



EARTHENWARE: THE ART OF TRADITIONAL POTTERY OF PASIL KALINGA

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Abstract: *Pottery is a traditional craft of the local tribes in Kalinga. Clay is the most important and earth's most abundant raw materials. The study was designed to document, notate the recognized indigenous tools or materials used, and the traditional procedures in Kalinga pottery; recognize the uses of the pots and the designs in earthenware; and determine the implication of pottery in the life of the people of Pasil.*

The study employed the descriptive approach to gather relevant information, unstructured interviews and documentary analysis of the different designs. The study revealed that Potters of Pasil use natural and locally available raw materials and indigenous tools and with the use of the bare hand in doing the said craft; the globular form is multi-functional but the transformations or modification in ceramic patterns is not a major deviation from the conventional pot; The new designs are known as ay ay-ayam- they are the embodiment of individual creativity to serve other forms and functions.; Pottery depicts the type of living and the kind of environment people have and redesigning and technical adaptation of traditional pottery has marked a major improvement in the life of the community at large, while at the same time, empowering men and women in creating opportunities for income generation.

Keywords: *Earthenware, Art, Traditional Pottery*

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

Pottery is a timeless occupation and the best pots through the ages have an equality of timelessness about them that transcends chronological and cultural boundaries. The essence of design and form, the quality of surface, the hidden meanings and the integration with mankind's daily existence over several thousand years, all add to the significance of the art. In the contemporary art arena, pottery has been looked at as the poor cousin to painting and sculpture in much the same way that the graphical arts were viewed. Pottery neither painting nor sculpture although has elements of both. Pottery has concerns that are quite different from most other media of expression. First, its process of transformation from malleable mud to hard ceramic; second, is its association with the rigors of daily life and



rituals of religious life; third is its multiplicity of uses; fourth is the infinite variety of form that maybe created; fifth is its range of technical variations, giving a possibility of expression that is at least equal to all of the variants of painting and graphics, from watercolor to oils, and from etching to photolithography; and lastly, is the degree of skill that is needed to bring all these concerns to the focal point of a timely made piece of work (Hopper, R. 2000). Clay is one of the earth's most abundant raw materials. Clay is in fact forming more quickly than it is being used. Since it is a common material over most of the earth's surface, pottery is sporadic developments, quite isolated from one another (Hopper, R. 2000). Throughout the civilized history of mankind, clay has probably been the most consistently used material for improving the quality of life of potters. This is being modeled, dried, and fired into a vessel or decorative object usually with a glaze or finish. The potter can form his product in one of many ways. Clay may be modeled by hand or with the assistance of a potter's wheel, may be jiggered using a tool that copies the form of a master model onto a production piece, may be poured into a mold and dried, or cut or stamped into squares or slabs. The methods for forming pottery are as varied as the artisans who create them. Pottery must be fired to a temperature high enough to mature the clay, meaning that the high temperature hardens the piece to enable it to hold water.

The town of Pasil is known for its clay pots called *Fanga/Banga* which is being form by potters (*manfafanga*). *Banga* has an important role in the lives of the Ikalings. It is a part of their tradition and culture. Pasil pottery is like a body of memory and a life history to those who can make pots because this continuous making of pottery is their life work and it contains experiences and processes. The earthen wares are produced by a local pottery group of women and other men who possessed and practiced the skill. Young girls in Dalupa and Dangtalan, Pasil developed an early interest in making pots from playing with clay while their mothers mold pots, and they gradually learned to form pots themselves. In every village, there is at least one specialist who is able to transmit the skills to the young, newly married women in the area who are interested in becoming potters. The potters do not record or document their knowledge at all, but pass it on informally from generation to generation. The women have been allowed to produce and sell directly to consumers (households) in the surrounding local markets, along with their other clay products at an affordable price. This is an income-generating activity. Ultimately, it is up to households



themselves to buy and use the pots. In most cases, the mother of the household is responsible for the practice. All members of the household benefit from drinking safe water and used as decorative arts the other clay products.

For archeologists, anthropologists and historians, the study of pottery can help to provide an insight into past cultures. Pottery in durable and fragments, at least, often survive long after artifacts made from less-durable materials have decayed for past recognition. Combined with other evidence, the study of pottery artifacts is helpful in the development of theories on the organization, economic condition and the cultural development of the societies that produced or acquired pottery. The study of pottery may also allow inferences to be drawn about a culture's daily life, religion, social relationship, attitude towards neighbors, attitudes to their own world and even the way the culture understood the universe.(Stark, 2000)

The people of Pasil are known for their talent and skill in the process of producing and creating manual, natural and indigenous pots and earthen wares. This shows that the potters (*manfafa*) of Pasil utilize available resources that they can get from the environment. Today, due to a greater range of experience with ceramic materials and a more scientific approach to pottery production, the blank spaces in our knowledge have shrunk (www.ceramicindustry.com). Due to the blend of factors such as the effects of economic development, education and modernization, Kalinga pottery, like many of the people's indigenous knowledge practices, is at losing ground as the contemporary generation of Ikalinga is increasingly disconnected from their beliefs, customs, and traditions.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study sought to answer the following objectives:

1. Document, notate the recognized indigenous tools or materials used, and the traditional procedures in Kalinga pottery;
2. Recognize the uses of the of the pots and the designs in earthenware; and
3. Determine the implication of pottery in the life of the people of Pasil.

METHODOLOGY

This study presents a picture of the indigenous tools and process of traditional pottery of the Ikalinga. The study employed the descriptive approach to gather relevant information,



unstructured interviews and documentary analysis of the different designs of traditional pottery of the Ikalanga. The researchers sought permission from the Barangay Chairmen of Dalupa and Dangtalan Pasil before conducting documentation and interviews. Culturally expert potters (*manfafanga*) were identified from the community and with the help of the National Commission on Indigenous People.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Tools and materials used in Kalinga pottery*

The following are the functions of the tools and materials (in Traditional Term) used in Kalinga Pottery

1. *Pita (Clay)* –it is the primary component in order to create and produce a hand-made earthenware.
2. *Al'o (Pestle)* –it is use in order to make the clay stone-free and fine.
3. *Sasal-salan* – it is a big smoothen rock where potters pound clay soil into fine clay.
4. *Chuyas* –it is a wooden plate where the clay is being formed.
5. *Ichi-id* –it is a stone polisher.
6. *Pikpik* –it is a wooden paddle.
7. *Gili* –it is used inscribing designs and designs on the surface of the pot.
8. *Talin-jak* –it is a piece of bamboo used in pulling the pot from fire.
9. *Inanas* –it is a piece of cloth used in polishing.
10. *Usu-us* –it is a piece of coconut shell used in polishing.
11. *Chu'yok* –it is a piece of wood.
12. *Aga-us* – it is a round metal.
13. *Puya* –it is known as red clay.
14. *Nigatong*- it is a sand stone.
15. *Pakaw*- it is a raisin handle.
16. *Ulot* For burning process, bamboo sticks and rice husk are required.

pita



Chu-yas



Ichi-id



Livu





B. The Traditional Procedures in Kalinga Pottery

The first step in the manufacture of pots is the acquisition of the starting material, clay. The clay is then pounded, added with enough amount of water to reach the wanted flexibility, and placed in a rotating plate. Using the hand-modeling and coil-and-scrape techniques, the height, thickness and shape of the pot is established. After this, the rim is designed by placing a wet rag on top of it and then rotating it on the other direction. Furthermore, scraping of the walls can also be done if the walls produced are too thick.

The pot, after the modeling stage, is then dried for a short period of time before the base is shaped. Also, after additional heating, small amounts of clay are added inside and outside the clay to maintain the evenness of the surface. A polishing step can also be done through the use of a polishing stone. In some cases, pots are also painted with red hematite paint for some stylized design. Understanding the process whereby the raw materials of ceramics are transformed into finished ceramic products is a necessary precursor to the examination of both the products themselves and the remains of the manufacturing sites. To set up any system of ceramic classification requires knowledge of the underlying physical characteristics of the raw materials and tools, an understanding of how they are affected by all stages of the manufacturing process and the ability to recognize and correctly identify the traces of these actions.

1) Preparing the clay to be molded:

- a. Remove the stones and other foreign matters from the soil clay;
- b. Sprinkle water on the soil then knead to form a ball;
- c. Place the molded clay on top of a sasal-salan;
- d. Pound the clay soil with pestle until fine and sticky; and
- e. Remove the fine clay soil from the sasal-salan using a piece of coconut shell then mold it like a rectangular small ball





2) Molding proper

- a. Place the ball like fine clay soil on the wooden plate material then form a hollow at the top then start forming the pot using the hand fingers to push up the soil to form a cylinder;
- b. Level the ream adding small piece of clay using the thumb;
- c. Using a piece of wet folded cloth placed on the ream moving the clutch fingers counter clockwise to form the mouth part;
- d. Dry the finish parts under the sun until bit hardened;
- e. Do the second leveling;
- f. Color the tip part of the ream with red signified soil;
- g. Using small wooden paddle plucking the outside against rounded stone pushing by the left hand inside of form and circular bottom;
- h. Repeat the leveling using kililan to smoothen rough parts;
- i. Dry under the sun;
- j. Scrape the inside part again until it is perfectly leveled;
- k. Wet piece of clay then rub it inside to cover hobs then scrap again with piece of circular coconut shell;
- l. Use wet cloth rubbing to level;





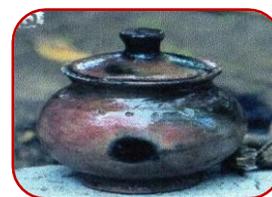
- m. When hardened, polish it with ichi-id; and
- n. Dry under the sun until ready to be burned.

3) Burning the pots:

- a. Prepare and arrange the alligatong for the pots to be burned;
- b. Arrange the pots from the biggest at the bottom and smaller pots are piled next;
- c. Put the sticks under then arrange pots between the stones gathered. Place then bigger sticks outside the arranged pots horizontally covering the pots;
- d. Cover the piled sticks with rice stalks then start the fire to burn the pots;
- e. Move and loosen the sticks under the pots to let the air move the fire inward;
- f. Add more rice stalks, cogon, and cook the pots into hardened stuff; and
- g. Apply the *livu* while the stuff is still hot.



Finished product



USES OF THE POTS AND THE NEW DESIGNS IN EARTHENWARE

The Globular Designs

The globular pots are far more advantageous than other organic containers. Since they are made in clay, heat has little or none any effect on the container and its contents, and that it protects the food from moisture and pests. Furthermore, its range of storage is far wider



since it can store both liquid and dry goods. The globular pots are very popular with the local people. There are basically three types of ceramic vessels of Ikalanga: rice cooking (*ittoyom*), vegetable/meat cooking (*oppaya*), and water storage (*immosso*) pots. The rice cooking pots are usually larger, thinner and have a smaller opening than vegetable/meat pots. On the other hand, water storage pots have an average and uniform size and a smaller neck size. Except for water storage pots, which have uniform size, the other two kinds can come in three different sizes, large, medium and small. Ceramic vessels can also be used for ceremonial activity like adornment during cultural presentation, decorative object, tokens for celebrations, and the like.

The pots are painted with red hematite paint for some stylized geometrical design which portrays the home of the Kalinga tribe. It represents also the mountains landscape of the place which composed of trees and plants, the mountains where the Ikalanga plant their crops and perform their rituals and ceremonies. The horizontal line segments signify rice terraces which leaves a sense of self possession among Ikalanga while the star and the diamond are insect patterns which depict fertility symbols, as the vertical lines symbolize sunrise cast upon the place.

New Crafts

The transformations or modification in ceramic patterns is not a major deviation from the conventional pot; new designs and craft are created to serve other forms and functions but still, 100% of the raw materials are natural and are available locally. Aside from the original craft and design which is the globular pot, there are 5 new forms designs The new designs and craft are known ay ay-ayam- they are the embodiment of individual creativity to serve other forms and functions, which are commonly made by men and women potters in Pasil, Kalinga which are scribed with mathematical figures such as the horizontal and vertical lines, triangles, circles and animal-like figurines like the *sin ugsa* (deer), *sin asu* (dog), *sin lawang* (wild pig), *sin manuk* (chicken), and the *sin alfasa* (squash or pumpkin) are named based natural phenomena and work of art based on their cultural identity.

Sinan-ugsa (Deer Design)

The deer or sinan-ugsa design is used as decorative item, token and coin saver. For the Ikalanga, if a deer crosses the path of a person, this may show that the person is very compassionate, gentle and loving person. They believe that deer teaches them how



powerful it to be gentle, to exert keen observation and sensitivity. Deer's are in tune with nature and all it comprises. They are sacred carrier of peace and show to the people how to open their hearts and love unconditionally.

Sinan-asu (Dog Design)

The dog or sinan-aso design is used as decorative object, tokens for any occasions and money banks. To the people Pasil, Kalinga, dogs have been known as guardians, protectors and most importantly – *mans' best friend*. Dog is the servant/soldier that guards the tribe's abodes, protecting them from surprise attacks especially during tribal conflict. His keen sense of smell and acute hearing alerted his master of dangers. A dog also assists during hunting and is believed to be a faithful companion to humans which carries that humane trait of lifetime loyal service. Like other animals, dogs can feel if an earthquake is about to occur; thus, they can lead us to safety, if we lay our trust upon them like they do.

Sinan-lawang (Pig Design)

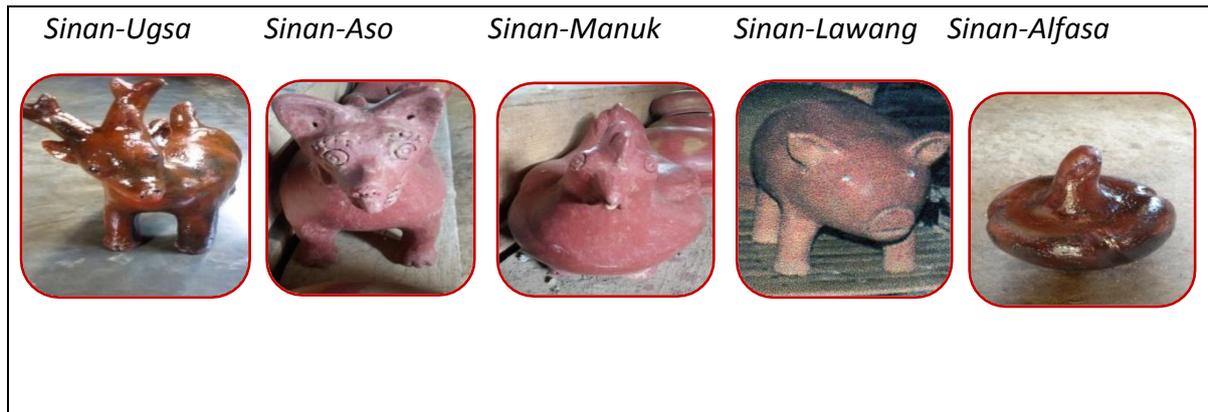
The design of water buffalo is used as decorative object, tokens for any occasions and coin saver. To the people of Pasil, Kalinga, they believe that pigs and wild boars are not simply farm animals but they have been used as badges and heraldic devices. Boars were frequently used also as war symbols for these animals echoes a sense of cleverness, invincibility, and ferociousness. They also symbolize fertility and are seen, moreover, as token of hospitality.

Sinan-manuk(Rooster Design)

The craft is used as decorative object, tokens for any occasions and coin saver. To the people Pasil, Kalinga, the rooster is a sign of illumination. Specifically, the cock served as a messenger of the underworld, screeching out warnings in danger, and calling out for the souls of the fallen ones. The people of Pasil also consider a rooster as a time-keeper and is a sign of time passing in our lives. Hearing a voice of a rooster may indicate that we need a wake-up call, and need to pay attention to some circumstances in our lives.

Sin alfasa (Squash Design)

Squash for the Ikalunga plays an important role as a food crop which the potters of Pasil have incorporated in making earthen coin saver.



CONCLUSION

1. Potters of Pasil use natural and locally available raw materials and indigenous tools and with the use of the bare hand in doing the said craft.
2. The globular form is multi-functional but the transformations or modification in ceramic patterns is not a major deviation from the conventional pot; The new designs and craft are known as ay-ayam- they are the embodiment of individual creativity to serve other forms and functions.
3. Pottery depicts the type of living and the kind of environment people have in Pasil, Kalinga.

Redesigning and technical adaptation of traditional pottery has marked a major improvement in the life of the community at large, while at the same time, empowering men and women in creating opportunities for income generation.

RECOMMENDATION

Based from the results and discussion of the study and conclusions made, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

1. Community leaders, elders and *manfafa* should create linkages to organizations concerned with the recognition of their properties and establish a centralized workshops to promote and revitalize traditional craft.
2. Considering the technologies used in pot making today, technical adaptation like the used of potters wheel should be customary to aid in pottery

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