

## **“ TE’O RENDA: IT’S HISTORY, MEANING, AND FUNCTION FOR THE ROTENESE COMMUNITY IN THE PAST AND THE PRESENT”**

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### ***Abstract***

This research aims to examine traditional te'o renda music from an ethnomusicological perspective. Using Ethnomusicology theories by Sri Hastanto that are relevant to those of Mantle Hood, the study explores changes and continuities in the presentation of te'o renda in Rote society. Conducted using qualitative methods, focusing on the discipline of ethnomusicology to understand the meaning and function of traditional music within cultural contexts, the research found that te'o renda and sasandu gong have undergone significant changes. In the past, sasandu and te'o renda played crucial roles in wedding ceremonies, particularly in traditional engagement rituals. However, their current usage has diminished, indicating a decline in their essence and sacredness. Other findings include the history, meanings, and functions of te'o renda for Rote communities past and present, as well as the construction of emic notations applied in te'o renda performances. This approach enables accurate and authentic documentation of traditional music, which is expected to contribute to the preservation and revitalization of Rote music culture. Thus, this research not only enhances theoretical understanding but also provides a foundation for efforts to conserve traditional music through emic notation methods.

***Keywords ; Te'o renda, sasandu gong, ethnomusicology, emic notation, traditional music of Rote***

## **INTRODUCTION**

Human civilization constantly changes over time due to the development of innovative thinking, technological advancements, and scientific knowledge. This evolution affects aspects of tradition and culture. Tradition is the inheritance of customary practices from generation to generation, including beliefs in supernatural powers and customs. As explained by Mukti Alam, tradition has a strong correlation with the customary practices of society in a traditional context and is closely related to culture. (Ali, 1967). According to Koentjaraningrat, culture is a way of life that develops and is shared by a group of people, encompassing values, norms, arts, language, and technology.. (Koentjaraningrat, 1979)

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The hypothesis that can be drawn is that tradition and culture cannot be separated because tradition is an integral part of culture. Clifford Geertz states that tradition is a meaningful symbol associated with culture, serving as a marker of group identity and strengthening social relationships as well as cultural power. (Geertz, 1973)

Tradition and culture are synonymous with inheritance, whether oral, written, or practiced. This inheritance is primarily focused on traditional songs and music. Purba emphasizes that traditional music, although rooted in tradition, has the flexibility to develop and innovate.

It is necessary to have understanding and responsibility to maintain, protect, and preserve traditional Indonesian music, including the music and songs from East Nusa Tenggara Province. This province, located in the eastern part of Indonesia, has a diverse range of cultures, traditions, and customs, spread across various ethnic groups in different islands, including Rote Island. This island is known for its unique music and songs such as sasandu, gong, and tambur, which are often used in rituals and celebrations, as well as traditional songs like ofa langga and te'o renda.

Traditional songs reflect the cultural identity of the region. According to Paul Haning, the traditional songs of the Rote people have distinctive features, such as the use of the pentatonic scale, variable rhythms, and significance in each final note. These songs hold meaning and an important position in the local culture, with te'o renda often used in the song lyrics. (Haning, 2010)

Historically, te'o renda is believed to have emerged during the Dutch colonial period on Rote Island, specifically during the formation of the Thi Kingdom. According to Rote cultural expert Jonas Mooy, te'o renda means song and dance, derived from the word "te'o," which means woman, and "renda," which means to knit. Te'o renda is

used in wedding rituals, particularly during the engagement ceremony, and is considered a tradition that unites two individuals, families, and tribes. Te'o renda can only be performed with the accompaniment of traditional sasandu gong or gong music. This indicates that the sasandu gong plays an important role in the practice of te'o renda in Rote society. The history of the development of sasandu music has not been definitively established, as there are several different versions within the community.

Sasandu music is played by plucking and has a unique technique. Susana Dorothea Pah explains that sasandu comes from the words "sari" (pluck) and "sandu" (vibrate).(Pah, 2001). Sasandu is a plucked instrument with a resonating chamber shaped like a half-circle, made from lontar leaves.

In general, sasandu consists of the sasandu violin and sasandu gong. Djony Theedens explains that the sasandu violin uses a diatonic scale with more strings, while the sasandu gong uses the anhemitonic pentatonic scale of do, re, mi, sol, la with fewer strings. (Theedens, 2019). The sasandu gong also has a smaller diameter tube. Habel Edon notes the variation in the number of strings on the sasandu gong, ranging from 5, 7, 9, to 11 strings, which reflects the traditional livelihoods of the Rote people, such as palm sap tapping, seen in the sasandu tube combined with haik. Paul Haning explains that each string of the sasandu gong has a name based on the sequence of notes and can only be played when accompanied by traditional songs, which often reflect sad stories or expressions of gratitude. (Haning, 2010)

In its performance, the te'o renda singing and the sasandu gong playing are harmoniously integrated. Te'o renda can only be sung with the appropriate accompaniment of the sasandu gong. This demonstrates that the position, function, and role of the sasandu gong in te'o renda have significant importance; the te'o renda singing cannot stand alone without the music from the sasandu gong. Both complement each other and form an essential unity in the culture of the Rote Ndao people. One distinctive feature of this singing is the presence of a main section that is always sung first before moving on to other parts. This is a very important aspect of the cultural heritage that must be preserved and maintained.

Given the connection between te'o renda and the sasandu gong, this is certainly an issue that needs to be examined because the level of understanding and preservation of the sasandu gong and te'o renda is still limited.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review includes several scholarly works, including those by Reineldis Doa et al., which discuss the sasandu gong as a stringed musical instrument that plays a role in accompanying the melody of te'o renda singing during harvest rituals. (Doa et al., n.d.), Augusta De Jesus Magalhaes, who describes the role of the sasandu in Rote society (Magalhaes, 2022), Agastya Rama Listya explains that the sasandu gong adopts the scale arrangement from Rote gong music itself, where the sound source of the Rote gong comes from metal, whereas the sound source of the sasandu comes from the strings and the resonator in the haik. (Listya, 2018). Furthermore, Uftiyah Ganozhy Usman explains the changes and existence of traditional bamboo flute music in Siulak Mukai, Kerinci Regency, and how this music has persisted from 1998 to 2021 (Usman, 2022), Irena Andina Putri Nst discusses the structure of the onang-onang song text, the context of delivering the onang-onang song, the process of creation and inheritance of the onang-onang song, as well as the values and functions of the onang-onang song. (Nst, 2018) Floris Schuling explains that ethnomusicological notation, specifically emic notation in this context, is necessary as a counterbalance to performance musicology and serves as an effort to eliminate the boundaries between musicology and ethnomusicology, making the process of analyzing oral and flexible traditional music more efficient. Furthermore, it is conveyed that emic musical notation can be described in the form of symbols representing both the text and the traditional melodies. (Schuiling, 2019)

Based on the literature review presented, there are differences between previous research and this study. Previous research discusses the function of the sasandu in te'o renda singing during the harvest thanksgiving ceremony, the process of making the sasandu, the structure of its notes, and changes in the notes, the preservation of traditional onang-onang songs for the younger generation, the history of traditional bamboo flute music, and the use of ethnomusicological notation. In contrast, this study focuses on the history, significance, and role of te'o renda for the Rote community past and present, the use of emic notation and its relevance in presenting sasandu gong in te'o renda, and the benefits and roles for the community, especially the younger generation.

## **METHOD**

Research methods are understood as a series of processes for collecting and interpreting data. Sugiyono explains that research methods are essentially a scientific approach to obtaining data with specific objectives and uses. (Sugiyono, 2013). There are four key aspects to consider in research methods: scientific approach, data, objectives, and uses. Each study has specific goals and benefits. Generally, the objectives of research can be divided into three types: discovery, proof, and development. (Sugiyono, 2013).

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Research on the study of te'o renda for the Rote community, both past and present, as well as the presentation of the sasandu gong in te'o renda, examined from both physical and non-physical aspects, is the main focus of this study. Therefore, choosing and determining the appropriate method is essential. In its implementation, the researcher will use a descriptive qualitative research method supported by the discipline of ethnomusicology..

Essentially, ethnomusicology is a branch of study focused on understanding culture with the aim of discovering the essence of that culture. Sri Hastanto explains that culture, in the context of regional music, can be elaborated by describing ethnomusicological studies in the form of phenomena through observing culture both physically and non-physically with regard to te'o renda and the sasandu gong. (Hastanto, 2012). It is further explained that physical characteristics encompass aspects focused on traditional musical instruments, traditional music tuning systems, and the language used. Additionally, there are also non-physical characteristics found in the presentation of traditional music. Essentially, non-physical characteristics refer to the naming conventions associated with the existence of the music. Moreover, non-physical characteristics also represent the meaning and function of traditional music, which has the potential to imbue these elements with distinctive features specific to the cultural group that owns the tradition..

This explanation aligns with the views of other ethnomusicology experts. Ethnomusicology scholar Mantle Hood describes the study of ethnomusicology as the research of music art objects in the form of physical, psychological, aesthetic, and cultural phenomena. (Hood, 1957). On the other hand, anthropologist Alan P. Merriam emphasizes an anthropological approach in the study of music with the aim of explaining how traditional music relates to the social and cultural aspects of human life in a broader context. (Merriam, 1960). Merriam, as cited by Nettl, divides the

scope of ethnomusicological studies within a music culture into instruments, lyrics, typologies and classifications, the role and status of artists, the function of music in relation to cultural aspects, and music as a creative activity. Further elaborating on history, Ismaun explains that the discussion of cultural history from an ethnomusicological perspective includes a series of processes: heuristic (gathering historical sources), criticism (evaluating historical sources), interpretation (interpreting historical sources), and historiography (writing history), which presents historical accounts descriptively. (Ismaun, 1990)

In addressing the research issues identified, there are also several stages in the methods used, including (1) the data collection stage through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review, and (2) the data analysis stage, which includes reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. (Sugiyono, 2013).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this discussion, the formulation of issues related to te'o renda and the sasandu gong will be outlined using an ethnomusicological approach, examined from both physical and non-physical aspects. An explanation of the history of te'o renda, as well as its meaning and function for the Rote community both past and present, is an important aspect that needs to be detailed before presenting the construction of te'o renda in the performance of te'o renda and sasandu gong.

### **THE HISTORY OF THE CREATION OF TE'O RENDA SONGS**

Literally, te'o renda is widely known as singing and dancing. Te'o renda is divided into two words: "te'o," which means woman, and "renda," which means to weave or knit. Broadly, te'o renda is interpreted as a woman who is weaving. The practice of weaving or knitting for the Rote people is a cultural practice that emerged due to Dutch influence during the colonial period on the Rote community. This weaving practice brought a new dimension to the traditions of the Rote people. It is estimated that the practice of weaving or knitting appeared in the 16th-17th centuries, coinciding with the formation of the Thi Kingdom, during which time all members of society, except the elderly and children, were employed in the Termanu area as laborers under Dutch colonial rule. During this period of colonial labor, the Rote people became acquainted with and learned the practice of weaving or knitting. This weaving technique has



continued to be studied and applied in their lives. At that time, the Rote people used the products of their weaving to create fabric sheets that would later be used in everyday life. In an interview with Rote cultural practitioners and observers, Jonas Mooy mentioned that one reason te'o renda is used in betrothal ceremonies is the mutual attraction between Rote women and men while they are weaving or knitting. It was also noted that the Rote people always present oral literature in every customary practice of daily life. Oral literature tends to narrate the processes being undertaken. Paul Haning stated that te'o renda songs, as a traditional art heritage of the Rote people, are also a form of oral literature presented as texts or stories. (Haning, 2017). In its preservation, oral literature is often memorized and passed down through generations with rhythmic pronunciation, much like singing.

In its development, the history of te'o renda, particularly te'o renda songs, began to be applied in betrothal ceremonies. Furthermore, Paul Haning stated that te'o renda songs and all oral literature can only be recited by trusted poets known as `helo` or `manahelo` (Haning, 2017). Furthermore, Paul Haning explains that in the past, the betrothal process in Rote society would be recognized if the presentation of te'o renda involved three main figures as recipients of the dowry. (Haning, 2020). This is in agreement with what Jonas Mooy, a cultural practitioner in the Rote community, has stated. In his explanation, Jonas Mooy describes that in the Rote community's betrothal tradition, the te'o renda text can only be recited by individuals who are entitled to receive the dowry. These individuals include to'o, nan, and ama. Furthermore, it is conveyed that te'o renda songs can only be performed by these three figures while playing the sasandu gong, as te'o renda can only be presented with the accompaniment of the sasandu gong. There is a belief that if these three figures serve as helo, they are believed to bring blessings; however, if they are replaced, it is believed to bring disaster to the new household. These figures play an important role because the presentation of te'o renda songs, according to Rote beliefs, must follow the traditions of the bride as the owner of te'o renda culture. The philosophy of weaving or knitting in Rote betrothal is likened to a woman weaving or uniting threads into a piece of fabric. It is believed that the practice of te'o renda serves as a means to connect the love between two individuals, to link the love between two families, and to unite two different tribes.

## **THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF TE'O RENDA SONGS FOR THE ROTE COMMUNITY PAST AND PRESENT**

Te'o renda songs are a tradition for the Rote community that needs to be passed down to the next generation. This is because te'o renda songs play a crucial role in the marriage process within the Rote community. This indicates that the meaning and function of te'o renda songs are traditions that need to be preserved. According to an interview with cultural practitioner and observer Jonas Mooy, the meaning and function of te'o renda songs have shifted over time. Below is an explanation of the meaning and function of te'o renda songs for the Rote community both past and present.

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### **TE'O RENDA SONGS FOR THE ROTE COMMUNITY IN THE PAST**

In the past, the Rote community regarded te'o renda as a very important tradition in marriage rituals. The role of te'o renda was considered crucial in the process of establishing a new household. According to an interview, Jonas Mooy mentioned that for the Rote community in the past, te'o renda, in this case, singing, was a mandatory element in every marriage ritual, particularly during betrothal ceremonies. Furthermore, it was conveyed that te'o renda songs essentially expressed both joy and sadness. The joy was associated with the betrothal leading to a new household, while the sadness was related to the separation of the bride from her family.

In practice for the Rote community in the past, te'o renda songs were performed only by individuals known as "helo." A helo was the person who would sing te'o renda and also play the sasandu instrument. Besides being a poet and sasandu player, a helo in the past Rote community was also entitled to receive the dowry in the betrothal ritual. This role was filled by to'o, nan, and ama from the bride's family. In the past Rote community, te'o renda songs represented a series of processes consisting of various parts or stanzas. Each stanza in the performance expressed the sentiments of the family. However, te'o renda songs had a unique aspect in their performance. The helo was required to sing the refrain of te'o renda simultaneously when starting a new section of the text. Additionally, each helo had a distinct method of delivering the text, which was divided into several parts or stanzas.

In the tradition of the Rote community in the past, the presentation of te'o renda was divided into three major parts that fully adhered to the traditions of the Rote community or the bride's family. The helo performing te'o renda had to come from the



bride's side. The three major parts of the te'o renda song consisted of: the betrothal text from the groom's side, the betrothal text from the bride's side, and the betrothal text affirming that the groom was accepted as part of the bride's family.

Te'o renda songs also played an important role in the lives of the Rote community in the past. According to interviews with cultural observers and practitioners, Herman Ledoh mentioned that when te'o renda songs and the sounds of the sasandu were performed, it signaled to the community that the betrothal ritual was about to begin. For the Rote community in the past, the function and meaning of te'o renda songs were considered sacred traditions that were only performed during betrothal rituals as part of the marriage process. This indicates that the role of music was very significant in social life. Furthermore, Alan P. Merriam explained that traditional music in a community can serve as a means of communication, a symbol of culture, a social norm, and more (Merriam, 1960). The roles and functions of te'o renda songs for the Rote community in the past are as follows : (1) As a Ritual Medium : Used in activities of a ritual nature, such as betrothal rituals, as part of the marriage process; (2) As a Communication Medium : The performance of te'o renda was used as a means of communication to convey the intentions and purposes of the betrothal ceremony ; (3) As a Symbol : The performance of te'o renda and the sasandu gong represents the symbolic culture of the Rote community ; (4) As a Social Norm : The performance of te'o renda also served as a medium for teaching norms that should not be violated and the traditions that need to be preserved and passed on to future generations; (5) As Social Integrity : The function of te'o renda as social integrity is also understood as a means to foster a sense of unity. This occurs because the essence of performing te'o renda is to unite two individuals, to unite two families, and to bring together two tribes into one community.



**Figure 1.** Helo Attributes

(Poet and sasandu gong player)  
Source : Philby Tafuakan, 2024

### **TE'O RENDA SONGS FOR THE ROTE COMMUNITY TODAY**

In the era of globalization, many civilizations have undergone changes with the passage of time. The impact is not only on technological advancements but also on cultural changes. This change is marked by shifts in meaning, function, and societal views on the sacredness of that culture. Evolution in these practices can lead to significant cultural transformations..

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In its development, the presentation of te'o renda has undergone transformations in terms of role, meaning, and function. According to interviews, Jonas Mooy explained that the presentation of te'o renda among the Rote community today has changed, especially during wedding rituals. The current Rote community tends to omit the presentation of te'o renda during the betrothal ritual.

In the betrothal process of the current Rote community, the presentation of te'o renda is often replaced with simpler procedures because te'o renda is considered to involve a complex series of processes. This is due to the limited number of traditional music practitioners, particularly sasandu players and helo. During the betrothal process, the Rote community now tends to replace the helo with an appointed elder known as a spokesperson or "jubir." This has led to a significant reduction in the presentation of te'o renda in each generation. Furthermore, it is noted that the betrothal process among the current Rote community only serves to convey intentions and purposes, excluding the essence of the role and function of te'o renda. Jonas Mooy indicated that this change is due to several factors, including a lack of preservation and transmission efforts to the next generation, low interest among the youth in understanding local culture, and the influence of foreign cultures on local traditions.

For the current Rote community, the presentation of te'o renda is no longer restricted to betrothal ceremonies. In an interview with cultural practitioners in the Rote community, Esau Nalle explained that te'o renda can now be performed in various other rituals, such as guest receptions, thanksgiving rituals, and artistic competitions. Additionally, it was noted that the selection of sasandu gong players and helo is no longer required to adhere to the traditional practices of the Rote community from the past. The texts of te'o renda now tend to follow the specific event, meaning that the texts presented can represent rituals other than betrothal ceremonies. This indicates that the role, meaning, and function of te'o renda have undergone significant

shifts. For the current Rote community, one way to preserve te'o renda is by integrating it into the field of education. However, this automatically reduces the sacredness of the presentation of te'o renda.

In conclusion, there is a significant difference between the paradigms of the Rote community in the past and the present regarding te'o renda. In the past, the Rote community viewed te'o renda as a ritual with profound meaning. The performance of te'o renda at that time was restricted to specific parties, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the sacredness of the ritual. For the past Rote community, te'o renda could only be performed during betrothal ceremonies, underscoring the exclusivity and sacred value attached to it. In contrast, while te'o renda is still valued today, its application has broadened to more general contexts, including education as a means of preservation and transmission. This reflects a shift in how the community views and implements the tradition. However, as a result of this broader context, the sacred aspect of te'o renda has gradually faded, indicating a shift in values and priorities in modern Rote society.

## **FORM OF CONSTRUCTION IN THE PRESENTATION OF TE'O RENDA**

The construction of te'o renda presentation consists of a series of processes that emphasize physical aspects according to Hastanto. These aspects include the sasandu gong instrument, the tuning system, and the language used. This is a cohesive sequence because te'o renda cannot be presented without the accompaniment of the sasandu gong. In its discussion, the presentation of te'o renda is divided into three main parts: the courtship of the groom, the courtship of the bride, and the acceptance of the groom as part of the bride's family.

### **SASANDU GONG**

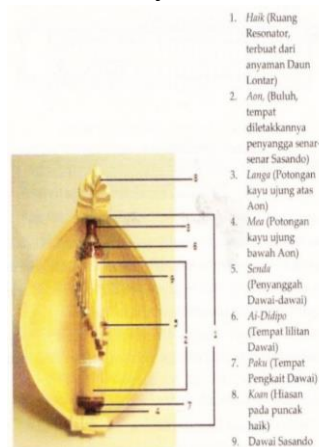
Sasandu gong is literally classified as a type of chordophone, a group of musical instruments played by plucking. Over time, the sasandu has evolved into two types: sasandu biola and sasandu gong. The sasandu biola is associated with the use of a diatonic scale and typically has more strings, while the sasandu gong is characterized by its use of an anhemitonic pentatonic scale consisting of the notes do, re, mi, sol, la, and generally has fewer strings. The sasandu gong also tends to have a smaller diameter tube. In its performance, the sasandu gong adopts the tuning system from the gong, with the number of strings evolving from 7 to 9, and now up to 11 strings.

Each string on the sasandu gong has its own name and uses repeated notes in the next octave.



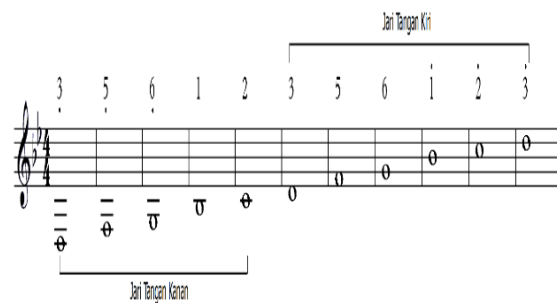
**Figure 2.** Sasandu Gong with bamboo strings and nylon strings  
Source . Philby Tafuakan 2023

The position of the sasandu in Rote society is considered important because the sasandu itself represents life in the Rote community. This is due to the fact that the role, function, and organology of the sasandu represent the essence of Rote society. The organological form of both the sasandu biola and the sasandu gong is identical. Each part of the sasandu biola is named the same as the corresponding part on the sasandu gong. Additionally, the construction of the sasandu uses materials from the lontar palm leaves and bamboo stalks. The shape of the sasandu instrument is also associated with a container used for collecting sap from the lontar palm, a profession among the Rote people. This view is supported by Herman Ledoh, a cultural practitioner in Rote society. He explains that the organology of the sasandu gong reflects life in the Rote community. For example, lontar palm leaves used in the haik of the sasandu gong can be used as roofing materials, woven into rice winnowers, or as containers for holding water used in daily life.



**Figure 3.** Organology of the Sasandu  
Source: Sasandu Guidebook

In the presentation of the sasandu gong, there is a tuning system based on the scale and the number of strings used. The sasandu gong utilizes the pentatonic selendro scale. This scale is applied to the number of strings by considering the repetition of notes on subsequent strings with the use of higher octaves. The tuning process for the sasandu gong is quite unique. During tuning, sasandu players do not adhere to Western musical tuning standards, specifically the diatonic scale tuning. The tuning process is entirely based on a sense of pitch, resulting in varying tuning standards. The following is an explanation of the tuning standards found:



**Figure 4.** Sasandu Gong Tuning System  
Source: Philby Tafuakan, 2024

In the sasandu gong, the 11 strings are divided between the left and right hands. The lowest note on the sasandu gong is E in the third octave, and the highest note is E in the fifth octave.

Resource person	Base Note	Lowest Note	Highest Note
Herman Ledoh	Ab	C3	C5
Jonas Mooy	C	E3	E5
Esau Nalle	Bb	D3	D5

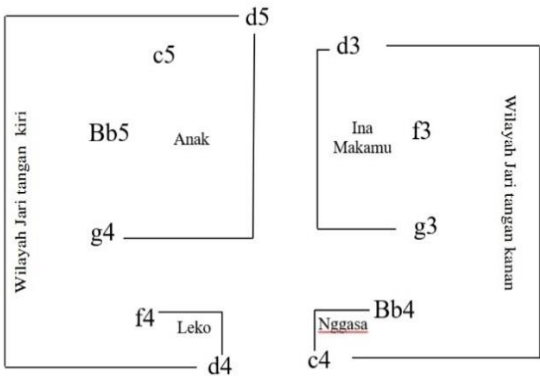
**Table 1.** Basic Tuning Notes for Sasandu

Although different tuning standards are found in the tuning process, the use of notes on each string follows the same sequence. The performance of the sasandu gong will determine the fundamental note for te'o renda. In te'o renda, the performance of the sasandu gong is divided into four groups of notes played by the left and right fingers. Based on the data found, the sequence pattern of notes on each sasandu is identical, but the tuning process used tends to vary. Here are the note groups on the sasandu gong:

No	Name	Not	String
1	Ina Makamu	mi - sol – la	1 , 2 , 3
2	Nggasa	do - re	4 , 5
3	Leko	mi - sol	6 , 7
4	Anak	la - do - re - mi	8, 9, 10, 11

**Table 2.** Classification of Sasandu Gong Notes  
Source. Bapak Herman Ledoh

In its performance, the 11 strings of the sasandu gong are divided between the left and right hands. The range of the right hand extends from strings 1 to 5, while the range of the left hand extends from strings 6 to 11. The plucked sounds of the sasandu will serve as a reference for the helo in presenting the te'o renda, as each helo tends to rely on the pitch produced by the plucking of the sasandu. Below is an outline of the range of the right and left hand fingers on the sasandu strings.



**Figure 5.** Tuning and notation of the sasandu gong  
Source. Philby Tafuakan. 2024

### PERFORMANCE OF TE'O RENDA SONGS

The Te'o Renda song is divided into two main parts: the verses/lyrics and the refrain of Te'o Renda. The presentation is based on three main stages that depict the process of courtship in the Rote community.

The first part begins with the courtship from the groom's side. The performer usually starts by presenting the introduction stage. The introduction involves the groom's family coming to introduce themselves and state their intentions and purposes. According to the presentation by the performer, in this case, the empu



(traditional expert), the courtship text from the groom's side consists of several sub-points that will be developed and presented orally. These sub-points include:

THE GROOM'S REPRESENTATIVE	
<i>Soda mole fai huhuak</i>	Good morning,
<i>Ai nu ma Dela muri mai ia</i>	We are from Nusa Dela.
<i>Ai ina mana tou harak</i>	We bring the greetings
<i>Numa anak lai Lena , ma inak soi muri mai</i>	from Mr. Lai Lena and Mrs. Soi Muri.
<i>De soi fai lelesu dei Fo ai dadi roa leon de</i>	Please open the door so we can enter the house.

**Table 3.** Text of the Groom's Family Proposal  
Source : Jonas Mooy. 2024

At this stage, the helo will deliver their responses spontaneously with the accompaniment of the sasandu gong. Each helo has unique characteristics in the development and delivery of the text. In the second part, the bride's family will respond to the groom's family.

BRIDE'S FAMILY REPRESENTATIVE	
<i>Kas mai o mai madadi mai o mei</i>	Please come into our hut.
<i>Ge mefo lo ak nai ia ma sao nar nai ia</i>	It is cool and spacious here, with a long and beautiful veranda.

**Table 4.** Text of the Proposal from the Bride's Family  
Source. Jonas Mooy 2024

At this stage, the helo will develop and present the response orally and spontaneously, as a reaction to what was conveyed by the groom's side. The final stage of the te'o renda presentation is where the bride accepts the proposal from the groom's side.

GROOM'S SIDE ENTERS AND SITS DOWN	
<i>Ai ina mam tou harak</i>	We are the bearers of the message
<i>Mai lali fotok, mai lali inak</i>	To propose to the girl, to woo the maiden
<i>Fo ana dadi mu tun sao</i>	And to become a companion
<i>ma ana mori neu lame ao</i>	To the husband...

<i>Noai ama tou sura lai</i>	And our child Sura Lai
<i>Te ame dea fai ena</i>	Who is sufficiently mature
<i>Me ana nggeo lena ena</i>	And of appropriate age

**Table 5.** Groom's Side Entrance  
and Seating Text

Source: Jonas Mooy, 2024

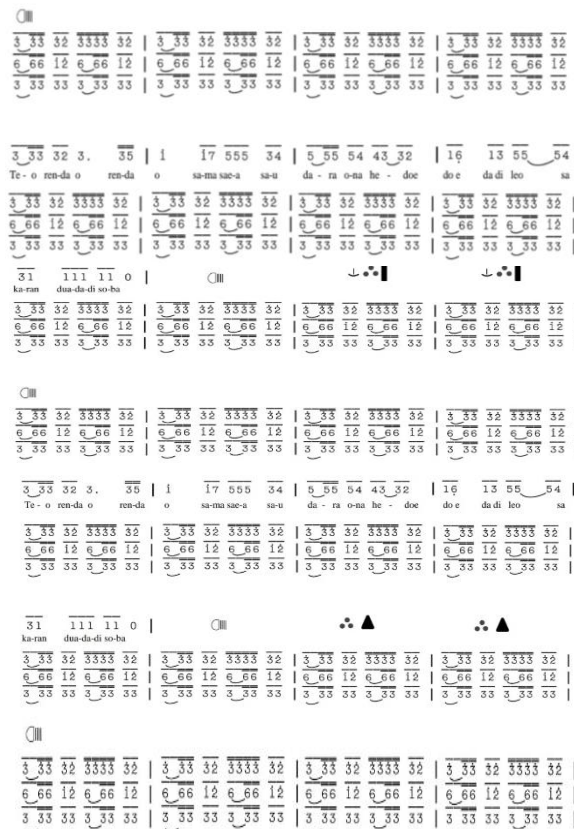
In this stage, the helo will deliver the text accompanied by the sasandu gong, indicating that the proposal has been accepted and both parties are ready to proceed to the next stage.

In the presentation of te'o renda, the three parts are delivered by the helo based on their own interpretation. This is because the helo tends to divide the bini/text into an indeterminate number of sections. Each helo delivers the content orally with an unpredictable duration and limits. Therefore, in analyzing the construction of the presentation, symbols are used to represent emic notation. Emic notation is only applied to the bini part, as the refrain of te'o renda follows a set standard for each performance. This approach also reflects the fact that te'o renda is no longer used solely for proposals but can be used in other events or rituals. Consequently, the construction of the presentation of te'o renda employs numerical notation and emic notation in the form of symbols representing the oral and spontaneous nature of the bini. Below is the description of the construction form:




**Te'o Renda**


Intro pada sasandu gong  
Do = Bb ; 4/4

Intro pada sasandu gong  
Do = Bb ; 4/4



**Figure 6.** Emic Notation of Te'o Renda

Table of Symbol Usage		
Part	Symbol	Meaning
Instrumen		Formed as a haik sasandu and four lines corresponding to the number of strings on the sasandu (11 strings divided into 4 names)
<i>Bini 1</i> (Proposal from the groom's side)		Shaped like the traditional hat of the Rote people and the livelihoods of the Rote people (fishing and farming)
<i>Bini 2</i> (proposal to the bride)		Implying the role of women in life. Cooking is symbolized by three dots representing three stove stones, and the long rectangle depicts cloth made from

		weaving or knitting work
<i>Bini 3</i> (proposal accepted and seated)		The triangle represents a house. Both parties are ready to enter the stage of married life by combining their livelihoods.

**Table 6.** Meaning of Emic Notation Symbols  
Source: Philby Tafuakan, 2024

The use of the B-flat scale is provided as an example in illustrating the notation. However, based on research findings, the tuning standard is entirely based on subjective feeling, making the use of tonality flexible.

CONCLUSION

This research has outlined the presentation of Te’o Renda among the Rote community both historically and in contemporary times. The study identifies the presentation forms by examining both physical and non-physical characteristics. The focus is on its role in the betrothal process within Rote society and the significance of the sasandu gong in relation to Te’o Renda.

The non-physical characteristics describe the historical creation of the Te’o Renda song and its evolving meanings and functions. In the past, Te’o Renda held a sacred status within the Rote community. The tradition required the presentation of Te’o Renda at every betrothal ceremony, encompassing three major stages: the proposal by the groom's side, the response from the bride's side, and the acceptance of the groom. These stages were presented by the helo, who delivered the Te’o Renda in varying segments and with indeterminate durations, guided by their own sense of expression. A notable uniqueness is that the helo would always present the Te’o Renda refrain before transitioning to the main body of the text. In summary, the study reveals a shift from the traditional, sacred practice of Te’o Renda to its more flexible and broader application in contemporary times, reflecting changes in cultural practices and societal values.

In its development, the presentation of Te’o Renda among the Rote community has become increasingly minimal. Te’o Renda is now used not only in betrothal ceremonies but also in events such as welcoming guests, harvest celebrations, and other occasions. This indicates that the essence and sacredness of Te’o Renda are gradually fading. Furthermore, as discussed, the physical characteristics of Te’o Renda's presentation refer more to the construction of the presentation itself. Te’o

Renda can only be performed with the accompaniment of the sasandu gong or gong. The analysis of Te'o Renda's presentation also utilizes emic notation because the bini section of Te'o Renda cannot be standardized according to musicology, as each helo always uses personal interpretation to express their emotions.

Although this study presents several interesting aspects that could be explored further, there are limitations that need to be addressed. Therefore, this research encourages further studies to explore traditional music such as sasandu gong, te'o renda, and other traditional music with the application of emic notation in the field of ethnomusicology.

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