

THE CONTINUITY OF SASAK SETTLEMENT SYSTEM

Case Study: Puyung Village, Lombok Island - Indonesia

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Men and their culture have special relationships with their settlement system. It has a particular meaning for the inhabitants, especially in the traditional settlement. Settlement system can be seen in two terms, i.e. its pattern and elements. Furthermore there are some potential factors which are able to change them due to the cultural acculturation, modernization, interaction with other cultures etc., which then will potentially change the settlement system.

Indonesia are well known to have a rich traditional settlements, one of which is the Sasak tribe in Lombok Island – eastern part of Bali Island. Sasaknese has a certain rule in patterning their settlement based upon: social stratum, seniority in the family, heritage system, and believe. In the long term, the influences of modernity and cultural acculturation change the people way of life, and so does to the settlement system. These changes threat the continuity of Sasak settlement system, which potentially encroach the Sasak settlement's identity.

This paper focuses on Puyung Village, situated in Central Lombok Regency. Generally Puyung people live in a house compound which is occupied by both core and extended families. However, the occupancy of other people in Puyung village has changed the local custom. The newcomer made single building for single families and made linier settlement pattern. As a single family they don't have traditional settlement element except the house itself. In spite of this both pattern can lived side by side harmoniously as a house-settlement system. Taking into account that Puyung village still alive and develop, settlement pattern and elements are gradually changed, thus there is a threat in the continuity of the settlement system.

By studying Sasak settlement system, it can be learned that the continuity of Sasak settlement system in Puyung Village should be well maintained or we will loose our local identity.

Key words: continuity, Sasak, and settlement system

1. INTRODUCTION

Man living in a certain environment will have various rules dealing with a settlement system. The rules, then, will make up a space order of settlement space. Rapoport (1977: 9) stated that the environment is a series of relationship among elements and people and these relationship are orderly - they have pattern. The environment has a structure and is not random assemblage of things. It both reflects and facilitates relations

and transactions between people and physical elements of the world. These relationships in the physical environment are primary spatial basically objects and people are related through separation in and by space.

In relation with the settlement system, a culture has an important role. This space order of the settlement is much influenced by various cultural aspects, so among one place and another there are some differences, depending on the way the people express them. In line with this statement, Lawson (2001: 2-3) state that wherever you find people gathered together collectively inhabiting some part of our world you will also find rules governing their use of space. Some of their rules may be purely a mater of local social convention, but many are reflection of both the deep-seated needs of our psyche and of the characteristics of human being. Before professionalism, the design and creation of space was more social and vernacular process seamlessly integrated with all other aspects of a culture.

There are many factors which influenced the settlement system, one of which is kinship system. In relation with it, Levi-Strauss (Klages, 2001) explained that one of the basic structures that all human societies share is kinship: every society that has ever existed anywhere has had some system for deciding who can marry whom, who inherits what from whom, and how all of these relationship are named. In the traditional settlement, the arrangement of its settlement has close relation with their belief. Social organization and stratum have others important roles in settlement system. Kracauer (Leach, ed, 1997: 59) stated that each social stratum has a space that is associated with it. The design of a space should define the kinds of behavior and social contacts most appropriate to that place. (Lennard and Lennard, 1993: 39).

Traditional settlement in Korea (Pilwon, 1997) showed that settlement pattern was highly influenced by *Fengshui*. The ideal site of *Fengshui* is embodied as a model of 'rear mountain, front water' with the settlement as centre. The typical development process of the settlement can be seen here, a man and his family with servant families move into a village which may be a undeveloped, newly selected site or an already occupied one by other families than by his clan. He settles down naturally at the best spot of the site which is often found at the foot of the important moderate mountain peak, that is, at the interface of mountain and flatland. He is called 'Village Entered Ancestor' by the offspring dwelling there from that time on. Ideally, his house is handed over to the eldest son, and then to the eldest grandson, and so on, over periods, and it is called 'Family Head's House'. In case that a few, not only one, clans dwell at a settlement,

there are as many Family Head's Houses. The settlement gets set up through continuous offshoots of the family by gradually transforming the land in front of the Family Head's House into house lots.

In other case settlement in Pakistan, in the Sind (Shaikh, 1996) was influenced by Islam which was showed by divided space between man and woman. She concluded that pattern of settlement and layout of the village and form of the rural habitat are based on religious and cultural values. In a general sense, cultural values and social expectation are deeply affected by the involvement of the religion with the pattern of settlement.

Rapoport (1969: 78), therefore, stated that attaching so much importance to the culturally linked aspects of built form tends to lead to a position of complete relativism. As soon as a given culture or way of life has changed, its form would become meaningless. Yet we know that many artifacts retain validity when the culture which created them has long since disappeared, and that housing and settlement forms are still useable, even though the meaning attached to the forms may have changed very greatly.

Indonesia consists of thousands of small and big islands and it is known to have various cultures including traditional settlements, and one of them is the traditional settlement of Sasak located in the Lombok island. In the Sasak history, it can be seen that Java, Bali, Goa and Dutch were much influenced in Lombok Island. Their occupation in Lombok made cultural changes, especially in their belief, way of life, and also many activities. The extent of the various changes due to interactions with people from other areas occur in Lombok is not the same, since there are some parts of the people who are very responsive so a great change happens, but some people tend to be unresponsive, therefore they do not change much. In this case, tradition plays a very important role, and especially this happens if the leaders still have a great influence. It can be seen in Bayan, Sembalun, and Pujut.

Settlements in Lombok are formed by some elements such as house (*bale*), rice barn (*lumbung*), pavilion (*berugaq*), cattle barn (*kandang*), water storage (*mbong*), mosque (*masjid*), and social facilities. Principally, each settlement has the same element, but the formed order may differ. The settlements in Sambalun, Bayan, and Pujut, and many others places show that belief, kinship system, and the social stratum still play an important role in ordering settlement system.

The response to the changes also varies, as a result of various elements and space order of the settlement starts changing, even some parts have lost. Remembering the varieties possessed, on the one hand, it is a pity that the changes that have happened may destroy the cultural identity of Sasak. On the other hand, the changes turn out not eliminating various aspects of Sasaknese settlement system.

2. SASAK SETTLEMENT SYSTEM

Sasak tribe was known since pre-historic era as the follower of animism and dynamism or belief of *Boda* then called *Sasak-Boda*. In this belief, they worshiped to their ancestor through things, animals, and the natural power as sacred things, (Wacana, 1988:15). The Sasak people at that time greatly believed in the power of the Rinjani mountain and they considered it as a power of the world. It has a power to destroy and to bless the people. Therefore the Rinjani mountain is guarded and controlled by a goddess Anjani. Various rituals related to worship are still conducted. In the context of settlement, the Rinjani mountain is used as an orientation of the buildings and settlement arrangement.

In the 14th century, Majapahit's expedition to Lombok and also to some parts of Indonesia made the people to adhere Hindu. In the 16th century, Islam was introduced to Lombok by Sunan Prapen, the son of Sunan Giri – one of the moslem saints in Indonesia. The ways of disseminating Islam done by Sunan Prapen was by accommodating the old belief. This pattern produces a syncretism between Hindu and Islam called *Islam Wetu Telu*. This belief recognizes Islam as a religion followed, but in their ritual, they emphasize the influence of their ancestors and supra natural power.

Moreover, the influence of Islam brought by Islam leaders (*tuan guru*) gradually replaced the teaching of *Islam Wetu Telu*, and this was especially supported by government program which just recognised Islam. It turns out, however, that some teachings cannot be neglected at all such as *selamatans* in cemeteries, rice planting ceremonies, evicting devils when opening field for housing or for planting, etc. Most people have not believed in the ancestors anymore but seniority in their daily lives is still adopted. This is shown in their arranging the settlement pattern.

The kinship system of the Sasaknese follows the patrilineal system and the community is divided into three levels: the highest level (*raden*), the second one (*triwangsa*), and the third level (*jajar karang*). Seniority can be clearly seen in

determining the location of housing. The respect to the ancestors is actualized by maintaining the sacred places such as: cemeteries or places of sacrifice in some places.

Sasak people in groups within one family tie, in a house yard, and it can be occupied by core and extended family. One family group consists of some houses dwelled by a house of the parent and their children, daughters and sons, such as in Sembalun. In other settlement, a house yard is occupied by a family from the son, since the daughter have followed her husband and lived in the husband's family or in another place. Then some house yards may make up a *gubug*, some *gubugs* may make up a *repoq*, some *repoqs* become a *dasan* or *dusun*. Some *dasans* administratively become a village.

The Sasak settlement usually consists of the same elements, but the ways of placing houses between one location and another vary. For example, the settlement in Sembalun Bumbung, is arranged based on the points of the compass and kinship functions their social life. Nengah (1985/1986: 28) states that the arrangement is as follows: the northeast for settlement of *pamangku* family, the southeast for *Kyai* family, northwest for *Perebekel* family, and south west for *Pande* family. Each family house is divided into some part with a long form. Between one settlement and another is separated by a path which starts and ends in a village road. The houses in all the settlements face to the west and are arranged from the north to the west and their houses have the same forms. The house located in the north part is possessed by the persons with the highest social strata, but the one in the south part is occupied by persons with lowest social strata. (Nengah, 1985/1986: 48). The coming of *transmigrants* in this area does not result in some changes in the settlement order, but the *transmigrants* should adjust their settlement order to the fixed order, so they will not disturb the harmony and preservation of the environment. (Nengah, 1985/1986: 83).

Different from Sembalun Bumbung, the Bayan people are divided into some settlement locations according to different strata. The noblemen and the common people are used to organizing themselves in line with the descent and live in separated places. Each group in a certain community is tied with and possesses one family tree. (Budiwanti, 2001: 109). Dealing with the family tree, most people living in the settlement environment in Bayan Timur, Bayan Barat, and Karangsalah are the aristocrat (*pewangsa*), while most people in Karangbajo are common people (*jajarkarang*). Most people dwelling in the *dusuns* out of Bayan Beleq can be categorised into common people (Budiwanti, 2001: 110).

In the placing of settlement elements, *alang* and *sambi* are considered to have the highest hierarchy, so they are located in front of the house. The place under the building is used for various social activities or to take a rest. In the back of the buildings, there are *berugaq* that are united with the kitchen. The next is for a house of *bale* and in the back of it, a *geleng* is located. The placement of the settlement element after the *geleng* is a stall of which its place is in the back part. The toilet is placed beside the house.

Concerning the house arrangement and other elements, basically, the houses are placed in a parallel form among their settlement element. It means that all *bale* is parallelly placed in a straight line, so are the *berugaq* and *sambi* or the stall. As a whole, all buildings of the housing face to the same direction, namely to the east, to the Rinjani Mountain.

3. PUYUNG SETTLEMENT

Puyung village is located in the main road between Mataram, and Praya and if one wants to go to tourist objects namely Kuta and Sukakara, the producer of woven cloth (*tenun*), he will pass the Puyung village. The people in Puyung may be divided into two groups, the noblemen living in the dusun Pedalaman and Singasari, and the common people living out of the two area.

The settlement in which the noblemen live basically is a group of community living in a place with various facilities such as *berugaq*, *lumbung*, *mbong*, and toilet. What makes the settlement different from that of common people is that the house possessed by the noblemen is equipped with *becingah* and *jaba tengah*, and the house itself is called *jaba dalam*. Principally, *becingah* is used to meet guests if the guests are common people. In this matter, common people are not permitted to enter further rooms. The next is *jaba tengah*, which is used to meet guests from other noblemen who do not have family relation, while *jaba dalam* is used to meet guests from the noblemen family, is also used for living their members of the family.

If the noblemen family, either the elder or younger brothers/sisters or sons and daughters or grand sons/daughter will build a house, the location permitted for building the house is in the back or side of the main house itself. Principally the front area of the house cannot be used to erect other buildings. After the independence of Indonesia, the role of the noblemen decreases and the right between the noblemen and the ordinary people is almost the same. It is physically can be observed where at present in front of

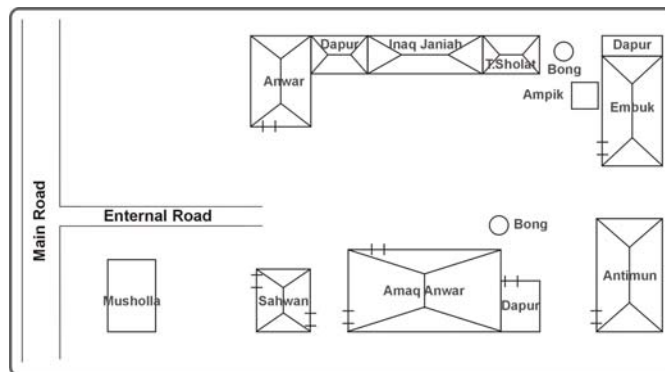
the noblemen's house, there are buildings for offices, even the *becingah* and the *jaba tengah* are not used anymore and the location is even rented for retailing activities.

Spatial arrangement of the settlement of the ordinary people has different patterns compared with that of the noblemen. Ordinary people usually live in a family group. In Puyung village, a patrilocal pattern results in a family group intended for the family from the man who has married, since women who have got married usually follow their husbands. In some cases, there are family groups who are dwelled by the women who have got married. This happens because of the exhortation and permission given by the parent or they buy land from their brothers. If the land in the family group is exhausted, the new family that will be formed should look for other places, and the land, if possible, should be possessed by the parent or heritage. If it is impossible, they try to get the land by buying. It happens continuously until a new family group is formed, and then they make up a new *repoq*. Either the noblemen or ordinary people family that tends to live in a family group makes the new family have a cluster form.

At first, a housing is arranged in such a way that the parents are located in the northern part, and the youngest children in the eastern part, while the younger children in the western part of the parents' house. Then other family is placed in the southern part. In this arrangement, the respect to the parents and the senior is realized in the house placement. This also represented in determining the direction of the house that tends to be built toward the north (toward Rinjani mountain), or the east (to the sun rises – as a symbol of living) and generally the people avoid to build their houses to face to the south, since this direction is considered as a way to death. In the other case almost all of houses face to the most senior one, see picture 1.

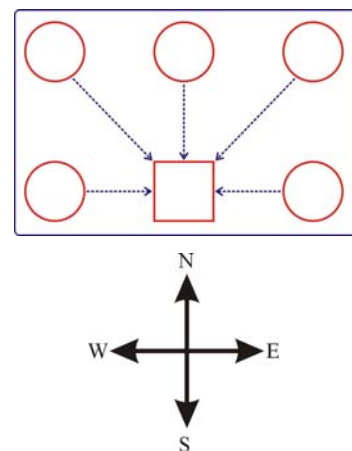
Picture 1

A house yard with one orientation to the most Senior House



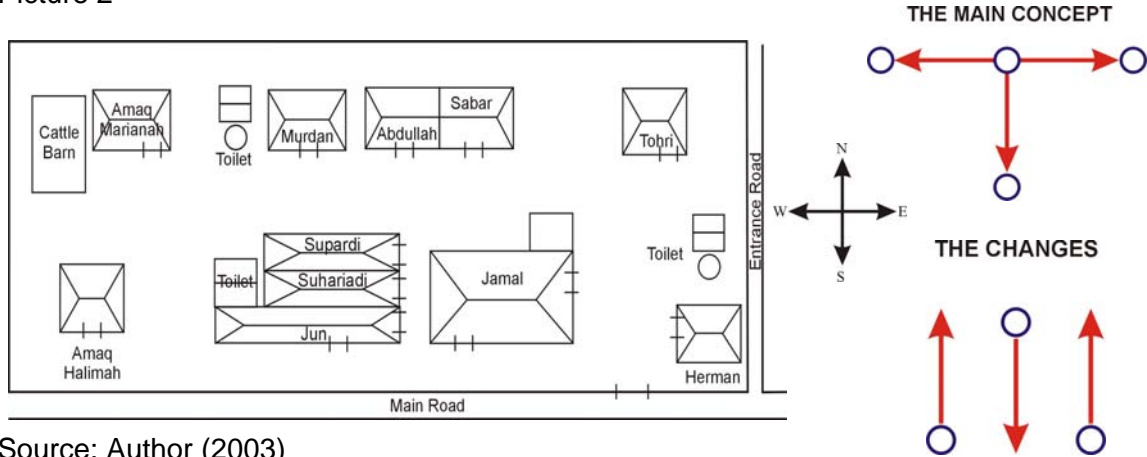
Source: Author (2003)

Diagram of Orientation



In line with the economic changes and the way of life of the people in Puyung village, preference to a place to live in also changes. Some times ago, parents chose to live in higher areas or in northern parts, now they tend to chose to live near the road although it is located at the southern part and although the building should face to the south, see picture 2

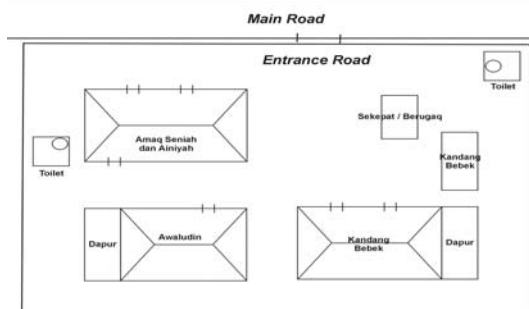
Picture 2



Source: Author (2003)

Since there are many people coming to and living in Puyung village, and some people from Puyung try to live out of the family group, individual houses may appear. This pattern then tends to make the housing order linear or small cluster. Therefore, in the space order of the settlement in Puyung village, there is a combination of cluster and linear orders in one system. However, in this settlement, some principles of arrangement and tolerance still exist. For example, if there is a house facing to the road, while there is also a house in the back of it, the house in the front should make a door or at least a window facing to the back so the two houses do not seem to be back to back position. In this oriental custom, this position is considered not to be polite and to be avoided, see picture 3.

Picture 3 (Door and Window in the Back of House)



Source: Author 2003



Some time ago, houses and other buildings in Sasak and also in Puyung village made of woods with the *ilalang* roof. Since the people's incomes rise, the kinds of houses are replaced with permanent houses. However, principles of seniority sex, and belief are still adopted.

4. CONCLUSION

On basis of the study above, it can be seen that the Lombok people are still in the process of changes in various living orders. The changes also occur in the space order of their settlement and their physical appearance. The changes are greatly influence by the changes in their belief, way of life, and also their preference to a place to live in.

Observation in Bayan, Sembalun, dan Puyung shows that the changes occurred in some parts of their lives may also result in the changes in their settlement order, also in the meanings. However, the people still maintain some principles. Therefore, some principle which do not contradict with religion teachings, especially Islam, are still well maintained. For example the kinship system may produce family groups that may be seen as a desire to give favor among families, and tolerance in determining the location and the direction of a house should be preserved. This pattern shows that the Sasak people have a high ability in adaptation, so they may maintain their cultural identity. One thing that may be considered as a very important is that they have the same cultural root, which may results different space order of settlement among villages and this may make Sasak posses various cultural richness.

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