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CHAPTER VII *TRITANGTU* AND *GINTINGAN*: SUNDANESE COSMOLOGY, CULTURE AND INSTITUTIONS

This research focuses on the role of indigenous institutions in sustainable community-based development of the Subang District of West Java, Indonesia. Particular attention has been placed on the study of the utilisation behaviour of local people of Subang, towards their preferences for utilising Community Institutional Systems, in four village samples, where the study has been conducted. As the majority of inhabitants in the Subang District are Sundanese in terms of ethno-cultural background, the influence of the Sundanese cosmovision and culture is rather substantial as to understand how the people in Subang show their behaviour in the process of sustainable community development. This chapter attempts to describe the Sundanese people, their history and culture, their cosmology as well as their institutions, using the particular example of the indigenous institution of *Gintingan*, which is still existent and practiced by the local people of Subang.

7.1 History and Culture of the Sundanese People

While Sumardjo (2011) raised an intriguing question about the identity of the Sundanese and the importance of this question, Ekadjati (1984) also mentioned earlier about the difficulties to define the Sundanese people as an ethno-cultural group in Indonesia. There are various approaches in defining and understanding the Sundanese people as one of the ethno-cultural groups in Indonesia. The question is rather interesting as defining the Sundanese people in the context of a changing environment is quite dynamic. In terms of physical anatomy, it is difficult to distinguish the Sundanese in comparison with the Dayak, Javanese, Batak, and the other hundreds of ethno-cultural groups in Indonesia. The Sundanese people are usually called *Urang Sunda* or the people of Sunda. This refers to the origin of Sundanese people which is based on blood and socio-cultural perspectives (*cf.* Warnaen *et al.* 1987). The Sundanese are defined through their geographical locations. Currently, about ninety percent of the Sundanese people live in the West Java and Banten provinces. However, there are some parts of these two provinces where the people do not agree to be considered as Sundanese. For instance the *Batawi* ethno-cultural group: most members of this group live in Jakarta and its surrounding areas, including the districts of Bekasi and Tangerang. Geographically, Bekasi is part of West Java while Tangerang is part of the Banten province. Some Sundanese people live in Central Java, the province where most of the inhabitants belong to the Javanese ethnocultural group. Some Sundanese people live in some sub-districts, *i.e.* Bantarkawung of the Brebes District, Pasir Batang of the Purwokerto District and Sidareja of the Cilacap District. People who live in those sub-districts are known to use the Sundanese language in their daily life. As most of the current Sundanese people live in the West Java and Banten provinces, this section is limited to the elaboration of the Sundanese who live in both provinces (*cf.* Ekadjati 1984; Sumardjo 2011).

From a semantic point of view, the term ‘Sundanese’ is taken from the word *Sunda*, which literally means ‘Good’, ‘White’, ‘Pure’, and ‘Shine’. The name ‘Sunda’ was also mentioned by the Sunda Empire in 536 AD. Sundanese people are historically influenced by syncretism, hinduism, and lately by Islam. The term ‘syncretism’ in this context refers to the old belief system of the Sundanese people, which is believed to be the original religion of the Sundanese people which is called *Sunda Wiwitan* in Baduy in the Banten Province or *Agama Djawa Sunda* (ADS) in Cigugur Kuningan of West Java. The belief system has an influencing combination from the Javanese and Sundanese people (Qodim 2017). The belief system of the Sundanese views that a harmonious life could only be achieved if human beings make a harmonious

relationship with nature, the gods/spirits and among human beings. The indigenous Sundanese people believe that spirits inhabit any objects in the universe, *i.e.* rocks, trees and any other objects in nature. Therefore, the indigenous Sundanese people believe in the concept of ‘*taboos*’ (forbidden things) in their livelihood, which refers to the way human beings treat the spiritual world, the earth and human beings (*cf.* Wessing 1978; Qodim 2017; Iskandar & Iskandar 2011). From the geographical history, the area inhabited by the Sundanese people in the West Java and Banten provinces is called the ‘Sunda Land’. The area is covered and surrounded by mountainous and highland areas with beautiful and sacred scenery. The Sundanese people believe that those types of places are like the places of the Gods. It is not surprising that the Sundanese view the area like the place of God(s) or the place of Spirits. That is why the Sunda Region, particularly in the area of Sumedanglarang (including Subang), Garut, Tasikmalaya and Ciamis (which used to be named *Galuh*) is also named *Priangan*, *Preanger*, or *Parahyangan*. *Para* means ‘a place in the top/roof/highland’ while *hyangan* is taken from the word *hyang* which means ‘God/Spirits’. Therefore, *Parahyangan* can be defined as a ‘Place of God/Spirits’. From a geo-historical perspective, the Sundanese lands are spread from Sumatra, Bali, Bima, and Sumbawa, which refer to the period of time of the influence of Hinduism. It was believed that the word *Sunda* was also taken from the word *suddha* (Sanskrit) which is used to name a mountain in the higher lands. The meaning of *suddha* was used to represent the colour of the surface of the mountain which is seen from a distance as a white-grey area. For many generations, most Sundanese people have lived in the area of the West Java and Banten Provinces. They are known as food gatherers and lately as farmers. The area where the Sundanese people live has long been known as the *lumbung padi* (‘grenade’) of Indonesia. The districts of Cianjur, Subang, Karawang, Garut, and Sukabumi are known as the grenade areas in the West Java province (*cf.* Haan 1910, 1912; Wessing 1978; Ekadjati 1984, 2014; Djen Amar 2010; Mustapha 2010; Iskandar & Iskandar 2011).

7.1.1 History of the Sundanese People

Early History of the Sundanese People

The history of the Sundanese people is rather difficult to elaborate in the context of Indonesia, as there are fewer records describing the origins of the Sundanese people, particularly the Sundanese people in the past who believed in ‘syncretism’. It is because the name of Indonesia itself was not known until the 18th century, while various sources on Sundanese history documented that the name of the Sundanese people was established many centuries ago. The name of Indonesia was firstly introduced in 1850 by the work of a British ethnologist, George Windsor Earl (1813-1865), in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia* (JIAEA). *Indunisiens* or Indonesia was used to name the East India archipelago, together with the name of Melayunesia. However, a Scot named James Richardson Logan (1850) in the same journal proposed for the first time the name of Indonesia to represent the Indian Archipelago (*cf.* Earl 1850; Logan 1850; Anshory 2004).

In contrast, various sources on Sundanese history mention that the term ‘Sunda’ which refers to the existence of the Sunda Kingdom as well as its society was firstly mentioned in the Nagarakretabhumi inscription dating back to the period between 669 to 724 AD. However, the first Sundanese literary work, *Caritha Parahyangan* (The Story of Parahyangan), is believed to have been written in the year 1000 AD. According to this history, the Sunda Region existed for many centuries before the formation of Indonesia. The term Sunda which refers to the western area of the Island of Java which was firstly mentioned in the 9th century (*cf.* Kartodirjo *et al.* 1975; Atja & Ayatrohaedi 1986; Ekadjati 1984, 2014).

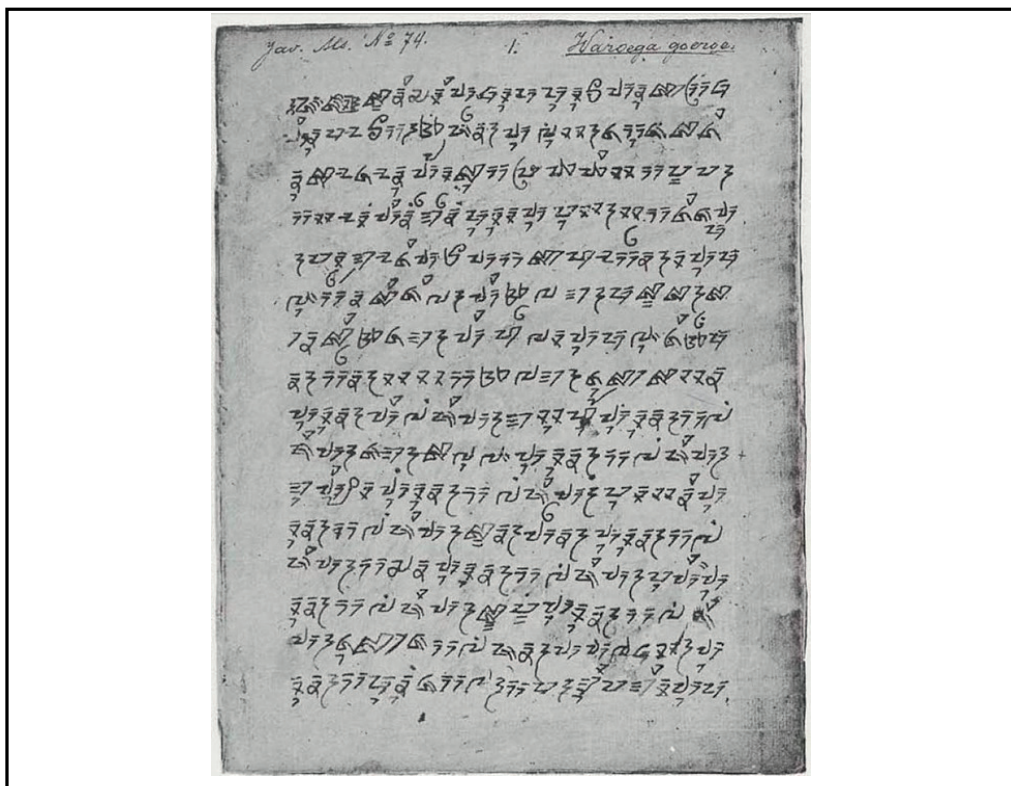


Illustration 7.1. Illustration of a Sundanese script on the Story of Waroega.
Source: http://www.wikiwand.com/su/Basa_Sunda (2017).

In addition to the early documentation about the Sunda Region in the western part of the island of Java, Vlekke (1959) also mentioned the existence of the Sunda Region in West Java in the 14th century during the period of the Padjadjaran Kingdom which ruled until the mid of the 15th century when the Demak Kingdom from Central Java penetrated the area in the year 1540. Its King, Raden Patah, who was the first King of the Islamic Kingdom of Demak to seek the power in West Java and found that the people in the area were more open to accept Islam than those who were in Central and East Java. The Islamic influence on the Sundanese people also happened while Sunan Gunung Djati, the first Sultanate of Banten, ruled this Kingdom and the region.

The Sundanese people were famous as food gatherers (*ladang* and *huma* systems) until the Central Javanese people migrated to West Java circa 1750 after the penetration of the Demak and Mataram Kingdoms into West Java. The people introduced the ‘*sawah* (wet paddy) system’ initially in Sumedang, and then expanded to Rancaekek, Tasikmalaya; the irrigation system was established among the Sundanese people. In the Banten area, the *sawah* system was firstly introduced after the Padjadjaran Kingdom fell, replaced by the Sultanate of Banten. In addition to that, the arrival of the Dutch in the Indonesian Archipelago incited not only some wars between the Dutch and the Kingdoms in several areas, but also the control over the land and its resources. Apart from the Javanese people who migrated to West Java, the Dutch arrival to Indonesia after the 16th and 17th century influenced the Sundanese people to change their

agroecosystem from a *huma* (food gatherer/shifting cultivation) system to a *sawah* (paddy farmer) system through the policy of the '*cultuurstelsel*' ('forced plantation') which was implemented by the Dutch. The local farmer was forced to plant paddy and the output of the harvest was taken by the Dutch while the local farmer could only receive one-third maximum of the harvest to consume and to keep them surviving. In one of the conversations with the elder villagers, the limited income generated from the harvest caused the initiative by the local people to establish *gotong-royong* (mutual voluntary assistance) community institutions, *i.e.* the indigenous institution of *gintingan*, *perelek*, and other *gotong-royong*-based institutions. The institution became the solution to the household economic problem when a community member has an important need to be fulfilled (*cf.* Terra 1953; Vlekke 1959; Adiwilaga 1975; Ekadjati 1984, 2014; Roger 1999; Iskandar & Iskandar 2011; Saefullah *pers.comm* 2013; Hays 2015).

7.1.2 West Java and Banten as Sundanese Homeland

The current indigenous Sundanese people live in several areas in the West Java and Banten Provinces. The Sundanese people are known as *Urang Sunda* or *Urang Priangan*, which means 'people of the Sunda Region' or 'people of the Priangan Region'. In terms of ethno-cultural groups, the Sundanese people show several similarities with the Javanese people in East and Central Java, although the Sundanese people are considered to be less feudalistic in comparison with the Javanese people. According to the history, after the Sunda Kingdom fell in 1579, the Sundanese lands spread into Sumedanglarang (including Karawang and Subang), Banten, Cirebon, Galuh (Ciamis and Banjar). Sumedanglarang and Galuh lately became one area named 'Priangan' while the former area of the Sunda Kingdom was named 'Pasundan'. Thus, Priangan and Pasundan are known as Sundanese areas in the West Java and Banten provinces, and most Sundanese people live in those two provinces, characterised by their language usage, livelihood and institutions (*cf.* Ekadjati 1984, 2014; Iskandar & Iskandar 2011).

The use of 'West Java' and lately 'Banten' as the Sundanese homeland have changed throughout the history of the Sundanese people in Indonesia. The name of 'West Java' was firstly used in the last 17th century by Prince Wangsakerta to differentiate the area with Eastern Java although the originality of the history is still in question. Some Sundanese people prefer to use 'Pasundan' to name their homeland rather than 'West Java'. This can be traced back to the *Staatsblad* No. 285 & 378 year 1925 article 1, which mentioned that some Sundanese people asked the Dutch during 1924-1925 during the development of West Java province to name the land as *Pasoendan* rather than '*Jawa Barat*' (West Java) to distinguish them from the Javanese people. However, the request was not accepted by the Dutch. The Dutch said that both terms are similar. '... West Java, in inheemsche talen aan te duiden als Pasoendan, *which means that Jawa Barat (West Java), in the Sundanese language refers to the Pasoendan land*'. Since then, the use of West Java (including Banten) is more popular to refer to the Sundanese homeland. Only after the year 2000, when Banten became an independent province, did the Sundanese homeland refer to the provinces of West Java and Banten (*cf.* Mustapa 2010; Iskandar & Iskandar 2011; Ekadjati 1984, 2014).

7.1.3 The Sundanese People, Culture and Traditions

The Sundanese people are called *Urang Sunda* (People of the Sunda Region). According to Warnae *et al.* (1987), *Urang Sunda* refers to anyone who claims themselves or is claimed by others as belonging to the Sundanese people. It refers to genetic and socio-cultural factors. According to the genetic factor, *Urang Sunda* is someone who was born from Sundanese parents, wherever the parents live or grew up. Taking the socio-cultural considerations into

account, *Urang Sunda* is someone who lives in the Sundanese socio-cultural and environmental setting and practices their livelihood based on the Sundanese culture. While Ekadjati (2014) accommodates both perspectives, Rosidi (1984) only acknowledged the term ‘Sundanese’ from the second perspective, which refers to the life and practices using Sundanese culture and institutions. As the Sundanese people are influenced mainly by the indigenous religion of *Sunda Wiwitan*, Hinduism and Islam, including the influence of modernisation and globalisation, the Sundanese people can also identify their culture based on all those influences. In the Sundanese culture, similar to the Javanese culture, the language has distinct status styles, or registers: ‘*kasar*’ (informal), ‘*halus*’ (deferential), and ‘*panengah*’ (a middle style). The use of these levels of Sundanese language mainly refer to the usage between elder people to younger ones or from the perspective of formality and informality (*cf.* Rosidi 1984; Ekadjati 1984, 2014; Iskandar & Iskandar 2011; Mustapa 2010).

The Sundanese people believe that the human being will live in several stages in their life: the life in this world and the life after this world or hereafter. The life of humans in the world and hereafter is subject to what they do in their life in this world. It is similar to the concept of *karma* in Hinduism which refers to a causal system where beneficial and harmful effects are derived from past beneficial and harmful actions, creating a system of actions and reactions throughout a soul’s reincarnated lives forming a cycle of rebirth. The causality also refers to our thoughts, words, actions and other people’s actions (*cf.* Brodd 2003). The Sundanese people categorise their life into stages: the stage of birth, the stage of entering adolescence, the stage of marriage, and the stage of death. The transformation from one stage to another will depend on the human actions during their life, and the secret discretions from the spiritual beings/God(s). Because each of the life stages is valuable, the Sundanese people praise life through rituals or ceremonies (*cf.* Wessing 1978; Mustapha 2010).

Hajatan and Life Stages in the Sundanese Culture

The Sundanese people believe that in order to have a happy life and achieve well-being, they place importance on rituals or ceremonies (*hajat*) in each stage of life. As mentioned by Wessing (1978), most Sundanese observances center around the household and the core of most observances consist of a ritual, named *hajat*. *Hajat* literally means ‘a communal meal’. The term has evolved from its origins as well as its functions. Originally, *hajat* is an Arabic word meaning ‘big needs/primary needs’. In Islam, a *shalat hajat* (*hajat* prayer) is suggested if a person or household is having ‘big/primary needs’. The ritual or the prayer is meant to ask the Spirits/God to give His/Her blessings to the person who is praying, to fulfil ‘the primary/big needs’. It is not surprising that the term *hajat* in the Sundanese language has the meaning of ‘rituals’. The rituals suggest to share people’s fortune with other human beings, as an expression of being thankful. One of the forms of being grateful for what the person or household has received in their life is by sharing with others what they have.

If *hajat* means ‘rituals’, then *hajatan* means ‘having rituals’. It is then understood that *hajatan* generally means ‘communal meals’. It is because, communal meals usually symbolise the practice of *hajatan*, although the basic meaning of *hajatan* is ‘having rituals’. The Sundanese people believe that apart from their daily needs, the life stage is a ‘primary life event’ for which they have to be grateful at any time of their life: when the person is born, when the person enters adulthood, when the person gets married including having babies, and when the person dies. The Sundanese people believe that having *hajatan* or rituals in every stage of their life will bring happiness and well-being, which in the Sundanese language is called *Salamet* (Safe and Sound). It is not surprising that the term *hajatan* is used interchangeably with *salametan*. Both terms have the same meaning of ‘having rituals’. The term *salametan* is also used by the Javanese people to express the same meaning with *hajatan*. In general, the Sundanese people have the *hajatan* (rituals) for the following life stages:

- During pregnancy, the Sundanese people have a ritual named *tujuh bulanan* (a ritual when the term of the pregnancy reaches 7 months)
- During birth, the Sundanese people have a ritual named *hajat lahiran* or *ekahan* (from the Arabic term of *aqiqah* – the ritual during the baby’s birth)
- Entering adulthood: the Sundanese people have the ritual to celebrate the entering into adulthood by having a circumcision (mainly for a boy), a ritual named *hajat sunatan* (‘circumcision ritual’)
- During marriage, the Sundanese people have a ritual named *hajat nikahan* or just *hajatan* (a marriage/wedding ritual)
- On death: the Sundanese people have a ritual named *hajat kematian* or ‘ritual for the dead person’, commonly using the term *tahlilan* (cf. Illustration 7.2).

The practice and implementation of *hajatan* is not only limited to those life stages. *Hajatan* could also be conducted to purify their life from any bad spirit, named as *tolak bala*, or any other occasions which require rituals to be conducted. The Sundanese people believe that the rituals on those five life stages or life cycles is necessary to have a happy life and well-being. In the past, the Sundanese people who lived in the agricultural areas as food gatherers, paddy farmers or fishermen, considered the rituals related to the life stages as their big needs.

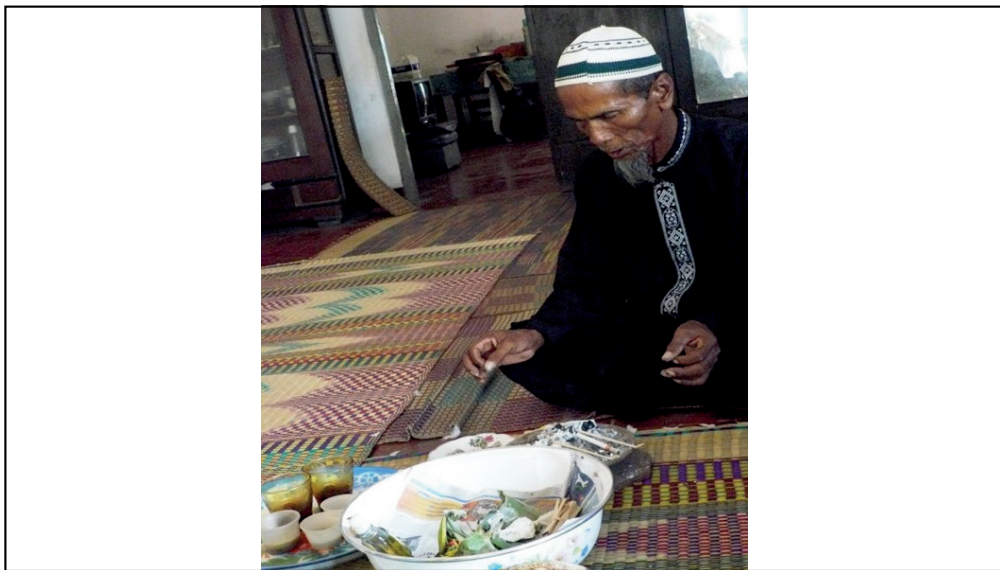


Illustration 7.2 A *Dukun* performing the Ritual for a Community Member in Sukamelang village who passed away.

Source: Photograph by K. Saefullah (2012).

The pressure of the Dutch in engaging in agriculture activities as well as the limitation of the local people to get the plantation results from the harvest led to the local initiative to conduct mutual voluntary-based assistance among themselves. One of the examples of this ‘bottom-up’ initiative is the indigenous institution of *Gintingan*, which is studied in this book. Later, it is explained that the practice of both *hajatan* and ‘indigenous institution of *Gintingan*’ for instance, are related to one another. Their belief is influenced by their cosmological views which influenced their way of thinking, acting and interacting (cf. Wessing 1978; Irawan 1999; Mustapha 2000).

7.2 The Sundanese Cosmology of *Tritangtu*

The term ‘cosmology’ is used interchangeably with the concept of worldviews. Suseno (1997: 84) defines worldview as: ‘*the frame of reference in relation to which man comprehends the various elements of his experience*’. Haverkort (1995: 456) furthermore states that: ‘*The concept of cosmovision thus refers to the way a certain population perceives the world or cosmos: It includes the assumed interrelationship between spirituality, nature and mankind. It describes the roles of super powers, the way natural processes take place, the relationship man-nature and it makes explicit the philosophical and scientific premises on the basis of which intervention in nature (as is the case in agriculture and health care) takes place*’. Obviously, these definitions show that the concept of ‘cosmovision’ refers to beliefs and cosmologies which have impacts on the use of natural resources and human interventions in life and the natural environment.

The Sundanese cosmovision can be represented through the thoughts, the acts and the ways of their interaction within their society and their environment. It can be represented through their artefacts *i.e.* houses, handicrafts, weapons, musical instruments as well as their poets, enchantments, or their life traditions *i.e.* farming systems, rituals, etc. The Sundanese cosmovision entails a specific consideration about the world order with special reference to the cosmovision’s mystical, spiritual and theological characteristics. According to the Sundanese cosmology, the good or the bad things in life will be determined by the people’s observance of the taboos (life restrictions). Human beings could reach their well-being or welfare only by harmonising their life with the spiritual world or the spirits and the universe. The thought and the act of the Sundanese people should be based on their cosmovision to ensure that their life will reach well-being and happiness (*cf.* Wessing 1978; Sumardjo 2010; Ekadjati 2014).

7.2.1 The Sundanese Cosmovision of *Tritangtu*

In the discourse of culture and development, it is understood that people’s cosmology will influence their behaviour and livelihood. Therefore, well-being as the objective of development can be understood by analysing local peoples’ cosmovision. As a country with hundreds of ethnocultural groups, the cosmologies of the people also vary. This can be understood through their social structure. It represents the dynamic relationship between the people and the societies as well as their environment. In analysing Sundanese culture, *Tritangtu* (‘Three Realms’) is known as the Sundanese cosmology. *Tritangtu* represents the three (triadic) structures of being, according to the worldview or cosmology of Sundanese sagacity *Tri* means ‘Three’ and *Tangtu* means ‘Realms’. So *Tritangtu* is also named as *Buana* in the Sundanese language while in Balinese the term *buana* is named as *Bhuwana* which also means world/realms. In terms of livelihoods, the Sundanese people believe that there are three realms which should be treated harmoniously. Specifically, the Sundanese cosmology of *Tritangtu* distinguishes the three realms as follows:

- 1) *Buana nyungcung/mayapadha* or upper realms, representing the sacred/spiritual realms/God(s);
- 2) *Buana panca tengah/madyapadha* or middle realms, representing the human realms or human beings; and
- 3) *Buana raring/arcapadha* or the lower realms, representing the earth and the environment.

The Sundanese cosmology of *Tri Tangtu* or *Tritangtu* ¹⁾ views that happiness, well-being and welfare can only be achieved if human beings live in harmony within the three elements: the human itself, the spirits (spiritual beings, including god/gods), and the universe. The life of the

Sundanese people should pay any form of respect to each of the those realms. The first realm is the *buana nyungcung* or *mayapadha* or the upper world, which represents the sacred/spiritual realms or the heaven. Human beings should give respect to the spirits/spiritual world as they represent the sacred realms/beings which invisibly contributes to the harmonious balance to the earth/universe and human beings. The second realm is the *buana panca tengah* or *madyapadha* or the middle world, which represents the place for human beings. Humans should pay respect to other humans and the other realms in order to have happiness as well as welfare both individually and socially. The third realm is the *buana rarang* or *arcapadha* or the lower world, which represents the earth and the universe, including animals and plants. Human beings should also pay respect to the earth and the universe as they have been serving humans with all kinds of natural resources which have been utilised by humans. If human beings would like the earth and the universe to keep serving them with all the beneficial resources, human beings should also treat the earth and the universe harmoniously and responsibly. Furthermore, Sumardjo (2010) argues that the first realm (*buana nyungcung*- upper world) and the third realm (*buana rarang* - underworld) represent the concept of 'heaven' and 'hell'. The indigenous Sundanese concept does not recognise such a 'destination afterlife'. The 'heaven and hell' is what humans experience in their life in the world, which is determined by their actions within the context towards the other realms, both the spiritual realms and the earth/universe. Humans will experience 'heaven' if the earth/universe provides them with anything that is needed by them and brings them happiness. Conversely, humans will experience 'hell' if the earth/universe harms the life of the humans. However, the benefits or harms which will be imposed by the earth/universe towards humans will be subjected to the way humans treat the earth/universe. In this context, spiritual realms or spirits give hints to humans to behave responsibly towards the earth and the universe as Sundanese cosmology views that every being in the world has its spirits. Plants, animals, stones, and lands are not merely representing resources which provide humans with all their needs, but also something which needs to be taken care of. The spirits in the earth/universe teach humans that the reaction by the earth/universe is subject to the action of the human. It means if humans act positively, then the earth/universe will react positively too, and vice versa.

The concept of causal action and reaction between the realms is used in the indigenous Sundanese cosmology of *Tritangtu* within the context of their traditional beliefs and livelihood. Human beings (*Middle Realm*) should maintain a harmonious relation with the spiritual realms (*Upper Realms*) as they bring spiritual energy towards humans and the earth, and the harmonious relationship between these two realms, named in Sundanese terms as the concept of *Silih Asah* ('reciprocal learning'). Similarly, human beings (*Middle Realm*) should also maintain a harmonious relationship with the earth and the universe (*Lower Realms*) as both realms have relationships of causal actions and reactions in the utilisation of natural resources, provided by the earth and the universe. In the Sundanese language, it is named as the concept of *Silih Asih* ('Reciprocal Love'). Eventually, the state of *Silih Asih* can be achieved if human beings maintain a harmonious balanced relationship with both the spiritual realm and the realm of earth and environment. The achievement of such an overall state of harmony is reflected in the concept of *Silih Asuh* ('Reciprocal Care') in the Sundanese cosmology. The concept of the 'triadic' structure of Sundanese cosmology has similarities with both the Balinese cosmology of *Tri Hita Karana* ('Three Foundations of Well-being') and the Javanese cosmology of *Triloka* ('Three Foundations of Happiness'). Both cosmologies also believe that well-being can only be achieved if humans make a harmonious life balance with the spiritual world and the earth/universe or the environment. Figure 7.1 shows a schematic representation of the Sundanese cosmovision of *Tritangtu*, which shows a clear similarity with the traditional Balinese cosmovision of *Tri Hita Karana* and the Javanese worldview of *Triloka*.

The triadic structure of *silih asah-silih asih-silih asuh* is known as the Sundanese indigenous wisdom, which inspires and motivates every Sundanese individual to behave harmoniously within their livelihood in the society. It affects the life and behaviour of Sundanese people in their thoughts, acts, arts and institutions (*cf.* Wessing 1978; Irawan 1999; Sumardjo 2010; Djunatan 2011; Agung 2005; Setyani 2018).

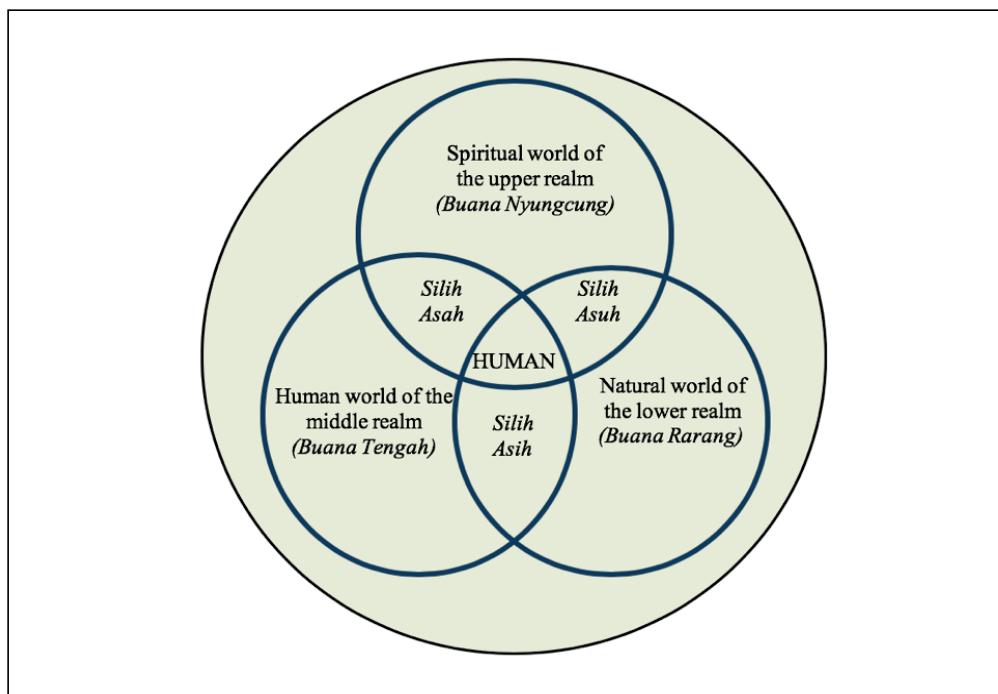


Figure 7.1 A Schematic Representation of the Sundanese Cosmology of *Tritangtu*.
Source: Saefullah (2018a).

7.2.2 The Influence of *Tritangtu* on the life of the Sundanese People

The new perspective of integrating cultural dimension with development as discussed in the pioneering study of Warren, Slikkerveer & Brokensha (1995) has been implemented by the Sundanese people through their cosmology of *Tritangtu*. The indigenous cosmology inspires and reflects the livelihood of the Sundanese people. Their cosmovision can be seen from the way the Sundanese people arrange their landscape, housing and residences, ecological arrangements, tools and equipment, including their landscape area; for instance, the Sundanese people divide the landscape based on the three divisions: *tonggoh/girang* ('upper landscape'), *tengah* ('middle landscape'), and *lebak/landeuh/hilir* ('lower landscape'). The nature of the water flow from the higher position to the lower ones explains the reason why the Sundanese people divide the land into those three landscapes, where every landscape has its own purpose and function. The beginning of the water flows of the river usually start from the water spring in the *tonggoh/girang/hulu* ('upper landscape') and then the water flows to the *tengah* ('middle landscape'), the lower landscape where humans usually live, and finally to the *lebak/landeuh/hilir* ('lowest area'), which in some cases ends up in the sea. The water from the higher landscape represents 'pure and clean water' as it is represented in *Tritangtu* with the

sacred/spiritual realms. The upper realm should be kept 'clean and pure' without any harm by the human. In the indigenous Sundanese cosmology, humans are not allowed to build houses or residences in the upper area. This is to avoid any contamination in the area which will affect the livelihood in that area as well as the lower area. Therefore, the indigenous Sundanese people preserve the upper area as a 'sacred area' or 'a place for spiritual beings'. In Sundanese terms known as '*Parahyangan*' or 'the place of the spirits and gods'. Human beings should build their residences in the lower area, or at least in the *tengah* ('middle landscape'), where the people could consume the clean water without disrupting the source. By consequence, the lowest area (*landeuh/lebak/hilir*) is meant for any human activity which does not require clean water but still consider the environmental sustainability. By using an example of Bandung as a city in Indonesia, the Dutch used to build the factories in the past in the lowest landscape in the southern area of Bandung. The waste which was produced by the factory would not harm the life of the people as they were mostly living in the higher areas than the factory. Although the Dutch have arranged the landscape management by following the Sundanese principle of landscape division, the pressure of the population growth however has changed the water management of Bandung city in recent times. The division of the landscape is not used anymore in modern Bandung. Some areas in northern Bandung have been disrupted by the massive construction of houses, residences as well as hotels. It is not surprising that in the last few years the city has been challenged by floods, which was the result of the disruption in the upper area of Bandung. Similarly, the quality of water in Bandung is also considered 'bad and unhealthy' as it cannot be consumed directly for the daily use of the households. Research by Al-Kamsi (2017) concluded that the water quality in Bandung contains *Escherichia Coli* (*E-Coli*) bacteria, which threatens people with various related diseases, including *diarrhea* (cf. Jabarprov 2015; Pikiran Rakyat daily 21/03/2018; Al-Kamsi 2017).

Another example of how the indigenous cosmology of *Tritangtu* is utilised in the livelihood of the Sundanese people is in the Sundanese architecture through the construction of Sundanese places of residence. In general, the Sundanese building is divided into three layers: 1) *ambu luhur/para* or the upperside of the house (rooftop); 2) *ambu tengah/pangkeng* or the middle side of the house where the rooms are built; and 3) *ambu handap/kolong*, or the lower/groundside of the house (cf. Illustration 7.3). The upper side of the house or rooftop (*ambu luhur/para*) is usually kept empty and meant as a roof. It is basically representing the sacred/spiritual world where the Sundanese people believe that the spirits will keep the people safe. The Sundanese people believe that if they consider the spirits/God(s), the spirit/God(s) will take good care of the people. The shape of the roof of the house represents the philosophy of the upper realm (*buana nyungcung*) which represents the first realm of the indigenous cosmology of *Tritangtu*. The shape of the roof is usually a 'triangle' in a trapezium form where the corner of the roof is directed to the sky, which in the Sundanese language is named *nyungcung*. The middle part of the house (*ambu tengah/pangkeng*) is usually built as the area where people live and do their daily activities. The middle area represents the second realm of the indigenous cosmology of *Tritangtu*: *Buana Panca Tengah*. The middle part of the house will usually be divided into several rooms which separate the front room and middle room (where the living room and the bedrooms are located) and the *kolong* ('bottom side of the house') is usually meant for any activity which the family members do in their daily life. It is also meant for the family members to give rooms for other creatures such as their pets to live. The *hareup imah* ('front room') is meant to be used by the Sundanese family to interact with the outer world such as with a guest or visitor. The *tengah imah* ('middle side') is meant to be used by the Sundanese family to do their daily activities for themselves and their family. And lastly, the *tukang imah* ('backside') is where the *dapur* ('kitchen') and *goah* ('storage room') are located.

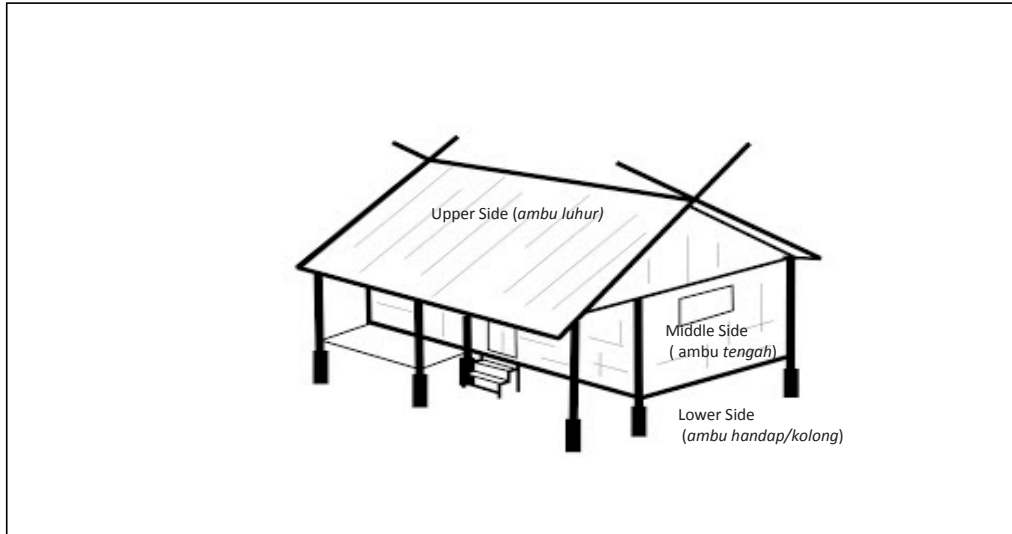


Illustration 7.3 A Sundanese House based on the Sundanese Cosmovision of *Tritangtu*.

Source: Adapted from Nugraha (2012).

According to the Sundanese cosmology, the backside of a house is meant only for limited members of the family who are responsible for the domestic activities such as cooking and preparing daily meals. In this context, the housewife is usually responsible for doing the domestic activities of a Sundanese family, while the household head works outside. In Sundanese culture, the woman is responsible to manage any activity in the backside of the house while the household head (man) is responsible to manage any activity which relates to the outer world, including guests or visitors. The middle part of a house is used together between the man and woman, or household head and housewife (*cf.* Nugraha 2012; Fauzi 2014).

In practice, there are various types of Sundanese houses built for different Sundanese people, depending on their area of living: 1) *Julang Ngapak* (birds which flap their wings), is a Sundanese house which is used by Sundanese people in Kampung Naga of Tasikmalaya District and Kampung Dukuh of Kuningan District in West Java. Some of the buildings of the Bandung Institute of Technology are also built by using this type of Sundanese house; 2) *Tagog anjing* ('the sitting dog') is a Sundanese house which is used by Sundanese people in Kampung Dukuh of Garut District in West Java; 3) *Badak heuay* ('the yawned rhino') is a Sundanese house which is used by the Sundanese people who live mostly in the Sukabumi District of West Java; 4) *Jolopong house* (droop, is a Sundanese house which is used by Sundanese people who live in the Tomo Sub-district of Sumedang District and Kampung Dukuh of Garut District of West Java; and finally 5) *Perahu kumereb* ('the prone boat') is a Sundanese house which is like a prone boat and used by the Sundanese people who live in Kampung Kuta in Ciamis District and Galuh District in West Java. The indigenous houses of the Sundanese people are made mostly of wood, bamboo and palm fiber. Illustration 7.4 shows one of the examples of such types of houses.

In the construction of the water reservoir system, the Sundanese culture has an indigenous institution of *Kuluwung*, a water reservoir which distributes the water from the water source to the area which the people use the water for their daily activities, from irrigation to household consumption. The implementation of *kuluwung* also uses three divisions of the pipelines: 1) *cai tonggoh* or the water source in the upper landscape; 2) *cai panampungan* or the water shelter in the middle landscape; and 3) *cai pangangoan*, or the water usage in the lower landscape, which is used by the people for their daily activities (*cf.* Illustration 5.9 and Illustration 7.5).



Illustration 7.4 An example of the *Parahu Kumereb* type of a Sundanese House in Subang.
 Source: Saefullah (2016).

Concerning the implementation of *Tritangtu* in the social interaction of the Sundanese people, the Sundanese cosmology of *Tritangtu* guides peoples' behaviour and attitudes in the society through the three moral principles which are needed to be implemented by the people: 1) *Tritangtu* on ourselves or *tata salira (jati diri)* which consists of how Sundanese people should behave as individuals. In this principle, humans should behave on the basis of their understanding of the first realm: the spiritual/sacred belief. The actions of this behaviour are named *silih asah* ('reciprocal learning/empowerment') and are represented in their individual ritual and behaviour; 2) *Tritangtu* on others or humankind or *tata nagara (jati nagara)* which consists of how Sundanese people should behave and interact socially as members of the community. Humans should behave in the society on the basis of their understanding of the second realm: respect for other human beings. The actions of this behaviour are named *silih asih* ('reciprocal love'); and 3) *Tritangtu* on earth/the universe or *tata buana (jati kusumah)* which consists of how Sundanese people should behave and interact responsibly with other beings in the universe. In this principle, humans should show care to other beings on the basis of a balanced life with the environment for the preservation of nature for future generations. The actions of this behaviour are named *silih asuh* ('reciprocal care').

The triadic principle of the human interaction among the Sundanese people, also known as the Sundanese local wisdom of '*silih asah-silih asih- silih asuh*' is well-known as mentioned earlier. *Silih* in the Sundanese language means 'reciprocal interaction'. It means that the Sundanese principle of human interactions and its society regard 'reciprocity or mutualities' as the important factor. Humans cannot be appreciated by others if they do not appreciate others. In practice, the Sundanese people adhere to the triadic indigenous wisdom which is expected to be implemented in any social interaction: *hirup nu hurip*, *hirup kudu nyontoan jeung picontoen* and *hirup kudu neundeun jeung ninggalkeun*.



Illustration 7.5 An Old Indigenous Water Reservoir of *Kuluwung*.
 Source: Tropenmuseum Collection No. 60052148.

The first one, *hirup anu hurip*, means that life concerns efforts and relates to questions of how to make life beneficial for the life of others, the social environment, the nation and religion, thereby emphasising the self-development of social obligations. The second one, *hirup kudu nyontoan jeung picontoeun*, means that any Sundanese individual should become a role model to other people in their thoughts and acts. The third one, *hirup kudu neundeun jeung ninggalkeun* means that any Sundanese individual should leave a positive image in their life through any good deeds which they might do, so that other people including future generations would follow their positive inheritance (cf. Erwina 2019).

7.2.3 *Tritangtu* and Community Institutional Systems

Concerning the community institutional system and how institutions play their role in sustainable community based-development, the utilisation behaviour of the institutions by Sundanese people are also influenced by the indigenous cosmology of *Tritangtu*. According to Irawan (1999), *Tritangtu*, an institution which serves the community, should follow three principles of Sundanese wisdom:

- *Akur jeung dulur sakasur* (should live in harmony with our blood)
- *Akur jeung dulur sasumur* (should live in harmony with our neighbor)
- *Akur jeung dulur salembur* (should live in harmony with our community)

The concept of harmony, used within the context of ‘harmony with our blood, harmony with our neighbour, and harmony with our community’, reflects the foundation of the Sundanese cosmovision of *Tritangtu*, which includes the triadic structure of how human beings should act accordingly with their cosmovision in social interaction by utilising any form of institutions. As further mentioned by Djen Amar (2010), the Sundanese Community Institutional System in general follows the criteria of *Paguyuban* (‘Gemeinschaft’) which according to Tonnies (1960) has the following characteristics: bottom-up initiative, common will and uses an emic approach in the principle and operations of the institutions. Similarly, Slikkerveer (2019) has also

mentioned that indigenous institutions in Indonesia, particularly among the Javanese and Sundanese people, follow the principle of *Gotong Royong*. Based on those criteria, it is not surprising that some community institutions such as *Gintingan*, *Perelek*, *Arisan*, as well as *Lumbung Padi/Leuyit*, use the criteria of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gotong Royong*, and are influenced by the indigenous cosmology of *Tritangtu* (cf. Dalton 1967).

7.3 *Gintingan*: Institution and Practices

7.3.1 The Concept of *Gintingan*

The Sundanese cosmology of *Tritangtu* influences people's livelihood from socio-cultural activities to economic transactions. One of the Sundanese institutions which represents the integration of economic activities and socio-cultural events is *Gintingan*. It is a socio-cultural institution, which is based on communality in terms of joint participation of individuals to provide a collective contribution to their community and of individual assistance to fellow villagers in need, known as *Gotong Royong* in the Javanese culture. *Gintingan* is practiced as a local initiative by people in the community when a particular household, which has a *Hajat* ('important need'), receives contributions from the community members through the provision of a *Gantang*, a vessel of rice with a content of about 10 litres. In contrast to the modern institutional system, *Gintingan* is a typical representation of an indigenous community-managed institution, based on the local people's cosmovision of *Tritangtu* which influences their livelihood practices. In this way, this institution maintains the harmonious balance among the villagers during socio-cultural events known as *Hajatan*, including weddings, circumcisions, rituals, etc (cf. Saefullah 2018; 2019).

The term *Gintingan* (cf. Irawan 1999) or *Gantangan* (cf. Prasetyo 2012) originates from *Ginting* or *Gantang*, which refers to a particular wooden vessel that contains a special amount of rice. *Gantang* itself is known not only in the agricultural areas of Indonesia, but also in some other parts of South-East Asia, despite the different scales of measure indicated. While in Indonesia, *Gantang* contains in general 10 litres of rice according to Irawan (1999), while in The Philippines, the equivalent of one *Gantang*, known as *Ganta*, contains about 3 litres of rice. The United Nations (1966) estimate the contents at 8.38 – 8.57 litres of rice, while in Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia, such a measure indicates 2.42 kg of rice. In Brunei, similar vessels contain 3.63 – 4.55 litres of rice. In addition to the above-mentioned capacities of the *gantang* in Indonesia, the scale measures are varying per region from 4.91 litres in Palembang; 9.59 litres in Batavia during the colonial period of time; 5.01 to 7.49 litres in Makassar; to 13 litres of rice in Kalimantan. Illustration 7.6 shows a wooden *Gintigan* ('vessel') of 10-litre capacity from West Java (cf. Saefullah, 2019).

The concept of *Gintingan* has been described by several authors, such as Irawan (1999), who defines *Gintingan* as: '*Pola hajatan dengan penggunaan sistem arisan*' ('the practice of a ceremony using the rotation system of mutual help'). While the socio-cultural motivation dominates the implementation of *Gintingan*, there is also an economic aspect involved of mutual assistance and reciprocity at the community level, albeit not in an obligatory sense. Indeed, participation in the *Gintingan* is voluntary, and not restricted to any membership or particular time frame of regular meetings. The social purpose of this institution of strengthening the spirit of communality and mutual assistance is reinforced by the cultural events of the above-mentioned ceremonies. As documented by Saefullah (2019), the *Sisingaan* ('traditional dance') of Subang is performed by families during the *hajatan* or ceremonies in praise of the celebration. Such dances have also been reported elsewhere in the Subang Region by Irawan (1999) and Wijaya (2010).



Illustration 7.6 A *Gintingan* Vessel from West Java, which contains 10 litre of Rice.
 Source: Temuan Galeri (2012).

Unlike the above-mentioned authors, Prasetyo (2012) defines *Gintingan* or *Gantangan* as: '*Sistem ekonomi tradisional berupa simpanan kredit beras melalui hajatan* ('a traditional economic system, using the exchange of rice, and implemented through ceremonies'). His interpretation focuses on the economic aspects of reciprocity assuming that in practice, the institution creates the concepts of 'debtor' and 'creditor'. The community members who contribute to the family in need act as a 'creditor', while the receiving family acts as a 'debtor'. The receiving family makes a record of any contributions from their relatives and neighbours in a special book, known as *buku beras* ('rice book') or *buku gintingan* ('gintingan book'). The book is similar to a cash-flow book, as it records the in- and outflow of the contributions. The contributions include mainly rice, money, or other valuable materials. The recent qualitative observations and in-depth interviews, complemented with quantitative household surveys in four villages in the Subang District clearly show the socio-cultural motivation of the local people in their intergenerational practice of the traditional institution.

The research findings underscore the overall objective of the traditional institution to preserve the social cohesion and communality among the members of the community. It represents the view of the local people on their relationship with their human, natural and spiritual world, based on their traditional cosmology. Wijaya (2010) relates the term *Gintingan* to *Gentenan*, which means 'Reciprocity'. In the Sundanese language, the term *Silih* refers to 'Reciprocity', and is also expressed in the philosophical foundation of the social interaction of the Sundanese people as mentioned earlier. The social aspect of this traditional institution is also observed in the way in which the obligation which follows the transaction is functioning.

Although there is an economic aspect underlying the transaction through the contribution of a certain amount of rice among the people, and this contribution is also recorded in the above-mentioned *buku beras*, there is, however, no finite period of time of repayment set in terms of a reciprocal contribution system, or a formal sanction in the event of a late recompensation or failed reciprocal return of a contribution (*cf.* Harris 1997; Irawan 1999; Agung 2005; Wijaya 2010; Djunatan 2011; Prasetyo 2012; Saefullah 2018; 2019).



Illustration 7.7 *Sisingaan*: The Traditional Sundanese Dance in Subang.
 Source: Saefullah (2012).

7.3.2 The Practice of *Gintingan*

The practice of *Gintingan*, as documented in the Subang Region, can be explained as follows: If one household in the community has an important *Hajat* ('primary need'), they will inform the community leader about their need for contributions from their fellow villagers. Since the contributions will be collected, the community leader then informs all community members about the upcoming *Hajatan* ('Ceremony'), and the voluntary obligation to fulfil the related needs of the household concerned, such as a wedding ceremony. Thereupon, the household sets the date of the ceremony in consultation with the community leader and the community members. Usually, the leader establishes an organising committee, *i.e.* a community-managed institution, which arranges the plans and preparations, as well as the implementation of the ceremony.

The organising committee then divides the tasks among the members of the community, such as collecting and administering the contributions, organising the rituals, and preparing the cultural events surrounding the rituals and ceremonies which the household would like to conduct. The informal organising committee then will send out invitations to all households in the community (*cf.* Illustration 7.9). Thereafter, the people in the community will then make their contribution to the needy household in the form of rice, money or other valuable materials, with a specific measurement. Considering that the *Gintingan* institution mainly uses rice as the form of contribution, a *Gantang* ('Vessel') is used to measure the volume of rice. Although in the Subang Region, the *gantang* contains 10 kg of rice, people could use this scale or contribute more if they wish. The total of such contributions could easily amount to rather large quantities of rice or money. If, for instance, 200 households in the community adhere to the *Gintingan* to contribute to a needy household, and each household contributes one *Gantang* of rice, the needy household will receive at least 2,000 kg of rice.



Illustration 7.8 Community Members in Subang collecting the Contributions of Rice in a *Gintingan* Vessel.

Source: Saefullah (2012).

If a conversion is made of the total amount of collected rice with a price of 1 kg at 10,000 Rupiah, the total amount of collected rice would be worth about 20 million Rupiah, equivalent to about 1,500 USD (2017). The collected *Gantang* of rice from the community is used by the needy households for the organisation of the rituals and ceremonies of the event, including the support of the needs which follows after the event. The needy household makes a record of every single contribution by the community members in the *buku beras* ('rice book') or *buku gintingan* ('*gintingan* book'). The book is used by the household members to document how much rice or other *Gintingan* contributions they have received, in the case when they should contribute to a similar need for another household in the community in the future.

Interestingly, while there is no finite period of time to return a contribution, the reciprocal recompensation can only be done in a similar way if the other household has a similar need or problem. According to Mauss (2002), this type of traditional institution is a form of reciprocal exchange, implemented by local people in a community as a positive return for what they have already received. Similar traditional institutions are also operational in other parts of the Subang Region, albeit under a different name, *Andilan*. In Indramayu, the institution is known as *Josan*, while in East and Central Java, it is called *Rewangan* in Banyumas, and *Bojokan* in Boyolali (cf. Harris 1997; Mauss 2002).

The practice of *Gintingan*, is based on the principle of mutual assistance through a reciprocal transaction, which is directly related to the pan-Indonesian institution of *Gotong Royong* and its parallel institutions of *Andilan* in the Sunda Region of West Java and *Metulung* in Bali. Irawan (1999) compares the practice of *Gintingan* with *Arisan*, being a Rotating Savings and Credit Association (ROSCA). The main difference is that *Gintingan* is not held regularly at particular dates and that recompensation of the received contributions is not confined to a limited period of time.



Illustration 7.9 An Example of an Invitation for *Gintangan* in Subang (2016).

Source: Saefullah (2012).

As regards the obligation of reciprocity, the household which receives the contribution from its community members should only 'repay' in the case when another household with a similar need is proposing to activate *Gintangan* for their planned ceremony. As an example of a traditional institution which is also based on the principle of reciprocity, there is compliance with the characteristics of the related category of: 1) absence of the need for immediate return; 2) absence of a systematic calculation of the value of the service and products exchanged; and 3) an overt denial that a balance is being calculated, or that the balance must come out even (*cf.* Geertz 1956; Harris 1997; Van den Brink & Chavas 1997).

The practice of *Gintangan* has been implemented in various forms. In Sukamelang of the Subang District, for instance, the community can contribute more than one *Gantang*, or in other forms such as money or goods which are needed by the household concerned. In the case when the needy household receives a contribution in money, then they also have to repay in the form of money. The same applies to other forms of such contributions. The custom of collecting money is also not merely used for rituals or ceremonies, and in some cases observations have been made that a household allocates some money to buy land for farming or to pay for the cost of schooling, etc. Also, in the case of Cimanglid in the Subang District, *Gintangan* is not practiced for the purpose of a wedding, but for building a house.

There are different opinions on the practice of *Gintangan*. The proponents of the practice of *Gintangan* argue that the tradition is not only providing specific economic support for needy households from the community, but it is also demonstrating the benefits from the principle of mutual assistance of *Gotong Royong*, where personal communication and social cohesion among the members of the community are maintained and reinforced. The opponents, however, point to the burden which is somehow put on some people who are not able to return a similar contribution in the future. They advocate the idea that the contributions should not be provided on the basis of expected returns, but be based on a social obligation. This perspective has found

support from the recent research by Saefullah (2019) in the Subang District, where in the village of Bunihayu a poor woman held a wedding ceremony for her daughter. As she had no money to conduct the wedding ceremony, the members of her community supported her through the practice of *Gintingan* in various ways, ranging from material contributions to the actual execution of the event. In her case, the people in the community did not expect her to repay their contributions; the case further substantiates that *Gintingan* is indeed a traditional socio-cultural institution without any pursuit of profit or economic gain characteristic for economic institutions (cf. Saefullah 2019; Slikkerveer 2019.).

The origin of *Gintingan* itself is also a subject of discussion. Irawan (1999) for instance states that it was established during the 1970s, while Wijaya (2010) supports the notion that it has been practiced since 1978. Prasetyo (2012), however, does not mention any argument on the beginnings of *Gintingan* in West Java, particularly in Subang. An anthropologist Mulyanto (*pers. comm* 2011) from Universitas Padjadjaran in Bandung supposes that *Gintingan* could have a long history, as he relates its origin and similar practices in different areas of Indonesia, as well as in other neighbouring countries. In his view, the various similarities of the institution in Indonesia and in other countries, such as the comparable use of the terms of *Gantang* or *Ganta*, the principle of mutual assistance, and the type of the communities where the institutions are practiced, might even represent a common Austronesian heritage.

7.3.3 Sundanese Cosmology and *Gintingan*

Gintingan provides an excellent example of how the three harmonies of *Silih Asah*, *Silih Asih*, and *Silih Asuh* are put into practice by the people of the Sundanese community in Subang. In this context, *Gintingan* indeed fulfils the underlying principles as follows: 1) the community leader represents the first element in the *Buana Nyungcung* ('Spiritual World') of *Tri Tangtu* as the community leader who puts the spiritual belief into practice by taking care of the people in the community; 2) the household, or the individual member of the community in need, represents the second element in the *Buana Tengah* ('Human World') of *Tri Tangtu*, where they are interacting with each other on the basis of reciprocity; and 3) the rice, money or any other material which are contributed within the practice of *Gintingan* represent the third element of *Buana Rarang* ('Natural World') of *Tri Tangtu*. The traditional principle of the voluntary provision of a 'contribution' to community members or the community as a whole has been an important part of the Indonesian culture, and is not only practiced in the Sunda Region, but also in other regions of the country. It is interesting to observe that the principle of the harmonious balance among the three realms of the cosmology has also recently been taken into account in the current development paradigm based on the concept of *endogenous development* through the re-conceptualisation of 'human well-being' as the objective of sustainable development. As it is now intensively discussed among development scholars, the 'materialist-economic' view of development has been criticised as its approach and implementation are lacking the inclusion of the important cultural dimension. For a long time, the development of the people and the community has only been analysed on the erroneous basis of the outsiders' perspective, and not from the insiders' view. Warren, Slikkerveer & Brokensha (1995) were among the first scholars who criticised the dominance of the outsiders' perspective in socio-economic development. Their strategy, implemented in the 'bottom-up' approach, was soon followed by others including Chambers, Pacey & Thrupp (1989), Richards (1985), Posey (1999), Woodley *et al.* (2006) and Loeffelman (2010).

The practice of *Gintingan* has not only improved the life and well-being of local people in terms of financial material circumstances, but also in terms of their social and human interactions. The traditional institution of *Gintingan* continues to maintain personal communication and social interaction among the local people in the community, where banking

transactions, for instance, seek to replace the personal dimension to become impersonal and commercially-oriented. By consequence, the local people in the communities tend to become alienated from their fellow humans, neighbours and other members of their communities, living together, but like strangers; in the words of a Bangladeshi villager who defined the philosophy of 'ideal well-being': '*bhat, kapor on shonman niye shukhey thakbo*' ('we live in happiness with rice, clothes and respect') (cf. White 2010). Thus, *Gintingan* can be considered as a traditional institution which can actively make an important contribution to the newly-proposed community-managed development efforts in order to achieve a state of well-being for all participants in the community - including the poor and marginalised families and individuals - and as such provide a major impetus to the achievement of sustainable community development. The traditional community institution of *Gintingan* has become crucial as an integrated community-managed development institution where people in the community are not only able to fulfil their material needs, including the cost of housing, food and education, including the performance of ceremonies and rituals, but also their spiritual needs of fulfillment towards a happy life, helped by other members of their community, and mutual respect by maintaining their culture of 'taking care' of all members - rich and poor - in the community (cf. Warren, Slikkerveer & Brokensha 1995; Woodley *et al.* 2006; White 2010; Loeffelman 2010; Saefullah 2019).

Note:

- 1) There are two ways in writing the Sundanese cosmology of *Tritangtu*. While Djunatan (2011) and Rusmana (2018) write it as one word, Sumardjo (2010) and Iskandar (2011) write it in two words. Both ways have the same meaning in terms of the Sundanese cosmovision.