

## The representation of the Trimurti concept in the architecture of Padma Tiga at Pura Luhur Muncaksari

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Article history:</i> Received June 16, 2025 Received in revised form Dec. 12, 2025 Accepted January 02, 2026 Available online March 01, 2026</p> <p><i>Keywords:</i> Padma Tiga Pura Luhur Muncak Sari Representation Trimurti concept</p> <p>*Corresponding author: Ida Bagus Idedhyana Department of Architecture, Faculty of Science and Technology, Universitas Ngurah Rai, Indonesia Email: <a href="mailto:ib.idedhyana@unr.ac.id">ib.idedhyana@unr.ac.id</a> ORCID: <a href="https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9057-7716">https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9057-7716</a></p>	<p><i>Padmasana architecture is the most important sacred building in Balinese temples. Padmasana functions as the sthana (seat) of God and has many types, depending on the concept of God being represented. The 'three padmas' form, one of the types of padmasana architecture found in the Luhur Muncaksari Temple, is very different from the padmasana forms found in other major temples in Bali. This uniqueness often causes difficulties in understanding its function and symbolic meaning, both for the general public and intellectual circles. To understand its representation, an interpretation is carried out by broadening the horizon of understanding, from the parts of the form to the form as a whole. The purpose of this study is to discover the concept of God represented in the visual form of the 'three padmas'. The findings reveal that the padma tiga at Pura Luhur Muncaksari symbolically represents the Trimurti: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, through its spatial composition, structural elements, and ornamental features. These findings are crucial for informing the development and preservation of traditional Balinese architecture, which is rooted in cosmological and philosophical foundations.</i></p>

### Introduction

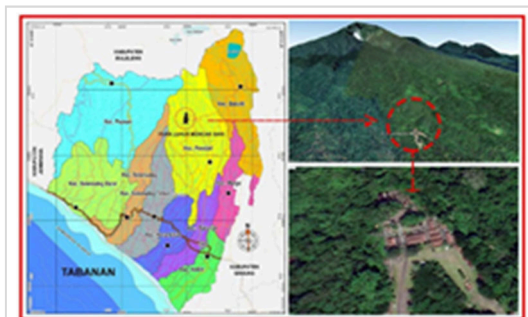
The most important sacred structure within a Balinese temple complex is the *padmasana*, which takes the form of a stone throne as a representation of cosmological order (Covarrubias 1937). This stone throne has undergone significant development within Hindu-Balinese religious art, transforming into what is known as the *padmasana*, also referred to as the *sanggar agung* (Goris 2012; Kempers 1956).

The *padmasana* is a sacred architectural structure symbolizing the seat of Brahman (God), who transcends all existing concepts, represents the totality of the deities worshipped, and embodies the entire universe (Idedhyana et al.

2019). The architecture of the *padmasana* exhibits numerous typologies, rendering its visual form difficult to interpret in terms of both function and meaning (Idedhyana, Sueca, Dwijendra, and Wirawibawa 2020). One of the typologies found at Pura Luhur Muncaksari is the *padma tiga*, which consists of three *padma* elements whose visual form resembles a mountain. The diversity of forms within *padmasana* typologies is closely associated with the theological concepts they represent, including the concepts of Tri Purusa, Sada Siwa, Siwa Aditya, and the Trimurti.

Pura Luhur Muncaksari is designated as a cultural heritage site and forms part of the "Catur Angga Batukaru World Cultural Landscape." Catur Angga Batukaru was proposed by the Balinese community and government and was

officially designated by UNESCO on 29 June 2012 as a World Heritage site (Davis 2015; Wardi 2017). Pura Luhur Muncak Sari symbolically represents a source of divine power bestowing blessings related to physical and spiritual health as well as the preservation of the universe, and it functions as the *sthana* (abode) of Hyang Sri Sedana. The temple is located on the southern slope of Mount Batukaru and occupies an area of approximately five hectares. Administratively, it is situated in Banjar Anyar, Sangketan Village, Penebel District, Tabanan Regency. The temple stands within a dense forest landscape characterized by steep cliffs and deep ravines (figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Location and neighborhood of Pura Luhur Muncaksari  
Source: (Pemerintah Kabupaten Tabanan 2012; Google Earth Pro 2025)

Accordingly, this research is important for identifying the concept represented by the function and form of the *padma* tiga at Pura Luhur Muncaksari. The study contributes to the expanding body of *padmasana* typologies, several of which have not yet been identified. Furthermore, this research is valuable for the development of traditional Balinese architecture in both the present and the future.

## Literature review

### 1. Representation and Interpretation in Architecture

The objective of design is not to identify universal truths or definitive solutions, but rather to determine the most appropriate alternative for a given situation (Nelson and Stolterman 2012). The procedures of the design process can therefore be understood as problem formulation through perception and analysis, and problem solving as transformation through synthesis. Consequently, both in formulating problems and in seeking potential solutions, designers must rely

on external representations; designers think through representations (Goldschmidt 1989).

In subsequent stages of the design process, particularly those related to the creation of form and visual imagery, ideas are expressed through representation (Goldschmidt 1994). Representation functions as a “reflective conversation (Salura and Clarissa 2025; Sudradjat 2020).” Acting as a visual device, the resulting representation “talks back,” returning information that was either unintentionally or deliberately embedded within it (Schon 1992). Thus, within the movement of representation, a systematic exchange occurs between conceptual arguments and figural reasoning, or reasoning assisted by imagery.

To understand the meaning of representation, interpretation is required. According to Bleicher, interpretation is a procedural process aimed at achieving understanding (Bleicher 2013). Palmer further emphasizes that interpretation involves viewing a work from both its external and internal aspects in order to attain its deepest meaning (Palmer 1969). Representation speaks back when communication occurs between the observer and the architectural work.

### 2. Tri Purusa, Sada Siwa, Siwa Aditya, Trimurti, and Dewata Nawa Sangga

Within the teachings of Siwa Siddhanta, God manifests Himself into three realms of existence, known as *Tri Loka*: *Bhur Loka* (the material realm); *Bwah Loka* (the material–non-material realm or the realm of ancestral spirits); and *Swah Loka* (the upper or transcendental realm).

The three manifestations of Siwa represent the vertical worship of God (*Tri Loka*), consisting of: a) *Parama Siwa*, God without activity, eternal, inconceivable and unimaginable, residing in *Swah Loka*; b) *Sada Siwa*, God who begins to act, forms elements of consciousness, permeates all beings and forms, and resides in *Bwah Loka*; c) *Siwa*, God who begins to compose and sustain the world and all its contents, permeating and imbuing it, residing in *Bhur Loka* (Wrhaspati Tattwa 1988).

The presence of God within His created universe (*Siwa*) is elaborated in the lontar *Tutur Bhuana Kosa*. In this text, God performs three principal activities: a) creation (Brahma); b) preservation (Wisnu); c) dissolution (Siwa) (Gautama 2007). The lontar *Padma Buana* (Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi Bali 1996) describes God as omnipresent throughout the universe and depicts this presence in nine positions, referred to

as *dewata nawa sangga*. These are aspects of Siwa that sustain the nine cardinal and intercardinal directions, with Siwa positioned at the central point (figure 2).

### 3. Padmasana typology based on form

The typology of the *padmasana* is determined by its spatial orientation in relation to the cardinal directions as well as by its form. The representation of divine concepts associated with Tri Purusa, Sada Siwa, Siwa Aditya, and Trimurti in *padmasana* architecture is primarily determined by typology based on form. Typology based on spatial orientation is related to the concept of the nine aspects of God sustaining the universe, known as *dewata nawa sangga* (figure 2).

The *padmasana* is divided into three parts: the lower section (*tepas*), the middle section (*batur*),

and the upper section (*sari*). The base (*tepas*) is supported by *Bedawang Nala* (a giant turtle ornament) entwined by naga serpents. The body (*batur*) consists of *pepalihan* (tiers), always in odd numbers ranging from five (5), seven (7), to nine (9). The summit (*sari*) takes the form of an empty throne called *rong*, comprising the *ulon* (the rear of the *rong*), *tabing* (the side walls of the *rong*), and *badan dara* (the lower part or neck of the *rong*) (Idedhyana, Sueca, Dwijendra, and Wirawibawa 2020).

Further determining factors of typology include form, which relates to the number of tiers in the body of the *padmasana*, the number of *rong* (empty spaces at the summit), and the presence of *Bedawang Nala* at the base. The number of *rong* at the summit may consist of one, two, or three *rong* (figure 2).

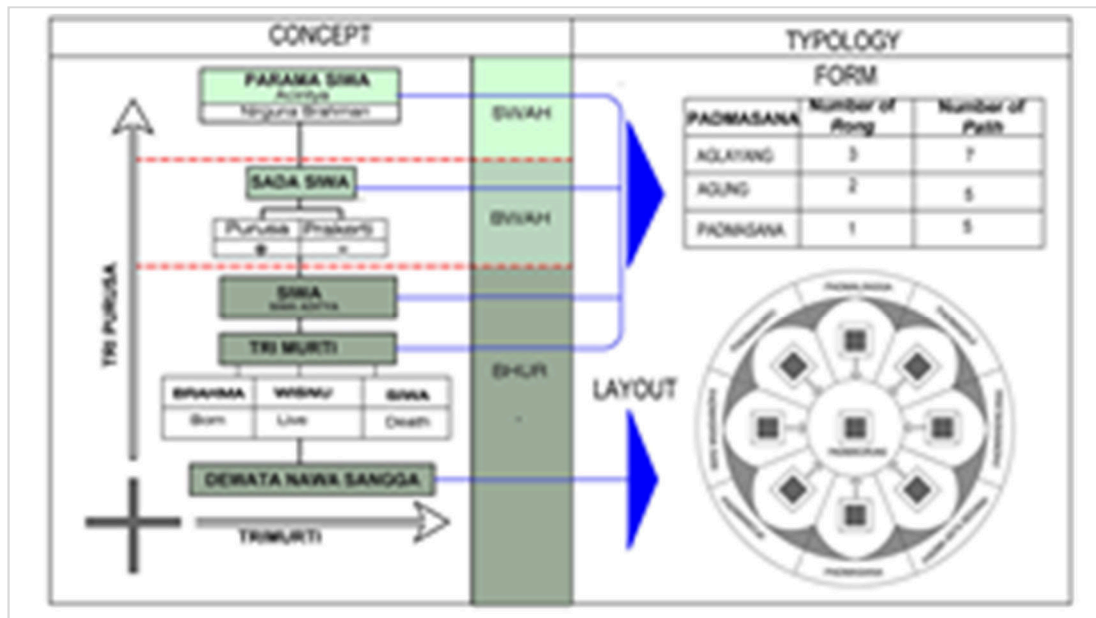


Figure 2. Concept and typologi padmasana

Source: Author, developing from (Wrhaspati Tattwa 1988; Gautama 2007; Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi Bali 1996)

## Methods

This research concentrates on identifying the representation of the concept of God in the architecture of the *padmasana* at Pura Muncaksari. According to Bleicher, representation refers to the production of meaning from concepts through signs or visual forms that are presented (Bleicher 2013). A reflective act is

required in engaging with the visual form of the *padmasana* object so that the meanings produced can be understood and reinterpreted (Letzter and Neuman 2022).

The research process begins with the disclosure of the visual form of the *padmasana*, followed by interpretation to reveal the meanings generated through representation. Within this process, a renewed dialogue occurs among concept, function, form, and meaning.

Empirical data collection commenced with field observations at Pura Muncaksari, documenting the temple structure and identifying the location of the *padmasana* within the temple site. This was followed by a detailed documentation of the *padmasana* found on site, covering the form of the *tepas* (base), *batur* (body), and *sari* (summit), along with the ornaments applied to each of these architectural components. Theoretical data were obtained through the examination of ancient *lontar* manuscripts, academic journals, and books, and were further complemented by interview techniques involving priests and *undagi* (traditional Balinese architectural experts).

At the interpretation stage, a hermeneutic method was employed, with interpretation conducted through three stages: the semantic stage, the reflective stage, and the existential or ontological stage (Ricoeur 2007). Semantic interpretation involves establishing a dialogue between form and function (Ashadi 2024). The form of the *padmasana* is explicated based on its construction, with its constituent parts articulated from the *tepas* and *batur* to the *sari*. The explicated form is then brought into dialogue with function by relating form to its context. In this case, the context is the concept of God within the teachings of Siwa Siddhanta: Tri Purusa, Sada Siwa, Siwa Aditya, and Trimurti. Through the dialogue between construction (the parts of form) and context, the form and function of the *padmasana* can be identified and understood.

The reflective stage represents an expansion of the horizon of understanding, developed through establishing a dialogue between the present and the past. This stage connects function and form with spirit. At this level, a constant mediation occurs between the interpreter's knowledge and experience and the historical past (Faulder 2025). The spirit referred encompasses the conceptual framework of Siwa Siddhanta teachings and Hindu iconography. Through this interpretative process, it becomes possible to identify which concept of God is represented, as well as the meanings embedded in the visual form of the *padmasana* under study.

The existential stage aims to generate meaning at a more ontological level. According to (Gadamer 2004; Ricoeur 2007), the ontological stage constitutes the deepest level of interpretation, in which the interpreter does not merely interpret symbols but enters into an existential dialogue with tradition and the spatial

experience presented by the object. Norberg-Schulz (1980) emphasizes that the ontological stage enables the interpreter to grasp the most fundamental relationships among form, function, ritual, and spatial experience, thereby clarifying the *spirit of place* contained within it.

## Results and discussion

### 1. Pura Luhur Muncaksari and the Form of Padma Tiga

Pura Luhur Muncaksari is divided into three *mandalas*: the first *mandala* (*jaba sisi*), the second *mandala* (*jaba tengah*), and the third *mandala* (*jeroan*). The *padmasana* is located in the *utama mandala* (*jeroan*). This sacred *padmasana* structure, referred to as *padma tiga*, is situated on the eastern side and oriented westward. The *padmasana* consists of three *padma*. Its base form is an elongated rectangle, with three *rong* (empty throne-like spaces). At the *tepas* level, a single *Bedawang Nala* entwined by two naga is visible. The three *padma* stand upon a single *Bedawang Nala* base. The bodies of the two naga intertwine along the *tepas* of the *padmasana* (figure 3).

The *batur* (body) consists of five *palih* (tiers), with the fifth-tier merging into the *badan dara* (the neck of the *rong*). On the rear side of each *batur* of the *padmasana*, at the third tier reaching the *ulon* (the backrest of the *padmasana* summit), three Hindu icons (symbolic ornamental motifs) are placed: a) *Garuda*, depicted as a giant bird with the head of an eagle and a human body, equipped with eagle claws, located on the left *padma* (when viewed from the front); b) *Nandi*, depicted as a vigilant bull, positioned on the central *padma*; and c) *Angsa*, depicted as a swan, placed on the right *padma* (when viewed from the front). At the *sari* (summit), each *padma* contains a *rong* (an empty throne-like space), resulting in a total of three *rong*. Two winged naga appear as *tabing* (left and right side supports) of the empty throne (figure 3).

### 2. Representation of the components of Padma Tiga

#### The *Tepas* (base) section

The base section of the *padmasana* presents the figure of *Bedawang Nala* entwined by two naga, namely Anantabhoga and Basuki, as explained in the Seminar Kesatuan Tafsir (2000).

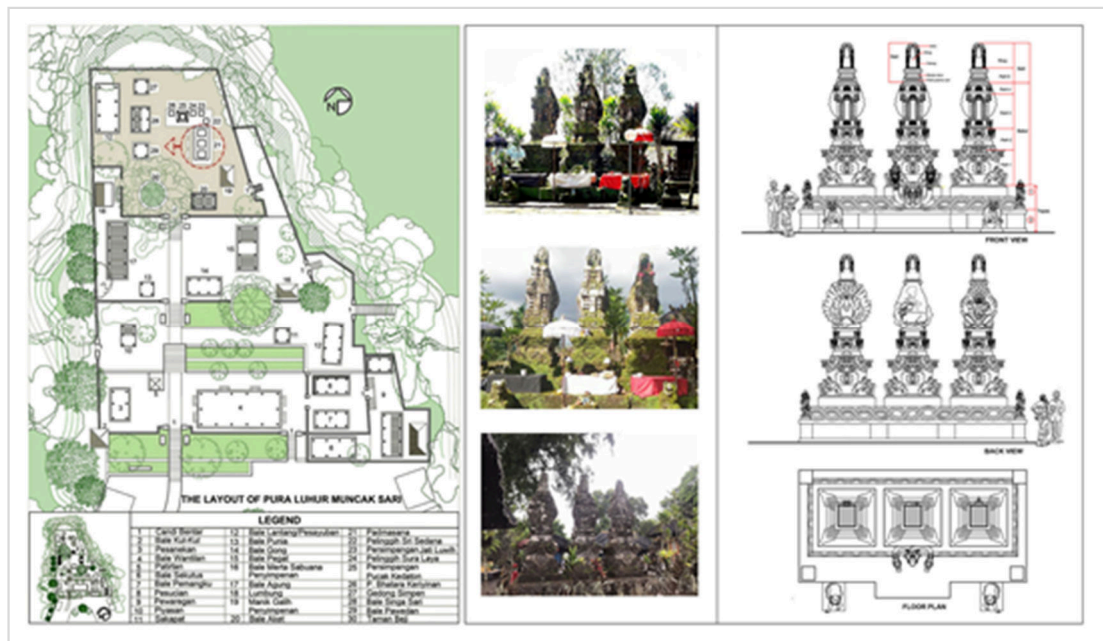
Together, these three figures form a symbolic structure that represents the foundation of the cosmos within the architecture of sacred buildings in Bali.

**Bedawang Nala**

In the *Satapatha-Brahmana*, *Bedawang Nala* or *Kurma* is described as a turtle. In early cosmogonic theory, the turtle figure equates the cosmos with a primordial egg created by Prajāpati, a symbol of creative power. Its lower shell symbolizes the earth, the curved upper shell represents the sky, and its body signifies the atmosphere (Dinas Kebudayaan Provinsi Bali

1996). Through this conceptualization, *Kurma* is positioned as a being that sustains cosmic order and becomes a symbol of the relationship among the three layers of the cosmos.

Balinese society interprets *Bedawang Nala* not merely as a mythical legacy but as a philosophical system that connects cosmic structure, environment, and ritual practice. This interpretation aligns with the findings of Lansing and Sutawan, which demonstrate that Balinese cosmology and religious practice are consistently related to ecological management and natural balance in sustaining environmental continuity (Lansing 2006; Surata et al. 2022).



**Figure 3.** The layout of Pura Luhur Muncak Sari and the shape of *padma tiga*

Balinese society names this figure *Bedawang Nala*, manifested in the form of a turtle’s body with a fiery horse head. This figure is believed to constitute the foundation of the earth; when this foundation moves, earthquakes are said to occur.

The term *Bedawang Nala* originates from the Sanskrit word *vadava*. According to the Sanskrit dictionary, *vadava* is also written as *vadaba*, *badaba*, or *badava*, meaning a male horse resembling a female horse, and subsequently interpreted as a mare (Monier-Williams 1872). The term *vadava* is combined with *agni*, *nala*, and *mukha*, meaning fire from the underworld. This fire takes the form of a mare’s head, emerging from a cavity shaped like a horse’s mouth.

*Bedawang Nala* refers to two meanings. First, it denotes cosmic fire resembling the head of a mare located beneath the ocean. Second, it refers to an amphibious animal, namely the turtle (Idedhyana and Rijasa 2022). The correspondence between the presented figure and the name attributed to it in Bali appears highly congruent. Consequently, this figure is not only used as the base of the *padmasana* but also appears in other important sacred structures.

*Bedawang Nala* at the base of each *padmasana* indicates the presence of *Bedawang* as the supporter of the realms (*loka*). A single *Bedawang Nala* signifies support for *Bhur Loka*; two *Bedawang* indicate support for *Bhur* and *Bwah Loka*; and three *Bedawang* signify support

for *Bhur*, *Bwah*, and *Swah Loka* (Idedhyana et al. 2019).

Thus, the use of a single *Bedawang Nala* signifies that this *padmasana* functions as the *sthana* of God in the worldly realm (*Bhur Loka*). God in *Bhur Loka* may manifest as Siwa Aditya, Trimurti, or Dewata Nawa Sanga (figure 2).

#### Naga

The two naga entwining *Bedawang Nala* are positioned on the left and right sides, with their heads appearing to flank the head of *Bedawang*. Another naga is located at the *sari* (summit) of *padma tiga*, flanking the *rong* (empty throne).

In Hindu tradition, naga (serpents) have been known since the Vedic texts as symbols of natural forces, particularly the elements of atmosphere, water, and earth (Doniger 2009). This understanding is reinforced by textual traditions such as the *Adiparwa*, which recounts the birth of three principal naga, Anantabhoga, Basuki, and Taksaka, hatched from a thousand eggs laid by Kadru, the wife of Kasyapa (Worsley 2012).

Naga Ananta or Anantabhoga is understood as the oldest naga, supporting the earth at the *patala* layer. It represents the element *perthiwi* (solid matter) and symbolizes stability and inexhaustible prosperity, as implied by the meaning of *bhoga*. Ananta is often visualized as a cosmic coil without beginning or end, emphasizing its role as the foundation of cosmic continuity. Basuki, or Vasuki, is regarded as the King of the Naga and represents the element *apah* (liquid matter) (Dwijendra et al. 2020).

*Bedawang* and the two naga (Anantabhoga and Basuki) depict the underworld (*Patala*) of *Bhur Loka*. Accordingly, this section represents the presence of God within a single realm, namely *Bhu Mandala* or *Bhur Loka* (the material realm) (figure 4).

In Balinese tradition, Basuki is associated with the power of water and springs as sources of prosperity and protection. It is often linked to Dewa Baruna, the deity who rules the oceans. A comparison between Balinese beliefs, ancient literature, and contemporary scholarly findings reveals a consistent continuity of meaning. Although the represented figures have undergone development and variation, they continue to retain the fundamental form of the serpent.

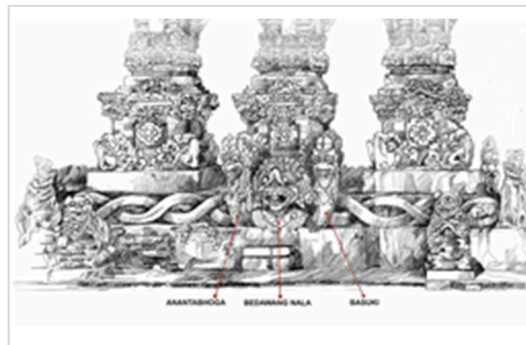


Figure 4. Anantabhoga, Bedawang Nala, and Basuki

#### The Batur (body) section

On the rear side from the third to the fifth tier, which unites the *batur* (body) with the *sari* (summit), three ornamental representations of divine *vahana* (vehicles) are carved, consisting of: a) Garuda, depicted with a bird's head and a human body; b) Nandi, depicted as a cow or bull; and c) Angsa, depicted as a swan.

According to the architectural provisions of the *padmasana* outlined in the *Kesatuan Tafsir Aspek Agama Hindu*, the number of *palih* (tiers) is stipulated to be five (Seminar Kesatuan Tafsir 2000). However, in this *padmasana*, four visible tiers are found, with the fifth-tier merging into the neck (*badan dara*) of the *sari* (summit).

The form of the *batur* resembles a mountain, tapering upward. The manifestation of mountains as sacred places is described in the *Linga Purana*, which explains that the earth contains many mountains, among which Mount Meru or Sumeru is the most important. Located in Jambudvipa, Mount Meru rises to pierce the sky and touch the sun, and it is the dwelling place of the gods (Debroy and Debroy 2015).

The concept of Meru emerged at the beginning of creation as the pillar of the world, connecting heaven and earth. Positioned at the center, Meru serves as the axis of the universe, both vertically and horizontally. Meru functions as a vertical axis that connects the macrocosm and the microcosm, linking the upper realm with the human realm (Witzel 2012).

Meru is regarded as the primordial sacred *linga*, while the earth beneath it is the mysterious *yoni*, comparable to the *padma* or lotus flower. (Idedhyana et al. 2019), further summarize that the *batur* of the *padmasana* represents the *linga*, functioning as the cosmic pillar and central axis of the world. The *batur*, consisting of five tiers, signifies the stages of the human journey toward

God, encompassing birth, life, growth, release from worldly attachments, and ultimate reunification with the Divine.

From this expanded understanding, the body section can be interpreted as a mountain symbolizing the *linga*. The *linga* refers to the symbolic manifestation of Dewa Siwa, one of the principal deities within the Trimurti. The base of the *padmasana* represents the *yoni*, manifested through the convergence of Bedawang Nala (the earth's core or magma), Anantabhoga (the earth's crust), and Basuki (all forms of water sources, from springs to oceans).

On the rear side of the *batur*, divine *vahana* ornaments are carved. The Nandi ornament (in the form of a bull) occupies the central position; Garuda, with an eagle head and human body, claws on both hands and feet, is placed on the left side (as viewed from the front of *padma tiga*); and the Angsa form is placed on the right side (as viewed from the front of *padma tiga*) (figure 5).

In Hindu narratives, Nandi is the sacred bull commonly found at the entrances of Hindu temples. It symbolizes prosperity, strength, selfless giving, and is regarded as a sign of abundant worldly life. Nandi, also known as Nandikeshvara or Nandideva, is the bull *vahana* of the Hindu god Siwa and serves as the guardian deity of Mount Kailash, the abode of Siwa (Stutley 2019). The name Nandi is also used for an anthropomorphic deity who is one of the two gatekeepers of Siwa, the other being Mahakala (Pal 2013).

In Balinese architecture, gate guardians more commonly depict Mahakala rather than Nandi. Nandikeshvara (Nandi) represents a gentler and more benevolent aspect of Siwa and is therefore frequently carved on the rear parts of sacred buildings. Mahakala, by contrast, represents the more fearsome (*ugra*) or destructive aspect of Siwa. As a manifestation of Siwa as time (*kala*), Mahakala consumes all things and symbolizes destructive power, functioning as a guardian of entrances.

Nandi also represents the inner teacher within the self. Spiritually, Nandi signifies deep meditation and steadfast devotion (Darsana 2020). This expanded understanding clarifies why the bull icon is placed at the center of the three *padma*, representing Nandi as the *vahana* of Dewa Siwa and as the guardian of Siwa's gateway.

Originally, Garuda was a deity associated with the sun, bringing prosperity to the world. Garuda

is known as the destroyer of obstacles and serves as a sacred mantra for eliminating disease and poison. Over time, Garuda evolved into a semi-divine yet immortal being, embodying courage, sacrifice, and devotion. This post-Vedic interpretation later developed in Bali (Idedhyana, Sueca, Dwijendra, and Wibawa 2020). Garuda, or Garutman, is known in the Vedas and devotional myths as a mantra for attaining the deepest level of consciousness across all realities (Pattanaik 2017).

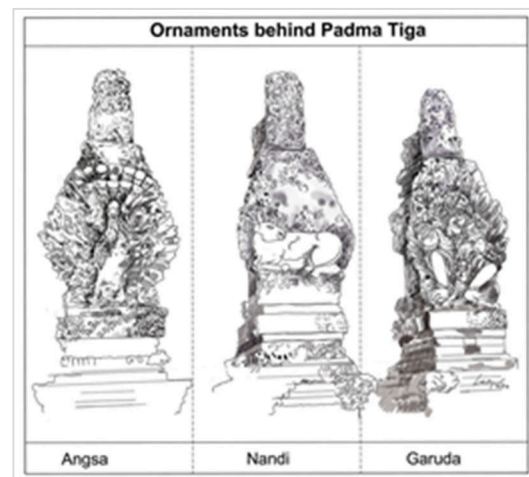


Figure 5. Ornamens behinds *padma tiga*

In post-Vedic literature, Garuda is identified as the vehicle of Wisnu, depicted with a bird's head, radiant like Agni, and also known as Garutman and Suparna terms already applied to the solar bird in the *Rig Veda* (Klostermaier 2007). Garuda is a celestial bird, commonly represented as a hybrid being with wings, human arms, carrion-eating bird legs, and a curved beak-like nose. As the *vahana* of Wisnu, Garuda carries the god upon his shoulders (Lal 2011).

In Bali, the iconography of Garuda as half-human and half-eagle symbolizes synthesis. The human aspect represents intelligence and controlled spiritual capability, while the eagle aspect signifies limitless physical strength, speed, and mastery of the element of air. Garuda thus serves as the ideal vehicle for Wisnu, the Preserver. Garuda Wisnu has also been monumentalized in Balinese architecture through the construction of the Garuda Wisnu Kencana Cultural Park in the Bukit Jimbaran area, which functions as a cultural park and international conference venue.

Swans (*hamsa* or *arayanna*) are regarded as celestial birds possessing the ability to separate milk from water. In Vedantic metaphysical literature, they are frequently used as metaphors for individuals capable of discerning between the material and the spiritual (Acharya 2015). In Sanskrit, the swan (*hamsa* or *hansa*) is believed to possess the ability to separate milk from water when mixed. In Indian philosophical literature, *hamsa* represents the individual soul or spirit. In religious monuments, the swan serves as the vahana of Brahma the Creator and embodies the highest virtue (Mondal 2020). This interpretative framework reveals that the Angsa functions as the vahana of Dewa Brahma, representing God as the Creator.

In Bali, the Angsa or *Hamsa* is also associated with Brahma's *Sakti*, Dewi Saraswati. This figure is commonly found in schools and universities. The iconography of Dewi Saraswati symbolizes boundless knowledge and is typically depicted standing upon a swan, surrounded by other swans, often accompanied by ornamental ponds and lotus flowers. The Angsa icon is also carved on the rear sections of sacred buildings, symbolizing purity. Thus, for Balinese society, the Angsa functions as the vahana of Brahma as well as of Dewi Saraswati as His *Sakti*.

#### The *Sari* (summit) section

The *sari* (summit) is divided into two parts: a) the base, consisting of the *badan dara* (the supporting joint of the empty throne), founded upon the *padmasari* (a lotus-shaped base); and b) the empty throne (*rong*). According to Idedhyana et al. (2019), the *padmasari* and *badan dara* represent the intermediate realm between *Bhurloka* and *Swahloka*, namely *Bwahloka*. This section constitutes a temporary resting realm in the spiritual journey toward higher realms. The *badan dara* serves as the passage through which the soul enters and exits, which is why it appears hollow (figure 5).

The *rong* (empty space) consists of three aligned square forms resembling thrones. The rear backrest is referred to as *ulon*, while the left and right supports are called *tabing*. Agastia, based on the lontar *Dharmasunia* authored by Danghyang Nirartha a Hindu priest of great influence in the development of Hindu teachings in Bali explains that the highest spiritual ascent lies at the deepest core of the *padma* flower, known as *sunia nirbana*, which is the abode of Dewa Siwa (Agastia, et al. 2002).

The empty space (*rong*) within the concept of *panca mahabhuta* represents void or emptiness, analogous to a quantum vacuum that fills cosmic space. Thus, the empty throne at the summit of the *padmasana* constitutes the innermost essence of the sacred *padma* flower and symbolizes the seat of God, corresponding to the icons carved on the rear of the *padmasana*. The three *rong* unequivocally represent the *sthana* (abode) of God as the Trimurti, expressing divine activity within *Bhurloka*, the material realm.

#### Representation of the Trimurti concept

The representation of *padma tiga* can be interpreted through its components: a) *tepas* (base); b) *batur* (body); and c) *sari* (summit), leading to an integrated interpretation.

The *tepas*, consisting of a single *Bedawang Nala* bound by two naga, represents the presence of God in *Bhurloka* (the tangible, worldly realm or *Bhu Mandala*). *Bedawang Nala* represents magma or the earth's core, corresponding to the element of fire. Anantabhoga represents the earth's crust, corresponding to solid matter, while Basuki represents all water sources, corresponding to liquid matter. The *tepas* thus functions as the *yoni*.

The *batur* (body), as Mount Meru, serves as the world pillar connecting the microcosm and the macrocosm, linking the realm of the gods with the human realm. As the central axis of the world, the mountain also represents the *linga* (*achalla linga*). The union of *linga* and *yoni* (*tepas* and *batur*) symbolizes harmonious duality and balance among the forces of creation, preservation, and dissolution. This function is articulated on the rear of the *batur* through divine vahana ornaments: a) the Angsa, as the abstract representation of Brahma the Creator, on the right *padma*; b) Garuda, as the vahana of Wisnu the Preserver of life, on the left *padma*; and c) Nandi, as the vahana of Siwa, who dissolves and returns all things to their origin, at the central *padma* (figure 6).

Through these iconographic representations, it can be conclusively stated that this *padmasana* constitutes the worship of God manifested as the Trimurti. The five tiers of the *batur* symbolize the five stages of the human life journey, from creation to return to the origin (figure 6).

The *sari* (summit), as *sunia nirbana*, represents the abode of God in His manifestation as the Trimurti, expressed through the *rong* (empty throne), which symbolizes *Swahloka*.

Beneath the empty throne lies the *badan dara*, supported by the *padmasari* (lotus base), functioning as *Bwahloka*, the transitional realm

between the worldly and divine realms. This section is flanked by Naga Taksaka, symbolizing air and atmosphere.

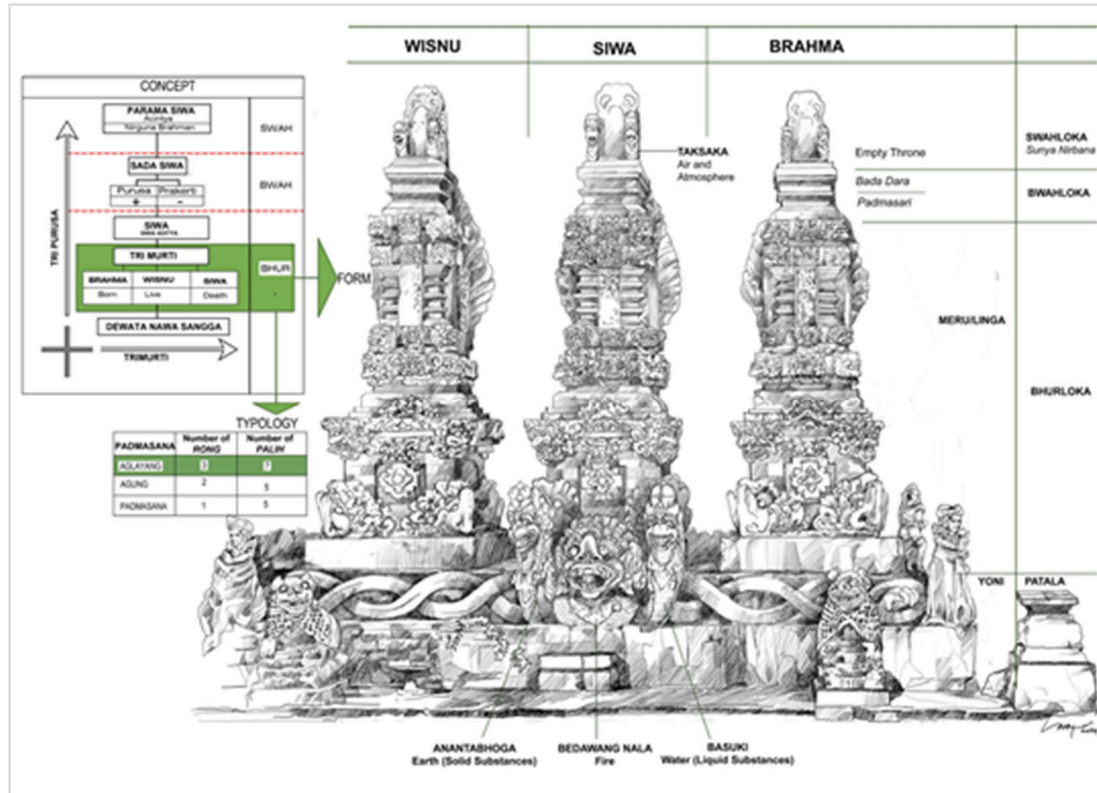


Figure 6. Representation concept of Trimurti in *padma tiga*

## Conclusions

The concept of the Trimurti, as the manifestation of God in *Bhurloka* (the material realm), represents the cyclical process of birth, life, and death. This is visually represented through the use of a single *Bedawang Nala* at the base (*tepas*), bound by two naga. The *tepas* also function as the *yoni*. The body (*batur*) functions as the *linga*, and the union of *linga* and *yoni* embodies harmonious duality and balance among the forces of creation, preservation, and dissolution. These three functions are represented on the rear of the *batur* of *padma tiga* by Garuda (Wisnu) on the left, Nandi (Siwa) at the center, and Angsa (Brahma) on the right. The presence of God as the Trimurti is further represented by the three *rong* (empty thrones) at the summit of *padma tiga*. From a typological perspective, based on the number of tiers (*palih*), *padma tiga* can be interpreted as having seven levels. With three *rong* (empty

thrones), its form-based typology can therefore be classified as *padmasana anglayang*.

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