

# **The Function and Meaning of *Tepas* (Terrace) at a Traditional house of Kampung Pulo, Cangkuang Garut Regency.**

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## **Abstract**

At a dwelling or a house, a terrace has an important role in maintaining privacy of the inhabitant of the house. The role of the terraces is as the first filter before ones entering a house. A terrace in general serves as the area for receiving guests, and as a transitional area between outside and inside of the house. At Sundanese traditional house, terrace is called as *tepas*. *Tepas* is located in front of a building, and serves as a guest recipient. The dwelling of Kampung Adat Pulo consisting of six houses with six families. Among the six houses at Kampung Pulo, only one that is still having its original form. On that house, there's a wide *tepas* located right outside of the main house, while on the other five houses there are no wide *tepas* exist. On those five houses, some of the *tepas* area has been transformed into a closed indoor area. This research is using qualitative approach with descriptive methods, as well as review on various literatures and surveys. The outcome for this research is to conclude that *tepas* at traditional house of Kampung Pulo has a significant role as a space or an area for social interaction.

**Keywords:** *Tepas*, *Kampung Adat Pulo*, Function and Meaning

## **A. Introduction**

House has a role as a shield and a protection, besides its main function sometimes become something that are more sacred. Through the house, the family builds personality and the quality of its housemates. This small part then interacts outside to become a collection of the community and build social interaction. From closed spaces into open spaces, from the private spaces to the public spaces and vice versa, in between the two

spaces there's a transition room that serves as a bridge between the two spaces with different functions. The transition between house in private to public space known as the terrace. Terrace has a role as a reception and a place to interact with outsider. At Sundanese traditional house, terrace is also a part of the house. Terrace in Sundanese named as *tepas*. It is located in front of the house and functioned as reception for visitors.

As a settlement, *Kampung Adat Pulo* is having six families with the same generations of bloodline from the women. Attachment and proximity between houses built closely as arranged in the settlement order. Houses built in radial and facing each other. Houses in this village has been subjected to some change. There's only one house that still maintain the basic layout of the house, the material, and the original shape. Among the six houses, there's only one house that is still having wide *tepas* and its size is wider than the other five houses. This original traditional house is a place for assembly and interaction between residents and visitors.

Traditional house in *Kampung Adat Pulo* is one of the Sundanese traditional villages. It becomes the object of cultural tourism that are mediated by the local government. Located in the village of Cangkuang in Garut regency, this traditional village also serves as an object for cultural tourism. It is opened up for tourists. Visitors can see the atmosphere in the village and interact with the residence. Some residence work as souvenir sellers. Guests or special visitors wanting to meet directly with *kuncen* or for a particular occasion are welcomed in *tepas* area at the original traditional house. Visitor area in this village limited until *tepas*, to keep the privacy of the house. Physically, *tepas* in the original house is located outside of the main house, as seen also in the form of the roof, while the other five houses do not having wide *tepas*. This subject is aimed to reveal the role of *tepas* at traditional house in *Kampung Adat Pulo*.

## **B. Methodology**

Function and meaning of tepas is described through various phases in a descriptive qualitative approach. Direct observation and the space sensing of tepas in traditional house and the environment of *Kampung Pulo*. Data include documentations, size of the building, profile data and interviews collected directly in the field. The processing of the data is arranged together with various literatures and references

All of the six houses basically have the same basic form. It is just that the five houses have experienced renovations so the tepas of the five houses are getting narrowed. So the objects of this study carried out on tepas at the main house which have not yet change its form. The expected result is to found the main functions and the meaning of tepas which has become a of part of a house .

## **C. Results and Discussion**

*Kampung Adat Pulo* is a settlement area that consist of six houses and one mosque that remain the same from time to time. The houses filled by families with the same bloodline of descent from the women, which is the descendant of Eyang Embah Dalem Arif Muhammad. Collected from various sources, it is mentioned that the origin of the houses in *Kampung Adat Pulo* represents the direct descendants of Eyang Embah Dalem Arif Muhammad. He had seven daughters and one son, so that the houses are allocated for his daughters and one mosque was for his son. Until now, buildings in *Kampung Pulo* remain seven and it is not allowed to be added. It is only allowed to be filled by the oldest female descendants of Embah Dalem Arif Muhammad. One house may only be occupied by one household. If the children have a family on their own, they should move

out of the house and can come back when their parents died. In addition, there is also one of the traditional bans that forbid its inhabitant to increase or decrease the number of the house. This is what made the population and the houses in the village able to avoid the density. The sixth houses are placed facing each other, facing the north-south axis with the mosque at the far end forming the letter u. It describes the life of people who lives in kampong, namely *ngariung* (gathered) that shows the social system and close relationship that uphold the value of the brotherhood (Alamsyah, 2011: 106).

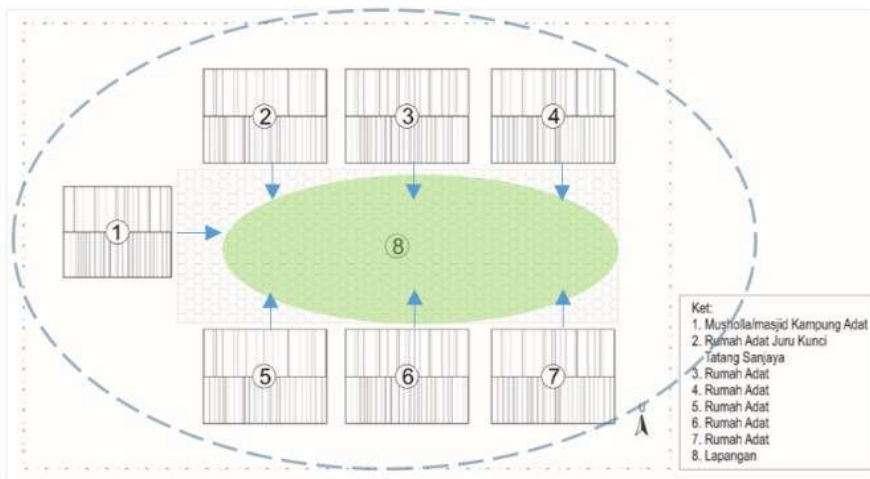


Fig.1. Block Plan – Sketch of settlement of *Kampung Adat Pulo*  
(Doc: Sriwardani, 2019)

The room division at the house in *Kampung Pulo* consists of;

1. *Golodog* serves as stair to enter the house, to sit or do light work such as weaving, bamboo, carving, make handicraft from bamboo or to wash the foot before entering the house.

2. *Tepas* space, (the portico/terrace) with size 5.67 m x 2.50 m serves as a reception and various public activities
3. One guest room that is connected with *tepas*, sized 2.83 m x 2.5 m
4. Living room sized 3.47 m x 5 m
5. Two bedroom size 2.83 m x 2.5 m
6. *Goah* (storage) located in the kitchen, and
7. *Hawu* (furnaces) sized 1.2 m x 1.6 m. This space function as a place for cooking. Kitchen utensils also kept in this area.

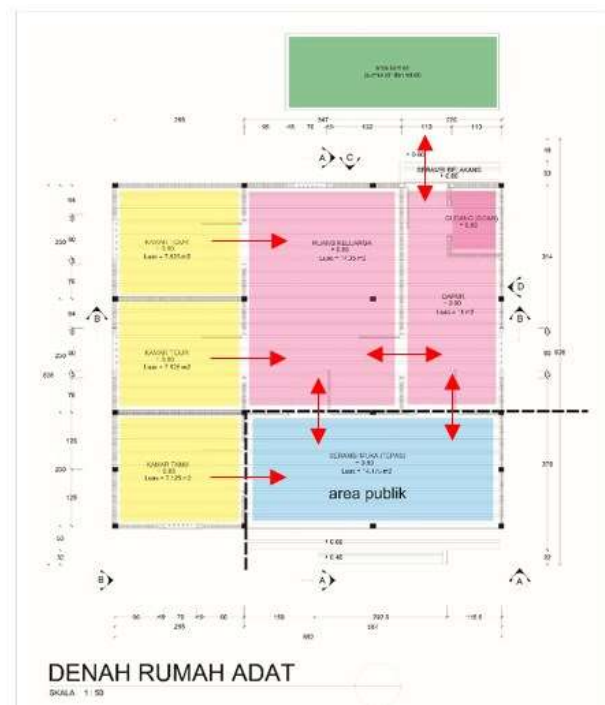


Fig. 2. Layout of traditional house of *Kampung Pulo* and the line of space relation.  
(Doc: Sriwardani, 2019)

As one settlement with families from the same descendant, assembly and sociable between the residents are the main activity of to preserve and develop wholeness in family relationship. The role of public space, such

as field and mosques in this area play an important role to do the joint activity. Not only between its residents, as the tourism village, the inhabitant of *Kampung Pulo* also has an open role in receiving visitors to recognize their existence in public area. Other public area to accommodate the role could also be done in *tepas*. Besides directly connected into the open public area, it is also located toward the private area of the house. According to Saringendayanti (2008: 26), *tepas* also serves as a gathering place for residents, consulting place, and the casual area at the day. *Tepas* is an open space without the walls on the front area, and without the house furnishings.

*Tepas* can be defined as a terrace or portico functioned as a guest reception. In general, the terrace is the transition from outer area toward the inside area or otherwise, and cover by a roof , with one or two walls (kompas.com, 2010). A front porch serves as a reception area before guests enter the house, or serves as a waiting room. As *tepas* is in the front of the building serves as reception area, before *tepas*, there is *golodog* functioned as an entrance stair, and it is also occasionally serves as a seating place and a place to do light work. There is also a *golodog* at the back of the house. *Golodog* is different with *tepas*, in terms of size and shape .

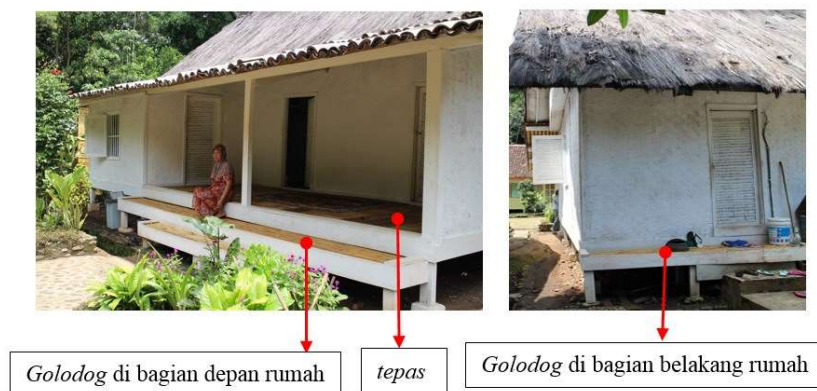


Fig. 3. The position of *golodok* and *tepas* at traditional house of Kampung Pulo (Doc: Sriwardani 2019)

The division of the traditional house can be divided into an area of private and a public spaces (figure 2). According to Marlina (2018: verdant.id), private zone is a space for personal needs, that is its inhabitants are free to their activity without interference from other people, for example the bathroom, the bedroom and the dressing room. Semi-public zone is when every inhabitant in this zone can interact with each other in the house and no inhabitants from the outside, for example is the living room and dining room. The public zone is functioned for common activity that is used for interaction between fellow members of a family with a visitor, it is open without disturbing personal activity, for example the living room, the terrace and the front yard. Generally, the public zone is having access to the main door which is easily in reach from the outside and from the inside.

The function of the house can be specified as the private area and the public area. Central space/ living room is a restricted access for guest or visitors, but when there's a traditional ceremony attended by the people from the village, and an invitation carried in the living room and in *tepas* at one of the traditional house, the function of the living room or family room become semi-public area. The bedroom is a private space, while *tepas* is a public space. According to Alamsyah (2011:104-105,114), house is functioned more than just a place to stay but also have a social function, economic function and become the centre of sacred cultural and moral education. House is as the place to develop social relationships between family members, a place for parents to continue educating their children. The space is arranged in accordance to special needs, namely the front area of *tepas* (front terrace) is to receive the guest or for male family gathering, and used as place for family to rest after doing the daily activity.

According to the village elder, *tepas* (terrace) is as a manifestation of an area for male, it is based on the condition of the time of that male is the one receiving guests, and male or head of the family who let the guests to sit at *tepas*, even if guests are coming from various circles.



Fig. 4. *Kuncen* (the village elder) receiving guests at *tepas*  
(Doc: Sriwardani 2019)

From all of the traditional houses at *Kampung Pulo*, there is only one original house that is having the broader size of *tepas*. The other five houses lessen the area of *tepas* by shifting the wall aimed to expand the house area. Therefore, incoming guests are often welcomed at the original traditional house who has not changed much. It is the house occupied by the village elder (*kuncen*, or the village elder is the husband of women who's the oldest descendant of Eyang Embah Dalem Arif Muhammad). *Tepas* at traditional house occupied by the village elder named Tatang Sanjaya, is the main house to dialogue with visitors, rest, and interact with residents. The broad size of the *tepas* creates an area that can accommodate many people with a seated position on the floor (*lesehan*), and able to make people interact well. The door to the guest room that faces *tepas*, made



guests can interact with the inhabitants of the house in *tepas*, without disturbing the privacy and activity of the occupants of the house.

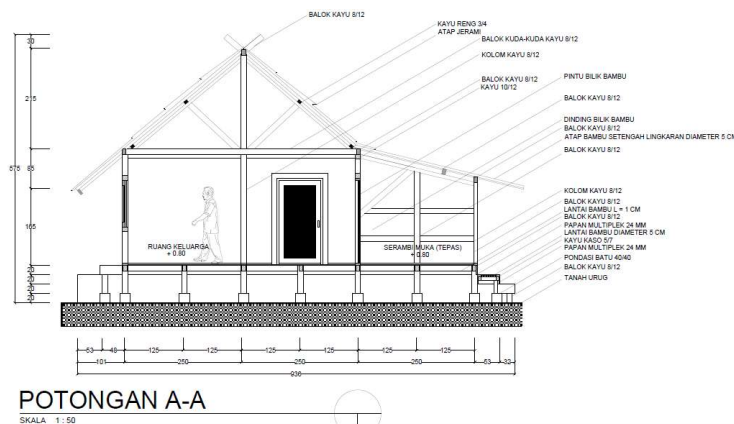


Fig. 5. Traditional House  
(Doc: Sriwardani 2019)

Traditional House (2). With wide area of *tepas*. At *tepas* area there's a door toward the guest room, living room, and kitchen. This front area (*tepas* and guest room) is having the different form of roof with the main house area. At the front terrace, the roof cover is made from *talahab* (the pieces of bamboo compiled). While the roof cover of the main house area is made from *ijuk* (*palm fibers*).



Traditional house (3,5, and 7), having terrace getting narrow. The wall at *tepas* area is widening. There's only one door at *tepas* area toward the house entrance. The form of the roof is not

different between the terrace area and the main house area, the roof material is *genteng* (roof tile).

Fig. 6. *Tepas* at traditional house of *Kampung Adat Pulo*  
(Doc: Sriwardani, 2019)

The size area of *tepas* affects the guests capacity, sitting position, activities and way to interact, although overall *tepas* in every house functioned as reception area.

#### **D. Conclusion**

*Tepas* is also called as a terrace located in the front porch or the face of the building and served as a reception for guests. *Tepas* at the main traditional house (( 2 ) original house of *Kampung Pulo*) has a broad space of 5.67 m x 2.50 m. This is different from the other five traditional houses getting a decreasing size of *tepas*. *Tepas* at *Kampung Pulo* plays a role as a space for social interaction. It becomes the space between the private-indoor and the public-outdoor. *Tepas* at a house is part of the traditional house in a settlement for gathering. Gathering space, including the field and the mosque is needed to get together and socialize in order to maintain and establish the unity of the family system. As objects of cultural tourism, *Kampung adat Pulo* welcomes visitors who want to interact and know their traditional village. In the area of *tepas*, the visitor is received by *kuncen* (the village elder which is the husband of the oldest women in the village). The *tepas* serves as a gathering space, discussion space, the break space after work, and a space to receive and interact with visitors from outside of the village. The large size of *tepas* 14,175 m<sup>2</sup> enables to accommodate enough capacity of more or less 10 people to interact well and sit facing each other. *Tepas* is an open space without the walls on the front area, and without the house furnishings. *Tepas* plays important roles as a filter in front of the house, an outsider who does not relate with family members are denied to enter the house and are only accepted in this area. *Tepas* provides an openness but also decides how to keep the sanctity of the contents of the house that is closed to outsiders. *Tepas* becomes a vessel/ public space in maintaining kinship systems in *Kampung adat Pulo*. In addition it also gives pictures of the hospitality of its residences in receiving visitors or guests.

## **Acknowledgments**

This research is funded by *DIPA ISBI Bandung*. An expression of gratitude given to the *LP2M ISBI* that has been giving the chance for realizing this research. Moreover, great thanks also for the help of resources from various parties in achieving the goal of this research.

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