

Design Resource

Temple Pottery - Puri, Orissa

Extensive Form of Handicrafts

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and

Aakash Sharma

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/temple-pottery-puri-orissa>

1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
5. Video
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Introduction

Orissa, in ancient times known as Kalinga, was a far-flung national unity, range over the vast regions nearby grounds from the Ganges to the Godavari and occasionally up to the Krishna River. This is between the oldest and most extensive form of handicrafts. Historical records of ancient era have been found in the remains of pottery. It is believed to have existed since 7000 BC in the Neolithic period. If we will consider its timetable and stages of formation, we may conclude that through the early historic period, Orissa succeeded under several names and under several rulers and administrations. Kalinga, as it was known, was very active in national as well as overseas trade associations, being located on the Bay of Bengal coast and being placed as a conference point between north and south India. The vegetation is of tropical deciduous type and the climate is considered by hot summers, high humidity and well-distributed rainfall.

The word 'Jagannath' and the word 'people of Orissa' mean two separate aspects; the first one narrates to culture of Lord Jagannath and second narrates to Orissan people. Orissa as such at present is comprising of 30 districts, but its cultural borderline is bounded by many ancient States speaking communal language. Oriya which the historians as well as epigraphers say is evolved from Udrumagadhi. However, the ancient State of Kaling, Utkal, Trikaling, Dakshin Kosala and Kalinga comprise the modern Orissa. The people residing in all the areas are mainly aboriginals, either classes of Sabaras or classes of Gonds and Khandas. There are many unions and sub-divisions in these three tribal communities and in course of time many sub communities have come out their tribal limitations to have mingled with the on-coming communities namely Kshatriyas and Brahmins as well as business community (Vaishya's) brought in by the ruling dynasty from both/or South and North.

As known in particular traditional heritage is usually established around river bank because of the fact that cultivation and animal husbandry are easily potential for undertaking in the lands which lay on both the banks ever flowing rivers. To many historians as well as epigraphers and archaeologists, the land of Orissa is very peculiar for the simple reason that even though many tribal collections from the major part of the population, but they almost have a common mystical belief as a result of which the worships of Lord Jagannath as we all know now has been an evolving synthesis of many people, but with a common stream of thought flowing from pre-vedic period as is evident from many Purans and relative study of old civilization as well as archaeological excavation. The worship of Lord Jagannath in Orissa, has led to development of distinct culture which is frequently described as Jagannath culture. Jagannath culture believes in universality but not in sectarianism. Lord Jagannath as we know now is the God of masses, but not of personalities with individual choice and thus naturally Jagannath culture has been observed as a mass culture. People of diverse faith with their distinct social backgrounds have worshipped Lord Jagannath as their own. From the foot prints of the ageless cultural heritage in India and abroad, we find that tribal (original inhabitant of Orissa), Dravidians, Aryans, Orthodox Hindus, Jains, Buddhist, Sikhs and various religions.

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When we as pilgrim's devotees or as companies go to the Lord Jagannath Temple complex, we frequently wait for some time to partake Mahaprasad rather in Anand Bazar. Anand Bazar is located inside the premises of Lord Jagannath Temple, Puri is a place where Mahaprasad in shape cooked rice, dals, curry, sweets and Sukhila Bhog etc. which are offered to Lord Jagannath and reoffered to the governing Lady Deity of Lord Jagannath. Vimala become Mahaprasad and are sold in Anand Bazar by the Suaras (the cooks of the sacred Mahaprasad). Here in Anand Bazar people of numerous categories right from Brahmin to Sudras partake Mahaprasad in a common place from a common ampoule. This designates that there is no sense of discrimination between Brahmin and non-Brahmin or between the touchable and non-touchable or between Hindus, Budhists, Jains and Sikhs. The terracotta or fired clay products are used to store the meal of the temple, these pots are especially made for the temple and has a dimensional shape.

According to "Skanda Purana" Lord Jagannath redeems the devotees by permitting them to partake his Mahaprasad, to have his darshan and to worship him by observing rituals and by offering of gifts. Mahaprasad is treated here as 'Anna Brahma'. The temple kitchen has got the capacity to cook for a lakh of devotees in a day. Mahaprasad is cooked only in earthen pots and medium of food is fire wood only. The steam-cooked food is offered to Lord Jagannath first and then to Goddess Vimala after which it becomes Mahaprasad.



Pots before drying.

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Artisan involved in the process of making clay pottery on spinning wheel.



Artisan showcasing the design of the pot.



Pots are uniformly arranged for drying.



Kumbhar Pada Kumbhakar Silpa Samabaya Samiti LTD. (potter's association).

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Tools and Raw Materials

The raw material for this craft is ordinary clay, derived from the beds of water bodies like river, lakes and ponds. The first layer is ignored as it's a form of mud, second layer is used as clay for pottery. The clay is filtered, cleaned, mixed and then shaped either by hand, wheel or molded into desired object. The clay or terracotta products are graded according to their color, strength and water absorption capacity.

- **Clay:** Free from chemicals is generally collected from the neighboring lake.
- **Black and Grey Clay:** It is used to strengthen the clay material as per the item to be made.
- **Spinning Wheel:** A manual pottery wheel (A spinning object).
- **Mesh:** It is to refine/ sieve the clay from brick and solid particles.
- **Gunny Bags:** It's used for kneading the clay well into a good mixture.
- **Water:** It is used for conditioning the dried clay material.
- **Wood Dust:** Dust used to add in the clay.
- **Plank of Wood:** To arrange the prepared clay items as per it is made.
- **Plastic Bags:** To store the clay collected from various locations.
- **Ash:** Used to add in the pot awhile hammering with a wooden tool.
- **Wooden Tool:** Used to beat the pot gently for flattening the pot.
- **Terracotta Object:** Used to control the hammer pressure while beating process.
- **Thread:** Is dipped in water and used to cut and separate the product from the turning wheel.
- **Bhatti (kiln):** It's used for heating the prepared clay items.
- **Dry Grass & Forest Plant:** It's used to impart heat in the Bhatti (kiln) during heating process.

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Spinning wheel that is used to shape pots.

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A lump of clay that is used to make pots.



Wooden tools used to shape and give facets to the pots.



Heating kiln set up where the pots are baked.

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A bowl of ash.

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Making Process

The Raw clay originates from the areas close to Sathi Gopal temple in a tractor which may last for about a month. The clay is mixed with water and drenched for a day after which, it's been crumpled and mixed by hand. Clay is moderately mixed with wood powder and extracting of unwanted objected from the clay is practiced. After filtering of the clay, it's been rolled until it forms to a soft clay. Artesian throws clay on the pot wheel, interchanges the wheel with the help of a stick placed on a one inch breach which benefits in spinning the wheel. Throwing the clay on wheel which is one of the main procedure, he starts to carve a pot out of the clay. Artesian places his thumb in between the clay and progressively starts applying pressure. Once a hollow shape takes place, he starts placing all his fingers and starts to gradually apply force in an equal manner. Cone shape is formed, the neck of the pot is bent towards upward and towards inside. With the help of thumb the compression is applied from the base of the pot towards edges to form a shape. Index finger and thumb helps in getting the edges precisely. Last finger gets edge shapes on the pot. Finally right hand goes into the pot by applying pressure with the help of left hand. Radius of the pot is equal with the help of this process. Once the shape is formed, artesian then detaches the pot with the help of a thin thread.

After placing the pot for drying which takes about a day, artesian checks for any minor cracks, keeps it on his laps and places an additional terracotta product within the pot by adding some ash for the surface to remain rough. He removes excess clay and beats the pot gently with the help of a curve shaped wooden tool. A layer of fresh clay is used to cover the base, after a gentle tap with the wooden object, water is applied on the pot as well as on the wooden tool, and artesian starts to hammer with the help of flat wooden tool (Bat shaped) following the same process. The hammering process takes place in the form of flat hit which goes flip flop by forming a dimensional shape. Pots are then placed on the kiln for the further burning process and it's burnt for about 2 to 3 days. Kiln is filled with dry hay, plants from forest with some coconut shells to begin with the fire. After the baking process, temperature cools down, the final product is removed from kiln and supplied on a manual transportation. All of this products are supplied to the temple. There is always a demand from the temple as all of the holy food is been stored in this pots.

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The clay is kneaded for the good use of pottery making.



Artisan turns the spinning wheel to start with the pot making.



Artisan sculpts the pot on spinning machine.



Thumb finger is being used to shape the pot.

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Artisan shapes the pot using fingers.



Artisan shapes the clay to the required form using fingers.



Clay is shaped applying gentle pressure.



Clay pot is being made on the spinning wheel.

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Artisan uses his fingers to shape the clay pot.



A finished pot is being removed from wheel using the thread.



Ash powder is used for inner surface of the pot.



Baked pot is held from inside and tapped on the outer surface to close the base of the pot.

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The pot base is patched with clay.



Artisan uses wet cloth to smoothen the surface.



Artisan making facets on the pot.



The pots that are completely shaped are kept under sun to dry.

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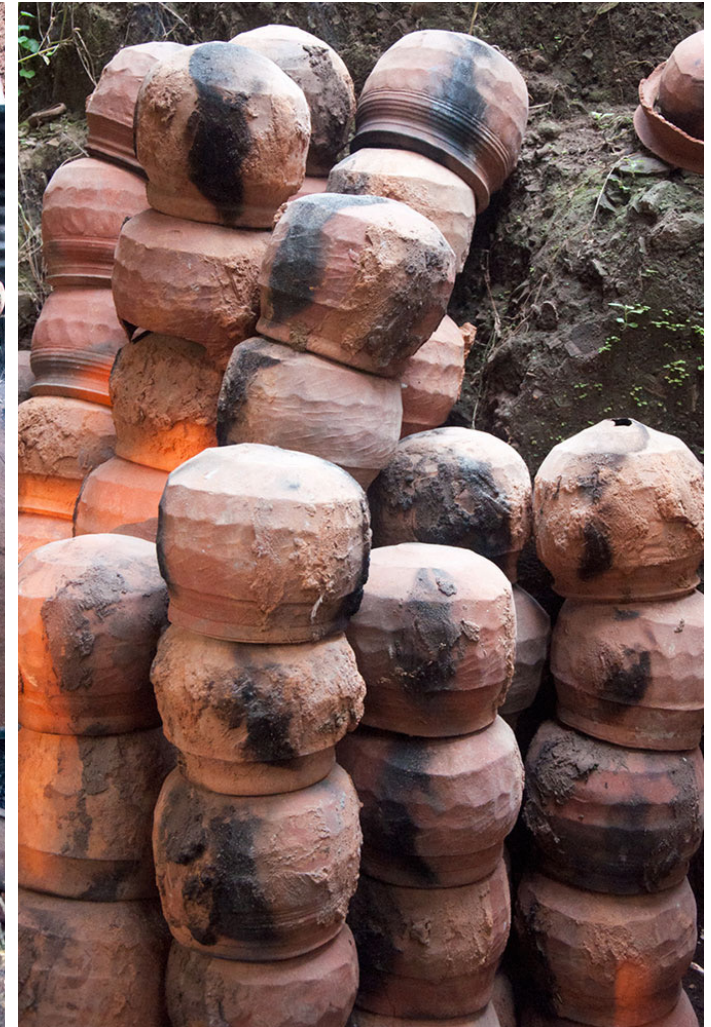
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Pots are baked in kiln.



Pile of baked pots.

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Products

Terracotta is the term used for ceramic sculpture in Indian which made heavy use of terracotta from a very early period. Pottery making has been practiced in India from olden days. In more sophisticated areas had largely abandoned modeling for using molds by the 1st century BC. This work is traditionally done by the tribal community. They use special type of clay and design to match their skills. Artesian prepare many items most of which they outline and highlight with coolers. However, in most cases the finished is left with the natural terracotta color. Several vigorous local popular traditions of terracotta folk sculpture remain active today. Often women prepare clay figures to propitiate their gods and goddesses, during festivals.

The products have huge varieties like home decorative pots, mud vessels, Jugs, flower pot, piggy bank, showcase items, lamps, tea cups, filter and toys etc. Mainly focusing at the pot's for temple, craftsmen focus on the various sizes starting from 4 inches to 2 feet and prepare them according to the order from Temple of Jagarnath. The productions of the pots happen throughout the year and have huge demand. The naturally made clay products are used for the daily life, special occasions and also decorative purposes.

The Mahaprasad is freely contributed by people of all castes and creeds without any discrimination. The items offered include cooked rice, dal, vegetable curry, sweet-dishes, and cakes by serving in these pots.

The specialty of this pot is that it can carry heavy weight and is long lasting than compared to the other pots as common circular shaped pots have one density whereas, this pot has low edges in the middle of every hexagonal shape of the pot and high density towards the edges of hexagonal shape, which holds to one another in a stronger manner.



A collection of lids after taking them out from the kiln.

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A stack of baked pots displayed to market.



A flower pot mostly used in plantation.



A bowl that is beautifully designed used for various purposes.

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Video



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