



The Cultural Meaning of *Para-Para* for the Dondai Villager, Papua

I Wayan Rai S.¹, Ni Made Ruastiti¹, Ni Nyoman Lia Susanti¹, Ni Wayan Masyuni Sujayanti¹, Gede Yoga Kharisma Pradana²(✉), Yunus Wafom³

¹Indonesia Institute of Arts Denpasar, Denpasar, Indonesia

²Hotel Management, Tourism Institute and International Business, Denpasar, Indonesia
yoga@stpbi.ac.id

³Indonesian Literature Education, Cendrawasih University, Jayapura, Indonesia

Abstract. This article was created based on the desire to reveal the cultural values of the *para-para* for the Dondai people in Papua. The Dondai people have a cultural tradition that seems different in Papua. However, no research has examined the meaning of *para-para* for Dondai people. The questions are: 1) What does the *para-para* look like in the Dondai village? 2) Does the *para-para* have cultural values in the Dondai village? It was completed using qualitative methods. The data was obtained through a literary study, observation, and interviews in the Waibu district. All data were analyzed qualitatively using deconstruction and functional theory. The Results: 1) *para-para* is the name of the Dondai people for the traditional house at Dondai village; 2) *para-para* has cultural significance because it has represented the identity of the Dondai people and has become an important meeting place to discuss the preservation of the Dondai culture in Papua. This article has implications for the promotion of Papuan traditional houses as well as for academics who want to improve their research on Papuan culture.

Keywords: Cultural Meaning, *Para-Para*, Dondai Villager, Papua.

1 Introduction

Papua is a large island located in the easternmost region of the Republic of Indonesia. This large island is inhabited by 2,318,819 men and 2,036,626 women [1]. The area of the island of Papua reaches 421,981 km², which includes more than 250 ethnic groups spread across the coast, valleys, highlands, and land [2]. Observing so many ethnic groups in Papua implies a huge cultural potential and an invaluable resource in the lives of the Papuan people.

Modernization in the development of the Papuan population has had an impact on the division of the Papua region in 2003. Based on the regional regulation of Jayapura district number 12 of 2003, it indicates the formation of the Ebungfauw district, Waibu district, Namblong district, Yapsi district, and Airu district in Papua. It is interesting to note that 1.78% of the Waibu district area contains the village of Dondai as the point of origin for *para-para*. Apart from the *para-para*, the village with an area of 4.92 km²,

which is very close to the old and new doyo villages, is also known for the tale of a dog named Yoku Debaiskha and traditional ethnic musical arts such as the tambur flute, asingan, and phu, which are preserved in ceremonial activities.

The purpose of this study was to determine the shape of the para-para in Dondai village and the relationship between the para-para and the culture of the Dondai people. In general, this research is to reveal the meaning of para-para for Dondai people. In previous research, para-para in Papua was mentioned as a vehicle for traditional cultural activities of the community that have social meaning. Para-Para is a place where many Papuan people often eat areca nuts [3]. Para-Para is declared to have cultural value in the context of social life, as indicated by the presence of symbols of local wisdom related to social capital and peace in Papua. Para-Para is their vehicle for resolving SARA conflicts (ethnicity, religion, race, and cultural customs) [4]. Conflict resolution for Papuan security is influenced by the quality of human resources and social capital [5]. The crisis of social solidarity, among others, is marked by the fragility of the supporting pillars of the cultural buildings belonging to the Papuan people [6]. The Dondai people in Papuan society in the Waibu District know para-para in their cultural activities. In Papua, Waibu District is known as a communities zoning that has a cultural heritage from the megalithic era, which is preserved at the Tutari site [7].

Customs and rites of passage of the people of Dondai village, Waibu District. The para-para and these traditional arts are part of the cultural traditions of the Dondai people, which distinguish them from the activities of life rites and cultural traditions of people outside the Dondai village. Of all the cultural heritage of the Dondai people, the existence of para-para has become very rare in Dondai village after the Waibu district was recognized as a new district in Papua. In the midst of the phenomenon of increasing scarcity of scaffolding in Dondai village, it turns out that no one has researched the meaning of "para-para" for the Dondai people. The questions are: 1) What is the shape of the para-para in Dondai village? and 2) Does the para-para have cultural value in the village of Dondai?

2 Method

This article was prepared based on the results of qualitative research. Qualitative research shows the use of data instead of numbers, which are analyzed descriptively [8]. Primary qualitative data was collected using observation and interviews with informants in Waibu district, Papua. Secondary data was obtained based on studies on Papuan culture. All data were analyzed using functional theory and deconstruction theory. Functional theory, assisted by deconstruction theory, is used to explain the manifestations of para-para in Waibu district, Papua. Meanwhile, the theory of deconstruction, with the support of functional theory, is intended to reveal cultural values related to the existence of para-para in Waibu district, Papua.

3 Result and Discussion

The discussion on para-para for the Dondai people has been prepared based on research results. The results of the research that was done and was successful are the form of para-para in Dondai village and what para-para means in Dondai village culture.

3.1 *Para-Para* at Dondai Village, Papua

Para-para has traditionally been recognized as part of local wisdom in Papua [4]. Para-para is the designation of the Sentani tribe for traditional houses that are typical in Papua. Para-para refers to traditional house buildings in the village of Dondai. Para-para has a length of 20 meters, a width of 10 meters, and a height of 8 meters. The shape of this house has a structure composed of a meeting room, three levels of the roof of the house at the top, and 11 wooden pillars supporting the building at the bottom (Fig 1).

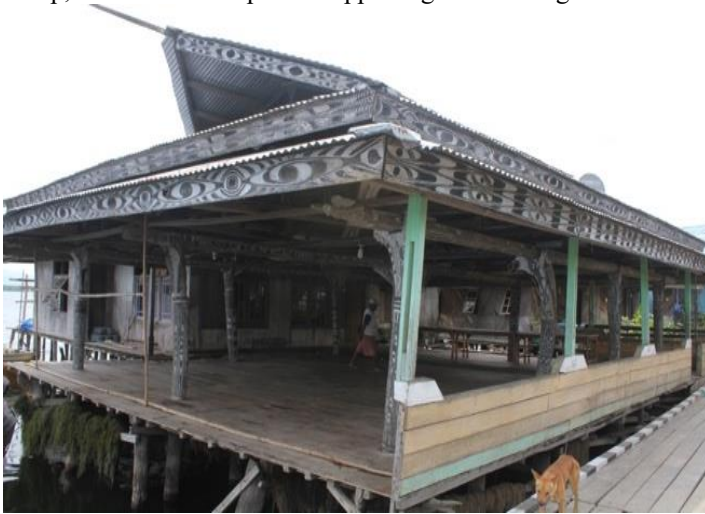


Fig. 1. Para-Para at Dondai Village (Source: Miki Wuka, 2020)

As a traditional house in the village of Dondai, para-para is equipped with human, mermaid, and animal motifs accompanied by geometric lines. The various motifs in Para-Para depict aspects of Papuan culture as expressed through creativity based on the Dondai people's artistic tastes and beliefs. The uniqueness of para-para has become part of the identity of the Dondai people. As a traditional ethnic building in the village of Dondai, the existence of awnings can be said to be rare.

3.2 The Cultural Meaning of *Para-Para* at Dondai Village, Papua

The meaning of "culture" indicates the presence of something of cultural value [9,10,11,12,13,14]. Para-para has a cultural meaning because it has represented the identity of the Dondai people. The correlation of social and cultural identities cannot

be separated from inheritance and genealogical relationships in social history [15]. The close relationship between the culture of the Dondai people and the cultures of the Yankonde and Sosiri people is represented in the three levels of corrugated iron roofs. The structure of the para-para is supported by 11 wooden pillars bearing the motifs of the Dike cultural tradition, the Walli tribal cultural tradition, and the Daimoe tribal cultural tradition. The para-para have a meeting place without a partition, which provides great opportunities for conformity to customary decisions among all participants in meetings that hold deliberations (Fig 2).



Fig. 2. The Meeting at *Para-Para* (Sumber : Rai S., 2020)

Traditionally, para-para has been used as a strategic location to address tribal war issues [4]. The cultural elements that are adapted and preserved cannot be separated from social interests and instrumental functions [16,17]. The function of the para-para as an important meeting place in order to solve the problem of preserving the culture of the Dondai village shows that this traditional house has cultural significance for the Dondai people. Para-para functions as a place for the sovereignty of the Dondai indigenous people in facing the threat of extinction of the uniqueness of Dondai cultural identity and tribal wars, a place for deliberations from Ondoafi together with Dondai residents regarding government development programs, a place to explain the origins of Dondai culture to new members of the Dondai village, and a place to welcome guests of honor regarding the peaceful settlement of issues of cultural preservation and tribal wars.

3.3 Discussion

This article has implications for the promotion of Papuan traditional houses as well as for academics who wish to develop their research on Papuan culture. Para-para refers to traditional house buildings and places of cultural activity in the village of Dondai. As a traditional ethnic building in the village of Dondai, the existence of para-para can be said to be very difficult to find. The importance of para-para for cultural preservation, the basis of cultural superiority, and the strengthening of the point of origin should make these traditional buildings abundant and easy to find in Dondai village. In line with Derrida's thought in Gaston [18], this situation shows that there is the other, something else behind the construction orientation. The lack of capital and reliable agencies is an obstacle to upholding the ideal function of the booths in Dondai village.

Para-para has a cultural meaning because it has represented the identity of the Dondai people. Sustainable cultural forms show social utility [19]. The function of the *para-para* as an important meeting place in order to solve the problem of preserving the culture of the Dondai village shows that this traditional house has cultural significance for the Dondai people. Decisions made during the deliberations in Dondai village regarding issues of cultural preservation and tribal wars were strongly influenced by *Ondoafi*'s perceptions. *Ondoafi* is known to have a great influence regarding local wisdom in Papua [4,20].

4 Conclusion

Reviewing the results of the analysis of "The Cultural Meaning of Para-Para for the Dondai Villager, Papua," it can be concluded that: 1) para-para is the name of the Dondai people for traditional houses in Dondai village. The dimensions of the para-para are 20 meters long, 10 meters wide, and 8 meters tall. The structure of this house consists of a meeting room, three layers of roof, and eleven wooden pillars at the base.; 2) para-para has a cultural meaning because it has represented the identity of the Dondai people and has become an important meeting place to discuss the preservation of Dondai culture, Papua. This article has implications for the promotion of Papuan traditional houses as well as for academics who wish to develop their research on Papuan culture.

Acknowledgement. Special thanks go to the people who took part in the research and turned the results into articles.

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