

Local Genius of Mambong Pottery in Kelantan, Malaysia

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Abstract

Art in Malay culture traditionally existed alongside with the invention of utility items. Traditional pottery known for its utility functions has integral with local genius aspects. This paper focuses on the documentation and in-depth study of the local genius of the Mambong pottery. The tradition of Mambong village pottery is traceable to 1868. Situated on the banks of the Galas River, Kelantan, Kampung Mambong with its two hundred and thirty eight years pottery tradition is a rather unique phenomenon. It has produced pieces such as smoke container, round bottom water jar, squat water vessel, vessels with handles, earthenware pot, steam pot that suggest skilful dexterity in handling the medium of clay in response to physical and spiritual needs. Mambong pottery expresses the knowledge of forms and their functions but something of the sense of genius, as well. It is time that the local genius of Mambong pottery is highlighted, its use and significance elaborated, and the tradition appreciated.

Keywords: Traditional pottery, local genius, dexterity.

Introduction

Viewed from the aspect of the development cultural objects in the world, material clay has long been a media production and living needs for expression statement to the community. Production of art pottery that made from the clay medium is one of the oldest art in the world after the use of stone media. Use of clay materials in cultural objects Malaysian society has been detected since the start of the Neolithic period. Pottery is an important element in understanding and know the cultural history of the development community because it represents the time of prehistoric man through a method of manufacturing and production technology for the welfare or the community. Pottery has become important criteria in determining the pattern changes life in prehistoric society and be an indication that the Neolithic culture has entered the beginning of reliable agricultural activities. Status the use of pottery was first changed from utility function in everyday life to help complete the rotation to the goods which functions as a business tool. Pottery have been eminent as an object related to community life. Illustration of this can be proved by the discovery of the burial place that contains artifacts of prehistoric pottery associated with the belief systems of society. Pottery objects were buried with corpses in a particular order.

This is contained in several articles that discuss specifically about prehistoric pottery such as M.W.F. Tweedie (1953) in Gua Musang, Kelantan and Gua Tuba, Langkawi Island, G. de. G. Sieveking (1954) about the discovery of pottery Cha Cave, Ulu Kelantan and Bukit Tengku Lembu, Perlis (1962) and B.A.V Peacock (1964) about tripod vessels in Kodingang, Kedah, Adi Taha (1985) Cha Cave, Kelantan and Nik Hassan Shuhaimi (1998) Kuala Selinsing, Perak. Pottery also became goods for customs traditional cultural society in Malaysia. Appreciation a very deep and high to the pottery can be detected in cultural ceremonies of the indigenous communities in Borneos. Such is the importance of use of pottery items as utility functions across the cultural things in Malaysia. Production of pottery is no longer simply needs to live but it is also a symbol of expression that to the community. Thus when expressing art pottery making, certain aesthetic values that exist and decorate production. Not only the unique forms and techniques, but also embody a pottery aesthetic philosophy in the thinking of individuals who represent the community which is communicated through symbols and motifs. Pottery has been detected in Malaysian society since prehistoric times. Discovery of prehistoric pottery has been presenting and clarifying the skills and wisdom to create items out of clay as a tool for physical and spiritual needs. This can be proved by the discovery of artifacts in prehistoric pottery Neolithic period.

Among Neolithic sites have been found in several sites in Malaysia are Hulu Perak, Nenggiri Complex in Kelantan, Gua Kecil in Pahang, Gua Niah in Sarawak and Tengkorak Hill and the Tingkayu Valley Sabah. The production and the creation pottery are not just forms and functions but also showed expression of aesthetic. Surface decoration on prehistoric pottery has been shown that when people already started communicating with nature as design motifs and patterns on the surface of pottery. Nature has been made the subject of the expression of feeling. Art pottery has long been the object of art history was born in the country and it has also experienced some changes in the process according to certain periods. From the Neolithic era to era metal, period Governments Start, Early Islamic period, Colonial and Modern and up to now. Change period and passage of time has been mature and show a chain of continuity of art pottery production in Malaysia.

Documentation and in-depth study of the local genius Mambong pottery will become a focus of study by researchers fairness because there is no more comprehensive studies on the Mambong pottery. In fact, this step is also considered very important to document and preserve that heritage Mambong pottery production tradition not swallowed the current global extinction. Therefore this study Mambong pottery expected to trigger recognition and aesthetic value to appraisation pottery traditions in Malaysia. With this when expressing art tradition pottery making, will present the aesthetic value. Not only unique forms and techniques, but also embody aesthetic Mambong pottery of philosophical thinking in the Malays, who communicated through symbols and motifs. The effect of the local genius Mambong pottery makers thought this gave a space for researchers to translate the pre-text (Mambong pottery) to the text.

Mambong Pottery.

Kelantan is located in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Kelantan State is divided into ten provinces, namely Tumpat district, Pasir Mas, Kota Bahru, Bachok, Tanah Merah, Pasir Puteh, Machang, Kuala Krai, Gua Musang and Jeli. In this research, the Kuala Krai district is location pottery tradition in the state of Kelantan. Mambong village is located in Kampung Ulu Sungai Kelantan which can be connected from Sungai Galas. The journey from *Bradley* jetty in Kuala Krai to Mambong Village took 45 minutes ,along the Kelantan river before the river is divided into two, namely Kelantan River and Lebir River. Malaysian history researchers think that Kelantan River has also been possible to open relationships and the route that connects with the world outside Kelantan. Handicrafts are based out of clay, which is also the name of Mambong pottery are unique and need to be recognized on par with the existing crafts in Kelantan as batik, wood carvings and metal goods.

The name Mambong is derived from the local Kelantan dialect word *mambo* (ng). Based on the history of those old former village, the name is derived from a piece of jack fruit has no seeds. Those old former village in the previous named with the name ' *Nangka mambo*'. Therefore this village is named after the jack fruit has no seeds, with the name Mambong Village. Mambong pottery that has long been based in Ulu Kelantan has received the name in conjunction with the village name. Mambong Pottery pieces such as smoke container, round bottom water jar, squat water vessel, vessels with handles, earthenware pot and steam pot. The pot similar in shape and generally used for cooking is called *periok* though smaller in size. Those produced at Mambong are reddish brown because of the high content of iron in the clay. They have more rounded bodies and come with covers, which have dotted impressions arranged round the knobs. This kind of knob is commonly found on covers of brassware vessels. Mambong pottery has unique organic character of its own.

Around the year 2006, there were about 30-40 of houses in this village. Total number of population is estimated at 290 persons. Placement villagers along side the Galas river. In the amount that, of ten houses in the village of Mambong that is still continuing production of Mambong pottery activities. Mambong Pottery production usually done and cultivated area their home environment. Bottom of the house will serve as a place for their work preparing the clay and produce Mambong pottery. History of Mambong pottery production actually said from family Maimunah Binti Puteh (Tok Bara). According to Ramli bin Mat Isa, four generations in family Tok Bara (Maimunah Binti Puteh, 1868-1969) states that basic skills is in Maimunah Binti Puteh has been inherited from the previous generation. Mambong pottery production activities initially only for utility item needs had to become a parttime activity to increase their side income.

Mambong pottery has been cultivated since 238 years before the ancestors of the family starting in 1868 until 2006. At that time there were about 20-30 family had produced Mambong Pottery activities. Skills and understanding creations of Mambong pottery by Maimunah binti Puteh (Tok Bara) has succeeded to daughter, Aminah or also known as Mek Yah until the last generation. Now days Tok Bara generations still continuing production of Mambong pottery. Apart from that the local villagers who also follow to produce Mambong pottery. This activity is seen as one source of sustenance for them.

In addition the knowledge sharing skills also develop results Mambong pottery can survive until now. The existence of Mambong pottery for 238 years, from 1868-2006 in the district of Kuala Krai Colony is a very unique phenomenon. If seen from the history of the craft highlights in Malaysia, highlights of pottery at the Mambong is less pay attention. Therefore equity Mambong pottery handicrafts gazetted as important as traditional handicrafts was established and lasted so long in the current development of pottery traditions in Peninsular Malaysia. Mambong Pottery also no less impressively with the creation of the distinctive appearance of pottery. Birth and the existence of Mambong pottery is a representation to the local genius of community in the area. Thus when expressing about Mambong pottery tradition, sure there wisdom values contained in the products created as a result of creation of a medium clay.

Local genius of Mambong Pottery

Manipulation of nature sources

Local pottery makers also works in basic science related material. Starting from the basic aspects of selection materials suitable for use as clay to produce pottery that span, the floppy land, easy to process forms, not fragile and powerful features such as unique colors, interesting effects of a mixture of natural materials, which always will be important criteria for making pottery tradition. Justification for the selection of appropriate raw material in the production of pottery is a reflection of policy makers pottery first. Studies on the chemical composition of Mambong clay has been conducted using XRF method (X-Ray Fluorescence) conducted by the Ceramic Technology Group Structural Materials Programme *SIRIM Berhad*. Studies carried out by SIRIM is as a way to support data obtained. Based on full analysis of the mineral content there are nine of mineral materials to create composition Mambong clay. Mineral materials such as Silica, Aluminum oxide, Iron Oxide, Titanium Oxide, Magnesium, Calcium Oxide, Sodium Oxide, Potassium Oxide and Phosphorus oxide was compenan become the main form of Mambong clay. Mineral content of various materials and is divided into several percentage have made the Mambong clay has different characteristics than other clay in Malaysia. Each mineral has a material interest and function either as an alternative to facilitate the process of production work or it works as a media character who embody the aesthetic Mambong pottery.

With a combination of nine mineral materials has been a complete nature of clay that has its own carector. Questions about how the clay is reddish brown in the presence of proof has been answered with red iron oxide minerals in the Mambong clay. Details of fine glossy effects have also been proved by the existence of the titanium oxide contained in the sand Galas river, as well as about the nature of clay is very plastic and also supported with materials classification oxide minerals such as Potassium, phosphorus oxide, Aluminum oxide and silica . Therefore tests of clay raw materials can identify substances contained in the mineral composition of Mambong clay. Experiments is also very important to support the creation of art pottery tradition, the combined application of mineral materials in the Mambong clay is sure to create aesthetic value and decorate item production. This can be clearly proved by the existence of titanium oxide that can impact on the shiny surface of Mambong pottery body that is not available on any of the pottery tradition in Malaysian other. Besides the knowledge related to the composition of clay will also be able to create a formula for the fixed income Mambong clay.

Not only unique forms and techniques, but also realize the aesthetic pottery tradition concept of art in the Malay mindset of the Malays who communicated through the selection and use of raw materials from natural resources that are appropriate to their daily lives. Elements of nature that are associate with the material clay is a mineral material as a material manipulated to create the daily needs of goods and cheap and easily obtained is also very relevant to their way of life. In conclusion the study materials related minerals from the technical angle is also expected to provide a new input value in studying the local genius Mambong potters. Identification of mineral substances contained in the clay is able to answer questions directly related to the clay ability to work and the side effects on the surface of body that resulting the trade mark in a Mambong pottery. This is because the pottery that can be used in the daily life of society is to be a pride to them. Clay production process that also contributes to the systematic production of Mambong pottery very strong and resilient as the goods in accordance with the utility functions. Mambong pottery is not fragile and can withstand temperatures of hot during its use as a cooking container.

Shiny effect on the body does not exist from the pottery production process forms or deliberately but it was born on the use of a mixture of mineral material is available from their natural environment. Aspects of materials selection, quality and have the privilege of its own production of goods for a craft of the Malays had been practiced since long time ago.

Production of raw materials together with the appropriate methods to ensure the proper production of pottery like Mambong pottery ancient times. Importance of the correct use of clay to Mambong pottery production process ensures the following methods to ensure the quality of the real and the same on every Mambong pottery This factor is also in line with the appearance of fine resulting from the nature of raw materials used.

Mambong pottery that has been created also produce a pottery used as goods as the goods and works to describe the brilliance of their representation to use natural materials optimally. Therefore clearly based on research on raw materials can produce local genius values in the Mambong pottery detected in raw materials. With research-based raw materials in the wisdom value of this pottery has been translated through the effect on the surface and the appearance of Mambong pottery and utility function.

Form and Function

The existence of birth and appearance of Mambong pottery is based on the aspects of utility products daily needs in the community of the local community. Essentially appearance of Mambong pottery created by is a creative effort that emphasizes aspects of utility functions or aspects of use, but it also absorbs elements of its environment and also highlighted the local genius. If review of the resulting art forms from Mambong pottery is actually designed with the concept of invention and philosophy. The creation of Mambong pottery based in several features that are important elements in the production process. Appearance of Mambong pottery can appreciate based on the elements that visualise appearance of form who inspired from Mambong pottery will be given a special shape and identity.



Fig. 1 – Mambong pottery (water container)



Fig. 2 – Mambong pottery (pot)

Appearance of Mambong pottery production has a strong relationship with nature. It is presented and consolidated forms of nature to form Mambong pottery. This can be detected on Mambong pottery manufacturer understanding about the nature of the clay materials that change according to circumstances and nature of the material that is manifested in the appearance of Mambong pottery. The form shows the state of nature between the soft clay and the hard nature of ceramic. The form is dynamic and reflects the process of making motion reflects arising from growing out of space.

Understanding the nature of the clay also has an alternative to community to create a working pottery for everyday life that helps perfection of life. Clay is a 'porous' when the low-temperature firing been implement on Mambong pottery items that simply ideal for cooling water. Cooking water stored overnight in the Mambong container will be very cold as ice water in the refrigerator. The elderly are often used to keep water in these container to supply drinking water during work in the garden. This clearly shows the ability and wisdom and creator of the very impressive capabilities. Creative shape Mambong pottery is a creative effort that emphasizes aspects of utility functions but it also absorbs elements of the environment useful for the local community.

Meanwhile the efficiency and local genius in making Mambong pottery is very evident with their knowledge to increase the foreign material in the clay to increase the structural strength of clay body to give the appearance of resistance Mambong pottery. Sand from Galas River also create a visual identity of its own Mambong pottery. Details range of fine shiny gold details can be seen clearly on the surface of the Mambong pottery is a unique identity.

Even the appearance of Mambong pottery established interaction precise nature of the creation of decorative motifs from nature in the Mambong body pottery. Ideas creation of patterns designed from their natural environment such as mountain picture motifs, flowers (flowers burst four, six broken flowers), animals such as birds, fish (fish bone pattern, fish eye) and also natural cosmos such as stars, sun and moon.



Fig. 3 – Mambong pottery (smoke container)



Fig. 4– Mambong pottery (steam pot)

Acceptance of nature elements and enjoy the pride also shown to retain its original color, the color on the ground Mambong pottery. Award appearance of materials received with the original clay color as a beautiful. Mambong community receive pottery with reddish brown color. Mambong potters also features pottery production aspects of appearance, spirit and form of the pottery produced. This can be detected with very clear on the production of pottery which look Mambong shapes reflect the dynamic process resulting from the base construction of footing next to the top. In addition the footing also provides a stable representation to a fixed position and imagine growing movement arising from base to space grow out. Determine the width of the bottom of the fixed position, neck and mouth yapping expands outward. This can be referred to the Mambong pottery consisting of smoke container, round bottom water jar, squat water vessel, vessels with handles, earthenware pot, steam pot. All forms of Mambong pottery relatively stable with a wider aperture sites and stable.

Aspects of life is also very clear in where the pottery source of inspiration form of the human body is placed on the Mambong pottery username human body becomes nickname on the parts of Mambong pottery. Call names such as feet, buttocks, hips, body, neck and mouth or lips have made the appearance of pottery is closer to the potters and the users. This refers to the concept Malay art by Syed Ahmad Jamal stated that the Malay art is composed of a combination of three important elements comprising the form, soul and elements of nature. Mambong Potters also put their feels of pottery production with applied in the values of the design pottery itself with fulfilled the function. This can be proved to the overall appearance of Mambong pottery which features applied products, such as the mouth opening that has a wide range of equipment suitable for cooking. This can be proved by the many pottery forms that does not have a holder but it was replaced with parts that have curves for functions held pottery. There are neck pottery designed with small form suitable for holding functions. There are also part of cover designed for the purpose of protecting the vulnerable from food materials. By the appearance aspect of form, soul and elements of nature is the form of inter-related aspects of the Mambong pottery can be characterized.

The concept of humility still be holding in an appearance of Mambong potters. This can be proved by production of color Mambong pottery which according to the original clay color. Mambong potters also is not excessive in making decorative pottery body at surface decoration. Even Mambong pottery makers also do not put their names on pottery produced in which it explains the nature of humility so that thickened in themselves. Mambong Pottery also processed into a form that recover, have the appropriate balance and size and use of various simple decorative. This clearly can be seen in almost all the Mambong pottery produced by the potters.

Design.

The design of the overall types of Mambong pottery produced is a very interesting design with the principles of aesthetics Malay shows on all forms of Mambong pottery. The principle of fine, useful and means the opposite elements of the pulse in the design Mambong pottery. Fine designed in the form of a balance that is the basis on semetri form a stable, fresh, thought to represent the thinker of the pottery makers. Mambong Pottery form that is designed based on the function design. Mambong pottery design is not only a form but it also functions as a form of visual aesthetics appreciation. For example, smoke container designed as a function of goods. Function as essential goods to help life. smoke container is often used for religious ceremonies and rituals in the local community. smoke container former also functions as a tool to fumigate clothes at first so that it fragrant.

In the former smoke container cover designed hole punched perforated to create a good ventilation system for the combustion process. Smoke container is designed to satisfy safety features to create a cover to prevent from charcoal fall on clothing. Therefore the design of the smoke container also functions as a form of visual aesthetics appreciation by demonstrating features designs that contain of principles aesthetic Malay. Similarly, the invention forms round bottom water jar, squat water vessel, vessels with handles, earthenware pot and steam pot based on the principles of aesthetics Malay. Mambong pottery designs, as a whole is a form of design that is ideal in a society. Design is not gaudy, but still reflect aesthetic values and become a chain of function and sensitivity to the symbol of artistic goods. Existence of the appearance Mambong pottery is a result of invention based on the values function thus produces a craft product that has local genius value of its own.

Surface Decoration

According to the development of Mambong pottery surface decoration it can be divided into two stages. Early stage refers to the patterns made by the gross and earthy as geometric motifs and elements of lines that form lines, points mole, curved lines, the lines of fish bones, shape and pattern cutting of traditional Malay food (*potong wajik*) and bamboo shoot. At this stage surface decorations are the resulting continuity of primitive tradition. The second phase decoration Mambong pottery has focused seriously with the mindset that directed to the creator of intellectual value and created based on natural elements, which includes flora and fauna. All motif is formed at the surface Mambong pottery was seen as a symbol to the beauty of Malay culture which contained nature of life itself.



Fig. 5 – example using bamboo tool as decoration technique

Overall patterns in Mambong pottery as stated this prove that the motive formulated based on the five classification, based on the patterns of nature, animals, natural cosmos, nature and geometric objects. Motives are organized and structured organized. All these elements will have such fine principles, harmony, balance, and contrast, useful and meaningful. Principles are actually interconnected and exist in Mambong pottery. Application principles are very clear on the impact on various surfaces of Mambong pottery. For example, contrary to the principle use of this merger can be seen in geometric and organic elements on the surface of Mambong pottery a significant. There are geometric patterns-motifs such as a circle, line and form hexagonal produced and combined with motifs bamboo shoot, fish eyes and flower. Mambong potters do not use spaces in total pottery surface otherwise leave blank spaces to show the assertion on the patterns created by simple. Moderation and self-regulatory nature of the potters displayed at various surface designs Mambong pottery is actually a fine reflection of sensitivity.



Fig. 6 – example wood carved paddle



Fig. 7 – example flora motif

Various techniques were used to decorate the Mambong pottery. Surface design was impressed into clay using cord-bound and carved paddle, woven matt, shells and combs. Impressed cord print and carved paddles dominate the surface designs of Mambong pottery.

Methods of production

Hands of a very high skill owned by individuals or community members in Mambong village is one indication that disclose ideas and fill in the manifestation of wisdom survival. Objects in their natural environment and manipulated wisely adapted to the production of Mambong pottery of the Malays. The research that has been done show that the process of Mambong pottery production needs very high hands skills and requires special method of process. Pieces of clay can be created to form a working pottery. Hand build with coil, which were then pinched and smoothed and burnished before fired. Simple devices such as wooden stick, wooden potters wheel, bamboo stick, paddles and anvil stones were implement into Mambong pottery making.



Fig. 8 – coil and pinch technique



Fig. 9– sample of production



Fig. 10– Jointing process with coiling



Fig. 11– production of foot ring

Production of pottery not only the extent but only in the form of application functional also involves skills, which require the creation process. Forms of Mambong pottery tradition that created very suitable for use. Skills are so high in the Mambong community to identify materials suitable for the production of Mambong pottery actually accentuate creativity, which is so high that to created Mambong pottery with very fine works of art. Form not only as a form of essential goods, but they also embody a form of which has its own characteristic beauty. Production form not just as a form of static but it can also be used in daily life.

Firing

Mambong pottery production process does not stop the extent of earnings shape only but it also involves aspects of perfection as products used in utilities and the implied as aesthetic objects. Earlier pottery makers have started to absorb ideas how results pottery can be used in their daily lives. Knowledge about the function and proper firing techniques has enabled Mambong pottery needs to be a tool for life. Firing process of Mambong pottery that has some method has been started well in control by the potters. Indirectly traditionally open firing is actually a representation of the value of wisdom is in society at that time to show a very interesting physical aesthetics.

Simulation, which was originally intended to strengthen the body with the creation of pottery, has appreciated the impact uniform reddish color on the Mambong pottery. Effects resulting from the firing process is complete the physical aesthetics of Mambong pottery. Knowledge about the nature of this medium and firing methods made Mambong pottery manufacturer belong in a society that smart. Knowledge related to the firing process also makes potters pottery making tradition as the inventor of the all *versatile*. Wisdom realizing the raw materials from natural materials as a function of instilling values in the aesthetic tradition of pottery has been enough to lift the dignity of pottery traditions. With this fact certainly claim that the rejection of local pottery production of very low quality can be denied.

Conclusion

When discuss about local genius values contained in the Mambong pottery, it not only deals with the extent of refinement and beauty of the beautiful aspects of Mambong pottery externally but it is a relationship with the natural environment experience. Mambong potters successfully producing Mambong pottery with adaptation elements of nature and life forms to the existence of Mambong pottery defining experience and skill and flair that is in them. Adapted from the appreciation of the environment allows the manufacturer Mambong pottery generate the transfer with the beauty of the environment to various forms of pottery in use and appreciate together. This is a physical manifestation of potters .

However, in the context of the knowledge society of reception local genius Mambong pottery tradition in Kelantan it appears very limited. People only look at the external aspects of Mambong pottery as an object of art or functional object that have aesthetic value without knowing about the spiritual aspects of experience and know-how potters before adaptation life and the environment to their production of Mambong pottery. Documentation aesthetic Mambong pottery not only the extent record forms visually, but it also describes the purpose and answering questions about the rationale for the existence of Mambong pottery related to local genius. This study also indirectly can set the date early existence of Mambong pottery according to several indicators. Significant early pottery makers of Mambong pottery, Maimunah Binti Puteh (Tok Bara), has been identified as one who has the skills and wisdom to make pottery at the Galas River in Kuala Krai, Kelantan. Skills and abilities have been inherited by generation until now.

Therefore, the socio-cultural change actually changes also affect the aesthetic tradition of Mambong pottery in which every culture that exists is actually happening with the expanded value added in such a culture. These changes occur as a result of the proliferation of ideas, thoughts and values of the local community and social view of the world, the existence of Mambong pottery not only represent the statement implied the individual but it represents the members of the local community. Mambong pottery is an expression of potters experience in society and culture. Mambong Pottery born in a remote area but with the full value of beauty. Values the beauty of Mambong pottery display is not only the appearance of pottery, but it also encompasses the beauty of the local genius community patterns of thought. From studying Mambong pottery it is possible, indirect way, to ascertain how culture development progressed from simple of thought to more sophisticated technologies, which reflect the local genius of Mambong potters.

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