

Symbolic Communication Ume Kebubu Context Atoin Meto

Yermia Djefri Manafe¹, Felisianus Efreem Jelahun², Fitria Titi Meilawati³, Henny L.L Lada⁴

Abstract

Symbolic communication allows us to share complex and conceptual understandings of the world around us. Every culture has a symbolic model used to convey meaning depending on the social environment, culture, and personal experience. Symbolic communication can also take place within the ume kebubu traditional house environment. Ume kebubu is taken from the word ume which means house and kebubu which means round. Therefore, ume kebubu is a representation of a circular house. The ume kebubu model reflects the combined culture and local wisdom of the Atoni Meto people, which is full of symbols and connotations. Therefore, ume kebubu can be interpreted as a dwelling that has a rounded appearance. The ume kebubu design reflects a combination of local customs and wisdom that is filled with symbols and meanings. Therefore, a proper understanding of communication related to cultural symbols, identity, and values of the Atoni Meto community as the owner of the ume kebubu is needed. This research was conducted in Oeue Village, Kuatnana Sub-district, South Central Timor District, East Nusa Tenggara Province using qualitative methods. Information was collected through in-depth interview sessions with traditional leaders and residents living in ume kebubu. Focused discussions were conducted to deepen understanding and ensure compatibility with the interview results. This research concludes that the symbolic communication of ume kebubu includes architectural elements, symbolic decorations, room layouts and ritual ceremonies. Architecture, including design, form and structure, has many symbolic meanings. Decorative symbols have specific meanings associated with cultural identity, while room layouts reflect certain values. Ritual ceremonies have deep symbolic meaning.

Keywords: *Symbolic Communication, Ume Kebubu, Symbolic Meaning, Atoni Meto.*

INTRODUCTION

The Atoni Meto tribe is one of the indigenous tribes of Timor Island, which is now found in West Timor, including South Central Timor. This ethnicity comes from a mixture of two human groups, Molus/Melus/Melas from the Melanesian islands and Penjamas (Kenurawan) from the Polynesian islands. This statement is consistent with the view of (Ormeling, 1957) in his book "The Timor Problem". Molus and Penjamas used to live in Timor by utilizing natural resources such as fruits, tubers, leaves, cinnamon, honey and game. They lived in groups in stone caves and did not recognize metal. The tools they used were made of stone, bone and hard wood. Over a period of time, after the arrival of other peoples from Papua, Helong and Jabi from Ternate and Tidore, these peoples learned about metals, agriculture and house building. Later, tribes from Malacca, Luwuk

¹ Department Of Communication Studies, University Of Nusa Cendana, Indonesia

² Department Of Communication Studies, University Of Nusa Cendana, Indonesia

³ Department Of Communication Studies, University Of Nusa Cendana, Indonesia

⁴ Department Of Communication Studies, University Of Nusa Cendana, Indonesia

(South Sulawesi), Bali, Java and Sumatra came to Timor. They were more sophisticated and complex.

The impact of the arrival of new groups in Timor led to a blending of blood and culture. The Atoin Meto began farming and building their houses. Although the Atoin Meto dwelling model reflected the cave situation, the houses were built in a round, conical shape with one door and small size. Atoin Meto had methods to adapt to various changes in the environment, such as changes in temperature and climate. One of the special ways the Atoin Meto adapted to the environment was by living as nomads or moving from place to place. This shows how well the Atoin Meto are able to adapt to changes in climate and environment in each place they visit. The round house plays an important role as a place of shelter, especially from changes in the weather. Towards the rainy season around July - September, the South Central Timor District experiences drastic temperature changes. The lowest temperature reaches 19-20°C (Puspita et al., 2016). August is the coldest month in South Central Timor. During the day, the temperature in Oeue Village can reach 31°C, then at night the temperature can drop to 19°C. This change in temperature causes the Oeue village community to adapt their activities in *ume kebubu*. This shows a process of cultural adaptation that the Oeue community is doing to meet their living needs (Ferraro and Andreatta, 2014). Specifically, the use of *ume kebubu* by the Oeue community shows that the house still functions in meeting the needs of the community, one of which in this context is protection from cold air (Haviland et al., 2008). The cold temperature also makes the residents not do many outdoor activities. From the observations and measurements of air temperature, it was found that when the temperature is low, many activities are done inside the *ume kebubu*.

Due to the relatively cold weather in the community, a fireplace is provided in the center of the *ume kebubu*, which also serves as a place for cooking, warming the body, and as a means of lighting the traditional house (Prasetyo, 2019). Towards evening, when the air temperature reaches 22°C, people will enter the *ume kebubu*. The main purpose is to prepare dinner together. In addition, they will chat while warming their bodies by sitting around the fireplace in the center of the *ume kebubu*. At this time, the temperature outside is 20°C - 19°C, while the temperature inside *ume kebubu* is very warm, in the range of 35°C - 37°C. The whole family will enter the *ume kebubu* to warm themselves (Dima et al., 2013). Smoke from wood and bamboo fireplaces is also used to preserve food. Fireplaces are built in permanent locations and have expanded into built spaces that are also used for socializing and performing rituals (Dewi et al., 2017). Therefore, it is not surprising that we can now enjoy a variety of interesting cultural legacies from the romance of Atoin Meto life. These cultures reflect Atoin Meto's response to the problems he faced. One of the famous responsive cultural heritage of Atoin Meto is *Ume Kebubu*.

The existence of *ume kebubu* involves understanding the value, meaning and significance of traditional houses in the cultural context of Atoin Meto. *Ume kebubu* is an important part of the cultural heritage that reflects a way of life, beliefs, architectural knowledge, construction skills and social ties that have been passed down from generation to generation. This traditional house is often the center of life for the Atoin Meto people. It serves not only as a place to live, but also as a place to interact, engage in cultural activities, and store and maintain cultural knowledge inherited from ancestors. The *ume kebubu* traditional house also reflects Atoin Meto's relationship with the natural environment and demonstrates local wisdom in the sustainable use of natural resources (Iswanto, 2021).

An important theme of this research is the revelation of symbolic meaning in order to explore the symbols contained in the design, form, and structure of the traditional *ume kebubu* house and how these symbols reveal deep cultural meanings and values for the Atoin Meto tribe. In addition, the role of the *ume kebubu* in cultural communication can illustrate how the *ume kebubu* traditional house functions as an important medium of

cultural communication for the Atoin Meto tribe. It conveys information about their tribal identity, history, and cultural knowledge.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach, which is a research that uses natural objects, where the researcher tries to describe and interpret the objects according to the facts and characteristics of the objects and subjects accurately (Bungin, 2011). Qualitative research observes people in their environment, interacts with them, understands their language, and examines how they interpret the world around them (Nasution, 2003) (Faisal and Rifai, 2020). In this case, qualitative research guides researchers to obtain previously unexpected findings and create theoretical frameworks (Endraswara, 2003).

The data collection technique used was observation or participatory observation, which was done intentionally to observe the lives of Ume Kebubu and Atoin Medo through close observation and recording. To obtain verbal information from informants or respondents and to complement the findings of observation, researchers used interview techniques (Syahrin et al., 2019). In addition, researchers used data documentation techniques to find information about ume kebubu in the form of notes, books, journals, newspapers, magazines, etc. After obtaining all the necessary data, the researcher conducted analysis using data analysis techniques according to Miles and Huberman, namely reducing the data, making summaries, selecting key issues, focusing on obtaining important themes, and looking for themes and patterns. After reducing the data, the next step is to display the data to make it easier to understand what is happening and to plan further work based on what is understood from the existing data. Then, conclusions are drawn in the form of new insights that were not there before or were not clear when the research revealed them.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Atoin Meto's perspective on Ume Kebubu

The worldview of the Atoin Meto refers to their cultural orientation based on their belief system about things such as God, humanity, nature, the universe, and philosophical issues related to the existence of the Atoin Meto themselves. Worldview issues help them to know their position and behavior in the universe. Worldviews are timeless and are the most fundamental foundation of a culture (Manafe, 2016). In the context of this research, it is necessary to discuss in order to obtain information about the beliefs and attitudes of the Atoin Meto towards ume kebubu.

Ume kebubu is seen as the main symbol of Atoin Meto's life, which is actually not very different from the meaning, value and function of traditional houses in general in relation to the life and social interaction of traditional communities in different places. Socio-anthropologically, for example, Ume kebubu has not only economic and social values and functions, but also religious and political values and functions. The basic elements of traditional human social patterns actually emphasize the value of togetherness and unity, which includes various aspects of human vitality to live and develop. In addition, traditional communities express themselves through various rituals and symbols in the house, both horizontally and vertically (Amsikan and Nahak, 2017). Thus, the ume kebubu is a symbol of unity, as it is the binding cord of all tribal members. In addition, the ume kebubu is also the core and center of their lives.

Socio-economically, ume kebubu for Atoin Meto is a knot that binds all tribesmen to build togetherness, unity and fellowship, in addition to being one of the central points for implementing certain customs. Socio-politically, ume kebubu has values and functions as a source of strength, protection, security, peace and integrity for all tribal members.

Socio-religiously, *ume kebubu* is a unified symbol of commemoration of the ancestors vertically to establish and maintain harmonious relations with the upper world, spirits and ancestors, while horizontally as a unifying symbol to improve relations among fellow tribe members. Thus, any character behavior that leads to things that are difficult to understand by common sense or absurd, highlighting the nature of spirituality, supernatural and abstract is included in the view of things that are transcendental in human life (Santosa, 2006). *Ume kebubu* is an integral symbol of the universe because through *ume kebubu*, the Atoin Meto community is able to express its existence in the world today, the world yesterday, and even the world to come.

Symbolic Communication *Ume Kebubu* Context Atoin Meto

Communication that takes place in a reciprocal, dialogic, face-to-face interpersonal setting is called symbolic interaction (SI). Symbolic interaction has become an interdisciplinary term in communication and sociology. The material object (objectum material) is the same, namely humans and human behavior. Other objects. Understanding of symbols in a communication process is very important because it causes communication to take place effectively (Ahmadi, 2008).

Culture is often thought of as a set of symbol systems, a medium through which humans adapt to and interact with their physical and symbolic environment. Ultimately, culture is unique because it consists of a system of symbols that are conventional and arbitrary. Symbols are objects, events, speech sounds, or written forms that are given meaning by humans. People can give meaning to any event, action, or object related to thoughts, ideas, and emotions (Hendro, 2020). In the context of culture, humans give meaning to any event, action, or object related to thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Thus, these symbols become a way to communicate, convey ideas, and pass on knowledge from one generation to the next. Symbols are conventional and arbitrary, meaning that the relationship between symbols and their meanings are collectively agreed upon and have no intrinsic relationship. As such, this view underscores the importance of symbols in shaping, reinforcing, and transmitting culture. These symbols form the basis of the communication and shared understanding that uniquely characterizes a culture.

Ume kebubu has rich cultural meanings and symbols because it functions as a residence and an important place in the life of the Atoin Meto community. The cultural meanings and symbols of *Ume Kebubu* are closely related to cultural identity, natural balance, social function, representation of cosmology and spirituality, local wisdom and traditional construction.

Through *ume kebubu*, the Atoin Meto community can strengthen its cultural identity, preserve its traditional heritage, and pass on the values of local wisdom from generation to generation. This round house symbolizes togetherness, intimacy, and strong social values in Atoin Meto life. Thus, *ume kebubu* is a cultural symbol that enriches the diversity and uniqueness of human life on Timor Island.

Ume Kebubu Atoin Meto

Ume kebubu or round house is a traditional house on the island of Timor in the province of East Nusa Tenggara. *Ume kebubu* comes from the word *ume* which means house and *kebubu* which means round, so *ume kebubu* means a round house (Prasodjo et al., 2015). The round shape of the house is due to the natural conditions and geographical location in the mountains which makes it a comfortable place to live and feel warm inside (Tlonaen and Deda, 2021).

The appearance and direction of the wind can affect air flow patterns in the surrounding environment, and wind speeds at ground level can cause complex wind flow patterns around buildings (Faharuddin, 2016). *Ume kebubu*'s conical design is very responsive to weather conditions, the steep roof allows rainwater and dew to flow quickly downwards without penetrating the along grass roof. The shape of the building is well suited to the

winds that blow throughout the year, even during high winds. Timor has variable weather, in the monsoon season strong winds from the north can cause heavy rain, in the eastern season strong winds blow from the south with hot temperatures, in the transitional season from April the intertropical wind crosses Timor to the north and in October it turns to the south (Maemunah, 2015). Although there was limited knowledge and simple building technology at the time of construction, the building form responded well to its environment.

The roof of the ume kebubu is made of dangling reeds that almost touch the ground (Dima et al., 2013). The traditional ume kebubu house has a round shape at the top of the house. The materials used to build the house can be found in the surrounding nature (Purwanto and Hapsari, 2018). The roof of the ume kebubu house is shaped like a hair, which is rounded and tapered at the top. The Dawan people consider it a symbol of women, especially a mother. Ume kebubu is also referred to as Ume Bife, which means women's house, where various activities such as cooking, weaving, and giving birth are performed.

Almost every Atoin Meto living in rural Timor has an ume kebubu. There is a rule that a family must build or own an ume kebubu before building another type or larger house (Puspita et al., 2016). This explains that ume kebubu is a material representation of the ancestral ties, symbolic life, and cultural heritage of Atoin Meto (Windi and Whittaker, 2012). A study conducted by Situmeang and Sarah revealed that the function of ume kebubu as a place to store food is the reason why it is still maintained in the Atoin Meto community to this day (Situmeang, 2013).

Figure 1. Ume Kebubu Construction Process



Source: Researcher's Documentation, 2023

Ume kebubu has a small and short door that requires everyone entering and exiting the house to bow. The small door of ume kebubu has its own meaning, which teaches that everyone must respect each other (Dima et al., 2013). Ume kebubu also has a cone-shaped attic that can be used as a place to store crops such as corn, rice, and beans so that they are not easily damaged. The smoke from the kitchen under the attic in ume kebubu is very helpful in the smoking process of ume kebubu so that food can last a long time. In daily life, ume kebubu serves as a place to live and do activities such as cooking, sleeping, chatting, and so on. In addition to being a place to live, ume kebubu is also used as a granary or food storehouse. This food storehouse is located just above the fireplace, the top of which is made into an attic. The food that is stored is usually durable food such as corn, coconut, and beans (Puspita et al., 2016).

Ume Kebubu Material

The materials used in the construction of ume kebubu come from the environment around Oeue village. The process of exploiting these natural materials is still conventional and on a small scale for the needs of building 1 housing unit, so it can be said that this process has no carbon footprint. Carbon emissions are generated from the material production process, the transportation of materials to the site, the construction process, and the occupants' use of the building by consuming electrical energy (Lapenangga and Taneo, 2019). The materials used can last up to 20 years as they continue to receive natural preservation from the smoking process in the ume kebubu (Lapenangga et al., 2020).

The materials used in the construction of ume kebubu are considered environmentally friendly because they are sourced locally and there is no carbon footprint from collection to processing. The materials are usually cut with machetes and transported by workers/community members from traditional gardens or forests to the construction site. These materials are readily available as they grow within the Oeue village environment and their life cycle is maintained and cultivated by the community, except for alang-alang and bamboo which grow wild. These materials have the ability to last up to 20 years due to continuous natural preservation through smoking. The following are the natural materials used in the construction of ume Kebubu.

Table 1.Ume Kebubu Materials

No	Wood Type	Designation
1	Redwood	Walls, attics, doors
2	Cassowary Wood	Roof ribs
3	White Wood	Poles
4	Acacia Wood	Poles
5	Ampupu Wood	Main pole, main beam, door leaf
6	Bamboo	Roof rib circle, wall, attic floor
7	Alang-Alang	Roof cover
8	Forest plant roots	Ringbalk as a fastener

Source: Researcher, 2023

Wood is the main material used in ume kebubu construction. The wood used comes from local trees such as redwood, cassowary, acacia, ampupu or other species that have good strength and durability. Wood is used to make the frame, poles and rooms that make up the structure of the house.

Bamboo is a material often used in ume kebubu construction. Bamboo is used to make walls, roofs and floors. Bamboo has good strength and is easily found in the village. Woven bamboo is also used as a decorative element.

Reeds are easy to find in the fields around Oeue Village. Reed is used as a roofing material for ume kebubu. Reed has good insulating properties against heat and sound, helping to maintain the temperature inside the house. Dried leaves can also be used as an alternative if straw is not available.

Forest root is a type of vine that grows with some large trees in the forest. They have a long length and are easily formed into large rings as ring balks that tie together walls and roofs or attic floors and roofs. Natural ropes, such as rattan ropes or ropes made from plant fibers, are used to bind and secure construction components, such as wooden or woven bamboo huts.

Symbolic Meaning of Ume Kebubu Construction Elements

Joel M Charron (1979) in (Ahmadi, 2008) argues the importance of understanding symbols when researchers use symbolic interaction theory. Symbols are social objects in interaction that are used as representation and communication determined by the people who use them. These people give meaning, create and change objects in interaction. These social symbols can manifest in the form of physical objects (visible objects), words (to represent physical objects, feelings, ideas, and values), and actions (what people do to give meaning when communicating with others).

Based on what underlies human group life or society, some Symbolic Interactionists point to "communication" or more specifically "symbols" as the key to understanding human life. Symbolic interaction points to the unique nature of human interaction. This means that people interpret and define each other's actions, both in interactions with others and in interactions with themselves. The interaction process that is formed involves the use of symbols of language, rules of customs, religion and views. According to Joel Charon, the process of symbolic interaction formed in a society can be seen in the picture above (Ahmadi, 2008).

Symbolic interaction essentially explains the frame of reference for understanding how people, together with others, create a symbolic world and how the world shapes human behavior. As noted by Douglas (1970) in (Mayangsari and Firdaus, 2022), meaning comes from interaction, and there is no other way to form meaning than by building relationships with other individuals through interaction.

Gambar 2. Ume Kebubu Construction



Sumber: Dokemen Peneliti, 2023

Structure Elements

1. Main pole (Ni Enaf).

The main post consists of 4 poles. This pole is planted directly into the ground at a depth of 1 meter (Boli et al., 2021). The location of these 4 poles forms 4 squares, with the distance between one pole and another being adjusted as needed. The philosophy of Ni Enaf in the context of Atoin Meto culture can be explained as follows:

- a. Whole Family Symbol: The main pole consists of 4 poles representing the members of an intact family. These poles symbolize father, mother, son, and daughter. For Atoin Meto, the family is a very important part of community life, and Ni Enaf symbolizes the unity and balance between family members.
- b. Root Depth: The Main Pole is planted directly into the ground at a depth of approximately 1 meter. This root depth reflects the strong and deep connection between

the family and the land on which they live. The land is considered the source of life and identity, and Ni Enaf symbolizes the recognition of the family's connection to the roots of the Atoni Meto culture.

c. **The Four Cardinal Directions:** The main pillars are placed in a 4-square shape, and each pillar faces the four cardinal directions. This philosophy depicts the unity of the family that encompasses all directions and all aspects of life. The four directions can also represent the family's relationship with nature and the surrounding environment.

d. **Gender Symbolic Meaning:** The main pole, representing male and female family members, contains symbolic gender meanings in Atoni Meto culture. Ni Enaf represents harmony and integration in the roles and duties of each family member.

e. **Family Unity and Integrity:** The main pillar also reflects the unity and integrity of the family as the core of Atoni Meto. Each pole supports the roof structure, showing the importance of each family member's role in maintaining the stability and well-being of the household. The commitment to stay together and strengthen each other is represented by this symbol.

2. Main beam (Tfa)

The main beam consists of 2 wooden bars connecting 2 parallel main poles. This main beam serves to support 2 layers of child beams (Tfa) above it. The philosophy of the Tfa in the context of Atoni Meto can be explained as follows:

a. **Symbol of Family Connectedness:** The main beam, consisting of two logs connecting the two main posts, reflects family connectedness. In the local culture, family plays a central role in people's lives, and the main beam symbolizes the interconnectedness and togetherness of family members. It teaches the importance of sharing and supporting each other within the family.

b. **Symbol of balance and unity:** The main beam serves to support the two layers of child beams above it. This philosophy can reflect the balance and cooperation between the older generation (the main beam) and the younger generation (the child beams). It illustrates the importance of cohesion and harmony between generations in keeping families and communities strong and sustainable.

c. **Symbol of cultural sovereignty:** In some cultures in East Nusa Tenggara, the use of wood as the main material for the construction of the main beam symbolizes cultural sovereignty and local wisdom. Wood is often seen as a material that is rich in meaning and has deep traditional values in people's lives.

d. **Representation of Social Structure:** The main beam connecting the two main columns can also symbolize the social structure in society. It can represent a connecting or unifying role between different groups or members of society. This symbol shows the importance of cooperation and coordination in maintaining social balance and peace.

e. **Activity and Craft Symbols:** The manufacture of the main beam and its components may involve skills and crafts unique to the local community. The process of making and using these beams may carry deep meanings of cultural preservation, togetherness in community activities, and local knowledge passed down from generation to generation.

3. Medium Beam (Nonof)

There are 4 middle rays. Nonof's place in this lower layer is crossed with Tfa. The philosophy of Nonof in the context of Atoni Meto can be explained as follows:

a. **Representation of Sovereignty and Balance:** The four nonof placed across the Tfa reflect the idea of sovereignty and balance in Atoni Meto life. The four blocks can be interpreted as representing four important elements in life, such as the four directions,

four elements, or four stages of the life cycle. The presence of nonof emphasizes the importance of achieving harmony and balance among these elements in daily life.

b. Symbol of unity and integration: The placement of the nonof across the tfa indicates the cohesion and togetherness of the various elements of the traditional house structure. This symbol illustrates how the various components of the community must support each other and work together to achieve a common goal. The nonof also carries a message about the importance of cooperation and teamwork in creating a harmonious life.

c. Representation of Roles and Responsibilities: Nonof, as the part that supports the overlying Tfa and child ray layers, is interpreted as a representation of roles and responsibilities within the family and community. Each part has a specific role in building the overall structure, much as each member of a family and community has unique roles and responsibilities in maintaining continuity and well-being.

d. Symbol of connection with nature and the environment: In the context of Atoin Meto, the symbolism of the nonof is related to human connection with nature and the environment. The slope or location that intersects with the Tfa indicates the desire to adapt to nature and go with the flow of life, which is characterized by seasonal and natural changes.

e. Representation of local cultural uniqueness: Nonof as a traditional architectural element typical of Atoin Meto symbolizes the uniqueness of their culture. The use and role of nonof in ume kebubu construction reflects local wisdom and traditional knowledge passed down from generation to generation.

4. Roof Ribs (Suaf)

Roof ribs are made of wooden poles 5-7 cm in diameter, the length of which depends on the size of the house. The base of the ribs is measured 30 cm above the ground and then tied to the loop on the attic floor, the ends of the ribs are bent and then tied to the loop on the ridge. Generally, the height of the ridge is determined by the height of the hand reach of the head of the family who is in charge of tying the ridge. The philosophy of Suaf in the context of Atoin Meto can be explained as follows:

a. Symbol of the connection between heaven and earth: The suaf that connects the two parts of the roof (the base at the attic floor and the end at the ridge) is interpreted as a symbol of the connection between heaven and earth. In the context of the Atoin Meto culture, the roof is considered the "roof of the world," connecting the human world with the universe or spirit world. The use of suaf reflects the belief in a close relationship between human life and nature and a higher existence.

b. Symbol of balance and harmony: The process of forming the suaf by tying logs together and determining the height of the ridge based on the reach of the family head's hand shows the importance of balance and harmony in community life. This symbol teaches the importance of seeking balance in all aspects of life and maintaining harmonious relationships among family members and with the surrounding nature.

c. Representation of sustainable use of natural resources: The use of logs as material for the Suaf reflects local wisdom in the sustainable use of natural resources. In the Atoin Meto culture, the use of wood is usually wisely regulated to maintain the continuity and sustainability of nature.

d. Symbol of Roles and Responsibilities: Suaf is carefully tied and fitted to ensure the stability and durability of the structure. This illustrates the importance of roles and responsibilities in building and maintaining the household and community. Each family member has an important role to play in maintaining the stability and harmony of the family and community.

e. Representation of Local Skills and Wisdom: The process of making and installing Suaf involves local skills and wisdom in ume kebubu construction. The symbolism in the suaf illustrates the uniqueness of Atoin Meto culture and craftsmanship passed down from generation to generation.

5. Roof Locking Loop (Nifu Neut)

In the Ume Kebubu roof construction, there are 5 locking circles. The lowest locking circle functions as a fastener between the child pole/wall (like the function of the ring beam) and the lower roof ribs, the locking circle at the second level has the same diameter as the attic floor circle, which functions as a fastener between the attic floor and the roof ribs, the third and fourth locking circles become smaller in diameter, and at the top there is a roof locking circle that functions as a fastener for the roof ribs that meet at the center point of the roof (ridge). The philosophy of Nifu Neut in the context of Atoin Meto can be explained as follows:

a. Symbol of bonding and cohesion: Nifu Neut serves as a tie between structural elements in the ume kebubu roof construction. In Atoin Meto culture, this is interpreted as a symbol of bonding and cohesiveness between family members in a household or between people in a community. The interconnected Nifu Neut reflect the importance of cooperation and unity in achieving a common goal.

b. Symbol of balance and harmony: The use of five locking circles of different heights and sizes represents balance and harmony in roof construction. They play a role in supporting the roof structure and complement each other. This symbol is interpreted as the importance of maintaining balance and harmony in life and social relationships.

c. Representing Order and Sequence: The use of circles as geometric shapes in Nifu Neut. Nifu Neut suggests order and regularity in traditional architecture. It reflects the desire to keep the roof structure stable, organized, and strong. This symbol can also reflect the desire to create order and regularity in daily life.

d. Symbol of cultural sovereignty and local knowledge: The way the Nifu Neut circle is used and placed reflects local knowledge and wisdom in building traditional houses. The use of Nifu Neut to bind the parts of the roof shows cultural sovereignty and local wisdom in building strong and durable traditional houses.

e. Symbol of Cosmological Meaning: The Nifu Neut found at the top of the roof (ridge) has cosmological significance in Atoin Meto culture. The center of the ridge is considered an important point that represents the unity of the universe and the connection between humans and nature and the spirits of the ancestors. The use of a circle at this point conveys a message about the relationship between humans and the larger universe.

Figure 3. Ume Kebubu Atoin Meto Oeue Village



Source: Researcher, 2023

Non-Structural Elements

1. Floor. The floor in ume kebubu is a circular section of leveled ground as large as the floor plan requires. The walls and poles that are in direct contact with the ground are not easily damaged because the humidity of the room is kept stable and maintained by the fireplace inside. The increase in temperature during combustion stabilizes the humid air. Through the floor, which is levelled from the natural ground, ume kebubu teaches the importance of connection with nature, the wise use of natural resources, and how local wisdom and traditional knowledge can shape a lifestyle that is in harmony with the surrounding environment. It also reflects the simple and natural values that characterize the traditional Atoin Meto culture.
2. Wall. The walls are made of bamboo slats called pelupu. These bamboo slats have vertical gaps in the entire plane of the wall, which play a role in Ume Kebubu, so that when burning takes place, the air at human height is still safe enough to inhale. The use of natural materials such as bamboo slats in the pelupu wall reflects the human connection with nature. By building houses with materials from the surrounding environment, the Atoin Meto community shows their respect and wisdom for nature as the source of life. The pelupu wall reflects local wisdom and traditional knowledge in the wise use of natural resources. The use of bamboo slats with vertical slits as walls utilizes the natural properties of bamboo to create good air circulation. This shows how the local community knows how best to build a house that fits in with the surrounding environment. Through pelupu walls with vertical slits, the Atoin Meto culture teaches the importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature, using natural resources wisely, and creating a comfortable and healthy living environment. The wall also reflects the uniqueness of the local culture and the wisdom of building traditional houses that respect the environment and the sustainability of nature.
3. Attic floor. (Pana). The pore-filled attic pelupu also conducts smoke upward, making it very functional for storing corn and other crops for long periods of time. A symbol of versatility and multipurpose function: The neat pana made of bamboo slats has several multi-purpose functions. The pana not only serves as an additional floor above the nonof, but also as a storage place for various crops such as corn and other items. These multi-purpose functions reflect practicality and efficiency in the use of space in daily life. Symbol of storage and tranquility: The attic used for storage of crops reflects an attitude of appreciation for the fruits of labor and wisdom in storing food and resources. This storage ensures food availability and sustainability in situations of uncertainty. The attic can also be interpreted as a place where abundance and tranquility are stored, reflecting wisdom and preparedness for the future.
4. Door. (Eno). Ume kebubu is a traditional building with only one door. The door is made of several pieces of wooden planks 1m wide and 1m high. Philosophically, this low door makes people who want to enter must bow in respect because the house is considered to have a spirit. The low door that makes people who want to enter must bow reflects a symbol of honor and respect for the house. In the Atoin Meto culture, houses are considered to have spirits or certain spiritual meanings. Bowing when entering through the low door shows respect for the house as a place to live and symbolizes an awareness of the human relationship with nature and the spirit world. A symbol of limitation and humility: A low door can also be interpreted as a symbol of human limitation and humility. Standing in front of a low door, one is reminded of the importance of being humble and modest in dealing with one's surroundings. This symbol teaches that simplicity and humility are Atoin Meto.

CONCLUSIONS

Through Ume Kebubu, the Atoin Meto community can strengthen its cultural identity, preserve its traditional heritage, and pass on the values of local wisdom from generation to generation. Ume kebubu symbolizes togetherness, intimacy, and strong social values in Atoin Meto life. Thus, ume kebubu is a cultural symbol that enriches the diversity and uniqueness of human life on the island of Timor.

The philosophy of symbolic communication in ume kebubu reflects the way the Atoin Meto people communicate their messages, values, and cultural identity through this traditional house. The use of symbols in ume kebubu not only serves as a means of communication, but is also imbued with deep and complex cultural meanings that are passed down from generation to generation. Ume kebubu seeks to convey a message about the importance of cooperation, balance and harmony in people's lives. The philosophy and symbolism of ume kebubu reflect the way the Atoin Meto community values local wisdom, maintains order, and conveys deep messages about human connection to nature and each other.

Ume kebubu teaches the importance of connecting with nature, the wise use of natural resources, and how local wisdom and traditional knowledge can shape a lifestyle that is in harmony with the environment. It also reflects the simple and natural values that characterize the traditional Atoin Meto culture. The ume kebubu culture teaches the importance of respecting the home as a place to live and the importance of limitation and humility in life. This philosophy and symbolism reflects the way the Atoin Meto people value and preserve local wisdom and cultural values in the way they live and build their traditional ume kebubu home.

Overall, the ume kebubu is an example of traditional architecture that is rich in symbolic and philosophical meaning, reflecting the harmony of man with nature and a sustainable way of life. This traditional house is an important symbol of cultural identity and traditional heritage in the East Nusa Tenggara region of Indonesia.

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