



Architecture, Spiritual Journey, and Religion

Gunawan Tjahjono¹

¹ University of Indonesia, Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Depok 16424, Indonesia
Virtueray@gmail.com

Abstract. The house as once a place for its dwellers spiritual journey had been an important topic in architectural discourse. Buildings of various religions and places of worship may be experienced as the works of architecture in many parts of the world. Yet the essence of its existence has a root in the human psyche, the feeling of awe, mystery, and fascination. Such feelings led to a path of journey which embedded in the mind of architects or anonymous builders. Dwellers tend to retain peaceful living with the unseen spirit with various forms of rituals at various significant parts of the house. Yet such practices have been challenged in the present digital urban life. Under such conditions in which technological might and capitalistic financial flow, new forms of powerful being, money, and information, have surfaced. We are on the path to respond wisely. Based on mostly secondary information, this paper addresses many studied cases with challenges ahead of the discipline.

Keywords: Religious Architecture, Spiritual Journey, Art and Worship, Ancestor Worship.

1 Prelude

This is not a result of scientific research. This paper is more a position statement rather than a thorough research conclusion. The subject may have social and cultural consequences. Yet architecture play significant role in shaping our behavior as religion in Indonesia is a major issue of social life, and spiritual journey was also practiced in many parts of archipelagoes' dwellers (notes: Every Indonesian's identity card should specify the person's religion and there are six religions officially approved by the government, which are: Islam, Roman Catholic, Protestant Christianity, Balinese Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism).

The terms religion, and spiritual are in many times implying each other and whose definitions are mostly disagreed upon by scholars in the field of such studies in this digital world (note: see various statement through search engines such as Google and Yahoo, ones might find various differs yet sometimes related understanding of those terms). Hence, in this address, I have no intention to define the terms but to state my position that religion relates to: collective, organized ritual acts for the engagement of faith. My understanding of spirit is: any things beyond the material experience by persons.

2 Architecture

I refer architecture to that defined by the most widely circulated dictionaries of the English language such as Oxford, Cambridge, and Webster. Architecture in such instance may be understood as: the science and art of designing and constructing building (notes: There is a famous saying that if you ask ten famous architects about ‘what architecture is?’ they will give you eleven definitions. Hence it is better to turn to dictionaries). I consider building as a set of organized meaningful spaces for humans’ activities. It is in this position, I humbly address these notes, for this special conference.

Architecture, as stated above, is in the mind which expresses through design act, and it does not appear, and it thus, immaterial or intangible (notes: Such statement of that architecture does not appear had become famous saying of the late renowned American architect Louis Kahn). Yet the works of architecture appear as the manifestation of the idea behind them, architecture. Religious buildings around the world are the works of architecture whether they were by architects or not (notes: The buildings which may qualified as architecture might not be produced by architects. The collection of buildings around the world without the involvement of architects had been exhibited in MOMA by Bernard Rudofski in 1964 under the theme: Architecture Without Architects). With this position then the process of making architectural works can be considered a spiritual journey; as design, as a verb, is a process which led to the formulation of how the spaces are organized to fit the expected condition.

If we turn ourselves to archaeological found as evidence of ancient buildings, then the first [suspected house] structure may be traced back to more than a million years ago while humans’ ancestor [or the protohumans] constructed a structure at Olduvai Gorge of Tanzania, Africa [1][2]. Although the function of this 13 feet diametric circled stones remains are still debatable. Yet construction technique is unquestionably there. And this fact led us to that a building cannot be built by one person, construction act must have engaged organized work force, thus collective act involved and the idea preceded must inevitably have to be also there.

3 Religious and spiritual, honoring ancestors

Is human inherently religious [or spiritual] as the term ‘*homo religiosus*’ implied? The answer varies depending on what angle one is looking at the issue. Human beings respect senior as expressed in various forms of rituals in various places. From those of funerals, burial grounds, tombs, altars, sanctuaries, shrines, temples, to various religious related buildings [and sacred pilgrimage sites] of various scales.

Paying homage to the dead, especially to those of blood tie, were possibly a universal experience of *homo sapiens* as evidences of either archaeological found or of continually practiced by relatively isolated tribes in many parts of the world [3] Yet humans are not the only species that pay homage to beloved, respected fellows, or senior deceases. Species such as monkeys, dolphins, dogs, giraffes, and elephants are five species known that pay homage to the death of their relatives [4][5].

Honoring the dead manifests the ancient human's spiritual mindset. We could witness that many overseas Chinese still visit and cleaning the graveyards of their ancestors at *Ching Ming* day, and that many Moslems in Indonesia retain the tradition of grave visit prior to entering the Moslems sacred month of Ramadhan. Such acts reflect that honoring those leaving the world before us are a good thing to do whatever the reasons are.

Ancestor worship may had been practiced by the earlier humans almost around the world as an obligation in the process of establishing larger bond towards the formation of societies in the history of *homo sapiens*. Worship needs an object, and it involves sequential actions and thus spatial arrangement. As such architecture may have involved for best spatial realization.

Within the family, and this is possibly experienced by many tribal communities, as in the observable case of Chinese families [6], takes place in a house [in the present sense of the word]. Ancestral altar used to define a Chinese traditional house layout.

A house, if it also reflects a family's life since the discovery of the concept [of family], becomes the container of the smallest hierarchical social order, whose members obey the house rule set by the social convention which the family was established within its framework at the moment. As the point of departure and of arrival, the house family members start the daily activities there. As such, a house had provided opportunities of spiritual experience. In it many rituals started by each individual it has contained.

It is in the house that the household started the ordered life, and it is thus a micro cosmos of the house members. In this sense it was a mini temple [7]. Hence, so many scholars discuss architecture through house.

The main task of architects, arguably, has been making meaningful (religious included) places. Architects define a part of free and possibly chaotic space a domain and assign it shape and scale so that those who employ in or around it can perform meaningful activities [8]. To be meaningful, it requires certain measures; it depends on those who utilizes and experiences the place involving temporal dimension. It is a place to dwell in, to sustain daily life, and to fulfill spiritual as well as corporeal needs. It is what we understand as home.

Dwelling provides those who live under its protection, warmth, and security. There are so many speculations had been built upon the first house as many architectural theories attempted to construct a universal theory of architecture (notes: Joseph Rykwert, Anthony Vidler, Alan Colquhoun, Aldo Rossi, and Vitruvius are among others, theorizing primitive hut. The relatively recent one is R.D.Dripps) [9][10]. "When did architecture begin?" remains an endless yet important quest and that is not the main concern of this article. Yet it is worth discussing through the Greek terms for house, as most Western architectural thoughts are originated from the thinking of the classical Greek.

There are two terms on dwelling/house in Greek. One is *oikos*, which becomes the root terms of high English *be*; and the German *buan*, which means to build. The great German philosopher the late Martin Heidegger had elaborated them thoroughly with great insight [11]. Another term is *demo* which means to tie and to put together, thus it led to construct.

Demo, to the Greek architectural theorist Demetri Porphyrios is meaningfully related to dwelling. He argues that: "...*oekodemo* differentiates the act of dwelling (as in *oekos*), from the act of constructing a dwelling. In fact, this sense of putting together and constructing as of the Greek *demo* is so strong that it gives rise to an alternative word for house, namely *domos* [12]. Thus, for the ancient Greek, the two words for house: *Oekos* (to dwell), stresses the sense of the house as dwelling, and *domos* (to construct), highlights the sense of the house as a constructed entity"[13].

It appears that in the context of the ancient Greece, constructing and dwelling was inseparable act. Dwelling was a construct. Furthermore, this act generated the **knowledge** which led to architecture as the knowledge of constructing a dwelling place, a house, the possible first building.

Houses and dwellings in the ancient Greco Latin context were produced through the knowledge of carpentry as suggested by the term *arkhetekhton*, [14] which derived the term architect. To distinguish an architect from the common carpenter, the *tekhton*, was by demonstration of the *arkhetekhton*.

An *arkhetekhton* needed to control so many aspects of the construction activities including the knowledge of carpentry, weather, public health, building materials, astronomy, engineering, painting, city planning, and the managerial skill of organizing the work force of many experts, craftsmen, and laborers. All of these knowledges were specified by Vitruvius [15].

The devotion the builder dedicated to the construction process that produced meaningful space inside and surrounding the building for human being dwell is the most meaningful aspect that distinguishes whether the work can be qualified as architecture or not. In this regard, the spiritual dimension plays important role in the construction process. And is that a journey? As any settled beings needed to have a place to settle, it needed a site. So it is better to start with site.

4 Spiritual Journey: Consecrating Sites

Many ancient societies looked for the best sites to settle down for starting a communal life which include possible collective or individual spiritual experience/journey. Sites so selected were often consecrated prior to building acts and became sacred locations where the devotees could get closer to the sacred. Many religious centers are named the center of the world for the believers [16]. The most famous one is the *Kaaba* in Mecca. It is the Moslems' center of the world, so the orientation of prayer must have directed toward it. It was built, as believed, by Abraham and is considered the cross section of vertical axis toward the heaven and horizontal field of human existence [17].

In our daily experience, looking up is to pay respect. The word has to do with looking at, with the prefix *re* as back/again [18]. Looking back reveals attention. More attention giving means the object the person is looking back at have important or meaningful feature that worth attention. Thus, upward position deserves more respectful rank in the social order. Supernatural beings were considered untouchable with tremendous power and they thus deserved a higher place for appreciation. Putting sacred object at highest place possibly was considered natural or getting collective approval as such act has relation with our conscious or even unconscious mind.

Many tribes in Indonesia reserved a place underneath roof top to store heirlooms or symbolic sacred things. At the five-layer customary house of Wae Rebo, the top layer the house dwellers store thing that represent the ancestor spirit. It is the sacred domain of the house [19].

Regarding the highest place as the closest imaginary domain that belonged to the superhuman beings, most single coned mountains inspired the ancient communities as well as us, as singleness stand out to express the powerful presence of the untouchable; and it can easily induce fascinating image. The magnificent and spectacular present of such mountains provided many imaginations for the creation of myth and magnificent works. The sense of mightiness it generated can easily connect the personal or collective feelings to awe.

Hill top had thus been the favorable place for worship and spiritually related rites. Some tribes prefer such a setting for settlement. The ancient Greek selected a hilltop as acropolis for the abode of their gods. The Gorontalo of Indonesia preferred hilltop as graveyard for family are among the cases.

Each temple on the acropolis was devoted entirely for one God. The god's adobe, according to German philosopher Rudolf Steiner, should distance itself from the human beings. Thus, the gods' abodes were separated from their worshipers; and such instance can only be understood in relation to the surrounding landscape [20].

The Tibetans also chooses the highest possible place for their most sacred retreat, the Potala temple. The Sumbanese of western Sumba Island of Indonesia selected preferably a strategic hilltop or high plain for their houses. They located their founders' graveyard at the central part of the site with houses of village elites of the same lineage surrounded this spot.

5 House as sacred structure

Le Corbusier, arguably the most famous architect of the twentieth century whose Chapel at Ronchamp affects architectural students all over the world, had described, by his imagination, the primitive man who ride a chariot, stop, and hammer the pegs to established his tent for temporary stay. Yet prior to dwelling in the tent, the man should protect his God first [21].

The Sumbanese of western Sumba Island selected preferably a strategic hilltop or high plain for their houses. They located their founders' graveyard at the central part of the site with houses of village elites of the same lineage surrounded this spot. The house was also a temple and a meeting place.

Such house was seldom dwelled as most daily events happened at a humbler structure right behind the venerable house whose soaring roof attracts the eyes of the spectators. They placed the representation of ancestral spirit at the space right beneath the soaring roof. It is the highest spot of the house interior. To set the most respected object at the highest place was evident [22][23]. High plain, high roof and high spot are venerable in West Sumbanese culture.

Tribal communities in Nias, Flores, and other Eastern Indonesian islands had revealed a similar tendency in the site's selection at high plain, hilltop for their settle-

ments. There the human dwellings enclosed the ancestral graveyard, and the social hierarchy start with the class of novelty follows the distant from the sacred zone; the closer to the ancestral tomb the nobler. Building noble or customary houses was an act of structuring the cosmos comparable to that of the act of establishing a new village; and thus the tomb of founding fathers occupied the most sacred spot.

The whole Island of Bali was conceptually separated into two main parts of north and south. Each part was then subdivided into three parts according to the degree of sacredness with reference to the most sacred mountain, the Mount Agung [24] The Balinese conceptualized a straight east-west cardinal line across the peak of Mount Agung.

They set the most sacred temple at about the middle of Mount Agung. This appears as that the position of the temple is not at the mountain tip as it is still an active volcano, and also the seat of divine beings. The middle point is as if the place where peoples should approach upward to meet the gods while the divine beings were invited to descend to meet their devotees through rituals.

There are temples built on not at the hilltop, or at the most revered spot conceived by the priests in Bali. The rock cut temple of Gunung Kawi, manifests another Balinese attitude toward a sacred site. Instead of building at hilltop or the belly of mountain this temple uses rock valley by devotedly crafting out several sculptures as a best place for meditation and devotion to the deities. It becomes a silent place for meditation.

It was, as the local myth reveal, the meditation spot of one of the legendary rulers of East Java Airlangga. It appears that immersing the mind of oneself into the landscape has become a good place for a spiritual experience or journey. There are many Buddhist temples in China with similar path by utilizing the rock surface for statues to orient the devotee's attention for meditation or performing prayer.

Sacred site needs not to always be at the hill top, the valley, or the mountain belly. In a particular case, evidence shows that such site can be constructed by digging out the earth surface into a round shaped sunken ground to hold considerable devotees, and then through rites the adherents may strengthening and consecrated the place, such as the *Kiva* of the Anasazi Indian at Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon, New Mexico.

Of course, how to determine the spot involved specialized knowledge belonging to the particular persons who have the same faith. *Kiva* is still in use by the Pueblo peoples such as the Hopi. The sunken ground represents the creation myth of the first man of Hopi and thus becomes the focus of rituals [25].

A plain can also serve as spiritual site. Many sanctuaries, temples, mosques, churches, shrines are located at low plains or be part of cities. Through construction with highly dedicated energy, artists, architects, and the devotees have marked out the world with so many monumental structures which spectacularly attracting our attention when experiencing them. A highly contemplating place which induces our senses for spiritual experience can be constructed as an empty garden as demonstrated by a Zen Buddhist Japanese temple Ryoanji. This relatively small temple has a garden which has endlessly astonished the spectators.

Monumentality is not necessarily measured through the size of a building. It can also be a particular aesthetic expression embedded in the structural elements, or by memorable character of a small garden within it, such as that of the Ryoanji near Kyoto of

Japan, which the famous 20th Century architect, the late Walter Gropius had experienced [26].

Another example which worth mentioning in my file is, the Vietnam Memorial by a National architectural competition winner, Maya Lin, who cut the given ground out and walled the entire cut-out surface. The V shaped memorial has led the visitors going gradually from the entrance down to the deepest point and then walking upward to reach another end of the ground.

The architect leads the visitors go down for contemplation and then up after clearing the mind. It is such a spiritual experience of the monumental impression this memorial had offered, and it thus becomes an excellent work of architecture. She has successfully captured the mind of the visitors to bring back the meaningful memory after experiencing a spiritual journey of the space so created.

Spiritual journey through buildings, with embedded art works, and other meaningful objects is not always connected directly to religious experience. Of course, to some extent religious experience is spiritual, as spirit has always belonged to the soul, as a closely related aspect of any living beings.

Spirituality, as defined by Philip Sherdrake, refers to immaterial reality as the deepest values and meanings by which people live [27]. Today the understanding of spirituality expands and, aside from religiosity, it involves love, compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, responsibility, harmony, and concern for others [28].

All of the dimensions are nonmaterial and noncorporeal. A work created by involving one or more dimensions of spirituality becomes a prerequisite to reveals the meanings. Buildings, landscape, and other man-made objects whether it is building up, digging down or positioning on, will be meaningful in the production of spiritual space if the makers are devoted their spirit into the works.

6 Ordering space, cosmology

To the earlier humans, ordering the surrounding where s/he settled down became a desire for controlling the fear of chaos, or getting lost in the vast unknown landscape or forest. The need to define a position stimulated the tribe developing their own symbolic classification system [29]. What followed was the establishment of cosmology. The pattern derived from cosmology was to some extent manifested through architectural works, such as buildings, and tombs.

Yet there are certain tribe that had minimal possessions with no need for building at all, but only the ceremonial windshield. For example, the ceremonial object, the windshield *waringa* of the Ashanda, the semi nomad Central Australian aborigines, which represents the initial body, sacred history, and cosmic order [30]. There is strong geometrical pattern of *waringa* which expresses spiritually the mental picture of this materially minimum tribe on their environment. It is thus an artistic representation.

Such old practice continues, even though many tribes or communities had professed a new religion. Here are some examples. The Mongolian Yurt was a representation of micro cosmos which represented the social order through a set of complex symbolic classification. The space within a one room tent was then divided primarily into four quarters with the fire place at the center. Each quarter was given a status. The spot

behind the fire at the center end against the entry was the most sacred place for the statue of Buddha [31].

The peasants of Rumania had demonstrated a similar thought. Their houses and churches are built by setting the geometrical center as the most important place. Above the center which is shaped by slightly vaulted low ceiling painted and decorated with magic characters of such celestial bodies as stars, moon, and sun similar to their church.

It was at this spot that a new born baby's head should touch the ceiling. There the order of sacredness in both houses and churches progressed from west to east and the sanctuary was forbidden for the female. Such house was thus a sacred place. Accordingly, its construction process employed many ceremonies started from site selection to the completion of the building. In this regard, both houses and churches transferred spiritual quality [32].

The Javanese houses in Central Java manifested the Javanese cosmology in which the idea of center and duality played the key roles. Inside the house, which was consisted of several structures to form a compound of houses, the abode of the rice goddess *Sri* used to occupy the most sacred position at the middle rear of the completely enclosed room which filled the back row of initial house within the complex.

The center of the initial house which was defined by four major posts was, kept empty. On the front floor of this spot, incense was burnt at the evening of every Thursday. It was also the place where the bride and bridegroom sit during the wedding ceremony which in the past had usually taken place at home.

House building became a very serious obligation for a mature Javanese. There were a series of complex construction rites during the building construction process involving offerings [33]. Most Javanese of Central Java are now Moslem. Some of them had converted the abode of *Sri* into a prayer room. Such sanctuary remains sacred domain.

The house of the Atoni of Timor Island is the sacred domain; thus, the space of the entire house is ordered in a series of inner-outer relations. The Atoni placed a hearth with ever burning fire at the house center. Center to the Atoni is also called inner. The attic which is supported by all inner posts is associated with sky and the floor the earth. The earth belongs to inner, and is considered dry land as opposed to the outer sea. The house is not only a model of cosmos but also an integral part of the universe. As a man is obliged to act accordingly to its rules to fix his position, the house is thus also the center of prayer, sacrifice, and celebration [34].

I have discussed so far various example of the land-based settlements. How about the sea living communities?

7 Instantly shifting religions, the sea people of Riau Island groups

The description below is coming from my own field notes while visiting this sea living society at the neighbor of Batam, Riau Archipelagoes province of Indonesia in 2019. The trip is an annual excursion program of architecture students of Universitas Indonesia. This note may be considered a primary source of data.

The Orang Laut (literary the sea people) of the seashore of Riau archipelagoes can frequently switch their religion according to which religious leader was visiting their village. If an ulama visited there, they profess Islam; but if a Christian missionary visited then they profess Christianity. There is a section of leader's piled house with altar setting for worship (As told by the villagers).

Religion, in this regard, seems to play an insignificant role in the community's life. The fishermen wake up very early in the morning for fishing. It becomes a long journey, which may contain spiritual possession, spending a whole day, several days, or weeks until the fisherman considered a success catch prior to returning home. The housewives forage seaweed, dried it and then sell it to the collectors. While journey at the wide horizon of sea, the fisherman sometimes should sleep in their boat or ship.

The small boat has a low thatch roof called *kajang*. This structure floating the sea surface which has never stable so people inside should keep quiet or still to balance the moving wave. Such instant moving condition could easily induce uncertainty, at least for the temporarily stay visitors. Perhaps this feeling of uncertainty led to the perception that life is uncertain.

During fishing, the fisherman may surely experience strong wind and wave or even thunderstorm. In such condition, they must have experienced the feeling of awe, or tremendous force which they can impossible to overcome or escape. They did, I believe, experiencing in life and journey the moment of unexplainable facts which induced the feeling of mysterious cases. These feeling may lead to fascination or surrender that led to the existence of the significant other; and thus the idea of the holy, the hierophany, or whatever terms related to sacredness [35].

8 Architecture, spiritual journey, and religion

One of the existential wills of a group, a tribe, or a nation is the identity search. How do a group identify with, has become a fundamental question of existence up-to now. Such question belongs to that of intangible aspects of human life and is thus spiritual, as long as it touches the basic values on which base the peoples act in dealings with others. Hence, the search for identity is a form of spiritual journey, one form of many of them may end up in religion.

Religion, to historian Harari, is "...any all-encompassing story that confers super-human legitimacy on human laws, norms and values." [36] That is the view of Harari. Of course there are numerous of different views. Harari contradict religion to spirituality as that religion is a deal but spirituality is a journey. He further stated that religion tend to bind but spirituality attempts to escape [36]. He suggested also that spiritual journey is a journey to explore the unknown sphere.

Yet the identity of any group of peoples is most easily associated with their artistic expression of architectural objects. The same applies to an age or an epoch of human history. Yet "what is artistic expression?" become an everlasting question, and it is seldom perfectly answered.

We perceive a work of architecture through our sensual organs, and yet it is our feeling to make sense of what had been exposed. If it appeals to our senses, then we are in the aesthetic condition [37]. As such it is closer to spiritual sphere of human mind

than to other physical organs to comprehend the work of art or architecture. It requires reflection to comprehend such work. Some work of architecture has a shocking effect to attract the attention and it thus does induce the feeling of awe within a short period of time for comprehension, but some work requires more time for reflection.

The great Italian scholar of aesthetic Benedetto Croce considered art, in regarding intuition, was the expression of impressions, and it was not the expression of expressions [38]. He further explained that the artistic intuition in this respect could not be differed from the ordinary intuition as intensive one but an extensive one. This differentiation singles out the work of art from the ordinary work of the same object, which somehow involving craft.

Of course, art is mostly inseparable from craft, particularly in the field of fine arts [39]. A work becomes art if its craftsmanship achieves the level of novelty. Novelty appears when the originality of a work is identified by those whose expertise is observing and classifying the works of artists and craftsmen. Paintings and sculptures are judged according to originality. How about building? A building becomes a work of art if the implementation of its idea expresses the quality that lends the users admiration. Such quality should be departed from the usability a building which has performed. It is through the craftsmanship that such quality can ultimately be expressed.

If a work of art is entirely observed by the value of skillful work, then it may ignore the idea that make it happen. Hence, the idea that produced the work should have a proper place to be honored. It is the idea that breed further process of the making of it which appeals to our senses regardless of which senses (seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, or smelling) it brings. The conscious effort belongs to the spiritual sphere rather than that of the corporeal involvement, although there can be no strict distinction between the two. Architecture in that sense is the idea behind the work of architecture which manifest itself.

Architecture is a form of art as that in the age of Renaissance. Regarding this, the great American Architect, the late Louis I. Kahn had emphasized that: “only the spirit of architecture exists.” [40] It is through the work of architecture that the subject can be learned. Architecture concerns more on the aspect of knowledge of the architects and thus intangible. The work of architecture offers meaningful spatial order out of uncertainty of a previous [chaotic] environment. It starts by the desire to define meaningful order, and it thus was the act of constructing the cosmos (Cosmos in this discussion is an ordered environment or world). Order appears to be the preference of most practicing architects and designers.

9 Spiritual journey at stake: a reflection

Now most of us are living in a very different world from what I had mostly described. We may rarely experience the relation of cosmology and materialized spiritual expression in our everyday life, as we are now living in a totally different atmosphere. We still build many religious buildings, individual or collective houses, shopping malls and other utility structures.

Yet most buildings we built have to some degree lost the spirituality. What has remained in traditional life elsewhere has undergone drastic transformation whose pace

and scale varies in digitally urbanized settings. Space and time seem to be contracted as most of our activities have been tightly scheduled in various speed oriented digitalized urban areas.

Those who live under the pressure of time and schedule will reduce the time for their spiritual activities. “faster, faster, and faster.” Are the current buzzwords of the bureaucracies and the so called the millennial generation, the generation which will succeed us to run the world.

It is rare in today’s standard that one will choose a hill site for a new place of worship (notes: almost all project I had reviewed placed the buildings of worships within 1 minute walk). Under such condition, the works of architecture and arts has more and more become commodities to be consumed. In this regard, it raises the suspicion whether a work of painting, sculpture, or architecture has still expressed genuine spiritual state of the artist or the architect.

Houses we built now are gradually commodified. They are no more a place to dwell. Peoples are more mobile in ever faster pace than that of the generations earlier. The commercialization of religious attributes becomes a common scene in the urban setting. Instance culture dominates. Time is not enjoyable but consumable. Machine replaces the work of hands. Computer program extends the production process. Alien intelligent is challenging various jobs, including those of architects and artists. Robots will soon replace laborers and security guards.

The knowledge and skill of construction becomes the domain of the experts. The once almost every male member of a community could have mastered in the agricultural field has no longer retained in many traditional communities. The younger generations of peasants and farmers are projecting their future not in their near-home environment at the country sides.

By the restriction of governmental law in Indonesia, which limit the use of wood for construction and the reduction of forest and farmland, architects are facing the shortage of the resources of building materials to construct a traditional building. Carpenters are losing job while the community members are lack of interest to continue the job of their parents who had the knowledge and skill to construct or perform artistic legacy of the community. Under such a condition, migration to city or urban areas becomes a trend for the new generations who are looking for a better life and fortune [41].

In the city whose populations have ever increased and is considered the future of living place, construction technics are very different from those in the villages. The once primacy hand work, *tekhne*, is less applicable now, as machine is taking over what had been done by hand. The hand for craft is now the hand to handle various machinery. Manufacturing various mass-produced building materials are replacing the fine, but rarely produced, crafted materials. Furthermore, the programmed 3D printing can copy those produced by hands.

The refinement of surface of built objects is not determined by skills, but factories. Under such circumstances, quality works do exist. But low-quality works prevailed as projects are competing in delivery time. Less time needed for compassion to the refinement of detail works. The works of architecture have thus become more and more rapidly produced. Architects can no longer control the novelty of their works.

Free expressions are taken over by guided expression. The curators in Indonesia guide artists to produce works (this is a confession of a sculptor who refrained from exhibition as he did not want to be guided by curator). The guild of so-called curators controls the themes of exhibitions in many prestigious galleries. The curator determines what should be done by the artists to fulfill the trend in order to get the work exhibit. Yet AI soon may replace curators.

Commercialization takes commands over the expressive nature. The works of architecture and arts are transforming to match global trend propelled by information technology and multimedia communication. It is not necessary to claim that there will have no novel work under such pressure. Architects can work under pressure as they are creative beings, but the circumstances for more spiritual experience is transforming.

Certain religious ceremonies are now taken place in shopping malls. Wedding ceremony which was once conducted at home as a rite of passage of sacred journey of ones' life, can now be packaged in the function rooms of many hotels. There are numerous commercial committees provide the service for wedding. They provide the background resembling the scene of home in a more lavishly decorated form which is easy to reassemble by employing knock-down construction system (For those who have critical attitude, when visiting a Javanese wedding ceremony, the back-ground for bride and grooms are resembling that of *senthong tengah*, a sanctuary for the goddess Sri in aristocratic Javanese traditional house. For *senthong tengah*)[42].

The spiritual dimension in construction process is taking over by schedule, budget, and profit in the present digital urban context. The project involves client, architect, artist, contractor, developer, banker, and broker which further extends the building process. The longer the process the higher the cost, it is no wonder that urban houses are increasingly unaffordable even by the middle class. It has also reduced the role of artists and architects in producing significant work of art and architecture.

It is the time dominated by speed and pace. Yet spiritual journey needs time for realization. Enjoying the work of art needs contemplation. Now spiritual performance can be manufactured and be consumed. Rituals can be packaged and there is commercial specialist to take over various rituals or ceremonies. Possibly AI may soon challenge the jobs of those specialists. Perhaps there will be another form of spirituality appears to make our world more habitable.

Is money becoming a new divine being? Or will the near future information created by AI a new subject of worship? Time will tell.

Acknowledgments. This presentation may be considered a journey, which leads the readers to the unknown sphere of inquiry. Human is in the ever-changing condition. Architecture would have survived with the spiritual journey whether ending up to religion or not is another issue. Faith, trust, and devotion remain the conscious aspects of our human life. The lengthy architectural journey continues to face any challenge of technological, societal, and catastrophically future. Profit and money dominate the framework of thought for many. Do we need new spiritual journey to answer that. And yet robot and AI is waiting.

Disclosure of Interests. The authors have no relevant competing interests to disclose concerning the content of this article.

References

- [1] <https://www.britannica.com/place/Olduvai-Gorge>, viewed 9.17 AM 18/10/2024.
- [2] <https://www.britannica.com/place/Olduvai-Gorge>, viewed 9.17 AM 18/10/2024.
<https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/who-built-the-first-house-and-what-even-is-a-house/>,
viewed 9.46 AM 18/10/2024.
- [3] Bellah, Robert N. *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, Chapter 4, 175-209. 2011.
- [4] Bhattacharya, Shaoni. "Elephants may pay homage to dead relatives." In *New Scientist*. 26 October 2005. Viewed on 9:32 AM, 19/10/2024.
- [5] Harper Collins Publisher, the link might help: <https://www.harpercollins.com/blogs/harperkids/the-five-animals-that-grieve>; viewed on 3:32 PM 19/10/2024.
- [6] Bellah, Robert N. *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, Chapter 6. 265-323. 2011.
- [7] Lord Raglan. *The Temple and the House*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1964.
- [8] Charles Moore and Gerald Allen. *Dimensions: Space, shape & Scale in Architecture*. New York: Architectural Record Books, P. 7. 1976.
- [9]. Dripps, R. D. *The First House: Myth, Paradigm, and the Task of Architecture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997.
- [10] Cunningham, C. "Order in the Atoni house." In *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 120 (1964), no. 1, Leiden, 34-68.
- [11] Martin Heidegger. "Building Dwelling Thinking." in David Farrell Krell (ed.). *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings From Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*. Revised and Expanded Edition. San Francisco: Harper, 1993. Pp. 343-364.
- [12] E.B. Smith. *The Dome: A Study in the History of Ideas*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.. P.5, 1971
- [13] Demetri Porphyrios. "From Techne to Tectonics." In Andrew Ballantyne (ed.). *What is Achitecture?* London and New York; Routledge,. pp. 129-137. 2002
- [14] Kostof, Spiro (ed.) *The Architect: Chapters in the History of the Profession*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3-27. 1977.
- [15] Vitruvius. *The Ten Books on Architecture*. Translated by: Morris Hicky Morgan. New York: Dover, 1960.

- [16] Mircea Eliade. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, pp.36-47. 1959
- [17] Caroline Humphrey & Piers Vitebsky. *Sacred Architecture*. New York: Barnes and Noble, P. 80. 2005.
- [18]. <https://www.britannica.com>
- [19] Antar, Yori et.al. (ED.). *Pesan Dari Wae Rebo: Kelahiran Kembali Arsitektur Nusantara, Sebuah Pelajaran Baru untuk masa depan*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama. 2010.
- [20] Rudolf Steiner. *Architecture: An Introductory Reader*. Forest Row: Sophia Books, pp. 40-43. 2003
- [21] Le Corbusier. *Toward An Architecture*. Translated by John Goodman. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 133-135. 2008
- [22] F.A.E. Van Wouden. "Social Groups and Double Descent in Kodi, West Sumba." In P.E. De Josselin De Jong (ed.) *Structural Anthropology in the Netherlands*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, Pp. 183-222. 1997.
- [23] Excursi Arsitektur Universitas Indonesia: *Death's Life in Sumba*. Unpublished Re-port in Manuscript. Depok: Universitas Indonesia, 2008.
- [24] Eko Boediardjo. *Architectural Conservation in Bali*. Jogjakarta: University of Gajahmada Press, P.33. 1986.
- [25] C. Humphrey, op.cit., 33... 2005
- [26] Gropius, Walter. *Apollo in Democracy*. New York: McGraw Hill, pp.123-124. 1968
- [27] Philip Sherdrake. *A Brief History of Spirituality*. London: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 1-2. 2007
- [28] Wikipedia's explanation on Definition. Op.cit. Now the reference is from Dalai Lama. *Ethics for the New Millenium*. New York: Riverhead Book, p. 22. 1999
- [29] Rodney Needham. *Symbolic Classification*. Santa Monica, California: Goodyear 1979.
- [30] Joseph Rykwert. *On Adam's House in the Paradise: The Idea of primitive Hut in Archittural History*. (2nd Edition) Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, Pp. 183-192. 1981
- [31] Caroline Humphrey. "Mongolian Yurt." In *Shelter II*. Bolinas, California: Shelter Publications, P.33. 1978
- [32] Ancal Stahl and Paul-Henry Stahl. "Peasant House Building and its Relation to Church Build-ing: The Rumanian Case." In Amos Rapoport (ed.). *The Mutual Interaction of People and Their Built Environment*. Chicago: Aldine, pp. 243-256, 1976

- [33] Tjahjono, Gunawan. "Center and Duality in the Javanese Dwelling." In Nezar AlSayyad and Jean-Paul Bourdier (eds.) *Dwellings, Settlements and Tradition: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*. Lanham: University Press of America, pp. 213-236. 1989.
- [34] Clark Cunningham. "order in the Atoni House." In Rodney Needham (ed.). *Right and Left*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 204-238. 1973
- [35] Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy: An inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational*. Translated by John W. Harvey. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- [36] Harari, Yuval Noah. *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*. New York: Vintage Book. 211. 2017
- [37] Barilli, Renato. *A Course on Aesthetics*. Translated by Karen E. Pinkus. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 32. 1993.
- [38] Benedetto Croce. *Aesthetic: As Science of Expression and General Linguistic*. Translated by Douglas Ainslie. Boston: Nonpareil Books, P. 13. 1983
- [39] R. Sennette. *The Craftsman*. New York: Penguin Books, 2009.
- [40] Richard Saul Wurman. *What will Be has Always Been: The Words of Louis I. Kahn*. New York: Rizzoli, p. 15. 1986.
- [41] Tjahjono, Gunawan. "Dwellings in Indonesia: Tradition, Resilience, Change." Chapter 7 of Ronald Knapp (ed.) *Old Dwellings of Asia: Tradition, Resilience, Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 159-184. 2003.
- [42] Tjahjono, Gunawan. *Cosmos, Center, and Duality in Javanese Architectural Tradition: The symbolic dimensions of House Shape in Kota Gede and Surroundings*. Unpublished Dissertation of University of California, Berkeley 1989.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

