



5.2.5.2.3. Betal Leaf/nut Container: This rectangular box called *chag kar* is a personal item used by both men and women to keep betel leaves and areca nuts and carried wherever they go. It is handcrafted on silver with gold finish and is often elaborately decorated with the eight auspicious signs, lotus, dragon and other designs.

5.2.5.2.4. Round Betal Leaf/nut Container: Bathra is handmade from silver with gold finish and decorated with the eight auspicious signs, this large round box was used solely by nobility and high level clergy for traditional offerings of betel leaves and areca nuts during special occasions and ceremonies.

5.2.5.2.5. Lime Container: This round container called *trimi* is used for keeping lime and is always carried along with chakar or bathra. It is hand crafted from silver with a gold finish and dragon designs.

5.2.5.3. Religious Objects: Handcrafted silver religious objects called *choe chas* are often engraved or plated with gold in various pattern. *Dung* (horn), *Choe-ting* (water offering bowls), *Dorje* and *Drilbu* (vajra and brass bell), *Bumpa* (vase), etc. are some of the religious objects.

5.2.6. Black Smithing

The art of ironwork is known as *Gar-zo*. Although it is difficult to trace the origin of blacksmithing in Bhutan, recent records tell us that the art can be dated back to the fourteenth century. People engaged in this craft are known as *Gaw*. When Mahasidha Thangtong Gyalpo (1385-1464), came to Bhutan in 14th century, it is said that there were as many as 18 sheds of blacksmiths in Paro. With the help of those blacksmiths, the saint had built 8 iron cast suspension bridges in the eastern and western parts of the country. Few of these bridges are still seen today. As the iron industry evolved over the time,

blacksmithing became a specialized trade. Today, this craft is lagging behind as many of the culinary tools and other equipment are imported from the neighbouring countries.

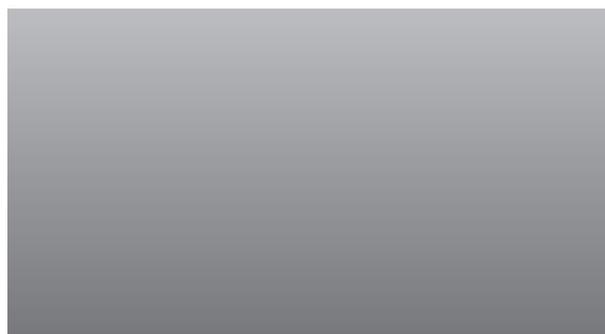
Iron smelters were small furnaces built from rock that could withstand extreme and repeated heating. These furnaces looked like beehives with an opening at the top and an entrance on the side. The furnace was filled with iron-ore and charcoal and then set to fire. With the rising temperature, the iron flows and forms balls. And these are consequently hammered and shaped into numerous useful tools.

5.2.6.1. Agricultural Tools: The blacksmiths crafted numerous agricultural tools that were essential in an agrarian society and almost every household would have a set of such useful tools. They are tools such as sickles, spades, pickaxes, axes, knives, crowbars, etc. However, today many of the tools are imported from the neighbouring countries, which in turn contribute to the gradual death of the craft.

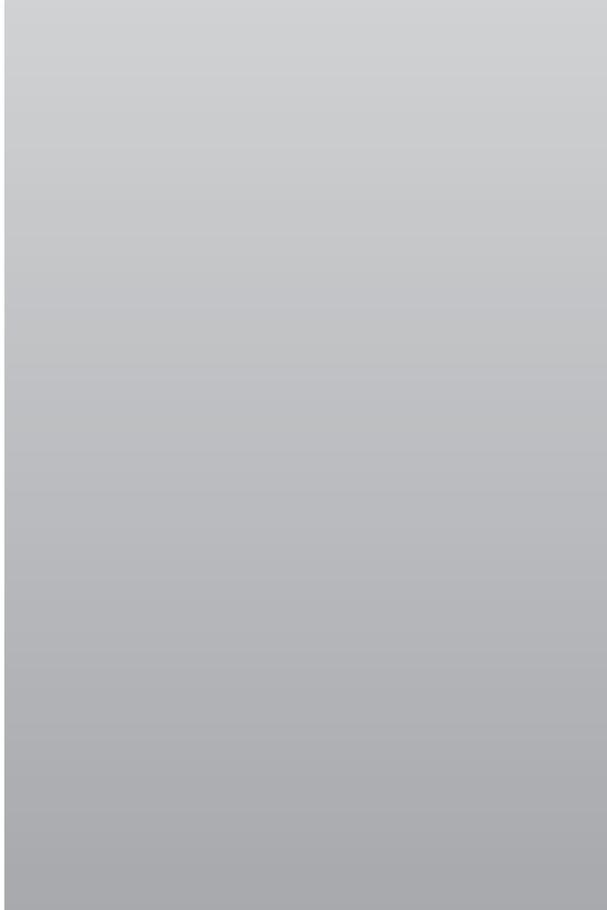
5.2.6.2. Carpentry Tools: The blacksmiths produced many important tools that are required by a carpenter such hammers, axes, saws, *zongchu*. *Zongchu* is a sharp chisel that is used to carve and chisel the edges of wood.

5.2.6.3. Household Items: Bhutanese blacksmiths have also made aluminium items like utensils, ladles, bowls and plates used at homes. They made ladles of different shapes, sizes and designs. Ladles are cast out of aluminium while the plates are made out of both aluminium and copper. One of the most important household tools is a knife. It finds its use in so many ways within the households. Knives come in different shapes and sizes ranging from a kitchen dagger to bigger knives.

5.2.6.4. Armours: In the past the Bhutanese blacksmiths were known to have designed and crafted arms and armours required by men in times of war. Today, colourfully designed shields and iron helmets are retained only in the museums.



5.2.6.5. Swords: As indicated in a previous section of this chapter, there are various kinds of swords, named after its maker and the places from where it was made. Based on the name of the place and the makers, there are the following types of swords:



5.2.6.5.1. Types of Swords

5.2.6.5.1.1. *Paksam Tenzin* – the sword derives its name from the place called Paksamkha while the maker was known as Tenzin. It has smooth surface area and is sparkly. The blunt edge is round. It is considered the best sword in Bhutan and is worn by the King and the nobles.

5.2.6.5.1.2. *Chukhap Tenzin* – it was first made by a person named Tenzin and he was from Chukha. And the sword is of equal size and same shape as Paksam Tenzin. Chukhap Tenzin has less surface area and is not as smooth as Paksam Tenzin.

5.2.6.5.1.3. *Bumthang Tsendri* – Bhutan's treasure discoverer Terton Pema Lingpa is believed to have cast this sword from the iron found in Bumthang. It is distinct from the rest in that it has the thumb imprint of the saint near the hilt and is considered highly sacred.

5.2.6.5.1.4. *Nagphala* – it was cast during the reign of Desi Jigme Namgyel, the sword appears dark and is very hard. It is also considered one of the best swords and has slightly bigger surface than Paksam Tenzin.

5.2.6.5.1.5. *Dungsam Thum* – the sword derives its name from the source of the iron – place named Dungsamkha. It is hard and shorter compared to other swords. It is as thick as Paksam Tenzin.

5.2.6.5.1.6. *Barshongpa* – Barshong is the name of a place in the eastern district of Trashigang where one can find iron ore. The sword takes its name from there and has slightly thinner edges.

5.2.6.5.1.7. *Thum* – the sword is not as strong as others and can be broken if hit on the hard objects.

5.2.6.5.1.8. *Chhuri Chenm* – the sword is 594 mm long and its blade is about 1mm thick. It is cast out of hard and soft iron. (this name is from the scabbards and not the knife itself)

5.2.6.5.1.9. *Lungdri* – Lungdri is a very thin and light like the wind (*lung*).

5.2.6.5.2. Swords named based on the Scabbards

5.2.6.5.2.1. *Churi Chenm* (wavy pattern) – the sword has scabbard of silver showing the meanders of a river in the middle. It is gold plated. Churi chemn is considered the best scabbard that senior officials wear.

5.2.6.5.2.2. *Benchang* – the sword has all the features of churi chemn except that it has no wavy patterns. Zimpon, Changap and attendants wear it.

5.2.6.5.2.3. *Belpak chemn* – Belpak chemn has lizard skin instead of churi while the remaining portions are covered in silver.

5.2.6.5.2.4. *Hoshu chemn* – the sword has scabbard/sheath, which is divided into three sections. The first and the middle portions are painted red and green. The remaining portion, which covers the tip of the sword, has silver case. The parts between hilt and the opening of the sheath and between the second and the last section have gold designs. Senior officials also wear this kind of sword.

5.2.6.5.2.5. *Zangshug chemn* – the scabbard is covered with bronze and has no decorations. Lower rank officers wear this kind of sword.