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**TITLE: DISCOVERY OF WALAI TOBILUNG IN KOTA
MARUDU, SABAH, MALAYSIA**

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
BACKGROUND	1 - 4
SURVEY PROCESS / METHOD	4 - 5
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS	5 - 6
INSIGHTS FOR THE USE OF THE LOCAL / TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE	6 - 7

BACKGROUND

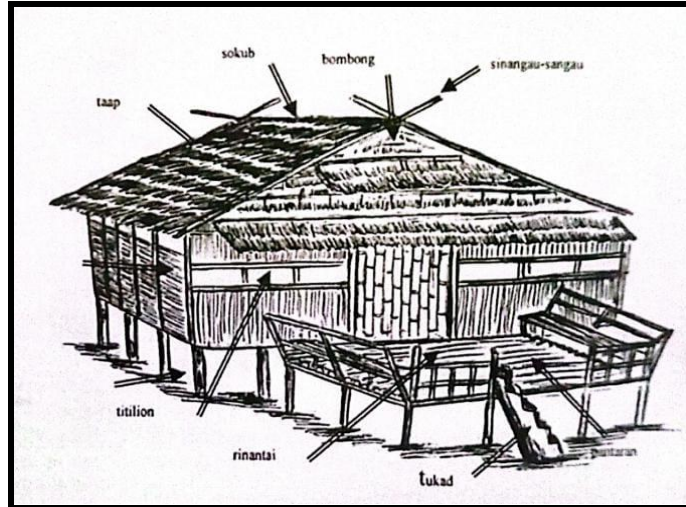
Introduction of Walai Tobilung

Walai Tobilung, also known as Tobilung Cultural House is located in Kampung Minansad, Kota Marudu, Sabah, Malaysia. The majority ethnic living there is Dusun Tobilung which is in conjunction with their leader's name, Aki Tombilung, who migrated from Nunuk Ragang to open a new settlement in northern Sabah. In Dusun Tobilung language, 'Walai' means house, while 'Tobilung' is a name taken from their leader, who brings the name to the Dusun tribe. Walai Tobilung is a monument that symbolizes the pride of Tobilung ethnicity that resides in North Borneo, Sabah. Walai Tobilung is located 125 km from Kota Kinabalu, and 70 km drive to Simpang Mengayau, the Tip of Borneo, Kudat. Walai Tobilung Cultural Village was founded by Mr. Janis Kansirong, one of the Dusun Tobilung people that want to keep on preserving and conserving their tradition and culture.

Culture and tradition that are still there and was practiced is the design and structure of the house and 'Bobolian Tobilung' tradition. The design of the Dusun Tobilung Cultural House can be found from the 19th century. The Tobilung Cultural House normally is pentagon in shape that was inspired by an animal's body and a constellation called 'Muru Puru'. The interior design consists of three different compartments which are Tingkang, Sirang, and Dopuan. Some versions of Walai Tobilung have a Roliyan or attic that can be used as a bedroom for men. Meanwhile, the bedroom for women called Bayawi, located at the back of the house. Tindud space is made at the top of Sirang, which was used for a storage room. However, there are only 5 cultural houses that were built, but 2 of them were demolished, and 3 of them still remain the same. However, 2 of them were combined into 1 that looked like a modern house.



Picture 1: Walai Tobilung



Picture 2: Interior of the house

Thus, 'Bobolian Tobilung' or more known as shaman is the title for the women that mostly practiced to conduct a ritual and help in traditional treatment in the past. Though there are many Dusun Tobilung living there, no one is interested and it somehow led to extinction of this culture. Currently, there are only 1 Bobolian Tobilung that is still practicing the culture.



Picture 3: Bobolian Tobilung

Hence, their interesting traditional facilities and activities that are still available are cultural galleries, traditional wedding customs and costumes, traditional musical instruments, corn and rice grinding demonstrations, traditional house architecture, herb garden, traditional games and art shows as well as traditional food.



Picture 4: Traditional Wedding Customs and Costumes



Picture 5: Traditional Musical Instruments



Picture 6: Traditional ways of corn and rice grinding



Picture 7: Traditional Games and Art Shows



Picture 8: Traditional Foods

The efforts to develop Walai Tobilung Cultural Village began in 2010 where Janes Kansirong had thought that it was necessary to put in efforts to preserve the Tobilung's tradition and culture so that it would continue to be preserved and passed onto future generations. His opinion is that if these efforts are not continued, in the next decades, Tobilung culture will disappear and no one will know about it. This is because, despite all of the traditions and cultures that may be learnt in Walai Tobilung, even locals are not interested and are unaware of this place. The goal of this discovery is to make it more widely known, not just in Malaysia, but also in other countries. It is a figurative legacy to connect today's people with the past so that it is not forgotten.

SURVEY PROCESS / METHODS

For the survey process, a face-to-face interview was conducted. Participant herself went to Walai Tobilung in Kota Marudu, Sabah. During the interview, the opportunity to connect personally with the host there has established some sort of relationship. This connection allows the interviewer to gain more insight into the information provided by the host in the course of the conversation. As it is done physically, it allows the interviewer to capture non-verbal nuances that provide more context around the host's responses. For instance, the interview can act in a certain way to suggest that they are comfortable or uncomfortable with a particular question. Below is the picture where the participant is interviewing the local people.



Picture 9: Interview session with local people

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

Cultural heritage is increasingly identified as an important resource of a nation due to the benefits it has brought to economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects whether it is a tangible, intangible or natural heritage. It is the reflection of a country, which links the past to the present. It also shapes the society, as well as enriches the lives of people through the cultural significance. People can understand more about something whether it is a country, city, or place through heritage. Most importantly, it is a precious asset for the present and future generations. The same goes to Walai Tobilung; the tradition and culture that used to be there slowly disappear due to the ignorance of the people nowadays. Despite all the promotion of the place before, it was difficult to preserve and conserve the tradition and culture in Walai Tobilung. This led to more promotion of the tradition and culture that used to be practiced in the old days to attract the interest of people such as the cultural galleries where all the tools used by the natives in the past including their hunting tools, fishing tools, household tools, kitchen utensils, instruments, costumes, and cuisine were displayed. The traditional games and cultural performances are also demonstrated and can be played by visitors as well. Through this discovery, the heritage in Walai Tobilung can be promoted to make it known not only in Malaysia but also in other countries. It is a way to protect the cultural identities and characteristics and give the stimulus to the promotion and preservation and conservation of Walai Tobilung.

Thus, there are so many things that can be reflected on by discovering the place. First and foremost, the history behind this Walai Tobilung. Not many people know about Walai Tobilung, let alone the history; most people would only take it as a new attraction. As a local, we know what 'Walai' means, however, 'Tobilung' is not a familiar word. The story stated that it is an ethnic obtained from their leader called 'Woyoon Aki Tombilung' who is known as a great warrior and was responsible to lead his clan to open a new settlement in northern Sabah and protect them from danger. The same shall apply for the Tobilung Cultural House, the design and interior that is adapted from the 19th century, even after decades, it is still stunning and breathtaking. After a long time, buildings can provide visible symbols of who is given

priority in rebuilding if the community is divided or who is not given permission at all. This helps to differentiate between ethnic in Sabah, Malaysia.

If we look into their tradition such as hunting tools, dances, musical instruments, games, and costumes, some of it still remains the same even though less is seen. Hunting tools and harvesting equipment are examples that result from civilization, the modern world would not use the same tools to hunt animals and harvest plants. However, they used a new technology or in other words, machines that can make it easier for them. Meanwhile, other traditions can be fixed; dance, musical instruments, games, and costumes, if we, as the younger generation, keep applying and utilizing what were used and played in the old days, nothing of this will be lost. Besides, it is the historical, cultural, and social value of Walai Tobilung; it conveys diverse messages and values that contribute to give a meaning to people's life. This is why the history behind Walai Tobilung must be embraced because it is what makes them unique and attractive from others.

Heritage in Walai Tobilung is often perceived as the protection and save of the past. In fact, Walai Tobilung is important to people, especially local people, because it is fundamental to learn history and evidence of the past human activity of the place. The tradition and culture displayed also elaborates the transformative process in society from the past in the present of urban areas by generations. Everything remains its distinct cultural characteristics and historical background, making its specific identity and uniqueness of the community. Although not every inherited trait, tendency, or tradition and culture is positive, we generally consider heritage to be the positive and meaningful elements of our family's identity that we incorporate into our own lives and pass along to succeeding generations. Heritage can express itself in many ways. Hence, this drives people to discover about the beauty and magnificence of Walai Tobilung.

INSIGHTS FOR THE USE OF THE LOCAL / TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Nowadays, education programmes provide important tools for human development, but they may also compromise the transmission of indigenous knowledge. With formal education, students spend much time learning passively in classroom settings, rather than engaged in hands-on learning on the land. Whether in schools or university, educators replace parents and elders as the holders of knowledge and authority. National languages become the medium of instruction, while vernacular languages are sidelined. Formal education may therefore contribute to an erosion of cultural diversity, a loss of social cohesion and the alienation and disorientation of indigenous youth. There is an urgent need to enhance the intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge, as a complement to mainstream education. Efforts are now being made to bring indigenous language and knowledge into school curricula, and to move learning back into the community, thus reaffirming the status of elders as knowledge holders. Thus, instead of learning just the theory, why don't people do it physically?

The social role of cultural heritage is founded on an understanding of the past as being integral both to individual and communal representations of identity and its connotations of providing human existence with meaning, purpose and value (Graham et al., 2000). That is the reason why the older generation of this Tobilung tribe must continue their tradition and culture; so that people know what their beliefs and

identities are. For example, foot soaking tradition called Sumimpun using herbs. There are many herbs that were used but the most commonly used are Tawawo and Sintotobou. If such knowledge is not even learned, no one would know that Sumimpun boosts human's blood flow, removes toxins, can help in releasing stress, and helps in cleansing the skin. It also claimed that it is good for minor arthritis.

Thus, the rituals conducted by the Bobolian Tobilung also are one of the cultures that is slowly disappearing. In the old days, Bobolian Tobilung used to conduct a lot of rituals. One of the biggest rituals is 'Modsongodou Piwoyon'. It is performed for 2 days and 1 night as a way to cure people with long term disease that was caused by spirits that come out from soil, rocks, or even trees. It is understandable that it is slowly disappearing because nowadays, instead of shamans, people go to the hospitals and see a doctor. However, some still believe with traditions and cultures, if it is not passed down to the new generation, who will continue all this? Hence, people won't even know the meaning of some things that used to be so famous back then.

To conclude, to ensure that age-old traditions and cultures stay intact and are passed down from generation to generation, the older generation should play an active role in spreading awareness about the positives of their heritage and help facilitate conversation between the older and younger on topics of culture and tradition through various activities. Every ethnicity should explain the moral values behind the traditions and cultures which are followed, especially the young generations. They should be given good background knowledge about the significance of regional culture. A sense of affinity to one's culture should be embedded in the mind from a very young age.