



# Buai-Buai Dance as a Symbol of Agriculture in West Sumatra

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**Abstract.** Buai-Buai dance is an art that originally originated from the South Coast and was brought by a community leader to the city of Padang who until now is not known whose identity is. Arriving in the city of Padang, Buai-Buai Dance has undergone many changes and the development of tampa eliminates the character of its sharp and hard movements. The purpose of writing this article is to describe the results of research on “Symbols and Meanings of Buai-Buai Dance Movements in Sanggar Singo Barantai, Padang City” with the speaker Irwandi Tan Basa, S.Sn, M.Sn as the heir and coach of Buai-Buai Dance at Sanggar Singo Barantai. This study used a descriptive method of analysis. Data collection was carried out by observation techniques, interviews, documentation, literature studies. Data from this research was collected from members of the Singo Barantai studio who are active in preserving the art of Buai-buai dance. The findings of this study reveal that the symbol and meaning of the buai-buai dance movement, namely, describes the daily life of the people around the Singo Barantai studio located in Kenagarian Pauh IX, Kuranji District, Padang City.

**Keywords:** Buai-Buai Dance · Symbols · Meanings

## 1 Introduction

The Buai-Buai dance, which developed on the South Coast, has existed since the 18th century AD. At first, buai-buai dance originated from the Indrapura Kingdom. The growth of dance in the Indrapura kerajaan is closely related to the activities of sikambang as a worker and caretaker of the king’s son in the Indrapura Kingdom. The core movements found in the Indrapura Kingdom are the buai-buai movement, *nandi-nandi*, *rantak kudo*, and *tikam jajak* and so on these four cores (staple) movements spread to Pauh Village [1]. Over time, this Buai-Buai dance was brought by a figure who is not known by name until now to the city of Padang. After the buai-buai dance grew and developed in the city of Padang, this dance experienced many updates and the stories raised were adapted to the activities of the people of Pauh Village. Tells the activities of the community, especially the role of parents in garden farming while taking care of their children. Each heir who learns this buai-buai dance always develops movement according to what story they captured from the previous ones who taught the buai-buai dance. Buai-Buai dance at this time is preserved by several studios in the city of Padang, but the Buai-Buai

Dance has different movements in each studio. One of the studios that still preserves the Buai-Buai Dance in the City of Padang until now is sanggar Singo Barantai, with its heir named Irwandi Tan Basa, S.Sn., M.Sn.

Researchers chose to study the symbols and meanings of motion contained in the buai-buai dance as the focus of this study. The word “meaning” can be interpreted as the meaning that a person gives to a thing that is manifested in the form of language, both its true meaning and its figurative meaning. While a symbol can be interpreted as a symbol of something that applies in people’s habits in a certain environment or culture [2]. A symbol system is something created by man and conventionally used together, regularly, and truly studied, thus giving an understanding of the essence of “man”, that is, a framework full of meaning to orient himself to the other; to his environment, and to himself, at once as a product and his dependence in social interaction [3].

Based on the explanations described above, it can be concluded that a traditional art will develop over time, but without removes the value of the dance tradition. The movements contained in the dance must have symbols and meanings in every movement, the purpose of which is to maintain the preservation of the dance so that it is not lost from time to time.

## 2 Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative type of research with a descriptive method of analysis, with an ethnocorrelological approach. According to Strauss and Corbin [4], this qualitative research is research that can be used to examine people’s lives, history, behavior, functionalization of organizations, social movements, or kinship relationships. Meanwhile, according to Bogdan and Taylor [4], qualitative research is a research procedure that is able to produce descriptive data in the form of speech, writing, and behavior of the people observed. The descriptive method of analysis is a method that gives predicates to the variables studied according to the actual conditions [5]. This ethnocorrelological approach is intended to be able to see more clearly in terms of the text and the context that surrounds it. Ethnocorrelological approaches apply many theories from different disciplines that are also called multidisciplinary, involving the disciplines of history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, iconography, physiognomy, and performance semiotics [6]. This is related to the symbols and meanings of the buai-buai dance movements that are filled with various aspects.

Research on the symbols and meanings of the buai-buai dance movement was carried out in Nagari Pauh IX, Kuranji District, Padang City because the access and location of the study is located in the city center and is easily accessible. The object of this study is the Buai-Buai Dance Art in Nagari Pauh IX, Kuranji District, Padang City. With the subject of the study, namely the Nagari Pauh IX community, Kuranji District, Padang City. The participants who are also the speakers in this study are Mr. Irwandi Tan Basa, S.Sn. M. Sn. as the heir and coach of buai-buai dance at the Singo Barantai studio and Meri Ramaneli S.Pd as a senior speaker who is actively being bullied at this time. The data collection techniques used in this study are observation techniques, interviews, documentation, literature studies, and data analysis.

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Research Results

Based on the results of an interview that was held on April 24, 2022, the source explained that this dance has experienced a lot of development by every heir who studied it. Dance is not the same form throughout the ages, it changes when taught by the older generation to the younger generation, because the form of dance that must be inherited is interrogated” [7]. The concept of dance preservation can be divided into two aspects, namely the aspect of maintaining and the aspect of developing [8]. It can be interpreted, maintaining means keeping the art on or using the art properly. Developing i.e. by modifying an art from certain aspects without removes its true identity.

Irwandi Tan Basa in his interview explained that at this time the story raised from the buai-buai dance illustrates how the activities of the people of Padang City, especially in Pauh Village, in carrying out their daily activities, where the main livelihood of the people here is farming, in addition to also telling how the role of parents in taking care of their children. In the Singo Barantai studio at this time there are 14 varieties of movements that have been developed, of which the 14 kinds of movements describe the sequence of activities ranging from community activities at home, working together, and returning home. For property, the Singo Barantai studio no longer uses geleta or timbala because judging from the level of difficulty of movement, it is not possible to use the property. In this buai-buai dance has symbols that have meaning in it.

**Symbols and Meanings of Buai-Buai Dance Movements.** *Sambah Motion.* The first symbol of motion is called sambah motion, where this motion symbolizes respect before starting the performance to the viewing audience. For his movement, the position of the right and left hands straight to the front of the chest is parallel to the shoulders and the five fingers of the hand upwards, the elbows are slightly bent. The position of the body is straight towards the body and the position of the right leg is bent to the right cross and the left leg is bent to the bottom holding the position of the body when performing the sambah movement. This movement is the opening movement of the buai-buai dance and is a symbol of respect for the community. This motion has no standard count, it is done and adjusted by the dancer himself according to the goreh of one of the dancers and follows the tempo of the music.

*Tapuak Motion.* The tread motion here symbolizes or indicates that the performance of the buai-buai dance will begin immediately, which means that this movement is an opening sign in the buai-buai dance. In this batapuak motion the position of the left foot in front of the right foot, then the two legs are shifted alternately. While the right hand is parallel to the shoulder and the five fingers of the hand are facing upwards, the elbows are slightly bent. The left hand also does the same thing with the right hand and both hands meeting and being in front of the chest. This is done repeatedly until it enters the next movement. This motion has no standard count, it is done and adjusted by the dancer himself according to the goreh of one of the dancers and follows the tempo of the music.

*Buaian Motion.* This cradle motion symbolizes how society, especially the role of parents in taking care of their children before going to the rice fields. Here the role of the mother is to swing her child in the cradle and the father’s duty is to serve his child, the fineng contains advice to the child so that he can grow up and return the favor to his

parents in the future, the fineng is sung through rhymes. On the motion of the cradle the dancer takes a sideways position of the dancer's body somewhat bent following both directions of the hands. The right hand is straight to the side of the right body slightly bent like an angle and the left hand is bent in front of the chest forming an angle of elbows with the position of the five fingers following both directions of the hand being below the shoulder average adjusted to the movement of the hand.

*Malenggang Motion.* Malenggang motion symbolizes people getting off the house after they have finished putting their children to sleep and continuing activities by going down to the yard before working together. For his movement the dancer advances with a walking motion by doing a foot beat to the ground or floor, with the position of the body slightly ducking while swinging both left and right hands beside both sides of the body forward and backward alternately in harmony with the beat of the dancer's two legs.

*Rantak Kudo Motion.* The rantak kudo motion symbolizes the farmer's journey from home to farmland using a horse, because in the past the distance between the house and the rice field was not close and at that time the only transportation that existed was horses. The movement of the kudo rantak is carried out such as the movement of pulling the horse rope where the two positions of the left hand in front of the chest are slightly bent and the right hand besides the right is shoulder level with the position of the fingers of the hand like grasping the horse rope. The position of the two cross legs is alternately stomped to the ground/floor.

*Mambajak Motion.* This mambajak motion symbolizes how farmers plow the fields, according to the name of the movement, after arriving at the rice field the farmer immediately continues his activities, the first is to plow the fields. The mambajak motion is carried out with the position between the two hands and the two legs in line forward alternately between the left and right legs with the left and right hands and the two legs are swarmed alternately forming an elbow angle with the body position slightly bent.

*Mamadek Pamatang Motion.* This pamatang mamadek movement symbolizes how farmers make boundaries of rice fields that can be passed to make it easier for farmers to work in the fields. The position of both hands is in front of the dancer's chest, while the left leg is raised ninety degrees in turn with the right foot samapai making a move to another place. With the position of the body tilted following the swing of both legs and both hands.

*Batanam Motion.* The batanam motion here symbolizes how farmers grow rice. With his movements the position of the two hands formed a grip and stabbed the ground like a person willing to plant with the body position slightly bent over. These movements are performed repeatedly with the position of the legs bent alternately.

*Manyabik Motion.* The manyabik motion symbolizes how the process of harvesting rice that has been planted before. By making a move that directly tells the story of a person where the left-hand grasps and the right hand is like cutting the one that is swung under the left hand. The position of the crossed legs alternately while walking.

*Mairik Padi Motion.* This motion symbolizes how the farmer's process of separating rice from the stem using the legs, because in ancient times there was no machine that helped the process of separating rice from the stem, so this method was used for this process. The movement of both hands describes the person pulling something and his legs stomping to the ground repeatedly and the position of the body bending forward while turning the four directions.

*Manampih Padi Motion.* While this rice manampih motion symbolizes how the farmer's process of separating rice from his skin using legs. With his movement both hands straight to the front of the chest, the fingers of the hands alternately pierced down and up. The position of the body is straight forward and slightly hunched, the two feet stepping into the shadows and the hood in turn.

*Barabah Pulang Mandi Motion.* This movement of the barabah returning to bath symbolizes how the farmer's process after work is in the field, which describes the process of the farmer cleaning himself (bathing) after work. The dancer performs the movement of the person who is willing to take water while being flushed towards the left and right sides of the body with the position of the right leg bent until the ground and the left foot stands ninety degrees. The position of the body is hunched and facing towards both hands.

*Saik Galamai Motion.* This saik galamai movement symbolizes gratitude to farmers by preparing dishes or snacks for farmers to eat after working in the field. With his movements such as cutting, the right hand is made to arch in front of the chest and the left hand is swung under the tangan's hand, done alternately. With legs walking forward in turn and stomping.

*Rantak Kudo Motion.* This rantak kudo motion symbolizes the process of farmers returning home after work in a horse. The movement of the kudo rantak is carried out such as the movement of pulling the horse rope where the two positions of the left hand in front of the chest are slightly bent and the right hand besides the right is shoulder level with the position of the fingers of the hand like grasping the horse rope. The position of the two cross legs alternately stomps on the ground/floor.

### 3.2 Research Discussion

**Symbols and Meanings of Buai-Buai Dance Movements.** Judging from the results of the research above, namely about the meaning and symbols contained in the movements of the buai-buai dance, it is very clear that the names of the movements in the buai-buai dance are closely related to the story raised by this buai-buai dance. The content of the buai-buai dance is a story about the life of a family who works as a farmer, and also shows the role of parents in taking care of their children.

The symbol of motion here explains how to convey a message through movement in the dance. A symbol of movement used to convey stories, feelings and even desires through the dance. Symbols of dance movements can be movements that symbolize sadness, looking at distances, strength, and even symbolizing hard workers. Each of these bui-buai dance movements has its own symbol and meaning. Symbols are human signs or tools for communication that have meaning and meaning are things that contain certain intentions [6]. In accordance with the explanation above, the buai-buai dance movement really sees the symbols of community activities in Nagari Pauh IX, where the daily activity is farming.

**Dance as a Medium of Communication.** The essential communication is how a message can reach others; the mediums used to achieve these things are of various kinds. In

the modern world the use of tools and means of communication is one of the indispensable parts for communicating messages. The role of dance as a medium of communication can be conveyed through body language (motion) which can be conveyed verbally (in the form of words, both oral and written) and non-verbal (images, expressions, and other forms that contain certain meanings) [9]. In essence, all arts including dance arts intend to be communicated, dance art also has a special feature, namely in the form of expression of the human soul which is expressed through beautiful and rhythmic body movements which contain messages or meanings to be conveyed, meaning that dance art can be said to be a form of non-verbal communication because there is a message or meaning that wants to be conveyed through the movement of limbs (kinesics), eye movements (eye gaze) and touch (touching) [10]. Buai-Buai dance is a form of communication conveyed through movement, which describes how the activities or livelihoods of residents in Pauh District.

## 4 Conclusions and Suggestions

### 4.1 Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that in the Buai-Buai Dance movement has very clear symbols and meanings, starting from the first motion to the last motion. Which tells the activities or activities of the Nagari Pauh IX community, Kuranji Koto Tengah District in carrying out their daily activities, most of whom are farmers.

### 4.2 Suggestion

Based on the results of the research that has been concluded above, it is advisable for other researchers to conduct similar research related to the symbols and meanings of traditional dance in Nagari Pauh IX. And to the researcher himself to be able to examine more deeply about the Buai-Buai Dance tie in terms of different points of view.

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