

made of skull called *thoedrum*. Bigger cylindrical drums like *bangna* are used for communication and to dictate ceremonial processions. There is also the *nga chen* (large-sized), *nga chung* (small-sized), *ser nga* (gold), *tshoen nga* (color-decked), and *thoed drum* (skull drum).

5.3.1.5. Process of Drum Making

Traditional Bhutanese drum making involves a number of artisans skilled in woodturning, woodcarving, leather and painting. Drum making involves the curving of the wood into a cylindrical shape, carving of the wooden rims, fixing the handles, painting and attaching skins.

Wood from *sengmaling shing* (*Acer campbellii*) or *rawa shing* (*Toona ciliata* or *Cedrela toona*) is cut into cylindrical shape. Wood from *sengmaling shing* is soaked in water, boiled and then rolled into a round shape in heated sand. A drum made from *sengmaling shing* is known as *pangoo*. Drum makers find it easier to work with *rawa shing* since it can be used without soaking or boiling. Drums made from *rawa shing* wood are known as *brungoo*, which has a slight bulge on its surface. Rims are carved on the cylindrical wood and painted with various prescribed mystic charms like dragon motifs, flowers and traditional symbols. The two sides of the drum are usually covered with goat, sheep or calf skin. The cylindrical wood is then attached to a handle with metallic embellishment. The handle represents a *vajra* bolt or *vajra* dagger (dorje) and fits into a lotus-shaped stand. Shaped somewhat like a question mark, the *nge tob* or the stick used for beating the drum is made from *rawa shing* or cane.

5.3.2. Pottery

Dzazo or the tradition of pot making might have preceded many of the other arts, as earthen pots were most widely used in the country as household utensils

in olden days in absence of metallic utensils as found today. This craft is believed to have propagated on a large scale during the time of Drubchen Thangthong Gyalpo (1385–1464) and Tertön Pema Lingpa (1450–1521). It had reached its height of development in the 17th century when Bhutanese people had the privilege of learning various arts and crafts including pot making during the time of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel and the fourth Desi Tenzin Rabgye.

It is believed that pottery was first practiced in Rinpung in Paro, Wangbama in Thimphu, Shar Goenkha in Wangdiphodrang, and Gangzur in Lhuentse district. Pot making is traditionally practised mostly by women, and the skills and knowledge are passed from mother to daughter. Although pot making is not as popular as other crafts in Bhutan, it is still vibrant in some pockets of the country like Gangzur. The community has a strong sense of identity and is proud to be practicing this heritage.

5.3.2.1. Process of Making Pots

The basic raw materials in pottery are red and white clay. Red soil and white clay are mixed in the ratio of 3:1. The process requires a huge amount of firewood for burning pots. A single burning requires almost seven men's load of firewood.

There seems to be hardly any change in the method of pottery. Red and white soils are pounded with a huge *thow* (wooden hammer) after drying them in the sun for two to three days. The pounded soil is then sieved using a bamboo sieve with fine holes. The sieved red and white soils are mixed in the ratio of 3:1 in water, and moulded by placing on a stone slab until the mixture turns into a fine pulp. Pots are made in the traditional manner using only hands. Pots are then shaped from the pulp, and water is applied in the shaping process with a *tukpun* (a piece of wet cloth). Pots are then kept in the sun for drying for a day. Next day, the bases of the pots are shaped. These pots are kept in the pottery house for a week for complete drying.

Heating the Pots

The burning of the pots is the most important component in pot making process. Pots are kept around a small fire and are allowed to be heated gently. The pots are then moved into the centre of the fire, and kept until they turn black in colour. When the pots turn dark in colour, the pots are then removed from the fire.

This process of gently heating the pots prevents the pots from cracking. Around 150-180 pots are heated at a time.



After removing the blackened pots from the fire, the place is cleared of any un-burnt wood, leaving only the hot ashes. The pots are then, piled one upon another, upside down in the hot ash. Once this is done the pots are covered with logs of firewood. In addition to the firewood, pine leaves are also used. The logs are then set on fire.

When the woodpile burns down to ashes, the pots turn dark red in colour, which then give a clear 'tinkling' sound when gently hit with a stick.

Application of Lac

While the dark red pots are still hot, the potter applies *lachhu* (a waste product of the lac dye, obtained from the resinous secretion of *Lacifera lacca*). This process renders the pots waterproof and prevents cracking especially on the neck area.

5.3.2.2. Type of Pots: Naming and Their Usage

Although the utility of earthen pots are replaced by modern metallic pots, the traditional earthen pots are still used as cooking pots, showpieces and flower vases. Bhutanese potters craft earthen pots of various sizes and shapes like *khadza* (for pouring the distilled ara), *ki thap* (pot for boiling water), flower pots, cooking pots, *madza* (rice pot), *jadza* (tea pot), and various other earthen utensils.

Badza is used as an inner vessel for distilling local liquor and *tshoe dza* for curry. *Chang pa dzam chu* has a handle and is used for frying and heating local distilled alcohol. Pots with long necks without any handle are used for making tea. Small pot with a short snout on side, and handle on the other side is traditionally designed for preparing food for babies. Unlike other pots, *Sang phor* has a flat and thick base, and is of two types. One has a handle and the other design does not have any handles. *Sang phor* is used for offering and burning incense. It is said that since lac is an animal product it should not be applied to *sang phor*.

5.3.2.3. Tools and Equipments

Pot makers use several locally made metallic and wooden tools. *Enchupak*, made from either *bashing* (*Picea spinulosa*), or *tongphu shing* (*Pinus wallichiana*), is a rectangular piece of plank which is used for supporting and for mounting the clay pulp while shaping the pots.

Khasha sinthag is a piece of cotton cloth used wet for shaping the pots.

Thongthoed is a flat wooden tool used for pounding and beating the hard soil. Sieve is made from bamboo and is used to sieve the soil, to separate the fine particles from stones and other unwanted materials. *Thow* is made from a hard wood and is used for moulding the mixed soil on a flat stone slab.

Dzink is a piece of bamboo bent to function as a tongs. This tool is used to transport the hot burning pots for lachhu application. *Zham* is a circular metallic tool used to remove the excess soil from inside the pot.

Pots are not made during the monsoon season, because the continuous rain disrupts the burning of the pots in the open area fire.

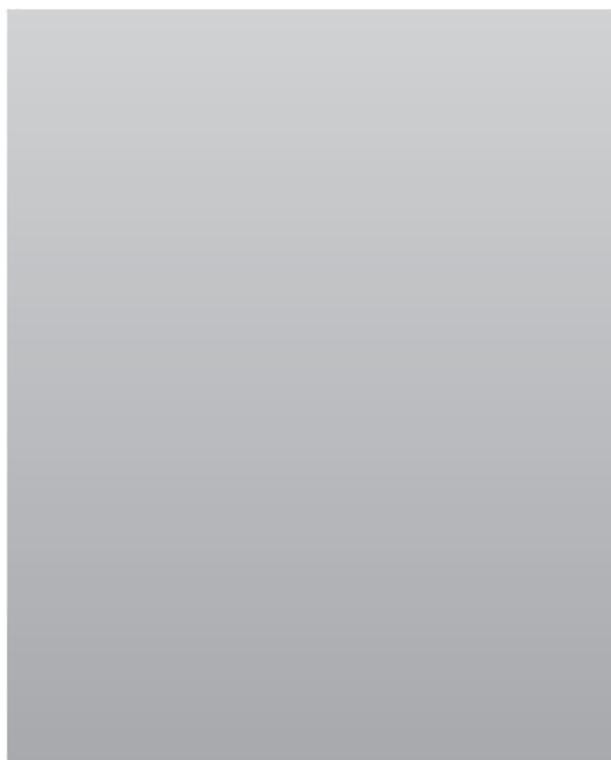
5.3.3. Bone/Horn/Tusk Work

Bone work, is also known as *ruezo* in Bhutan and it is one of the earliest tools used by humans for cutting, digging and hunting purposes. Bone work could therefore be one of the oldest craft which has taken firm roots in our culture. It is believed the craft had come to Bhutan from Mongolia via Tibet in the seventh century during the reign of King Songtsen Gampo. This craft is fast diminishing and needs to be revitalized.

5.3.3.1. From human bones the following objects are made:

5.3.3.1.1. *Kangdu*–Kangdu is a trumpet made from human thigh bones and used as an instrument during rituals performed by the monks and gomchens. It is decorated with silver and gold at the notch.

5.3.3.1.2. *Kapalee/kapala* –the human skull is used to offer *duetsi* – alcohol offering to the guardian deities. Most often the Kapalee is plaited with gold or silver from outside.



5.3.3.1.3. *Trangtring* – also known as damaru. Although wood is widely used for making damaru, a pair of human skull makes a special damaru to be used by highly learned gomchens.

5.3.3.2. From animal bones/tusk/horn of rhinoceros, takin, tiger, sambar deer, buffalo and oxen are used for making various kinds of products as stated below:

5.3.3.2.1. Rosary beads or prayer beads are also made of out of animal bones.

5.3.3.2.2. Elephant tusk are used to make decorative and ornamental items such as rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelet, etc.

5.3.3.2.3. Horns and bones of various animals are used for making items such as cup, *palang* or jandom (alcohol container) and handles of hand instruments.



5.3.3.2.4. Bones have also been used to make musical instruments such *Pchiwang* and dranyen.

5.3.4. Leather Work

Kozo is also an ancient craft practiced in Bhutan. The hides of ox that are older than seven years but not too old are mainly used for hide work. Other hides used are those of goats, deer and snakes. Owing to availability of cheaper leather goods from neighbouring countries, leather work in Bhutan is hardly practiced today and needs to be revived.

First the hide is dried in the sun by stretching it on the ground by wooden pegs on the edges or hanging them on frames. When the hide is fully dried, it is soaked in cold ash water. After draining out the ash water, the hide has to be stretched using wooden pegs in order to shave off the hair and any flesh remains. Once again ashes are applied and turned inside out to remove the skin. Next rancid butter or *shing mar* is applied on the clean-shaven hide which is then thrashed using heavy wooden club and periodically clobbered with legs. When the hide becomes softer and flexible, it is kept away from air to let it dry completely. Then it is cut into different shapes as desired and stitched.