Chapter - 5

Typological classification and uses of the pottery

Typology is a means to exhibit certain distinctive characters for classification of things and objects. In order to find out the different characters of the pot, it will be more benefiting to define the terms first used in describing the pots.

Hutton (1921:22) states, “One should not only concern with the objects made and used by the people in their shape, but should also see their ways of fashioning and use”. A typological classification along with its uses is made in order to study the fashioning of the pots. The traditional pot is mainly used for cooking, fermentation of rice beer, storage, etc. In comparison with the present, the older people are simple and are content with what they have.

It is not easy to group the various types of pot used accordingly, but by considering them from the point of view of form and shape, it has been possible to make a rough classification in which function and form are seen to be consistent.
Definition of ceramic terms

*Mouth*

The opening upper most part of the pot is called mouth

*Rim*

Rim represents that particular part encircling the mouth of the pot, which connects with the neck. Sometimes the free edge of the rim is described as lip. In this work the upper end of the rim is described with a definite expression of its form by using the term – everted, straight, concave, rolled etc.

*Neck*

It starts immediately below the rim and extends upon the upper end of the shoulder, from where the wall of the pot starts widening.

*Shoulder*

The area between the neck and the upper portion of the body from which incurving of the body wall begins is the shoulder.

*Body*

The portion between the shoulder and base is called body. Again, the body is divided into the upper body and lower body, which are being demarcated by an imaginary line at the highest/widest point on the bulged portion of the body. The upper part will be upper body and below this is the lower body.
Different parts of a pot
Base

The bottom portion of a vessel where changes of angle, of curvature, of body wall starts. For vessels lacking such curvature, the part that contacts with the ground for support is described as base. In fact, the shape, size and outline of the base varies from pot to pot.

Lug

The strip of clay attached to the pot from the rim to the shoulder to serve as handle is called lug.

Foot

The discrete ring-like element added to a vessel’s lower body to provide a surface on which the vessel can rest on a horizontal surface.

Morphology of Oinam and Nungbi (Longpi) Pottery

Pottery is the important and essential socio-cultural elements of Oinam and Nungbi (Longpi) villages. They produce different types of potteries with various shapes and sizes to use for varied purposes. However, the potteries produced by Oinam and Nungbi (Longpi) can be categorized into the following types.
1. Jar types

Jar is characterised by the vessel with its highest being more in proportion than the body diameter, which is again generally greater than the mouth diameter. Its body wall is convex and the bottom is generally rounded, sometimes very narrow rounded or a ring-footed; in this type of vessel, however, the forms and styles are variable. Pots are handmade by anvil and beater technique with either plain, thin or thick net wrapped paddle that produces smooth plain or cord-marked surfaces. Some of the jars have incised or appliqued motives. The jars are divided into four varieties on the basis of the surface decoration and morphology as plain appliques, corded, net impressed and ring-footed wares.

2. Bowl type

Bowls are distinguished by an angular to sub-angular junctions between bottom and sides. It is wider than the depth and has wide mouth. The base has flat bottoms or rounded, with or without a lug. The ring-footed bowl is usually with a little rounded base and typically used for holding food and liquids.
Bowls also can be divided into two varieties as flat bottom and ring footed bowls.

3. **Wide open mouth vessel type**
   As the name implies, it is a wide mouth vessel with round base. Neck is short and the rim is slightly out turned with a plain or beaded lip. The vessel shows concavo-convex profile. This pot is usually used for cooking. The name of the vessel changes with the variations of their sizes and functions.

4. **Smoking vessel**
   It is a funnel shaped vessel in which tobacco is burnt for smoking through a narrow hole.

5. **Jug type**
   It has a straight body with flat base and a lug at one side. It is a vessel and generally used as container for rice beer.
Decoration

The design used for decoration may be taken as a secondary basis for classification of pottery types. This may serve as an important criterion for cross study or comparison. A number of designs have been identified in the collection. Most of them are executed in the form of embellishment consisting of limited patterns. These are done in the pre-firing stage. The characteristics of the respective designs are as follows.

1. Incised design

Incised lines are produced by incising or cutting with pointed or sharp-edged tools; when this design occurs independently, it is found either in the geometric form or parallel lines. Some of incised designs are as follows.

a. Crossed

The designs are the result of inter-section of slanted parallel lines, such that their inter section produce small parallelograms.
b. Parallel

The incised is done in slanted parallel lines or in a horizontal parallel line.

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c. Herring bone pattern

This is also known as fish bone, where a series of open triangles are connected by a straight line through the vertex.

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d. Wavy incised design at the foot

This incised wavy design is produced by cutting with a sharp bamboo split and mostly present at the ring foot.

2. Applique

These are technologically different from the rest of designs. Parallel and vertical rolls of clay are pressed to fix on the body of the pottery as to produce some designs in relief.
a. Round

This design is round, when the shaping of the pot is finished a roll of clay is taken separately and applied on the pot, particularly on the shoulder.

b. Round with incised crossed marks

This is a round shaped applique same as the above, but on this round applique an incised cross mark made by an edged tool. It also present on the shoulder.

c. Ring applique with fingernail impression

The applique line is made by pasting a rolled clay separately on the shoulder of the pot. On which fingernail impressions have been made with the potter's hand. Over the horizontal applique, other clay strips also pasted in the right angle.
d. Oval

This applique oval is made by pasting a small oval shaped clay separately on the shoulder of the pot round the pot leaving some spaces in between.

3. Corded design

This design is produced by the impression created with a thick cord net-wrapped paddle. The cord marks are mostly in the linear pattern.

4. Circular Punctuation mark

It is a circular impression produced by a tube and such marks are generally present on the upper surface of the rim.

Description of pottery

Jar (variety 1) The variety 1 is characterised by a plain surface, made with moulding and beater technique.
1. *Lakho*

This pot belongs to Oinam. It is an oblong shaped jar with short narrow neck, flaring rim, bevelled labial flanged lip, convex wall and base with a plain smooth surface; made by moulding and beater technique. Used for cooking rice and curry. The height is 27 cm, the mouth and body diameter is 12.2 cm and 20 cm respectively. Fig. 1(A).

2. *Onaeme Yandao*

Long, narrow neck oblong Oinam jar, outturned rim with bevelled labial flanged lip, convex wall and base; made with moulding and beater technique; plain scrapped surface; used as brewing rice beer. The height is 28 cm, the mouth and body diameter are 10 cm and 17.8 cm respectively. Fig 1(B).

3. *Yudao*

Short, narrow neck and globular body jar, outturned rim with bevelled labial flanged lip; convex body wall and base made by moulding and beater technique. Used as container of water or country rice beer, belongs to Oinam. With the measurement
of 23.8 cm in height and 10 cm and 17.7 cm of the mouth and body diameter. Fig. 1(C).

4. *Yangdao*

Jar of Oinam, with long narrow neck, outturned rim with bevelled labial flanged lip, from the lower part of the body it tapers down and base is flat. The pot is tied or laced with cane strips from shoulder to base to protect the pot from cracking while brewing rice beer. It measures 30 cm in height and 10.8 cm and 22.8 cm of the mouth and body diameter. Fig. 1 (D).

5. *Tamkha*

Jar with a medium short neck, flaring rim, rounded lip, convex wall and base; made by slab rolling and hand-beater technique; plain back burnished surface; used for brewing rice beer of Nungbi (Longpi). It measures 35.5 cm in height 21.3 cm and 25.5 cm of the mouth and body diameter. Fig. 1 (E).

*Jar (Variety II)* This variety is characterised by applique decoration on the shoulder with smooth surface.
A. Oraejadou

This pot belongs to Oinam, with smooth plain surface, on the shoulder there is embossed decoration with applique in oval shape to show fertility. It is an oblong shaped jar with short narrow neck, flaring rim, bevelled labial flanged lip, convex wall and base; made by moulding and beater technique. It is used for brewing rice beer. The height is 41 cm, 22 cm and 26 cm for the mouth and body diameter. Fig. II (A).

Jar (Variety III)  This variety is characterised by cord mark in linear pattern on the body.

A. Soala

Oinam pot with short narrow neck jar, outturned rim with beveled labial flanged lip, convex wall; made by moulding and beater technique; decorated with cord mark on the body in linear pattern, used for boiling water. It measures 42 cm in height, 22 cm and 27 cm in mouth and body diameter Fig. III (A).
Jar (Variety IV) This variety IV is decorated with cord mark in linear pattern on the body and round applique on the shoulder.

A. Doasane

Long, narrow necked oblong jar, outturned rim with bevelled labial flanged lip, convex wall and base; made with moulding and beater technique; surface is scrapped before decorating with cord mark in linear pattern, with round applique on the shoulder. These are symbolical of the fertility concept. Used for fetching water. It measures 34.5 cm in height, 10.8 cm and 23 cm of the mouth and body diameter. The bigger type of this pot is locally called Duphoungdo with same design and shape, used for two-purpose (i.e) fetching water or storing water. The pots belong to Oinam. Fig. IV (A).

Jar (Variety V) This is characterised by net impression and incised design.

A. Turkha

Nungbi (Longpi) jar with out curved neck, flaring rim, rounded
lip and flat base. The neck has an incised design, producing a slanted parallel lines. The shoulder and the body have net impressions producing rough surface; made by slab rolling and hand beater technique; used for putting fermented rice beer, mostly used during festival for keeping large amount of rice beer and they fetch from this pot, with a gourd poured in their own container or vessel and drink. The height is 52 cm with 24 cm and 42.6 cm for the mouth and body diameter. Fig. V (A).

**Jar Variety (VI)** This is characterised by ring footed type, either of smooth surface, incised applique and corded design.

**a. Chaham**

A ringfooted pot of Nungbi (Longpi) with medium high neck, rounded lip, convex wall, made by slab rolling and hand beater technique; plain black burnished surface; used for storing water. It measures 30.6 cm in height, mouth and body diameter is 20 cm and 26.6 cm respectively. Fig. VI (A).
b. Rakha

A ring footed pot of Nungbi (Longpi) with medium high neck, rounded lip, convex wall, made by slab rolling and hand-beater technique; decorated with incised marks producing herring bone on the shoulder, the body has a corded design with net impression. It measures 20 cm in height, 15 cm and 18 cm of mouth and body diameter; used as rice beer jug. Fig. VI (B).

c. Daone

A ring footed pot of Oinam, with short narrow neck jar, slightly flattened body outturned rim with beveled labial flanged lip, convex wall; made by moulding and beater technique; decorated with cord mark on the body in linear pattern and applique on the shoulder; used as wine jug. It measures 18. 6 cm in height, 10 cm and 17.8 cm of mouth and body diameter. The sizes varies according to the potters desires. There is an incised wavy design at the ring foot. Fig VI (C).
Bowl Type

Bowls are characterised into two varieties.

1. **Bowl variety I** This types of bowls are characterised with flat base.

   **A. Tangkhu**

   This bowl belongs to Nungbi (Longpi). It is a flat base bowl with a lug; sides are concave and projected upward in a featureless rim. It is burnished black and decorated on the lug with incised crossed design. It measures 10.2 cm in height, mouth and body 16 cm and 13 cm respectively. Fig. 2 (A).

2. **Bowl variety II** It is characterised with ring footed either with or without lug.

   **B. Ngaekoune**

   It is a ring-footed bowl of Oinam, made by hand and beater technique. It has flat lip convex wall, the body is half spherical in shape with a side lug. The height is 8 cm with a
depth of 7 cm; the mouth diameter is 14.5 cm, used for grinding chutney and as curry bowl. Fig. 2 (B).

C. Ngaekou

A ring-footed bowl of Oinam with flat lip, convex wall, the body is half-spherical in shape. The size and style varies according to the potters and users' desire. Use as rice bowl. The diameter at mouth is 18.5 cm with a height 10 cm. Fig 2 (C). and

Wide open mouth vessel type

Variety 1 These varieties are characterised with smooth plain surface.

A. Fouham

Globular Nungbi (Longpi) pot with widely open mouth, flaring rim, rounded lip, convex wall and base, made by hand and beater technique; plain black surface; used for cooking rice. It measures 20.5 cm in height, the mouth and body diameter 24.5 cm and 23.5 cm respectively. Fig 3(A).
B. *Koklai*

Wide opened Nungbi (Longpi) pot, flaring rim, rounded lip, convex wall and base; made by hand and beater technique; plain burnished black surface; used for cooking curry. It measures 14 cm in height, 24 cm and 23.6 cm of the mouth and body diameter respectively. Fig 3 (B).

C. *Hamvam*

It is round Nungbi (Longpi) pot with globular body, widely open mouth, flaring rim, rounded lip, convex wall and base; used for cooking curry. The surface is smooth; made by hand and beater technique. It measures 19 cm in height, mouth and body diameter is 18 cm and 17cm respectively as the name implies it is a round pot.

D. *Shaksaham*

It is a small Nungbi (Longpi) pot. The name is given due to the technique of making with the help of elbow, instead of *hamtatan*. It is a miniature pot with a wide more than height, flaring rim, rounded lip, convex base, use for cooking less
quantity of curry. The surface is smooth without any decoration. It measures 10.2 cm in height, 13.3 cm and 13.2 cm of the mouth and body diameter respectively. Fig 3(D).

E. Fakham
Globular Nungbi (Longpi) pot with widely open mouth, flaring rim, rounded lip, convex wall, made by slab rolling and hand beater technique, plain black burnishing surface. It is a simple pot with no decoration, used for cooking pigs’ food. Nungbi (Longpi) villager mostly rear pig for seed sowing festival (Luiraphanit). In this celebration fakham is found in every household. The measurement is 32 cm in height, mouth and body diameter is 33cm and 35 cm respectively. Fig 3 (E).

Wide open mouth vessel variety II
This type is characterised with wide mouth and oval shape base, the wall is concave.

F. Sailani
Wide open mouth Oinam pot, outturned rim with bevelled
labial flanged lip, the side is concave and base is oval in shape; made by moulding and beater technique with smooth surface; used for cooking rice and curry. It measures 19.5 cm in height, the mouth and body diameter is 7 cm and 16 cm respectively. Fig 3 (F).

Wide open mouth vessel variety III
These are characterised with wide mouth, base is flat, the wide is bigger than the height.

G. Langshotham
A pot with widely open mouth; the length is shorter than the breadth; with flaring rim, rounded lip, convex base; plain black burnishing surface, used for cooking curry by the Nungbi (Longpi). Height is 11 cm, mouth and body diameter is 27.3 cm and 26.6 cm respectively. Fig 3 (G).

Wide open mouth vessel variety IV
This are characterised by having a lug.
H. Kashorham

Widely open mouth Nungbi (Longpi) pot, having lug at both sides. The lug is decorated with incised design of slanted and vertical parallel lines and herring bone pattern. It has flaring rim, rounded lip, the upper surface is decorated with circular punctuation representing plate locally known as *khu* and incised marks. The incised marks above the circle are crossed producing small parallelograms to represent the Tangkhul shawl design and below the circle is in slanted parallel lines symbolising the buffalo horn. It is convex wall and base. On the shoulder is decorated with round shaped applique with incised cross marks, this symbolises the naval. The pot is made by slab-rolling and hand beater technique. This pot is considered as "Achuk Kapei", this term cannot be literally interpreted in one or two words. However, here it refers to or is taken as being complete, whole, perfect, etc. in ritualistic sense. This pot is used for cooking meat, generally of big pieces. This pot is not for daily use. It is used only during festivals and possessed by the rich family (*Hi Khalak Naowui Hamna*). It measures 34 cm in height, 45.3 cm and 51 cm for mouth and body diameter respectively. Fig 3 (H).
Smoking vessel

*Kaporham-ku*

It is a smoking pipe of Nungbi (Longpi) which is ill baked, the top container part makes an obtuse angle with the basal hole. The top container is in the shape of funnel; neck constricted and the body is round with concave wall. It tapers toward the base and the basal hole is inserted with smoking pipe. The mouth and body diameter is 8 cm and 4.2 cm respectively, with its height 10.2 cm. Fig 4(A).

*Kateoham*

Another smoking pipe of Nungbi (Longpi), with an elongated funnel shape. It has a hole from mouth to the bottom, which is L shape, used for smoking tobacco. It measures 5 cm in height, mouth and base diameter is 5 cm and 9 cm respectively. Fig 4 (B).

Jug

*Korram shatsorva*

It is a Nungbi (Longpi) jug with flat base, without a neck and shoulder. The body wall is straight with smooth surface, the lug
joins from the mouth to the base, decorated with crossed line in the shape of small parallelograms by incising technique, use for drinking rice beer by inserting a pipe. It measures 24 cm. in height, the body and mouth diameter is 6.4 cm and 4 cm respectively. Fig. 5.

Pottery is an important asset of human civilization whether earthen pot, utensil, or whatever the case may be, without cooking food, no human culture and civilization can progress and develop. The art of pottery has been developed in Nungbi (Longpi) and Oinam since remote past, although no definite date can be ascertained regarding the origin of it. However, it is beyond doubt and argument that Nungbi (Longpi) and Oinam pottery is one of the oldest industries of the people, which are still continuing. The method of making pottery is very simple and primitive. No improvement of technology had been developed so far. They do not use wheel and other advance tools for making pots.

In Nungbi (Longpi) some traditional pots are no longer available today, they are Tanglebell and Longham. Tanglebell was the biggest
pot available in traditional times and used to contain country rice beer, during festivals people stand and fetch the rice beer with another pot, pour it in their own wine pot and drink to the brim. *Longham* is also no longer available, in the past there was a youth dormitory (*Longshim*) where all the unmarried men and women gathered, sang song, dance, learnt all the craft, etc. the *longshim* dwellers performed different activities during festivals including religious ceremonies and many other social activities. To keep every program in proper order, the *longshim* acts as a charitable institution to help the orphans, the weak, the widows, the poor and the disable. Sharing with each other, the principle of “each for all”, was followed in daily activities. This happened to be one of the criteria for promotion to the higher grade of inmates of the *longshim* and all the handicrafts are learnt from this place. They spent a night in the dormitory; there were separate dormitory for males and females. In this dormitory they prepared country rice beer for consumption. Now, there is no more *longshim* and therefore, there is no more making of *longham*. 
The modern Nungbi (Longpi) potters no longer make this specific pot, as it is no longer in demand with the coming in of western education and Christianity. They no longer offer rice beer. Of course there are few households who still consume rice beer, but it is not open as the traditional days. Longham also is no more in demands as there is no more youth dormitory, instead of learning from the youth dormitory, the young children now go to school, and leave the village for higher studies after high school.

Old customs and traditions were rapidly forsaken or modified and old beliefs which for ages had been dropped partly because they met with contempt and ridicule from missionaries, and partly because the young men soon learned that they were not worthy of credence. Transport and communication method was developed / development of commerce, hostility cease now they are free to go anywhere / any part in safety. The contact with the advanced people also led to the introduction of modern mill made goods into the region, replacing hand-made goods, such as earthen pots, wooden plates, etc. today, these indigenous products have almost been abandoned due to the availability of mill-made products in the market at a cheaper rate than they could produce.
With the realization of their indigenous culture and its importance, today the potters have a great awakening in this field and Nungbi (Longpi) started new style and designs of pot to draw more customers, they make vase, container, decorative vessel, pressure cooker, cup, tray, ashtrays, filters, frying pans, etc. they are making every new object seen in magazines or the market products. And even created new designs. According to potter’s report, the new style is more in demand. Some of the old traditional pots are not available and no longer made, as people do not demand for it. In spite of this, there are many new styles and designs each day, each year, showing their creativity. The Oinam potters too started making pots with lug for easier in handling, they also start making decorative things like flower vases, and other decorated pot. The technique of making earthen vessels remains unchanged till today in these two villages. The people have not sought to improve their technology and neither the governmental agency have been successful to have a change in pottery making of this two mentioned villages.
Fig 1 (A) Lakho (\(\frac{1}{3}\) of the original size)

Fig 1 (B) Oinam Yandao (\(\frac{1}{3}\) of the original size)
Fig 1 (C) Yudao (1/3 of the original size)

Fig 1 (D) Yangdao (1/3 of the original size)
Fig 1 (E) Tamkha (1/3 of the original size)
Fig II (A) Oræjadou (1/3 of the original size)
Fig III (A) Soala (1/3 of the original size)
Fig IV (A) Doasane (1/3 of the original size)
Fig V (A) Turkha (1/3 of the original size)
Fig V (A) Chaham (1/3 of the original size)
Fig V (B) Rakha (1/3 of the original size)

Fig V (C) Daone (1/3 of the original size)
Fig 2 (A) Tangkhu ($\frac{1}{2}$ of the original size)

Fig 2 (B) Ngaekoune ($\frac{1}{2}$ of the original size)

Fig 2 (C) Ngaekhou ($\frac{1}{2}$ of the original size)
Fig 3 (A) Fouham (1/3 of the original size)

Fig 3 (B) Koklai (1/3 of the original size)
Fig 3 (C) Hamvam (1/3 of the original size)

Fig 3 (D) Shaksaham (1/3 of the original size)
Fig 3 (E) Fakham (\(1/3\) of the original size)

Fig 3 (F) Sailani (\(1/3\) of the original size)
Fig 3 (G) Langshotham (1/3 of the original size)

Fig 3 (H) Kashorham (1/3 of the original size)
Fig 4 (A) Kaporham - Ku (Original size)

Fig 4 (B) Kateoham (Original size)
Fig 5 Korram Shatsorva (½ of the original size)