

Public Space and Ritual in a Sundanese Traditional Hamlet

Case: *Kampung Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar, Sukabumi Regency, West Java
by:

Sri Rahaju B.U.K.

Dept. of Architecture, Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB)

wd_sumberdaya@sappk.itb.ac.id

Nuryanto

Dept. of Architecture, Indonesia University of Education (UPI)

adhinurgumilar@yahoo.co.id

History of the Formation of *Kampung Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar

Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptagelar is a small hamlet, the place of the central government of an ancient traditional community of Ciptagelar (*Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar), which resided in several hamlets in the surrounding areas. The community is a part of the United Ancient Traditional Community of South Banten (*Kasepuhan Kesatuan Adat Banten Kidul*). Ciptagelar was built after the community leader had have a divine revelation or dream to move (*hijrah wangsit*) from the old location. According to ancient believe, it carried along an order from their ancestors, to leave their old hamlet, move, and built a new one at a certain location. This dream could happen several times to a leader, regardless of place and time.

According to oral history, the events of moving motivated by *hijrah wangsit* could still be traced back to the time of *Abah* Ardjo, the late community leader. During his reign he had moved the central hamlet (*kampung gede*) several times. First, he had a dream to move *kampung gede* from Cidamar to Sirnaresmi, Cisolok District. Second, he moved from Sirnaresmi to Ciganas which he changed its name to Sirnarasa. *Sirna* meant lost, *rasa* meant "taste or trace" from city life. It's meant that the community of the village isolated themselves from the influence of city life. After settled down for nine years, he moved again the central hamlet to Linggarjati; but after only a year, he abandoned Linggarjati to become rice field and moved *kampung gede* to Datar Putat, which he changed its name to Ciptarasa. He died there and was succeeded by his eldest son from his sixth wife, Encup Sucipta. Because he was still young (*anom*) at that time, he was called *Abah Anom*. During his reign, he had a dream to move *kampung gede* to

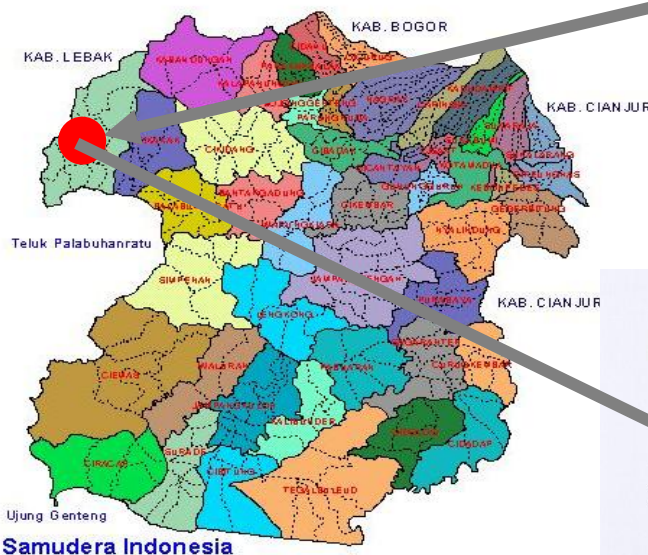
Cikarancang, which he then named it *Kampung Gede* Ciptagelar. It was located in Cisolok District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia (fig. 01).



Map of Indonesia



Map of West Java Province



Map of Sukabumi Regency



Map of Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptagelar

Fig. 01: Map of location research of *Kampung Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar

Source: Internet

When moving to Ciptagelar, he bought with him several buildings: *leuit si Jimat*, *pangkemitan*, *pangnyayuran* and *ajeng wayang golek*. *Si Jimat* (The Amulet) was the name of the main grannary, which they believed was the throne of Nyi Sanghyang Sri Pohaci, the rice goddess, symbol of fertility. *Si Jimat* was used as a cooperation facility, to store and lend rice for the member of community in need, maintained by the village elders. *Pangkemitan* was the security post of the people. *Pangnyayuran* or the community kitchen, was a public facility which cater food for the whole community, during construction of the hamlet or at ritual times. *Ajeng wayang golek* was a building to store art properties and a place to perform puppet *wayang* show, at ritual following the completion of the hamlet construction (*ngaruwat lembur*) (Nuryanto, 2006).

The name Ciptagelar was given by the village elders through a ritual. *Cipta* was the last name of *Abah Anom* (Encup Sucipta) which meant to create; *gelar* meant showing one self. Ciptagelar was then meant a hamlet created with openness; the community were ready to open themselves to the outside world while holding tightly to the tradition of their ancestors. According to the elders, their community would live in the open, unlike before when they still hid in the dense. It was meant that the people of Ciptagelar were willing to open themselves, to interact and integrate into larger society, unlike before when they were still a close community. They were willing to live as member of a nation, based on the principles: obey the law, help and serve the nation, participate with others (Nuryanto,2006).

The construction of *Kampung Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar was carried out by the participation of all community members. The erection of buildings were executed as integrated part of the construction of the hamlet; people called it like fresh and blood. According to the elders, just one month after moving to this location motivated by *hijrah wangsit*, Ciptagelar had have nine new building, excluding the existing houses. Those building were *bumi ageung* (the main house, for rituals and lodging), *bumi tihang awi* (the house of the leader, made of bamboo/*awi*), and seven other houses (Nuryanto,2006).

Public Space in *Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptagelar*

Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptagelar is today the centre place of rituals for the community of *Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar. It was built on a slope of the highland surrounding Mount Halimun, at 1000-1050 metres above sea level. It's remote location can only be reached by four wheel driver jeeps, small trucks or motorcycles. A sedan can only reach *Pangguyangan*, a small hamlet, two hours ride from Ciptagelar. From *Pangguyangan* to Ciptagelar the ascending way pass over Ciptarasa, the old hamlet, before it pass through Mount Halimun National Park (TNGH). Ciptagelar lies on the other side of the park. The only road to Ciptagelar is three meters wide, has steep slopes and unpredictable curves, which lies between slope of hills and deep valleys. It was made by the community at the order of the leader utilizing manually compacted split stones directly on the soil, without asphalt. Some of them are still unpaved (fig. 02).

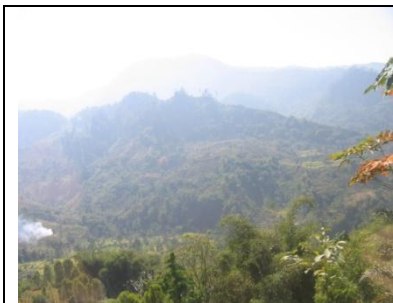





		
Panoramic view of Mount Halimun.	Green hilly surroundings of <i>Kampung Kasepuhan</i> Ciptagelar.	Ascending road to <i>Kampung Kasepuhan</i> Ciptagelar.
		
Road pass through the forest to <i>Kampung Kasepuhan</i> Ciptagelar.	Wet sticky red soil road during rainy season.	Houses between hills and valleys in <i>Kampung Kasepuhan</i> Ciptagelar.

Fig. 02: Natural surrounding and access to *Kampung Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar.
Source: Nuryanto, 2006.

Out of the National Park, the road descends to the north. At Ciptagelar the road turns west directly into a large empty square (*alun-alun*). From it the road splits; to the west it reaches Cikelet hamlet, and to the north it descends to a dead end, forming a south-north axis of the hamlet. Small paths form as branches of the main road. Ciptagelar is surrounded by steep slopes of the Park as it's south border; the existing hamlet on the east; valleys rice fields, open grass lands and fish ponds on the west and north side. A group of grannaries (*leuit*) and rice-pounding sheds (*saung lisung*) are located on the north-east, west, and south west outskirts of the hamlet (fig. 03).

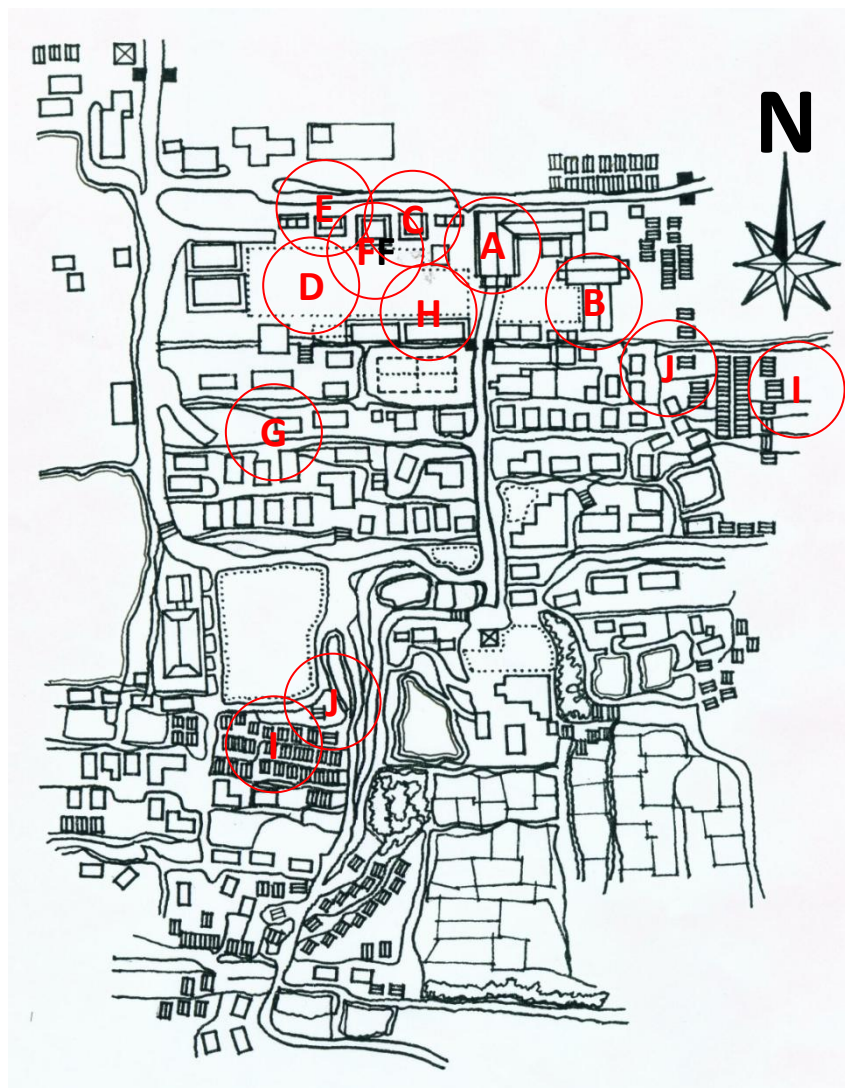


Fig. 03: Lay out of *Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptagelar*.
Source: Nuryanto, 2006.

A. <i>Bumi ageung</i> (the central of rituals)	F. <i>Podium adat</i> (a stage for delivering speech)
B. <i>Bumi tihang awi</i> (the house of the leader)	G. <i>Panggung hiburan</i> (stage of music and dance)
C. <i>Leuit si Jimat</i> (the Amulet)	H. <i>Bale adat</i> (large hall for guest during ritual)
D. <i>Lapangan/alun-alun</i> (square of ceremonial)	I. <i>Leuit warga</i> (grannaries of people)
E. <i>Tajug</i> (small mosque)	J. <i>Saung lisung</i> (rice-pounding sheds)

Facilities in Ciptagelar are named *alas* (place). According to its function, there are three kinds of *alas*: *keur semah*, *nu boga imah* and *balarea*. *Keur semah* means facilities for outsiders such as guest of honour of the village leader-either connected with ritual or everyday activities, such as: guest house for the staff of the National Park and *bumi ageung*. *Keur nu boga imah* are facilities for the residents, such as houses for common people, houses for the village elders, granaries, stables, etc. *Keur balarea* are facilities for serving the community (either residents or outsiders) such as: *leuit si Jimat* (the main granary), *bale adat* (large dining hall for guest during ritual times), *pangnyayuran* (public kitchen), *podium adat* (a stage for delivering speech during ritual times), *ajeng wayang golek* (a building to store and perform puppet *wayang* show), *panggung hiburan* (stage for music and dance performance), and *tajug* (small mosque).

Among those, facilities for the community (*balarea*) have the most important function, because they are related to rituals. They are built at the edge surrounding the main square (*alun-alun*), which measured 28x102 s.q.m, at the highest zone level of the hamlet (*daerah girang*). At the lower zone level (*daerah hilir*) there is volley-ball field, 12x6,5 s.q.m, as a facility for the youth. At harvest time, the side of the main square and volley-ball field are used by for drying paddies and fire woods. Public spaces are spaces used for public function, so that *alas keur semah* (facilities for outsiders) and *alas keur balarea* (facilities for the community) can be called public space. In this case, public spaces are not limited to open space such as *alun-alun*, but it can also be in the form of a building or a space inside the building. People usually don't differentiate between interior and exterior spaces (fig. 04).



		
The main grannary (<i>leuit si Jimat</i>).	Large dining hall for guests during ritual (<i>bale adat</i>).	<i>Pangnyayuran</i> ; as public kitchen at <i>seren taun</i> ritual.
		
Stage for delivering speech during ritual times (<i>podium adat</i>).	Building to store and perform puppet wayang show (<i>ajeng wayang golek</i>).	Stage for music and dance performance (<i>panggung hiburan</i>).
		
Small mosque (<i>tajug</i>).	Volley ball field (<i>lapangan voli</i>).	Daily situation of the road in <i>Kampung Ciptagelar</i> .

Fig. 04: Facilities of *Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptagelar*
Source: Nuryanto, 2006.

Rituals and Public Space in *Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptagelar*

The community of Ciptagelar is a traditional community which still hold the rules set up by their ancestors (*tatali paranti karuhun*); which as descendants, they have inherited it for generations. For them, *tatali paranti karuhun* are used as a line of conducts, which they stick to tightly for the safety of their lives. Performing rituals means to obey the rules of their ancestors; while abandoning rituals means calamity, caused by anger of their ancestors. In their opinion, *karuhun* or ancestors are people who have died, who possess supernatural power far above human, or the founding fathers which they believe

were descendant of ancient kings of Padjadjaran or reincarnation of the gods, like *sesepeuh girang* (the village leader). For them, if the good relationship with *karuhun* is maintained, there will be safety and blessing; if the rules of the ancestors are held tightly and followed exactly, the strength of *karuhun* will protect them. There are many kinds of way for the people of Ciptagelar to make and maintain harmonious relationship with their ancestors, among others are conducting traditional rituals. They consist of *seren taun* (annual ritual), *ngadegkeun bumi* (ritual before erecting a house), *ngaruwat bumi* (ritual before entering new house), *susuguh* (offering), *amit* (asking permission), etc. Beside their social values, those rituals mean as a virtual bridge which connect the communities desire and hope to their ancestors.

Seren taun is an annual ritual, as a form of gratitude from the whole community of Ciptagelar to Nyi Sanghyang Sri Pohaci (the rice goddess) for the abundant harvest, and as a hope that it will continue next year. *Ngadegkeun bumi* or *ngadegkeun imah* and *ngaruwat bumi* are the fundamental rituals of constructing and entering a new house (see fig. 04). The future inhabitant carried out a particular ritual by putting several kinds of offering at a certain site of the future house, asking a safe and easy construction process to the domestic power of the soil. *Susuguh* (offering) consists of a glass of water, some incense and flowers are put in *padaringan* (rice-barn inside the house) for the goddess of rice. On Monday and Wednesday evenings, *susuguh* are also put in four corners or at least one corner of the house. *Amit* is a ritual for asking permission to build a house to their ancestors by making a visit to their graves. *Amit* is also often done before cutting a big tree, asking permission to the possessive powers of the forest. The interior spaces of the house to be used for conducting ritual activities are the kitchen, *tepas imah* (guest room) or *tengah imah* (living room), which often are not so large. Rituals at the exterior needs a larger space like *alun-alun* (the main square) and front yard of the main grannary (*leuit si Jimat*). The celebration following the ritual often needs every space available at the hamlet (fig. 05).



Fig. 05: Small rituals and public space in *Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptagelar*.
Source: Nuryanto, 2006.

Seren taun is the biggest and the most celebrated of all the rituals concerning rice cultivation. It is also the most colorful event, involving the greatest number of local participants. Far exceeding other events like Idul Fitri (celebration in closing of the fasting Month of Ramadhan), or independence day in August. Every member of the community, even those who live far away outside *Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptagelar* are obliged to come for family gathering.

Two days before the celebration, all places were transformed temporarily into new functions to support the celebration. The main square (*alun-alun*) became parking space for cars and motorcycles of the guests who want to look at the ritual. Sport field and school yard were transformed into open theatre for the youth to watch music band and traditional dance, while playing football. Grass lands (*sampalan*) which usually were used for herding cows and sheeps and drying firewoods became the place for erecting small shops and food stalls.

The facilities for serving the community (*alas keur balarea*) were prepared for the ritual and for receiving guests. *Bumi ageung* started serving every guests with board and lodging. From the terrace, the guests can eat, drowse, chat, while watching the all night long puppet *wayang* show. Foods were served at the living room three times a day for every guests. The public kitchen (*pangnyayuran*) produced food continuously; the cooking was done by shifts of voluntary local women with some male assistants. All

the foodstuffs were provided by *Abah Anom* and the gifts from all the member of the community.

The facilities wich in everyday life are the facilities for the residents (*keur nu boga imah*) were also transformed into public space for several days: before, during and after the celebration. The function of the house yards were transformed from private chatting places into sudden places for selling and bargaining. *Lolongkrang imah* (alleys beside the house), a narrow space about 150-185cm, were transformed into free motorcycle's parking space. Pedestrian and the front yard were used for trading by the seasonal hawker, who put tents, tables, or mats. The terrace of the house became place for chatting; the living room were transformed into sleeping place for guests who couldn't be accommodated in *bumi ageung*, while the residents of the house with their relatives slept in the kitchen. Often the residents kneuws only one or two of their guests. But even if the guests were complete strangers, the local people were willingly accept them, to honour the guests who wanted to look at the celebration (fig. 06).

		
<p>Playing football while watching music band in sport field.</p>	<p><i>Pangnyayuran</i>; public kitchen with shifts of women.</p>	<p>Living room for sleeping and dining guests</p>
		
<p>Open space transformed into small shops and food stalls.</p>	<p>House yard became place for selling and bargaining.</p>	<p><i>Lolongkrang imah</i> (alleys) became parking lot for motorcycle.</p>

Fig. 06: Transformation of function of spaces at *seren taun* ritual in *Kampung Ciptagelar*.
Source: Nuryanto, 2006.

On the day of the ritual, the way from *Kampung Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar to Cikelet were closed. It was transformed into the starting place of the ritual. In one side of the way, a long bamboo rack was erected for hanging bundles of paddy. On the other side was parking lots for motorcycles. The wholeway was full of people ready to begin the procession. The main square were once again transformed into an open place, because the parking vehicle had to be removed to other open spaces outside the hamlet. *Alun-alun* were now ready for the ceremony. Bamboo banners and colorful flags were erected at the edge of the square, as barrier for people who would watch the ceremony. They sat on the stairs of the large hall (*bale adat*) or standing as crowd surrounding the main square outside the bamboo fence.

The ceremony began at 10.00 P.M. The parade started from the paddy racks (*lantayan pare*). Each man brought several bundles of paddy on their shoulder using a long big bamboo carrying pole, each bamboo had square holes. When the men let the dangling bundles of paddy swing, they produced sounds rithmically. The procession entered *alun-alun*, lead by several dancers and women who brought offerings followed by men playing bamboo music instruments (*angklung, rengkong*). They dance around the square, several times. At the middle of the large square several women *ngagondang* (producing music by beating wood sticks into the rice pounding bowles made of a single trunk of tree), following the rythm of the bamboo music instrument. All of the activites were conducted by *lengser*, a conductor wearing a mask and clothes of an old man and acting very funny to entertain the crowd. In front of *Abah Anom* and guests of honour, some young men perform *silat* (marshal art) and *debus* (cutting oneself, animated by supernatural power, without enjury).

After performance, the procession headed for the front yard of *leuit si Jimat*. They brought down bundles of paddy from the carrying pole and piled up in the front yard. While *Abah Anom* and the guests were having lunch in *balai adat*, the participants lined up from the entrance of *bale adat* to the front yard of *leuit si Jimat*. The grannary and its front yard became the focus of the ritual after lunch. *Abah Anom*, his wife and families

walled between two lines of participants, from *bale adat* to *leuit si Jimat*. After prayer and burning incense, *Abah Anom* climbed the bamboo stairs with bundles of paddy in his hand to be stored in the grannary which had been decorated with coconut leaves. His wife, families and the elders took turn in storing paddies (fig. 07). Only after these rituals had been performed and finished, were the community allowed to cook and eat new rice produced from the recent harvest. The ceremony ended after the grannary was full with new paddies from the harvest. After launch in *bumi ageung* most of the guest had left Ciptagelar in the afternoon. Only people from neighbouring hamlets and relatives stayed to watch puppet *wayang* show in front of *bumi ageung* and music performance at the school yard and grass field in the lower zone level of the hamlet, for about two more days. The main square became empty again and the public buildings gradually became vacant.

		
<p>Preparation of alun-alun or lapangan for the annual ritual in <i>Kampung Kasepuhan</i> Ciptagelar.</p>	<p>Bamboo rack for hanging bundles of paddy before annual ritual is began.</p>	<p>Six girls simbolizing Dewi Sri sits before master of ceremony and bundle of paddy.</p>
		
<p>Bamboo music instruments player.</p>	<p>Bundles of paddy are put on carrying pole.</p>	<p>The procession begins of annual ritual.</p>



Fig. 07: Procession and ceremonies of *seren taun* ritual in *Kampung Kasepuhan* Ciptagelar.

Source: Nuryanto, 2006.

Kasepuhan Ciptagelar is thus the centre of ritual activities of the United Traditional Communities of West Banten (*Kesatuan Adat Banten Kidul*), which live in the surrounding hamlets while some others spread to Lebak Regency, Province of Banten; Bogor and Sukabumi Regencies, West Java Province. The *seren tahun* ritual is an event for reuniting and gathering all members of the community. It is an important ritual that can lead as a transformer of the functions of public and private spaces. The hamlet which usually is empty and quiet transformed into a crowded and lively one. The private houses of the people are transformed suddenly into guest houses and lodging facilities; the house yards transformed into places of street hawkers and parking lots. The fullness of the public space with ritual activities of the community is an indirect expression of the importance of a public space in its function as place for ritual activities, even though only for a short time.

Conclusion

1. The function of public space in Ciptagelar is only stimulated by ritual activities such as *seren tahun*. Except for those activities, the function of public space is unclear. It is an evidence that the only and most important function of public space is to accommodate ritual activities;
2. Other space which actually known as place for the residents (*keur nu boga imah*) such as kitchen, guest room and living room in the interior, and exterior spaces surrounding a house such as house yard, terrace, alley, at ritual times are transformed into public space, accesible for every guest, even the recently acquainted one;
3. There are social and ritual values in public spaces of Ciptagelar. Social values are expressed by the gathering of people from relatives to unknown guests: sitting, chatting, bargaining in the terrace, front yard, alley; sleeping, chatting, eating sweets in the kitchen, guest room, living room of the house; playing sport, watching performance at the main square and open spaces. Ritual values are expressed by the use of public space for *seren taun* ritual procession, reading sacred formulas and burning incense while storing paddies into *leuit si Jimat* as mark of honour to Dewi Sri, the rice goddess.

Acknowledgement

This study is a part of the research funded by ITB, based on contract no: 0025/K01.03.2/PL.2.1.5/I/2007; Lembaga Penelitian dan Pengabdian pada Masyarakat (LPPM), Institut Teknologi Bandung, November 2007.

References

Collier, J., Jr. & Malcolm Collier, 1987, *Visual Anthropology*, Photography as a research Method, University of New Mexico Press, Alberqueque;

Dasum Muanas, dkk, (1983), *Arsitektur Tradisional Daerah Jawa Barat*, Dinas Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Proyek Inventarisai Dan Dokumentasi Kebudayaan Daerah;

Edi S. Ekadjati,(1980): *Masyarakat dan Kebudayaan Sunda*, Pusat Ilmiah dan Pembangunan regional Jawa Barat;

Heni Fajria Raf'ati, Toto Sucipto, (2002) *Kampung Adat & Rumah Adat di Jawa Barat*, Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Provinsi Jawa Barat;

Lang, John, (1987), *Creating Architectural Theory*, Van Nostrand Reinhold Co. New York;

Nuryanto, (2004), *Perubahan Bentuk Atap Rumah Tinggal dari Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptarasa ke Ciptagelar-Kab. Sukabumi Selatan, Jawa Barat*. Report of Proceeding or Makalah of Riset Planning 3rd, in Architecture Post Graduate Program, Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB);

Nuryanto, (2006), *Kontinuitas dan Perubahan Pola Kampung dan Rumah Tinggal Dari Kasepuhan Ciptarasa Ke Ciptagelar-Kab. Sukabumi Selatan Jawa Barat*. Master Thesis, in Architecture Post Graduate Program, Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB);

Sri Rahaju B.U.K., (2001), *Penataan Kampung dan Rumah di Perdesaan yang bersumber dari Tradisi Bermukim Orang Sunda*. Paper, International Conference on Sunda Culture, I; theme: "Pewarisan Budaya Sunda di Tengah Arus Globalisasi", Rancage Foundation Bandung;

Sri Rahaju B.U.K., (2005), *Urban Public Space Design Based on Local Culture*. Proceeding International Seminar on "Culture of Living", Yogyakarta;

Sri Rahaju B.U.K., & Indah Widiastuti (2007), *Kajian Fenomenologi–Hermetik pada Ruang Publik Arsitektur Sunda dan prospek pemanfaatannya: Kasus Kampung Kasepuhan Ciptarasa dan Ciptagelar, Jawa Barat*. Research Centre for Art and Design, ITB;

Walker, JA & Chaplin, Sarah (1998), *Visual Culture Studies*, Manchester University Press, New York;

William Holingsworth Whyte (1980), *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, Washington DC, Conservation Foundation.

Sri Rahaju B.U.K

Arsitek, peneliti, dosen tetap pada Jurusan Teknik Arsitektur SAPPK-Institut Teknologi Bandung (ITB). S1 Arsitektur ITB (1971), Magister Arsitektur ITB (1990), Doktor Arsitektur ITB 2004. Sekarang menjabat sebagai Wakil Dekan Bidang Sumber Daya Manusia SAPPK ITB dan aktif melakukan berbagai penelitian dengan fokus Arsitektur Tradisional Sunda.

Nuryanto

Arsitek, peneliti, dosen tetap pada Jurusan Teknik Arsitektur FPTK Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI). S1 Arsitektur UPI (2002), Magister Arsitektur ITB (2006). Aktif menulis dan melakukan penelitian dengan fokus Arsitektur Tradisional Sunda. Anggota Peneliti Muda pada KK-STK SAPPK ITB, anggota Komunitas Arsitektur Vernakular (KAV) Universitas Parahyangan (UNPAR), serta arsitek pada biro arsitek WASTUCITRA.