bali derived from the historical background of Chinese temples affected the selection of the main deity within the temples. Leeng Gwan Kiong and Seng Hong Bio temples, for instance, the Chinese sailor-traders built these Chinese temples faced to the sea in the north respecting the God or Goddess of the sea for helping them arrived safely in Northern Bali (figure 4).

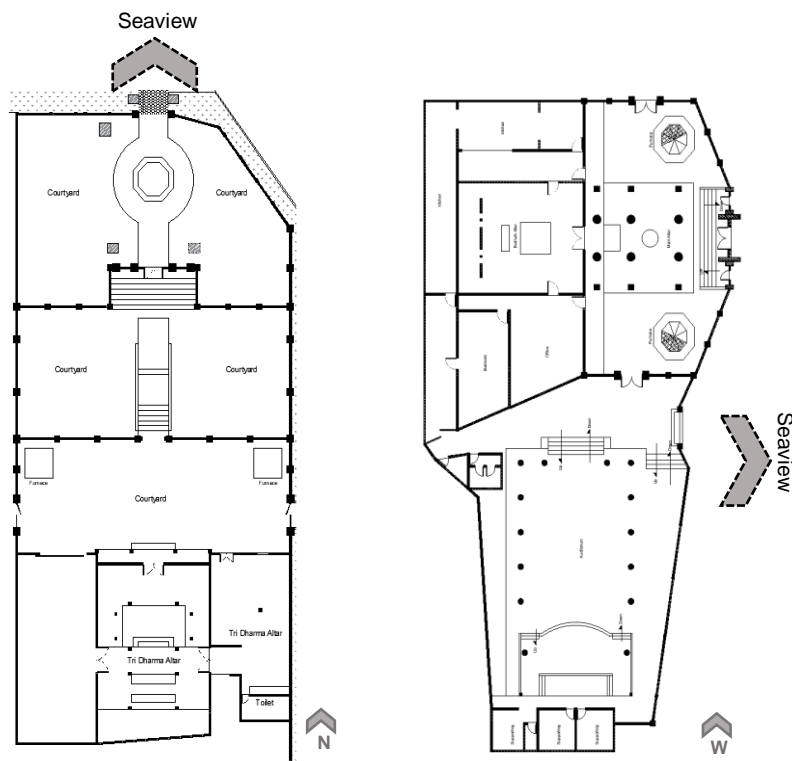


Figure 4. The Orientation of Leeng Gwan Kiong and Seng Hong Bio Temples
Source: Author, 2018

The adoption of Balinese traditional architecture in these Chinese temples in Bali can be identified through their façade and Hindu-Balinese shrines (*pelelinggih*) within the temple. *Pelelinggih* is a sacred building element within the Hindu-Balinese temple complex, in which different deities are manifest. Basically, there are three types of *pelelinggih* distinguishing by size, form, position, ornament and decoration. These are *padmasana*, *gedong*, and *tugu*. Essentially, these *pelelinggih* are designed according to Balinese traditional approach. Most of the Chinese temples in Bali placed *pelelinggih penunggun karang* and/or *pelelinggih Ratu Subandar* manifesting God of earth and God of trading respectively. *Pelelinggih penunggun karang* is classified as *tugu* placing in the front courtyard of south or west. *Pelelinggih Ratu Subandar* adopted a form of *gedong* and positioned in the east facing to the west or in the north facing to the south (Gelebet, 1986). In addition, some of the Chinese temples in Bali have altered the *pelelinggih* in materials and colours, as well as

added Chinese ritual objects or Chinese traditional decorations, such as Chinese incense jars and Chinese lanterns (figure 5).

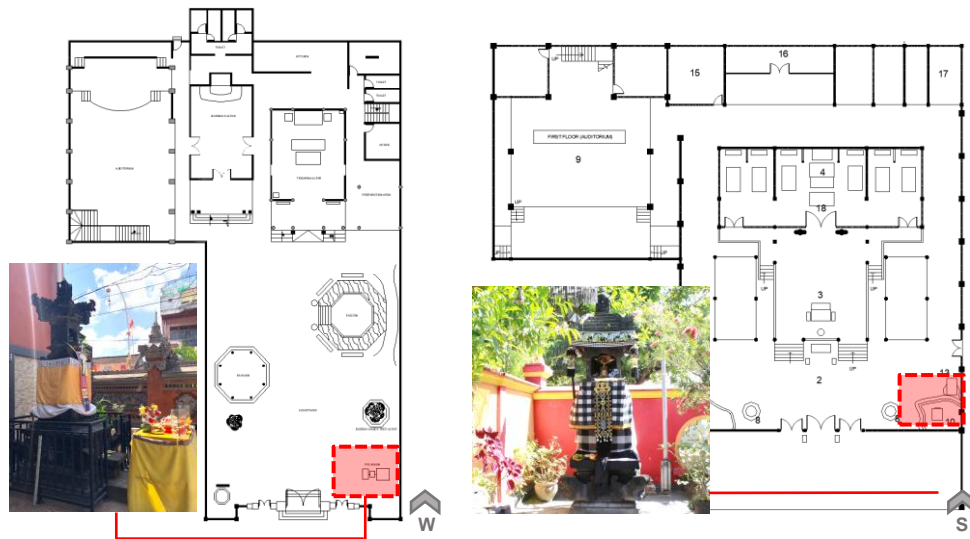


Figure 5. Hindu-Balinese Shrines in Kongco Bio and Cao Fuk Miao Temples
Source: Author, 2018

CONCLUSION

The Chinese temples in Bali represented a cross-cultural architecture expanding the new insights of architectural knowledge in relation to the geographical characteristics, traditional belief systems, and cross-cultural intercourses. All of these aspects have been through a re-interpretation process of a long tradition of Chinese culture by Chinese diaspora and their generations. A re-interpretation process that emphasised the balanced harmony between macrocosm and microcosm, and implemented into Chinese temple layout planning in Bali as an objective in preserving the cultural identity of an ethnic minority.

The notion of cardinal orientation has been applied in Chinese temple layout planning in Bali, though the fact reveals that most of these temples are orientated more towards lakes or waterways instead of north-south orientation. This approach is the effect of adaptation to the condition of the local landscape aimed to maintain the philosophical meanings. A pragmatic adaptation has also been included in these temples by altering the position of the main road despite the fact that it has not followed the geomancy. In addition to this, the orientation of Hindu-Balinese shrines within the temples has followed the Balinese traditional precepts.

Overall, the notion of Chinese traditional cardinal orientation has been re-interpreted both philosophically and practically. This notion has been implemented into Chinese traditional temple spatial layouts in Bali, however, with the adjustment to Bali's geographical characteristic and adoption of local culture. Nonetheless, this article has shown that the Chinese temples in Bali are maintained appropriately both as a worship building and a place for socio-culture activities by the Chinese

community according to the intermixture of Chinese and Balinese traditional approaches.

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