

THE MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT IN BALI



by

PUTU BUDIASTRA

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DIREKTORAT — MUSEUM
DIREKTORAT JENDRAL KEBUDAYAAN
DEPARTEMEN P DAN K

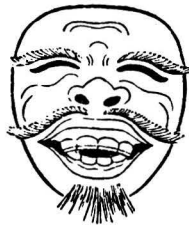
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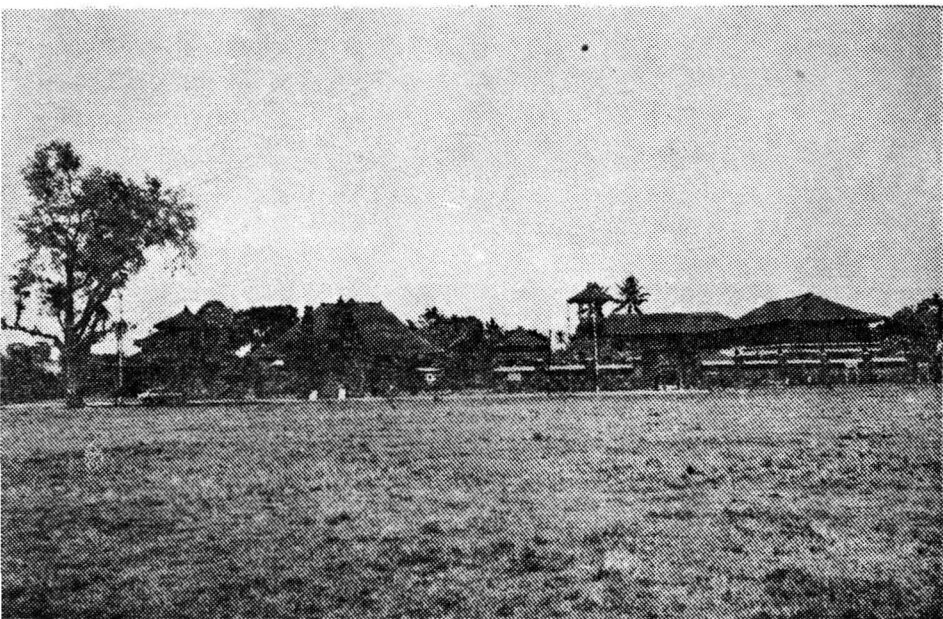
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Museum Bali, Denpasar.

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THE MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT IN BALI.

I. INTRODUCTION

Museums are highly significant and perform an important function. Nevertheless this has not yet been realized to the same extent throughout the world, as hoped by museum curators. The differences in development of museums, between the developing countries and the U.S.A. several countries in Europe is easy to see. This may be attributed to a lack of understanding of the meaning of the museum combined with the efforts of economic problems within the countries. Possibly the developing countries have already conceived programs to address these problems, but because of financial constraints and higher priority matters, the program can not be realized. Being aware that budget is an important factor in the success of any museum, it is nonsense to plan a museum without budgetary considerations. Despite the many difficulties every country must build a museum, because of its great meaning not only for the country itself but also for other countries in the world.

People who do not understand, sometimes will laugh at our efforts. If this occurs let them regard us as crazy to collect dead weight which requires much money for its preservation. Be convinced, that what we are doing is really an exalted endeavour and will be appreciated by others in the future. We must remind them that a museum is a place for keeping the soul of the national, because a museum is a living thing and preserves the national identity from prehistoric times up to the present. If there is no museum, the nation will not know its own national identity. People must preserve their national grandeur for future generations lest the accuracy of the history of their nation be threatened. Thus a museum has an important role.

In addition to displaying works of art accomplishments in science a museum has the following functions :

1. Documentation of works of art and fossils.

The museum collection gives us the representation of nature, people and the extent of their creations.

* This paper was presented to the Hawaii Museums Association in Honolulu on April 2 nd, 1976.

2. A place to exhibit worthy creations.

The artists are able to depict the beauty and grandeur of man's creations.

3. Education and investigation.

According to their disciplines scholars make their contribution thru investigations, explanations which remain for the appreciation of future generations.

4. Tourist object.

As a place for recreation, a museum environment for reflexion to the tourist provides an prior to visiting other places.

II. MUSEUMS IN BALI

Now let us take a look at the development of museums in Bali. The problems involved in the development of museum in Indonesia and specially in Bali being late, if I compare it with the development of museum in Europe, Australia and the U.S.A., are the result of inflation and difficulties in renovation caused by alack of the museum scholars and the awareness of the people themselves.

Bali has known about museums since 1910, after the Dutch occupied the entire island. At that time the Dutch were interested in Balinese culture and wanted to preserve it. The Hindia Belanda Government began construction of buildings for that purpose. The architectural style of these buildings was a combination of the traditional architectures of the "pura" (temple) and the "puri" (palace). In addition, the Government also sought actively to collect artifacts to display. These collections were made possible by the donations of art lovers, enabling the museum to acquire objects dart from the people. Most of the collection including statues, masks, pupets, paintings and so forth, was comprised of objects which were sacred and worshiped by the people. But because of their intelligent approach, the government was able to collect them for the museum. Unfortunately, in 1917 there was great volcanic eruption in Bali. Hundreds of temples and buildings were destroyed by lava flows and the earthquake of Mount Batur. The museum building which had been establish collapsed but after overcoming many obstacles setbacks the building was finished in 1925. During the past 7 years it was used for temporary exhibitions, while continuing to collect artefacts and on December 8th, 1932 the Hindia Belanda Government formalized it as an ethnographical museum called "Bali Museum".

In the mean time, in 1928, four years before the Bali Museum was opened, the Hindia Belanda Government established a manuscript museum in Singaraja (north Bali) called "Gedong Kirthya". In this manuscript museum were kept thousands of "lontar" (manuscripts) which described history, folk stories, religion and "kidung" (holly song).

Remembering that these collections originally came from the temples an were held sacred by the people many were afraid to enter the Bali Museum and Gedong Kirthya, to see these examples of their heritage. They were worried about making mistakes during their visit and were afraid of being cursed by the spirits in the museum. They did not call it Bali Museum but instead "Pura Museum" (Museum temple).

Old people came to me in "pakaian adat" (traditional dress) and ask for my permission to look at their ancestral heritage. They would ask me when the "odalan" (ceremony) of this temple was. While looking at the collection, their faces showed anxiety. I could blame them for feeling this way. This indicated that they did not understand it. If they had understood it well I am certain they would have been glad and proud to look at it.

After 34 years of the Bali Museum being cared for by the Bali Museum Foundation in 1966 it was taken over by the Museum Directorat,, under the Direktorat Jendral of Culture in the Education and Culture Departement. The Gedong Kirthya is still maintained by the local rency of Buleleng in the Province of Bali.

Museum Puri Lukisan.

The third museum was completed on July, 1st, 1956 in the village of Ubud, 24 Km from the capital of Bali. This museum is called Puri Lukisan and was organized by the Ratnawartha Foundation. The erection of this museum was instigated by the artists and the art lovers who were organized by the "Pitamaha". The collection contains 176 pieces of sculpture and painting that represent wayang stories, Balinese folklore and other aspects of Balinese tradition. The goals of this museum are :

1. To develop local art, especially fine art.
2. To set standars for works of art.
3. To educate and stimulated among young artists.

The size of the collection and the facilities to house it continue to grow.

Museum Le Mayeur.

Museum Le Mayeur was a memorial museum originally established by a Belgian painter named Le Mayeur who stayed in Bali until his death in 1957. This museum has 92 paintings by Le Mayeur himself. The nature of this paintings is modern and most of them have Ni Pollok (Le Mayeur's wife) as his subject. There are also paintings in the museum from India and Singapore.

According to the agreement were between the Indonesian Government and Le Mayeur, in 1957 the museum was surrendered by Le Mayeur to the Government. Since that time this museum has belonged to the Government and has an equal position with the Museum Bali. Nevertheless in remembrance of Le Mayeur's merit and ac-

according to their agreement Ni Pollok with the museum for the remainder of her life, to take care of her husband's legacy. But if she remarry again, she must leave the museum and it will be taken over by the Indonesian Government.

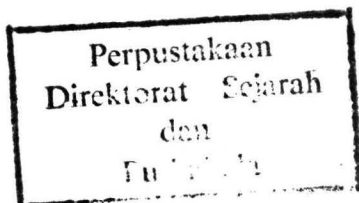
Museum Purbakala.

The youngest museum is the Museum Purbakala (the Archaeological museum) in Bedulu village, approximately 5 Km from the Museum Puri Lukisan. This museum belongs to the Lembaga Purbakala dan Peninggalan Nasional Wilayah II Gianyar (The Archaeological museum) in Bedulu village. The museum contains various archaeological artifacts from the island of Bali which were excavated by the Institution. This museum was opened for the public in 1974.

Today in Bali we find five museums, each of them with his own specialty :

1. Gedong Kirthya with collections containing manuscripts.
2. Museum Bali with collections dealing with Balinese Ethnography.
3. Puri Lukisan with collections of Ubud traditional paintings.
4. Museum Le Mayeur with collections of modern paintings.
5. Museum Purbakala with collections of archaeological inheritances.

Although Bali already has five museums, the Indonesian Government does not refuse the requests of schools, individual museum lovers, or other members of the society who wish to build additional museums. The number of new museums established indicates an increasing awareness on the part of the people of Bali resulting in an advancement of the sciences.



III. HINDRANCES AND HOW TO EXCEED

Beside the two factors mentioned i.e. a lack of awareness among the people and a lack of museum scholars, this situation is also caused by several other factors. To clarify, let us consider of the some obstacles I encounter. How I must deal with them according to existing conditions.

1. Buildings.

The architecture of all the museums in Bali takes its architecture from Balinese tradition, symbolic of nature and representing the purity of the Balinese culture. In some aspects these building really harmonize with the collections in them, but according museology it is not adequate. For example, the walls of the buildings are made of bricks or sandstones and are not covered by lime. The upper part is not closed at the roof, so that there is a space of approximately 30 Cm between the roof and the upper part of the wall. It is dangerous for the collections because if the wind blows, they must will come easily into the room. The surface of the bricks or sandstone wears and rapidly becomes threadbare. The rooms are not to compensate air conditioned, therefore it is difficult to control the humidity. For this problem, the employees must clean the collections continuously. In light of this problem I have to make changes in the building. I am still working how to make a fit building in order that the exterior still appears traditionally Balinese, even though the interior is in accord good museological practice.

I tried to do this with the two buildings of the Museum Bali in Denpasar without neglecting the tradition itself. This first experience was successful and the exterior look traditional, the interior, however changed according to the museum requirements although they were not completely satisfy.

The roof is made of "ijuk" (palm fibres), "alang-alang" (grasses), and sirap (wood or bamboo) which have to be specially processed certainly. I must be careful with the dimensions of the roof construction, because if I make mistakes in measuring it would cause leaks, but if we do it properly, it will last between 15 and 20 years.

2. Conservations.

Conservation is an important function and if we neglect it, the collections will be attacked easily by insects or other elements. Therefore, the designer of a museum must not forget the laboratory for preventing the destruction of the collections. Unfortunately, no mu-

seums in Bali have laboratories, so that I have the big problem of how to preserve my collections. To tackle this problem I just put camphor in all of the displays cases and storage containners in order to prevent spoiling of the exhibition. Futher, to protect clothes from moisture sometimes I expose them to weak sunshine and change the pleats before putting them back.

Futher more the storage conditions are not adequate, The humidity varies widely between the wet and dry seasons. Almost 80% of collections contains materials which are easily damaged (i.e. clothes, papers, and soft sandstones). I do not have experts to take charge of this work on a continuous basis. To solve this problem the Direktorat of Museums in Jakarta often calls museum staff from other places in Indonesia to Jakarta for conservation training in accordance with the facilities we have. Fortunately as a result of this training damage can be avoided samewhat. In conjunction with the training the Direktorat of Museums will build laboratories in the museums in Indonesia. Nevertheless I would be glad to have your help and advice on developing my museum.

3. The growth of the collections.

Additions to the collections are still being made according the budget I have. To acquire recent work of art is not difficult in Bali. Some of the artists are even proud to have their works exhibited in the museum. They believe that if they are kept in the museum their creations are valuable and they will be lucky to have other people see them.

On the other hand I have difficulties in getting the ancient works because people generally believe that their inheritances have magic power and if they do not treat them properly terrible things will happen to them. But if an object loses its function because it has already been replaced by a new one, it is taken to an antique shop. Because of the great tourist development, sometimes I fail to aquire such an object for my museum since it has already been taken by tourists. Fortunately now our government is more strict with archaeological artifacts and does not allow antiquities to be taken out from Bali or Indonesia without the consent of the Lembaga Purbakala dan Peninggalan Nasional (The Archaeology Service). This rule is enforced by the office of the public prosecutor, the police, the customs office, the air port officials, etc, Whoever violated this rule will be prosecuted by a federal judge and the things he smuggles will be confiscated by the government.

IV. OTHER ACTIVITIES.

Currently, in addition to the efforts mentioned, above, to develop the museum in Bali futher, I am still increasing the museums service to the people in order that they may become fully aware and understanding the museum.

1. Information.

To inform the people I am taking the following steps :

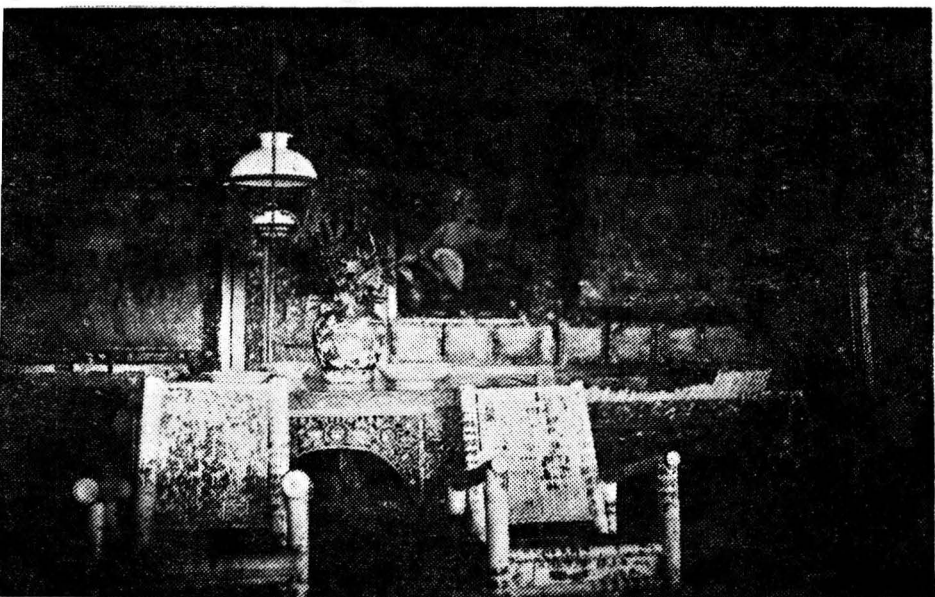
- a. Publishing brochures.
- b. Making speeches via radio.
- c. Having museum employees deliver lectures to the people who live far from museum.
- d. Arranging art exhibitions relating to the museum collections.

2. Educational measures.

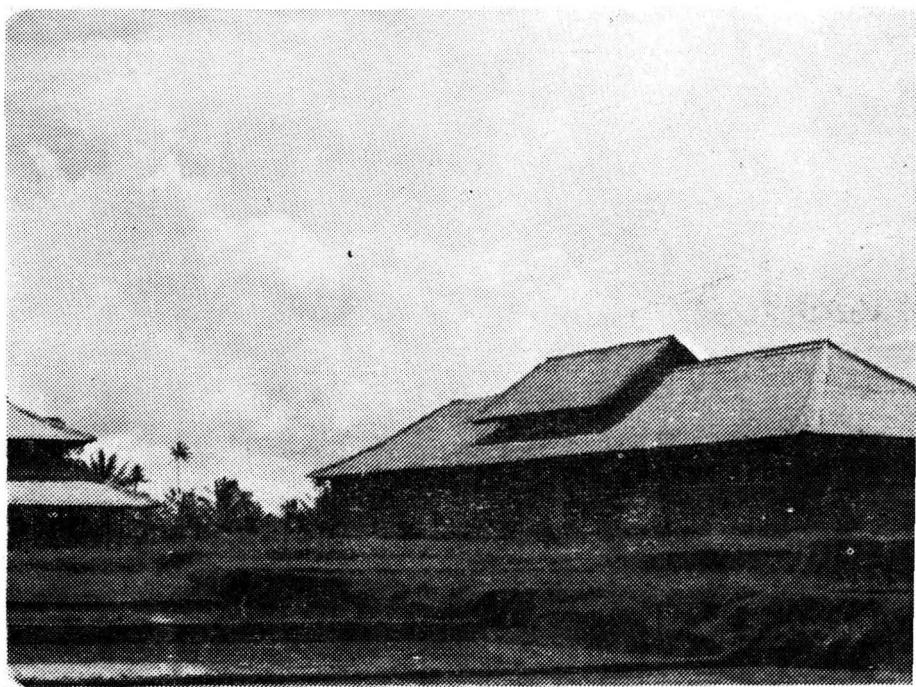
- a. To organize visits of students from elementary school up to University level.
- b. To help researchers with their investigations.
- c. To give course to guides before they accompany visitors.



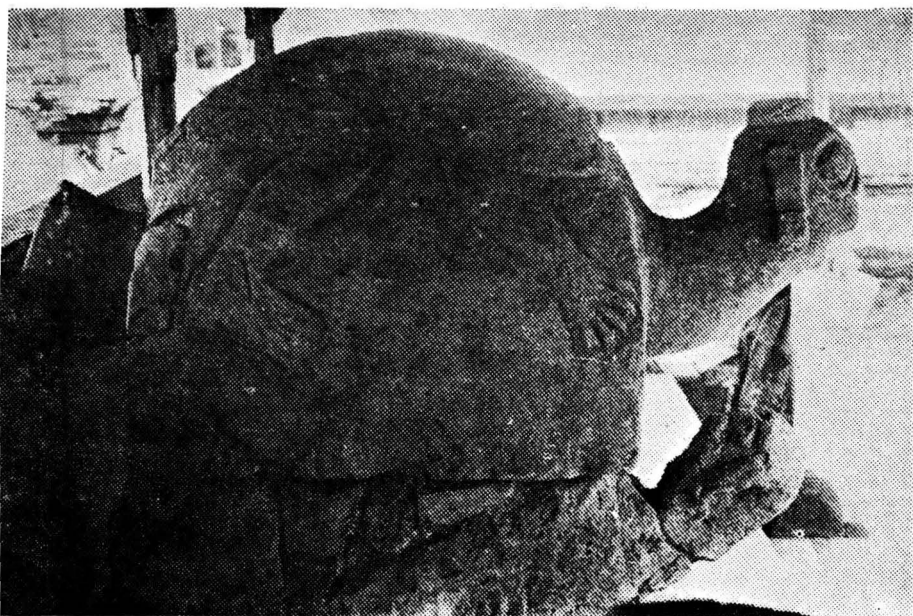
EXHIBITION HALL, Buleleng, Museum Bali, Denpasar.



Museum Le Mayeur, Sanur.



EXHIBITION HALL, Museum Puri Lukisan, Ratnawarta, Ubud.



Sarcophagus at the Museum Purbakala, Bedulu.

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