

BALI

IMPRESSIONS OF PARADISE TEMPLES OF BALI



Pura Ulun Danu Bratan

By Jim Omi Cramer© www.baliadvisor.com



Bali's Temples

Before we get started I want to explain Bali's temples. There are thousands of temples in Bali but none are precisely alike. The Balinese temples (pura) are an exposed areas encircled by walls. This is because the Balinese Gods do not abide permanently in the temples but are invited from their abode above Gunung Agung and need a open air a temple unroofed at the top so they can descend and settle in their shrines during festive occasions.

In every village in Bali, there are several temples and at least one small one in each home. One can therefore safely say that there are more temples than homes in Bali. Most of these temples are shrines and might not be regarded as actual temples, but the number of walled compounds are believed to reach to a total of 10,000. The word for temple in Bali is pura, which in Sanskrit means 'space surrounded by a wall'. Simple shrines or thrones are found everywhere and at all sorts of unusual places.

Although many temples are quiet and uninhabited, they are transformed into colorful, active and ornately decorated places of worship when there is a festival. Offerings would be made, while performances of traditional dances and gamelan, cockfighting and gambling liven up the atmosphere.

All temples derive their orientation from the mountains and the sea. Kaja, which is the direction toward the mountains, is the most significant direction. The direction toward the sea is kelod. Sunrise, or kangin,

also plays a major part and most secondary shrines are found in this direction

Temple Types

There are three basic types of temple in every village. **Pura Puseh** (temple of origin) remains the most prominent and is reserved for founders of villages. It is always situated at the kaja (towards the mountains) end of the village. In the middle of the village is the **Pura Desa**, which is for the spirits that protect and bless the villagers in their daily lives. The **(Pura Bale Agung)** is sometimes attached to the Pura Desa or is in the center of the village. These are meeting places to share ritual meals on auspicious days with each other and defied ancestors because they are founders of the social order. At the kelod (towards the sea) end of the village is the **Pura dalem** or temple of the dead. It is here where the souls of the dead in their first stage after death are purified as not to bring harm to the village..

The Pura Dalem would have representations of Durga, the dark and terrible side of Shiva's wife, Parvati. Both Shiva and Parvati have a creative and destructive side, and it is their powers of destruction that are honored in the Pura Dalem. It is here where the souls of the dead in their first stage after death are purified as not to bring harm to the village..

Since rice is such an important produce in Bali, there are temples dedicated to the spirits of irrigated agriculture. These temples are called **Pura Subak** or **Pura Ulun Suwi**. There are also agricultural temples, which are usually small shrines in the rice fields. It is here where the Balinese can thank the gods, especially **Dewi Sri**, from whom they receive blessings and fertility for their work.

The largest of Bali's temples are the state temples such as **Pura Tamen Ayun** in Mengwi and the largest and most holy temple in Bali **Pura Besakih**. Rather than belonging to homes or villages these state temples belong to districts or in the case of Pura Besakih all of Bali.

Balinese temples are generally separated into two or three sectors: a front court yard, which contains the bale **Kulkul** or slit drum tower. This drum summons the villagers to work or to announce the presence of the arrival of the gods. There is usually a **balepawaregan** or kitchen where women cook the rice and rice cakes necessary for communal offerings and the shed like building is the **bale paebatan**, where the men prepare the meat for offerings. In the central courtyard is the bale agung or meeting hall and pavilion for the gamelan orchestra. Most of the dances are performed in this central courtyard. The innermost temple is intended for the actual reception of the gods. Shrines and altars are usually arranged in a row. It is here where the offerings are placed and the gods can receive their essence. The **bale pawedaan** is a pavilion where the Brahman priest conducts rites to produce holy water.

While attending ceremonies remember these are religious occasions. **Always wear a sarong and sash. Do not walk in front of people praying nor sit or stand higher than the priest. Avoid using flash cameras and obey the directions of the attendants. Women are not allowed to enter the temples when menstruating.**

BALI'S TEMPLES

Pura Besakih

Bali's most important temple located on the slopes of Mt. Gunung Agung in Northeast Bali. The temple probably d The temple is actually a complex made up of twenty-two temples that sit on parallel ridges. It has stepped terraces and flights of stairs which ascend to a number of courtyards and brick gateways that lead up to the main spire **Meru structure**, which is called Pura Penataran Agung. All this is aligned along a single axis and designed to lead the spiritual upward and closer to the mountain.

Tanah Lot

Tanah Lot means "Land and Sea". The temple sits on a large offshore rock which has been shaped continuously over the years by the ocean tide. Tanah Lot is claimed to be the work of the 15th century priest Nirartha. During his travels along the south coast he saw the rock-island's beautiful setting and rested there. Some fishermen saw him, and bought him gifts. Nirartha then spent the night on the little island. Later he spoke to the fishermen and told them to build a shrine on the rock for he felt it to be a holy place to worship the Balinese sea gods. The Tanah Lot temple was built and has been a part of Balinese mythology for centuries. The temple is one of seven sea temples around the Balinese coast. Each of the sea temples were established within eyesight of the next to form a chain along the south-western coast. Go at Low Tide to get blessed from the Holy Springs underneath the Temple.



Also a very beautiful spot to see the Sunset.

Uluwatu

Uluwatu is a the thousand-year water temple (Pura Luhur) of Uluwatu is one of Bali's six holiest temples in Bali called "temples of the world" "Ulu" means head, "watu" means rock and "luhur" implies heavenly. The temple is perched 825 feet on a ledge of rock and offers a panoramic view across the Indian Ocean to the island of Java, and a world-class surfing venue below.



Pura Luhur Batukau

This 11th century temple is situated in a beautiful mountain setting in Tabanan region of Bali.. This temple is dedicated to the God of Mt. Batukau and is one of Bali's key directional temples. This temple is considered very sacred to the Balinese and is often covered by mist, which adds to the mystical atmosphere. If you are going to the temple visit Jatiluwih on the way back. Situated majestically in the hills 850 meters above sea level, Jatiluwih means "really beautiful". An appropriate name indeed with expansive views across terraced rice paddies, undulating hills and valleys. After visiting the temple arrive at lunchtime and enjoy a meal in the restaurant while soaking up the view, cool climate and fresh air.



Pura Ulun Danu Bratan

This temple is located on the shores of Lake Bratan near Bedugul in Bali's central highlands. As you travel on the main south to north road and climb through the rice terraces and past the cocoa plantations you will reach the village of Bedugul with beautiful views of Bali's south coast. Follow the short descent through the village of Candi Kuching (with its beautiful flower market). Lake Bratan is one of three lakes formed in the volcano crater and on its shores is this beautiful temple of Pura Ulun Danu Bratan. This 17th century temple is dedicated to the goddess of the lake "Dewi Danu" You are forbidden to enter the main courtyard of the temple, unless you bringing offerings and dressed properly for prayer. The small island just off the shore has a 11 tiered meru dedicated to Vishnu and a three tiered meru for Shiva.

Pura Ulun Danu Batur

This temple is dedicated to the goddess of the lake. High in the mountains near Batur. This temple houses over 90 shrines and has stunning views of the Crater Lake and Mt. Batur. Sunrise is beautiful ! Built in 1926 this is the second most important temple complex of Bali, after the mother temple Besakih. The temple is dedicated to Dewi Batari Ulun Danu, goddess of lakes and rivers Until 1926



Pura Ulun Danu and the village of Batur were located down in the caldera, at the foot of the Batur volcano. The volcano erupted violently in 1926, both the village and the temple were destroyed except for the most important shrine, an 11-tiered meru dedicated to Dewi Batari Ulun Danu. The villagers moved to the highest and oldest rim of the caldera where they rebuilt their village and the temple.

Pura Tirta Empul

This temple, located in central Bali, is reputed to have holy healing waters. The name refers to the crystal clear stream that is the source of the spring. For more than a thousand years, Balinese worshipers have been drawn to this temple for its curative powers. Legend has it the God Indra shot an arrow into



the ground to create the Spring.

Pura Gunung Kawi

Also located in the village of Tampaksiring. This complex can be reached by descending a steep stone stairway (300 steps) into the gorge of the Pakrisan river, you will see the royal tombs and hermitage carved out of solid rock.

Pura Taman Ayun.

Located near the village of Mengwi. This temple is surrounded by a moat with lotus flowers. Various shrines represent Bali's holy mountains. This temple was built in the middle of the 18th century by the King Cokorda Munggu. This is considered a house temple.

Goa Lawa (Bat Cave temple)

Revered as a sacred site for the God Brahma, this cave also houses thousands of bats that hang above the temple cave that is reported to lead to under the volcano Gunung Agung. It is located in East Bali and is considered one of the 6 major temples of Bali. *note Beware of hawkers.