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# The Function and Typology of the *Padmasana Tiga* Architecture in Besakih Temple, Bali Indonesia

Ida Bagus Idedhyana<sup>1</sup>, Ngakan Putu Sueca<sup>2</sup>, Ngakan Ketut Acwin Dwijendra<sup>3</sup>, Ida Bagus Wira Wibawa<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,3</sup>Department of Doctoral Program Engineering Science, Faculty of Engineering, Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia

<sup>2,4</sup>Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia

Correspondence: Ngakan Ketut Acwin Dwijendra, Faculty of Engineering, Udayana University, Bali, Indonesia, E-mail: acwindwijendra71@gmail; acwin@unud.ac.id

## Abstract

*Padmasana* architecture is part of traditional Balinese architecture, it is a sacred building that functions as God's *sthana* (place/position). The existence of symbols as religious expressions is very thick coloring the realization of *padmasana* architecture, a very diverse typology, and there are still many meanings that need to be expressed. *Padmasana tiga* is one of the most important types of *padmasana* buildings, manifested from *three Padmasana*, standing tall on a rectangular base. Its unique shape, different from other *padmasana* buildings, gives rise to diverse interpretations, thereby increasing the attractiveness of this building for research. *Padmasana tiga* is located in the main and largest temple in Bali, *Besakih Temple*, on the slopes of Mount Agung, Karangasem Regency, Bali Province. The purpose of this study is to reveal the *padmasana tiga* functions and their typology which are closely related to the teachings of *Shiva Siddhanta*, so that they can be better understood by the Hindu community in Bali and the wider community. In order to express its function and typology, a descriptive qualitative method was used, by observing, documenting and interviewing Hindu priests, intellectuals who understood the *Shiva Siddhanta* concept, and *undagi* (traditional Balinese craftsman). *Padmasana tiga* is the embodiment of the great soul of the universe, a vertical representation of God, a God in three different realms called '*Tri Purusa*'. Judging from its layout which is in the middle of the *mandala* (zone) facing the entrance and at its peak there are 3 *rongs* (empty throne), this *padmasana* belongs to the type of *padmasana kurung* (brackets). Judging from the number of *rongs* and the number of *palih* (level), which amounted to 7, *padmasana tiga* including the type of *padmasana anglayang*.

**Keywords:** Traditional Balinese Architecture, Padmasana Tiga, Function and Typology

## INTRODUCTION

*Padmasana* is a sacred building as the seat of *Brahman* (God), which transcends all concepts, which represents all worshiped gods, as an embodiment of the entire universe, is the main building found in sacred places (temples) in Bali. This holy building has been widely applied, not only in the main shrines, but also applied to shrines found in office buildings, educational centers, trade, hospitals, and other buildings that accommodate

public activities. *Padmasana* has a variety of typologies, rich in the use of decoration, filled with symbols that contain religious meaning.

*Padmasana tiga* is one of *padmasana* architectural typologies, manifested from three *Padmasana* that stand tall on a rectangular base. The form is different from other *padmasana*, inviting diverse interpretations, besides that many Balinese Hindus do not understand the function and typology of *Padmasana* architecture, especially *Padmasana Tiga*. According to Mirsa, *et al* (1986); Agastya, *et al* (2002), the existence of this sacred building is closely related to a priest named *Dang Hyang Nirartha* who has had a significant impact on the development of Hinduism in Bali. Stuart-Fox (2010). Subagiasta (2006) explains the characters inherent in *Padmasana* architecture are closely related to the teachings of *Shiva Siddhanta*. This sacred building is located in the largest and main temple in Bali, Besakih Temple which stands firmly on the slopes of Mount Agung in Karangasem Regency, Bali Province.

In tracing its function, it is bridged with Hindu concepts related to Shiva's teachings, namely "*Tri Purusa*" (the concept of God in three different dimensions) and "*Tri Murti*" (God's duty in the world of His creation). In the typology associated with the ejection of '*Catur Winasa Sari*' which contains the typology of *padmasana* based on the layout of the *pengider-ider* (eight corners of the compass), related to the concept of '*padma bhuwana*' (lotus flower as a picture of the universe). The *padmasana* typology is also related to the number of *rongs* (empty throne) at the top of the *padmasana*, and is related to the number of *palih* (levels) on the *padmasana* body. By bridging the past through in-depth documentation and interviews, the functions and typologies of *Padmasana tiga* can be clearly expressed, and typologies based on layout, number of *rongs*, and number of *palih* can be represented.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Padmasana Architecture*

Based on the traditional script of "*Catur Wariga Winasa Sari*", the layout of the *padmasana* is based on *pengider-ider* (9 positions of the gods in the direction of the wind), divided into 9 types of *padmasana*: a) *padma kencana*, in the east facing west; b) *padmasana*, in the south facing north; c) *padmasari*, in the west facing east; d) *padma lingga*, in the north facing south; e) *padma asta sedhana*, in the southeast, facing northwest; f) *padma noja*, in the southwest facing northeast; g) *padma karo*, in the northwest facing southeast; h) *padma saji*, northeast facing southwest; and i) *padma kurung*, in the middle of the temple, has 3 *rongs* (empty thrones) on the top of *padmasana* facing the *pemedal* (entrance and exit) ( Anonymous, tt-b).

*Padmasana* is divided into three parts, consisting of *tepas* (base), *batur* (body), and *sari* (peak). *Tepas* is the basis of *padmasana* supported by a variety of decoration '*Bedawang Nala*' which is twisted by a dragon, can amount to one dragon with the *Naga Basuki* symbol and can also be two dragons as *Naga Basuki* and *Anantabhoga* symbols. *Batur* is a *padmasana* body which has an odd number of levels (*pepalihan*), from 5, 7, to 9. In this section there are also decorations oh *garuda* (eagle), *angsa* (swan), and there is a *dikpalaka* statues (Gods in the eight directions of the wind). *Sari* is the top of a throne-shaped *padmasana*, which consists of *ulon* (backrest towering high), *tabing* (backrest on the left and right), and *badan dara* (base of the throne/empty space). *Ulon* can be filled with tangible form *Hyang Acintya* ( Anonymous, 2000).

### *The concept of Shiva Siddhanta*

*Saiva Siddhanta* consists of two strands of meaning, '*Saiva*' means connected with *Sive*, and '*Siddhanta*' means conclusion (Pillai, 1952). In "*Rigveda*", "*Vajasaiieyi-samhita*" from the holy book "*Yajur-veda*" and in "*Atharvana-veda*", the word *Siva* means beneficial, as the axis of *Rudra* (Rao-Gopinatha, 1916). *Siddhanta* etymologically means sacred teachings (Mardiarsito, 1990). In the Sanskrit dictionary, *Siddhanta* implies definite decisions, fixed teachings (Subagiasta, 2006). *Siddhanta* contains three forms, *Si* (*sikara*) is *Rudra*. With some of these descriptions, *Shiva Siddhanta* can be interpreted as sacred teachings, definite teachings from *Shiva*, which guide people from darkness to enlightenment.

### ***Tripurusa***

Consciousness has three strict forms, referred to as '*Tripurusa*', namely *Parama Shiva*, *Sada Shiva*, and *Shiva*. *Parama Shiva* is an immeasurable, inconceivable and unimaginable God, everywhere, everlasting. Quiet, calm, and inactive, He is the ruler of the universe, He is *Lord Parama Shiva*. Then He began to be active, enlighten, begin to form an element of consciousness, He permeated all beings and all forms. He arranged from one life to another, that is *Lord Sada Shiva*, his seat is the *padmasana*, and the *padmasana* is his magic. He began to assemble and support the world and the entire contents of nature, possessing it, seeping into it like butter in milk into a unified whole, that is *Lord Shiva* ( Anonymous, 1988).

### ***Trimurti***

In the traditional script of "*Bhuwana Kosa*" *Lord Shiva* stated when creating *bhuwana* (universe) as *Lord Brahma*, while maintaining this *bhuwana* (*pangraksa jagat*) God is *Vishnu*, and when he merges (*mrelayaken rat*) called *Rudra*. *Sanghyang Rudra* united with *Sanghyang Shiva* becomes the essence of nature entirely (Gautama, 2009). *Lord Shiva* symbolizes aspects of absolute reality, continuously in the cycle of the process of creation, preservation, and fusion. This cycle is three manifestations related to the function of the cosmic. *Brahma* symbolizes creation, *Vishnu* as the preserver, and *Shiva* as the fuser needed for the re-creation process (Pandit, 2005).

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The relationship between the manifestation of its architecture and the underlying factors is difficult to describe quantitatively, so we need an approach that is better able to capture the meaning contained in the visible form. A qualitative approach is used on the basis of consideration of research on the function and typology of *Padmasana* three more related to socio-cultural values and heterogeneous values.

This research was conducted with descriptive qualitative method. The research was carried out in Besakih Temple, especially in the main complex, Penataran Agung Besakih Temple. The initial step is to do with selected and focused observations, starting from the location of the existence of *padmasana tiga*, data collection on its layout, taking the manifestation of its shape and parts from various points of view, then redrawing it to get a plan and appearance that approaches the scale corresponding to the object of research.

The next step is to study documentation, broaden horizons by bridging objects with the past, connecting objects with the characters inherent in them, namely the *Shiva Siddhanta* concept. The dialogue between objects and the past is deepened again with interview techniques. In-depth interview techniques were carried out with Hindu priests and scientists who studied Hindu teachings, especially the *Shiva Siddhanta* concept. Interviews were also conducted with *undagi* (traditional Balinese builders) to find out the relationship between typology and *palih* (level) and the variety of decoration on the *padmasana* building. Analysis takes place from the beginning of data collection, analysis is open, adaptive to changes, and improvements made based on new data found.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Position of *Padmasana Tiga* in Besakih Temple**

Besakih Temple consists of 18 temple complexes, Penataran Agung Besakih Temple is the most important part of the temple, divided into seven *mandalas* (zones) (Figure 1). Starting from empty, namely the seventh *mandala*, called the universe *sunia* (empty) is a symbol of God in the '*Nirguna Brahman*' (God without Activity). In the sixth *mandala*, there are two twin buildings '*Gedong Ratu Bukit Kiwa*' and '*Gedong Ratu Bukit Tengen*', as an illustration of God in the form of *Ardha Nareswari* (negative and positive elements), God began to carry out creative activities. Furthermore, from the fifth to the third *mandala* is the nature created by God. The second *mandala* is 'Great Penataran', there is a main building, *padmasana tiga*, facing the *bale gajah* or *bale pawedan*, located in the middle of the *mandala* facing the *kori agung* (main door). At the very front of this temple is the first *mandala*, reached by going through a ladder of 52 steps, past statues depicting the story of Ramayana and Mahabrata (Figure 2).

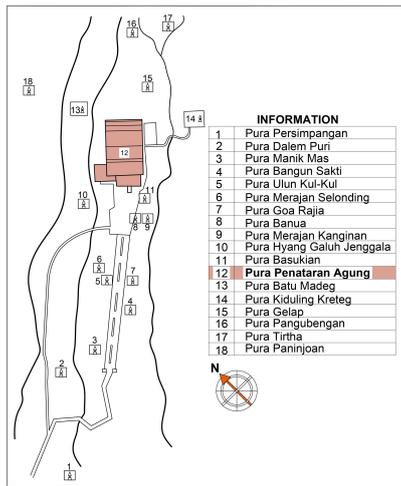


Figure 1. Besakih Temple Complex  
Source: Modifications from Stuart-Fox (1982)

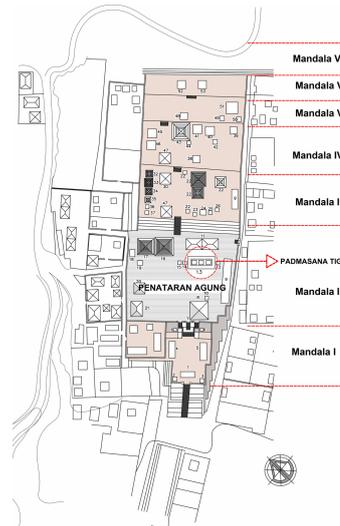


Figure 2. Penataran Agung Besakih  
Source: Modification from Bappeda Bali (1999)

**Padmasana Tiga Functions and Typology**

**Function of Padmasana Tiga**

*Padmasana Tiga* consists of three of the same *Padmasana*, standing tall on a long rectangular base. Divided into three *palih* (levels): *tepas* (bottom), *batur* (body parts), and *sari* (peak) (Figure 3). Based on the "Decision of the Unity Interpretation Seminar on Aspects of Hinduism" The sacred building of *Padmasana* is a symbol of the universe, as *sthana* (place, position) of *Lord Shiva Aditya* (God who gives light to life) (Anonymous, 2000). According to Agastya (2010) *padmasana tiga* as *stana the Sanghyang Tri Purusa*. *Padmasana tiga* is the essence of *Padma Bhuana* (a universe with eight strands of lotus flowers/eight directions of the wind) that radiates holiness in all directions. *Parama Shiva* (animating swah) is in kana. *Sada Siwa* (animating the spirit world) is in the middle. *Shiva* (animating nature) is on the left, is a symbol of the existence of God in a state of *krida* (doing activities).

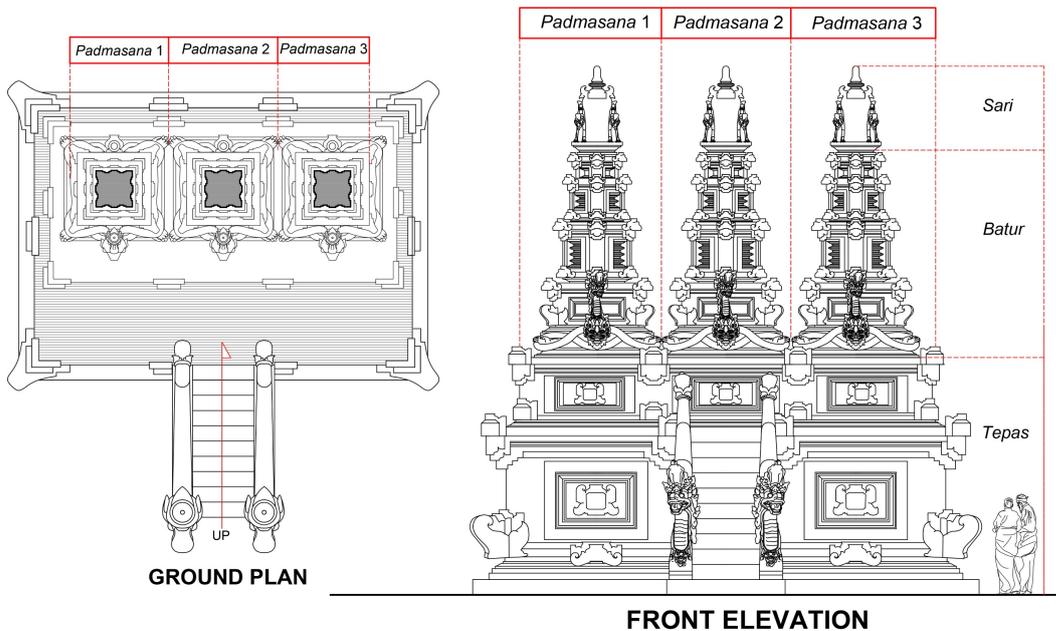


Figure 3. *Padmasana Tiga*  
Source: author (2019)

In padmasana three there are three *padmasana*, describing the three manifestations of *Shiva*. Referring to the traditional script of "*Wrhaspati Tattwa*" *Three Shiva* is worship of God in the vertical direction consisting of: a) *Parama Shiva*, God without activity, eternal, unthinkable and unimaginable; b) *Sada Shiva*, God begins to be active, forms an element of consciousness, permeates all beings and all forms; c) *Shiva*, God begins to assemble and support the world and the entire contents of nature, possessing it and seeping into it (Anonymous, 1988). *Shiva's* image in the universe is described as *Shiva Aditya* (Anonymous, 2000), which means *Shiva* as the sun, which provides the light of life for all beings in the universe. The existence of God in the world of creation (*Shiva*) is described in the traditional script "*Tutur Bhuana Kosa*" (Gautama, 2009), God in the universe performs three main activities including: a) creation (*Brahma*); b) maintenance (*Vishnu*); c) fusion (*Shiva*) (Fig. 4).

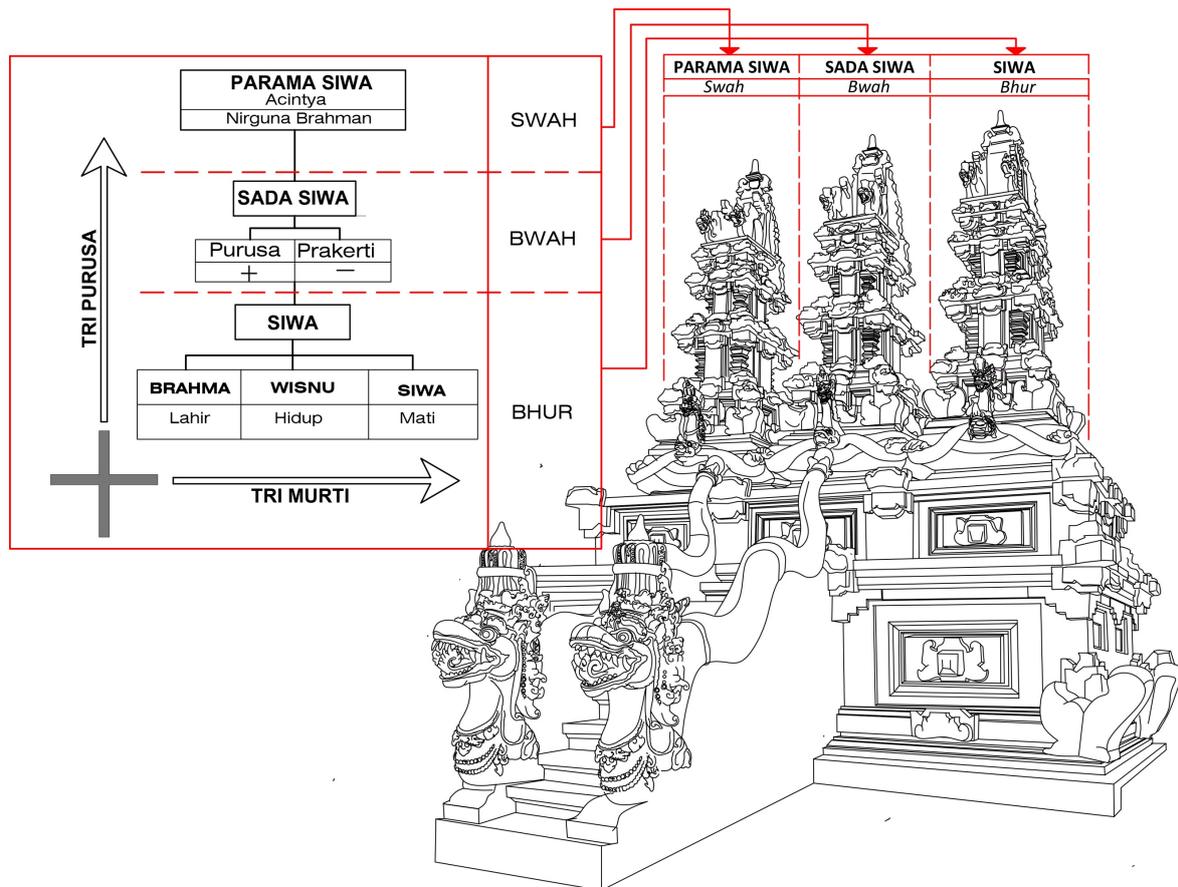


Figure 4. The Concept of *Tri Purusa* on *Padmasana Tiga*

Source: Author (2019)

This image of God in three different worlds is represented in the form of *padmasana tiga*, so that the function of *padmasana tiga* is as a *sthana* of God who is in three different realms. Lord *Parama Shiva*, the Supreme God is in very rare strata, represented by the rightmost *padmasana* of the *padmasana tiga*. He descended to the level of *karma sadakhya* (the cause of the material nature of the universe) to become *Lord Sada Shiva*, represented by *padmasana* who was in the middle. Subsequently descend again and be and merge with this universe, called *Lord Shiva*. He as the sun of the life of all His creation, is called *Shiva Aditya*.

**Typology of Padmasana Tiga**

**Based on Layout**

*Padmasana tiga* is located in the second *mandala* (zone) of Penataran Agung Besakih Temple, its position in the middle facing the main entrance (*kori agung*) (Figure 2). Covarrubias (1937) states that the most important thing in the temple is the *padmasana*, a stone throne with its back directed always towards *Mount Agung*. According to (Stuart-Fox, 2010), this holy building appeared later, after the temple existed, was the only sacred building that did not follow the orientation of the temple.

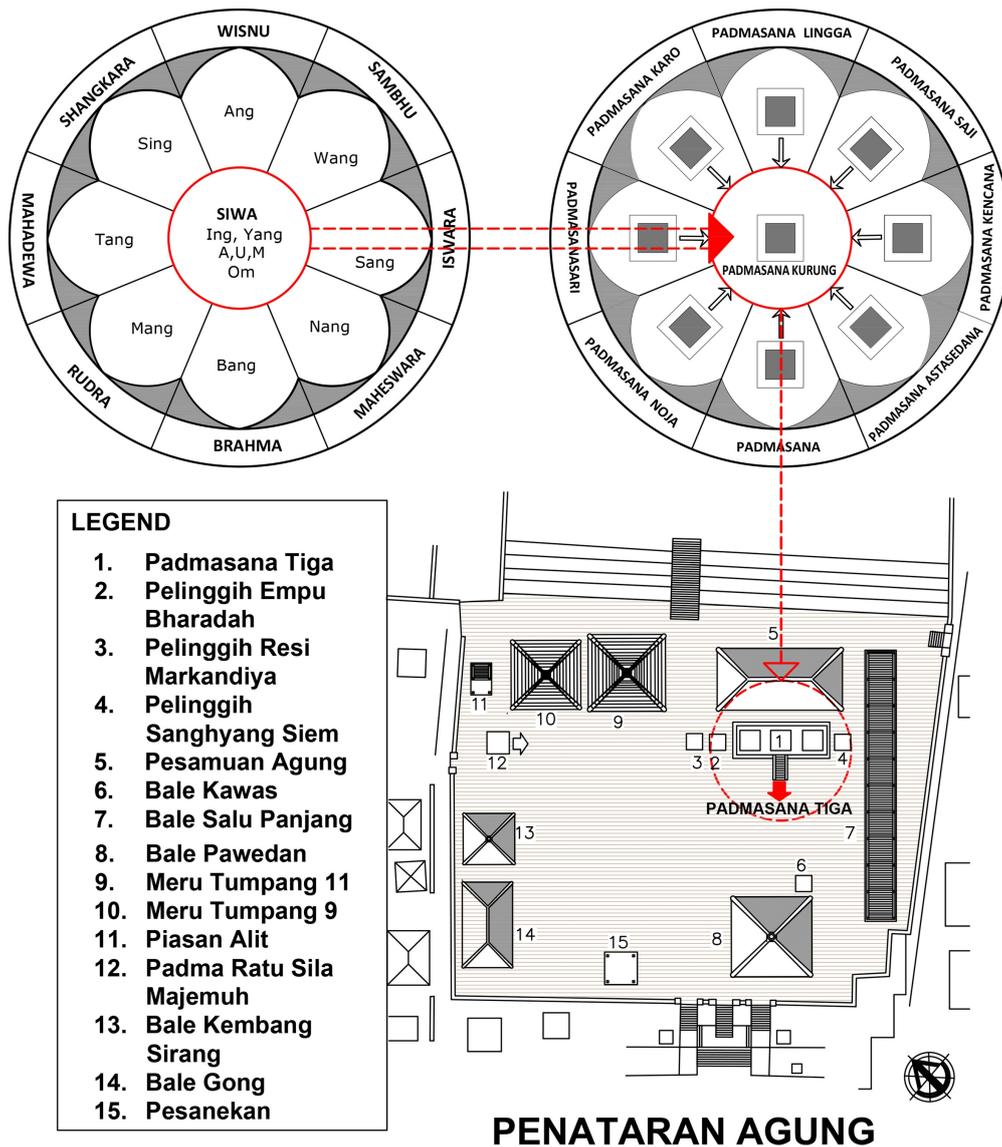


Figure 5. *Padma Asta Dala*, Type of Padmasana, and Position of *Padmasana Tiga* on the Mandala of the Penataran Agung Besakih Temple.

Source: Author (2019)

In the lontar "Bhuana Kosa" (Gautama, 2009) and "Lontar Padma Buana" (Mertha, 1996), it can be seen that God everywhere is described in nine positions, called 'dewata nawa sangga' are gods aspects of Shiva which supports the nine cardinal points, with Shiva domiciled at the midpoint. These nine positions form padma

bhuana, or called *padma asta dala* (padma flower with eight strands of flower petals). This position is used as a guideline in determining the orientation of *padmasana*.

The depiction of the position of the eight corners of the aspect of *Shiva* is manifested into 9 types of *padmasana* with *Shiva* as the core of the lotus flower (Figure 3). Referring to traditional script of "*Catur Winasa Sari*" (Anonymous, tt-b) and "Unity of Interpretation of Aspects of Hinduism" ( Anonymous, 2000), *padmasana* with the number of *rong* 3, its position in the middle facing the entrance, included in *padmasana kurung* type. Seeing the existence of these *padmasana tiga* and the number of *rongs*, this *padmasana* belongs to the type of *padmasana kurung*.

**Based on Number of Rong (empty throne at the peak of Padmasana) and number of Palih (level)**

In the traditional script of "*Raja Purana Besakih*" on page 4a (Anonymous, tt-a) it is stated: "*dewa lila jnyana ngarining padmasana, padma layang ngaraning Gunung Agung*" (Anonymous, tt-a). The meaning of this traditional script is; "*A clean mind is symbolized by padmasana, padma layang is the name of Mount Agung*". In this traditional script does not reveal anymore about the relationship of *padma layang* with *padmasana tiga* in Besakih. In the Unity of Interpretation of Hindu Aspects of Religion (Anonymous, 2000), *padmasana* with *palih* (level) amounts to 5 and is equipped with 1 *rong* (empty throne on top of *padmasana*) is called *padmasana*, if 5 *palih* with 2 *rong* is called *padmasana agung*, and if the sum the *palih* 7 with 3 *rongs* is called *padmasana anglayang* (Table 1).

Table 1  
The Typology of the *Padmasana* holy building is based on *Rong* and *Palih*

Type	Name	<i>Rong</i> (empty throne)	<i>Palih</i> (step/level)	Ornamen <i>Bedawang Nala</i>
<i>Padmasana</i>	<i>Padmasana anglayang</i>	3	7	✓
	<i>Padma agung</i>	2	5	✓
	<i>Padmasana</i>	1	5	✓

Source: Author, modified from the Unity of Interpretation of Aspects of Hinduism (*Kesatuan Tafsir Aspek-aspek Agama Hindu*) (2000).

With the above discussion based on *palih* and *rong*, this *padmasana* can be included in 5 *palih*, with the number of *rongs* being 3. The complete ornamentation of *Bedawang Nala* is at the bottom (Figure 6). The number of levels on the *padmasana* body is only 5, but if calculated as a whole (added to the bottom/*tepas*), the number of levels is 7. Thus this *padmasana tiga* can be entered as a type of *padmasana anglayang*.

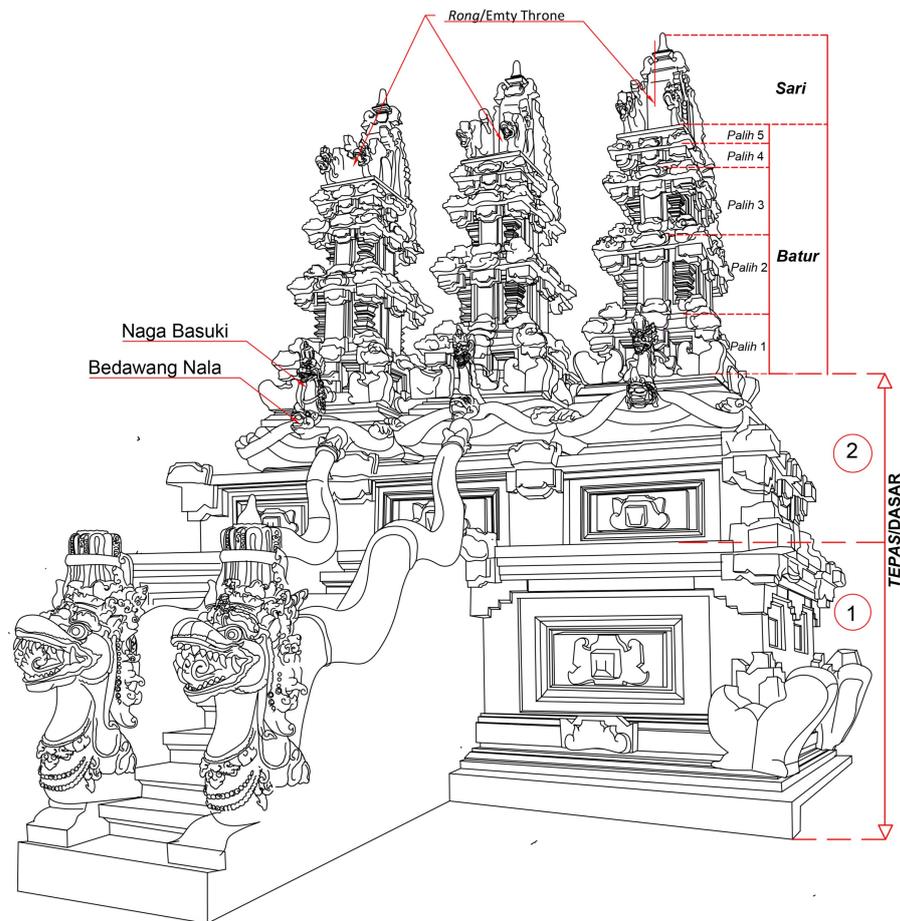


Figure 6. *Palih* (level) and *Bedawang Nala*'s decoration on *Padmasana Tiga*  
Source: Author (2019)

## CONCLUSION

Architectural functions of *padmasana tiga* are as worship of God from the concept of *Tripurusa*, worship of *Lord Shiva* vertically, *Parama Shiva* on the right hand side, *Sada Shiva* in the middle, and *Shiva* on the left side. *Parama Shiva* is the highest consciousness, permeates the entire cosmos, has not been affected by cyberspace, exists in strata which are very rare from pure cyberspace, because it cannot be directly involved with the astral and physical realms. God is not yet active is called '*Nirguna Brahman*'. Then God descended to the level of *karma sadakhya* (material cause of the universe), to carry out cosmic activities in the pure virtual world. He does this through the form of his Lord *Sadasiwa*, God has begun to move, called '*Saguna Brahman*'. Furthermore, God descended again into the realm of His creation, in the form of his Lord as *Shiva* who carries the task of creation, nurturing, and fusion, called '*Tri Murti*'.

When viewed from its layout which is at the center or middle of the *mandala*, its orientation faces the entrance, *padmasana tiga*, including the type of *padmasana kurung*. It is a picture of the essence of the lotus flower as the center of the entire universe. *Padmasana tiga* has three *rongs* at its peak, as well as five levels on its body, if counted to the bottom it has seven levels, thus *padmasana tiga* can be entered into the type of *padmasana anglayang*.

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