

The Study of the Ancient Philosophy of "Aboge" in the Embodiment of a Space (Case: Cirebon City, Indonesia)

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Received May 28, 2022; Revised June 22, 2022; Accepted July 15, 2022

Cite This Paper in the Following Citation Styles

(a): [1] Ina Helena Agustina, Irland Fardani, Riswandha Risang Aji, Mochamad Ghiffary, "The Study of the Ancient Philosophy of "Aboge" in the Embodiment of a Space (Case: Cirebon City, Indonesia)," *Civil Engineering and Architecture*, Vol. 10, No. 6, pp. 2330-2337, 2022. DOI: 10.13189/cea.2022.100608.

(b): Ina Helena Agustina, Irland Fardani, Riswandha Risang Aji, Mochamad Ghiffary (2022). *The Study of the Ancient Philosophy of "Aboge" in the Embodiment of a Space (Case: Cirebon City, Indonesia)*. *Civil Engineering and Architecture*, 10(6), 2330-2337. DOI: 10.13189/cea.2022.100608.

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Abstract Cirebon, in the Indonesian province of West Java, is a culturally and historically significant city. The past's culture is still alive and well today. One of these is the Aboge concept of space embodiment, which is still alive and well today. The goal of this study is to describe the Aboge philosophy in the creation of a space, such as a house. The research is carried out by collecting data through field surveys. Interview activities with respondents were carried out in a snowball manner. Field observations were used to record empirical phenomena. The analytical approach employs a qualitative descriptive data collection method, followed by synthesis and conclusions. The findings demonstrate that aboge is an old philosophy that regards humans as integral members of the universe. This old aboge ideology has grown among the Cirebon people as an intangible heritage. Its evolution is passed down from generation to generation through folklore, or "getok tular," as it is known. The findings of the study indicate that the location of a house is necessary to attain harmony with its owners' energy. These findings can be utilized as evidence for the preservation of Cirebon's intangible heritage.

Keywords Ancient Philosophy, Aboge, Cirebon

1. Introduction

The study of local knowledge, in this case, the basic philosophy, is part of preservation. Through research, the memory of historical artifacts can be preserved and passed

down to future generations [1]. Ancient philosophy has developed in several areas, among which is ancient Chinese philosophy. Confucianism, Daoism, and Taoism [2] are well-known ancient Chinese ideologies that have become well-documented sources of world knowledge. Furthermore, ancient Greek philosophy provides the most fundamental human rationale [3]. The ancient Indonesian philosophy has not been as thoroughly documented as the ancient Chinese philosophies. The documentation and dissemination of old philosophical knowledge in Indonesia is a difficult task.

Aboge is one of the intangible cultural understandings of the people of Cirebon, Indonesia. According to ICOMOS, the physical and intangible heritage that promotes the identification of particular values in humans must be safeguarded [4], including the philosophy of "aboge," which is human values used to create an intangible place in Cirebon. Cirebon civilization established the aboge philosophy from generation to generation. Alif-Rebo-Wage is abbreviated as Aboge (Source: interviews with sources from the Cirebon City Tourism Office). The first letter of the Qur'an is Alif, Wednesday is Rebo, and Wage is the name of the day in the Javanese calendar. Aboge began by exploring the history of building a *suwunan* house in a coastal location on Rebo Wage. Cirebon's first house, or awitana, is a structure in the Keraton Kanoman Cirebon. This tangible culture could add sacred value to the place [5]. It also could preserve local culture for the future generation [6].

The goal of this research is to describe the Aboge philosophy in the creation of a place, particularly

residential structures. Many studies have been conducted on the preservation of a place or building, such as the preservation of historical buildings against climatic change [7]–[10], and the preservation of old materials for ceremonial garments [11]. Even if it is part of intangible heritage, studies on the core philosophy of the embodiment of space, particularly in relation to the knowledge that develops in Cirebon society, have never been conducted. Research into the idea of "aboge" yields a wealth of local information that can be documented to add to future generations' treasure troves of fresh knowledge.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Study Context

This research was conducted in Cirebon City, West Java Province, Indonesia. Cirebon City is bordered by Cirebon Regency, Kuningan Regency and Indramayu Regency and Majalengka Regency. The geographical position of Cirebon City is at 6.41° South Latitude and 108.33° East Longitude. A further location map can be seen in Figure 1.

2.2. Data Collection Procedure

This study was done by obtaining data on Aboge's philosophy from Cirebon City residents. They are Cirebon palace courtiers, royal family members, and Cirebon City Tourism Office employees. This data was provided through interviews and the documentation of the results of the interviews. Survey activities for interviews were carried out for one week from October 3 to October 9, 2021. Technical interviews were carried out by means of a snow ball.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed qualitatively descriptively in the following ways: Describe the results of recorded interviews into writing in the form of transcription; Examine the results of these transcriptions to see the similarities with each other; Grouping transcription results; Connect relationships between types/groups; Interpret results. The stages of this analysis can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 1. The Position of Cirebon City

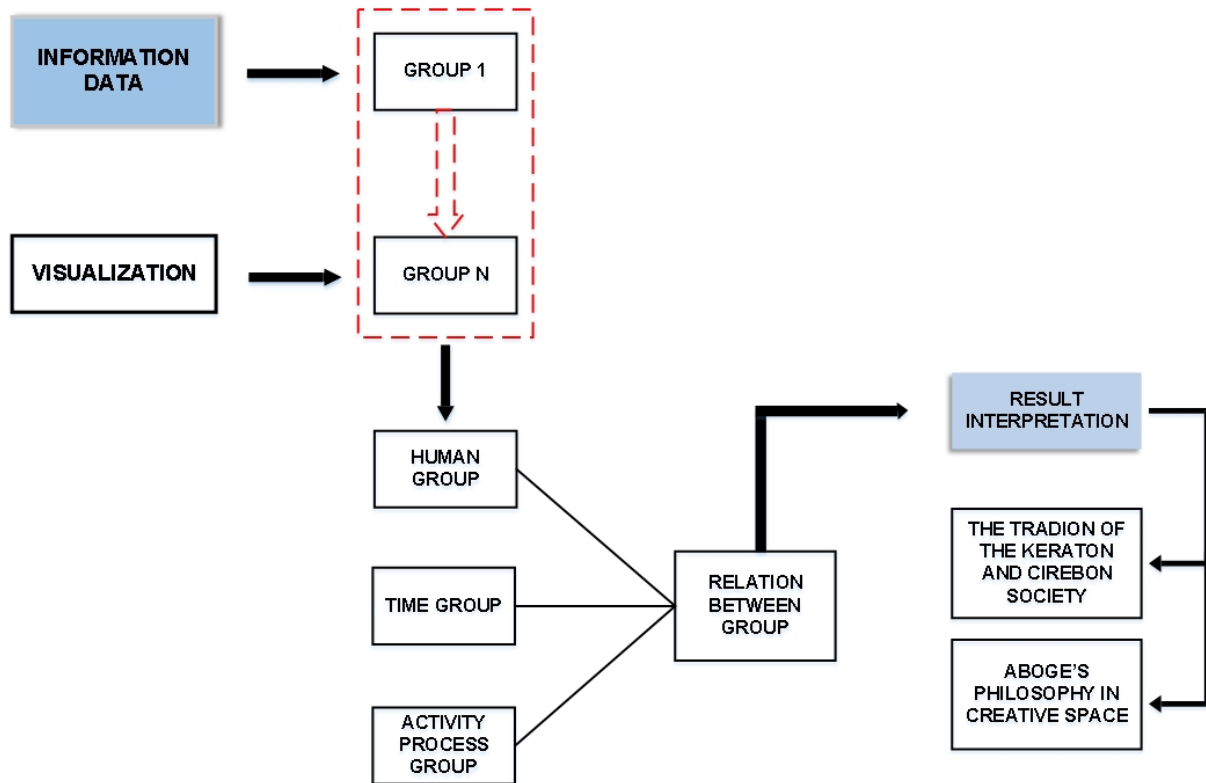


Figure 2. Stage of Analysis

2.4. Result and Discussion

2.4.1. Results of a Qualitative Description of the Philosophy of Aboge

The description was based on interview transcripts from three resource people who were familiar with the Aboge philosophy. The resource people were relatives from the Cirebon palaces. Interviews with resource people were conducted at various times. The interview took place in October 2021. The transcript of the interview results from the resource persons is provided below.

Source 1: "Aboge's philosophy contains an understanding of Alif, which is the first letter in the Qur'an. Al-Quran is the holy book of Islam. The holy book of Al-Quran was then revealed to the Prophet Muhammad and in Cirebon the values were spread by Sunan Gunungjati as walisanga. The Bo comes from Rebo or Wednesday. Ge is from Wage. Wage is one of the "pasar" names in ABOGE. This philosophy is still alive and well in Cirebon and its palaces. To carry out the Aboge philosophy, you must first practice the fasting tradition to purify yourself. There are usually several rules about when to fast and what to eat when breaking the fast, such as only eating white rice. Cirebon residents consider good and bad days to build a house, marry, and conduct other life-related activities, because they believe in Raspati, or a day that brings bad luck into people's lives. Shams (sun), Qomar (moon), Mirik (Mars), Athorid (Mercury), Musytari (Jupiter), Zuhro (Venus), and Zuhal (Venus) are the seven celestial bodies that influence human performance

(Saturn). They understand that humans are a part of the universe. Raspati takes Naktu into account in his calculations. For example, if Naktu Sapar is 2, then 5 is reduced by 2 to 3, and Raspati is scheduled for Tuesday."

Source 2: "ABOGE takes into account Alif year on the 1st of Suro or Muharam if in Hijriah it is called Alif year, the first year consists of 8 years become Windu. Alif is the fall of the suro month on the 1st of suro, the fall of the day of rebo, the pasaran wage is certain. The Pasaran consists of kliwon, legi, pahing, pon, wage. Human life is determined by God's destiny. The calculation of good days and bad days is a belief that humans are controlled by the power of God. To build a house, we also consider good days and bad days. Belief in Raspati, or the day that brings bad luck, is associated with the universe, specifically celestial bodies that affect human performance, specifically Mirik (Mars), Athorid (Mercury Shams (sun), Qomar (moon), Musytari (Jupiter), Zuhro (Venus), and Zuhal (Saturn). This viewpoint demonstrates the Cirebon people's unwavering faith in God's power and omnipotence over human destiny. Friday is a significant day in Cirebon, so it is included in the first line. Kliwon is considered the most important in the "pasar" category, so the pasaran order is: Kliwon, Manis, Pahing, Pon, and Wage. The calculation of important events is based on a time period of every 35 days, namely on Kliwon Friday. The considerations of the day and the market are carried out when people are about to get married or build a house. Even the cardinal points are also considered because the cardinal directions have a relationship with the position in

the universe. When building a house, the birthday of the occupants of the house will be calculated when the good time is, then the good time is allowed to build a house. There is a process in building a house, namely doing a prayer process, reading the creed and then building a house."

Source 3: *"The understanding of ABOGE comes from Alif, it indicates that the early year coincided with the fall on the day of the Rebo and the wage as pasaran. According to the Javanese, Pasaran consists of manis, pahing, pon, wage, kliwon. Then it was combined into Aboge in the meaning of the word Alif Rebo Wage, meaning that the 1st year of Cirebon fell on the day of the Rebo Wage. Alif is taken from the letters of the Holy Qur'an, rebo is the term Wednesday, wage is the pasaran that applies in society."*

The people of Cirebon believe that God's destiny is in accordance with the Qur'an as the holy book of Muslims. The principle of destiny in their view shows that luck or misfortune is "God's will". There is a belief about Raspati or the day that brings badness to human life. Raspati is calculated according to the phenomena of the universe, including objects in space. When you are going to build a house, you have to consider the good and bad aspects of time."

Based on the results of the transcription above

Human Group:

Humans are grouped as Cirebon people who have a tradition of the Aboge Philosophy. This man is supported by the existence of religious beliefs and the palaces in Cirebon, as the successor of tradition.

Time Group:

Time is indicated by the names of the days, pasaran names and the names of the lines that affect the belief in the good and bad destiny of humans.

Activity Process Group:

Human activities such as marrying and making houses are integrated with the work of the universe and the celestial bodies, because humans are part of the universe.

Based on the results of the grouping, a process of relations between groups is carried out and the resulting interpretation:

- (1) The traditions of the palace and the Cirebon people form the Aboge Philosophy
- (2) Aboge philosophy forms a spatial philosophy

2.4.2. Interpretation of The Traditions of the Keraton and the Cirebon Society in shaping the Aboge Philosophy

The religion of Islam that was spread by Sunan Gunungjati originated in Cirebon. Sunan Gunungjati is a member of the *wali sanga* in charge of spreading Islam in Java. Sunan Gunungjati was also a guardian who became the King of the Cirebon Sultanate. The palaces in Cirebon are a continuation of the Cirebon Sultanate and descended from Sunan Gunungjati.

The Cirebon palaces have upheld the traditional Islamic values taught by Sunan Gunungjati to this day. Traditional Islamic values have intrinsic holiness as a value. Cirebon's people uphold this value system as well. The people of Cirebon believe that God has predetermined the good and bad fates of humans. Resource Person's stated that in a classic example that we cannot choose where and when we will be born, we cannot choose our parents, and we cannot choose when and where we will die. These statements are representative of the Cirebon people, who believe in Allah's destiny in accordance with the Qur'an, Muslims' holy book. The principle of destiny in their view shows that luck or misfortune is "God's will". This view shows that the Cirebon people's belief is non-compromising in the power and omnipotence of God over human destiny.

Cirebon residents' efforts to avoid bad luck or bad luck in their lives are calculated using a numerology system. The Cirebon numerology system serves two purposes: the first is to establish the new year, and the second is to establish a good date and time to carry out important tasks. In addition to the solar calendar, the Cirebon people use the lunar calendar. Because determining the lunar calendar is more difficult than determining the solar calendar, a calculation agreement is made. There are two ways to calculate for one week: 7 days and 5 days. Each has its own "jejer," "pasaran," and "Naktu." "Naktu" is an important factor that is considered.

Because the people of Cirebon regard Friday as a significant day, it is included in the first "jejer." *Kliwon* is the most important in the "pasaran" category, so in that order: *Kliwon*, *Manis*, *Pahing*, *Pon*, and *Wage*. The calculation of significant events is based on a 35-day cycle, with the first *Kliwon* jejer meeting the first jejer of the "pasaran" day on Friday (See Table 1). Friday is an important day in Cirebon society because Islamic tradition regards Friday as the most important day for carrying out religious orders. Meanwhile, the tradition of *Kliwon* Friday is used by Sunan Gunungjati as the day of the Palace meeting, because *Kliwon* Friday is a good day to know the good and bad of someone's intentions. Sunan Gunungjati died on Friday *Kliwon*.

Table 1. Day in One Week for Aboge Calculation

Days of the week	Naktu (a specific Value related to days of the week)	Jejer (Ordinal Standing)	Pasaran (the native five-days week)	Naktu (a specific Value related to days of the week)	Jejer (ordinal Standing)
Jum'ah (Friday)	6	1	Kliwon	8	1
Septu (Saturday)	9	2	Manis	5	2
Akad (Sunday)	5	3	Pahing	9	3
Senen (Monday)	4	4	Pon	7	4
Selasa (Tuesday)	3	5	Wage	4	5
Rebo (Wednesday)	7	6			
Kemis (Thursday)	8	7			

Naktu is calculated for the month in the year and the year in the windu (one windu is 8 years). By means of a manipulation system, the calculations are always carried out every month, the Sura of the year Alif will fall on the Wednesday of the Wage market. Furthermore, this calculation system is known as ABOGE which stands for A (lif), Re (Bo), Wa (ge). This ABOGE is used to calculate the specific goals of the Cirebon people.

The celestial bodies affect human life in years, months, days, and even hours. A certain time will affect the results of the work. Time which is under the domination of certain celestial bodies will be appropriate and beneficial for the work. Finding the best time to do work is an important aspect among the people of Cirebon. According to them, there are seven celestial bodies that affect human performance, namely *Syams* (sun), *Qomar* (moon), *Mirik* (Mars), *Athorid* (Mercury), *Musytari* (Jupiter), *Zuhro* (Venus), and *Zuhal* (Saturn). These celestial bodies have influence, as the Sun will be good for all work. Mars would be good for making weapons. Jupiter is not good for all work, but good for war. Mercury is good for all work. Venus is very good for carrying out Religious orders. Saturn is good for digging wells for springs. For this reason, the person who will do the work will consider the best time according to the circulation of the celestial bodies.

Table 2. Order of the Months in the ABOGE and Islamic Calendars

ABOGE/ JAWA	ISLAM
Sura	Muharam
Sapar	Safar
Mulud	Rabiul-Awwal
Sawal mulud	Rabiul Akhir
Jumadil awal	Jumadil awwal
Jumadil akhir	Jumadil Akhir
Rejeb	Rajab
Ruwah	Sya'ban
Puasa	Ramadhan
Syawal	Syawal
Kapit	Dzul-Qaidah
Raya Agung	Dzul-Hijah

People in Cirebon will consider blessed days, especially when building houses and holding weddings. The Raya Agung, Kapit, Jumadil awal, Jumadil akhir, and Rejeb are all good months to build a house. Raya Agung, Ruwah, and Jumadil Akhir are good months for marriage. The ABOGE calendar has month names that are similar to the Javanese calendar. Table 2 compares it to the Islamic Year Calendar.

In some cases, a person cannot wait for the right time but will usually avoid bad days or days that are considered dangerous. This bad day is called "*Raspati*". To avoid this, it is directed to choose a neutral time called "dina lowong" (vacant), meaning the time when it is not profitable or does not cause harm to the person. The determination of the vacant day is carried out with calculations as can be seen in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 3. Calculation of Vacant Days and Raspati in the Year of Alif

Month	First Day	Lowong (Vacant)	Raspati (The Bad Day)
Sura	Rabu Wage	Sabtu (Saturday)	Minggu (Sunday)
Sapar	Jumat Wage	Senin (Monday)	Selasa (Tuesday)
Mulud	Sabtu Pon	Rabu (Wednesday)	Sabtu (Saturday)
Syawal Mulud	Senin Pon	Jumat (Friday)	Rabu (Wednesday)
Jumadil Awal	Selasa Pahing	Minggu (Sunday)	Jumat (Friday)
Jumadil Akhir	Kamis Pahing	Selasa (Tuesday)	Senin (Monday)
Rejeb	Jumat manis	Kamis (Thursday)	Selasa (Tuesday)
Ruwah	Minggu Manis	Sabtu (Saturday)	Kamis (Thursday)
Puasa	Minggu Kliwon	Rabu (Wednesday)	Rabu (Wednesday)
Syawal	Rabu Kliwon	Jumat (Friday)	Minggu (Sunday)
Kapit	Kamis Wage	Minggu (Sunday)	Senin (Monday)
Raya Agung	Sabtu Wage	Selasa (Tuesday)	Sabtu (Saturday)

Table 4. Determination of Naktu for Years and Months in one Windu (8 Years)

Months of the Javanese Calender	Naktu (a specific Value related to days of the week)	Years and Months in one Windu (8 Years)	Naktu (a specific Value related to days of the week)
Sura	2	Alif	3
Sapar	2	He	2
Mulud	1	Jimawal	2
Syawal Mulud	1	ze	1
Jumadil Awal	5	Dal	5
Jumadil Akhir	5	Be	5
Rejeb	4	Wanu	4
Ruwah	4	Jimakir	3
Puasa	3		
Syawal	3		
Kapit	2		
Raya Agung	2		

Raspati can be calculated simply by multiplying the month's value by the number of days, which equals 12 or 5. For example, if Naktu Sapar is 2, then 5 is reduced by 2 becomes 3, and Raspati is on Tuesday. This calculation is a type of human effort to adjust to the motion of the universe. Because humans are microcosms, their motion must be in sync with that of the macrocosm. This calculation is not the only thing that determines a good final result, but the Lord of the Universe will be the most absolute determining factor.

2.4.3. Interpretation Results of Aboge's Philosophy in Creating Space

Cirebon's people understand and believe in Aboge, which is a philosophy, point of view, or set of ideas on the values of human life. The concept that humans must live in harmony with the universe gives rise to this consciousness.

This philosophy and principle have been passed down through the generations by "getok tular," or word of mouth. Furthermore, the palaces' policies in Cirebon are still based on this aboge mentality (Source: Interview results).

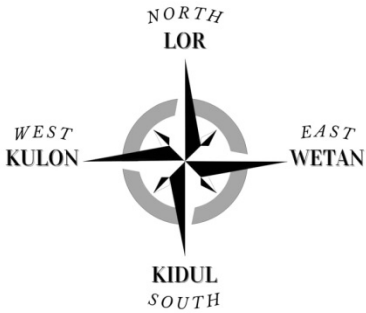
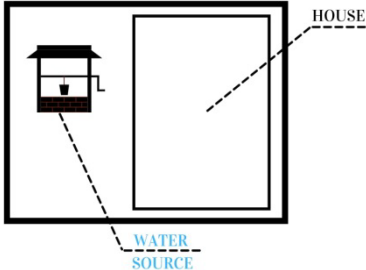


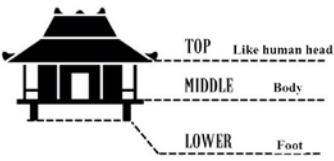
**Figure 3.** A house located in the Kasepuhan Palace area, Cirebon City

The figure above shows one of the houses that are still part of the royal family. The construction of the house is still considering the cardinal directions. The spring is placed on the left side of the house. When the house was built, the best times were considered by the people who filled the house.

The space referred to in aboge is a place where humans live and carry out their activities. Space is considered a place for activities for its habitants based on their usual doing [12], [13]. This philosophy's guiding premise is harmony and unity between humans and the universe, as evidenced by various guidelines for designing a space, particularly a dwelling, as shown in Table 5.

The aboge ideology exemplifies the harmony of religious beliefs and old customs. Unity is the belief that humans do not exist in isolation and must work together with their creator. Various factors must be considered from the construction of a house to the filling of the house. These considerations are thought to ensure human life safety. These cultural things could be considered as tourism potential in the future [14].

Table 5. Aboge Philosophy for the Construction of Houses

Principle	Consideration	Explanation	Visualisation
The place/ Room/ Location/ Position	Wind direction	The winds considered are lor (north), kidul (south), wetan (east), kulon (west). For house construction, the wetan direction is an excellent choice.	
	Energy	The position of the spring should be placed on the right side of the house. The dirty room (wc) should not be adjacent to the bedroom.	
Time	Good day Good month	The construction of the house should be on the days in the Aboge calendar which are sweet Monday, sweet Thursday, sweet Saturday. Days when it is forbidden to build a house Prohibition of building houses in the months of Shawwal, Mulud, and Jumadil at the end.	 <p>Sura - Sapar - Mulud - Bakda Mulud - Jumadil Awal - Jumadil Akhir - Rejeb - Ruwah - Siyam - Sawal - Selang - Akbar</p>
Human	Humans are born with a condition called nature	Calculation according to the name, day of birth, date of birth, of the human who will occupy the house	
Process	Development of the Room/house Moving to a newly built house	Perform prayers such as reading <i>syahadat</i> Laying certain materials such as duck eggs that are almost rotten in the foundation of the house. Laying sugar cane, rice, yellow bamboo and banyan trees as well as nails made of gold to raise the roof of the house Performed the <i>Selametan</i> by serving food Must prioritize entering Padaringan (rice storage) into the house	<p>•Structure Of The House•</p> 

3. Conclusion

The aboge philosophy that developed in Cirebon is maintained because of the role of the Cirebon palaces. This philosophy is concerned with human values, comprehension, and the conviction that humans are a vital element of the universe.

The principles of aboge philosophy in the embodiment of space are: location, time, people, and processes. These concepts demonstrate the fundamental aspects that suggest the protection of human life around the globe. The aboge ideology must be documented in order to become part of Indonesia's intangible legacy and a treasure trove of cultural knowledge.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, the National Unity and Political Agency of West Java Province, the UNISBA Research and Community Service Institute for the cooperation and research funding for the Matching fund program wave VIII in 2021.

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