

## ***Tritangtu* Philosophy in *Leuit*, *Lisung* and *Bale* as a Sundanese Cultural Artefact**

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**Abstract.** *Tritangtu* is a Sundanese philosophy of life that means harmony. The main core of the *Tritangtu* concept focuses on the harmony built by the middle *sineger*, which can be translated as the middle way or solution between the opposing or contradictory dualities. Sundanese cultural artefacts are produced by the ethnic Sundanese people who have a specific purpose based on the thought they profess, *tritangtu*. *lisung* and *bale* are the Sundanese cultural artefacts that carry *tritangtu*'s values. This study aims to analyze and discover the concept of *tritangtu* contained in *leuit*, *lisung* and *bale*, which are the example of Sundanese cultural artefacts that contain the concept of *tritangtu*. And to prove that the Sundanese ethnic community implements the *tritangtu* concept in various aspects of life, one of them is in the manufacture of field furniture. The descriptive qualitative method is used to study the *tritangtu* philosophy, a belief held by the Sundanese ethnic community. Robert Stecker's biographical criticism model approach method is also used to study the actual intentionalism and work meaning. The actual intentionalism method consists of two models, biographical criticism and proper aim. Artefacts of the Sundanese cultural Objects that are used to meet daily needs and fulfil functional aspects also accommodate systems of symbolic and philosophical meaning that contain life instructions for the Sundanese ethnic community. Sundanese identity is not just about its cultural products but the Sundanese way of working and thinking in creating cultural products. Sundanese people created Sundanese cultural products based on their belief in the *tritangtu* philosophy (*lampah*, *ucap*, and *tekad*).

### **1. Introduction**

Symbols in the Sundanese primordial ethnic community are collective tribal groups. Religious primordial ethnic communities depend on the universe and the divine realm for their lives. Humans are not free to determine their own destiny, but depend on a religious system. In the realm of religious thought the more it subject to its religious system, the more the humans will feel a sense of freedom, every violation of the system by will endanger the group. [1] The cultural basis of the primordial ethnic community is the pure natural environment that was already available before humans inhabited it. They decided to live by gathering food provided by nature. [2] The Sundanese primordial ethnic community is highly dependent on ecology and natural resources to survive, that is why they really take care of the preservation and balance of nature so as not to be damaged and also for the survival of human life so that it is guaranteed. Such principles of life can influence the Sundanese ethnic community in creating and interpreting their cultural products. [3] Cultural objects are produced with certain reasons for certain purposes in accordance with the will and desires of the people who produces them. All cultural objects produced by certain social groups have certain goals and certain

ways of thinking. [4] The Sundanese ethnic community does not know the term philosophy as western philosophy, what they recognize is the philosophy of local wisdom. Philosophy is theoretical knowledge about the nature of things, looking for the most basic principle or the deepest cause of everything. While local wisdom according to Aristotle's is a phronesis or practical knowledge that is more pragmatic. [5]

The form of western philosophy is more inclined to knowledge in words based on logical reasoning and rely on logic. In contrast, the philosophy of local wisdom is knowledge based on concrete knowledge, experience, and benefits. [5] The Sundanese ethnic community recognizes that philosophy has meaning for practice in everyday life. If in western philosophy, words are everything, while in local wisdom, actions, energy, energy are everything. [4] Ethnic society, a primordial religious society, believes in the dual reality, that everything in this life is paired and contradictory, that outside the real world, this human is paired with the spirit world, which is the opposite of the human world. If this human world exists, then there is a partner of it that does not exist. if the existing human realm is finite, sensed, characterized, then the non-existent nature is infinite, senseless, characterless. [4] The existence of this paired and contradictory reality creates the potential for conflict. There are two possible solutions to the duality of being of opposite nature: the destruction of one entity or both. To maintain the existence of this life, it is necessary to take a moderate or a middle way. This is the reason why it is necessary to create a single entity as a unifier. The essence of the philosophy of Sundanese local wisdom is the middle *sineger* or can be translated as the middle way.[5]The middle synergy is the way of peace, harmony, tolerance, mutual acceptance of differences, loving each other (*silih asih*), reminding each other (*silih asah*), and protecting each other's differences (*silih asuh*) which unites the duality of opposite nature. This is what underlies the concept of the *tritangtu* philosophy or the all-three pattern.[6] *Tritangtu* or the all-three relationship pattern is only one of the philosophical foundations of Sundanese culture. All Sundanese facts grow from the roots of the *tritangtu*. *Tritangtu* can be found in the old Sundanese text, *Sang Hyang Siksakandang Karesian* states that *tritangtu* contains three provisions, namely *lampah*, *ucap* and *tekad*.[7]

Every human being has these three things. A *tekad* means desire, the word which means thought and *lampah* which means action. *Lampah*, *ucap*, and *tekad* are something that can be interpreted as alive, or the locals call it '*Sang Hyang Hurip*'. [8] That is why everything is divided into three provisions so that something is *hurip* in the sense of being safe, healthy, prosperous, and perfect. The basic meaning of *tritangtu* is the unity of the three (*tekad*, *ucap*, and *lampah*). Before this existence came to life, there was *uwung-uwungan*. From that *uwung* emerged three *batara*, or *batara kersa* (will), *batara kawasa* (energy), and *batara bima mahakarana* (*ucap*). The three *batara* merge into a single *batara*. It is from this single *batara* that everything exists. [8] The pattern of three *tekads*, *ucap* and *lampah* contains two contradictory provisions, which are desire (*tekad* or will) which is contrary to reality (*lampah*). Desire is not a reality. Desire can only become one if you have thought about how the desire can become a reality. Thus, the mind or (*ucap*) becomes the middle *sineger* as an intermediary or connector. Thought (*ucap*) is related to desire (*tekad*), while the action is reality related to ideas. This is what is called the middle *sineger*. Two contradictory existences don't need to be resolved by eliminating the opposite. All contradictions can coexist, united by a middle *sineger*.[4] Every human being has these three things. A *tekad* means desire, the word which means thought and *lampah* which means action. *Lampah*, *ucap*, and *tekad* are something that can be interpreted as alive, or the locals call it '*Sang Hyang Hurip*'. [8] That is why everything is divided into three provisions so that something is *hurip* in the sense of being safe, healthy, prosperous, and perfect. The basic meaning of *Tritangtu* is the unity of the three (*tekad*, *ucap*, and *lampah*). Before this existence came to life, there was *uwung-uwungan*. From that *uwung* emerged three *batara*, or *batara kersa* (will), *batara kawasa* (energy), and *batara bima mahakarana* (*ucap*). The three *batara* merge into a single *batara*. It is from this single *batara* that everything exists. [8] The pattern of three *tekads*, *ucap* and *lampah* contains two contradictory provisions, which are desire (*tekad* or will) which is contrary to reality (*lampah*). Desire is not a reality. Desire can only become one if you have thought about how the desire can become a reality. Thus, the mind or (*ucap*) becomes the middle *sineger* as an

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Middle *sineger* functions as a way of harmony or peace from all contradictory things. Contradiction is not seen as a difference but is seen as complementary and mutually exclusive. [4] Every artefact created has a function or purpose. Each artefact has a particular shape or form that accommodates the value of meaning and thoughts. Thus, each artefact contains the purpose or desire and way of thinking of the maker. So many Sundanese cultural artefacts are in the form of objects, behaviour, verbal and written expressions. [9] The *tritangtu* philosophy strongly influences the creation of Sundanese cultural products. Therefore, if excavated, three distinctive patterns of *tritangtu* can be found, two of which are opposite, and one is the middle *sineger*. Then, the three of them are one, and the one contains the structure of the three. Previous research regarding the disclosure of the *tritangtu* concept on Sundanese cultural artefacts has been studied, where it focuses on *boboko* with similar methods and contexts. [10] The purpose of this research is to discover the concept of *tritangtu* contained in *leuit*, *lisung* and *bale* which is one of the products of a Sundanese culture that has the idea of *tritangtu*. To prove that the Sundanese ethnic community implements the *tritangtu* concept in various aspects of life, one of which is manufacturing field furniture.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Descriptive Qualitative

The first method is descriptive qualitative. This method is used to study the *tritangtu* philosophy, a belief held by the Sundanese ethnic community. *tritangtu* underlies the creation of cultural products of the Sundanese ethnic community how the *tritangtu* philosophy can influence the Sundanese ethnic community in thinking and creating cultural products. By using the qualitative approach of Creswell [11], *leuit*, *lisung* and *bale* as a cultural product, artefacts can be studied from the aspect of form, which has its meaning.

### 2.2 Biographical criticism

The biographical criticism approach is the method of interpretation of the biographical criticism model. As stated by Robert Stecker, the method of interpretation of works of art is an attempt to understand and appreciate a work of art as well as to deepen the level of understanding and appreciation of the artwork. [12] The actual intentionalism and work meaning approach interpretation method is also used in this study. Actual intentionalism is the view that the proper interpretation can identify the purpose of the creator's expression of his work, both semantically and symbolically. This method of actual intentionalism consists of two models, namely biographical criticism and proper aim. Biographical criticism is collecting significant elements from the background of the creator's life and then trying to read the meaning of the work at the time the work was done. [12] The creators of the cultural artefacts of *leuit*, *lisung* and *bale* are the Sundanese ethnic community. Thus, biographical criticism is used to examine the thoughts of the Sundanese ethnic community that underlie the creation of their cultural products, which is the *tritangtu* philosophy. [4]

## 3. Result and discussion

Culture is a manifestation of the way of thinking. Culture is a complex whole in which knowledge and habits are accommodated by humans as members of community groups. In a village, buildings are usually built for the benefit of the village community. [13] In the Sundanese community who used to live *berhuma*, three important buildings were always created based on the *tritangtu* concept, which are the *leuit* or rice barn, the saung *lisung* for pounding rice and the *bale*, a large building for community gatherings. *Leuit* is a symbol of *tekad*, saung *lisung* is a symbol of *lampah*, and *bale* is a symbol of *ucap*, and the three of them are the unity of *Sang Hyang Hurip tritangtu*.

### 3.1 *Tritangtu* in *Leuit*, *Lisung* and *Bale*

*leit* building is made similar to a house, and the only difference is that it only has one room, the rice storage room. It also only has one door with the sole purpose of entering and removing the rice.[14] As seen in Figure 1, the *leit* building has a bottom (pit), body, and roof. At the bottom or the pit, the *leit* pole is supported by flat stones (a symbol of the earth). The *leit* body is made of bamboo that towers upwards, symbolizing the connection between the earth and the sky (symbol of humans). And a roof made of palm fiber (a symbol of the sky). At the end of the roof, two wooden crosses are made, symbolizing the harmony of all dualities. [15] Table 1 below explained how the three main part of *Leit* represent the *tritangtu* element (two contradictive duality and *sineger* tengah).

**Table 1.** The three patterns in *Leit*

Building Structure	<i>Tritangtu</i> Structure	Local wisdom structure
Roof Palm Fiber/ <i>ijuk</i>	World above/ Sky	Contradictive duality Roof (upper world/ sky) Middle <i>Sineger</i>
Body	World (in between Heavens and Earth)	
Bottom (pit)		Contradictive duality

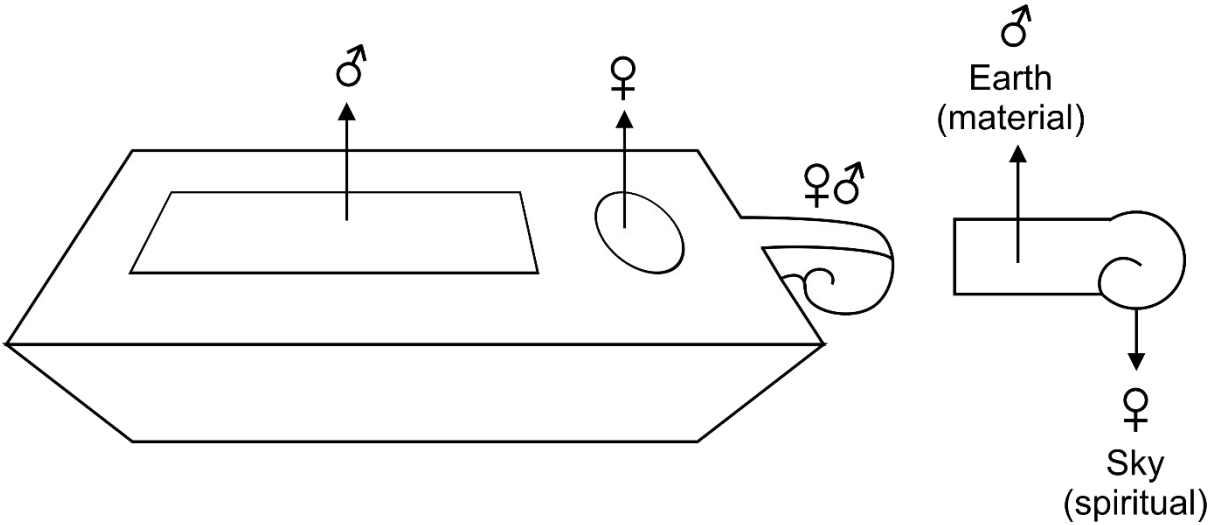
### 3.1.2 Lisung

*Lisung* is made of wood. *lisung* for pounding rice is made elongated and hard. All these straight and hard shapes are symbolizing the connection between the earth and the sky (symbol of humans). And it is indeed true that saung *lisung* is made from the skin so that rice can be cooked into an elongated shape, which has a *tritangtu* pattern as well. Figure 2 shows the structure of the *lisung* building. The upper body of the *lisung* is hollowed out in a

rectangular shape, where the rice is pounded. This reflects the *lampah*. On the side of the rectangular, a hole is made concave with a rounded surface, smoothing out the rice shows *tekad*. Thus, the square hole and the round hole are a pair of the duality of *tekad* and *lampah*, while the middle word or *sineger* is the end of the *lisung* in the form of a coil. The rice pounder must be a woman, in contrast to the rice picker in *Leuit*, which can only be done by men so that there is a middle *sineger* between the equipment and the user.[15] Table 2 below explained how the three main part of *lisung* represent the *tritangtu* element. *Lisung* is usually stored in a building called *saung lisung*. As seen in Figure 3, *Saung lisung* is an open building with a roof and no walls. This *saung lisung* is supported by pillars instead of walls and has a roof made of palm leaf fiber

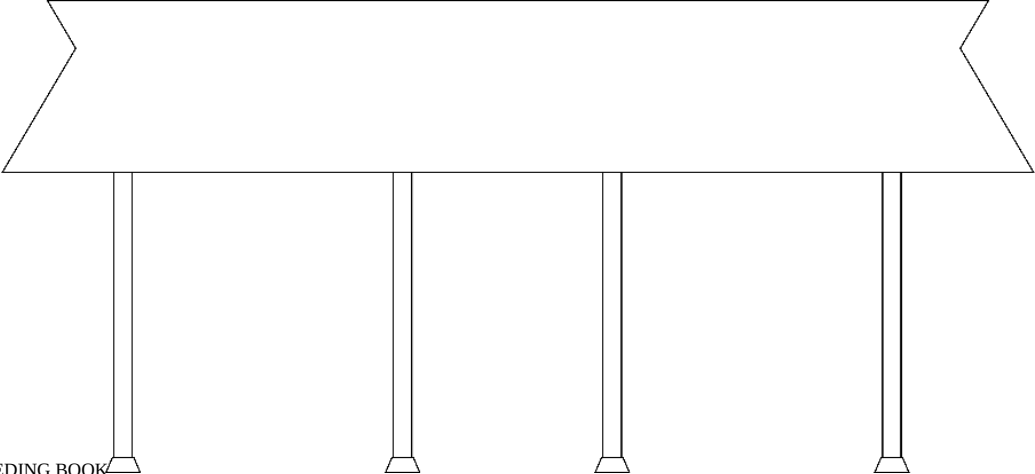
**Table 2.** The three pattern in *lisung*

Gambar	Struktur bentuk <i>lisung</i>	Struktur <i>Tritangtu</i>
<b>Roof</b>	Squared Hole	<i>Lampah</i>
<b>Body</b>	Hollowed circle shaped hole	<i>Tekad</i>
<b>Bottom (pit)</b>	Coil	Middle <i>Sineger</i>



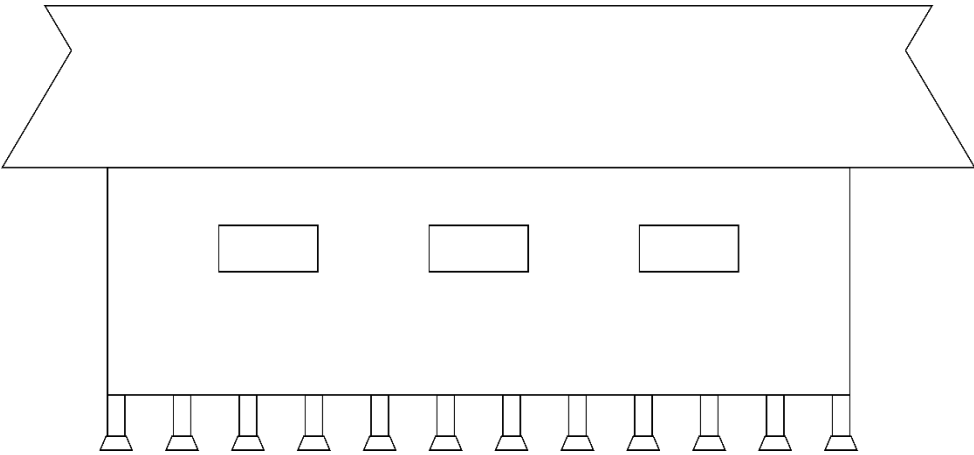
**Figure 2.** The Structure of *lisung*.

3.1.3. Bale



**Figure 3.** The structure of Saung *Lisung*

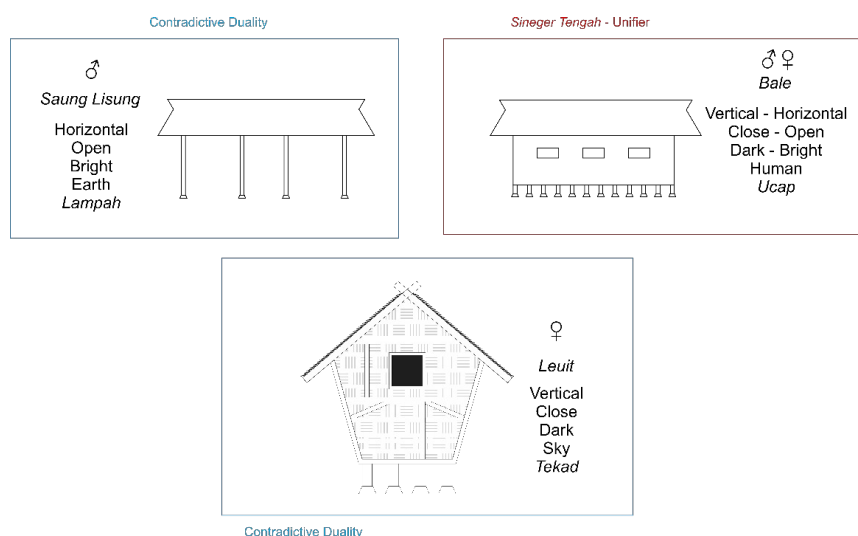
As seen in figure 4 *bale* is a large building similar to a house but without a dividing wall between the rooms. *Bale* has a roof, outer walls, and a pit. There is a cooking room with kitchen furniture inside. *Bale* is a community gathering place, a place where men and women meet together to gather and perform traditional ceremonies with home-cooked meals. Table 3 explain *bale* as a middle *sineger* of the *tritangtu* meanwhile *leuit* and *lisung* as duality. Figure 5 shows the pattern of *tritangtu* in *lisung*, *leuit* and *bale* with their characteristic that form the *tritangtu* pattern.



**Figure 4.** Illustration of *Bale*

**Table 3.** The three patterns in *leuit*, *lisung* and *bale*

Artefact	<i>Lisung</i> shape structure	<i>Tritangtu</i> Structure
<b><i>Leuit</i></b>	vertical, enclosed, sky, <i>tekad</i> , ♀	Contradictive duality
<b><i>Bale</i></b>	Vertical-horizontal, open- enclosed, Bright-Dark, Humans, <i>Ucap</i> , ♀-♂	Middle <i>Sineger</i>
<b><i>lisung</i></b>	Horizontal, open, Bright , Earth, <i>lampah</i> , ♂	Contradictive duality



### 3.2 Biographical criticism analysis

By using a qualitative method of biographical criticism approach, the background of the Sundanese ethnic community as the maker and user of *leuit*, *lisung*, and *bale* cultural products are studied and

**Figure 1.** The scheme of *tritangtu* in *leuit*, *lisung* and *bale*

analyzed. This analysis shows that the Sundanese ethnic community is a primordial religious society that is strongly influenced by a three-way pattern, known as the philosophical concept *tritangtu*. [11] The concept of *tritangtu* is the harmony of duality that is the opposite of the middle *sineger*, which has the purpose of uniting these dualities to achieve harmony and prosperity in living their lives. As previously stated, the concept of a middle *sineger* does not have a recipe, and everyone must be creative in finding a middle *sineger* as a solution and peace of every duality they find to achieve harmony. [4] *tritangtu* is a basic principle or philosophy that seeks a general description of the structure of things that characterizes all that exists. Armed with the *tritangtu* philosophy, the Sundanese ethnic community applies the *tritangtu* concept in almost every aspect of life. Apart from making cultural artefacts such as kitchen or field utensils and furniture, they don't only think about the functional aspects. Still, they also involve philosophical aspects wherein creating artefact products always accommodate the three patterns, which have the opposite dualities where they don't eliminate each other but complement each other by creating middle *sineger*. [4] They are using their creativity so that these opposing dualities can be harmonious and produce benefits and balance. In *leuit*, *lisung*, and *bale*, these three if examined in the context of a unified cultural product which is an artefact that is used sequentially to process food from raw materials to a gathering place where the food has the concept of *tritangtu*, and *leuit* is a place to store rice with different properties and uses. Symbolizing *tekad*. *Lisung* is used to process rice into edible rice, and *saung lisung* with its properties and uses

represent *lampah*. [14] The *bale*, which is used as a place to gather, cook and serve food, represents the symbol of the word as the middle sineger. Even if *leuit*, *lisung*, and *bale* are examined separately, as previously stated, each still accommodates the *tritangtu* concept's values. [5] This proves that *leuit*, *lisung*, and *bale* were created by the Sundanese ethnic community based on their beliefs, which is the *tritangtu* philosophy.

#### 4. Conclusion

Artefacts are Sundanese cultural products that are used to meet daily needs. Apart from fulfilling functional aspects, they also accommodate symbolic and philosophical meaning systems that contain life instructions for the Sundanese ethnic community. After conducting a study of the background of the thought of the Sundanese ethnic community, specifically the *tritangtu* philosophy, it can be concluded that Sundanese identity is not only based on its cultural products but also the Sundanese way of working and thinking in creating cultural products. Thus, Sundanese cultural products are created with the basis of the thoughts of the Sundanese people who adhere to the *tritangtu* philosophy (*lampah*, *ucap*, and *tekad*). Thus, the reading is reversed. From the structure of cultural artefacts, a relationship system and correlation is found in the *tritangtu* structure, known as the all-three patterns that give meaning to the artefact.

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