

EVE POTTERY IN PHILOSOPHICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the PhD in Art Education and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

The problem of the study was that, the rich philosophical and cultural components of pottery have not been understood and appreciated due to the fact that the concepts and values of Eve pottery have not seen adequate documentation whereby information about the numerous vessels that are created can be easily accessed. The focus was on the practices of indigenous pottery in their philosophical and cultural milieus in order to chart a new course for unveiling and documenting pottery to the benefit of Eves in particular and Ghanaians in general. The objectives of the study are to identify and discuss indigenous Eve pottery tools, materials, methods and uses in selected centres in the Volta Region to find out the philosophical implications of Eve pottery and to the extent to which Eve pottery express Eve culture. The qualitative research methodology was used in the study. These included descriptive and explanatory. The main data collecting tools were observation and interview. Data from both primary and secondary sources were obtained from observations and interviews conducted on the field. Inclusive were those from books, magazines and the internet. The research found that, Eve pottery is predominantly traditional and it is still in the hands of women who use available and convenient local tools and materials to make pots, bowls and local stoves. Taboos still control some aspect of pottery such as clay digging. Round/circular shapes are still made because potters maintain that they are balanced when used in fetching water and heat is evenly distributed when placed on the local stove for cooking. Philosophically, pottery containers are regarded as vessels that hold life sustaining substances and therefore this idea is translated into the making of pottery. Further, pottery is considered beautiful when red clay slip is smeared on the surface and rendered smooth and shiny. Again, proverbs are used to portray values in relation to pottery making. Finally the transmission of pottery skills are from mother to child through observation and imitation. It is

suggested that, Eve potters will adopt less backbreaking forming methods to reduce the incidence of waist pains. The youth should be encouraged to take up the pottery industry from their aging mothers. For the sake of continuity, pottery should be introduced in schools where there is abundance of clay to equip children, the youth with skills necessary for making pots in their respective communities.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Indigenous pottery is made by forming plastic clay into objects of required shapes and firing them to appreciable temperatures in the open or in pits to induce reactions that lead to permanent changes, including increase in strength, hardening and setting their shape (Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 2007).

Pottery has a long tradition among the Eves of the Volta Region in Ghana. Apart from blacksmithing, pottery is among the oldest and most conservative arts practised by the Eves. Although pottery methods are still traditional, patronage of the products is still very high especially among the Eves. In the past, almost every housewife made pots for the sake of housekeeping. However, today, most people find it more convenient to buy them from certain villages that still exhibit high standard craftsmanship and have access to good and abundant clay deposits. Besides, they are also highly valued for their aesthetic appeal and customary practices. A report on ceramics in Ghana, published by, Ghana Investment Promotion Centre reveals that the introduction of the potter's wheel by Michael Cardew and Von Stocker, European ceramists, in 1942 to potters in the Volta and Greater Accra Regions revolutionized pottery production to some extent. Nevertheless, most pottery materials and methods still remain traditional and pots are hand-made in small quantities for the local market in Eve pottery communities (Priddy, 1974).

The most striking fact of pot making is the absolute simplicity of raw materials and tools involved (Barley, 1994). A review through a Public - Private Partnership Programme between Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (2006) indicates that, clay, the major raw material is still abundant in notable Eve communities making it possible for the

production of pots. Tools could be anything suitable found in the environment, for instance, pieces of metal for scrapping; pieces of wood and corn cobs for making designs; smooth stones, rugs and discarded stainless steel spoons for smoothing and burnishing. The methods used are very simple but demand serious commitment and hard work involving the whole human body in a way that contrasts modern methods. For a pot to reach its functional stage, it involves processes such as prospecting and washing clay, forming, trimming, decorating and firing. The two most extensively used methods are pinching and coiling. Indigenous pottery as a domestic art has for many years been the exclusive preserve of women, especially the elderly (Rattray, 1927). LaDuke (1991) says while some women opt for pottery as a complete occupation, others take it as extensions of domestic activity where money accrued from the proceeds go into the provision of household necessities.

Pots are made for several purposes, yet as a rule, their basic shape is predominantly round bottomed, with oval, spherical or half-spherical representing the body. These forms are preferred because of their considerable increased strength and the spread of heat evenly when used for cooking on the swish stoves (local stoves made of clay which use charcoal or firewood as fuel). Additionally, the quality to stand either in depressions in the ground or on rings and easy balancing on the head when used as water pot cannot be ruled out. Symbolically, the round shape of pots is associated with qualities traditionally considered as feminine. Perhaps that is the reason why women are most associated with pot making in many cultures across the world.

Regardless of who makes them, pots are considered vessels which are used to refer to bodily cavities such as heads, wombs, bellies, rectums (Barley, 1994). Undoubtedly, the Eves have a philosophy shrouded in the making and use of pots. In effect, a pot is like a womb of a mother who gives birth to a child. It follows therefore that, the womb is a receptacle which

holds life or where life flows out. Pots are used as vessels for storing water, food, palm wine, concoctions, herbs and medicines. These uses point to the fact that pots are containers which hold life-sustaining substances and through which they flow. The sustenance of a life force in this capacity is contained in the whole art of pottery. Concisely, the basic Eve philosophy of pottery is based on the idea of Amenuke et al. (1991) that, pots function as life-saving containers, thus, pottery and its activities sustain life.

Eve pots are also intimately connected philosophically with the decorative designs and activities of pottery. Decoration of pottery wares using wavy or undulating lines for example, symbolizes continuous flow of a stream. That element of decoration which illustrates the continuity in the flow of a stream signifies a symbol that upholds life. In this regard, life sustaining substances such as fluids are stored purposely in pots decorated to reflect the indigenous Eve concept of life. Specifically, to the Eves, life and pot making are inseparable. So far as the role of pots is concerned, no meaningful life can go on without the use of pots.

The industry has survived perhaps for the fact that potters work hard to preserve ancient customs and traditions handed down to them by their ancestors. Among them are a respect for and an intimate relationship with tradition, strong personal value systems, and reverence for pottery as part of daily life. For instance, traditions in relation to digging clay, moulding pots and firing using age-old practices rather than modern methods are believed to ensure some consistency in production. The strict adherence to taboos also led to strategies to impose stringent boundaries and checks to guard against the occupation and processes of pot making (Rattray, 1927). As a life rewarding activity, indigenous pottery provides the livelihood of a people in order to survive. In practice, Eve pottery is made to reflect the expression of life. The philosophy via knowledge and experiences potters gathered over the years from their ancestors makes it feasible for pottery to be expressed within the context of life.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The knowledge and techniques of creating pottery among the Eves in Ghana spans a vast period and survived hitherto. With thousands of years devoted to pottery making, Eve philosophies are still built into each pot produced in such a way to determine the composition, form, decoration and use. Regardless of where pottery evolved or how long it has survived, there is no doubt that it affects the promotion of the total way of life of the Eves. The life-styles, beliefs, ceremonies, myths and rituals associated with pottery might have played a major role in the adaptation to specific materials, forms and functions of pottery products.

The great quality of clay is that it develops plasticity when mixed with water and so can be worked into diverse shapes and forms and put to diverse uses (Anquandah, 2006). Clay presents a continual challenge to the potter because of the numerous ways it can be manipulated, its unpredictability, and the very personal worth of the final product. Eve pots are made to serve basic needs of life, that is, to hold life sustaining substances such as water, soup, etc. Apart from these, pots are also used to protect life in shrines and to perform rituals for the dead.

The predominant shape of pots produced by the Eves is round or circular. The circle symbolizes purity and it denotes sacred things that relate to God. The circular pot is usually associated with God who is the giver of life. Symbolically, water is a factor that upholds life that is why a circular pot is used to store it (Amenuke, et al. 1991).

In correlation, if water is said to bring about life and the pot is also connected to God who is the giver of life, then all substances which promote life can be stored in pots for the same purpose. This idea and many more including taboos, still control the type of pottery forms produced by the Eves. Concepts such as these, in spite of everything, are deep-rooted in the lives of the Eves.

As part of everyday life, pottery products are used widely for domestic, commercial and medicinal purposes. It is rather unfortunate to find that most people who patronize pots are predominantly Ghanaians who in one way or the other do not have in-depth knowledge about the ideas closely associated with their making and usage. It is vital to let other ethnic groups, particularly those within Ghana, to have first hand information about Eve pottery in general for the sake of cultural diversity and aesthetic appreciation.

The philosophical and cultural components of pottery have not been understood and appreciated due to the fact that the concepts and values of Eve pottery have not seen adequate documentation whereby information about the numerous vessels can be easily accessed. It is rather interesting to note that, these ideas have existed for several years and elders or experts who are well versed in the philosophy of Eve pottery are dying and such valuable information is gradually fading out. The usual complaints the older potters hear from the youth are that pottery is a dirty job, it involves too much hard work yet the profit margin is low. Regrettably, the youth have little or no interest in appreciating and sustaining what their ancestors left as an inheritance for them and their generations to come. The reality is that they are not ready to learn from their aging parents in order to preserve the pottery industry. The question is who takes over the pottery industry to sustain continuity when the old folks are gone?

If these trends of events continue, Eve pottery will be a thing of the past. As it stands now, it is obvious that not all Eves are well informed about pottery in the context of philosophy and culture. If the information on pottery is made available, people will no more be limited to the existing ideas of basic domestic usage only, but will also become aware of the perfect and pure forms regarding the understanding of the conceptual indigenous knowledge. Accordingly, the perception of tangible pottery vis-à-vis their intrinsic values will yield a genuine insight into the indigenous activities regarding Eve pottery.

It is crucial therefore to develop and facilitate ways through which knowledge about Eve pottery can be understood. It is a way of filling the gap between the existing pottery concepts and how they can be understood and used to enhance the lives of the Eves. A further step is to create awareness among the youth particularly about the implications of losing such a viable industry while simultaneously stirring them up to take up responsive roles in pottery activities that will help salvage the industry from total collapse.

From the foregoing, this research focuses on the tools, materials, methods and uses of indigenous pottery in their philosophical and cultural milieus, so as to unveil and document them to the benefit of Eves in particular and Ghanaians in general.

1.2 Objectives

- i. To identify and discuss indigenous Eve pottery tools, materials, methods and uses in selected centres in the Volta Region.
- ii. To find out the philosophical implications of Eve pottery.
- iii. To find out the extent to which Eve pottery expresses Eve culture.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. Are there specific Eve pottery tools, materials, methods and uses which are peculiar to the selected centres?
- ii. What philosophical ideas can be identified with Eve pottery?
- iii. In what ways does Eve pottery express Eve culture?

1.4 Delimitation

This research limits itself to six out of eighteen Districts in the Volta Region of Ghana

where indigenous pottery is a predominant occupation. These include, North Dayi, Adaklu Anyigbe, Akatsi, Ketu North, South Tongu and North Tongu. Twelve pottery centres were chosen from the six Districts selected. This selection catered for the Northern, Central and Southern belts of the Region. The primary criterion for inclusion is based on the philosophical and cultural dimensions of the various centres. Selection was diversified enough to cater for the various vegetation zones found within the Region.

1.5 Limitations

The impracticality of covering such a wide geographical area accounts for the selection of only six Districts in the Volta Region. Again, not every District has good clay deposits, therefore the only centres where clay is abundant and the industry has thrived for so many years were selected.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Burnishing: The rubbing of smooth stones on pot surfaces to render them smooth and shiny.

Coiling: A hand method of forming pottery with coils or long ropes of clay.

Firing: The process by which pottery wares are hardened or rendered more permanent by fire.

Pinching: The hollowing and direct pulling of a ball of clay to form a pottery ware.

Potter's wheel: A device with a metal head used in forming or shaping pottery.

Prospecting clay: Digging clay in the raw state.

Swish stove: A three-legged local stove made of clay.

Washing clay: Soaking, pounding, sieving and mixing clay to even consistency.

Iyamopo: The goddess of the Yoruba who is both pot and potter, the patroness of all women's occupations, including a woman's erotic vocation, of conception and child birth.

1.7 Assumptions

Indigenous pottery making and its practices within the Eve ethnic group have for many years been their preserve. It is assumed that:

- i. Pottery among the Eves is identifiable and can be described.
- ii. Eves were willing to provide needed information to the researcher.
- iii. There are available philosophical and cultural practices that are connected to Eve pottery.
- iv. Many ethnic groups in Ghana have been exposed to the philosophical and cultural practices of Eve pottery so as to expose them to other ethnic groups.

1.8 Importance of the Study

- i. The study generates knowledge about the philosophy and culture of the Eve society.
- ii. Findings about indigenous pottery is an aid to artists to identify defects in the technologies used and modify them to regenerate the values of Eve societies.
- iii. The research is a useful reference material for comparative study and appreciation in institutions of learning for researchers such as anthropologists, historians, art educators and art students across all the Regions in Ghana.
- iv. The research is also beneficial to the tourism industry and the natives of Eves especially women in the area of job creation.

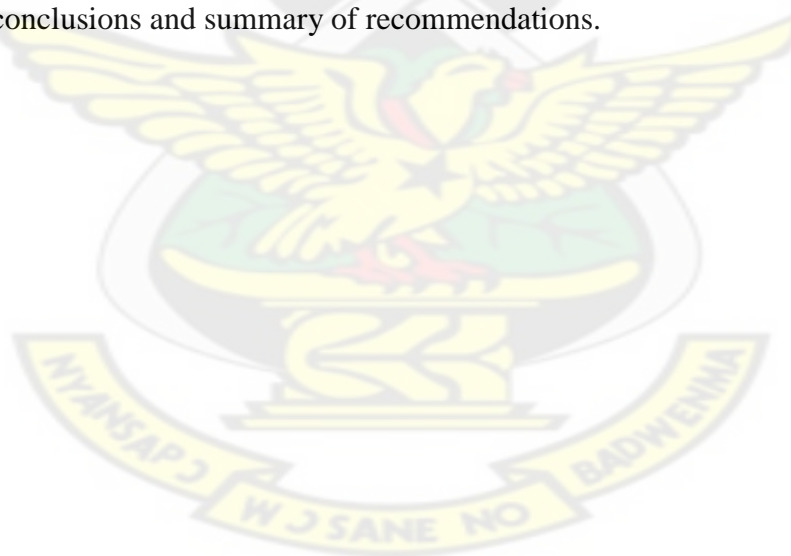
1.9 Organization of the Rest of the Text

The entire dissertation is made up of five chapters. Chapter Two reviews literature related to the topic. It discusses the history of the Eves to establish their true location and worldview of indigenous pottery. A variety of arts engaged in by women in Africa was reviewed to find out whether pottery in Africa is a preserve of women. The concepts in

indigenous pottery processes, methods and customs associated with pottery were selected from a number of traditions. The philosophical and cultural concepts of indigenous pottery which form the hub of the research were also reviewed. Finally, traditional religion with emphasis on vodun, *yeve* and mami wata worship was examined.

Chapter Three discusses the research design based on qualitative research. These included mainly observation and interview techniques. The observation method was used by the researcher to have a direct interaction with the potters while the interview questions were based on relevant data to be gathered at the various centres. The rest included validation of instruments, primary and secondary data, data collecting procedures and data analysis plan.

Chapter Four describes and discusses findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations while Chapter Five ends with summary of study, summary of findings, summary of conclusions and summary of recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

This chapter discusses a selected literature which is related to the research. The review examined practices of other cultures to elicit information that will be necessary for Ewe pottery. This chapter therefore covers literature on:

2.1 The History of the Ewes

2.2 The Art of Women in Africa

2.3 Indigenous Pottery Processes

2.4 Philosophical Concepts of Indigenous Pottery

2.5 Cultural Concepts and Practices in Indigenous Pottery

2.1 The History of the Ewes

This sub-topic is intended to establish the extent of the territory inhabited wholly by the Ewes of Ghana. It is also to identify the true native Ewes, their origin, language and their distinctive ethnic groupings within the Volta Region of Ghana. The name 'Ewe' which is an acculturated form of 'Eve' will be used interchangeably throughout the write-up.

The Ewes in general inhabit south-eastern Ghana and southern parts of the Republics of Togo and Benin. In the present day Ghana, the Volta forms the western boundary of the Eweland. The same Volta separates the Ewe from the Ga, Ga-Adangbe and the Akan. The Ewe territory is bounded in the north by Akposo, Kebu, Boasu and Buem (Gadzekpo, 1997).

In a contrasting account, the Ewes were believed to have their origin in the horn of East Africa. Owing to the conquest of their empire by barbaric tribes from North Africa, they migrated southwards apparently along the River Nile and temporarily settle in Ile Ife, in present day Nigeria (Weduahlor, 2006). Concurrently, Gadzekpo (1997) recounts that, the

Ewes have a tradition of eastern origins. This tradition pointed first at Kwara and then Ile Ife in Eastern Nigeria as their original home. The proto-Ewe (the ancestors of the Ewe) later migrated to Ketu, a Yoruba town in the modern Republic of Benin due to Yoruba civil wars. Weduahlor also agreed on inter tribal wars between the Ewes and the Yorubas as being the reason for leaving the Yoruba land. Contrary to this, Kuada and Chachah (1999) claim that when the Yoruba Empire began to expand, there was a serious shortage of land. This forced the Ewes to migrate, around 16th Century, in search of a new home.

These two accounts seemed to be incoherent, yet it could be a combination of both accounts that led to the migration of the Ewes towards the east precisely the kingdom of Dahomey, now Republic of Benin.

The next important stop that the ancestors of the Ewes made was at Notsie (Nuatja). The kingdom of Notsie was bounded on the south-east by Little Feddah Kingdom and on the north-east by the Kingdom of Dahomey. The Mono River in the east and the Volta River on the west separated the Ewes from other kindreds. A strong wall was built round the kingdom. There were strong soldiers who guarded the kingdom (Amenumey, 2008).

The Kings ruled their subjects wisely but during the reign of King Agorkorli, he instituted many stringent laws and rules. Agorkorli was so wicked that, he once requested that ropes should be made out of clay and human blood should be used to mash the clay, to enable his servants fetch water with containers from the well with the clay rope attached. In order to obtain the human blood, Adza's elders or aides put sharp objects of different kinds in the clay. The few strong men who mashed the clay were badly wounded and their blood oozed into the clay bringing about a revolt (Weduahlor, 2006). To free them from Agorkorli's tyranny, the people decided to flee from the town, which they did secretly in the night, and dispersed to populate the territory between the southern portion of River Mono in the east and the river Volta in the west (Amenumey).

Verdon (1983) asserts that because of the origin and language the Ewes, ethnographers have tended to depict them as one homogeneous socio-cultural system. He points out that Spieth in 1906, for instance, treated Eweland as one large “tribal area” as indicated in **Fig. 2.1**. However, Amenumey maintains that during the migration, the Ewe people split into three broad groups. One group went to settle at the northern part of the new home. This territory is represented today by the people of Hohoe, Matse, Peki, Kpando, Awudome, Alavanyo, Palime, Agu, Ve, Kpedze and Wodze. The second group went by a southern route and settled in the coastal region of the new homeland. It founded such settlements as Tsevie, Be, Togo, Abobo, Wheta, Anlo, Klikor, Ave, Fenyi, Afife, Tsiamé, Agave, Tavia, Tanyigbe, Game, while the third group also came from west of the Volta, to settle near and amidst the Tongu such as Torgorme, Vume, Battor, Mafi and Mepe.

In terms of settlements, Amenumey establishes that, the land had not been altogether without human habitation. There is evidence in the form of implements and utensils used by inhabitants, such as broken pottery and tools known as *sofia* and *sokpe* i.e. "stones of the gods." In addition, the traditions of the various Ewe groups recall that on their arrival, they met some people already inhabiting the territory. A section, north-western Ewe, in the north of the Volta Region, admits that their ancestors met the Akposso, a Guan people already living there. It is not far from establishing that the Ewes might have studied and practised how to make pots from the remains they met on their arrival as revealed by Amenumey and also en route their present home some pottery skills from East Africa, Kwara and Ile Ife in Eastern Nigeria as well as Notsie in Benin.

The Ewes adopted a policy of mutual co-existence with the Guan ethnic groups who had come before them. The latter continued to live independently retaining their own languages and culture. But over-time many of them have learnt Ewe as a second language. They have

also adopted some Ewe cultural practices (Kuada and Chachah, 1999). The Ewes did not enter as one united group, but as dispersed units. Territorial divisions or chiefdoms *dukowo* were created. Some of these chiefdoms that evolved in the area of present-day Ghana were Anlo, Tongu and inland and farther from the river Volta (Amenumey).

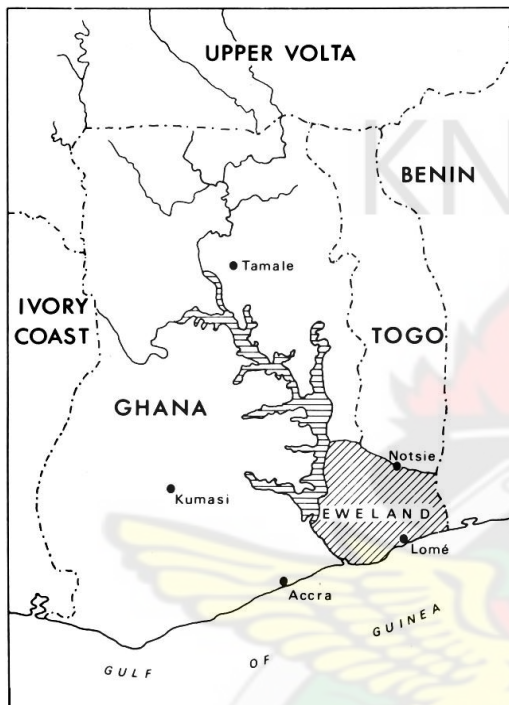


Figure 2.1: Map of Eweland
Source: Verdon (1983)

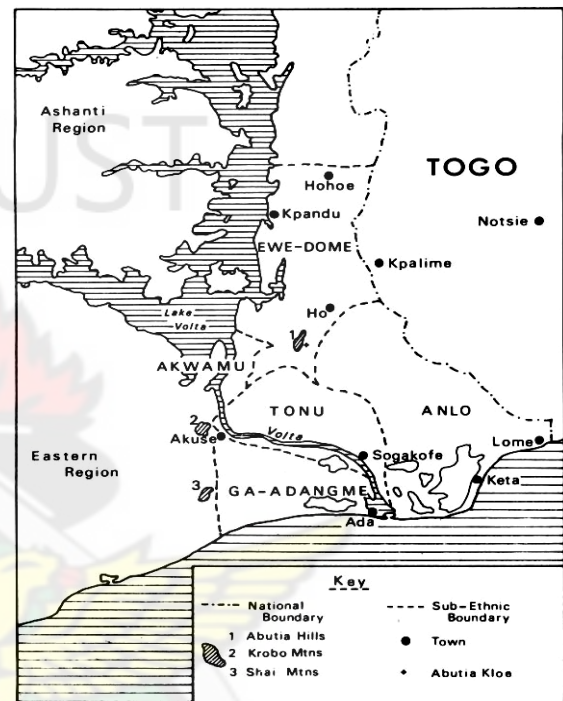


Figure 2.2: Sub-ethnic Divisions of Eweland
Source: Verdon (1983)

Verdon, who worked in seven divisions throughout Ghanaian and Togolese Eweland, indicates that the three ecological and geographical regions of Eweland, **Fig. 2.2**, concealed deep dissimilarities in social and cultural organization. These regions include:

1. The *coastal* region (and its people) known as *Anlo* occupy the coast, the lagoons and the coastal savannah some forty miles inland, share borders with Abutia and Agotime. The name 'Anlo', however, refers both to the largest and most important Division of the coastal region (henceforth designated as 'Anlo proper'), and to all the Divisions occupying this coastal zone.

2. The *riverine* region (and its people) known as *Tonu* are found along the shores of the River Volta up to Akuse, where the River bends, and a few miles north of the River Volta to the borders of the Abutia, Adaklu and Avenor Divisions.
3. The *inland* region (and its people), known as *Ewedome* is located north of both Anlo and Tonu, in the transitional area of savannah and woodland, and also in the mountain ridges which run parallel from the Akwamu area, near the Volta, to the north-east of Togo. Alternatively, Ewedome, northern Ewe or inland Ewe can be used to designate the Ewe Divisions which are neither of Anlo nor of Tonu extraction.

Weduahlor asserts that the people of Notsie kingdom spoke Adza and Ewe language. Capo (1991), affirms Ewe language (*Evegbe*) is a Kwa language spoken in Ghana, Togo and Benin by approximately five million people. Ewe is part of a cluster of related languages commonly called *Gbe*, stretching from eastern Ghana to western Nigeria. Other *Gbe* languages include Fon and Aja. Like other *Gbe* languages, Ewe is a tonal language.

The *Gbe* languages, pronounced (*gbe*) form a cluster of about twenty related languages stretching across the area between eastern Ghana and western Nigeria. The most widely spoken *Gbe* language is Ewe in Ghana and Togo, followed by Fon mainly in Benin. The *Gbe* languages belong to the Kwa branch of Niger-Congo, and break-up into five major dialect clusters as in **Plate 2.1** by Capo: Ewe, Fon, Aja, Gen and Phla-Pherá.

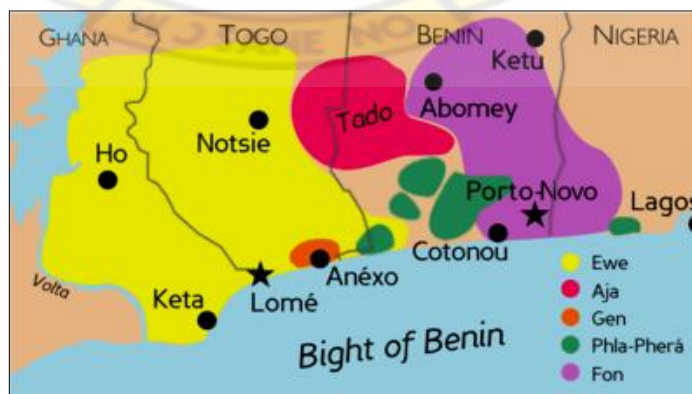


Plate 2.1 Major *Gbe* Dialect Areas

Source: Capo (1991)

In Summary, the Eweland of Ghana can be subdivided into three broad groups. These include; Ewedome which occupies the northern portion, Anlo occupying south-east coastlands and Tongu around the shores of the lower Volta Basin or west of the Anlo state. The language spoken by the Ewes is *Evegbe*. Within the Eweland especially in Ewedome, there are small non-Ewe groups who speak different languages and dialects. These include; Avatime, Nyagbo, Tafi, Logba, Akpafu, Lolobi, Santrokofi, Likpe, etc. These small groups remain in their settlements maintaining their culture but also learning the culture of the Ewes.

2.2 The Art of Women in Africa

This session discusses women's art to establish facts about the beginnings of pottery by African women, why they dominate the pottery industry, the roles men and women play in pot-making industry and how pottery is linked with other indigenous arts.

Perani and Smith (1998) state that, "Prior to the twentieth century, the potter's wheel was unknown in Africa south of the Sahara, and African potters hand-built ceramic vessels" (p.14). Pottery is among the oldest arts of mankind. In Kenya it is documented since the upper Paleolithic era and in the Saharan sites have been dated to the eighth millennium B.C. In Nigeria, it is traceable at least until the early fourth millennium B.C. (Barley, 1994). The archaeological account of Anquandah (2006) further reveals that, there is literally, no district or Region in Ghana that does not provide some evidence of remains of ancient clay hearths, smoking pipes and vessels for cooking or serving food, carrying, storage and serving of water.

Rattray (1927) indicates that, in the Ashanti traditional setting, it is noted that the first woman potter, at the village of Tafo, one of the important pottery centres, was a woman called Osra Abogyo. It is believed that she learnt the art from *Odomankoma*, the creator God.

From the foregoing, it is evident that pottery is among the oldest arts in African societies

and was mainly hand built. This long and sustained tradition of pottery identifies women to be involved in the art all these years. It is therefore imperative to find out the reasons pertaining to the involvement of women in pottery and how they have managed to preserve it to date.

For centuries, women have been making pots in almost every Region in Ghana; among Akans, Ewes, Ga-Adangbes, and people in the North. LaDuke (1991) points out that in village compounds, women contribute collectively to pottery production, ranging from the mining and processing of clay, forming, trimming and firing of pots for several generations. Teilhet as cited in Barley (1994) adds that in most parts of the world while women work in soft media, men work in hard.

LaDuke's view was that over the years all the processes involved in making pots in clay are completely controlled by women who operate from their homes. This view may be accepted within a narrow context. This will be substantiated under the sub-heading 2.2.2 - gender in pottery making. Accurately, no Region in Ghana can be left out as far as the pottery industry is concerned. In general, there is a clear distinction between the kind of material used by both women and men. While women use soft materials men use hard ones.

Berns (2007) indicates that,

Other than basic household duties, such as fetching water, preparing food, washing utensils and clothing, and caring for children, women spent much of the day engaged in pottery-making and its associated tasks. They worked in two, 3-4 hour sessions, one in the morning starting about 9:00-10:00 AM and lasting until the preparation of the noon-time meal and a second longer session lasting all afternoon until the preparation of the evening meal. (para. 2).

To a large extent, women engage in pottery in addition to daily household chores permitting them to have breaks. Both activities are managed so well that none conflicts with the other. A break from making pots means having time off to prepare meals, washing, etc.

In brief the dominant role women play in the pottery industry cannot be overlooked. Comparatively, they play a major role in the entire pottery process regardless of the numerous daily household chores they are faced with. Significant as this may be, there is the need to find out reasons why women make pots.

2.2.1 Women, why the Chief Makers of Pots

Asihene (1978) points out that pottery was done mostly by women who had skill and patience for it. Traditional pottery is done by hand. This makes it possible for the potter to be individual in her approach. In backing Asihene's point, Barley adds, "The production of usable vessels within the framework of a traditional canon of forms demands technical ability that cannot be acquired without the expenditure of great time and constant practice" (p. 63).

Hand-made pots are formed by women because they have the requisite skills. They also have the time to spend on pottery as well as endure the risks associated with it. Again, due to the fact that pots are hand-made, women potters make forms based on their personal feelings and style. A great deal of time and endurance is also needed on a regular basis in perfecting the art of pottery.

Rattray (1927) establishes that in ancient times making of pots lie in the hands of women because "pots were invariably bartered in exchange for food, and that they were never sold for gold dust or whatever was the currency of the time" (p. 301). This is why men do not necessarily make pots. It follows that since women were directly involved with the preparation of food in the home as well as regular barter trade for food in the market place, the making of pots absolutely remain under their control.

Priddy (1974) also maintains that among the Shai of the Accra plains, it is practically obligatory for every girl to learn the art of pot-making in order to be accepted as a full member

of the society; “God has given us pottery-making as our work” they say. Colson cited in Barley (1994) establishes that, the Thonga in East Africa believe that one must be ‘called’ by an ancestor to take over a skill. The dominance of female potters as claimed by Priddy is a matter of tradition coupled with education necessary to qualify a female child as a rightful citizen of a community. While the inspiration of making pottery is perceived by the Shai as a gift from God, their Thonga counterparts attribute it to an occupation requiring some form of control of by the ancestors in the impartation of skills.

Briefly, three points have emerged from the fact that women are the chief makers of pottery. Firstly, women produce pots because they have the patience and finesse to do it. Also, making pots for domestic use requires abiding by conservative rules that call for time and regular practice, of which women stand a better advantage. Again, women make pots because they customarily use and trade in them. Furthermore, for one to be recognized as a true member of a society, it is compulsory in some cultures for all girls to learn pottery. Finally, it is also an art that is passed on from mother(s) to a girl child.

2.2.2 Gender in Pot Making

Perani and Smith (1998) argue that although the vast majority of ceramicists in Africa are women, men occasionally are involved in pottery production, as is the case for the Hausa of northern Nigeria. In the same direction, Reif (1992) maintains that, pot-making in Central Africa has always been women's work, although men have made some works of pottery for centuries. There is no doubt at all that men are involved in some aspects of pottery in Africa. It can also be established that women dominate the pot-making industry yet men cannot be completely written off in terms of their valuable contribution to the industry.

Rattray further declares that it will hardly be correct to state that, pottery in Ashanti is

entirely in the hands of women. It might be true that women, all over appear to be the makers of pots, yet there is no oral rule or taboo to prevent a male from engaging in pottery.

Among the Ashanti, pottery is not a preserve of women due to the fact that there is no written code restraining men in the making of pots. The most vital point to establish is that, generalization in favour of female potters within this context will be illogical. Both men and women make pots depending on the cultural practices pertaining to a particular society. Therefore, the emphasis should rather be on whether the approaches and techniques men adopt are useful and beneficial to the society they belong. It is also essential to weigh the complimentary efforts of men in the pottery industry so as to distinguish their contributions to the benefits to society in general.

Barley (1994),

Even where it is established that both men and women of a particular subgroup make pots, as among the Mossi of Burkina Faso, men may be dominant in one geographical area and women in another. The result is that men and women may not make the same pots. More over the potting techniques used may be different. Thus, in West Cameroon, both men and women work in clay. Men, however, only pot in particular locations such as Bamessing where they make specialised vessels for prestige use. Elsewhere, men make elaborate clay pipes but by carving the clay rather than modelling it (p. 61).

It is obvious that there are differences in the approach of the type of pottery produced by both men and women. Pertinent to this, Barley establishes that, there is common sense in this division since each sex makes the type of pottery ware it uses. Succinctly, pottery in relation to gender depends to a large extent on the needs per sex at any given time. Women by their nature prepare the meals of the family so they will definitely prepare wares that will be convenient to carry out this important activity. Men also smoke tobacco, therefore they will find it more comfortable making their own pipes to suit their taste.

Though making pots is generally accepted as a woman's task or duty, in Central and Western African cultures male potters exist as well. Reif reiterates that the purpose for making pottery depends to a large extent on who makes it. Among some people in Nigeria, for instance, women make pots that are for household purposes while men make pots used in the performance of rituals. Though both male and female potters produce frail, thin-walled pots, they use different methods. The idea regarding male pottery is rather associated with rites, initiations and ceremonies while women make pots generally for domestic purposes. The finished pots produced by both sexes seem to be similar in terms of wall thickness, the methods employed vary.

Perani and Smith in a similar vein differentiate between pottery wares made by both sexes in the Gongola Valley (located between the Nok and Sao cultures) and explain how they are used for various reasons. They said women make utilitarian vessels, including basic water pots characterized by long necks while men make ritual vessels for much of the region. Just like Reif's argument so is Perani and Smith; women make household items while men make vessels for religious purposes.

Rattray indicates that men do not mould pots or pipes unless they represent anthropomorphic forms, for women are prohibited to make such pottery wares. Rattray claims that the reason to this fact requires "greater skill." Among the Asante, men are limited to moulding pottery which is characterized by figures or symbols of animals. This suggests that men possess exceptional skills needed to carry out complicated pottery works.

In conformity with the type of complicated pots made by men, Asihene (1978) maintains that men make the following categories of pottery; ceremonial, funeral and ceramic sculpture. These groupings of pottery which include the figurines attached to lids of pots are kept by families or used in shrines and during festivals. The pots contained the nail and hair clippings

of close relatives of the deceased, water or other offerings. A prestigious version of an *abusua kuruwa* is an *abebudie* (proverb pot). These pots are elaborately decorated with motifs that are representational as shown in **Plate 2.2 a-b**.



Plate 2.2a *Abusua Kuruwa - Abebudie*

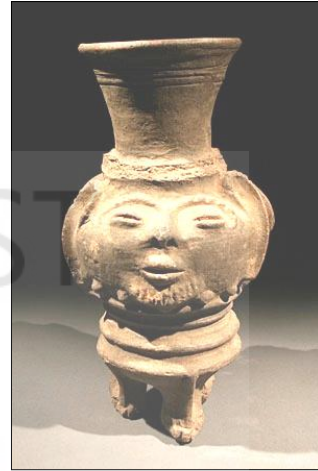


Plate 2.2b *Abusua Kuruwa - Funerary Vessel*

Barley, in a contrary view declares that till now, among one group, the Yungar, women make most of the ritual ancestral pots. While women are restricted to making only utilitarian pots in some cultures, women in other cultures produce ritual or ancestral pots. It will be unfair therefore to maintain the stance that, only men can mould complicated forms meant for purposes other than domestic. To this end, it is apparent that women are capable of producing all purpose pottery vessels.

In a different point of view, men and women in Upper Egypt may be responsible for different stages of the production of a single pot. Among the Chokwe and Lwena, men beat out pots and women form them from spirals of clay (Roy as cited in Barley, 1994). Here, the final product is a result of both men and women working together. Schildkrout and Keim cited in Perani and Smith also add that men and women work together in building anthropomorphic pots with a woman making a pot and a man adding the head. The making of anthropomorphic

pots in this context is rather based on the principle of division of labour where each sex makes just a component of the finished pot.

While women continue to be involved in some aspects of pottery production, their role has become secondary. They sometimes decorate, burnish, and paint the pots with designs; in some areas women specialize in particular ceramic products, including inkwells, ablution vessels, lamps, and children's toys (Perani and Smith, 1998). Of much significance, women's duty in the pottery industry among the Hausa, complements the men. At certain times women's focus may be directed to beautifying pots while other times their expertise may be centered on making specific items.

In brief, the making of pottery depends considerably on the types of pots desirable in accordance with the needs of any given society vis-à-vis the gender sort. While in some cultures women make domestic pots, men make more complicated ones for religious purposes. This order however may be vice versa in other Africa cultures. It is noteworthy to generally believe that both men and women are capable of making any kind of pot whether simple or complicated. It may also turn out that the pots produced may not be directly used by those who make them. Having dealt with the issue of gender categorization in pottery, it is imperative to examine how pottery is connected to other indigenous arts.

2.2.3 The Linkage of Pottery to other Indigenous Arts

Most probably, people's experiments in firing pottery may have intermingled with the discovery of true metallurgy (metal technology). Skills acquired in making pottery might have been transferred to lost wax casting of metals which employs clay for its mould (Herbert in Perani and Smith). Herbert is particularly drawn to the fact that there is a relationship between pottery and metal smithing possibly because of the adoption of some processes and

materials. Specifically, the relative use of clay and fire is a common factor to both arts.

Barley purports that, female pottery is generally harmonized with male smithing in West Africa and it is normally expressed in terms of the potter being the wife of the smith and both belonging to closed caste. In this regard, it is simply a social order for women potters to marry male smiths. The factor of connectedness, so to say, is a possible catalyst for both men and women who belong to the same social class to coexist and carry out their artistic careers efficiently. To add to this, McNaughton in Perani and Smith identifies a pottery and blacksmith complex throughout Western Sudan where female potters are married to male blacksmiths. He further stated that among the Bamana of Mali, women in the blacksmith's clan own the rights to make pottery. It is not simply enough to have a cordial relationship in terms of marriage but also the privilege and liberty to engage in the art of pottery.

In line with Herbert's submission, both pottery and blacksmithing share parallel production processes because the raw materials e.g. clay, extracted from the earth are transformed by fire (Perani and Smith). Clearly, not only do women marry blacksmiths belonging to the same clan alone but it is a morally justified norm. Additionally, the methods used in both arts are practically related from the beginning to the end.

LaDuke reveals that, it is typical throughout West Africa that blacksmiths marry women potters. The men have their shops apart, where they produce farm implements and brass jewelry. The women make pottery as an extension of domestic activities, in the shade of the room designed as studio. This emphasizes the importance of pottery coexisting with smithing within the same setting on account of marital bond. Perani and Smith also say female potters and male blacksmiths among the Bamana are considered to have special knowledge and powers, separating them from the general population. By virtue of the supernatural abilities potters and smiths possess, they are highly respected and looked upon as special beings.

Assuredly, they are capable of performing their artistic roles via the inspiration under which they operate. This makes them different from any ordinary person in their respective societies.

In relation to the art of weaving, Drost as cited in Barley (1994) reveals, “It is more interesting to note that this is one of the few areas where the manufacture of basketry and pots by the coil technique is limited to women” (p. 156). Rattray in Barley (1994) also points out that, Asante potters talk of ‘weaving pots’ *nyon nkuku*, thus, pottery becomes a sort of female equivalent to male weaving. This implies that, pottery as a female vocation corresponds to weaving in view of the use of similar techniques.

In the area of decoration, Massaoudi (2007) discloses, when a variety of objects are assembled they permit one to examine that the same geometric patterns found on textiles and tattoos are the same as those on the Berber pottery, for example; chevrons, triangles, diamonds and zigzags,. It is significant to acknowledge and appreciate the ability of Berber potters who apply their skill in transferring designs applied on other artifacts to pottery. Undoubtedly, the arts in this grouping can be interpreted as being interdependent. Thus, in **Plate 2.3**, it is evident that, pottery cannot exist without textiles.



Plate 2.3a *Berber pot*



Plate 2.3b *Berber Textile*

The impression of Schimelman (2007) when she first saw photographs of Sirigu women’s houses at Northwest Bolgatanga in the Upper East Region was that, they live in large,

beautifully decorated pots. “I’m a potter and I see the world in terms of pots”, she said. The houses are made of mud as such mud and clay have a lot in common. Like clay, mud can be sculpted, incised and moulded into relief decorations. Dried mud ‘adobe’ can be painted. She said, when she visited the potters, she learned that the methods and materials potters use for the decoration of their houses and pottery are very alike.

The effectiveness of Sirigu women’s art depends on the following factors. Firstly, clay and mud are familiar materials to both pottery and wall painting. Secondly, the nature of the materials lends a hand to easy manipulation of forms. Finally, the processes and techniques used in both arts are remarkably alike.

Schimelman again sees the women of Sirigu as laborious and creative in making baskets. She says, the typical Sirigu design is the *pio* which is conical in shape with a square base basket and round opening. The basket is considered a symbol of womanhood in the house. Schimelman further identifies that Sirigu baskets are used to keep or carry all kinds of things like millet, cassava, groundnuts, fruit items, pots, personal belongings, etc. The baskets are decorated with different geometrical designs. The natural colours used are black, red and white. It is interesting to note that the colours used in painting walls and pottery wares are also employed in the weaving process.

Women usually make baskets by the coil method - winding fibers into coils and then binding the coils together with additional strips of fiber. This technique is similar to the coil building technique in pottery. Zulu and Ndebele women from South Africa use binding strips made of coloured fibre to create intricate patterns in their baskets. Inspiration for these patterns comes from nature - the joints of sugarcane plants, for example - and from spearheads and other handmade items (Reif, 1992).

Clearly, the methods and materials used by women in pottery are similar to a number

of arts stated above. These include, black smithing, textiles, basketry, wall painting and decoration. Knowledge about the methods used in these arts, for example weaving, is transferred to pottery. Additionally, people with special creative abilities such as pottery and smithing are revered in their societies. With this idea in mind, artists may be motivated to perform their role well. The subject of marriage is also a favourable factor to edge women to engage in the pottery industry. The rights of women to marry blacksmiths and the mere fact that they belong to blacksmiths' family give them the opportunity to engage in pottery.

2.3 Indigenous Pottery Processes

Certainly, pottery has many similarities among the numerous societies who practise it. Independently, every society engaged in pottery has a unique approach perhaps influenced by its cultural norms. Even so, it will be needless to assert that a particular process or method is a preserve of any society. Overlooking any practice will also defeat the ideals of indigenous pottery as well as the subject in question.

Since literature on Ewe pottery is insufficient, this sub-topic will draw from related concepts in a number of pottery traditions. These include, clay digging and preparation, taboos associated with clay and pottery in general, moulding pots, finishing and decorating pots, drying and firing pots, uses and disposal of pots. The discussion will focus on the methods employed in pottery as well as the customs associated with them.

2.3.1 Clay Digging and Preparation

Indigenous pottery is simple, functional and hand-built. The first thing to look for is clay. Clay, the main material, has a wide variation of properties used by potters and this often helps to produce wares that are unique in character in each locality.

The digging of clay is done by potters with assistance of their blacksmith husbands (Frank as cited in Perani and Smith, 1998). In contrast, clay preparation is done by hand with women potters engaged in digging clay at the local clay pits regularly around rivers or swamps (Asihene, 1978). Both views call for a distinction in terms of who digs clay in any indigenous pottery community. For instance, due to the hard physical labour associated with digging clay, the male inhabitants may be preferred since they have the physique and are able to endure strenuous labour. On the contrary, female potters may insist digging their own clay because of their dependence and affection to pottery activities besides the domestic roles of pots.

Traditionally, looking for and preparing clay predominantly goes with certain practices. In accordance with this conception, the spiritual value of traditional art requires certain rituals when preparing the base materials from which the artists work. The spirits that reside in such materials must be pacified. This practice goes with offering prayers and libations to safeguard the artist as well as the finished item. Exactly so, potters offer similar prayers before digging for clay (Salm and Falola, 2002).

Likewise, Asihene reveals that before potters dig clay, libation is poured to offer prayers as a sign of respect or to ask for permission and safety from Mother Earth and the spirits of the forest. Asihene's revelation obviously shows that there is a special relationship between the pottery container and the clay which is obtained from the earth.

Among the Frafra of Ghana, women collect their clay from a site containing both good quality material and possess spiritual meaning. Although a number of factors may be influential, the site is linked up with spirits which permits the potter to prosper in her work (Perani and Smith, 1998). In the same way, when pots keep breaking at Tafo, Asante, during firing, the altar to the Sky god called *Nyame dua*, set up on the bank of the Santan River where the clay is dug is propitiated by placing the feet, wings, heart and head of a fowl in a pot. It is

believed that, not only has the river a spirit but that the whole village belongs to it as well as owes its origin to it (Rattray, 1927).

The hands of African women traditionally dig the clay, prepare it for use, and shape it, often according to rules and taboos. For example, the Mongoro potters of Ivory Coast sacrifice a goat or rooster before digging clay as a way of asking forgiveness from gods Speight and Toki (1999). The women of Kwawu of Ghana fetch their clay at the bottom of the south face of the Kwawu escarpment near the headwaters of the sacred Pra River. Men are forbidden to go near the clay deposit, because the women who dig it do so usually being naked (Bartle, 1982). Similarly, among the Kalabougou, a village across the Niger River from Segou, Mali, men are not allowed in the clay pit. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the pit is full of women and girls digging up the clay from the earth with axes made by male blacksmiths (Goldner, 2002).

Significantly, the process of acquiring clay for pottery can either be a normal or coupled with spiritual exercise. While the former may be devoid of restrictions and traditions, the latter is associated with rituals due to the value potters place on the earth which is the source of their material. So, for ages, each society may adopt its own practices of acquiring clay for pottery.

In terms of rituals, artists give great respect to their materials and tools because they believe that the materials and tools possess powers of their own (Amenuke, et al. 1991). Additionally, Schimelman (2007) states, “Ghanaian tradition says that spirits live in every object and that the spirits must be appeased by following certain rules, so potters traditionally would only dig clay on certain auspicious days.” Citing an example by Rattray, Asante potters were forbidden to dig clay on days sacred to the Earth goddess, *Asase Ya* because in Sub-Saharan Africa the earth is commonly regarded as female due to its connectedness with it.

The belief placed on materials and tools having power is linked with animism, a belief that God has given powers to animals, plants and objects (Amenuke, et al.). In this regard, if

pottery objects are believed to possess certain powers, then the material and the processes which are handled and employed in making pots ought to be revered. Perhaps this account for the confidence and safety artists enjoy throughout the entire process of pottery.

In looking for workable clay, its quality must be considerably plastic to assume any shape that it will be subjected to. The indigenous potter may use a simple clay test, for instance, rolling a coil of clay around the finger to determine whether the clay is suitable. Its suitability depends upon whether it cracks or not. If it cracks excessively then the clay is not plastic enough to be used for pottery.

The best and most accessible among the various groups of clay is earthenware which may be single natural clay or a mixture of several groups of low-firing clays that mature at comparatively low temperatures (Nelson, 1984). Clay for pottery comes out in different colours. While Asihene lists the colours as gray, green, red, brown, ochre and yellow; Rattray lists Asante pottery colours as white, red, yellow, grey, and brown.

Generally, after clay is fetched from the pit or site, it is left to weather for a number of days. The lumps are then broken into pieces, sometimes they are pounded, in a mortar. The mass is then soften with water and mixed up thoroughly with the hands until the required consistency is attained. Alternatively, the lumps of clay can be soaked in water and pounded or stamped with the feet and the impurities are removed. If the clay is too plastic, temper or grog made up of finely-ground broken pots can be added to make the clay more porous. The clay is kneaded to obtain a homogeneous consistency which neither sticks to the hand too much nor fails to hold together (Rattray, 1927; Priddy, 1974). A particular area of each compound was reserved for clay preparation and another for pot making. Women prepare only sufficient soft and considerably plastic clay for use on a given day (Berns, 2007).

To sum up, clay digging and preparation cannot be specifically ascribed to a particular

sex. Whereas men or boys are the only people permitted to dig and prepare clay in one society, women and girls have the right to do so in another depending on the role of both sexes in pottery. In some societies, clay digging is never carried out without rituals such as offering prayers to venerate the earthly spirits. These acts are performed to ask permission from the spirits, protect the artist from hurt and safeguard the pot from breaking during the entire pottery process. The most suitable and widely used clay by indigenous potters is the earthenware type. Its suitability lies in the fact that, it is easily obtainable and fires at a low temperature. Apart from these, taboos are also linked with clay digging. The next sub-topic discusses taboos.

2.3.2 Taboos in Indigenous Pottery

This aspect looks at the meaning of taboos and how they affect the pottery industry. Sarpong (1974) states, the word *taboo* is derived from the Polynesian term ‘*tabu*’ which simply means forbidden and can be applied to any sort of prohibition. He further established that, the phenomenon of *tabu* has been discovered in every society in the world irrespective of its technical advance. He emphasized the diversity in the conception of taboo such that it is so vital among the different societies. A taboo prevents an individual or a group of persons from certain behaviours or activities considered to be forbidden in order to maintain the sanctity of objects believed to possess some supernatural powers which need some form of protection and also to prevent any calamity.

One cannot talk about taboos without referring to the land or the earth which is the source of clay, the main material for potting. Sarpong declares that most likely, next to the Supreme Being in greatness is the Earth which is considered to be a very important goddess. As the drum language of the Akan succinctly puts it: “Earth, when I live I depend upon you,

when I die, I depend upon you, Earth, you who eat carcasses.” Amenuke et al also reveal that in some African traditions such as the Yoruba and the Akan, the Earth goddess is held in high esteem and it is associated with a number of activities such as farming and pottery. They name these female spirits or goddesses as *odudua* and *asaase* respectively, the land or earth called Mother. Nature is personified as a woman named Asaase Yaa (*asaase* representing earth and Yaa is all females born on Thursdays). She is believed by the Akans to be the mother of the universe.

In tilling the land on certain days of the week, Sarpong says, “Among the Ashanti, the earth should not be ‘disturbed’ on Thursdays. She must rest. The Fante have put aside Friday as the day of the earth on which she must have peace of mind” (p. 116). Sarpong emphasized the value of the earth by applying the personal pronoun “she” to it. So far as indigenous societies always depend on the earth to cultivate crops and exploit it for other purposes including pottery, by their beliefs, it may seem unpardonable to go contrary to the taboos associated with its usage.

Among the Frafra of Ghana, Perani and Smith (1998) maintain that, ‘*duko*’ (general name for pot) is a gift of the Earth, and the pot stores water, food, and millet beer tastes better when brewed and served in it. Here also, it is clear that there is a special relationship between pots and the earth. As such, “the gift of the earth” pointed out by Perani and Smith, has special attributes that explain why food items that pots hold are delectable.

Kit (1998) studied the Yoruba women and how they attach religion and taboos to pottery making. He identified that, in every industry in Yorubaland, including pottery there are beliefs and taboos. The potters in Ilora, apart from the fact that all women are Christians and attend churches, they are still worshippers of the Ebu divinity called Iyamopo, who is believed to be the goddess of all women engaged in factory works in Yorubaland, especially in the Oyo

Yoruba area. Iyamopo, the women's factory divinity, is worshipped occasionally with prayers offered to her daily, while starting a day's work, or during any type of work concerning pottery. The potters believe that successful output of their product is made by the support of the divinity.

Rattray (1927) says in Ashanti, religion and taboos are not absent from the pottery. He enumerated a number of taboos that are adhered to during the processes of pottery. There is a tradition of a certain 'potteress' whose name has even been preserved - one Denta, who is on record to have become barren, as a result of having modelled figurative pots. From that time onwards, it is stated, women ceased to make highly ornamented designs in pottery. At Tafo, neither water nor clay must be taken from the Santan River on a Friday. Unbaked pot may not on any account be taken away from the village. Pots before being baked may not be counted. Pots might not be made when the Ashanti army was away on a campaign. To break a pot intentionally is a serious offense, and entails the sacrifice of a sheep upon the spot where the pot was broken. To break a pot 'on a person's head' is thought possibly to cause his death.

Kit says among the Yoruba, certain taboos are also associated with pottery. For example, if any potter loses her husband, she is expected to remain off pottery duty for at least three months. At the end of the three months, compulsory leave in commemoration of her husband's death, Iyamopo is worshipped before the potter resumes work. It is believed that if any potter should refute this taboo, her labours during the said period would be fruitless, because her product will crack beyond repair.

Secondly, the potters are also forbidden to steal clay from one another. Clay can be requested or be given out at will, but never stolen. If the owner is not around, it may be used, and then reported immediately she returns. It is believed that any potter who intentionally

steals another potter's clay will face fruitless labour, because her pot will continue cracking until she confesses to the owner and appeals to the Iyamopo divinity for forgiveness.

Thirdly, fornication is also forbidden to potters. If the potter breaks this taboo, she has to confess to Iyamopo and appeal to her for forgiveness before her labour can attain a fruitful output. No matter how thick the pot is made by the offensive woman, it is believed that it will crack. But after confession and the appropriate rituals, she may continue her potting skills.

Among the Kangara (Zimbabwe) firing in the presence of a man would render him sterile while the presence of a teenage girl would split the pots. Again, a man should never be the first to eat from a freshly fired pot or jar. Just like menstrual blood, it could be dangerous and 'overheat' him (Aschwanden in Barley). While pregnant or menstruating there are implications for the relationship between pots and creativity. Both sexes may be forbidden sexual intercourse while involved in potting (Drost as cited in Barley, 1964).

At Shai in Ghana, men may not touch potting clay on pain of impotence. Women dig clay using a special tool which is set apart from farm work (Johnson in Barley). With Lobi women (Burkina Faso/Ivory Coast), only postmenstrual women make pots for altars because of the danger from the blood of sacrifice to their fertility. Even these, however, avoid buying food with the money paid for such pots (Spindel as cited in Barley).

Among the Nuba (Sudan), a man never uses a pot (made by women) for washing himself, he does this with calabash or *bukhsa* (a vessel made of gourd, to which leather strips and coiled basket work with a lid, are often added). He waters his tobacco plants similarly with *bukhsa*, never with a pot (Bentley and Crowfoot in Barley). According to LaDuke (1991) strict taboos are enforced during firing. "It is a taboo for menstruating, pregnant or uninitiated women to approach the area. Sacrifices are made before firing to ensure that the ancestors will not interfere in a harmful way" (p. 17).

Aguilar who studied about Chewa women (Central Malawi) also noticed that just as sexual relations during pregnancy is prohibited, potters in the past could not have sexual relations during the critical stages of pottery-making, such as when pots are being fired, because the technological process of making pots is associated with female fertility, birth, and the creation of new life (Aguilar, 2007).

In short, pottery in most cultures is not without taboos. The taboos cut across a number of activities related to pottery. These include, menstruation, abstinence from sexual intercourse, pregnancy, birth, impotence, lost of a husband, usage of pots, breaking of pots, etc. It is believed that a potter must be in a certain condition to be able to achieve success in making her pots. At any time the potter goes contrary to a taboo, she must ask for forgiveness otherwise her works will continually break. These account for the reasons why potters pay particular attention to their clay and the processes involved in making pots.

2.3.3 Modelling Pots

Rattray, Priddy and Barley admit that the stages pots undergo irrespective of their shape and type are virtually the same in every instance. The methods used in making pots are exceedingly simple, nonetheless it is an extremely difficult task to accomplish since the production processes entail the whole body. The fact about the similarities of the stages pottery undergoes cannot be completely eroded. However, generalization in this regard may not be completely fitting because similar general stages or techniques may seem very dissimilar in different societies.

Nelson (1984) states, “Except in few Muslim-influenced regions in North Africa, all pottery was hand built in a combination coil and paddle.” Adding, Nelson says building with the hand using clay is one of the oldest technique known. The methods are followed today in

almost the same way as they were ten or twelve thousand years ago.

On the contrary, Speight and Toki (1999) contest that, the methods used in Africa today may have been changed by contact with other cultures, so we cannot take them as 'living archaeology,' but rather must see them as only suggestions of some of the traditional methods that have been handed down from one generation to another.

Undoubtedly, pottery methods might have gone through some slight modifications over the years. The complexity of societal life, cross-cultural influence, adulteration due to transfer of skills from one person to the other and taste might be some contributory factors to this fact. However, indigenous pottery, as the name stands, is still unique in its methods and usage among traditional societies. It is therefore vital to state that, no matter how much the methods go down, pottery remains a way of life, and without it most societies will cease to exist.

There are a number of factors contributing to the success of pottery in Africa which of course might not be different from Ewealand. In a nutshell, Barley pointed them out as; abundance of clay, suitability of clay in terms of the assumption of the shape it is subjected to, tempering the clay to reduce plasticity thereby making clay objects porous or having a good clay body to work with, availability of tools and fuel to complete the process. Rattray lists some of the tools as corncob, a piece of rag, small blocks of wood, a scraper in the form of a strip of palm stem bent into a ring and smooth pebble.

Just as the contemporary potters have the potters wheel head as the surface to throw their pots, so do the indigenous potters also use various materials to serve as the base. As indicated by Aguilar among Chewa potters of central Mali, a woman places the pot on a large shard of old pottery, then she moves around the stand continuously in order to shape and smoothen it. Speight and Toki also add that, the base may be made of dry gourd, or an old broken pot set on another pot while Barley (1994) states that,

Many potters use a roundel - often the bottom or neck (Igbo) of a broken pot or a basket of wet leaves (Ovim-bundu) - as the base for their pots which may be turned by hand during forming. Elsewhere, special clay (Mossi) or wooden (Fang) supports may be made on which to seat the clay as it is turned and worked. (p. 19)

In this regard, the support for the base of pots can consist of diverse kinds of materials such as, parts of broken pots or whole old pots, dried gourd or calabash, padded leaves and rugs, flattened clay and wooden planks. They all help in one way or the other to make a pot.

Basically, indigenous pottery in skilled hands, uses two well known methods; pinch and coil. Both methods may be used separately but can be combined at times to achieve certain particular effects. Apart from pinch and coil, moulds are also used. Fundamentally, the pinch and coil methods cut across most pottery traditions.

The pinch technique involves making a hole and pulling clay from the center of the ball towards the top edge in order to render it taller and wider. At a desired height or width, the potter smooths the mouth of the pot with the hands. The shoulder is formed with the use of a scraper on the outside while the hand is kept as a support inside the pot (Arnoldi, Geary and Hardin, 1996). Among the Bonakire, Brong-Ahafo, Ghana, pottery vessels are built in stages, the larger in two parts and the smaller in a single unit. The upper half of large vessels is built first, working on a flat circle of wood elevated on a wooden mortar at about knee level. The top and bottom parts of the leatherhard pots are joined together with clay slip (Berns, 2007).

The coil technique is the most widespread traditional pottery-building method still used in traditional cultures, and was widely used by earliest potters. The possibility of clay to collapse during building might be one of the bases for which potters devised the coil method. Coils are prepared by rolling clay in a rope-like form between the hands or on a flat surface. The coils are then joined to the base one after the other while waiting for the lower coils to harden (Speight and Toki, 1999; Close, 1984).

A third popular technique involves the use of the mould. (Perani and Smith) identify two types of moulds, the inverted and concave. With the inverted mould, a clay slab is prepared and the shape is formed over the base of an old inverted pot to form the bottom of the new pot. The concave technique is rather opposite where a potter places the slab into a depression of a standing pot or into a round hole in the ground. These methods may vary slightly from one society to the other depending on gender and what the pot is going to be used for. For instance, Perani and Smith, state that, “Whereas Hausa women first used an inverted mold technique to start their pots, Hausa men used a concave mould technique, either an upright ceramic or wooden vessel or a shallow depression in the earth, to form the pots” (pp. 37, 38). This completely differentiated the technique used by men potters from that of women.

In brief, while some authors allude to the fact that pottery methods are the same, others acknowledge that there might be slight variations from one society to the other. However, pottery in Africa is still hand-built in small quantities and has a number of methods namely; pinch, coil and mould. All the same, there could be a combination of these methods to produce a pot. As a final point, pot-making is possible because of favourable conditions such as availability of suitable clay, tools and materials for decorating and firing.

2.3.4 Pottery Forms and their Uses

A great variety of pottery containers are produced to meet the demands of daily life activities in indigenous societies. The varied shapes and sizes modelled determine to a large extent how the pots are used. These may be grouped as domestic, commercial, prestigious and religious pots. It is in the interest of the researcher to explore the forms and uses of pots as well as find out where potters derive their ideas from.

In building pots, the potter creates the shape and size desired for a particular purpose. For example, small wide pots are made for cooking relish while rounded deeper pots are used for cooking maize meal in larger quantities (Aguilar). The most common shapes of pots are oval, semicircular and circular serving numerous domestic needs. These include, cooking pots, storing water and palm wine pots, eating bowls and ceremonial pots.

Additionally, smoking pipes and ceramic sculptures are made (Asihene, 1978). Similarly, Amenuke, et al., (1991) note that, indigenous Ghanaian pottery assumes the shapes of oval, spherical or half-spherical. Oval-shaped pots are used as washing and palm-wine containers. Water for drinking is stored in the spherical-shaped pot while the half-sphere pots are used for serving food and storing pomade.

The circular shapes of pots are link up with the concept of containment. A Kono potter in Sierra Leone rates a good pot in terms of its roundness or if it can contain. In forming pots, there is an emphasis on maintaining a round mouth. In justifying this fact, Kono potters explained that the form of the pot seizes to be a pot if it did not assume the round shape, in other words if it could not contain (Arnoldi, Geary and Hardin, 1996). Essentially, this concept stresses the idea that pots must be modelled to merit the quality needed to hold substances. In effect, this idea pervades the technicality involved in making pots not only in the Kono but definitely in other pot making cultures.

Rattray gave more detailed account of uses of some pots and utensils in the Asante language. These include; *Anane*, for melting shea butter; *Kuruwa*, a proverb pot meant for holding drinking water; *Ahena*, a large pot used for carrying water from the stream; *Osene*, a cooking pot; *Tasenaba*, soup pot; *Akotokyewa*, palm wine pot; *Nkyeryeresa*, literally ‘three steps’ pot and *mogyemogyee*, a jaw bone pot, both used for religious or ceremonial purposes; *Abusua kuruwa*, family pot; *Ayowa*, pot for washing the soul; *Abammo* and *kuna kukuo*,

widows' pot. Apart from these, fragments of pots are used for roasting groundnuts, carrying live charcoal and refuse, rims of old pots serve as stands for making fresh pots as well as using cracked pots for storing cotton, groundnuts, etc.

According to Arnoldi, Geary and Hardin, pottery vessels can be placed into three major groups. These include, closed (or restricted) vessels intended for the transport and storage of beverages; open vessels meant for the cooking of food or boiling of water; and vessels considered to be imitations of imported vessels designed for consumption. In essence, the functions of pots give order and form to the shapes that are made. Obviously, the emphasis on the mouth of pots categorizes the use they are put to.

Huge jars for brewing and storing corn-beer and water; smaller jars for fetching water, corn beer measure pot; water coolers; cooking pots; mixing bowls; food and soup bowls; colanders; wash hand bowls; shea butter jars; water holding pots for ducks and chicken; animal troughs; lamp containers; globular pots smeared with cow dung and herbs to attract ants to feed chicken; vegetable grinding bowls, circular patty-pans for frying corn-cakes; ritual pots with lids; globular pots with lids and ventilation for storing salt and meat; tiny toy pots for children (Priddy, 1974).

It is important to find out whether potters use their imagination alone or get their ideas from some other sources. Speight and Toki say potters draw their ideas from the surroundings. Since they live close to the earth, they have responsive fingers which they use in activities such as planting, reaping, sorting and grinding food. Thus, their pottery reflects the sensitivity of the fingers used in the manipulation of the clay into pots. Also, potters are aware of animal postures and movements they find around them, so, from time to time, they mould pots to assume simple, exaggerated or distorted shapes of furry and feathered animals. Also, forms are made based on containers fashioned from other materials, e.g. metal. Again, some forms result

from the feelings of the potter paying attention to relationship between the rim and the base.

The gourd, one of the plant sources which is commonly used as a container influenced many pottery forms (Nelson, 1984). In agreement, Perani and Smith say one of the most elegant types of Nupe pots is a large hourglass vessel based on a gourd shape, used for storing water and palm wine. Additionally, the utilitarian vessels appear to reveal the shape of a gourd or basket deeply rooted in African tradition. Priddy also reveals that a Kusasi potter in Nakum, east of Bawku in Ghana, makes pots imitating the shape of a gourd instead of the normal types rather. The potter explained that the idea spontaneously emerged one day when she was making pots, and that they were selling very well so she had stopped making the normal shapes. However, the designs have no meaning. In brief, ideas for making pots are somehow drawn from the environment; both natural and artificial sources.

2.3.5 Finishing and Decorating Pots

Finishing and decorating processes of pottery basically enhance the surface quality of pots for aesthetic appeal, good market price and to meet spiritual requirements. This segment will therefore find out how pots are finished, the types of decorations applied at any stage of the process; designs, motifs, patterns and symbols used and their meaning; pigments and colours employed. Also, the various tools used for specific processes will be identified.

Finishing is done when pots are partially dried, to the consistency of leather and are ready to be trimmed and smoothed. Thus, the surfaces of pots are scraped, thinned and the unwanted portions of the rounded bottoms are cut away and rendered smooth (Colley, 2007). In shaping the pot to reach a finished stage, Aguilar (2007) also says, a cob of maize from the garden lengthens, thins, and smooths the sides. A smooth, white river pebble helps maintain the rounded belly of the pot, and a curved shell rounds thinner sides. A strip of white sisal,

used in making mats and baskets, is now a tool to trim the top before adding the rim of the pot, and a fresh green leaf is used to smoothen the rounded rim.

Aguilar's method of finishing is characterized by a careful choice of specific tools that are also convenient. Using these tools help to maintain the shape and to work without difficulty on delicate portions of pots as well. For an even smoother surface, (Speight and Toki) add that, at leatherhard consistency, the pot is burnished. This is done with a smooth pebble, or a piece of bone, or a shell with rhythmic gestures to polish the surface to a glassy look and tightening the clay particles. Conversely, a pot with coarse particles of clay can be effectively polished by applying a coat of fine clay soaked in water (clay slip) on the surface.

It should be noted that, pots can only be burnished or rendered smooth if the surface has not been textured or scratched or pressed with designs. The pores on the clay surface might be tightened, yet it does not make pots water-tight or less porous. This is because earthenware clay is not fired high enough to become impervious.

In decorating a pot, Encarta Encyclopedia (2007) points out that, a pot can be decorated before or after firing. When the clay is half dry and somewhat stiffened 'leatherhard', bits of clay can be pressed into the pot; the body can be incised, stamped, or pressed with lines and other patterns; or clay can be cut out and the body pierced. The vessel walls can be smoothed by burnishing, or polishing, so that rough particles are driven inwards and the clay particles are aligned in such a way that the vessel surface is shiny and smooth. It is evident that pots can be decorated during the wet, dry and firing stages but Arnoldi, Geary and Hardin feel application of pottery decorations is most convenient when clay is either wet or leatherhard.

The methods of decoration outlined above include, incised, impressed or stamped and burnished. Apart from these, Close identifies relief decoration or raised designs as one other type of decoration used considerably by indigenous potters. In pottery decoration, one thing

should be observed and Clark (1973) categorically states that, “the decoration should complement and enhance a piece and be an integral part of the total design” (p. 64). To Clark, incised decoration can be thin scratches or free form curved or linear patterns made with a needle, fork or comb, or narrow wire or a loop tool. While Aguilar indicates a knife can be used to cut markings around the rim of a pot and also symmetrically repeated around the neck of a pot, Priddy maintains that the pointed end of a stick or stalk, edge of a pebble or broken calabash, edge of broken bottle, broken handle of a metal spoon or anything that comes to hand may be used. Arnoldi, Geary and Hardin also add that, deeply incised grooves at the neck and shoulder are the most common incised decorations. In keeping with the points made by the above authors, the portions of the vessels most commonly incised are the rim, neck and the shoulder using all manner of sharp tools.

Berns confirms that, shallow bowls were generally burnished all over the exterior (pepper-grinding bowls were incised on the inside with linear patterns to create a rough surface for grinding), and storage vessels were burnished on the interiors using a larger pebble to render them less permeable after firing. Burnishing is a time-consuming task and Berns observe that women (and young girls) frequently sit in the late afternoon and evening as well as by lamp light burnishing their wares.

In terms of impressed or stamped decorations, all manner of patterns are used with a variety of tools employed to imprint designs on pots. Barley lists these tools as feathers, grass, textiles, baskets, thorns, shells, nets, bracelets, twigs, nails, pieces of calabash, carved and wooden roulettes, string, fruits, cormcobs, bones and of course, fingers. The list is endless because whatever object that is found in the surrounding with its surface textured will be appropriate for the impressed decoration. From the Encarta, burnishing is a form of decoration in itself in view of the fact that pots are complete without adding any pattern to the surface.

2.3.6 Colour, Motifs and Patterns applied to Pottery

Schimelman (2007) observed that, before the pot is dry, relief decorations may be added and patterns incised in the clay, much as are done to the house walls. The pots may be decorated with a dark brown stain before being dried for a week. The patterns include; diamonds, zigzags, pythons, and cows that are found painted on Sirigu houses. These motifs indicated in **Plate 2.4** are believed to be protective. Perani and Smith note that, to the Frafra, the primary purpose of decoration is for aesthetic enhancement. A number of pottery motifs can be identified with them. For example, a triangular motif alludes to a woman's role as wife and mother.



Plate 2.4 *Diamond, Zigzag Python and Cow Motifs Painted on Sirigu Houses*

According to Schimelman, only three colours are used for the designs, all earth based pigments. *Red* comes from a local stone, *black* pigment from a stone from Burkina Faso that is purchased in the market or made by putting the hot pots in a mixture of millet grass and *white* comes from a chalky stone that is rubbed over the final surface. These colours have very simple meanings; black is a sign of power, red a sign of danger and white a sign of purity.

Some pots get no additional attention, their only decoration being the marks left by the fire. The pots, like the houses, may be covered with *dawa-dawa* or locust beans (*Parkia filicoidea*) to make them less porous.

Perani and Smith in line with the use of the three colours, observed that the Frafra view the colours white, black and especially red as aspects of the Earth because red is made from clay, black from pulverized stone, and white from a soft chalklike stone. However, they say lately, tar is used by some women instead of the traditional black pigment.

Perceptibly, referring to **Plate 2.5**, there is no difference in imagery and colour as regards pottery. From the backgrounds of the wall paintings, it is noticed that the decorative activity of



Plate 2.5 *Pottery and Wall Paintings by Sirigu Women
Northwest Bolgatanga, Ghana*

pottery has been extremely controlled by wall paintings vis-à-vis the environment in which they work. The type of colours selected by Kwawu, (Eastern Region, Ghana) potters are not far from Sirigu women, only that the concept is different. Three colours representing (three souls) are used; *black* is directly from God, transition and destiny; *red* is female, nurturing,

feeding, fecundity; *white* is for morals, male, sex, strength, personality (Bartel).

Chewa women in central Malawi as reported by Aquilar (2007) shows that they dug up a special root known as *nkunga*, with red sap that is described by the women as blood. The roots are considered sources of fertility and blood of life, and it is believed each living person is associated with an *nkunga* root. The root is beaten against a hard rock, just as the clay was beaten against a hard rock, and the root and its sap are placed in a pot of water and worked through. As the red sap is kneaded from the root in the water, it turns milky (white) and is then left to rest in the water. The fired pots are painted with the *nkunga* root solution. The water and sap form a stain running down the interior and exterior of the pots as the whitish liquid sizzles to dark brown.

There are certain characteristics of well-made pottery that a group of potters all agreed were pleasing and beautiful. As noted by Aguilar, the colour of the fired clay is important; a clear color is preferred to a muddied one. The pottery is better if it has sheen and the clay is not dull. The brown stains are also transparent, and this transparency is perceived as a kind of brightness valued by the women. During firing, a variety of colours appear on the surface of the pot, such as dark blue, orange, and earth tones, and sometimes a grey-green shade. The way these colours play on the surface with the applied stain can be very beautiful and renders each pot unique.

Animal motifs are no exception in indigenous pottery designs. Perani and Smith reveal that the hand-made pottery from Meroe (Northern Sudan) was particularly painted with figurative and geometric motifs. For example, local animals such as giraffes, crocodiles, bulls and gazelles were featured along with geometric motifs. Barley also points out that, among Shona groups (Zimbabwe and Mozambique) there are zoomorphic pots representing lions,

zebras, guinea fowl, etc. that are associated with male ancestor spirits. These forms are placed on the graves or used for the purpose of libation.

Once more, the Gongola Valley (North-eastern Nigeria) is noted for its ritual pottery which serves as ancestor veneration and healing. Many of these pots are said to be containers for the spirits of the deceased male elders or priests who had upheld the welfare of the society. The pots are kept in societal shrines and offerings made during festivals. Pots for healing which are involved with skin diseases have the designs related particularly to the symptoms.

Barley notes that African pottery, like body decoration lays emphasis on glossiness and texture as a mark of beauty and strength. Bohannon in Barley remarks about the Tiv in Nigeria that the first idea of physical beauty is the fact that the body must 'glow' or *wanger*. The word means to be beautiful, clear and to be in a satisfactory ritual state. It can be deduced here that, to the African the treatment of pottery surface is supreme to beauty.

Decoration forms a vital aspect of pottery art. There are limitless ways of going about decoration as enumerated by the various authors. On the whole, it is noticed that a pot with a glossy surface is considered most beautiful. In terms of colour, black and red are mostly seem to be linked with beauty. There is something unique about these colours that is why most potters select them and use them. It can be said that their relatedness to the earth make them more convenient and appropriate for decoration. Finally, the potter's environment determines what motifs, patterns, colours, etc. to select for a particular project.

2.3.7 Drying and Firing Pots

Berns noticed that, once women gather sufficient works firing can take place within one hour. There is pre-heating of huge pots especially to remove the remaining moisture before the actual firing takes place. Firing is done in the open normally called open firing at low

temperatures. Pots are treated after firing either by smoking or applying liquid substances to the red-hot vessels.

Priddy also observed that pots may either be left to dry completely for a number of days in a shady, airy place or warmed up in the sun for a short time. She maintained that among the Dagaaba potters near Wa in the Upper West Region of Ghana, women pre-heat pots over temperatures of about 100° C to remove the remaining water or else during firing works will break. The actual firing is a short process which takes place usually in the morning or evening when the sun is not too hot. The fire burns at most an hour reaching a temperature not exceeding 650 °C.

Priddy outlined three methods used in firing. These include; the open bonfire in shallow pits, the bonfire enclosed in a wall of old pots, and the simple cylindrical kilns. The first two methods are characterized by a bed of firewood on which the pots are placed upside down and covered with more firewood and grass to aid the setting of fire. To create a glossy black surface, the hot pots are either dipped into a pot of *dawa-dawa* dye or the dye applied to the pots directly. Another way of doing this is to place the pots on a pile of chaff which erupt into flame and doused with water to create smoke. Among the Asante potters, firing is the same as enumerated by Priddy. However, to set the fire, Rattray confirms that a ‘lucky’ girl is chosen to ignite the heap of wood and grass on the pots.

All pottery ware is fired when well dried to avoid cracking. However, bigger vessels are pre-heated to expel the residual water which may cause breakages at full blast of firing. Although much might be done to maintain a high temperature yet because of the openness of the firing methods the maximum temperature one can attain is 650°C within the midst of the fire. This is to say that much heat is lost yet the wares are fired to an appreciable temperature

meant for domestic and spiritual purposes. This is made possible by the fire walls set by the shallow pits and the old pots.

2.4 Philosophical Concepts of Indigenous Pottery

Certainly, there are distinct philosophies that Eves stick to, so it will be inappropriate for any single person or community to declare that Eves have a common philosophy. To also say that the Eves migrated from the same roots and speak the same language, therefore they have the same philosophy may also be totally inaccurate. This makes it extremely difficult to identify the philosophy of the Eves in general. However, a number of authors have expressed their views on African philosophy which is worth considering for this discourse.

From the ideological viewpoint, Hountondji (1996) states, “philosophy is any kind of wisdom, individual or collective, any set of principles presenting some degree of coherence and intended to govern the daily practice of a man or a people” (p. 47). Wiredu as cited in Chukwudi Eze, (1998) specifically sees African philosophy as a “community thought” and not confined to an individual. He added that, it is the common property of everybody within a community. Omoregbe, also in Chukwudi Eze thinks otherwise that, since “community thought” emanates from individuals it therefore stands for the thoughts of the community at large.

This implies that by nature, individuals as well as groups of people engage in philosophical thought, as such, they are philosophers as well and have a system of social beliefs they practise of which the Eves are no exception.

Bodunrin as cited in Appiah (1998) agrees that, the African philosopher cannot intentionally disregard the study of the traditional belief system of its folks. In Africa, even

now, traditional culture and beliefs have immense control on the thinking and actions of men. It follows that traditional belief systems are fundamental to African philosophy.

The crucial difference between traditional African folk philosophy and philosophy proper is that the Western philosopher tries to argue for his thesis, clarifying his meaning and answering objections known or anticipated, whereas the transmitter of folk conceptions merely says, "This is what our ancestors said" (Wiredu as cited in Appiah, 1998). African philosophy in this context suggests that philosophy is a body of ideas which have been transmitted from one generation to the other by the precursors of communities.

One can therefore argue that African philosophical ideas are not found in documents, but in the mind of individuals and groups guided by belief systems which are preserved and passed on to members of society. As put forward by Appiah (1998), African philosophy is folk-philosophy or ethno-philosophy (beliefs pertaining to traditional African societies). In this regard, African philosophy and for that matter Eve philosophy is not a kind of philosophy that is based on academic knowledge.

If African philosophy is folk based one, then what does it constitute and how is it passed on? Simply, it consists of myths, wise-sayings, proverbs, stories and particularly religion and these components are transmitted through unwritten means (Omeregbe in Chukwudi Eze). It is also said to be transmitted orally or by word of mouth from generation to generation through proverbs, myths and folktales, folksongs, rituals, beliefs, customs, traditions of the people and art symbols (Appiah, 1998; Gyekye, 1995).

Selectively, an attempt will be made to discuss some of the components or elements of African philosophy which emerged in the discussion. These include; myths, proverbs, symbols and religion. In the light of this project, the discussion of these constituents is vital to the philosophy of Eves and pottery in particular.

2.4.1 Myths

Gyekye (1995), defines a myth as “imaginative representations of religious or philosophical (metaphysical ideas or propositions; they presuppose conceptual analysis and conceal philosophical arguments or conclusions.” Explaining further he cited Stewart’s write-up of Plato’s idea of myths as a vital element of philosophical style without which his philosophy cannot be understood.

Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia (2008) generally looks at a myth as a narrative that describes and portrays in symbolic language the origin of the basic elements and assumptions of a culture. Narration of a myth in this regard may pertain to how the world began, how humans and animals were created, and how certain customs, gestures, or forms of human activities originated. Almost all cultures possess or at one time possessed and lived with myths. Encarta Encyclopedia further stresses that, myths are worldwide, happening in almost all cultures and they typically date from a time before the introduction of writing, when they were passed on orally from one generation to the other. In their totality, myths refer to an extraordinary time and place and to gods and other supernatural beings and processes. More often than not, they have been seen as a vital component of religion.

In African societies, there are various myths dealing with the origin of human beings and women in particular. Some of these myths will be discussed with emphasis on women because of the major role they play in pottery. This aspect of the discourse will attempt to establish the facts about how myths are connected to indigenous pottery. Mbiti (2000) listed these myths as follows:

- i. Some myths speak about an original Mother of mankind, from whom all people originated. E.g. the Akposso (of Togo) tell that when Uwolowu (God) made men, He first made a woman on the earth and bore with her the first child, the first human being.
- ii. The Ibibio (of Nigeria) say that human beings came from the divinity Obumo, which was the son of the mother-divinity Eka-Abassi.

- iii. It is told in eastern Africa about a virgin woman Ekao, who fell on earth from the sky and bore a son; the son got married to another woman and founded human society.
- iv. Among the Tutsi of Rwanda, they believed that, the original pair of human beings was in paradise. But both the man and woman were sterile, they could not bear children. So they begged God to help them. God mixed clay with saliva and formed a small human figure. He instructed the woman to put the figure into a pot and keep it there for nine months. Every day the woman had to pour milk into the pot, mornings and evenings. She was to take out the figure only when it had grown limbs. So she followed these instructions and after nine months she pulled out what had now become a human being. God made other human beings according to this method, and these later increased on the earth. The pot is here a symbol of the womb of a mother, in which a baby takes shape and after nine months it is born.
- v. It is told that the woman was made by God out of the man's body, or after the man had been made. E.g. the Kwotto (of Nigeria) say that God made the first human beings out of the earth (soil). God made (created) first the husband, and when He had become tired, lie then made the wife (woman) who turned out to be weaker than her husband. (para. 6).

Source: www.afrikaworld.net/afrel/atr-women

A close examination of all the five myths outlined show that, women dominate and are identified as key players of creation. In some cases man was not mentioned at all. Mbiki links human life directly with God through the woman. She is created by God, and in turn becomes the instrument or channel of reproducing human life. As indicated, she has become the one who passes on life. A pot is linked with the birth of a baby by the Tutsi of Rwanda. It represents the symbol of a vessel (womb) of a woman which holds and sustains life. Mention has also been made of clay and soil respectively as the material used by God to create human beings, for that matter woman. Coincidentally, clay is the main raw material used for pottery. Categorically, a woman has been referred to by Mbiki as “mother of mankind or mother of the universe”. Similarly, Amenuke et al., (1991) also see a mother as the “Earth goddess.” Both descriptions possibly explain the reason why the woman is so ardent in using clay for several purposes such as pottery, painting and decorating the home.

The fifth myth about the Kwotto tribe of Nigeria agrees with the Holy Bible (NIV, 1973) in Genesis Chapter 2 Verse 20-23. It recounts that, Adam had no suitable mate, therefore God caused him to fall into a deep sleep and took one of his ribs and closed up the place with flesh. So God eventually made woman from the rib of man. On seeing the woman, Adam exclaimed, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman’ for she was taken out of man.” Both the Kwotto tribe and the Holy Bible accounts make the creation story convincing.

Thus, man was created first and then the woman. Most probably, the order in which the creation of man and woman follows gives the man an edge to dominate the woman. However, it does not take away the exceptional role God has bestowed upon the woman to play in procreation. In explaining further, Mbiki acknowledges that, through the origin of myths the woman is perceived as someone specially positioned to share with Him (God) the creative process of life. Somehow, the woman’s position overshadows her husband’s. In fact, she is seen as the mother of humankind, the dispenser of life and most prominently an agent of God.

The woman has been elevated to a position that overshadows the man via her role as a medium by which God’s plan of procreation had been perfectly executed. It is therefore essential to declare that the role of a woman in any African society is very crucial in the sustenance of human life. Women do not only bear life, but they nurse, they cherish, they give warmth, they care for life since all human life passes through their own bodies. It is necessary to appreciate the desire and persistent efforts women exhibit in carrying out God’s plan of human life.

In adding to the role of women, Groenewald (2005) says women are natural resource managers and they hold profound knowledge of the environment in many societies. They are also largely credited with keeping this knowledge alive and passing it on from one generation

to another. This fact emphasizes earlier points made about women occupying and controlling a very sensitive component of the society. The survival of the society depends to a large extent on how women exercise their skills in the day-to-day affairs within and outside the home.

Mosimege as cited in Groenewald (2005), manager of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in the Department of Science and Technology, South Africa, says, women play an important role in maintaining livelihoods, cultural stability and community solidity and they are the keepers of indigenous knowledge. Matricardi (2000) outlines the most important role of an African woman as that of a mother, a bearer of good luck, a revered ancestor, a vessel, procreator, protector, and initiation figure. Ntsoane, Deputy Director of (IKS), explicitly says the merge of culture and craft can be seen in the clay pots of the Bakgatla and Bahurutshe women of the North West province. The role of women therefore, is not isolated from indigenous artistic activities but closely knitted especially with pottery in particular.

In adhering to the account of myths, it is noted that a woman possesses the capabilities and flair for creating objects including those relating to pottery. A close reflection on Mbiti's version of the creation story gives the woman a great deal of life experience in performing her artistic and domestic tasks. Again, the roles attributed to a woman such as mother, a natural resource manager, a vessel, procreator, custodian of indigenous knowledge, pot referring to the symbol of the womb, demonstrates her innate approach to life, nature and humanity at large. It follows that, the care with which women handle lives coupled with their several roles in sustaining mankind can possibly translate into the subtleness of modelling pots.

2.4.2 Proverbs

In this sub-section, proverbs will be examined in relation to indigenous pottery. Literally, a proverb is a short, popular saying that expresses some practical truth, thought about daily life. Mieder as cited in Wikipedia Encyclopedia (2011), online version, says "a proverb is a

short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation” (para. 1). It is clear from this definition that most proverbs are concise, rooted in folklore, enriched in ethics and preserved by oral tradition.

Some writers (Mbiti, William Bascom and Ruth Finnegan) described African proverbs as situational in that, they can only be meaningful through the analysis of the social situation in which they occur (Gyekye, 1995). In making this fact clearer, they gave four reasons why this may be true: that, the content of proverbs are local so they must be interpreted within that context; some are conclusions of local folktales necessary for moral consumption; others originate from the customs and beliefs of the people and that form past events; and they are like metaphors of which there is need to be familiar with the rhetorical context in order to find out their meaning. In general, one will agree with Gyekye that, proverbs arise from situations, circumstances, incidents, events and experiences and must be examined and interpreted within their respective context.

From ancient times, people have recorded proverbs in visual form. This has been done in two ways. First, proverbs have been written to be displayed, often in a decorative manner, such as on pottery, cross-stitch and quilts. Secondly, proverbs have often been visually depicted in a variety of media, including paintings, etchings, and sculpture (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2011). Also, Parrinder as cited in Gyekye (1995) observed that, the medium of art was used as a tool of putting across a basic philosophy of life. Abraham affirms this point by saying that, the Akans were unable to write so they expressed their philosophic religious ideas simply through art. The focus as far as this research is concerned is about how proverbs have been used in pottery.

In order to make good sales, maintain quality and high reputation the potter selects the

best pots for the market and keeps the damaged ones for herself. There is an Akan proverb to that effect: “The potter eats from the ground.” This is literally translated as she eats from broken pots (Asihene, 1978). This proverb is to emphasize the fact that, for economic reasons the potter is obliged to maintain a certain standard and pride that will enable her to remain in the industry. The focus is therefore shifted on to the consumer instead of the producer. In effect the potter is satisfied as long as her customers are.

As regards motifs, an Akan clan pot is embellished with an *adinkra* ladder pattern representing *owu atwede obakofo mfro* meaning “death is the leveller” (Anquanda, 2006). The Akans believe that no human being is immortal and therefore all humankind shall climb the ladder of death meaning death is inevitable and everybody will taste it. Motifs of this kind are therefore a way of expressing life situations on pottery.

An Asante proverb relating to the pottery process is: “the one who moulds your head like a water pot, that one alone can break you.” It is said that Asante royal mothers literally mould their children’s heads to make them conform to Asante notions of beauty (Barley, 1994). It is an admonition to children to respect their parents because the very people who begot them are those who know how to train them in the right way.

Again, an Igbo proverb which advises a married woman to be faithful to her husband is expressed this as: “You don’t use a pot, then take it to sell in the market” (Barley). This is to stress that, it is not good to share the same body a woman shares with her husband with other people. Simply put, one should not engage in prostitution.

Barley further used another proverb in relation to fertility, precisely birth as: “I praise my pot which did not crack.” Birth in this context, is like the firing of pots put aside to cool with or without a crack. This proverb is attributed to a successful birth (no crack in a pot) of a woman. Conversely, a Yoruba proverb says: “It is the water that spills, may the pot not break.”

This is related to a woman who experiences miscarriage. It does not matter, as long as a woman continues to live she can still become pregnant and give birth, but the only danger is when she dies, referring to when the pot breaks.

2.4.3 Symbolism

Symbolism is crucial to this project because there are numerous symbols associated with pottery. Fagg as cited in Gyekye attests to the fact that, the philosophical subject matter of African art comes from its famous symbolic nature.

A symbol as defined by the Brainy Dictionary Online Edition is, “a visible sign or representation of an idea; anything which suggests an idea or quality, or another thing, as by resemblance or by convention; an emblem; a representation; a type; a figure; ...” An idea is an image of an external object which is formed by the mind. It is a notion, thought, impression, any product of intellectual action and imagination. A common way of showing something as a symbol is a matter of changing sensory data into meaningful mental images.

The way man made and used symbols might stem out of a need. So, citing Langer in Lansing (1976), men engage in the exceptional human activity of symbolization simply because of the necessity to do so. Unlike human beings, animals do not have the need for symbols and they do not make them. Thus, the need to produce symbols is basic to human life in that man cannot, but make, live with and use symbols to satisfy needs or else man becomes less human. It is impossible to see pottery vessels without a symbol. The round shapes, lines, animals and human figures, objects, etc. all attests to this fact.

The meaning of a symbol is determined by the person or group of persons using it. Many cultures may use the same symbols, but the symbols may represent different things. For example, while there is nothing intrinsically dangerous about the colour red, it has become a

symbol for danger in a number of cultures.

In a submission on the Image of Man in Africa, Dzobo (1992) listed some general uses of symbols. These include: the use of symbols to communicate complex knowledge, abstract truths and ideas about life and their meaning. A symbol is a vehicle for the conception of an object, enabling us to conceive or form a view of an object; it calls forth mental images. The mind plays a major role in forming objects as symbols. In effect, the experience acquired through seeing, aid the mental representation of images.

Plato as cited in Wildenhain (1986) asserts that, “The inner eye is more important to keep than ten thousand real eyes, for only through this can the truth be seen. The soul has an eye and it is directed towards the eternal forms” (p. 67). The soul here refers to the mind. Seeing with the soul’s eye or mind’s eye is the ability of the mind to perceive images in the unseen world, which otherwise is referred to as truth. The object that is formed with the inner eye or mind represents the symbol. The quality that calls for the revelation of images in the mind is imagination. To imagine is to create in the mind objects or situations yet to be experienced. It becomes a reality when the ideas evoked in the mind become artistic expressions. This idea is what potters translate into the making of pots.

Among the oldest and most basic inventions are symbols. Jung (1964) classified symbols as follows: Natural forms: plants, animals, men, mountains and valleys, sun and moon, wind water and fire. Man-made forms: houses, boats, cars. Abstract forms: numbers, or the triangle, the square and the circle, etc.

Generally, the symbols were outlined alphabetically in a tabular form and not grouped as indicated by Jung. The descriptions and meanings are selected from the following authors: Amenuke et al. (1991), Asihene (1978), Glover (1992) and Antubam (1963). In the light of this research, only the familiar and relevant symbols with their meanings will be discussed.

Table 2.1 *Ghanaian Symbols and their Meaning*

SYMBOL	MEANING OF SYMBOL
Bee	It denotes a well-governed industry, resurrection.
Black	Vice, sadness, strength, past things, old age and history.
Blue	Love, female tenderness, serene appearance, rule of a queen.
Brown	Decay and rottenness, past things, closeness to the soil (farming and hunting).
Circle	Symbolizes the presence and power of God.
Concentric Circle	It is used as a symbol of fertility.
Crescent Moon	Protection, tenderness, warmth, affection, calmness and gracefulness.
Crocodile	Scepticism, scrupulousness, suspicion.
Hawk	Snatching nature, hard work.
Key	Guardianship and dominion.
Leopard	Force and tenacity.
Moon	Faith, patience and determination.
Oval	A symbol of female beauty, cleansing purposes.
Palm tree	Long life and prosperity.
Pot	Holding water, wine and oil. It is a symbol of liberality and charity.
Red	Close blood relations, war, anger, aggression, violence, calamity, death, danger.
Silver	Second in position, i.e. next to a leader; female royalty; feminine qualities.
Snake	Signifies wise and wittiness.
Spiral lines	Symbolizes delicate nature of women, peace, mercy and continuity of growth.
Tortoise	Independence, self-sufficiency, patience, longevity and invulnerability to attack.
Triangle	Generally used as a symbol of female influence in society.
Undulating lines	Represents the stream of life.
White	Joy, victory, happiness, purity, virginity, faultlessness of God
Zigzag lines	Symbolizes a good application of wisdom, or careful forethought.

2.4.4 Traditional African Religion

This sub-topic discusses traditional African religious beliefs and how these beliefs affect the daily lives of people. A look at the institutions through which individuals as well as groups relate with the supernatural world will be appropriate for the literature under review. Categorically, the notional meaning, structure, nature and functionality of traditional African

religion will be examined particularly making reference to the Eves. Traditional worship, specifically Yeve, Mami Wata, Vodun; the works of art, practitioners, deities, ceremonies and rites will be discussed as well.

Religion is explained as the beliefs and practices which are connected to the supernatural. The notion of religion takes into account man's relation with the supernatural which comprises magic, witchcraft, ancestor worship, etc. (Nukunya, 2003). Again, Frazer in Nukunya (2003) considers religion as beliefs and acts which intend to propitiate or conciliate powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and human life.

To Gyekye (2002), the nature of traditional African religion is more of a communal than an individual affair. He believes that religion is at work in all aspects of human life. To clarify this point, he says to be born into the African society amounts to being born into a culture which is deeply and pervasively religious, demanding the citizens to believe and partake in the religious rituals and ceremonies of the society.

Nukunya, Frazer and Gyekye (1995) noted that beliefs and practices play very vital roles in linking humanity to the supernatural. Further, Gyekye clearly demonstrates that religion is not limited to an individual alone but to the whole community and it is woven into the everyday life of a people. It is not far to say therefore that each and every society believes and somehow practise traditional religion. It can be presumed from Gyekye's discourse that notwithstanding the array of religious systems, there are a number of doctrines, practices and rituals that are common to all which make it worthy to be identified as African Religion.

The African concepts of God have arisen from a very close relationship with nature and a dependence on the land. Though perceptions about God vary widely among different peoples, God is generally recognized as one Supreme Being, at the top of a hierarchy of lesser

deities and ancestors who are also thought to play a role in guiding and protecting men (New World Encyclopedia, 2008).

The traditional Ewe religion is organized around a creator deity, Mawu. Mawu to the Ewe is the Supreme Being and is remote from daily affairs. *Se* is a word for law, order and harmony; *Se* is the maker and keeper of human souls; in an abstract sense, *Se* is destiny (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2010). The name Mawu in Ewe simply means “he will not kill” which is generally perceived as being merciful, kind and provides the needs of his creatures. Due to God’s supreme nature, (Nukunya, 2003) says that there is no organized worship for him via priests, shrine or congregation. The only way the supremacy of God is recognized is through the pouring of libation where he is identified first as the creator before other gods and spirits are mentioned. God can only be approached through lesser spiritual beings.

Next to the supreme God are the *trɔwo* (*trɔ* singular) or nature gods which are God’s creation. They derive their power from him and reside in nature objects such as trees, rivers, streams, lagoons, ponds, forests, stones, etc. Unlike Mawu, *trɔwo* are characterized by organized worship through priests, shrine or congregation. There are also a number of religious groups such as *vodu* and *yeve* which are owned by individuals (Nukunya). *Vodun* and *yeve* will be discussed into details later under this same sub-heading.

The third group is *tɔgbɛɣɔliwo* or ancestral spirits which are held in high esteem by the Ewes because they believe they control the activities of mankind and protect them against evil spirits, accidents and calamities which may befall them. It is also believed that, ancestral spirits could impose punishments on humanity (Gadzekpo, 1997).

Religious worship involves saying prayers through the pouring of libation to God, the gods, ancestors, etc. For the effectiveness of the prayers, a work of art is used by priests or members of families. An art work, in this case, (a pot or bowl, plain or figurative) serves not

only as a visible image but most importantly as a medium into which spirits are invoked to commune with the living. A prayer may involve salutation, invocation, offerings and sacrifices to strengthen the relationship between God, spirits and man (Asihene, 1978).

2.4.5 Yeve and Mami Wata Worship

The information on *Yeve* and *Mami Wata* is a research conducted by Wright, Coleen (1999), on Art and Symbolism in Ewe Religion in Klikor, Ghana. The nature of the *Yeve* religion was explained to the researcher by Togbi Adalaku.

2.4.5.1 Yeve Worship

Generally, Yeve is the God of thunder and lightning among the Ewe speaking people of Ghana, Togo and Benin (Wikipedia, 2008). Togbi Adalaku said, the thunder god was revealed to man through thunder and lightning. The Almighty God is worshiped in many ways and the thunder god power comes from the Almighty God who created heaven and earth. Yewe was first revealed to Togbi Adalaku the Tohono Sofatsi shrine's founder. This is believed to have happened over three hundred years ago. The thunder god or the sky gods in variation can be found all over the world (i.e.-Yaweh of the Israelites; Ra of the Egyptians...). This is also confirmed by Parrinder (1969) that thunder gods are found almost everywhere in West Africa just as in many parts of the world. The Sacred name of Yewe is *Tɔhonɔ*, *tɔ*-father, *ho*-wealth, *nɔ*-mother. The god is both male and female because the almighty God created everything in pairs. It is both mother and father as the name implies. The reference to wealth implies that it is a god who can supply spiritual wealth.

The thunder god is a god of justice, authority and protection. It will act wrathfully towards those who are unjust or unlawful. With its lightening it hurls stones at anyone who

has done wrong and strikes them down. All of the relics of the thunder god were revealed to Togbi Adalaku when Yewe came through the thunder and lightening.

The symbols of the yewe religion include *sogbo*, *fiagble*, *gbaka*, *vegle*, *hudze*, *diagbla*, *se*, and cowry shells. The word *Sogbo* is interpreted as; *So* meaning sky or the thundergod; *gbo* meaning great. In the totality of the word it means the thunder god surpasses all that is in the world. Physically, *Sogbo* consists of a small red glass, seed beads that are strung together to make a large banded necklace that is bound together by one large bead. Initiates and priestesses wear this necklace to signify the greatness of the thunder god.

Fiagble is a horn-shaped metal blade similar to the zodiac sign of Aries, the Ram (*agbo* in Ewe). The ram is a sacred animal to the *So* followers. The Ram is sacrificed to Yewe and therefore forms the basis for Yewe worship. The object is used to create the deity. It also signifies the wisdom of Yewe. When a priest or the initiates carries this during a ceremony or festival it is showing aggressiveness and or their authority.

Gbaka are clay pots, which are placed on fixed pillars. There are two found in the thunder god's shrine representing the two pillars of *So* (male and female). The male *gbaka* is situated in the East and the female in the West. It is used to 'cool down the tension of man'. If there is a problem or sickness the victim uses the water in the pot for cleansing with the belief the he/she will be cured. The material used for such an object must be created by Mawu, because it is the holiest that is why it is made of earth.

Vegle is a necklace consisting of different types of beads worn by the *Soshi* (male part of god) initiates. After one passes through the period of initiation this is given to him as a sign of acceptance. The mixture of colours used signifies that though the thunder god is only one yet it is worshiped in many different ways (diversity). Red-aggression, yellow-fairness or

justice, and blue-peace. All these colours also testify about the different natures of the only thunder god.

Hudze is the bead necklace worn by the *Abloshi* (female) initiates. It is also the necklace of the god to be worn after one has completed initiation. Red symbolizes aggression and yellow signifies justice.

Diagbla is a long strand of cowry shells strung together. It is placed around one's shoulder and resting on one's hip. All of the cowry shells are placed in pairs around the band to signify the "two" in everything. The *Soshi* and *Abloshi* initiates have different sets of *Diagbla*. The *Soshi* initiates can be identified from the *Abloshi* by the black bead that is strung in-between each alternating cowry shell pairs. The black and white together symbolizes the dependence of night and day on each other.

Se is a red parrot feather that is worn by *Soshi* (male initiate). It is placed in an intricately woven headband and worn on festival occasions. It signifies "the law" of existence- the nature of all things that must be followed. When the *Soshi* initiates wear this it is because they are on the side of Yewe that is the side of the law (the male). During festivals when *Soshi* initiates wear this they are not to laugh or even talk because they represent the law. The *Abloshi* (female) initiates on the other hand wear a headband that does not have *Se* in it. They are free to be more relaxed during festivals. They often bring humour and fun to the gathering because they are not under the law.

Cowry shells are very important objects in traditional African religion particularly in *Yeve*. They serve many purposes - magical, medicinal, divinatory or sacred. They most often represent one's material wealth or one's "spiritual" wealth, for they were once used as currency in West Africa. They also symbolize fertility or prosperity in that they are said to resemble a woman's vagina.

2.4.5.2 Mami Water

It is a goddess/god of the sea. It is both male and female. Because it is a god of the Sea it does not like to be dirty and worshippers must make sure they are clean and smelling good in order to please her/him. Mami Water loves perfume and perfume talcum powder. Mami Water is a god of commerce and wealth; she brings prosperity into one's life. Human hands do not create Mami Water, because it is a spiritual being, but it is identified by images such as paintings or wooden sculptures. It is often personified and shown as a white lady with dark bushy hair. She is identified by different objects that she is adorned with. Snakes can be wrapped around her and she often wears certain jewellery (i.e.-silver, coral beads, blue beads). She is often represented as a mermaid or merman (with a fishtail instead of legs) and a bare upper body.

When Mami Water calls a particular person to have her/him as a guardian spirit she is very persistent and particular. One must not refuse to her wishes or else she will surely taunt the person. The person may fall ill or even have strange things happen to him or her. When man is called by Mami Water a woman will appear to him in a vision during sleep. When it is a woman it will be a man to appear. When one is initiated into Mami Water one becomes married to a "spiritual husband" or "spiritual wife". Not everyone can be called to Mami Water just like in the Yewe worship, it is only those who are chosen by the god.

2.4.6 Vodun Worship

There are several definitions of vodun but Wright's seems to suit the Ghana-Eve vodun, hence it is adopted for the discourse. Bleir in Consentino (1995), reveal that the term vodun (*vodu*) first appeared in 1658 in the *Doctrina Christiana*, a work by the West African King of Allada's ambassador to the court of Philip IV of Spain. It is generally translated as "god, sacra,

sacred, or priestly." Gilli also in Consentino argues that vodun's etymological roots lie in the Ewe (Ewe) word *vo* meaning 'hole' or 'opening.' According to Gilli, the word

vo here is a symbol of the hidden, the secret, of what we cannot explain but which troubles us and makes us feel uneasy. The presence of this *vo* can also deceive us without our perceiving it and the *vo* becomes the cause of our error. One says in this case, *me da vo* "I have been deceived" (p. 79).

Complementing the above, Gilli says vodun shrines often take the form of a hole in the ground into which special empowering materials are placed. The second aspect of the word *dun* has its foundation in the term for Fa (Afa, Ifa), divination signs, *du*. *du* signifies a messenger or sign. When both words *vo* and *du* are combined it means "messenger of the hole" or "messenger of the hidden, the invincible."

Wright (1999) says, the word 'vodun' when taken apart actually means: *vo* - finish completely, to set free, liberate or be comfortable; *du* - town/community. When put together it speaks of a form of worship that makes a community feel good. These words may come from the word *gbadu*; *gba* - break; *du* - town/community; which is a deity that can harm the town if its laws are not abided.

Wikipedia (2008) looks at the word *vodún* as the *Gbe* (Fon-Ewe) word for *spirit*. When the word is capitalized, *Vodun*, it denotes the religion. When it is not, *vodun*, it denotes the spirits that are central to the religion. "Voodoo" is the most common pronunciation amongst English speakers. Vodun is practised by the Ewe, Kabye, Mina, Fon, peoples of south-eastern Ghana, southern and central Togo, southern and central Benin, and (under a different name) the Yoruba in south-western Nigeria.

Wikipedia says, Vodun cosmology centers around the *vodun*, spirits and other elements of divine essence which govern the Earth. Vodun has a single divine Creator, called *Mawu* or *Nana Buluku*, which embodies a dual cosmogenic principle, and of which *Mawu*, the moon,

and *Lisa*, the sun, are female and male aspects, respectively. *Mawu* and *Lisa* are often portrayed as the twin children of the Creator.

Vodun is the age-old West African belief in a magic field of force that rules our earthly existence. A world in which ritual pots and figures made out of clay can attract gods, goddesses, ancestors and spirits. Also a world in which Vodun gods have to be given offerings so that the gods will not land people in disaster, and in which figures charged with powers can liberate individuals from a hopeless situation (Blier, 1995; Vodun, Kracht en Aarde, 1996).

In Togo and Benin, pottery which is made for the purpose of Vodun rituals is called *Wen Zen*, meaning pots with a message (*nyagblaze* in Ewe). It can be recognized by a variety of decorations such as holes, studs, projections, animal patterns and human figures. A lot of this pottery shows - apart from residues from offerings (alcohol, herbs and food) - also traces of white, red and blue pigment and bits of coloured textile. Some patterns and colours distinctly refer to a specific voodoo-god (Blier, 1995).

Blier grouped vodun gods into 3 pantheons: the pantheon of the heavens, the pantheon of the earth and the pantheon of thunder. Each pantheon has its own gods and goddesses, who cover, as it were, all aspects and possible experiences of human life. She identifies the most important earth god as *Sakpata*, **Plate 2.6**. He is capable of bringing hunger and disease, but he offers also protection against all evil. Red is a typical *Sakpata* colour. Bulges refer to *Tohusso* in **Plate 2.7**, the king of the water. White is the colour of *Dan*, **Plate 2.8** the cosmic snake who binds heaven and earth, and in doing so ensures there is a balance. Typical of *Lissa* in **Plate 2.9** is the male element in the cosmos, the pots with chameleons.

The animistic decorations and figures contain certain rawness. One explanation Blier gives for this primitive appearance is the lack of ovens. In many places in Togo clay is baked

in open fires at low temperatures. Despite these technical limitations the pots and figures are of extraordinary quality.



Plate 2.6 *Sakpata*



Plate 2.7 *Tohoussu*



Plate 2.8 *Dan Aido Hwedo*



Plate 2.9 *Lissa*

2.5: This pot with bulges refers to Sakpata, Vodun of the earth. Height 17 cm.

2.6 Pot and lid refer to Tohoussu, Vodun of the water. Height 15 cm.

2.7: This lid shows a male and a female snake, they both symbolize Dan Aido Hwedo, the rainbow snake. The white colour is a reference to cosmic harmony. Height 18 cm.

2.8 Vodun pot Lissa Chameleons attracts Lissa, Vodun of strength and all human dealings. The two chameleons on the lid are surrounded by 41 small bulges - the 'children' of Lissa. The large bulges on the pot are intended for Sakpata, Vodun of the earth. Height 28 cm.

Source of Images: (Kracht en Aarde, 1996)

In Vodun worship names are acquired in a particularly way. Tugbenyo Justice, 2011, an Informant, reveal that the first person who acquires and worships a vodun is identified with a name which is used by anyone who subsequently worships the same vodun. The names are divided between the sexes. Note that any name preceded by *Da* means that person belongs to the “snake-vodun.” Also any name ending with *shi* signifies spouse of the vodun spirit.

Names are also divided between the sexes. The male names include; Daḡodo, Misida, Daglohu, Dalehũ, Dakpo, Dalekpõ, Dadziseḡe, Hũtɔdzieso, Kadza, etc. while the female names consist of; Dangoe, Dashi, Dakomeshi, Lugushi, Nyɔgbɔshi, Ageshi, Dadzenkɔ, Dadzesɔ, Hũdziezɔ, Kadzeshi, etc.

2.5 Cultural Concepts and Practices in Indigenous Pottery

No society, community or institution can exist without a culture. The truth of this statement lies in the fact that, culture deals with the life style of a people and every group of people live in a particular way. Therefore, it is just natural that every society should have its own culture. Any society without culture means it has no way of life and therefore is dead or is non-existent. This session will entail the definition of culture, the characteristics of culture and how culture is related to pottery. It is important to note that the discourse on the uses of pottery on **Pages 37-40** reflects a vital aspect of culture.

2.5.1 Culture Defined

E. B. Taylor, an English anthropologist was the first to coin the term 'culture' in the eighteenth century. The study of society becomes incomplete without proper understanding of the culture of that society because culture and society go together. Culture is a unique possession of man. Man is born and brought up in a cultural environment. Culture is the unique quality of man which separates him from the lower animals. Culture includes all that man acquires in his social life.

In defining culture, Taylor (1994) states, “Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capability and habits acquired by man as a member of society (p. 1).” Taylor sees culture as having different parts yet related. These parts include both material and non-material things that exist in the society which determine the life of the people, and which are observable within the life pattern of the members of a society. It also includes the skills and other regular ways of life the members of a society have learnt which they use knowingly or unknowingly. This is because it is something they have lived with for a long time.

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica (1988) describes culture as the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behaviour. It is made up of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies, etc. and for culture to develop, it will depend on the capacity of subsequent generations. This description shows that, culture includes a pattern of life, not in fragments but integrated which the people in a society have learned and made their own and by which they are identified, which is passed on from one generation to another.

Linton (1945) states, “Culture is the configuration of learned behaviour and the results of behaviour whose component elements are shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society (p. 32).” Linton shows that culture includes a pattern of life which the people in a society have learned and made their own and by which they are identified.

From the foregoing definitions, culture means the total way of life of a people as members of a distinct group. This life includes the language they speak; names they have and use; the types of work they do as made possible by their environment; types of food they eat and their feeding habits; stories they tell; art and how artifact are produced; their ways of singing and dancing; symbols they have and their meaning; their religion, their beliefs, customs, values, traditions, attitudes and their philosophy; institutions they have; tools and implements they use and what they use them for; child-raising practices among the people; their laws and their interpretations; and the social relationships that exist among the people. These can be referred to as elements of culture.

2.5.2 The Characteristics of Culture

Basically, culture does not exist in isolation therefore it is social, as such a product of society. It develops through social interaction. No man can acquire culture without association

with others. Man becomes a man only among men. Again, culture is not something that an individual alone can possess. In sociological sense it is shared. E.g. customs, traditions, beliefs, ideas, values, morals etc. are all shared by people of a society. Also, culture is not inborn but it is learnt. It is often called "learned ways of behaviour". Unlearned behaviour is not culture but shaking hands, saying thanks' or dressing etc. are cultural behaviour. In all human societies, children learn culture from adults. Anthropologists call this process *enculturation*, or cultural transmission.

Culture must also lend itself to transmission, that is, it must be such that it can be passed on from one generation to the other. Transmission of culture may take place by imitation as well as by instruction. Language for instance makes it possible for the present generation to understand the achievement of earlier generations. Another fact about the characteristic of culture is the fact that it is continuous and cumulative. In its historical growth it tends to become cumulative. Sociologist Linton called culture 'the social heritage' of man.

Furthermore, culture varies from society to society. Every society has a culture of its own. It differs from society to society and varies from time to time. Again, culture of every society is unique to itself. Cultures are not uniform. Cultural elements like customs, traditions, morale, values, beliefs are not uniform everywhere

No culture ever remains changeless, it is subject to slow but constant change. Culture is responsive to the changing conditions of the physical world. Hence culture is dynamic. Finally, culture is gratifying in that it provides proper opportunities for the satisfaction of our needs and desires. Our needs both biological and social are fulfilled in the cultural ways. Culture determines and guides various activities of man. Thus, culture is defined as the process through which human beings satisfy their wants.

2.5.3 Classification of culture

Culture which Schein (1992) refers to as organizational can be grouped into three levels (see **Table 2.2**): *artifacts* which are at the surface and can easily be discerned but hard to understand e.g. dress; *espoused values* which are conscious strategies, goals and philosophies; and *basic assumptions and values* which form the core of culture which are difficult to discern because they exist at a largely unconscious level yet they provide the key to understanding why things happen in a particular way.

Bodley (2006) rather grouped culture into four: material, social, ideological and the arts. Material culture includes products of human manufacture, such as technology. Social culture pertains to people's forms of social organization that is how people interact and organize themselves into groups. Ideological culture relates to what people think, value, believe, and hold as ideals. The arts include such activities and areas of interest as music, sculpture, painting, pottery, theatre, cooking, writing, and fashion.

Table 2.2 Schein's Three Levels of Culture

Source: Schein (1992)



The fourth category though falls in line with this project yet it cannot exist without the others. Bodley describes art as a distinctly human production, and many people consider it the ultimate form of culture because it can have the quality of pure expression, entirely separate

from basic human needs. The material arts include painting, pottery, sculpture, textiles and clothing and cookery which take the form of material production, and many utilitarian items have artistic qualities. Non-material arts include music, dance, drama and dramatic arts, storytelling and written narratives and they reside in the mind and body and are expressed in the form of performance.

In relation to other aspects of culture, a work of art for example a pot, must be created to reflect certain ideas, beliefs, religion, philosophy which have been accumulated for years and are deep rooted in the minds of the people. Art therefore is a vehicle to help in the expression of the belief systems and practices of a people. On the other hand, for a successful work in pottery, potters are obliged to follow certain rules and practices such as taboos.

2.5.4 The Relation of Culture to Pottery

For archaeologists, anthropologists and historians, the study of pottery can help to provide an insight into past cultures. The study of pottery products is helpful in the development of theories on the organisation, economic condition and the cultural development of societies that produced or acquired pottery ware. The study of pottery may also allow inferences to be drawn about a culture's daily life, religion, social relationships, attitudes toward neighbours and attitudes to their own world (Wikimedia, 2007). This insight is vital in the sense that the past way of life of a people provide an opportunity to look at the various forms of pottery and the possible uses they were put to.

Sterner as cited in Barley (1994) revealed that making pots is one of the many ways available to a culture to think about itself. This is because pottery conveys different messages to different sections of the community and the African love for it turns out to be something of a regional stylistic feature. Sterner's point therefore suggests that making pots is one vital area

in reflecting on the culture of a people.

The 'potting model' is only one of the many ways available to a culture to think about itself. It may convey different messages to different sections of the community and the preference for it by Africans may amount to a particular style adopted within a geographical area (Sterner as cited in Barley 1994). In this regard, the production of pottery in any society is one vital area in reflecting on how to live as a people. Potting then is a way of life, not something regarded primarily as a career. The way it conveys feelings and thoughts to people of one community may differ from the other depending on how it is carried out.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

Included in this chapter are discussions of the main steps used in undertaking the study. These consist of the methods and tools employed to gather and analyze data applicable to the research project.

3.1 Research Design

The design used in this research is the qualitative type. It involves small groups with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from participants' perspective (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). The research methodologies adopted include descriptive and explanatory. These methods yielded data that cannot be measured quantitatively. The data gathering tools include interview and observation.

3.2 Research Methodology

3.2.1 Descriptive

This method demands that the setting of the research be described. Descriptive research is concerned with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, attitudes, on-going processes, etc. The purpose is not just the description of *what is*, but the discovery of *meaning* (Ndagi, 1984). From Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia (2010), descriptive research answers the questions of *who*, *what*, *where*, *when* and *how*. In brief, it is a fact finding method. It was used by the researcher to identify tools, materials and methods together with how they are used by Eve potters. It was also used

as a means to report the pottery process the researcher experienced at the various centres; how, where and when the potters engaged in making pots.

3.2.2 Explanatory

Explanatory research does not only describe the features of the research but goes further to analyse and explain why or how something is happening. Blurtit (2010) also indicates that, the focal point in using this type of research method is to seek and provide an explanation between two phenomena. As indicated by both, the focus is not the description of observable facts but the clarification for a deeper understanding. To all intents and purposes, Blurtit says the explanatory research method seeks to look for causes and reasons.

Again Blurtit enumerated the goals of explanatory research as: the development of a mental picture of the topic which is under observation; the determination of the research feasibility; refining the research ideas by formulating different questions; building and elaborating a theory; determining the accuracy of a theory and testing a theory's predictions or principles, etc.

This method guided the researcher to look for facts pertaining to the concepts of philosophy and culture in order to understand how Eve pottery is integrated into everyday life. Based on this method, certain theories which emerged in the review of literature were tested. Again, the explanatory method was employed to know and understand the reason why potters still abide by certain customs, beliefs and traditions in these modern times so as to gain familiarity in unidentified fields.

3.3 Library Research

Related data which is pertinent to the project was gathered and reviewed from documentary sources: the print and electronic media. These include books, publications,

journals, maps and the internet. Libraries played a major role in sourcing for secondary data for the study. Literature searches were made from the following libraries: KNUST Main library, Art Education Department and College of Art. Other libraries included African Studies at Legon; Wesley College, Kumasi and Ashanti Library also in Kumasi. Additionally, a data on the Volta map was obtained from the Survey Department in Accra. The literature gathered helped the researcher to trace the history of the Eves, examine tools, materials, methods, culture, philosophy and traditional education of the pottery tradition globally.

3.4 Population and Sampling

3.4.1 Population

Best (1981) defines population as “any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. The population may be all the individuals of a particular type or a more restricted part of a group (p.8).” A population is a group of individual persons, objects, or items from which samples are taken for measurement (Mugo, 2010). Simply, it is the larger group from which individuals are selected to participate in a study. For the purpose of this research, the target population covers Eves in all pottery centres in all districts of the Volta Region.

Out of a total of eighteen districts, six were selected as the representative population. The criteria for inclusion was based on: the geographical location and how it affects the making of pots; the variety in the use of tools, materials and methods; availability of clay as the main material in the area; nature of domestic activities women particularly engage in; religious practices influencing the making of pots; and the variety in the philosophy and culture of the selected groups.

3.4.2 Sampling

According to Mugo (2010), sampling involves the selection of a suitable representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Where a population is too large to cover, the researcher obtains a part (sample) rather than a total population. It is easier to observe a part rather than the whole. Based on this, from a sample frame of six districts, fourteen respondents were selected from each centre. These groups included elderly female potters (45+ years), middle age female potters (25-45 years), male potters (all ages), elderly men (45+ years) and female youth (25 and below). Apart from these, three informants shown in **Table 3.2** were consulted on the subject of traditional religion; Yeve, Mami wata and Vodun worship.

Table 3.1 *Selected Pottery Centres (Samples).*

No	DISTRICT	POTTERY CENTRE
1	North Dayi	Kpandu, Bame
2	Adaklu Anyigbe	Agotime, Adedome
3	Akatsi	Ave-Dzalele, Ahihladzi
4	North Ketu	Dzodze Kuli, Dzogbefime, Fiagbedu, Kpodoave, Zomayi
5	North Tongu	Adidome Todze, Vume Klokofe
6	South Tongu	Vume

The respondents were grouped into five. The main group of study was A, while B, C, D and E served as supporting groups, see **Table 3.3**. Their inclusion was vital in terms of verifying the practicality of the assertions put forth in the statement of the problem.

The simple random and cluster sampling methods were employed in order to obtain a manageable segment of the population. The researcher considered the use of the simple

random method because it consists of a simple and systematic procedure. It also has a high probability of being representative of the total population. It again ensures that each subject has an equal chance of selection. It would be very impracticable, tedious and unyielding to gather data from a whole population, i.e. all pottery centres in Evedland hence the use of this method. The cluster sampling method was also used for the fact that all clusters (districts) have similar characteristics.

Table 3.2 *Resource Persons*

N_o	NAME	BACKGROUND INFORMATION
1.	<i>Mr. Mawutor Shigbadi</i>	He is a native of Woe, a town in the Keta District. He was a <i>tɔ̀bɔ̀kɔ̀</i> (chief divination priest) but now converted to Christianity.
3.	<i>Mr. Justice Tugbenyo</i>	He is a native of Dzodze, a former <i>Hũnɔ̀</i> (custodian of gods). He has now converted to Christianity.
4.	<i>Mr. Ignatius Dzakpa</i>	He is a teacher at Wilhemena Bishop Memorial Senior High School, Old Tafo Akim. He specialised in Eve and English Language in the University.

3.4.3 The Sample

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985). According to Mugo, when applied to human beings, it can be defined as a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey. It entails part of a whole to show what the rest is like. Usually, it is only a fraction of the population which is selected for the study. This is referred to as the sample.

Although there were several people in the 6 preferred districts, only 84 persons (sample) were selected to represent the entire population. **Table 3.3** indicates that, 14 respondents were

selected from each pottery centre. When multiplied by the 6 centres the overall number of respondents used in this research totalled 84. These were the people who were interviewed on one-on-one basis in order to gather data for the study.

Table 3.3 *Respondents.*

GROUP	DESCRIPTION	GROUP RESPONDENT	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
A (45+ years)	Elderly Female Potters	5	30
B (25-45)	Middle Age Female Potters	3	18
C (All ages)	Male Potters	2	12
D (45+ years)	Elderly Men	2	12
E (25 below)	Female Youth	2	12
TOTAL		14	84

3.5 Data Collecting Procedures

Data are very essential in any type of research that is to be carried out. The gathering of data is vital in the testing of the research questions. Research tools or instruments are therefore employed to describe and quantify the data. In simple language, research tools are data-gathering procedures used to investigate problems.

There are two very important facts to note about research tools; their validity and reliability. Validity is a data-gathering tool intended to determine whether the research measures the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure while reliability is the extent to which an instrument measures the same data over time and shows an accurate representation under the same conditions with the same subjects (Best, 1981). A test or measure is valid if the conclusions made from it are appropriate, meaningful, and useful. In reliability there must be consistency showing in the repetitive measurements.

3.6 Research Instrument

3.6.1 Interview

It is an oral questionnaire. It permits the researcher to elicit direct information from respondents and to classify it on the spot (Best, 1981). In terms of its appropriateness, Best (1981) states that, “The interview is also particularly appropriate when dealing with young children, illiterates, those with language difficulties and those of limited intelligence” (p.165). This procedure was very useful since most of the indigenous potters were illiterates and would certainly have difficulty with language, for that matter English language. Apart from the traditional face-to-face method of gathering data, the telephone was also utilised. For the purpose of this research, personal interviews were conducted in all the pottery centres.

First of all, a draft interview guide was prepared in English and pre-tested in four pottery centres to find out whether the respondents understood the questions. From the answers given, the pre-test interview revealed unanticipated problems with question wording, repetitive questioning, etc. Also, the researcher found it difficult to translate the questions from English to Ewe on the spot. With the help of specialists, the questions were translated directly into Ewe.

Next was the actual interview in all the centres which was preceded by self introduction, explanation of the purpose of the interview and how the opinions of respondents would be treated. The researcher further established the kind of rapport that was needed for the respondents to tolerate and willingly answer questions posed to them.

Structured and semi-structured questions were used to guide the subjects in providing answers in their own words. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) reveal that, in a structured interview, “the researcher asks a standard set of questions and nothing more. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher may follow the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification or probe a person’s reasoning” (p. 184). It was necessary

to have an interview schedule to maintain consistency in data and to ensure that respondents do not deviate from the research topic. However, the researcher also used follow-up questions to elicit in-depth views from respondents. The researcher also employed the open-ended interview which is more flexible and has no formal schedule of questions but only topics to explore. It was vital to obtain information on Yeve, Mami Wata and Vodun worship which form the basis for the making of figurative pots in some pottery centres, specifically Dzodze Kuli and Dzogbefime.

The recording of responses from respondents was on the spot through note-taking and with the aid of a tape recorder to obtain a more detailed and comprehensive data which otherwise would be difficult to capture through writing only. Where the researcher was in doubt of some facts after leaving the field, the telephone was used to find out from the respondents.

3.6.2 Observation

It is the tool used by the researcher to obtain data through direct examination. This allowed the researcher to directly interact with potters in their work environment. It involved a critical look or watching carefully on-the-spot the way pottery was made although no active part was played in the modelling process. The observation was supported by the use of a digital camera to capture the tools, materials, methods and some uses of pottery. The advantage of this research tool was that, it was relatively inexpensive, flexible and it yielded valuable data which was understood by the researcher and analysed with ease.

3.7 Data Analysis

The grounded theory method within which the constant comparison method works was used as a guide to analyze data. According to Dye, et al. (2000), “Grounded theory is a general

methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed.” The aim of this approach is to find out what theory accounts for the research situation as it is. A central feature of this analytical approach is the use of a general method called the constant comparative analysis (Dye, et al). Further, Dye et al indicate that constant comparison is used to compare data set to data set and data set to theory.

The constant comparative analysis method is a process whereby data recorded and classified are also compared across categories. It undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data collection and analysis process, continuously feeding back into the process of category coding. As a result, a new topological dimension, as well as new relationships are discovered (Goetz and LeCompte as cited in Dye et al., 2000).

In the same way, grounded theory works through the following overlapping phases. Data collection, note-taking, coding and memoing. Sorting occurs when all categories are saturated. Writing occurs after sorting. The theory is emergent – discovered in the data, Dye et al say.

In applying this method, the researcher gathered data using interviews and observation and categorized them according to the answers emanating from the respondents. They were put under the following headings coined from the research questions. Tools, materials and methods, uses of pottery, the philosophy of pottery, cultural aspect of pottery, mode of transmitting pottery skills and sustainability of indigenous Eve pottery. These sub-headings reduced data complexity thus permitting ordering and relating the ideas grouped to one another.

Some comparison was done to find out the similarities and differences. Finally, refinement of data was done to eliminate those that were inappropriate within the bits and piles of the categories. In effect, some categories emerged frequently. These were considered

“conceptualised data” hence the emergence of grounded theories. For instance, in all the pottery centres, it became clear that only females make pots.

In summary, by using this method the data was put into a format, sorted and shaped into information, interpreted and summarized in order to draw out the findings from the study.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

This chapter embodies assembling, description and interpretation of data gathered from twelve Eve pottery centres. The data gathered was through interview and observation. It is divided into two parts. Included in part one is assembling and description of data under tools, materials, methods and uses of pottery; philosophy and culture. Additionally, a comparison of Eve and Krobo pottery has been included in this chapter. Plates were added where necessary to clarify textual discussions. Part two entails interpretation of the data assembled in part one.

4.1 Kpando Bame

Kpando Bame is located in the North Dayi District, about 6 kilometres from Kpando the capital. Almost every household makes or has fair idea about pottery and its activities. Potters in this locality have a flair for making unstained and unpainted pottery. They work on individual basis under trees and shades in their respective homes.

4.1.1 Pottery Tools



Plate 4.1 *Ababe*



Plate 4.2 *Emedzeti*



Plate 4.3 *Zemliti*

Ababe (wooden paddle) is carved from a white lightweight wood called *kpomiti* in Eve or *sese* in Twi. It is used for shaping and removing trapped air from the surface of pots and bowls.

Emedzeti (fork tool) is carved from bamboo and used for ruling lines inside *kolizɔkpui* (grinding bowl). It is also used as a decorative tool to draw lines on the rim and neck of pots.

Zemliti (shaping tool) which is obtained from any soft wood is used as a shaping tool to deepen the neck and flatten the lip of pots and bowls.



Plate 4.4 *Kenenḡḡe*



Plate 4.5 *Zedomakpa/tredzo*

Kenenḡḡe (hole-in-coin) is used to divide the inner part of bowls into four parts for easy texturing. It is also used as a decorative tool to deepen lines drawn on rim and neck of pots.

Zedomakpa/tredzo (shaping leaf) is boiled to soften it. Depending on the thickness of the leaf at least fifteen leaves are folded longitudinally into two parts. It is used for widening, shaping and smoothing the rim of a pot in the wet stage.



Plate 4.6 *Akorḡe*



Plate 4.7 *Numeḡlanu*

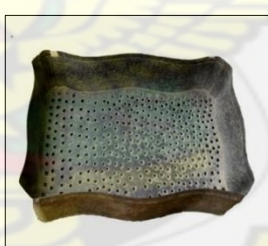


Plate 4.8 *Sranu*

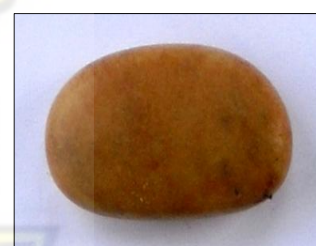


Plate 4.9 *Kpedonakpe/
Zeninikpe*

Akorḡe (metal scraper) is a metal tool prepared by a blacksmith and used for scraping the rough inner surfaces of pots and bowls. *Numeḡlanu* (scraper) is a circular metal lid used after scraping the inner surfaces to level the inside walls of pots. *Sranu* (sieve) is a metal sift used for sieving grog. *Kpedonakpe/zeninikpe* (smooth stones) are a number of smooth stones obtained from the Volta River and used purposely to smoothen surfaces of wares in order to seal all sand and emerging grog particles that appear on the surface of wares.

4.1.2 Pottery Materials

Clay digging and preparation: The two types of clay used are earthenware and fire. They are obtained from Bame and Torkor pits. Potters mix both because Bame clay is too plastic to be used alone. Clay is dug by both sexes any day except Friday.

The ancestors always performed rites in the past to *Yɔvui* (Bame god), occasionally, the fetish priestess who is the spouse of *Yɔvui*, performs similar rites as a sign of strengthening and maintaining close ties with it. However, if any person defiles the land, she/he is fined to pay drinks and sheep for the pacification of the land gods. The potters especially adhere strictly to the taboos so as to continue enjoying the resources of the land which is their main source of livelihood (F. Tette, personal communication, 2010).

No rites are performed before clay is dug but women in their menstrual period are not allowed to go near the pit for the fear of defiling it. Secondly, nobody is allowed to wear black clothes to the pit because that is *Yɔvui*'s colour. The belief is that a person in any of these conditions will be attacked by a crocodile from the nearby pond. It is also believed that pots break if these taboos are not adhered to and the clay also reduces in quantity and quality (F. Yaokpoe, personal communication, 2010).

Raw clay from the pit is dried in the sun for three days to aid the lumps to dissolve quickly when soaked in water. *Solũ* (grog) is prepared from broken pots. The pieces of pots are ground into powder, added to very plastic clay to reduce plasticity, avoid breaking of wares and to give thermal strength to the body. To prevent drying, clay is stored in plastic containers or covered with rugs. Potters prefer using aging clay or stored clay or clay soaked overnight because the components dissolve properly to give the clay a more workable texture (V. Dzamedzi, personal communication, 2010).

4.1.3 Pottery methods

The pinch and coil methods are mainly used in building pots. Only the pinch method is used for modelling *koloe* (grinding bowl) while both the pinch and coil are used for pots.

Ze (pot): After kneading the clay (**Plate 4.10**) it is rolled into a ball according to the size of the pot. The top is flattened and a hole is made through the centre from one end to the other and widened to an appreciable circumference (**Plate 4.11**). With the rim in between the *zedomakpa* (a stack of folded leaves), it is widened to the required perimeter (**Plate 4.12**) and the *zemliti* (shaping tool) is used to form the neck (**Plate 4.13**).



Plate 4.10
Kneading clay



Plate 4.11
Making a hole in the clay



Plate 4.12
Smoothing rim with leaves

Lines are ruled at the rim and left to dry in the sun (**Plate 4.14**). Usually water pots are marked with single lines at the rim and two lines at the neck respectively. The pot is upturned on the potters lap and the base is scrapped off to reveal the wet and malleable surface (**Plate 4.15**). Initially, a long coil of clay is attached to the base (**Plate 4.16**) and additional coils placed over one another. Pulling is done to build a spherical shape (**Plates 4.17 and 4.18**) until the bottom is completely sealed.



Plate 4.13
Shaping with Zemliti



Plate 4.14
Ruling lines on the rim



Plate 4.15
Scraping sand from base

Simultaneously, the potter gently pushes out the inner surface while beating the outer with *ababe* (shaping tool) to bring out the spherical shape (**Plate 4.19**). At the leatherhard stage, the inner parts are levelled with *numeflanu* or scraper (**Plate 4.20**). Clay slip is applied to facilitate smoothening and burnishing. These processes aid in concealing all sand and grog



Plate 4.16 *Adding coils*



Plate 4.17 *Pulling wall*



Plate 4.18 *Sealing bottom*



Plate 4.19
Shaping with ababe



Plate 4.20
Scraping the inside wall



Plate 4.21
Burnishing the pot

particles which emerge after scrapping. Burnishing is done at the leatherhard stage to render the pot smooth (**Plate 4.21**). The pot is left to dry under shade and sun before it is fired.

The open firing method is used to fire all wares. The fire place is lined with dry bamboo and palm branches before the arrangement of pots are made. Smoking of pots is done separately in a hole immediately after firing. Additionally, water pots are smoked when cool on the “swish stove” (a local firewood stove made from clay) to permanently fix the carbon (black colour) otherwise drinking water stored in the pot may be stained.

Koloe (Grinding Bowl): The method employed here is similar to Adidome Todze (**Plates 4.188 - 4.194**) yet there are differences. Kpando potters render the rims flat and thick while Todze potters rather thin them out. At Kpando, bowls are built with long neck devoid of *kɔdzẽ* or *akati* solution as a form of colour decoration. Exclusively, Todze potters make a special two-in-one ellipse-shape bowl for serving solid food and soups together but Kpando potters make single bowls. While potters at Todze make footless bowls for serving food, their colleagues in Kpando use the same bowls for performing rites and sacrifices.

4.1.4 Names and uses of pottery

There are three main items that are made at this centre; pots, bowls and “swish stove.” Bame potters have a flair for making unstained and unpainted pots. Their pots are characterised by freshness of the natural clay colour.

Tomedeze (water fetching pot) in **Plate 4.22** has the natural colour of clay with the mouth bigger than *tsinoze*. It is used for fetching and carrying drinking water from the stream.

Tsinoze (water storing pot) in **Plate 4.23** is usually blackened with a smaller mouth than *tomedeze*. It is used for storing drinking water and also used as *ahaze* (palm wine pot) for

collecting palm wine from *lubu* (palm wine tapping pot, **Plate 4.29**), carrying palm wine from the bush and as a container for selling palm wine.



Plate 4.22 *Tomedeze*



Plate 4.23 *Tsinoze*



Plate 4.24 *Kplɔdzize*

Kplɔdzize (table pot) in **Plate 4.24** derived its name from the fact that it is always placed on a table. *Kplɔ* means table and *dzi* means on. *Kplɔdzi* simply means “on the table.” It has a lid with a handle and a foot for stability when placed on a flat surface. It is used for storing drinking water reserved specially for visitors on special occasions.



Plate 4.25 *Detsifoze*

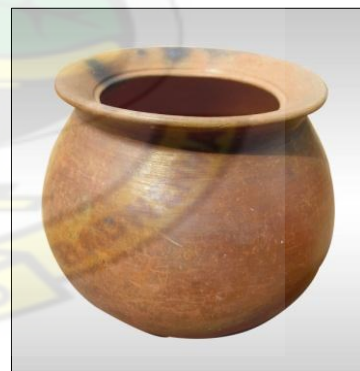


Plate 4.26 *Nuɖaze*

Detsifoze (soup pot) is usually blackened because of daily cooking. It has a broad rim and a wider mouth to hold up the overflow of the soup when boiling. It is used for preparing and storing all kinds of soups and vegetable meals.

Nuḍaze (cooking pot) has thicker walls than *detsifoze* and it has a wide mouth which allows easy movement of a paddle in preparing meals such as *akplē* (corn flour) and *kokonte* (cassava flour). Other foods prepared in *nuḍaze* include yam, cassava, cocoyam and rice. While *detsifoze* is broader at its waist *nuḍaze* is slimmer but deeper.



Plate 4.27 *Amatsiḍaze*



Plate 4.28 *Gbotozevi*

Amatsidaze (medicinal pot) is used for boiling herbs for curing ailments. It is also used as *kɔnuzevi* (ritual pot), a similar pot to *zedzē* used purposely for any form of ritual in the shrine. Depending on the type of ritual, up to seven may be used at a time.

Gbotozevi (puberty rite pot) is a small pot used in performing *gboto* (puberty rites) for adolescents. The novitiate carries the pot on her head and goes to the stream to fetch water which is used during the period of the rites.



Plate 4.29 *Lubu*

Lubu (palm wine tapping pot) has the natural colour of clay after firing with a small hole to prevent insects and dirt from entering the palm wine. It is used under the palm tree as a receptacle for the wine. On the surface of *lubu* are drawn *deti* (palm tree), *eha* (earth chisel), *krante* (cutlass) and *akplɔsu* (metal drill) which are associated with activities pertaining to palm wine tapping.

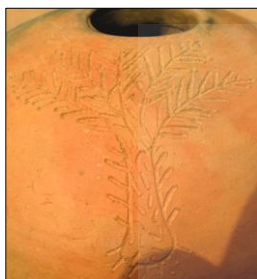


Plate 4.29a *Deti*



Plate 4.29b *Eha*



Plate 4.29c *Krante*



Plate 4.29d *Akplɔsu*

The *eha* is for uprooting the palm tree, *krante* for trimming and *akplɔsu* for punching a hole through the palm tree to allow the sap liquid wine to flow into the *lubu*.



Plate 4.30 *Ahakoloe*



Plate 4.31 *Koloe zɔkɔkɔe*

Ahakoloe (palm wine bowl) is an oversize bowl with a foot capable of containing at least a keg of palm wine. It is used for mixing and serving palm wine on various occasions. *Koloe zɔkɔkɔe* (funeral bowl) is an elongated foot bowl used for serving food prepared during funerals for the guests of bereaved families. It is mostly made with a lid to cover the food.



Plate 4.32 *Abebuze*

Abebuze (proverbial pot) is associated with three human senses; the mouth, eye and ear. These forms are moulded in relief and placed equidistant from one another with the hand indicating specific senses. The pot has a similar shape, lid and foot just like the *kplɔdzize*.



Plate 4.32a *Mouth*



Plate 4.32b *Eye*

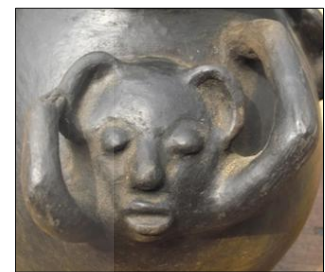


Plate 4.32c *Ear*

The meaning of the motifs on the pot is, “what the eye sees is what the mouth says to the hearing of the ear.” As human beings, we need one another to be able to exist in this world. It is therefore an advice to humankind to live in unity.



Plate 4.33 *Venɔvize*



Plate 4.34 *Nakemlekpui*



Plate 4.35 *Kolo*

Venɔvize (twin pot) has a lid with a knob and a hole made purposely to let in coins into the pot. It is used for the performance of *venɔvi kɔnu* (twin rites). *Venɔvi kɔnu* is a twin rite performed with *venɔvize* (twin pot). It is a small pot with a cover. The pot which contains

cowries and coins is hidden from the children (twins) to prevent them from dipping their hands into the pot prior to the performance of the rite. However, if any of the twins picks money from the pot before the rite is performed the child will have an obsessive desire to steal. In the process, the grandmother holds the hands of the twins, count seven and dip them into the pot. It is believed that the children will no more be under the curse of stealing if they decide to go later to pick money from the pot.

Nakemlekpui (firewood swish stove) has thin walls when compared with *Kpodoave* and *Ahlihadzi* types (**Plates 4.160** and **4.211**) which have thick walls. Due to its fragility, it is not used for heavy cooking.

Kolo (ritual bowl) is without foot and design, big in size devoid of texture within it. Water is always kept in it by priests or priestesses for the performance of sacrifices. It is also used for feeding and as water trough for domestic animals such as duck, chicken, dove, etc.



Plate 4.36 *Koloe zɔkpui* in brown and black colour

Koloe zɔkpui (grinding bowl) is similar to *Asante koloe* (below) but textured within to aid the grinding of vegetables such as pepper, tomatoes, garden eggs, etc. They are made in two forms; one is made in its natural state and the other blackened with smoke.



Plate 4.37 *Asante koloe in brown and black*

Asante koloe (eating bowl) is used for serving all kinds of foods. It was one of the favourite pottery wares patronized by the Asantes of Ghana hence the name *Asante koloe*. The inside is made smooth to differentiate it from the grinding bowl which is textured.

4.1.5 Philosophy of Kpando Bame Pottery

There is a myth among Kpando potters that says; an old lady from Kpando Fesi came across *lilitalize* (wasp nest) hanging on a twig and replicated the idea into a pot. This brought about the making of various types of pots in Kpando and its surrounding villages (R. Abodo, personal communication, 2010).

The fact that the ancestors use clay over the years demonstrates that it is the most convenient material for making pots. This can be attributed to the element of plasticity clay contains. It is venerated because it has never shrunk since the time potters started using it. F. Yaokpoe, (personal communication, 2010) is convinced that clay is endowed with extraordinary qualities which are linked with the spiritual world. In the mind of potters, it is still a mystery to see ordinary clay assume such a round shape and endure the heat that it is subjected to.

The making of round shapes of pots and bowls is a skill inherited from the ancestors. The idea of round shapes is that of a receptacle, able to contain substances. It is like the

stomach which looks insignificant on the exterior yet when filled, it is able to hold enough substances. To the potters, size, as regards quantity, is vital in the design and making of round shapes. Thus, the capacity of a pot is closely tied to the round shape made. On the exterior, pots look small but in reality they are huge and characterised by what the Eves call *eto* (depth) when filled to capacity. The round shapes are also considered well balanced and stable when placed on the “swish stove”, carried on the head to fetch water and placed in shallow holes on the ground to store drinking water (D. Tettey, personal communication, 2010).

Furthermore, there is a relationship between women particularly potters and the shape of pots. Mama Tette affirmed that the round shape is similar to a pregnancy which undergoes a number of developments until birth. Similarly, pots undergo a number of similar processes before they emerge finally as containers. Additionally, plants such as gourd and calabash have comparable shapes and are used just like pots. From the assertion of potters, pots can be attributed to containers of life.



Plate 4.38 *Gaze*

All kinds of pots made in Bame are generally referred to as *anyigbaze* (pots made on the ground). Initially, pots were called *zɔ*, a name attributed to large and immovable storage vessels that were mainly used regularly in the distant past. However, as other pots emerged, the name was changed to *ze* to imply a container for all substances. Names have been assigned to various pots for the sake of identification and specific use. The names emerged as people started using pots for various purposes in and outside the home.

The sizes of pots are determined by the numbers assigned to *gaze*, (locally made aluminium cooking pot) as well as the various uses to which they are put. The smallest pot therefore corresponds with size one of *gaze* shown in **Plate 4.38**, followed by size two, three, etc. while larger pots and bowls take up the size of *ahadzafi* (palm wine keg). Balls of clay are not weighed before they are used, yet they correspond to the various sizes of pots made. With many years of experience, potters are capable of perceiving effortlessly the quantity of clay to use in making each pot or bowl.

The shapes of pots communicate an idea of beauty to both the potter and the customer or user. Beauty here is tied to pots which are well decorated and have peculiar forms pertaining to the locality. Thus, the shiny outer surface, ringed lines at the rim and neck, the black colour, etc. Also, undamaged pots after firing are traditionally accepted as beautiful.

Pots convey a message of joy and value to potters who believe their creative thoughts and skills are rather revealing than concealing whereas in the eyes of users, they are the quality of desirability. Again, beauty can be seen in the textures made within bowls although specific names are not assigned to them. These textures are carefully crafted to add value to bowls meant to aid grinding of vegetables and herbs as shown in **Plate 4.39**. Some have marks such as the hourglass sign which are used to identify the potters who made them.

There are specific proverbs and proverbial songs associated with pottery. These were communicated by (F. Tette, F. Yaokpoe, V. Dzamedzi, D. Tettey and J. Akpoh, personal communication, 2010). The significance of proverbs within this context is the fact that the practice of pottery thrives on thoughtful expressions. Again, customers purchase proverbial pots because of their relation to life situations while others do so because of their beauty. These proverbs include



Plate 4.39 *Textures and marks within bowls*

Mina nuḍe made ze me kpɔ - It is proverbial lyrical expression literally meaning “give me something to put into the pot.” It is an indication that a potter at work is hungry and anybody cooking at that moment should consider serving her with some food. This is to say that, it is a risk to abandon work at a crucial stage in order to engage in other businesses such as food preparation.

Eno tsi vie ɖe a - This proverb which refers to a stranger literally means “has the stranger also drunk a little amount of the water.” This is to find out whether the stranger knows or has an idea about pottery.

Miele nugbadze la kɔ gbe ava mlɔ anyi, egbe mie gale nu ɸo gbe - This pertains to digging clay. “We are going to put to rest the flat thing, today we shall uncover it.” The flat thing is the hoe which is used to uncover and dig clay. The idea here is that potters do not want people to know when they are going to dig clay.

Tome dela egba ze - Literally meaning “one who goes to fetch water at the stream is responsible for the breaking of a pot.” It is an advice to every human being to take a risk and be responsible for every act of misfortune and never shift the blame on other people.

Enyo wu be eze me tsi ne fugbe wu be ezea ηut̃ ne gba - Literally meaning “it is better for a pot of water to waste away than the pot itself being broken.” This proverb which is linked to the birth of a child implies that a safe mother (pot) is better than a dead child (water). It implies that, a pot that is well kept provides regular supply of water. In the same way, a living and safe mother is capable of giving birth to another child again.

Vodada le nu nyuie wola desiade ηu - Literally meaning “every morally upright person is bound to make mistakes.” Nobody is perfect and therefore a potter who mistakenly breaks a pot cannot be said to have committed an outrageous crime.

Colour and motifs are the two intrinsic worth of pottery. Smoking of pots with leaves bring about the black colour. The application of smoke enhances the surface quality, renders the outer surface water resistant and gives flavour to drinking water which is stored in the pot. Motifs such as flowers, cock, tortoise, snail, crab are incised on pots especially *tsinoze* (water



Plate 4.40a *Abɔbɔ/klo*

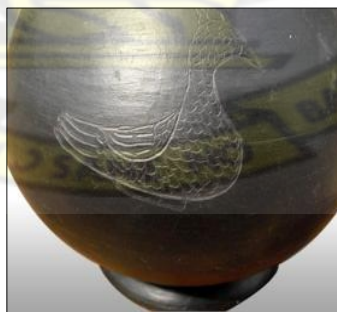


Plate 4.40b *Avese*



Plate 4.40c *Asi le koklozi*

drinking pot). A pot decorated proverbially with a combination of a snail and tortoise interpreted as, *eklo kple abɔbɔ be nenye yewo dede ta dee, etu maɖi le gbeme o*. This means

“left with the snail and tortoise there would never be any gun shot in the forest.” These are slow moving shell animals hunted not by the use of guns but picked from the ground. These animals signify peace, hence it is an advice to human beings to live in peace and harmony (Plate 4.40a).

The chameleon is also as a motif in decorating pots. Its illustration with an Ewe proverb; *ngogbe ngogbe nye azoli, megbemegbe nye azoli*, literally means “moving forth and back is all together walking.” It indicates a slow but sure action. This proverb cautions potters to work cautiously, just like the chameleon whether at a fast or slow pace, forward or backward, the ultimate is to maintain quality so that the pots made can turn out to be whole and attractive.

Another animal motif is *avesse* (time bird) keeps the potters working according to time (Plate 4.40b). Upon the sound of the bird, potters know when to start, take a break and retire to prepare the evening meal for the family without having to look into a clock.

Asi le koklozi (a hand holding an egg) is a motif that is related to life. *Agbenon le abe koklozi ene, ne wome lebene eye wo dzo ko agba*, literally meaning “life is like an egg, if it is not held with care it will break.” This is an advice to take good care of oneself because life is as precious as an egg (Plate 4.40c).

4.1.6 The Culture of Kpando Pottery

Pottery is a natural gift acquired from the ancestors. Certainly, pottery as part of everyday life goes beyond being just as a job. This is because though pottery as a job is no longer lucrative these days, it is still thriving.

Traditionally, the indigenes as well as outsiders still use pots because pots are more fitting in performing customary rites, boiling of herbs, storing food and liquid substances and cooking in general.

In relation to the beliefs of performing rites, pots such as *kɔnuze* (ritual pot) are made by a woman who is pure, who is neither in her menstrual period nor has sexual intercourse with a man during the pot making process. To be sure about purity, most people entrust the making of such pots into the care of elderly women who have passed the period of menopause.

As regards the stages of life, a number of pots are made for birth, puberty, and death rites. In all the rites, a particular pot called *Amatsidaze/kɔnuzevi* is used for these rites any time they are performed. This pot can be linked to *zedzẽ* made by potters of Ave Dzalele.

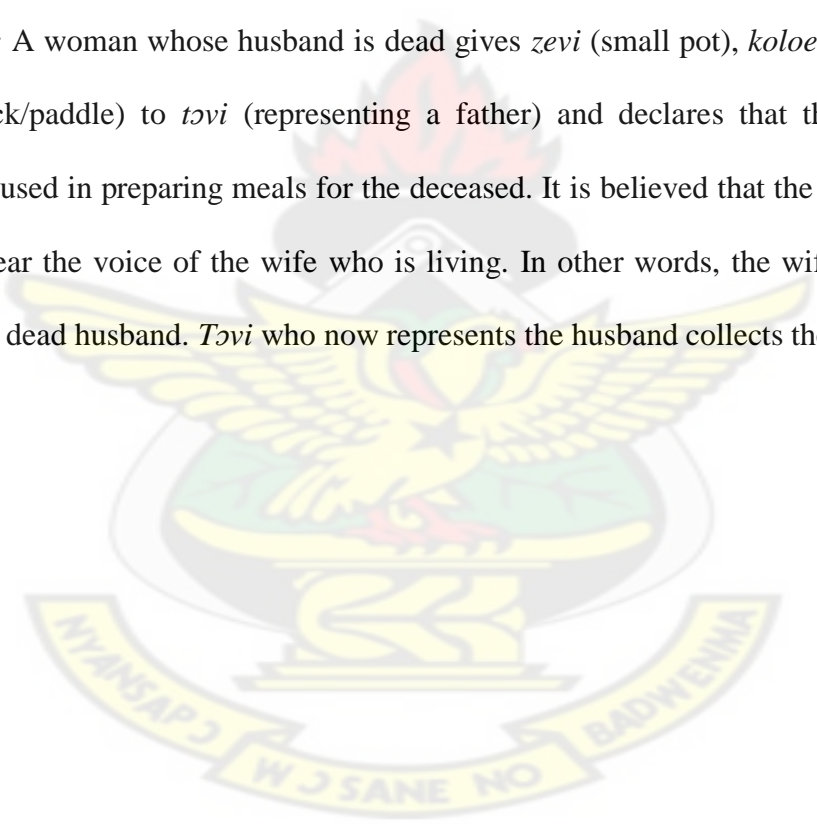
Birth: On the eighth day after the birth of a child, the mother carries *zevi* (small pot) on her head to fetch water from the stream to be used for *vidzidzi kɔnu* (birth rites). The significance of this rite is to announce to the whole community that a successful delivery has occurred. A mother who unfortunately dies before the eighth day is said to have died mysteriously. In circumstances like this, a common question is asked by anyone who hears about the death of such a mother, thus, *amea de tɔme a?* This is literally translated as “has the person gone to the stream?” Meaning has the person gone through the puberty rites? It is simply to verify whether the dead mother has gone through puberty rites. The burial of the deceased mother will never take place until the rites are performed for her.

During the naming ceremony of a newly born child, *tomedeze* (water fetching pot) full of palm-wine is placed in the centre of the house for members of the community to drink and share their joy with the family. Among the indigenes of Bame, twins are considered extraordinary beings therefore they are treated specially. Rites are performed occasionally to honour and maintain their status in society. One of such rites called *venɔvi kɔnu* (twin rite) is performed using *venɔvize* in **Plate 4.33** described on **Page 93**.

Puberty: Two types of pots *gbɔtozevi* (puberty rite pot) and *Asante koloe* (eating bowl) are usually used in performing *gbɔto* (puberty rites) for young girls in order to prepare them for

adulthood. If the novitiate belongs to the pottery fraternity, she carries pottery tools in a *koloe* during her usual rounds in town and market as an indication that all the items used for the performance of *gboto* were duly worked for through pottery. The novitiate as well carries the *gbotozevi* to the stream to fetch water which she drinks during the period of the rites. Afterwards, the novitiate is accompanied to the betrothed husband's home amidst dancing and carrying of a number of pots and bowls; e.g. *nuqaze*, *tomedeze*, *koloe*, *detsifoze* and other cooking utensils. This is to equip the young adult's kitchen with cooking utensils she may need to prepare food for her husband and children.

Death: A woman whose husband is dead gives *zevi* (small pot), *koloe* (bowl) and *nuqati* (stirring stick/paddle) to *tovi* (representing a father) and declares that the items were the utensils she used in preparing meals for the deceased. It is believed that the dead husband will no longer hear the voice of the wife who is living. In other words, the wife is breaking soul ties with the dead husband. *Tovi* who now represents the husband collects the items for use.



4.2.2 Pottery Materials

Clay digging: Clay, called *etsu* in Eve, is obtained within the neighbourhood from *tsuveme* (clay pit). It is a taboo to dig clay on Thursdays and Agotime Kpetoe market days. Anybody who goes contrary to this norm invites the wrath of the gods of the land and is fined by the chief and elders with a ram and schnapps (flavoured liquor). These items are used in pacifying the gods against any misfortune on the individual and the community at large. Both male and female members of the community are permitted to dig clay but women are not allowed to go near the pit when they are in their menstrual periods. As and when it matters, rites are performed to *Gugu* the god of the pit via *Tɔdzẽ* (Red River). A white cock and hen are slaughtered and *akpledzẽ* (corn flour and palm oil meal) is offered to the gods to appease them. It is believed that if sacrifices are not offered to the gods, the clay will diminish. It is also a time to plead for a boom in the pottery business (M. Asige, personal communication, 2011).

Kɔdzẽ or red clay is bought from Ho and Ave-Dzalele markets and used as slip. It is applied to the rim during the wet and leatherhard stage. Another colouring material is *akameti/vɔsiti* (dye tree). The bark of a freshly cut stick is scrapped off, pounded, boiled to form a deep red solution. It is applied to pots in the hot state. The colour however changes to black when the pots cool.

Clay Preparation: Clay from the pit is dried in the sun for at least three days. It is collected into large broken pots and water is sprinkled on it for at least twenty four hours. Occasionally, the clay is stirred and additional water is added to make the lumps to dissolve thoroughly. Clay is pounded on flat stones, kneaded to a reasonable consistency and stored in plastic containers for use. Only one type of clay is used and grog is not added to it because it is strong enough to be used alone for all forms of pottery.

4.2.3 Pottery Methods

A variety of domestic pots, figurative pots (pots for vodun worship) and bowls are made by women of Adedome. The pinch method is exclusively used for small pots while a combination of the pinch and coil methods are used for large ones. The methods used here are similar to Kpando. The only taboo associated with the making of figurative pots is that, the potter is not supposed to eat salt as long as she makes the said pot.

Small pots: A well kneaded lump of clay is made into a ball of a desired size. A hole is punched into the ball, hollowed by the fist at the same time trying to maintain a round shape. The structure is placed on a well swept ground. The rim is widened with *tredzo* (a stack of folded leaves) to the required circumference. *Kplɔdeti* (smoothing tool) is used to shape the neck and rim. Single and double lines are ruled on the rim and on the upper body during this wet state and left in the sun to dry. Enough clay is added to the base just before the rim dries. Red clay slip is applied when the rim reaches its leatherhard state. When dry, the sand at the base is scraped off to reveal the wet and malleable clay. With one hand supporting the outer surface, the potter gently punches out the base with the fist until the pot or bowl assumes a round shape. *Ababe* (shaping tool) is used to beat the outer surface to form the round shape. When leatherhard, the inner parts are scraped off, levelled and the smooth stone used to polish both surfaces. Pots and bowls are dried under room temperature to avoid cracking. They are, however, dried in the sun just before they are fired so as to remove the remaining water.

Big pots: In contrast to small pots, the rim is made from a thick round slab which is placed on the ground as indicated in **Plate 4.46**. About half of the slab is pressed from the centre towards the edge. With the support of the left palm, the inner wall is pulled until a required thickness is attained (**Plate 4.47**). The rim is shaped and smoothened. The rim and the upper body just below the neck are decorated with single and triple lines (**Plate 4.48**). Clay is

not added to the base but coils are used to build up the rest of the body. When the mouth is dry, it is upturned and the bottom part is scraped off to reveal the wet and malleable surface. Thick and long coils (**Plate 4.49**), one after the other are attached to the bottom and pulled to build a round shape. When completely sealed, the pot is left for at least three days to dry.

At the leatherhard state, the pot is lifted up with the base placed on *akla* (a circular pad made from dried plantain bark) as indicated in **Plate 4.50**. Shaping, scrapping and burnishing are done simultaneously. A deep red clay slip is applied as a final coat before the pot is fired (**Plate 4.51**) in the open air. The huge pots are pre-heated before the main firing proceeds. Pots are not smoked rather, *votsiti* (dye plant) solution is poured on the pots after firing to render the surface glossy (**Plate 4.52**).



Plate 4.46 *Building the rim with a slab*



Plate 4.47 *Pulling the walls*



Plate 4.48 *Decorating with lines*



Plate 4.49 *Building the base with coils*



Plate 4.50 *Pot on Akla for burnishing*

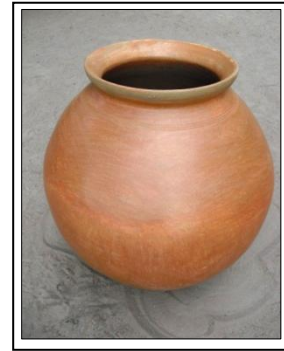


Plate 4.51 *Polished pot*



Plate 4.52 *Different textures of stained pots with votsiti solution*

Bowls: Two types of bowls are made by potters in this area. They are bowls for grinding vegetables and roasting cereals/nuts; and vodun religion. Basically, the two types are moulded using the pinch method. In all cases, the rim is prepared first, with red clay slip applied to it and allowed to dry. Depending on the size of the bowl, enough clay is added to the base just like it is done in Kpando, Todze and Klokɔfe. In the case of the grinding bowl, an all round foot is added to the base to withstand the pressure exerted during grinding.

4.2.4 Names and uses of pottery



Plate 4.53 *Ezɔgã*



Plate 4.54 *Zɔgmeze*



Plate 4.55 *Anyigbaze*

Ezɔgã (water storage pot) is the biggest of all the pots. It is a water storage pot for domestic purposes and for storing palm-wine used in distilling *akpeteshie* (local liquor). It is usually kept outside for the sake of harvesting rain water.

Zɔgmeze (footed pot) is named so because of the addition of a foot to aid its stability when placed on the ground. It is kept in the room with a lid on top to protect the water from contamination and it is used for storing drinking water for serving visitors.

Anyigbaze (ground pot) derives its name from the way it is buried in the ground. It is used for storing and serving water fetched from the stream. It also serves the purpose of a cooler.



Plate 4.56 *Tɔmedeze*



Plate 4.57 *Atadzize* (greenware)

Tōmedeze (water fetching pot) in **Plate 4.56** is used purposely for fetching water from the stream.

Atadzize (lap pot) in **Plate 4.57** acquired its name from the way it is placed on the lap and worked on. It is used for boiling medicinal herbs.



Plate 4.58 *Kpotomali*



Plate 4.59 *Nuḍaze*



Plate 4.60 *Detsifoze*

Kpotomali/Akpleḍaze (cooking pot) is compared with a leper without fingers. *Kpotō* in Eve is a leper, so is a pot without a flat overlapping rim. The mouth is widely opened to facilitate easy stirring of the meal. It is used for the preparation of *akplē* and *kokonte* (corn and cassava flour meals). *Nuḍaze* (cooking pot) on the other hand is used in general cooking instead of for meals like *akplē* and *kokonte*.

Detsifoze (palm nut soup pot) acquired its name from palm fruit which is normally prepared in it. It is also used for preparing all kinds of soups and vegetables.



Plate 4.61 *Mumli*



Plate 4.62 *Ahaze*



Plate 4.63 *Ahatrōze*



Plate 4.64 *Adzafize*

Mumli (palm-wine tapping pot) is used as a receptacle for collecting wine from the palm tree.

Ahaze (wine pot) specifically refers to a pot used for carrying, storing and selling palm-wine.

Ahatrɔze (palm-wine pouring pot) is a pot carried around to collect palm-wine from the *mumli* which are placed under the various palm trees.

Adzafize (keg pot), is a small barrel used as its equivalent. It is used for carrying palm-wine.



Plate 4.65 *Kuzɔ*



Plate 4.66 *Eblitɔgba*

Kuzɔ/Dawa (funeral bowl) is a deep bowl for mixing/serving palm-wine on funeral occasions.

Eblitɔgba (corn roasting bowl) is an open bowl used for roasting corn, groundnut, etc.



Plate 4.67 *Yakayakeze*



Plate 4.68 *Kpoklovi*

Yakayakeze (steamed cassava meal) serves the purpose of a steamer during cooking. The flat perforated lid is permanently attached to the pot to allow the inflow of steam for cooking the cassava meal. *Kpoklovi* (water boiling pot) is used for boiling hot water for bathing and cooking as well as for boiling medicinal herbs.

4.2.5 Philosophy of Agotime Adedome Pottery

The round shape is inherited from the ancestors and that is why it is still being made. It is symbolic because when used for cooking the fire is said to be evenly distributed on the swish stove. M. Asige (personal communication, 2010) affirms that food tastes better when cooked in pots than other utensils. It is also acknowledged that pots have a fitting bottom that can sit and be fixed into a depression in the ground for stability and as a cooling system.

Just like Kpando potters, the pot is linked to a pregnancy; it can be depended upon to keep its contents intact provided it is taken good care of just like a child is kept safe by the mother in the womb until delivery. A broken pot during firing is therefore compared with a miscarriage by a pregnant woman. Due to this, pregnant women are not permitted at certain times to engage in pottery for the fear that they may have complications during child delivery.

The equivalent of *gago* (jerry can; a flat-sided can with a capacity of holding roughly 19 litres or 5 gallons of liquid) is used to determine the size of big pots. The capacity of pots in this regard ranges from the smallest size of one to the largest size of twelve jerry cans. The capacity of the jerry can also corresponds with the size of *kpolugba* or outsize enamel bowl.

Potters use proverbs to relate to daily life activities. One such proverb is; *ne tsie fugbe enyo wu be ezea ntu ne gba* - literally meaning “it is better for water to pour out than the pot itself breaking.” This proverb which is associated with the birth of a child implies that a safe mother (pot) is better than a dead child (water). A pot that is kept safe obviously provides regular supply of water. A living and safe mother is capable of giving birth to another child. This proverb is similar to that of Kpando potters.

Pots are named based on the functions they perform. At the mention of each pot’s name everybody knows in the community what a particular pot is used for. The names are also

classified according to the various activities like processing and cooking food, fetching and storing water, processing palm-wine, worship, medicinal and ritual activities. Practically, names are ascribed to various pots for the sake of identification.

A pot communicates a message of beauty to the potter as well as the user when it is painted with deep red clay slip and rendered smooth. All pots except *mumli* (palm-wine tapping pot) are painted with red clay slip before they are fired. The *akameti/v̄siti* (dye tree solution) which is wine in colour is also used to render pots black.

Apart from decorating and rendering pots waterproof, it is believed that the beauty of a pot talks about the beauty of a woman. A well finished pot reveals the beauty that a woman carries within her. Also, a pot without colour is like a person without clothes, thus, beauty clothes a pot. The colour red or wine is related to the colour of blood. Blood is a vital fluid found in humans that provide sustenance to the body. Accordingly, red symbolizes “close blood ties.” D. Viglo, personal communication, (2010), strongly believes that the idea of close family ties become manifest when a whole family gathers for a meal which is prepared and dished out from the said pot. Again, every member of the family drinks water from the same pot signifying mutual trust and bonding.

Usually, motifs are used on vodun pots and bowls whereas on cooking pots, different motifs such as the key are embossed on them for identification when group firing is embarked upon. This makes it easier for every potter to recognize her pot after the fire has gone down. These marks in reality indicate the signature or the trade mark of respective potters.



Plate 4.69 *Identification marks*

4.2.6 The culture of Agotime Adedome Pottery

Pottery is understood not only as a job but also as an inheritance from the ancestors. It is based on this idea that pottery has thrived until now. The unceasing household chores particularly, other family and community activities put considerable demand on pottery. Another reason that dictates the type of pots made has to do with traditional worship. Devotees of vodun commonly known as *vodunsi* also order pots for sacrifices. Again, a number of rites performed by priests in the community require special pots, for example, *gbetsixexe* (a rite to avert evil). This rite is usually performed in order to curb an unusual condition or behaviour of someone. If someone is behaving abnormally, the parents or relatives will consult a *bɔkɔ* to find out the cause. If the cause is known, the *bɔkɔ* will demand items such as dove, cock, etc. for the performance of the rite known as *nuxexe* to curb the situation. It is a norm in certain families that people may never live beyond a certain age and therefore need to undergo *nuxexe* rites to curb death. Pots are therefore acclaimed the most convenient vessels to use (J. Tugbenyo, personal communication, 2010).

Also, women who have persistent *dzikuidzikui* (stillbirth) go through the same rites. A mixture of herbs and water are put into a small red pot and the victim is asked to carry it to a specified site. At that spot, a young chick will be slaughtered to appease the spirit of death after which the person is bathed with the herbs. The pot is upturned to signify the termination of the spirit of death (S. Afari, personal communication, 2010).

It is also an inseparable art because it is believed to be *Mamanu* (legacy of a grandmother). With this concept, potters do not really worry about not getting market for their pots. Potters said, they feel content with the fact that they are capable of preserving what their grandmothers have held in high esteem and handed down to them .

The location of the village near River Tɔdzẽ whose banks contain huge clay deposits is a major boost to the pottery industry. Pots made in this area are different because of a number of factors. These include; type of clay used, colouring materials and how they are applied, farming activities, type of staple foods consumed and religion. For instance, the maize, yam, cassava, cocoyam meals demand a lot of soup as such pots are made to serve these purposes.

Pots are still made because they continue to serve the various purposes in the community and beyond. In the first place, pots can endure a longer cooking time, in other words, they have the ability to withstand the stress from heat. People within and without the locality admire and use the pots because of the stained glossy surface treatment (S. Afari, personal communication, 2010).

Pots are also used in the stages of life; birth, puberty, marriage and death. At the birth of a child, all kinds of foods are prepared and served, hot water for bathing both the mother and the baby is boiled, herbs are prepared for the mother, carrying and serving palm-wine are also done during birth. During marriage, food is prepared in huge pots and served in huge bowls for many people. It is said that eating together in one bowl ensures unity among siblings and members of the family. At the death of any member of the community, no potter makes pots. This is in solidarity with the bereaved family to mourn the dead. At funerals, the *kuzɔ* (funeral bowl) is used in mixing and serving palm-wine (S. Afari, personal communication, 2010).

4.3 Ave Dzalele

Ave Dzalele can be found in the Akatsi District. Located on the Ho-Aflao trunk road, it is about 45 kilometres from Akatsi the district capital. Their ancestry can be traced to Avedzi in Togo where pottery was practised by their mothers. Besides farming, almost in every household, mainly women engage in pottery. Potters work individually under sheds in their homes with a little help from their families.

4.3.1 Pottery Tools



Plate 4.70 *Ababe*



Plate 4.71 *Afɔligoe*

Refer to **Plate 4.1** for the uses of ababe. *Afɔligoe* (oyster shell) is obtained from the seashore; it is used for levelling inner walls of pots as well as removing tiny stones.

Abuke (corn silk) is a soft hairy material attached to the style of corn. It is gathered in the form of sponge and it is used to apply red clay slip on pottery wares.

Pointed stick is used for linear designs on the rim of pots and on the inner surface of bowls.

Rug is made of a soft cotton material which is dipped in water and slip to coat the inner walls of wares and to seal emerging holes.

Tredzo (shaping leaf), *zeninikpe* (smooth stone), *ezeɖeti* (a two or three pronged tool) and *gabla* (scraper) are used in the same way as in **Plates 4.8, 4.9, 4.42** and **4.45** in that order.

4.3.2 Pottery Materials

Clay digging: Clay is obtained from two sources within the locality but has the same

qualities and colour. A. Azamala, personal communication, (2010) confirmed that good clay can be discovered at the spot where mud is scooped out very deep beyond the soil layer and left at the mouth of crab holes. Clay is dug on any day by women only. Within the *etsuveme* (clay pit) nobody is permitted to sing, whistle or clap. It is believed that if anybody goes contrary to these norms, pots will break during firing. M. Dodzinu, personal communication, (2011) is convinced that there is a force behind the clay which gives it the strength to withstand high temperature. M. Dodzinu also affirmed that it has happened to her in the past because she did not strictly adhere to the taboos their ancestors respected and preserved. Ave Dakpa market days are set aside for rest for potters and farmers alike to sell their wares so that the land and the gods can also rest.

Clay preparation: Clay from the pit is stockpiled at a place demarcated with stones. Water is poured on the clay to soften it before it is pounded on flat stones. The clay is not kneaded thoroughly before it is used. The clay is moderately plastic and therefore needs no grog for strengthening it, neither is it composed into a body before being used. In effect, only one type of clay is used since both types have similar properties.

Decorating materials: *Akati* is used as a stain. It is a small tree that grows wild within the locality. *Aka* means charcoal and *ti* is tree. It is distinguished as a charcoal burning tree hence the name *akati* (charcoal tree). The bark of a freshly cut stick is scrapped off, mashed in water and applied to pots in the hot state. Another material is *kɔdzẽ* (red clay) which is obtained from two nearby villages, namely; Ave Dakpa and Posmonu. It is prepared into clay slip and used as a colorant in decorating pots and *agba* (cereal roasting bowl) in the wet, leatherhard and pre-heating stages of outsize bowls. Coal tar pitch (black liquid by-product from coal) is used in painting the rim of bowls as decoration and to prevent the rim from scratching easily.

4.3.3 Pottery Methods

There are three categories of vessels made at this pottery centre; domestic pots, ritual pots and bowls for roasting cereals. Two methods are combined in the building of these pots; pinch and coil. Only the pinch method is applied to the modelling of *agba* (cereal roasting bowl). These methods are the same as those used in Kpando. The methods have never changed for they are perceived as *Mamanu* (legacy of a grandmother).

However, pots from Ave Dzalele can be identified with a line at where the rim and the base have been joined but Kpando pots are completely sealed at the joint. Again, while Dzalele potters decorate their pots with *ekodzẽ* and *akati* their counterparts in Kpando either leave the pots with the natural clay colour or smoke them to acquire the black colour. Both centres seem to have similarity in terms of thickness of wall. The evidence of the differences specified above can be seen in **Plates 4.72** and **4.73**.



Plate 4.72 *Dzalele pot with a line at the joint*



Plate 4.73 *Kpando pot without a joint line*

Agba (bowl): There are three types of bowls made by potters in this locality. They are bowls for grinding vegetables, roasting cereals and *gari*, yeve and vodun religion. All the three categories are moulded using the pinch method. However, the *gari* bowl is treated with much

care due to its huge size. While the grinding and cereal bowls are made in the sun, the *gari* bowl is made within the confines of a room where the weather conditions are less intense. Again, instead of the legs and hands of the potter circling outside the ware, they rather remain within the circumference of the *gari* bowl. In all cases, the rim is prepared first with red clay slip applied to it and allowed to dry to avoid breaking when lifted (**Plate 4.74**).



Plate 4.74 *Decorated rim with red slip*



Plate 4.75 *Sealing the bottom of galitɔgba*

Depending on the size of the bowl, enough clay is added to the base. In terms of the *gari* bowl, clay added to the inside is covered with rugs so as to maintain a wet and malleable consistency. It is very important that the rim dries well before the bowl is inverted, otherwise cracks may occur. After filling the bottom (**Plate 4.75**), it is left to dry thoroughly before it is fired. The cereal and *gari* bowls are preheated before the real firing. The bowls are again smeared with red clay slip because of the black colour acquired from pre-heating. Only one or two *gari* bowls can be fired at a time because of the huge size. After firing, while the pots are still hot, the *akati* solution is applied to the rim rendering it black as a form of decoration.

4.3.4 Names and uses of pottery



Plate 4.76 *Detsifoze*



Plate 4.77 *Yakayakeqaze*



Plate 4.78 *Nuqaze*



Plate 4.79 *Edaze*



Plate 4.80 *Kpotomali*



Plate 4.81 *Amatsiqaze*

Detsifoze was named so because Eves usually call any type of soup *dedetsi* (palm nut soup).

Nuqaze and *yakayakeqaze* perform the same function as in **Plates 4.59** and **4.67**.

Edaze (snake pot) is a pot made for a *dasi* (snake pouse). It is identified by the type of snake moulded on it. It is first prepared like any ordinary pot but it becomes different when the snake figure is attached to it. It is usually covered with a lid which also has the symbol of the snake on it. It is used for vodun and *yeve* worship. The Akan version of *edaze* is *Nanaze*. For the function of *kpotomali*, see **Plate 4.58**.

Amatsiqaze (medicine pot) is a special pot made for the preparation of herbal medicines to cure chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma, tuberculosis, etc. Usually, the mouth is made

small with the intention to disallow people from peeping into it, which otherwise will reduce the potency of the medicine.



Plate 4.82 *Adãdaze*



Plate 4.83 *Vuduze*



Plate 4.84 *Yeve kɔnuze*

Adãdaze (heroic pot) which has similar uses as *zedzê* (red pot) has no linear or figurative designs on it. It is used to perform funeral rites for *yeveshi* (*yeve* spouse). It can also be used as *amadogba* (herbal pot). Apart from these, many other rites for *ahewo* (ordinary people) are performed with it.

Vuduze is a pot in which selected herbs are kept and used to attract and hold the spirits of human beings and evil spirits. After the spirit is invoked into the pot, the cover is placed on it to suppress its power.

Yeve kɔnuze is a pot that is always available for rituals within the *yeve* shrine. It can be used for boiling herbs to cure ailments of *yeve* spouses.



Plate 4.85 *Dakpuize*



Plate 4.86 *Adekpeze*

Dakpuize (short snake) is depicted slightly different from Kuli potters who use an ordinary pot e.g. *nuḍaze* and attach snake figures to the sides. Here, *kpotɔmale* is first made and short snakes attached to the sides. *Adekpeze* (hunting stone pot) is a small pot in which *adekpe* (hunting stone) is kept in the hunter's shrine. It is covered to prevent water from touching it. Occasionally, the *adeze* (hunting pot) is washed and revitalized with *adekpe* and *eye* (white clay). Both substances are used alternately to rule vertical lines on the pot as a sign of embellishment. The *adekpe* produces the red and the *eye* white colour.



Plate 4.87 *Nuwɔvegba*



Plate 4.88 *Ewɔze*

Nuwɔvegba (ceremonial bowl) is a footless bowl which is used by priests in serving food demanded by spirits and for rites such as *adzenyanya*. This is a rite performed by spiritual leaders by dispossessing anyone who has the spirit of witchcraft. This rite may be performed by *amegashie* (seer), *bɔkɔ* (diviner) or anyone who has juju. The importance of *adzenyanya* is to dispossess the spirit of witchcraft that one is using for evil purpose. Witches can also be ward off in a separate rite. An earthen bowl (*nuwɔvegba*, **Plate 4.87**) containing a mixture of palm oil and corn flour is placed in the stomach of a slaughtered chick. The bowl and its contents are placed at a cross-road. It is believed that, witches are unable to cross over the bowl because it has the potency of neutralizing their powers. In effect the victim is set free from further oppression of witches (I. Dzakpa, personal communication, 2011).

Ewɔze (flour pot) is used for storing corn and cassava flour. Apart from these, groundnut, beans, rice etc. can also be stored in it for a short time.



Plate 4.89 *Eblitɔgba*



Plate 4.90 *Galitɔgba*

Eblitɔgba (corn roasting bowl) is used for roasting corn, groundnut, etc. while *galitɔgba* (*gari* roasting bowl) is used for roasting *gari* (grated cassava dough).

4.3.5 Philosophy of Ave Dzalele Pottery

Potters claim they make round pots because that is what the *Mamawo* (grandmothers) inherited and passed on to them. It is a career which expresses the skill of their grandmothers and therefore they cannot depart from it. Again, the round shape is bonded in such a way that it does not detach itself easily when compared with a shape such as square.

There is a link between pots and women particularly, thus, the stages pots undergo are similar to a pregnancy. Just like a woman who becomes weak during the early stages of pregnancy so is the state of fresh pots during the forming stages. As the pregnancy grows, the woman regains her strength. Likewise, pots go through various stages until firing to make them strong and durable.

Ideas for making pots especially figurative ones are derived from customs pertaining to

the locality. For instance, when a *vodunshi* orders *edaze* (snake pot), the potter visualizes and models a breed of snake which corresponds with the *vodun* the owner is associated with.

Although the width of a rim determines the size of a pot, pots are measured according to the number of gallons they can contain. A normal cooking pot can contain a gallon of water and a *gago* (keg) is said to contain four gallons. The smallest pot called *zevi* contains about a third of a gallon. Potters say although their grandmothers were able to make sizes equivalent to a barrel, they are unable to make such huge sizes. They cited a number of reasons which they think were the secrets of their predecessors. These include strict adherence to taboos; taking time to compose the clay body; and allowing the pots in the green ware stage to dry under room temperature at least three months before they are fired.

Proverbs play significant roles in pottery and its allied activities, these include; *Zevi tukui danu dukowo du*; literally translated as “a small pot used in cooking fed a whole community.” It is stressing the point that no pot can be underrated for the amount of substance it can contain.

Ze wu ze eto gbɔ wokpɔne le; literally meaning “when one boasts of the size of a pot it is at the stream that it can be noticed.” This is just to emphasize the fact that the size of a pot can only be noticed when water is fetched into it. This shows how much substance a pot can contain when it is filled.

It is also believed that the continuous use of pots reduce the intake of chemicals into the body. This mind-set expresses the reason why most people in Dzalele do not use metal tanks to store water. Huge pots are buried in the ground outside the home to harvest rain water and to store water from the stream for domestic purposes.



Plate 4.91 *Water storage pots buried in the ground*

4.3.6 The culture of Ave Dzalele Pottery

The passion for pottery makes it more of a way of life than a job. Potters affirmed that financially pottery is not good enough but the various uses it is put to makes it rewarding. This is because societal life depends to a large extent on pottery for its fulfillment. This is clearly demonstrated in the rites and ceremonies discussed in the next paragraphs of this sub-heading.

Every society has a peculiar culture and practice they abide by. These dictate the types of pots produced at any given time. It is based on these facts that pots are still in production. These rites within this community include; *luvɔyɔyɔ*, *adãɖaɖa* and *adzenyanya*. *Luvɔyɔyɔ* (soul calling), is a funeral rite performed by *vodusiwo* with *agozi*. The same herbs which were used during the *vodusi's* initiation into the assembly will be put in the *agozi* (**Plate 4.97**) for the final rites. This rite known as *agoyiyi* takes place in the bush to restrict *ahewo* (ordinary people) from witnessing it. The soul of the deceased *vodusi* is lured into the pot. Amidst appellations, the real identity of the *vodunsi* is denounced. Hereafter, only her real name is used among members. Significantly, this rite aims at terminating the membership, thus separating the real soul from the vodun spirit which the deceased was associated with. The *agozi* which is accompanied by singing and dancing is finally placed in the coffin for burial.

Adāḍaḍa (heroic display) is part of the final funeral rite for people who are worshippers of *yeve* the thunder god. Items used in performing this rite are ram (male sheep), palm oil, corn flour and strong liquor. The rite is usually performed by *Midawo* and *Minawo*, the male and female leaders of *yeve*. It is always done during the later part of the evening. It signifies the separation of a dead person who was once a worshipper of the thunder god from the living. *Adāḍaze* (**Plate 4.82**) is used for the rite. In the capacity of a *sosi* (lower rank), a fowl is used while in the case of *agbisi* (higher rank) a goat is used. The meat is first boiled and removed from the soup. Palm oil is then added to the soup and *akpledzē* (a meal of corn flour mixed with palm oil) prepared. When the meal is done the hot pot is lifted from the fire with the foot. The food is first sprinkled on the ground to feed the ancestors before all members partake in the eating. After eating, the pot is re-filled with bones, herbs and palm oil which again is placed on fire. Amidst singing and dancing the *yebesowo* (*yeve* spouses) display their powers by going round the fire and ‘catching’ the blazing flames emitted by the pot of boiling palm oil until the fire goes out (G. Ketu, personal communication, 2011). Refer to *adzenyanya* rites on **Page 121**.

Funeral rites are performed for family members who wash and prepare a dead body for burial using *zevi* (small pot). Within this pot is a mixture of special herbs and water in which those who handle the corpse wash their hands to cut off soul ties with the dead. Again, pots are used for washing the dead before they are buried. Any pot that is used for the rites of the dead is not used by anyone but is broken or thrown away (A. Zamala, personal communication, 2010).

4.4 Dzodze Kuli

Kuli which is in the Ketu North District is located at the southern part of Central Dzodze. It is about three kilometres from Dzodze the capital of the District. Their ancestry can be traced to Mafi in the North Tongu District. The name Kuli was derived from a number of tragic deaths that occurred to the children of 'Avoklaya' the founder of the village. In an attempt to move from the spot of death and to settle at a safer place, he realised that it was not a safe place either. So, he exclaimed *kuli* meaning death exists. Proverbially, *eku megbe afideke o* emphasizes the fact that death exist everywhere and nobody can run away from it.

4.4.1 Pottery Tools



Plate 4.92 *Ababe*

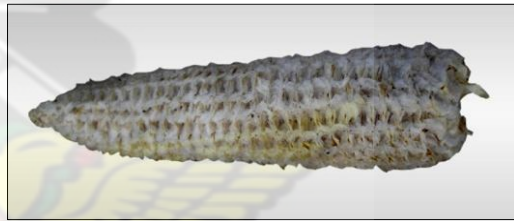


Plate 4.93 *Eblitsrokpui*

See **Plate 4.1** for the functions of *ababe*. *Eblitsrokpui* (corncob) is used to form the neck of pots and to flatten the lip of pots and bowls. *Zeninikpe* (smooth stone) is used for smoothening the surfaces of wares. *Abɔɔɔgoe* (snail shell), see details of its uses in **Plate 4.44**.

4.4.2 Pottery Materials

Clay Digging: There are three sources from which clay is obtained; Toklome, Kplikpame and Mamave (Dzogbefime). All are obtained from river beds. Clay is dug on any day except Ehie market day. It is a taboo to use a hoe to till or dig clay on this day but a cutlass can be used for clearing the bush. If anybody defiles the land on the said day, that person is charged

with different colours of calico - red, white and black; one keg of palm-wine, a bottle of schnapps and two bottles of *akpeteshie*. These items are used to pacify the gods of the land. The rites are performed in the clay pit (M.A. Attachie, personal communication, 2010).

Normally, it is a woman's job to dig clay but men are not restricted from doing so. In the olden days, women in their menstrual period were not allowed to visit the clay pit. Presently, this taboo is no more adhered to. Occasionally, rites are performed at the pit to honour *Togodo* the god of Toklo pit with the aim of strengthening the clay for pottery. Food and drinks are offered to the god of the pit after which women are restricted from going to dig clay at least seven days from the day the rites were performed.

Clay preparation procedure is the same as that of Ave Dzalele on **Page 113**. However, fine sand is mixed with clay to reduce its plasticity. Only one type of clay is used. Colouring material is mostly *akati* which is boiled and used as stain while *kɔdzẽ* (red clay) is prepared into slip and used as a colorant in decorating bowls in the wet, leatherhard and fired stages.

4.4.3 Pottery Methods

The method used in Adedome is the same used in Kuli except that in forming the rim of pots, cotton rags are used instead of leaves. Linear designs are not made on the rims of pots during the forming stage when the clay is still wet. The walls of the pots are thick. The open firing method is used for firing pots just like in Adedome and elsewhere. A firewall is built with old pots to prevent the fire from scattering. Whereas Kuli potters apply *akati* solution to stain the pots in the hot stage, Adedome potters apply it when pots are cool. However, not all pots are stained.

4.4.4 Names and uses of pottery

Pottery made in this suburb is in two categories; pots and bowls. They are made for domestic and ceremonial purposes but the latter seems to be made in large quantities than the former perhaps due to the popularity of traditional worship activities in the locality.



Plate 4.94 *Adāwɔze*



Plate 4.95 *Mami Wata gba*

Adāwɔze or *adāɖaze*, see the write-up on **Plate 4.82** for uses. *Mami Wata gba* (dish) is a dish with Mami wata sculptured on its lid. *Mami wata* is a water deity which has links with vodun. The dish is used to feed the spirit which demands food items such as rice, sugar, bread, lavender, etc. Attached to this is a second dish, a pot and a basin. The basin is filled with herbs and water for bathing the *mamishi* (mami spouse). The pot which remains the abode of the spirit contains selected herbs mixed with water which is used occasionally for purification and protection of the *mamishi*.



Plate 4.96a *Aziza (male)*



Plate 4.96b *Age (female)*

Aziza (dwarf) is the male dwarf while *age* is the female type. The custodians of both sexes are called *ageshi* (*age* spouse). Both dishes are vodun dishes used in feeding the dwarf spirits. While *age* operates as an errand spirit for an *Amegashie* (seer) *aziza* is used by hunters and travellers to disappear any time they sense danger. Their spirit is also used for charms. Based upon demand, they are fed in two dishes with items such as banana, pawpaw, cigarette and flavoured liquor (schnapps). Amegashies refer to this group of beings as *fiele* (porter).



Plate 4.97 *Agozi* or *goyize*

Agozi or *goyize* are made in various forms. There is one with holes punched at the sides while the other has a single hole underneath. Both can also be covered with lids depending on what rite a specific pot is used for. It is a special miniature but powerful pot which is usually used by the worshippers of *yeve* (thunder god) or *tɔhũnɔ* (head of gods) and *vodun* during initiation. It is generally a pot used for any installation in the domain of traditional religion. It is a receptacle for the powers of deities usually buried in the ground and the spot marked with a plant, or a sculpture work in clay or cement. Occasionally, the pot and its contents are reinforced with drinks, blood which drips into the *agozi*. They are made in three forms; with or without lid, perforated at the bottom or the sides purposely for the exit of spirits. *Agozi* is also used for the installation of *Bɔkɔnɔ* (diviner), *Amegashie* (seer), *Trɔnɔ/Hũnɔ* (custodian of a god or gods) and other rites such as *goyiyi* (installation of *yeveshi* and *vodunshi*), *trɔ̃lili/legbalili* (installing gods or idols). *Trɔ̃lili legbalili* rite is performed by a priest who

welcomes *trɔ̃*, a nature god, initiates and establishes a shrine for it. The activities that follow this initiation rite are pouring of libation and merry-making such as eating, drinking, drumming and dancing.



Plate 4.98 *Dakpui pots*

Dakpui (short snake) is depicted in various forms. There are two pots for the worship of *dakpui*. The pot on the left has seven short snakes on its lid and the side while the lidless pot has five short snakes sculpted on its side. Odd digits are usually used to suggest the number of spirits invoked into the pot. Even digits are considered as concrete and successful in dealing with the supernatural. So to avert any successful attack and defeat of a deity odd digits are used. The pot with the lid is usually kept in a shrine while the other is submerged amidst herbal plants with a particular herb planted on the spot to identify it. This vodun is acquired for general protection against the enemy. It is believed that anyone who has an evil intention towards the *adeshi* (custodian) can be bitten by *dakpui*. The spirit demands items such as fowl, rice, etc. which are used to feed it through two dishes with the *dakpui* symbol on them.



Plate 4.99 *Gozida-dakpui (pot & bowl)*

Gozida-dakpui is a vodun which is made up of a combination of *agozi* and *dakpui*. The addition of *agozi* rescinds the striking of the thunder god. The power of *dakpui* is sheltered by the spirit invoked into the *agozi*. Usually the *agozi* is buried in the ground and a physical statue is made with a hole on top running through to the *agozi* underground. Any offering of blood or drink drips into the *agozi* for reinforcement. It is a protective vodun.



Plate 4.100 *Anyiqehode (pots & dish)*

Anyiqehode (bee swarm) is a vodun for war and protection against the enemy. The spirit manifests itself physically through a bee swarm. It is depicted with knobs and holes on the lids

of dishes and pots. The holes on the pot allow bees to inhabit and move freely to and fro the pot. Apart from this, there may be bee-hives around the house and within the rooms of the custodian's house. Anybody with an evil idea against the custodian is attacked immediately by the bees upon entering the house. The spirit is fed in a pair of dishes on food items such as sugar, rice, etc.



Plate 4.101a *Agbosu*

Agbosu is a vodun with a custodian named *agbosushi*. *Agbo* means 'ram' hence it is depicted with horns like a ram. Its installation is just like any other vodun but it demands animals such as ram, goat, fowls, etc. It is for protection and justice.



Plate 4.101b *Agbosu, One-headed dish*



Plate 4.101c *Agbosu, Two-headed dish*



Plate 4.101d *Agbosu, Double headed pot*

Irrespective of the number of heads, a pair of bowls of the same kind is used in feeding the spirit while the pot which contains selected herbs and water is used by the custodian for cleansing and healing ailments.

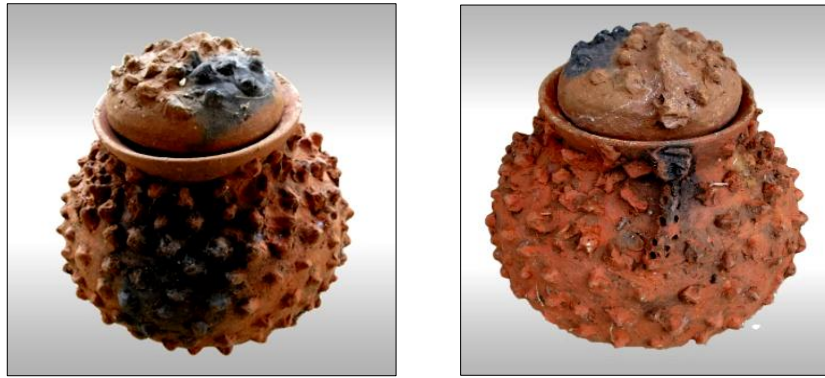


Plate 4.102 *Tɔgbe Anyigbatɔ pot & snake*

Tɔgbe Anyigbatɔ (landlord) is *trɔ* but also acquired as vodun. It is depicted with thorny knobs both on the pot and lid respectively. Its duty is to avert epidemics like cholera and chicken pox from infesting a community. *Tɔgbe Anyigbatɔ* is fed on cayenne pepper. If a snake figure is added to the pot, it implies the custodian deals with two different spirits.



Plate 4.103 *Adesu (pot and bowl)*

Adesu is *trɔ-vodun* which derived its name from River Adesu. Its custodian is *Trɔnɔ*. The white substance, a type of clay, is smeared on the pot and bowls as a sign of purity. A pair of bowls with *adesu*'s figure is placed on a raised palm frond platform for the purpose of feeding it. The spirit is fed on white fowls and white doves.



Plate 4.104 *Agoze*



Plate 4.105 *Tɔgbe Dagbui*

Agoze is a fertility vessel with two open ends. It is used in performing rites for a mother whose child shows up the legs first instead of the head during child delivery. This rite is known as *nuxexe* (averting evil or bad omen). It is believed that when the rite is performed for the victim, she will be prevented from giving birth in the same manner.

Tɔgbe Dagbui is believed to be a harmless and peaceful snake. It is very smooth and looks just like the colour of salmon fish. It is not killed when seen, rather those who belong to its lineage are immediately required to go and wash their faces at its shrine as a sign of purification. The worshippers think they might have offended it that is why it reveals itself to them. The spirit is believed to protect and bring peace to its worshippers.



Plate 4.106a *Tɔkɔsu*,
Fraternal twins



Plate 4.106b *Tɔkɔsu*,
Identical twins-male



Plate 4.106c *Tɔkɔsu*,
Identical twins-Female

Tɔkɔsu is a water spirit just like *mami wata* modelled in several forms. In most cases, they are made to represent fraternal twins, identical male twins and identical female twins. The pot is also made up of fraternal twins modelled on the lid as well as on the sides. This vodun is associated with twin worship hence worshipped by twins and those who give birth to twins. A pair of dishes is used to feed the twin spirits while the pot is filled with selected herbs and water for the purification and healing of twins any time they fall sick.



Plate 4.106d *Tɔkɔsu*, Fraternal twins -pot



Plate 4.107 *Tɔkɔsuda*

Tɔkɔsuda is a combination of *tɔkɔsu* and *egle* (cobra). It is referred to as *da-vodun* (snake vodun). The basin contains a snake joint with *tɔkɔsu*; male and female. It is used by *dashi* (snake spouse) as herbal bath any time she wants to purify herself.



Plate 4.108a *Efli* (one head)



Plate 4.108b *Efli* (two heads)

Efli (cobra) is a vodun which is worshipped by both sexes. Its original name is *Dangoe*, taken after the first person who worshipped it. *Dashi* and *Daqoho* are the names assigned to the female and male spouses respectively. A pair of dishes is used to feed it with specific animals such as fowls demanded by it.



Plate 4.109a *Alibla* (Yali)



Plate 4.109b *Alibla*

Alibla is *trɔ* (god) worshipped communally e.g. town or village. It is a snake yet it manifests itself in the form of ‘whirls’ on land and on water (sea or river). These are called *yali* (dust whirlwind or dust devil) and *alibla* (water whirlwind or waterspouts). Its operation is associated with rainstorm. Its worshippers are called *liblashi*.



Plate 4.110 *Anyievɔ*



Plate 4.111 *Tɔmekosu*

Anyievɔ (python) also called *yevɔ* is a god of Benin origin. Its abode is on a mountain. Its manifestation is linked with the rainbow. It is a water spirit worshipped as *da-vodun* with

women usually the custodians. It is worshipped for its wealth sake that is why it is at times referred to as *sikada* (gold snake) referring to money.

Tɔmekosu is a sea creature which is worshipped because of its spiritual ability to heal. It is installed with a pair of dishes, pot and a basin. A pair of dishes with the figure of the animal on the lid is used to feed the spirit on food items it demands by it. The spirit of *tɔmekosu* is evoked into a pot filled with selected herbs. This becomes the abode of the vodun spirit.



Plate 4.112 *Lisa*



Plate 4.113 *Adzakpa*



Plate 4.114 *Ahɔluze*

Lisa (chameleon) is a vodun which is usually worshipped by women. Its natural name in Ewe is ‘agama’ but spiritually it is referred to as *lisa*. Animals are offered as food to it. It is believed to give protection to its worshippers called *lisashi* (*lisa* spouse) and help them in the area of fertility, especially those women who find it difficult to become pregnant.

Adzakpa (crocodile) is a vodun associated with *mami wata* because of its water habitat. The ardent worshippers are called *adzakpashi* (*adzakpa* spouse). It demands animals such as fowl, sheep, and goat as food. Its spirit is for protection and justice. Its colour is white hence an *adzakpashi* is always seen in calico for life.

Ahɔluze (*Ahɔlu* pot), sometimes called *dzralaze* has a shape similar to *nuɖaze* (cooking pot). About three-fourths from the mouth towards the base is perforated. It acquired its name from the god called *Ahɔlu* but has links with *age* (female dwarf) because the latter’s hair is used to install it. The pot is perforated, yet when water is poured into it, it does not drain off. The

custodians of this vodun are *Amegashie* and *Aholushi*. Its work is similar to *age* (female dwarf) and *aziza* (male dwarf) as shown in **Plate 4.96a** and **4.96b** which is mainly a porter.



Plate 4.115 *Zedzē*



Plate 4.116 *Gozida*

Zedzē (red pot) or *zevi* (small pot) is very versatile in the performance of many rites for *ahewo* (ordinary people), *yeveshiwo* (yeye spouses) *vodunshiwo* (vodun spouses), *trɔ̃nɔwo* (custodian of gods), *Amegashiwo* (seers) and *Bɔ̃kɔnɔwo* (diviners). For the sake of purity, it is made without any decoration or incision. A number of rites are performed using *zedzē*. These include: *nuxexe*, *trɔ̃lili*, *yɔfofo*, *vevenyanya*, *ɲɔlitsɔtsɔ*, *ɲɔlinyanya*, *ɲɔlibabla*, *agbakakla*, *kudotutu*, *gudede*, *ahowɔwɔ*, *adāda*, *gbetsilele* and *gbetsixexe*. *Gozida* is a combination of *agozi* and a snake. This implies that the snake is backed by the power of the *agozi*, in other words the *agozi* protects the snake spirit from attacks. This also has a pair of bowls used to feed the spirit. The snake of the pot attracts the spirit to inhabit it. Its contents include selected herbs, water and blood usually sprinkled at the rim of the pot.

Yɔfofo (soul calling) is a funeral rite performed by *vodusiwo* with *agozi*. The same herbs which were used during the *vodusi*'s initiation into the assembly will be put in the *agozi* for the final rites. This rite known as *agoyiyi* takes place in the bush to restrict *ahewo* (ordinary people) from witnessing it. The soul of the deceased *vodusi* is lured into the pot. Amidst

appellations, the real identity of the *vodunsi* is denounced. Hereafter, only her real name is used among members. Significantly, this rite aims at terminating the membership, thus separating the real soul from the vodun spirit which the deceased was associated with. The *agozi* which is accompanied by singing and dancing is finally placed in the coffin for burial.

Vevenyanya/Dzawuwu is a rite usually performed by priests; *bɔkɔwo*, *amegashie* and *venagã* (those who give birth to twins). The items involved in this rite are fresh yam, fresh maize and selected herbs. This is done to signify the introduction of new harvest. The products of these fresh crops are cooked and the *venagã* sprinkles part on the ground at the shrine, in front of the house and the junction of the road leading to the village if there is any. This also signifies the introduction of new harvest (crops).

Dɔlitsɔtsɔ/ɲɔlibabla is a rite performed by *bɔkɔ* or any other person who is spiritually inclined in terms of *juju*. This is done to prevent ghosts from haunting human beings. The rite is usually performed at a refuse dump or at the outskirt of the community. It is performed early in the morning as a means of protecting the victim.

Agbakakla is a rite performed for any *bɔkɔ* who passes away (died). This rite is usually performed after the burial and funeral rites. This signifies that the dead person has been separated from the living colleagues. During the rite, the *bɔkɔ* consults the spirit and special food is identified, prepared and placed at the outskirt of the village or town of the late *bɔkɔ*.

Kudotutu is a rite performed by a *bɔkɔ* or *amegashie* to prevent someone who is seriously pursued by the spirit of death. During this rite, the *bɔkɔ* or *amegashie* blocks the ways for whatever evil spirit or ghost trying to take the life of the person, usually a sick person. Special items such as fowl, sheep and goat are used for sacrifices to the spirit.

Gudeḡe is a type of rite which is usually performed by an elderly person in the community who is versed in the customs of the society. It is purposely done to heal the sick

person (normally swollen). Selected herbs and pieces of metal are put in *guze* or pot and water added to form the base of the concoction that will be used for the healing process. The victim is bathed with the concoction for about three days. Offences leading to this rite are beating of persons at the toilet, hitting people with foodstuffs, having sex in the bush and other local taboos. A number of items are demanded from the victim for the rites such as fowl, schnapps, palm oil and corn flour which are used to prepare *akpledzē*. However, the offender will not be allowed to eat the food prepared during the rites.

Ahowɔwɔ is a rite performed for a widow or widower after the death of a wife or husband. The widow or widower has to be confined for a night and early the next morning, the rite is performed for him or her. This signifies separation of the dead person from the wife or the husband. The rite is usually performed by widows and widowers. For the description of *gbetsilele/nuxexe*, *adāqāqā* and *trɛlili* refer to **Pages 113, 124, 129** in that order.



Plate 4.117 *Efa* (dish & pot)

Efa (adder) is a calm and harmless snake. Its spiritual name is *dzakpata*. It is *da-vodun* and those who worship it are called *dashi*. It is used for protection.



Plate 4.118 *Nyigbla*



Plate 4.119 *Tɔgbe Ekpo*

Nyigbla which moves in the night acts like meteorite having a luminous head, followed by a streak of light created in the night sky. *Nyigbla* is *trɔ̃* (god), a figure modelled to imitate a deified snake. In the olden days, it is believed that *nyigbla* attacks people who bath *evekɛ* (local soap made from dried cocoa pots) in the night. The ailing victim is taken through rites which demand two bowls and a pot with the figure of *nyigbla* modelled on the lids. It is also associated with *dzobibi* (blazing fire) so the elderly do not approve of children removing firewood from fire in the night. It is a war vodun believed to lead the ancestors in the night. Its destruction is in the form of fire. *Tɔgbe Ekpo* is *trɔ̃* (god) from *hogbe* (the descent of Ewe) worshipped by a whole town but worshipped as vodun through bowls and pots. *Ekpo* means ‘mound’ that is why it is depicted like a mound with a head at its summit. It is a god of protection from danger and bad omen. It is believed that when offended it inflicts famine on the victims. It is fed mostly on animals such as fowls, ducks, goats and sheep it demands at any time.

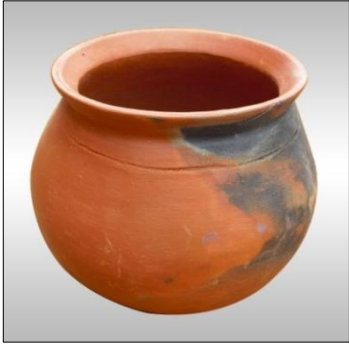


Plate 4.120 *Two versions of Nudaze*

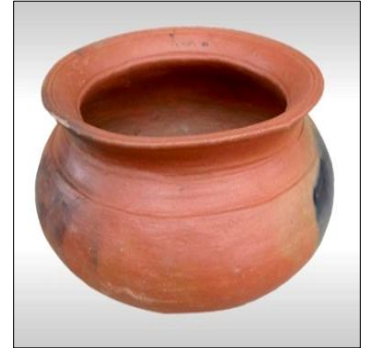


Plate 4.121 *Detsize*

See **Plates 4.59** and **4.60** for the uses of *nudaze* and *detsize*. See also the function of *gbaze* or *ahakpaze* in the write-up of **Plate 4.61**.



Plate 4.122a *Gbaze*



Plate 4.122b *Gbaze under palm tree*

4.4.5 Philosophy of Dzodze Kuli Pottery

Ze refers to *mamanu* - objects belonging to grandmothers. The continuous making of circular pots is a matter of preserving the tradition of mothers. Potters have embraced the round shapes for the reason that they have attributes of motherhood. This is because mothers make their own pots as well as use them to suit the activities of daily life they engage in within and without the home.

The sizes of pots are determined by the mass of clay used coupled with how the eye makes it out. The perceptible appeal of the eye becomes a standard as to what size a pot may assume at the forming stage. Thus, every pot size is discerned by the eye before it is formed, so that, if the clay is too small or too big for a particular pot it is either reduced or increased.

Specific names are assigned to pots so as to differentiate those used purposely for domestic activities from traditional worship notwithstanding those that fall within both categories. Potters mostly make proverbial pots from vodun and *yeve* worship. The marks and figures sculpted on the pots and dishes communicate numerous messages about animals and objects in relation to how they affect the spiritual life of humankind rather than for the purpose of decoration. Although these figures look remote from the potter, she is able to capture them clearly to suit the customer's taste and desire (G. Fianyo, personal communication, 2010).

Colour plays a very significant role in pottery. *Akati* and *ekodzẽ* are mostly used to decorate the pots because of the red colour which signifies blood, for that matter life. It is accepted that blood is life and therefore when red is smeared on the pots and bowls, life is transmitted into the pots to easily attract living creatures.

4.4.6 The culture of Dzodze Kuli Pottery

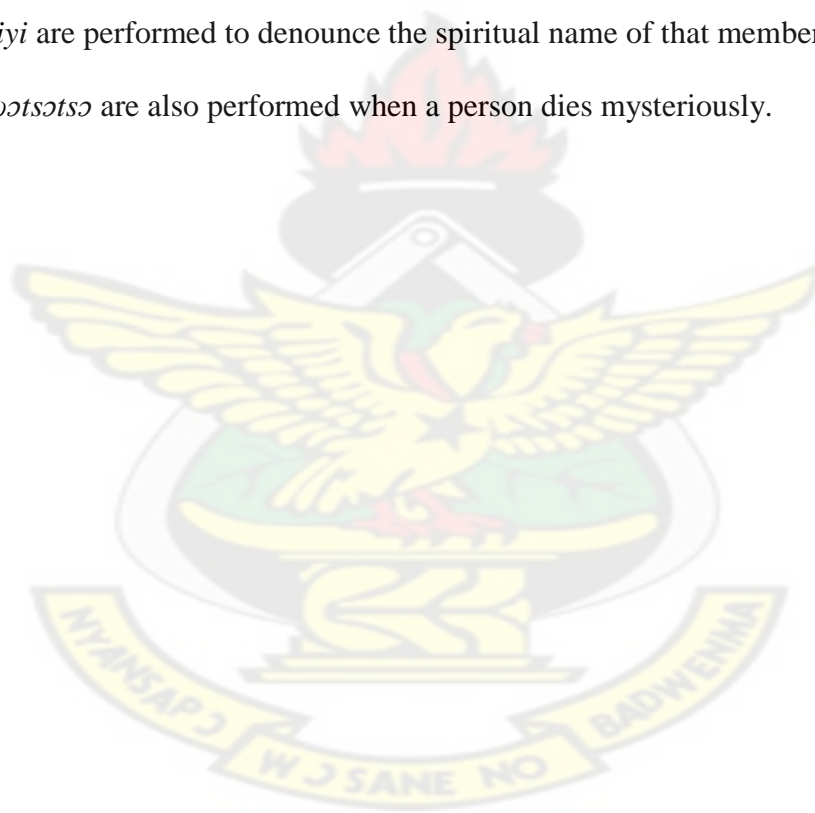
Pottery is more of a way of life than a job. Potters claim that if it were just a job to earn a living most of them would not have lasted in the industry. They said they have love and passion for it because of the way it was handed down to them by their parents hence it has been sustained hitherto.

Religious activities such as *yeve* and vodun have greatly dictated the kind of pottery made in this locality. This is because now and again people are being introduced and initiated into the vodun and *yeve* worship. In this regard, the most convenient vessels for the rites are

the earthenware types; pots, bowls dishes and basins. This of course makes pottery in this area inseparable from religious activities in particular.

Despite the fact that plastics and other containers have been introduced into Eve market, pottery still thrives in this area. This is because most people prefer pottery for its natural quality. The gods and voduns are contacted with earthly or natural materials especially those made with the hands and not with machines.

Pots are used in several ways in the stages of life. In the area of birth, pots are used for *vevɔwɔ* (twin rites). In the case of the death of any member of *yeve* and vodun family rites such as *goyiyi* are performed to denounce the spiritual name of that member. Apart from these, *luɔɔyɔyɔ/luɔɔtsɔtsɔ* are also performed when a person dies mysteriously.



4.5 Dzodze Dzogbefime

Dzogbefime is one of the suburbs of Dzodze. It is located about 4.5 kilometres at the south-eastern part of central Dzodze. Their ancestry can be traced to Togo from where they migrated. Virtually, every household still engages in pottery due to availability of clay and ready market. Here, women specialize in making of figurative pots meant for vodun worship.

4.5.1 Pottery Tools



Plate 4.123 *Dovuvu*

Ababe, *kpezɔzrɛ* and *abɔbɔgoe* perform similar functions as indicated in **Plates 4.1, 4.9** and **4.44**. *Dovuvu* (cotton rug) is folded, dipped in water and used for widening, shaping and smoothing the rim of pots. Dada Asafo acknowledged that the rug is a substitute for leaves.

4.5.2 Pottery Materials

Clay digging and preparation: It is obtained in the locality from a nearby river bed. Clay is dug on any day except Ehie market day. It is a taboo to use hoe to dig clay on this day although a cutlass may be used for clearing the bush. Again, only containers made with natural materials e.g. baskets lined with leaves are permitted within the clay pit. If anybody defiles the land on the said day, that person is charged with the following: red, white and black calico; one keg of palm-wine; a bottle of schnapps and two bottles of *akpeteshie*. These items are used to pacify the gods of the land. The rites are performed in the clay pit. Normally, it is a woman's job to dig clay, however, men are not restricted from doing so. In the olden days

women in their menstrual period were not allowed to visit the clay pit but at present, this taboo is no more adhered to (M Amezado, personal communication, 2010). The clay preparation method is the same as Ave Dzalele on **Page 116**.

Colouring materials such as *akati*, a tree that grows wild in the bush is used as a stain. *Aka* means charcoal and *ti* means tree. It is distinguished as a charcoal burning tree hence the name *akati* or “charcoal tree.” The bark of a freshly cut stick is peeled off, mashed in water and applied to pots in the hot state. It has wine colour but after its application, it turns black. *Kodzê* (engobe) is obtained from a nearby village called Ave Dakpa. It is prepared into slip and used as a colorant on pots and cereal roasting bowls during the wet stages of production.

4.5.3 Pottery Methods

The pinch method only is used for making pots and bowls which is the same method used by Agotime Adedome potters on **Pages 113-116**. However, on figurative pots, selected animal figures such as the crocodile, chameleon and snakes are modelled and attached to ordinary pots and bowls (**Plate 4.124**) before they are burnished. All pottery is dried under room temperature to avoid cracking. Small pots dry within a week but huge pots and bowls take up to three weeks before they are fired. The open firing method is used for firing wares.



Plate 4.124 *Modelling a snake figure on dish*

The *gari* roasting bowl is pre-heated before the actual firing is done but all other wares are fired at once. **Plate 4.125a** is an example of a preheating structure. A firewall is built with old pots to prevent the fire from scattering (**Plate 4.125b**). Dry palm branches are arranged lengthwise within the arena of the wall to serve as the main source of heat. Small spaces are created in-between the pots to allow enough air to keep the fire burning (**Plate 4.125c**).

Pots are placed sideways in a bottom-to-bottom arrangement to allow even flow of heat. Enough thatch is used to support the firing on top of the wares. The fire is set under the palm branches from the two points lengthwise. The emergence of buff colour is an indication that the firing is done. The bark of *akati* is removed and boiled on fire and used as a stain. In the hot state the *akati* solution is applied to pots as a form of decoration (**Plate 4.126 a,b**).



Plate 4.125a
A preheating structure



Plate 4.125b
Firewall made of old pots



Plate 4.125c
Spaces in-between broken pots to allow



Plate 4.126a *Boiling akati*

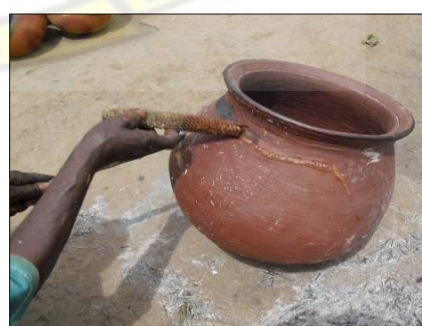


Plate 4.126b *Applying akati solution*

4.5.4 Names and uses of pottery

Dzogbefime potters are noted for their figurative pots, dishes and basins used in worshipping gods, *yeve* and vodun. However, a number of domestic pots are made also. Each potter specializes in an aspect such that anybody looking for a particular pot or dish has no difficulty in obtaining it. Some potters do not make pots themselves but buy the green ware and finish them for the market.



Plate 4.127 *Aholuze*

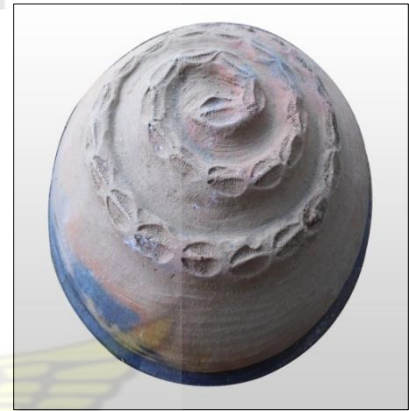


Plate 4.128 *Hodagba*

Refer to the write-up of the uses of *aholuze* in **Plate 4.114**. *Hoda* (cowry snake) is a combination of *ho* (cowry) which symbolizes wealth and *da* (snake). Wealth is associated with *hoda*. It is believed that a person who worships *hoda* is bound to be wealthy irrespective of the trade or business she engages in. Two lidded dishes and a pot with the figure of *hoda* sculpted on them are made purposely for feeding the spirit. The content of the pot is usually seven selected herbs, blood and water which are used occasionally by the *vodunshi* (spouse) to cleanse the face, bath and drink. Its devotee is called *daqoho*.

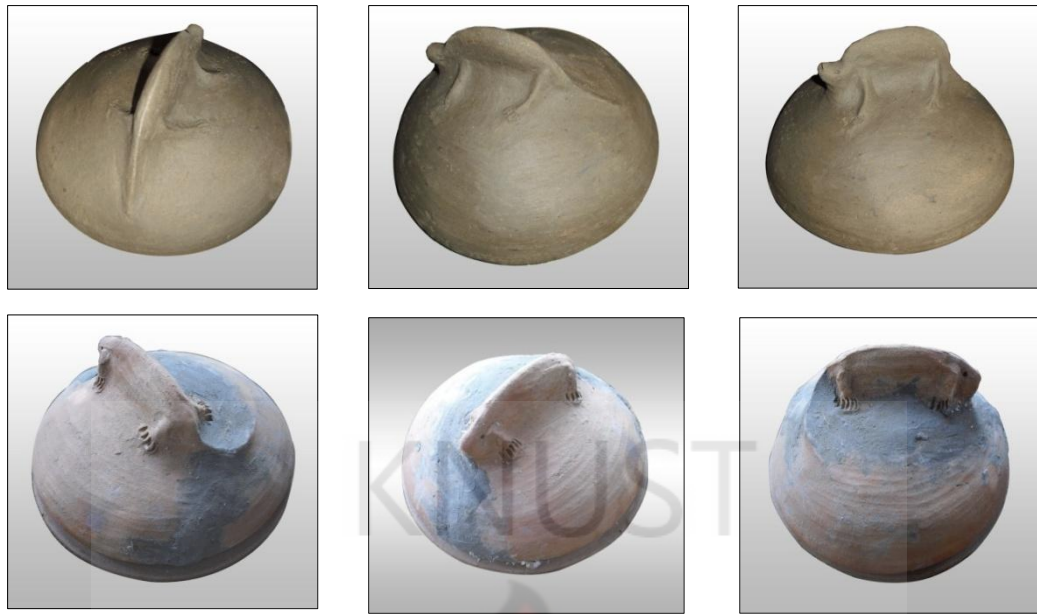


Plate 4.129 *Lisagba depicted in two forms*

Lisa is depicted variously by potters; the top three have long legs and long tail while the three below have short legs and curled tail. Refer to its write-up on **Page 137**.



Plate 4.130 *Adzakpagba (dish) and adzakpa-gozi*

Adzakpa (crocodile) is a nature god which possesses a person with a crocodile spirit. Two bowls and a pot with the figure of the crocodile on the lids are made purposely for sacrifices. The *adzakpa-gozi* is combined with the agozi to absorb shocks from spiritual attacks.



Plate 4.131 *Agozi*

Agozi or *gozi* (ritual pot) is a miniature pot used for *luwɔyɔyɔ* (soul calling). Some are made with lids as indicated in **Plate 4.131**. The perforated holes serve as exit route for the spirits.



Plate 4.132 *Gozidaze*



Plate 4.133 *Gozida dadofu* (dish & pot)

Gozidaze (ritual pot) is made of seven *gozi* and seven snakes. Seven snakes textured with dots are attached to the lower part of the seven *gozis* having their heads directed towards the neckline of the pot. Completely, a snake coils on top of the lid. The pot is used for *yeve* and vodun rites. The snake draws its strength from the *gozi*. *Gozida dadofu* is a combination of *agozi* and joint headed snakes. *Dadofu* means “the snake has entered the sea.” The vodun which is linked with the sea is supported by the power of eleven *agozi*. The number of *agozi* determines the content of the pot. Its rites are first performed at the seashore making it easier to invoke the snake spirit later into the pot at the shrine. The dish is used as a feeding bowl and the pot is where herbs are kept in water for rituals purposes.



Plate 4.134 *Medawo gozi*



Plate 4.135 *Tomekosu gozi*



Plate 4.136 *Uegbadzẽ*

Medawo is a *yeve* title for a priest while *menawo* a priestess. Both sexes use the pot for the same rites. It is used in performing life and death rituals for the *yeve* devotees. The addition of *agozi* is to prevent spiritual attacks on the devotee. It acts like a “shock absorber.”

Tomekosu, a sea creature is combined with *agozi* to prevent spiritual attacks on the devotee.

Uegbadzẽ (red bowl) is a footless bowl used by priests and priestesses for sacrifices in and outside their shrines. It is also used as *nuxegba* (warding off evil spirits). Usually the bottom part of figurative bowls is made of *vegbadzẽ* in which food is offered to voduns and gods.



Plate 4.137 *Avako*



Plate 4.138 *Adzakpa-gozi amadogba*



Plate 4.139 *Mamida*

Avako (hawk) is *trã*. Its spirit manifests in the form of a hawk when it possesses a person. It is a protective vodun. *Adzakpa-gozi amadogba* is a basin used for herbal bath by an *adzakpashi*. *Ama* (herb) and *amadogba* explain the concocting of a number of herbs with water meant for spiritual cleansing and healing of ailments. *Mamida* (mami snake) is combined with Mami

Wata and snakes attached to both arms of each figure. *Mamida* is a water spirit which manifests itself in human form and in a snake form. Those who worship it are called *mamishi*.



Plate 4.140 *Egleze*



Plate 4.141 *Anyɔgbɔ*



Plate 4.142 *Avedzida*

Egleze (cobra pot) is usually used with its bowls for the rites. The contents of the pot are selected herbs, blood and water while food is served in the two bowls for the cobra spirit. It is a spirit which is believed to give protection to its worshippers any time it is called upon. *Anyɔgbɔ* is *da-vodun* (snake vodun). There are two types; *dekpe* having red colour and the other sometimes called *Togbui Dagbui* has ash colour just like the skin of salmon fish. Its worshippers are called *anyɔgbɔshi* or *dashi* in short. *Avedzida* (green mamba) is a very swift tree-dwelling snake with bright green colour. It is a snake-related vodun and those who worship it are called *dashi* (spouse). It is fed just like any other spirit on demanded food items.



Plate 4.143 *Tomekosu* (dish, pot & basin)

This is a full set of another form of *tomekosu* vessels used in performing rites for its spouse.

For details of its uses see **Page 137**.



Plate 4.144 *Gugba & guze (saucer & pot)*

Gu simply means “committing acts of abomination.” *Gu-vodun* does not accept connivance with evil and therefore will punish whoever is found guilty of any immoral behaviour. It is a vodun of iron and war that is why the symbol of a gun is modelled on the dish and the pot respectively. Its rites are performed in the blacksmith’s workshop where there is abundance of iron. Its manifestation is in the form of tetanus where a victim’s body swells. As curative measure, the victim is bathed with water containing pieces of metal and herbs in the pot.



Plate 4.145 *Anyidohode (Dishes, pot & basins)*

Anyidohode is depicted differently by potters. It is modelled with protruding knobs as indicated in the first three sets above. Below, it is combined with a snake to form a ring on top of the dish and within the basin. This vodun deals with two spirits; *anyidoho* and a snake.



Plate 4.146a *Hoqeda* (dish)



Plate 4.146b *Hoqeda* (pot)

This is another way of depicting *anyidohode* with a snake. Physically the snake is seen moving along with the bees. This vodun is a combination of the spirit of *anyidohode* and snake.

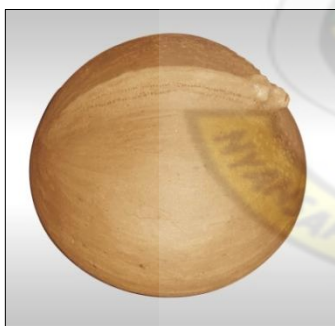


Plate 4.147a *Anyievo atsu*



Plate 4.147b *Anyievo vino*



Plate 4.147c *Anyievo atsu kple asi*

Anyievo (python) is *da-vodun* which is depicted in three different forms; the male only, mother and three children, and husband and wife. Refer to **Page 136** for the write-up on *anyievo*.



Plate 4.148 *Da le kpɔ̃ (single & double kpɔ̃ dish & pot)*

Da le kpɔ̃ literally means “the snake has caught the tiger.” It is *da-vodun* (a snake related vodun) for protection. The dish is modelled in single and double *kpɔ̃* figure with just one snake encircling it. The pot takes the form of a single figure of the same animal. This underscore the fact that any spirit that wants to surmount the snake or vodun will be overpowered.

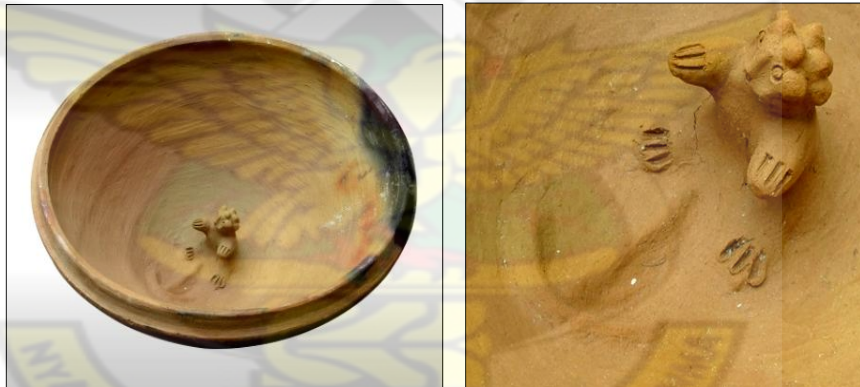


Plate 4.149 *Soviwɔda fiagble*

Soviwɔda fiagble is *vodun* related to *yeve* with its power connected to thunder and lightning. *Sovi* is a type of herb which is planted at the spot where *yeve gozi* is buried amidst other herbs in the *yevekpɔ* (*yeve* fence). To invoke the spirit of thunder and lightning into *zedzẽ*, the following items are put into the pot; *fiagble* (looks like an anchor shape) as indicated on **Plate 4.149**, *sokpe* (ancient stone with at hole in the middle), *sovi* (herb) and other herbs. Water

never gets finished in the pot and the basin because when these vessels are empty it can provoke thunder to strike the plants within the *yevekpɔ* thereby neutralizing the power of *soviwɔada*.



Plate 4.150 *Akpada*



Plate 4.151 *Tomekosu vikle*

Akpada (fish snake) is called so because its spinal column resembles a fish. It is used for protection. *Tomekosu vikle* is *da-vodun* (snake vodun). *Tomekosu* has been separated and modelled into snake form. *Vikle* means ‘separate’, so the head has been separated yet it is still linked up with the snake.



Plate 4.152 *Zevi agbanu*

Zevi agbanu (twin pot) is a small pot with a cover used for twin rites. They are made in pairs, a small and a big and packed just as it is shown in the middle plate, before the rites are performed. This is different from Kpando potters who have a hole on top of the lid.



Plate 4.153 *Kutu*



Plate 4.154 *Aboloḍagba*

Kutu (soup pot) is just like the pot in **Plate 4.26**. Refer to it for its uses. *Aboloḍagba* (steamed corn meal) is used as a steamer during cooking. The base is perforated to allow the inflow of steam. It is placed on another pot containing boiling water that provides steam for cooking the *abolo* meal.



Plate 4.155 *Ekuze*



Plate 4.156 *Afagba*



Plate 4.157 *Gbaze*

Ekuze (water storage pot) literally it means “death pot.” The size of the pot makes it impossible for a child to fetch water from the bottom part. A child who attempts to reach the bottom of the pot to fetch water is likely to topple over and die. The elderly from Togo call it *ezɔ* while the indigenes of Dzodze call it *ekuze*. *Afagba* (divination bowl) is used by a *bɔkɔnɔ* or *tɔbɔkɔ* to keep his objects such as cowries used exclusively for divination. *Gbaze* is a palm-wine tapping pot.

4.5.5 Philosophy of Dzodze Dzogbefime pottery

The data on the philosophy was revealed by J. Tugbenyo, M. Amezado and D. Asafo, personal communication, (2010). The making of round pots is traditional and still prominent because it is considered 'whole' in nature. Anything that is whole is complete and perfect. Thus, a pot can only be complete after making several circular movements around it. The observance of nature reveals so many important things taking up the same round shape, e.g. the sun and moon. The round shape is therefore closest to nature than any other shape.

The sizes of pottery are not associated with any man-made or natural objects but are determined by experience. Within the mind of the potter, she knows what size of pot to make at any time and so she fetches her clay exactly so to cater for the various sizes of pots.

Kodzẽ (red clay) and *akati* (dye tree) are both used for the decoration of pottery. Both appear as red but after firing, they turn buff and dark grey respectively. Potters maintain that red is a colour of beauty; therefore, it is applied to all pots including those that are smoked. Black colour is used to differentiate one pot from the other.

Animal, human and abstract motifs are applied to pots to portray their relationship with a particular deity. The sculpted motifs usually placed on the lid and body of pots depict the nature of specific vodun figures well-known to potters and the customers as well. Mostly, the sculptural forms are described by customers and potters imagine or remember them by forming a picture in their mind before modelling them.

Potters use proverbs to communicate ideas among themselves. These include; *Ezevi tukui ɖanu dukwo ɖu*. A small pot feeds a whole community; it is not the physical size of the pot that matters but the amount of substance it can hold. The physical size of a thing does not matter, what matters is how much substance it can contain.

Ezɔ media tɔme o. An outsize or storage pot does not go to the stream. A little child cannot send an elderly person. It is expressing an idea of impossibility.

Agbo gba ze, ze fe akla tsi kɔ ne. A ram broke a pot and its piece remains hanging over its neck. If you do not go near a thing, nobody will say you have spoilt it. Avoid handling delicate things or issues.

Sonju kake be yeme wɔ deke o, gake ye dena dzo na donɔwo. A piece of broken bowl says it contributes nothing, but it fetches fire for sick persons. Nobody should be underrated; everybody has a role to play.

Names are assigned to pots because of what they are used for. Figurative pottery can have single or a combination of two or three names. For instance *gozida*, *gozi* is a miniature pot while *da* is snake. This pot/bowl therefore is a combination of the power of *gozi* and the snake. Again, names assigned to figurative pottery are mostly spiritual, e.g. *adzakpa* is the spiritual name for *lo* (crocodile).

4.5.6 The Pottery of Dzodze Dzogbefime Culture

Potters affirmed that the only female handiwork that has survived since they were born is pottery. As a career, pottery was relied upon over the ages to supply the daily needs as well as enhance the way of life of their families.

The location of Dzogbefime within an area where the practice of vodun and its allied religions abound, have a great influence on the type of pottery made. The pots made here are more of the figurative types than domestic ones. These special pots are embellished with human and animal figures and a variety of textures to portray their true character and form.

Pots are believed to be *blemanuwo* (items of old) and were used by the ancestors as

containers for several years before other utensils emerged. This is to say that, pots are linked with the past generations. Pots are still being used because almost each household is capable of making its own and the fact that traditional religion is still being practised within and without the locality. Potters affirmed that earthenware are safer to use because they are made directly from the earth which is pure. In the case of traditional religion, the gods or spirits alike are said to originate from nature hence human beings resort to the use of objects such as pots and bowls to worship them.

Pottery is used in many stages of life; birth and death. At birth, a child is bathed with hot water from a pot. Herbal soup is also prepared for a mother who delivers a baby so as to replenish her energy.

At the death of a potter, the colleagues will set up a market scene at the funeral grounds by displaying pots for sale. The proceeds from the sales are put in one small pot and given to the children. Again, the members of the pottery fraternity wash their hands in the pot used in bathing the departed colleague with the intention of cutting off their links with her. On the fifth and seventh days after burial, *akpledzie* is prepared. Before the meal is served among the members of the family, a small portion is fetched into a terracotta saucer and sprinkled at the cemetery with the intention of feeding the departed soul.

Venovi konu (twin rite), is performed with *zevi agbanu* (twin pot) with a cover. The pot which contains cowries and coins is kept from the twins to prevent them from dipping their hands into it before the rites are performed. The grandmother holds the hands of the twins, count seven and dip their hands into the pot. It is believed that the twins will no more be under the curse of stealing if they decide to go later to pick money from the pot (D. Asafo, personal communication, 2010).

4.6 Dzodze Fiagbedu

Fiagbedu is another suburb of Dzodze which shares its western border with Kpodoave. Located at the northern end of Dzodze. Fiagbedu is famous for its swish stove. Just like Kpodoave, Fiagbedu also inherited the making of *soɲu* or *ado* from Mama Sodolo of Zomayi.

4.6.1 Pottery Tools



Tsranu (sieve) is made in a warp-weft weave from pliable palm fronds and used for sieving grog. *Ababe*, *zeninikpe*, *gabla* and *ebliti* (corncob) are used the same way as in **Plates 4.1, 4.45, 4.9, 4.45 and 4.93.**

Plate 4.158 *Tsranu*

4.6.2 Pottery Material

Clay digging and preparation methods are the same as Kpodoave on **Pages 167 and 168.** Both suburbs of Dzodze fetch their clay from the same pit and share the same ideas about taboos. The colouring materials are *kɔdzẽ* (slip) and coal tar pitch. While the *kɔdzẽ* is smeared all over the *soɲu* (gari bowl), coal tar pitch is painted only on the rim of *soɲu*.

4.6.3 Pottery Methods

Mlekpui (swish stove) *yakayakeɖaze* (steamed cassava meal pot) and *soɲu* are mainly made at this centre. There are two types of stoves made using the pinch method only. Namely; *nakemlekpui* (firewood stove) and *akamlekpui* (charcoal stove). The *yakayakeɖaze* made using

the same method. It is specially made in the form of a pot but has one up to six saucers fixed to the top.

Nakemlekpui: Depending on the size, a round ball of clay is placed on a well swept ground. The top is flattened and a hole is made through the centre leaving a thickness of about a third of the index finger at the base. The hole is widened to an appreciable circumference with intermittent pulling of the clay ball into a broad cylindrical form. The entrance for the firewood is formed as depressions are also created at opposite planes of the seat purposely to let out fire and for the pot to fit perfectly. Thus, the seat becomes broader than the base.

Practically, the length of the palm is used to determine the height of the stove from the base to the depressed inclination and a broom stick used across to establish the level. When leatherhard, the stove is inverted, the base scrapped and flattened. Two small holes are made at the rear to facilitate the emission of smoke and excess heat. The surface of the seat is incised with a number of marks depending on the potter for the purpose of identification. A coat of *kɔdzẽ* is applied to the whole stove before burnishing is done with a smooth stone. The stove is left to dry under room temperature for at least two weeks before it is fired. While hot after firing, the rim and the fringes of the seat are painted with coal tar pitch.

Akamlekpui: Just like the *nakemlekpui*, it is also pulled from a ball of clay even as additional parts are fixed. When the required height is attained, the top is widened, an exact copy of making *agba* in Adidome Todze. A flat circular slab is fixed about halfway within the stove to create the charcoal tray or holder. First, seven small holes are punched in the tray in the wet stage and later widened at the leatherhard stage to create an exit for the ash. Again, at the leatherhard stage, a square dent is created to let in air and to serve as an opening for emptying the ash that accumulates at the base. The stove is inverted, the base scrapped, flattened and smoothen and *kɔdzẽ* is applied to it. Burnishing is done with a smooth stone, left

to dry and fired when bone-dry. The coal tar pitch is applied to only the rim of the charcoal tray or holder immediately after firing

Yakayakeḏaze: There are three different types that are made. These include *enuḏekaze* (one mouth pot), *enueveze* (two mouths pot), *enuetɔze* (three mouths pot) and *enuadeze* (six mouths pot). Two different approaches are employed; in one instance the mouth (saucer) is modelled just like the *agba* and overturned before the pot is added. In another instance, the mouth and the pot are modelled separately and joined to each other. The hole in the middle of each saucer allows water to be poured into the pot so that steam can be emitted through the same source for cooking the *yakayake* (steamed cassava meal).

4.6.4 Names and uses of pottery



Plate 4.159 *Akamlekpui*



Plate 4.160 *Nakemlekpui*

Akamlekpui (charcoal stove) is a local stove which uses charcoal as fuel and it is used for all manner of cooking. *Nakemlekpui* (firewood stove) uses firewood as fuel and it is also used for cooking all kinds of meals. Refer to **Plates 4.67** and **4.155** for the uses of *yakayakeḏaze* and *ekuze* respectively.



Plate 4.161a
Yakayakeḑaze enu ḑeka



Plate 4.161b
Yakayakeḑaze enu

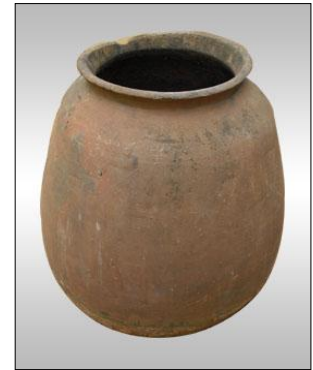


Plate 4.162 *Ekuzɛ*

4.6.5 Philosophy of Dzodze Fiagbedu Pottery

Making round pots is *denu* or *dekɔnu* (tradition). Potters claim this is the only way pots have been made since they were born and they have also carried it out to date. The round shapes are said to be more convenient and able to hold much substances as well as fit perfectly on the swish stove.

Sizes of *mlekpui* particularly are determined by the amount of clay that can be held in the hand. *Nakemlekpui* has three sizes that are made using the measure of a handful of clay; one plus half (small size), two (medium size) and three (large size). *Akamlekpui* has five sizes; one (smallest), one plus half, two, three, two plus half and three (largest). However, sizes may differ from one potter to the other due to the fact that all hands do not have equal dimensions.

The information about the proverbs were given by J. Ablometinu, (2010). *Atsu le agbe zemela mewɔa etsu dɔ zame o* - “It is forbidden for a potter whose husband is alive to work in the night.” It is believed that the husband will die.

Dɔ tsɔlae kpɔa afɔku - literally meaning “one who goes on an errand gets involved in an accident.” This proverb is similar to Kpando Bame version of *tome dela egba ze*. It is an advice to every human being to be responsible for every act of misfortune and never shift the blame on other people.

Funɔ mefle na ze o, ke ame bubu koe afle ne - it means “a pregnant woman does not buy a pot, it is rather someone else who will buy it for her.” This is not attributed to only pots but all other forms of pottery produced in this locality. It is believed that a pregnant woman who encounters cracks and breakages during the pottery process may also experience difficulty during birth. In effect, she is restricted from handling pots for the fear that just like a pot breaks so a pregnancy may be likewise affected.

Gblɔmadzo - literally meaning “say it so that I leave.” The *nakemlekpui* which is dubbed *gblɔmadzo* is linked to marriage divorce. It is held that when there is a dispute within a marriage and the husband returns the *nakemlekpui* which the wife brings into the marital home to her parents, a divorce occurs. On the other hand, a divorce occurs if the wife carries the *nakemlekpui* back to her ancestral home for the same cause but when she leaves without it she is seeking redress. Proverbs have immense significance on pottery and its activities. *Gblɔmadzo* is a proverbial name for *nakemlekpui*. Anybody within the Dzodze community is conversant with it because of its continuous use and the events that led to naming it so. In effect, during traditional marriage contracts, *nakemlekpui* is one important item which attracts so much attention among the people gathered because it is believed to make or mar marriages.

No potter has been able to establish the meaning of pot in Eve but allude to the fact that names are primarily assigned to pottery by reason of certain past events and how they are used within the society. One such vessel is *ekuze* which is believed to have trapped children who attempt to fetch water from it. *Eku* means death, so at the sound of *ekuze*, children become aware of the consequences of fetching water in such a huge pot.

Kɔdzẽ is applied to all types of pottery while coal tar is applied mostly to the fringes of *mlekpui*, rims of *soɲuvi* and *Ado/dokpo* as a form of decoration. These two colorants are generally referred to as colours of beauty.

4.6.6 The culture of Dzodze Fiagbedu Pottery

Potters regard pottery as a job in itself but interest overrides this idea. This factor undoubtedly has led to the continued existence of the industry although most current jobs look more attractive and rewarding than pottery.

It is believed that the survival of pottery depends to a large extent on how spiritual activities are carried out to maintain the legacy left behind by the ‘mothers.’ Mama Ablometinu reveals that the occasional rituals performed to nourish the clay pit provide strength to the clay and for that matter their wares. These beliefs compel the potters to work feverishly to preserve the industry from collapse.

To a woman, particularly a potter, her livelihood depends to a large extent on pottery because most vessels and domestic devices utilized in the home are pottery ware. Hence, the activities in the home dictate the kind of containers to produce in clay. In the area of traditional religion, *soṇuvi* is used for *amadodo* (herbal concoctions) in the vodun shrine as well as offering food to gods. To all intents and purposes, pottery becomes inseparable from human life and activity.

During the stages of life; birth, marriage and death pottery is employed in various ways. At birth, the mother is presented with a number of vessels which are used for herbs, soup, hot water, etc. It is also a must that at marriage a number of pottery ware above all *nakemlekpui* be included in a collection of items the bride will send to the marital home. At the funeral of a potter, *zevi* (miniature pot) is placed at a conspicuous place to indicate that the deceased was a potter. It is also used to bath the corpse after which it is broken signifying the absence of the deceased among the living.

4.7 Dzodze Kpodoave

Kpodoave, which is located North-West, is also a suburb of Dzodze. Pottery here can be traced to its roots at Zomayi the ancestral home of Mama Sodolo. She was married to Togui Adutor of Dzodze Kpodoave where after settling as a housewife, introduced the art of *so`u* (bowl) making in the locality. To date, making of *so`u* has remained the main speciality of women in this neighbourhood.

4.7.1 Pottery Tools

See **Plates 4.1, 4.9 and 4.44** for the uses of *ababe*, *zeninikpe* and *abɔbɔgoe*. *Forget-me-not leaves* are thick luscious leaves used for widening, shaping and smoothing the rim of pots.

4.7.2 Pottery materials

Clay digging: Clay is obtained from a nearby dam bed. Usually it is women who dig clay, but men are not restricted from doing so. Clay is dug any day of the week and no rites are performed before it is dug. A woman in her menstrual period was restricted from digging clay in the past. It is believed that, a potter who ignores this taboo will have most of her pots broken, and also, a snake will emerge from the pit to frighten her.

Clay Preparation: Fresh clay from the pit is dried in the sun for at least three days depending on the prevailing weather conditions so that it can dissolve easily. A special type of sand is used as grog to mix with the clay in order to reduce its plasticity and give it strength to withstand the stress during the drying and firing stages.

Decorating materials: *Kɔdzẽ* smeared at the rim of *so`u* in the wet, leatherhard and pre-heating stages for two main purposes; to decorate and to prevent the rim from cracking during drying. Coal tar is used in painting the rim of *so`u* as a form of decoration which contrasts the

red colour of *kodzẽ* and to prevent the rim from scratching easily.

4.7.3 Pottery Method

Two types of bowls are made; cereal and *gari* roasting bowls. The pinch method is used in modelling both. However, the *gari* bowl is treated with much care due to its huge size. The bowls are made in the outdoor and later carried indoor where the weather conditions are less harsh (**Plate 4.167**). Depending on the size of the bowl, enough clay is added to the base.



Plate 4.163 Making *soju* or *galitɔgba* in the open air



Plate 4.164 Application of red clay slip



Plate 4.165 Base covered to prevent drying

The rim is prepared first, with red clay slip applied to it and allowed to dry so that when it is lifted it will not break (**Plate 4.164**). The wet bowl is covered with rugs (**Plate 4.165**) to maintain the same clay consistency in order to facilitate the building and sealing of the base. The base of the *gari* bowl is cut out and covered with rugs to maintain a wet and malleable consistency which will be used later to fill the base.



Plate 4.166 *Uncovering and scrapping the cut base*

It is very important that the rim dries well before the inversion of the bowl otherwise, cracks may occur. The cut out pieces are scrapped to remove sand particles and to reveal the malleable texture used to build the conical base (**Plate 4.166**).



Plate 4.167
Overturning the ware



Plate 4.168
Filling the base



Plate 4.169
Shaping with ababe

Two people carefully overturn the ware, still in the leatherhard stage in order to start filling the base (**Plate 4.167**). In filling the base, the legs of the potter remain within the perimeter of the bowl with the support of the hand until more than half of the base is covered (**Plate 4.168**). The *ababe* is used in shaping the bowl (**Plate 4.169**) and left under room temperature until the leatherhard stage before the inside is scraped. The bowl is left to dry under room temperature for at least two weeks depending on the weather conditions before it is fired by the open-air method. Preheating is done first to expel any chemical water left in the ware (**Plate 4.170**).



Plate 4.170
Preheating bowl



Plate 4.171
Changing smoky colour



Plate 4.172
Coating rim with coal tar pitch

The bowl is smeared with red clay slip to replace the black colour acquired from preheating (**Plate 4.171**). Only one or two *gari* bowls can be fired at a time because of the huge size. The rim is painted with coal tar pitch while hot as a form of decoration (**Plate 4.172**).

Although potters from Kpodoave and Zomayi use the same methods, there are slight differences. Kpodoave potters build lighter walls while their counterparts in Zomayi build thicker ones. In the case of the *gari* bowl, Kpodoave potters cut the base very close to the rim while Zomayi potters cut it rather close to the base as indicated in **Plate 4.173 a** and **b**. It takes



Plate 4.173a *Cut base-Kpodoave*



Plate 4.173b *Cut base-Zomayi*

Kpodoave potters a longer time than those in Zomayi to fill and seal the base of bowls entirely. Zomayi potters claim that in the process of filling the base, the walls do not cave in easily due to the strength of their clay. This confirms the reason for the cutting of the bowl close to the base instead of the rim. Again, Kpodoave potters use stones as support during preheating and firing while Zomayi uses *zegui* (similar to palm-wine tapping pot but slender) as props for the same purpose.



Plate 4.174a *Pre-heating on stones at Kpodoave*



Plate 4.174b *Pre-heating on zegui at Zomayi*

4.7.4 Names and uses of pottery



Plate 4.175a *Soṇu galitɔgba*



Plate 4.175b *Galitɔgba fitted on galikpo*

Soṇu galitɔgba (*gari* roasting bowl) is an open, outsize bowl, the largest among all bowls because of the swing and turning of *gari* during the roasting process. The *soṇu galitɔgba* is fitted permanently on *galikpo* (circular swish stove) used for roasting *gari* (**Plate 4.175 b**). See **Plate 4.89** for the function of *soṇu eblitɔgba*.

Soṇu etitɔgba (medicinal bowl) is similar to the *eblitɔgba* (corn roasting bowl) except that it is not decorated with clay slip and coal tar pitch. This is to maintain purity. It is used for roasting powdered substances e.g. herbs, animals, etc. commonly known as *eti* to cure chronic ailments. It is also used as herbal bath container for patients undergoing treatment of diseases.

4.7.5 Philosophy of Dzodze Kpodoave Pottery

According to Da Mana, personal communication, (2010) before Mama Sodolo introduced *soṇu*, large pieces of broken *ezɔ* (outsize pots) were used for all kinds of roasting purposes. Mothers of old believed to have discovered the round shapes, built them to accommodate the swinging and turning action of the substances roasted in them. As such, bowls formed assume that shape in the mind of the potter relative to how and what they are used for. Again, the round shapes remain balanced when placed on the “swish stove.” There is

therefore an assurance of even distribution of heat and capacity of bowls to withstand long hours of cooking without damage.

Three sizes of bowls can be identified, (corn roasting bowl), large and outsize (gari roasting bowls). The large and outsize bowls are not done according to any standardized measurement but by the use of the eye and the mass of the clay. In this wise, the idea of visualizing the sizes by the potter even before the process of making the bowl commences is paramount. Also, the dimensions of the “swish stove” are used as a standard for the sizes.

The sound of bowls communicates a sign of a perfect shape. When flicked, a ‘kenken’ sound *gbaḍegodo* (sound beyond or outside) signifies perfect bowl. On the contrary, a ‘kponkpon’ sound conveys *gbaḍelāme* (sound within) which implies a broken bowl.

Agba is the general name for all bowls. *Agba* literally means load or “what is carried in” which is indicative of a kind of bowl that can hold/contain plenty substances. However, the general name *soṅu and ekpo* for outsize bowls are peculiar to the area. Togolese and their relations in Kpodoave also use *ado*. The names reflect the functions of the bowls. The names are symbolic since they identify the various groups that use them and what they mean to them.

Whereas bowls for domestic purposes are painted with deep red and black, others for medicinal purposes and vodun worship have motifs drawn on them to express the general beliefs and ideas of the people. To the potters, both colours express beauty. Largely, the deep red colour signifies warmth when applied to the bowl. Symbolically, it is linked with the activity of fire. Furthermore, red is applied as a coat to protect the bowl from cracking. The application of black however implies strength. When used on the rim of bowls it resists the damage caused through using it for a long period.

4.7.6 The Culture of Dzodze Kpodoave Pottery

Pottery used not to be a complete job in the olden days, but it is considered as such nowadays because of financial constraints. The task of processing daily meals from legumes, vegetables, tubers and cereals; vodun and other forms of traditional worship; healing administered through herbs, etc. makes pottery inseparable from human activity and life. The above practices therefore dictate the kind of shapes, sizes and decorations potters embody in their wares.

Just as a child is identified with a particular mother so also is pottery with its maker. A potter becomes famous based on how she exhibits her skills in finishing her wares. This clearly shows differences in pottery, and for that matter bowls made in each locality. The various centres that make *soɲu*, e.g. Kpodoave, Zomayi and Ave Dzalele use similar methods yet there is clear difference among their final products. Potters established that it depends on how one takes care of the wares and the preparation of the materials used for pottery. Customers are therefore attracted to products that have been well finished, appear colourful and stimulating.

A. Agbate personal communication, (2010) affirmed that bowls are still used because food prepared in them has some special flavour and taste better than those prepared in metal containers. The even distribution of heat within the bowl ensures well roasting of food substances. Again, bowls are cheap but can last as long as they are handled with care. In addition, the use of bowls is a sign of preserving what mothers of old have handed down to potters.

4.8 Zomayi

Zomayi, found in the Ketu North District, is about seven kilometres from Dzodze and located off the Dzodze-Akatsi trunk road. Potters specialize in the making of *soɲu* (gari and cereal roasting bowls) and make other pots for domestic and ritual purposes.

4.8.1 Pottery Tools

Refer to **Plates 4.1, 4.5, 4.9** and **4.45** for the uses of *ababe*, *edzo*, *zeninikpe* and *nufloɲa*. *Agbakle* (terracotta shard) works like *nufloɲa*.

4.8.2 Pottery Materials

Clay digging and preparation: Clay is dug any day except Friday reserved for the resting of the god of the land and it is not restricted to a particular group of people. Apart from this, one is not allowed to eat salt before going to the pit. Anyone who goes contrary to these taboos encounter breakages of her wares. Occasionally, rituals are performed at the pit to reinforce the strength of the clay. *Akpledzẽ* (a meal of corn flour mixed with palm oil) is prepared and sprinkled at the clay pit along with the pouring of libation. Only one type of clay is used. The clay which can best be described as earthenware clay is not tempered with any material to reduce its plasticity. From the pit, the clay is dried for two or three days before water is added to soften and dissolve the lumps. It is kneaded afterwards and kept in polythene to avoid drying. Decorating materials include *akati* (charcoal tree) *Kɔdzẽ* (red clay). Just like is done in Ave Dzalele and Dzodze Kpodoave, coal tar pitch is used to paint the rim of *soɲu*.

4.8.3 Pottery Methods

The methods used for making pots and bowls are the same used at Ave Dzalele and Dzodze Kpodoave respectively. However, there are some slight differences in the thickness of

walls, the cutting of the base and firing of bowls in particular. See **Plate 173** for details.

4.8.4 Names and Uses of pottery



Plate 4.176 *Galitɔgba*



Plate 4.177 *Soɲuvi/eblitɔgba*



Plate 4.178 *Uegba*

Galitɔgba is used for *gari* while *soɲuvi*, apart from using it for roasting corn is also used for *abɔbi* (anchovy) and as a drinking trough for ducks and chicken. *Uegba* is a grinding bowl.

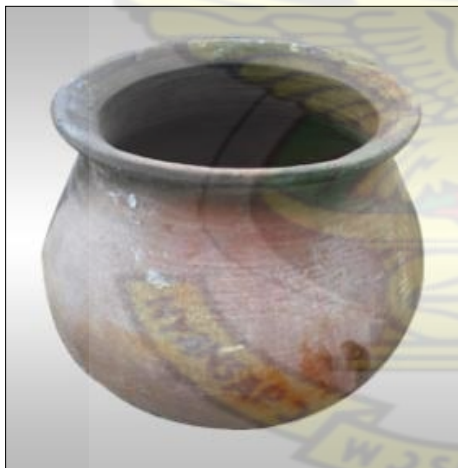


Plate 4.179 *Nuɖaze*



Plate 4.180 *Nuxeze*

See **Plate 4.26** for the uses of *nuɖaze*. *Nuxeze* (ritual pot) is a small pot used in a number of rituals e.g. twin rites, *gbetsilele* (herbal bath), vodun worship, etc. Depending on the ritual, it can be used with or without a cover.



Plate 4.181 *Zegui*



Plate 4.182 *Agbaze*



Plate 4.183 *Tsize*

Zegui is a slender pot with a hole underneath which serves as a prop for firing *soju*. The hole discourages wine tappers from using it as a receptacle for the wine. Refer to **Plates 4.61, 4.23, 4.80, 4.25** and **4. 156** for the uses of *agbaze*, *tsize*, *kpotomali*, *detsize* and *afagba* in that order.

4.8.5 Philosophy of Zomayi Pottery

The round shape is said to be a shape of convenience and for generations, they have been repeated. It is therefore a shape that has been accepted as the most ideal over the ages and that is why potters cannot stop making them. The mind in conjunction with the eye are used to determine sizes of pottery. Potters support this idea with the fact that the shapes are formed in the mind before they emerge.

Beautiful pottery ware is made by an expert. Beauty in this context is characterised by smooth and glossy surface, a shape free of defect and can be conveniently used for the intended purpose. Any pot or bowl that is not beautiful is considered to be made by either an amateur or an expert who did not take care and spent sufficient time to make it.

Just like other centres, potters express some views in the form of proverbs, e.g. *tome dela egba ze*; literally, it means “one who goes to fetch water at the stream is responsible for the breaking of a pot.” It is an advice to every human being to be responsible for every act of misfortune and never shift the blame on other people. *Ne zea gba gake akla tsianyi eyowu*; this

literally means “it is better to have a cracked pot than a smashed one.” It is emphasizing the fact that there is still hope for a surviving mother who loses her child during birth (G. Agbodemegbe, personal communication, 2011).

Ekɔdzẽ (red clay slip) is considered a colour of beauty, while the application of coal tar pitch adds gleam to the rim of bowls especially. *Akati* solution is used as a substitute for black. The beauty of other pots is not tempered with black for the sake of maintaining one colour instead of a contrasting black with red.

Pots such as *nudaze* and *agbaze*, which are set aside for multi and rare use respectively, acquire their colour (black) through smoking although they are initially painted with *ekɔdzẽ*. The colour of these pots is not measured in terms of beauty but the function they perform.

In relation to application of marks and motifs, only incised lines are visible on pots and bowls. On bowls, a number of lines ranging from three to five are incised on the rim. Potters claim that these lines prevent slipping when held in the hands. The number of lines and texture to aid grinding vary from potter to potter. In effect, this signifies a potter’s trademark by which she is identified. However, on pots, lines are not deliberately incised on them but results from joining the head to the body. This automatically breaks the plain appearance on the surface of pots and differentiates the head from the body.

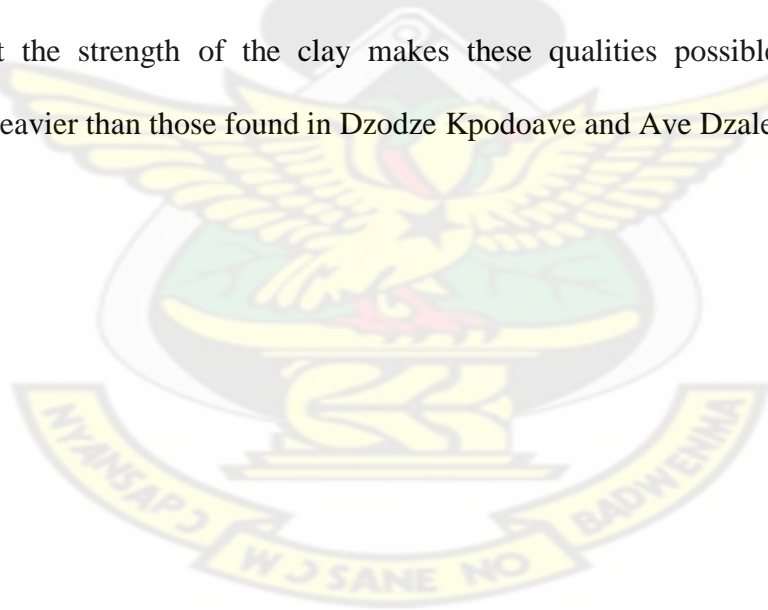
4.8.6 The culture of Zomayi Pottery

The passion for pottery makes it more of a way of life than a job. Potters claim even though proceeds from pottery is inadequate, they feel satisfied for the fact that they are able to carry out what their mothers have handed down to them. They reiterate that it will be impossible to discontinue what they have practised over the years. In affirmation, they said, “this is what we know and can do best to earn a living.”

The type of meals prepared and traditional worship mostly dictate the kind of pottery that pertains in this area. Cassava which is the most staple food is largely processed into *gari* hence the making of *galitɔgba* to support its preparation. *Ezedzĩe* which is used for all manner of rituals and sacrifices ranks among the commonest diminutive pots made.

Pots are still being used because they are considered as *blemanuwo* (things of old) which have shown to be less poisonous. Although pots are not as hard-wearing as *gaze* (silver metal pots) in terms of handling, when food is prepared in them their nice flavour cannot be compared to that of metal pots. This quality makes pottery enduring and inseparable from human activity to such an extent that the indigenes fancy using pots to metal pots.

Pottery produced in Zomayi is different from other centres due to the materials and the techniques. All pottery in Zomayi is characterized by heaviness and thick wall. Potters affirmed that the strength of the clay makes these qualities possible. The *galitɔgba* for example, is heavier than those found in Dzodze Kpodoave and Ave Dzalele.



4.9 Adidome Todze

Todze is about three kilometres from Adidome, the capital of North Tongu District. It lies within the tropical savannah grassland zone and is about a kilometre from the bank of the Volta River. Todze potters are specialists in domestic bowls and almost every household engages in pottery. There are two cooperative groups besides a few individuals who work on their own. Initially, a potter makes all the bowls on her own and at the leather hard stage where finishing is done, her colleagues help her. The days are planned such that every potter is fairly catered for. At least hundred bowls are produced by each potter per day.

4.9.1 Pottery Materials

Clay digging and its preparation: Clay is dug at *Amuto* (bank of the Volta River). It is dug any day and both sexes are allowed to do so. However, any woman who gives birth is restricted from visiting the pit for a period of three months. Again, any woman in her menstrual period is restricted from digging clay in the pit. These taboos are said to be connected with blood. By tradition, any discharge from a woman is considered unclean. It is therefore assumed that women in such conditions will defile the land and make it unclean. It is believed that anybody who violates this practice will have her pots broken in the process (V. Tettey, personal communication, 2010).

. Only one type of clay, earthenware is used by potters in Todze. *Anka* (grog) is mixed with the clay to give it strength and make it porous. The clay is allowed to age before it is used for pottery. Colouring materials include *anka* and *dedzẽ*. *Anka* is a type of brownish fire clay which is used as grog. Formally, after calcining, it is pounded in mortar and sieved into powder. Of late, it is milled in a corn mill. *Dedzẽ* (red clay), which is referred to as *ekɔdzẽ* in most pottery centres, is mixed with water and used as engobe for painting green ware.

4.9.2 Pottery Tools



Plate 4.184 *Agoku/Mangoku*



Plate 4.185 *Gaḍeti*



Plate 4.186 *Trekake*

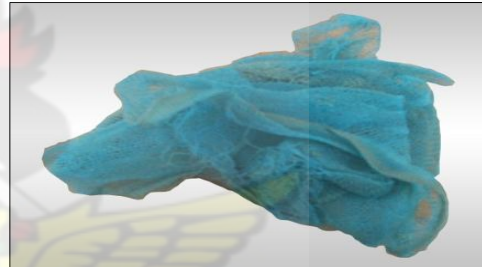


Plate 4.187 *Nylon mesh*

Agoku (fan palm seed) is a dry seed used for levelling the surface of bowls. *Mangoku* (mango seed) does the same work like the *agoku*. *Gaḍeti* (line making stick) is a short flat stick with five deep cut lines at one end used for making lines or rings at the neck of a bowl.

Trekake (broken calabash piece) is a piece of calabash used for levelling the inner surface of bowls and pots. *Nylon mesh* or what is commonly called “mosquito net” is a new tool introduced by potters which is also used for burnishing/polishing bowls. *Afē* (comb) is a discarded plastic comb used for texturing the inside of grinding bowl. Refer to **Plates 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.9, 4.45, 4.71 and 4.123** for *togbati* (stick), *kaple* (coin), *edzo* (leave), *afumekpe* (smooth stone), *zefloga* (scraper), *adza* (oyster shell) and *akla* (calico).

4.9.3 Pottery Methods

The pinch method is used mostly. Clay is cut according to the size of the bowl and kneaded thoroughly. The ball of clay is placed on a clean ground and a hole is made at the

centre leaving enough clay at the bottom. The hole is widened to an appreciable circumference of a flat thick ringed shape (**Plate 4.188**). With the rim in between the *edzo* (leaf), it is widened to form the neck as well as the required shape and perimeter (**Plate 4.189**). The leaves are again used to render the rim smooth and left to dry in the sun. Clay with a thickness of about a third of the index finger is added to the base and *agɔku* is used to smoothen it (**Plate 4.190**). The dried rim is lifted to rest sideways on the potters lap. She scraps off the sandy base to reveal the wet and pliable clay (**Plate 4.191**).



Plate 4.188
Making the initial shape

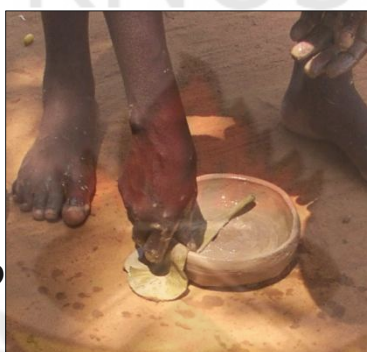


Plate 4.189
Widening the rim



Plate 4.190
Smoothing base with agɔku

At leatherhard stage, both the inside and outside surfaces are burnished (**Plate 4.192**). The inner surface of grinding bowls is usually textured (**Plate 4.193**) but not in the case of eating bowls.



Plate 4.191 *Scraping the base*



Plate 4.192 *Burnishing inside and outside*

Next, the foot is made, smoothed and left to dry under room temperature for at least four days (**Plate 4.194**). *Dedzẽ* (red clay) is then applied to the bowl (**Plate 4.195**), left to dry before the final burnishing/polishing is done to make it smooth and shinny (**Plate 4.196**).



Plate 4.193 *Texturing the inside*



Plate 4.194 *Making the foot*



Plate 4.195 *Application of dedzẽ*



Plate 4.196 *Polishing bowls*

The textured surface of the bowl remains untouched so as to preserve the roughness which aids grinding. Potters affirmed that when the textured surface is painted and pepper is ground in it the pepper turns black. Drying of painted and polished bowls are both done under room and open air temperatures respectively (**Plates 4.197** and **4.198**). The colour grey determines full dryness of a bowl. Firing is up to one hour depending on the quantity of wares. Mostly firewood and thatch are used for firing. Neem leaves are used to render the bowls black.



Plate 4.197 *Drying painted bowls with dedzẽ*



Plate 4.198 *Drying polished bowls*

4.9.4 Pottery names and uses

Potters make two major pottery wares in this locality; *agba* (bowl) and *ze* (pot) but *agba* seems to be produced more than *ze*. There are two main types of bowls: *agbadzẽ* (red bowl) and *agbayibɔ* (black bowl). Apart from these, there are bowls for grinding vegetables, eating, feeding livestock and others for religious rites.



Plate 4.199 *Totetegba*



Plate 4.200 *Toḍetegba*



Plate 4.201 *Kposi*

Totetegba (flat rim bowl) is characterized by flatness at the tip of the rim. It is used for grinding all types of vegetables.

Toḍetegba (thin rim bowl) has a thin rounded rim at the tip. It is also used for grinding vegetables.

Kposi is a grinding bowl slightly taller, closed and ringed at the neck with two lines.



Plate 4.202 *Agbagã*

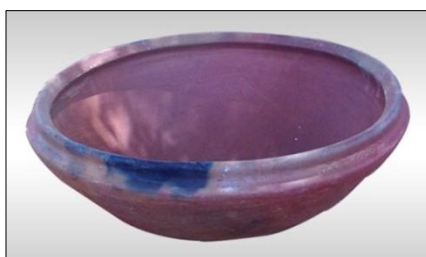


Plate 4.203 *Kpakpaxegba*



Plate 4.204 *Emeniye*

Agbagã literally means big bowl. It is used for covering *kokoe*, local name ‘kenkey’ when being boiled. It is also used for grinding vegetables when cooking for many people, usually during funerals or festive occasions. *Kpakpaxegba* (drinking trough) is a vessel used as a drinking trough for ducks in particular because of the name, but other animals such as chicken, goats, sheep, etc. also drink from it. *Emeniye* (smooth bowl) is a bowl which is smooth within and used as an eating dish.



Plate 4.205 *Afɔtigba*



Plate 4.206 *Fufugba nu eve*

Afɔtigba (foot bowl) is a special serving bowl for people with boils under their armpit. *Fufugba nu deka*, literally meaning a *fufu* bowl with one opening or mouth. It is a serving bowl which derived its name from *fufu* (pounded yam, cassava, cocoyam, plantain, etc). It is round in shape and covered with a lid and it is mostly used for serving *fufu* and other cereal meals. *Fufugba nu eve* literally meaning a *fufu* bowl with two openings or mouths. It is a special serving bowl for all kinds of foods with two compartments. The shape is that of an

ellipse which looks like a stretched circle. Both solid and soupy foods are served separately within the same bowl. Others include *Gomeniŋe* (footless bowl) a bowl without foot used purposely for eating. *Agbaglo* (deep bowl) is used for harvesting rain water and storing river water. It is also used for soaking and storing clay in its old stage.



Plate 4.207 *Kutu*



Plate 4.208 *Yomekutuvi*

Kutu is a soup pot, used for preparing all kinds of soups and vegetables. *Yomekutuvi* or *zevi* is the smallest among all pots used for rites of the dead. The pot is placed in the coffin of the deceased, not for only potters but any elderly woman who died at an advanced age.

4.9.5 Philosophy of Adidome Todze Pottery

Potters claim that they make circular bowls and pots because it is a practice inherited from grandmothers. Just like a woman is attractive, so are the round shapes. Thus, that beauty in a woman is translated into the pots and bowls. The circular bowls are so friendly and easy to handle when used for grinding purposes.

Five sizes of bowls can be identified; the smallest, the outsize and three others in between them. The sizes are determined by both potters and sellers depending on the amount of money each is sold.

The bowl speaks by way of its beauty. Beauty is attained depending on how the potter

takes care of wares during burnishing and painting with the deep red clay slip. A good finish reveals the beauty of a ware.

B. Ayita and J. Eleblu, personal communication, (2010) recounted two proverbs they heard from their predecessors. *Tɔkɔ dela gba ze*; literally translated as the one who goes to the river side is liable to break the pot). A similar version of this proverb is *nutsɔ lae gba nu*; the carrier of a load is liable to breaks it. Both proverbs imply that every person must be responsible and account for every activity engaged in and not shift the blame on someone else. Potters claim proverbs are linked with pottery because they teach them not to be in haste but pay attention to and care for whatever they are doing. Furthermore, they also use the proverb to admonish children when they are handling fragile objects such as pots.

Names of pots do not just happen but are ascribed to the use they are put to. Just like a human being is given a name so also are pots assigned names to identify them from one another and for the functions they serve. The name *agba* or *nuɖugba* is attributed to eating or serving bowl. They are said to be *Hogbe ηkɔwo* or names of old (V. Tettey, personal communication, 2010). Unlike other centres e.g. Dzodze Kpodoave, who linked *agba* to ‘load’, Todze potters however tie the names to the design and make of the lip, inner surface and opening. Other bowls derive their names from the size, foot and depth.

The use of colour in decorating bowls is very vital among Todze potters. Red is considered beautiful hence the use of red clay slip on bowls. Although all pottery wares are painted and polished with the red clay slip by Todze potters, some pots still undergo smoking to acquire the black colour used just for differentiation in usage. Usually, black bowls are used for grinding purposes instead of for serving food. In terms of marks or motifs, only the inner surfaces are notched in different styles to aid grinding.

4.9.6 Culture of Adidome Todze Pottery

By virtue of the geographical location, i.e. near the Volta River where fishing abounds and in the savannah zone where vegetable farming is prominent, potters claim that the forms, mainly bowls, aid in the processing of fish and vegetable products. In effect, most solid meals are accompanied by fresh vegetables ground in bowls instead of soups as applied to the forest zone e.g. Kpando Bame.

Pottery is supposed to be a job, but to potters, the love for it surpasses the financial gains that accrue from it. If it were just a job for financial gains, it might have collapsed because comparatively, there are other lucrative jobs that can yield higher incomes than pottery.

Pottery is still used for the most part of Todze and its environs because lots of cultural practices relating to rites/rituals still persist in the area. At any time, there is demand for natural vessels for the sake of purity. The daily life activities dictate the kind of pottery to be made. Pottery forms are made according to the type of domestic activities, religious activities, etc. that go on in the locality. There are a number of rites performed with bowls and pots. These include rites pertaining to funerals, ailments, fertility and behaviour.

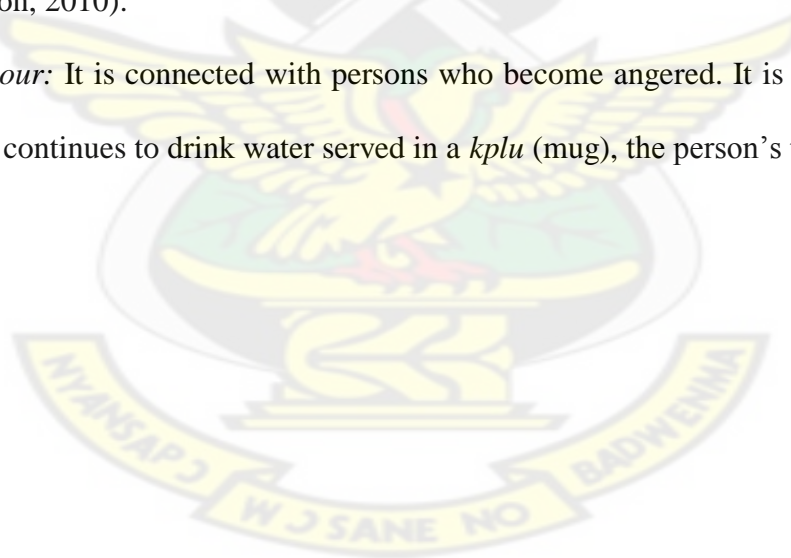
Funerals: In performing the funeral rites of a potter, all dry pots ready for firing are removed from the dead potter's room before mourning commences. It is believed that anybody who cries while pots still remain in the dead person's room will cause all the pots to break during firing. During the funeral, all kinds of pots are freshly made, fired and placed on the dead potter's tomb besides the *yomekutuvi* which is placed in the coffin before burial (J. Eleblu, personal communication, 2010)

Ailments: A person who becomes infested with boils orders *afɔtigba* or "foot bowl" for curative rites. A number of either short or long knobs are moulded at the base of the bowl representing the boils under a person's armpit. Usually, three, four, five and seven are

moulded. The victim eats in the bowl until the boils burst and complete healing takes place. Another one is *venɔvi kɔnu* or twin rite. When twins fall sick two small pots representing each person filled with herbs are given to the twins to drink as a curative measure (V. Tettey, personal communication, 2010).

Fertility: The rite is known as *gbetsilele* literally translated as “herbal bath.” To be childless is typically a cause for worry and pity, therefore a childless woman, normally, will consult a *Borkor* (diviner) or *Amegashie* (seer) to find out the reason for her inability to have children. If any of the above establishes that it is a bad omen, the victim is offered *zevi* (small pot) full of assorted herbs mixed with water. She is aided by a fruitful aunt to perform the rite. In practice, the aunt asks that some water is poured from the pot into her hands which she splashes on the victim signifying her blessings of the fruit of the womb (C. Sagada, personal communication, 2010).

Behaviour: It is connected with persons who become angered. It is believed that as the angry person continues to drink water served in a *kplu* (mug), the person’s temper cools down.



4.10 Ahlihadzi

Ahlihadzi is situated in the Akatsi District near Wute on the Akatsi-Ziope trunk road. It is about 15 kilometres from Akatsi the district capital. Potters at this centre specialize in making *vegba* (bowl), *akamlekpui* (charcoal swish stove) and *nakemlekpui* (firewood swish stove).

4.10.1 Pottery Materials

Clay digging, preparation and colouring materials: Only women dig clay in this area and there are no taboos attached to digging clay at the pit. Only one type of clay is used but grog is added to it to reduce its plasticity. *Kodzẽ* (red clay), *yokumi* (shea butter) and kerosene are mixed together and used like a glaze to render the wares lustrous and water resistant.

4.10.2 Pottery Tools



Plate 4.209 *Fliteti*

Fliteti (line tool): Any stick can be obtained from the bush and fashioned to be used for ruling lines within the bowl to create texture to aid grinding of vegetables. It is a two-end serrated flat tool known as *ɲkugã* (large notch) towards the right and *ɲkuvi* (small notch-left) towards the left referring to the size and number of notches created at either edge of the tool. Usually, the large one has ten notches while the small one is up to nine. *Agbatofeti* (line tool) is a tiny stick like a broom stick used in conjunction with *tredzo* to imprint lines on the rim of bowls. Other tools include *ababe*, *tubluti*, *agɔku*, *abɔbɔgo*, *tredzo* and *kpezɔzɔɛ*. See **Plates 4.1, 4.3, 4.190, 4.5 and 4.9.**

4.10.3 Pottery Methods

The pinch method is employed in making *vegba* (bowl). The methods used by potters at Ahlihadzi are relatively the same as those in Adidome Todze. The only difference is that Todze potters use neem leaves for blackening bowls while Ahlihadzi potters use thatch. Although the *mlekpui* methods in Ahlihadzi are the same as those in Fiagbedu, there are differences. In the case of *akamlekpui* (charcoal stove), both the ash tray and the vent are circular while Fiagbedu potters create seven holes on the ash tray and a square vent. In terms of *nakemlekpui* (firewood stove), potters in Fiagbedu seal the base but this is left opened by Ahlihadzi potters. Both stoves by Ahlihadzi potters seem to be bulkier than those in Fiagbedu.

4.10.4 Names and uses of pottery



Plate 4.210 *Akamlekpui*



Plate 4.211 *Nakemlekpui*

Akamlekpui is a local stove which uses charcoal as fuel. It is used mainly for light cooking.

Nakemlekpui which uses firewood as fuel is particularly meant for heavy duty cooking.



Plate 4.212 *Afɔtigba* (Footed bowl)

Afɔtigba is a four-footed bowl of Krobo origin. They are two forms; rough with serrated lines and smooth surfaces within. It is usually used in the “chop bars” or public eating places.



Plate 4.213 *Uegba gomekpo* (Footless bowl)

Uegba gomekpo is a bowl without foot, textured within and used for grinding all kinds of vegetables. Similar to this is *vegbamenini* which has a smooth surface within and used purposely for serving food. *Apɔtɔyiwa* is an Akan name for earthenware bowl. It has a flat base with textured surface within to aid grinding of vegetables. It is also of Krobo origin. *Agbagã* which is literally translated as “big bowl” is a multi-purpose vessel. It is used as a feeding and drinking trough for domestic animals, for serving food and grinding vegetable if it is textured within.



Plate 4.214 *Apɔtɔyiwa*



Plate 4.215 *Agbagã*

4.10.5 Philosophy of Ahlihadzi Pottery

Historically, the *apotoyiwa* is foreign to Ahlihadzi pottery. According to Y. Gakpo,

personal communication, (2010) their ancestors who migrated from Kroboland brought with them the skill of making footed bowls which have remained up till now. To date, some members of Ahlihadzi speak the Krobo language which attests to the fact that there is a link between the indigenes of Ahlihadzi and the Krobos.

The round shapes of bowls are still being produced because they were inherited from ancestors. Dada Gakpo claims that there had been no other means apart from making round shapes and they have no option than to follow the footsteps of the ancestors for round shapes. To them, the round shapes are friendlier to handle when used in various domestic chores.

Four different sizes of bowls can be identified at this centre. These include, small, medium, large and extra-large. The mass of clay for modelling the smallest size is used as a standard measure for other sizes. In this regard, a handful of clay is used for the smallest size while one and a half for the medium, two for the large and three for the extra-large.

Names are assigned to pottery purposely to identify them with the various activities that they are used for. The forms also dictate the kind of name assigned to them. E.g. *vegba gomekpo* and *afɔtigba* acquired their names because of the foot under them. Also, *agbagã* acquired its name on account of the extra-large size. *Agba* means bowl and *gã* means large. It is the biggest of all bowls hence the name *agbagã* to distinguish it from others.

A variety of materials are used for finishing and decorating. All pottery ware is smeared with *kɔdzẽ* in the green stage. Potters affirmed that the red colour is the most attractive on pottery ware hence its ascription to beauty. For glazing, *yɔkumi* (shea butter) and kerosene are mixed. It is held that the beauty of pottery does not lie in the application of the red colour alone but a shiny finish as well, hence, the application of shea butter and kerosene as a glaze. The coating from these substances fixes the red clay and renders wares water resistant.

4.10.6 The culture of Ahlihadzi Pottery

Pottery is considered more of a way of life than a job because its benefits surpass the amount of money which accrues from it. Potters claim that since infancy, they have lived with and used pottery products for various domestic and religious purposes which otherwise would not have been possible with some recent vessels, such as plastics. Although not much money can be made from pottery products, potters are satisfied that what has been handed down to them by their mothers has been preserved hitherto.

Pottery produced here is different from other centres due to the quality of clay and expertise exhibited in the making of wares. The products are characterised by bulkiness yet well finished. The concentric lines in the bowls which aid grinding of vegetables are restricted to this locality. This makes the forms easily identifiable wherever they may be found.

The centre which is located in the savannah zone sort of dictate the human activities that take place in the area and one way or the other, influence the pottery forms made. One of such activities is vegetable farming. Unlike the forest areas e.g. Kpando Bame, where pots are used extensively in the preparation of meals and other domestic chores, here, the demand is rather on the bowls for vegetable preparation. Bowls are still used because they are more convenient, available always and cheaper to obtain. Potters assert that they are familiar with bowls because they were introduced to them since infancy, in effect, almost every elderly person is capable of making bowls.

Pottery wares are used in all cooking and eating activities pertaining to the stages of life; birth, puberty, marriage and death. During naming ceremonies, marriages and funerals, *agbagã* is mostly used to serve food for family members and other invitees. This gesture is to foster unity among the members of the community.

4.11 Vume-Klokofo

The people of Klokofo migrated from Denkyira in the Ashanti Region to Vume in the South Tongue District almost at the estuary of the Volta River near Sogakofe but moved further to their present location.

4.11.1 Pottery Materials

Clay digging, preparation and colouring materials: Clay is obtained in the locality from a river bed. Clay is dug any day of the week exclusively by women. Although there were taboos in the past about the clay pit, they are not being adhered to in recent times. Raw clay from the pit is dried and later poured into old pots for soaking. After soaking it overnight it is mixed with *anka* (grog). The grog is calcined, just like potters in Todze do before it is mixed with the clay. The only difference in grog preparation is that while Klokofo potters pound, grind and sieve the fired clay, Todze potters mill it in a corn mill machine before it is used for pottery.

The colouring materials used include *ekodzẽ*, kerosene, shea butter and palm oil. *Ekodzẽ* is mixed with water and used as an engobe on pottery. A mixture of shea butter and kerosene or red oil only is used in a form of glaze to give lustre to pottery in the green state.

4.11.2 Pottery Tools



Plate 4.216 *Tuxe*

Tuxe (palm fruit stalk is used purposely for smoothing the inside of a bowl. Other tools include *ababe*, *tsoboti*, *agɔku*, *tredzo*, *kpenini* and *abɔbɔgo*.

4.11.3 Pottery Methods

Agba: The methods used by Klokofe potters are similar to those of Todze. The dissimilarity lies in the names of tools and materials but they perform the same functions. There are certain burnishing materials that are missing in the collection of Todze potters. These include kerosene, shea butter and palm oil. Todze potters use only red clay slip as coating and colour. In relation to the foot, it is far heavier and taller than those made in Todze and elsewhere.

Yakayakedagba: There is only one type of bowl, best described as saucer, made for the preparation of steamed cassava meal commonly called *yakayake*. The method is similar to the making of *agba*. The saucer is not attached to the pot as in the case of Todzi. It has *enudeka* literally meaning “one mouth” referring to the hole in the middle of it. This hole allows steam to be emitted to facilitate the cooking of the *yakayake*.

4.11.4 Uses of pottery



Plate 4.217 *Zɔgba*

Zɔgɔme: *Zɔ* simply means ‘foot’ and *gɔme* means under. In effect, it is an all round footed bowl. It is used for grinding all kinds of vegetables and herbs. They are made in sizes and called differently; *zɔgba lolotɔ* (big footed bowl) and *zɔgba suetɔ* (small footed bowl). Alternatively, bowls are used for eating when the inside is rendered smooth.



Plate 4.218 *Gomefuflu*

Gomefuflu: It is a footless bowl used for serving food. A bigger version of the same shape is used for roasting corn, groundnut and medicinal herbs.



Plate 4.219 *Yakayakegba*

Yakayakegba (steamed cassava meal bowl) is made separately in the form of a saucer with one whole in the middle and placed on a pot to let out steam for the preparation of cassava meal popularly called *yakayake*.

4.11.5 Philosophy of Vume-Klokofe Pottery

Round shapes are made because they are a heritage. Potters say their mothers made the same shapes therefore they are compelled to adhere to the norm of making round shapes. Making round shapes is a tradition that must be preserved or else the ancestors will be incensed with them. The aforesaid shapes have a long-established usage in various ways and have been integrated into the everyday life of the people.

The various sizes of bowls are determined by the size of clay that can fill the hand. This idea of using the hand as a standard measure is comparable to potters of Dzodze Fiagbedu who make swish stoves. Only three sizes can be identified with this centre. Here, the smallest is half a handful, one handful for medium and two handfuls for the largest size respectively.

A bowl is referred to as *vegba* meaning “Eve earthen bowl.” It is called so because its kind can only be obtained from Vume Klokofe. It is characterised by tall and bulky foot which is said to be essential because of the pressure exerted when grinding vegetables and herbs.

The beauty of a bowl is measured according to the surface quality. The surface is treated with *ekodzẽ*, kerosene, shea butter and palm oil in order to render it lustrous. The inside has different types of textures that add to the beauty of a bowl. **Plates 4.220 a-c** shows freehand techniques used to create texture within bowls.



Plate 4.220a
Cross-guided texture



Plate 4.220b
Square-guided texture



Plate 4.220c
Unguided texture

4.11.6 The culture of Vume-Klokofo Pottery

Pottery wares are used in several life activities such that they are considered more of a way of life than a job. G. Gadogo, personal communication, (2010) affirmed that, the remuneration from pottery is more satisfying than what is obtained from the sale of wares.

A number of activities dictate the type of bowls made in this locality. These include *venɔvi kɔnu* (twin rites), *nuxexe* (curbing bad omen), *afa* (divination) and vodun worship. The footless bowl which can easily sit and fit into the ground is used for such rites as vodun and *afa*. Twin rites vary from place to place, here, after the food is prepared in a pot, it is served for the twins in a newly prepared bowl. Pottery is therefore inseparable from human life and activity because the performance of certain rites, such as, vodun strictly demands the use of earthen vessels. This is because the spirits that inhabit such vessels are the nature types.

Just like Todze, Klokofo also lies in the savannah zone where most meals are eaten with vegetables rather than soups. So, potters specialise in making bowls, especially those used for grinding. The bowls in this locality are different because of their bulky nature.

Earthen bowls are still being used despite the emergence of other vessels, such as plastics and metals. This is because their usage conforms to the requirements of everyday activities and rites, e.g. the steaming of *yakayake* and serving food in bowls for vodun worship. It is held that food served in earthen bowls remain warm for a long time.

In the stages of life, bowls are used for rites associated with childbirth. A woman who successfully gives birth to a child is given a concoction prepared by an elderly woman. Salt is ground in a freshly made earthen bowl and *akpeteshie* (local alcoholic drink) added. Fire is set to the mixture to burn for about three minutes before it is put off. The burnt substance mixed with water is given to the woman to drink in order to clear blood clots in her womb.

4.12 Vume

Vume is about five kilometres from Sogakofe the capital of South Tongue District. It is located along the Accra-Aflao trunk road. Elders held that they migrated from Denkyira in the Ashanti Region and women brought with them pottery skills which they have practised until now. Individually, potters at this centre make huge storage pots mostly. When compared with other centres, their pots are characterised by thick wall, wide mouth and heaviness.

4.12.1 Pottery Tools

The tools include *ababe*, *atikpui*, *dovuvu* and *agoku* in **Plates 4.1, 4.3, 4.123 and 4.184**.

4.12.2 Pottery Materials

Clay digging, preparation and colouring materials: Clay is obtained from the locality and it is dug on any day of the week. Both male and female inhabitants are allowed to dig clay. There are no taboos or rites performed to the clay pit before it is dug and processed for pottery. Clay is dug in large quantities and kept at the site to dry and age before it is conveyed home for processing. It is soaked in broken pots for at least one day, usually overnight. It is mixed with *anka* (grog) prepared from broken fired earthen pots. Clay is mixed up and kneaded before it is used for making pots. *Dedzĩe* and leaves for smoking the pots to acquire the black colour are the colouring materials used.

4.12.3 Pottery Method

The coil method is predominantly used in modelling pots. Firstly, a coil is laid on the ground to form the rim and subsequently adding more coils to build up the rim part (**Plates 4.220-231**). The fresh ware is left in the sun to dry (**Plate 4.226**). When the rim is dry, it is upturned and the bottom scraped off to reveal the malleable portion on which to seal it off.

The inside of large pots are also scraped and smoothened before the base is built (**Plate 4.227**). Small pots can be built up to the bottom in a short time while large ones are built bit by bit to allow the clay to harden before adding more coils otherwise the body may fall over. Additionally, coils are added until the bottom of the pot is completely sealed (**Plate 4.228**).

When the pots become leatherhard, the large ones especially are placed in old bowls lined with sacks or rags and kept under room temperature to dry for at least two weeks. The lid is made separately as shown in **Plate 4.237**. When completely dry, they are smeared with *dedzē* (red clay) and left again to dry finally before firing. Just like the firing of *soju* (gari bowl) at Zomayi and Kpodoave, large pots are also pre-heated before the actual firing is done.



Plate 4.221
Laying a coil on the ground



Plate 4.222
Building with coils



Plate 4.223
Pulling up the coils



Plate 4.224 *Shaping the rim*



Plate 4.225 *Smoothing the rim*



Plate 4.226 *Drying the ware*



Plate 4.227
Scrapping the inside



Plate 4.228
Building the base



Plate 4.229
Sealed base



Plate 4.230 *Completed footed base*



Plate 4.231 *Making the lid*



4.12.4 Names and uses of pottery



Plate 4.232 *Afotize*



Plate 4.233 *Tomedeze*

Afɔtize (footed pot) is also called *xɔmeze*. *Xɔme* means room and *ze* means pot, therefore *xɔmeze* literally stands for room pot. It acquired its name from the fact that it is always placed in a room and drinking water stored in it just like a cooler. It is sometimes called *tsinoze* referring to drinking pot. It has an all round foot and a lid with a knob.

Tɔmedeze (water fetching pot) has a smaller mouth comparable to *akplɛ̃daze*. It is used for fetching water from the river side.

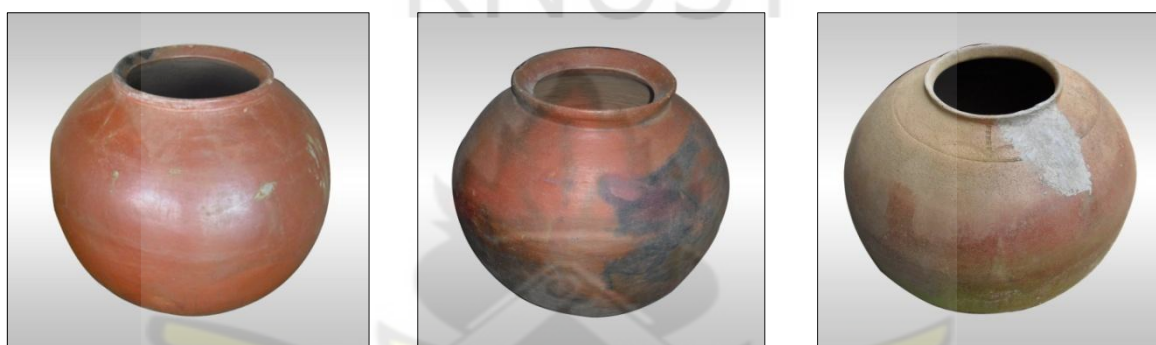


Plate 4.234 *Different shapes and rims of Ede/ezɔ*

Ede/ezɔ (storage pot) is an outside pot used for storing water meant for domestic chores. They are made in different forms but used for the same purpose.



Plate 4.235 *Akpɔheze*

Plate 4.236 *Akplɛ̃daze*

Akpøheze (*kokoe* or corn dough meal) is used for the preparation of corn dough meal popularly called *kenkey* by the Gas (inhabitants of Accra). *Akplēdaze* (corn flour meal pot) is used for preparing particularly *akplē*, other solid meals and boiling of herbs as well.



Plate 4.237 *Yakayakedaze*

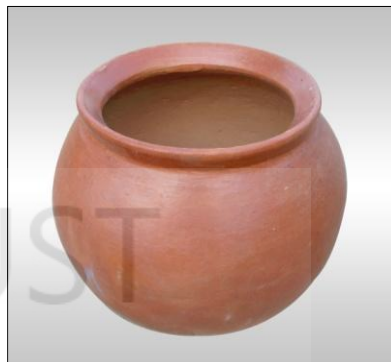


Plate 4.238 *Kutu*

Yakayakedaze (steamed cassava meal) is a perforated saucer at the top which is fixed permanently to let out steam for cooking the meal. *Kutu* (Soup pot) used for preparing all kinds of soups and vegetables.

4.12.5 Philosophy of Vume Pottery

Pottery is regarded as *mamanu* (grandmothers' legacy). Round shapes are indigenous shapes inherited from grandmothers and made for the purpose of containment. Their origin can be traced to their ancestry in Denkyira, in the Central Region.

Sizes are decided on by the quantity of clay and the use of the eye. The mere look at the clay ball tells a lot in the mind of the potter what size the pot will assume eventually. These ideas depend to a large extent on how the pots will be used. The large sizes which are usually for drinking and storing water are measured according to the size thirty-four bucket. *Tsinoze* (drinking pot) for instance has two sizes only, small and big. The small size holds one bucket while the big one holds two. The water storage pots can hold up to twelve buckets.

Pots are said to be whole or broken if they produce a particular sound when they are

beaten with the finger. When the pot sounds *gengen* it signifies it is whole while a *gbogbo* sound communicates that of a broken one.

A good finish is when the pot is said to have a smooth, shinny and colourful effect, precisely red colour which is obtained from clay slip. When pots are decorated in this manner they are considered beautiful. The red colour obtained from clay slip is regarded as colour of beauty. Vume pots do not mostly have linear or motif designs on them, not even at the rim. Potters claim the application of clay slip provides enough beauty for the pot.

A pot is considered a container for storing solid foods, fluids and used in performing numerous domestic activities. As such, various names are assigned to pots to identify them with these activities. For instance, *tomedeze* is named so because it is used for fetching water from a river; a pot meant for preparing corn flour meal popularly known in Eve as *akplẽ* is referred to as *akplẽqaze* meaning “*akplẽ* cooking pot”; although *aha* means drink, a pot used for tapping palm-wine is known as *ahakpaze* and not *dehakpaze* “palm wine-tapping pot” because palm wine is known and accepted as a traditional drink.

Clay is the only material suitable for pottery because it contains a plastic substance described as *aye* (elastic). Plastic is perceived as an elastic material which can be manipulated to assume any required shape. This is what makes *etsu* (clay) different from *anyi*. *Anyi* is a weaker form of clay usually used for building mud houses.

4.12.6 The culture of Vume Pottery

Pottery is more of a way of life than a job because of its needs in society. At any point in time, pottery containers are needed for several tasks. This demand inspires potters who also use clay pots, to continue producing them although money obtained from the sale of pots is inadequate when compared with other jobs such as fish-mongering, dress making, etc.

Pots are still used because of their convenience in performing particular rites which other vessels cannot. These include; *venovi kɔnu* (twin rite) p. 160, *nuxexe* (averting untimely death), *avoyi* (rite where Mami wata possesses a person), and *gbetsilele* p.113.



Plate 4.239 *Researcher with some potters at Dzodze Kuli*



Plate 4.240 *Researcher with some potters at Ave Dzalele*

4.13 Pottery in Krobo

The Krobos live in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The main language spoken here is Krobo. Kroboland is divided into two; Yilo and Manya. Yilo Krobo was chosen for this project because it is the main pottery District. Krobo potters make three kinds of pottery; pots, bowls and local stoves. The main pottery centres include; Okwenya, Agamakope and Adelakope. The centre where the research was carried out was Okwenya because they produce both pots and bowls. Okwenya is two kilometres from Akuse Junction which is on the main Accra-Ho trunk road. Agamakope and Adelakope are located on the Accra-Ho trunk road.

4.13.1 Pottery Tools



Plate 4.241 *Ba*



Plate 4.242 *Gowulolo*



Plate 4.243 *Te*



Plate 4.244 *Pamplo*



Plate 4.245 *Busha*



Plate 4.246 *Deyu*



Plate 4.247 *Ka ngua tso*



Plate 4.248 *Flake*



Plate 4.249 Platform with
Terracotta saucer on it



Plate 4.250 Platform with
a hole for turning saucer

Ba (leaf) is obtained from (custard apple tree). It is boiled or burnt in fire to soften it. It is used in smoothening rims of pots and bowls as well as widening and shaping bowls during modelling.

Gowulolo (dry fan palm seed) is used for shaping and enlarging the belly of hardened pots.

Te (smooth stone) is a smooth stone used for burnishing the surface of pots and bowls in order to render them smooth and sparkling.

Pamplo (bamboo stick) is used for pulling the wet clay to form the pot and for scrapping the outer surface when the clay is still wet.

Bueha (metal scraper) is a type of flat metal meant for holding the wood firm during the roofing of a house. Potters collect the remnants and shape them to suit their work. It is purposely used for scrapping the outer surfaces of pots.

Deyu (terracotta saucer) is a form of disk (just like a potter's wheel head) on which a ball of clay is placed and modelled. It is also used as a turning wheel to form the shape of bowls.

Ka ngua tso (fork tool) is carved from any hard wood and used for ruling lines inside bowls to aid grinding of vegetables.

Flake (calabash piece) is used for smoothening and broadening the inside of bowls.

Platform: It serves the purpose of a turn-table or turning wheel. It is used for modelling pots and bowls. A small hole is created in the soft wood and creased with gas oil to ease rotation.

4.13.2 Pottery Materials

Clay digging and preparation: Clay known as *zu* in Krobo is obtained from a nearby riverbank. Clay is dug any day except Thursdays and Sundays by women only. It is believed that if a man digs clay he will become impotent. Women who are also in their menstrual period are not allowed to go near the clay pit. Any person who goes contrary to these norms experiences the breaking of pots during firing. It is believed that the land, for that matter, the clay, is endowed with some forces and adhering to the taboos will minimize the breaking of wares. The procedure for preparing clay by the Krobos is just like the Eves e.g. Kpando Bame on **Page 86**. Only one type of clay is used but it is tempered with *atsakahe* (grog).

4.13.3 Pottery Methods

Bue (pot): A flat clay slab is placed on the saucer and coils are used to raise the walls (**Plates 4.251 and 4.252**). *Gowulolo* is used for shaping and widening the belly of the pot. The bamboo stick is used to pull the malleable clay until it assumes the desired shape (**Plate 4.253**). *Ba* (leaf) is used to smoothen the rim (**Plate 4.255**). The fingers are used to rule lines at the rim. When the pot is leatherhard, *ha* (scraper) is used to scrap the outer surface in order to facilitate easy burnishing. Burnishing is done with a smooth stone called *ba* (**Plate 4.256**).



Plate 4.251
Clay slab on saucer



Plate 4.252
Modelling with coils



Plate 4.253
Pulling wall with Pamplo



Plate 4.254
Shaping the rim



Plate 4.255
Smoothing rim with ba



Plate 4.256
Burnishing the pot

Ka (bowl): A ball of clay is pinched and centered on the saucer fixed to the platform (**Plate 4.257**). The wooden platform has a depression greased with gas oil to allow easy turning. Coils are used to build up the form until a desired size is attained (**Plate 4.258**).



Plate 4.257
Centering clay on saucer



Plate 4.258
Building with coils



Plate 4.259
Widening/shaping with flake



Plate 4.260
Smoothing with ba



Plate 4.261
Freshly made bowls



Plate 4.262
Freshly made bowls

As one hand turns the saucer, the other is simultaneously used to broaden and smoothen the inside with *flake* or calabash piece (**Plate 4.259**). The *ba* is used to smoothen the rim (**Plate 4.260**). The wet bowl is removed with the saucer and placed on the ground to dry (**Plate 4.261**). It should be noted that each bowl is modelled on a saucer.

Pots and bowls are decorated with linear designs particularly on the rim. Depending on the potter, a number of lines from one up to four may be ruled on the pot. Also, *tsu* (red clay slip) is smeared on the pot when it is leatherhard and bone dry. When the clay slip is dry, the pot is burnished with *te* to render it smooth and shinny. Bowls are dried under room temperature (**Plate 4.262**), but are dried outside in the sun a day before firing.

In all cases the open firing method is employed in firing pottery wares. Some of the vessels are put on dry grass to induce smoking which will render the ware black (**Plate 4.263**).



Plate 4.263 *Smoking bowls*



Plate 4.264 *Black bowls*



Plate 4.265 *Coloured bowls*

4.13.3 Pottery Names and Uses

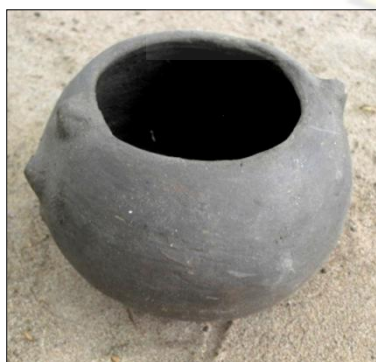


Plate 4.266 *Bue wayo*



Plate 4.267 *Bue ngua*



Plate 4.268 *Kutu*



Plate 4.269 *Dudo*



Plate 4.270 *Mumui*



Plate 4.271 *Ngeju*

Bue wayo: It is the smallest pot without an overlapping rim. During *dipo* rites it is used by the novitiate to fetch water from the stream. Herbalist also use as a form of drinking vessel. In the past it was used as a cup that is it why it is rimless. It is made in three sizes.

Bue ngua (herbal pot) is the next size after *bue wayo*. It is used for cooking herbs and solid foods like yam, cassava, and even beans.

Kutu (soup pot) is used for preparing soup and vegetables of all kinds.

Dudo (water pot) is used for storing and fetching water.

Mumui (palm-wine tapping pot) is a circular pot with small hole to prevent insect and dust from entering it. It is placed under the palm tree for the wine to flow into it. It is also a vessel used by farmers to fetch drinking water.

Ngeju (saucer) is used as a turn table to aid the rotation of pottery on the wooden platform.



Plate 4.272 *Kpotse*



Plate 4.273 *Kpukpoka*



Plate 4.274 *Baka*



Plate 4.275 *Late*

Kpɔtse (footed grinding bowl) has four props as support. The inside is textured to aid grinding of vegetables and herbs.

Kpukplɔka (footless bowl) has no props but a flat base as support. It is textured within and used for grinding vegetables but sometimes used as an eating bowl.

Baka (smooth bowl) has no props and no texture within. *Ba* means 'leaves' and *ka* means 'receptacle'. It is used as a bowl for preparing herbs and for ritual purposes.

Late (swish stove) is a local stove used for cooking.

4.13.4 Philosophy of Krobo Pottery

Most ideas regarding this sub-heading expressed by potters here are not far from the data gathered from their Ewe counterparts. Specific names assigned to pottery ware according to its use. The round shapes are said to be inherited from the grandmothers and therefore cannot be changed or substituted for any other shape. The idea of round shapes is linked with the capacity that is how much substance the pot can hold. Madam Narkey, who is over seventy years claim the round shapes balance when placed on the floor and on the *kate* for cooking.

The sizes are determined by a handful of clay. For instance, the smallest size, or size one so to say, measures just a handful of clay, followed by one and a half, two, two and a half, three, etc. Potters use *tsu* (red clay slip) as colour on pots and bowl. The red colour to the

pottery is considered as colour of beauty. The black colour acquired from smoking them adds value to the surface and makes the surface water resistant. It also gives a nice flavour to drinking water which is stored in the pot. The incisions made on pottery are for identification of wares during group firing.

Proverbs are also part and parcel of the potter's art. The most frequently used proverb among the potters is "*paya lo le wia bue*" literally, it means "one who fetches water from the stream is the one who breaks the pot." It was explained that everyone must be responsible for any mishap in the process of pursuing any task.

4.13.5 The Culture of Krobo Pottery

Just as it is stated in the philosophy of pottery in terms of similarities so it is with the cultural aspect. The most significant ceremony involving the use of pots is *dipo* (puberty rites). The *bue wayo* is mostly used by the novitiate to fetch water from the stream meant for cleansing her and also used as a drinking cup. Other rites pots are used for include twin rites, birth and death rites, etc.

Analysis

Having assembled and grouped data according to the various centres, it is necessary to interpret and summarize it. The research questions will be used as a guide to bring out the emerging themes and patterns from the data simultaneously making reference to the literature review in Chapter Two. Also, a comparative analysis will be done to identify similarities and differences between Eve and Krobo pottery which will help in stating the findings of the project.

Question 1: Are there specific Eve pottery tools, materials, methods and uses which are peculiar to the selected centres?

Tools: The range of tools Eve potters utilize in pottery is either found or carved objects. These include, wooden paddles, snail and oyster shells, leaves and rugs, broken calabash, terracotta shards, smooth stones, metal scrapers, wooden fork, fan palm/mango seeds, coins, corn silk, sticks, sieve, corncob, palm fruit stalk, etc. Similar to these, the Krobos have tools such as leaves, fan palm seed, smooth stone and metal scraper. The difference is in the terracotta saucer used as a turn-table or wheel head for modelling bowls, bamboo stick for pulling and scraping the outer surface and a platform or raised surface on which pots and bowls are modelled. See **Page 207** for the tools used by Krobo potters.

In the respective pottery centres, tools are identical but generally varied from centre to centre. While some tools are obtained within the immediate environment, others are acquired far away from the pottery centres. For example, the smooth stone which is usually acquired from the sea shore is used by all centres even though the pottery centres are not located near the sea. The Krobos also acquire their tools in the same manner like the Eves.

Potters have a collection of varied tools they use for smoothing/polishing, broadening, shaping, line drawing, scraping, levelling and burnishing clay pots and bowls. There are differences regarding names, shapes and types of tools acquired by potters yet they are used everywhere for the same purposes as enumerated above. For example, while some centres use looped metal tools (*zehaga*) for scraping the inner walls of pots others employ the snail and oyster shells (*abɔɔɔgoe* and *afɔɔligoe*). A fork tool for texturing has different names e.g. *feɔɔɔti*, *emedzɔɔti* or *ezeɔɔɔti*.

Some tools are more frequently used than others. Among all the tools identified, *ababe* (wooden paddle) and *kpezɔɔrɔɔ* (smooth stone) are used by every potter for shaping and burnishing pots and bowls. This technique of burnishing pots with *kpezɔɔrɔɔ* confirms the idea of using smooth pebble for burnishing clay wares in the leatherhard stage which is identified by Speight and Toki (1999). The availability of *kpomiti* (wood) and other wood species for carving *ababe* at all centres makes it an obvious choice for potters. Also, potters are able to get *kpezɔɔrɔɔ* for its purpose though it is mostly obtained from the seashore. It will therefore be factual to infer that all potters use these tools because shaping gives form to pottery while burnishing enhances the surface quality. Correspondingly, Krobo potters also pay much attention to shaping and burnishing hence the use of (*pamplo*) bamboo stick instead of the *ababe* (wooden paddle), *gowulolo* (fan palm seed) and *tɛ* (smooth stone) respectively.

Some tools that are not frequently used are *agbakle* (terracotta shard) for scraping, *abuke* (silk corn) for smearing slip, *tuxe* (palm fruit stalk) for shaping, *trekake* (broken calabash piece) for scraping and nylon mesh for burnishing. Others (regarding two centres) include, *ebliti* (corn cob) and *afɔɔligoe* (oyster shell) both for scraping, *sranu/tsranu* (sieve) and *kenenɔɔɔɔ* (hole-in-pesewa coin) for ruling lines. Besides the main tools, these are additional

ones used as and when they are needed for equal tasks. The Eves have a wider range of tools it should be noted that the Krobos have a short list and therefore the question of variety is negligible.

While majority use *zedomakpa/tredzo* (leaves) for smoothing and enlarging rims of pots, others use cotton rugs for the same purpose. Clearly, unavailability of specific types of leaves at some centres results in the use of rugs. It is evident that all centres use either leaves or rugs for the same purpose. The frequency in the use of these tools by all centres is an indication that smoothing is an aspect of finishing wet vessels to facilitate high-quality burnishing in the leatherhard state. Both tools are indispensable in the making pots and bowls. The Krobos however use only *habue ba* (custard apple leaves) for smoothing the rim of pots.

Materials: The main materials used by Eve potters are *etsu* (clay) and *solū* (grog). Clay is dug by women near river beds with hoes as confirmed by Asihene (1978). No rites are performed on the spot before clay is dug. This fact contradicts the submission made by Salm and Falola (2002), Speight and Toki (1999) and Asihene (1978), in that, before clay is dug women offer prayers, libation and sacrifices to the clay pit. However, among the Eves, occasionally, not when clay is being dug, but on special days, priests do so in and around the pit. This is believed to rejuvenate the clay. The Krobos also have *zu* (clay) and *atsakahe* (grog) as the main materials for pottery and do not perform any rites before digging clay.

Taboos still exist regarding the days clay should be dug and the state in which women should be before approaching the clay pit. While some centres strictly adhere to taboos, others do not pay much attention to them although they admitted their grandparents did in the past. Besides fixed days, market days after every four days are also restricted days for digging clay. The point raised by Schimelman (2007) on taboos of digging clay on days is in conformity

with the days set aside for digging clay by Eve potters. Generally, Krobos adhere strictly to taboos, as such, Thursdays and Sundays are restricted days for digging clay.

Women, especially those in their menstrual periods are considered unclean and therefore not permitted to approach the clay pit. LaDuke (1991) did not only agree on this idea but added that women who are pregnant or uninitiated are forbidden from going near the pit. Incidentally, pottery is closely related to female fertility and birth as plainly stated by Aguilar (2007). In isolated cases, women are not allowed to whistle, clap, or sing while in the clay pit or even taste salt before going to dig clay. As regards going contrary to taboos, it is believed that pots will crack or break during moulding and firing, hence food and drinks are offered to the gods as a form of pacification and purification of the land. Similarly, women who are in their menstrual period are not allowed in Kroboland to approach the clay pit for the same reason that pots will break.

Predominantly, earthenware clay is used by Eve potters. On the other hand, the Krobos have very strong and firm clay which can be described as fireclay. The identifiable colours of clay in Eveland which include red, gray, brown, ochre and white are the same colours listed by Asihene and Ratray (1927). The colour of the Krobo clay however, is dark gray. Clay is not fetched in large quantities but just enough for each particular project within a day or two. Every potter throughout the various centres dry their clay for at least one day before it is soaked mostly in broken terracotta pots. This technique applies to the Krobos as well. It is a very vital technique which is confirmed by Ratray and Priddy (1974) for the fact that clay lumps dissolve more rapidly when soaked in water.

Except Kpando Bame, Eve potters do not usually compose their clay into a body (mixing two or more clays together) but use only one type of clay for pottery. Where the clay is too plastic or not strong enough to be used alone, *solũ* (grog) in the form of fine sand, broken

terracotta pots and calcined clay are added to reduce the plasticity. Just like Eve potters, Rattray and Priddy have the same opinion regarding the addition of grog to clay especially broken pots ground into powder. It is generally acknowledged that wares will shrink or break during drying and firing without the addition of grog. Prepared clay which is not in use is stored in plastics, old pots and rags to avoid hardening or drying. Only one type of clay is used by the Krobos but is strengthened with *atsakahe* (grog).

Other materials which include *kɔdzɛ* (red clay), *akati* (charcoal tree), coal tar pitch, shea butter and kerosene are used for decoration. All pottery centres except Kpando Bame use *kɔdzɛ* and *akati*. *Kɔdzɛ* is prepared in the form of engobe (coloured clay slip) and smeared on all wares during the wet or bone dry stages leaving a red colour coat (glaze) on the surface. *Akati* bark which is either mashed or boiled is applied mostly to hot wares to create a black colour effect. An isolated case is where Adedome potters pour *akati* solution on pots. Identical to *kɔdzɛ*, Schimelman; Perani and Smith identify red and white as earth-based colours. Equally, Krobo potters use *tsu* (red clay slip) and gasoline for painting and shining the pottery wares but do not use plant colour. Whereas Perani and Smith indicate that, coal tar is used by some potters as black, Aquilar (2007) is at variance with it and rather indicates the use of a plant material called *nkunga* root. Potters around Dzodze paint vodun pots (see **Plate 4.103**) with white earth substance. Somehow, the submission of Aquilar (2007) regarding colour seems to conform to the use of a plant material, except that, the resultant colour is dark-brown instead of black.

Furthermore, in the hot state, a black glossy effect is also created on the rims of *soɲu* (*gari* and cereal roasting bowls) using coal tar pitch. In another circumstance, a lustrous finish is created with shea butter and kerosene on wares before they are fired. The aim of decoration is to create beauty and to prevent the rims of wares from cracking during drying.

Methods: Predominantly, every Eve pottery ware is hand-built and in small quantities. This point agrees with Nelson (1984) on the fact that, all pottery was hand-built. The pinch and coil methods are practically the same among all Eve potters. While the pinch method is used exclusively for small pots and bowls, a combination of the pinch and coil is used for huge pots, bowls and basins. On the other hand, Krobo potters use a combination of pinch and coil methods for making pots and a combination of pinch and a bit of throwing for bowls.

Typically, all aspects of Eve pottery is made on the ground with the potter encircling the clay mass in an effort to form the rim of pots and bowls in particular. In a divergent view of making pottery on the ground, Speight and Toki specify working on raised surfaces or platforms. Interestingly, the Krobos use wooden platforms as work surfaces and terracotta saucers as turn table or throwing wheels. The Krobo technique seems to be more convenient than the Eve, in that, bending the waist which is the main complain among Eve potters and a setback to health is absent.

A step by step approach is used to create the various parts of pots and bowls namely: *enu* (rim), *ekɔ* (neck), *eto* or *alida* (body), *edome* (base). In all cases, the rim is made first, sometimes linearly decorated and dried in the sun before other parts are added later. This initial process requires the whole body of the potter moving around the clay ball. This confirms the point made by Arnoldi, Geary and Hardin (1996) on making the rim of pots first before adding the base. Berns (2007) supports the making of the rim first, yet disagrees with building the base on the rim. Rather, the two parts are joined with clay slip when they are leatherhard. However, this is the opposite in the case of the Krobos. In their case, pots are built from the bottom to the rim and can be completed at a sitting instead of joining them later or waiting for the clay to harden before the base is punched out.

Thus, the circumference of the rim is carefully modelled to conform to the size of the body which will be added to it. This invent is vital because it determines the size of the pot. The base, a very vital part, is conically shaped to facilitate stability wherever it may be placed. Simultaneously, shaping, scraping, decorating, polishing and burnishing go on until the ware reaches the stage of drying.

Eve pots are generally made in an oval or spherical shape while bowls take the form of half-sphere just as is done among the Krobos. Precisely, this idea is the same as that of Amenuke et al (1991). The shapes are not pre-planned in terms of drawing but they are executed to reflect the existing forms most people are familiar with and which they have always used. This skill can be linked up with the popular saying, “practice makes perfect.” This is to say that with long years of working with clay, Eve potters are able to make pots without much effort. Again, the shapes and sizes are also conceived in their minds before they make them.

Both Eve and Krobo potters make concentric linear decorations on the rims and necks of wet pots. However the Eves create incisions of selected animals and objects on leatherhard pots. Kpando Bame particularly is prolific in the latter design techniques. These designs are closely related to the functions of the wares. For example, the concentric lines suggest the constant flow of water hence it is used on the rim of a water pot to indicate regular supply of water to humankind. Correspondingly, Clark (1977), Aguilar and Priddy have the same view regarding curvilinear incisions around the rims and neck of pots as the commonest used by indigenous potters.

Figures of animals and objects are also sculpted on pots for ceremonial and religious purposes. Among all centres, Dzodze Kuli and Dzogbefime are experts in making vodun and *yeye* pots. This can be attributed to the fact that they live close to Togo and Benin where

majority of people are involved in vodun worship. Conversely, Barley indicates that the use of animal motif on pottery is for ancestor worship especially for the spirits of deceased male elders or priests who have led exemplary lives.

Generally, pottery vessels are dried in the sun when they are wet and dry while under shades and rooms when they are leatherhard to avoid cracking. Small pots dry faster just within a week and huge pots and bowls take over three weeks to dry thoroughly because of differences in the thickness of walls. Huge pots and bowls are pre-heated to drive out moisture which may cause breakages during the actual firing. Krobos dry their wares in the sun a day before firing takes place.

Just like the Eves the Krobos also use the open firing or bonfire method is everywhere. Pots are either piled up in a side by side or inverted arrangement on a level ground for the purpose of circulation of heat. Averagely, within an hour, the firing is completed and pots are drawn out with long sticks. While Eve potters cover their wares earmarked for smoking with leaves, the Krobos place the wares on dry leaves to induce smoking and apparently creating the black coat on the wares.

Uses of pottery: Eve pottery consists of a range of pots, bowls, dishes, basins and swish stoves (local stove). They can be classified as follows; domestic, ceremonial, figurative and proverbial. These vessels are modelled to suit the functions for which they are intended and in line with traditional aesthetic values. Rattray's list of Asante pottery seems to fit into the classification above. The only difference is the use of old pots to mould new ones which is absent Eve pottery. Generally, the names are closely associated with the various household activities and religious practices. In most cases, the circumference of the mouth and the size of the body determine what the pot is supposed to be used for. Except figurative and proverbial pottery wares the Krobos have a narrow repertoire which fits into the classification of Eve

pottery list. The only ceremonial pot which is very significant in Kroboland is *bue wayo* a rimless pot used for *dipo* ceremonies, rituals, boiling herbs, etc.

Besides specializing in specific aspects of pottery, Ewe potters can be accredited for making other domestic pots for use in the home. Within the domestic domain, nearly every pottery centre makes pots purposely for fetching and storing water; general cooking, steaming and preparing soups; tapping and storing palm-wine; boiling medicinal herbs; storing food substances; etc. Bowls of varied sizes are also made for grinding and serving food; mixing substances such as palm wine; for roasting cereals, tubers, herbs and animals into powder for medicinal purposes. Local stoves are also made. Virtually the Krobos have about seven varieties of pots serving the numerous domestic and ceremonial purposes outlined above.

The names of water pots range from storage, fetching, and drinking. The names assigned to storage pots do not really reflect on the word. They are rather linked with the size referred to as *ezɔgã* (big pot) or placement as *anyigbaze* (ground pot) or death as *ekuze* (death pot). On the contrary, *tomedeze* (water fetching pot) specifically tells what it is used for. Interestingly, on one hand *tsinoze* (drinking pot) reflects the name of its true use and on the other hand it is either placement *kplɔdzize* (table pot) or *zɔgɔmeze/afɔtize* (footed pot). Pots used for fetching and storing water are among the biggest and is still being produced by potters from Kpando Bame, Agotime Adedome, Ave Dzalele and Vume.

The most widely produced and most popular pots among the Ewes are those in the category of cooking, e.g. pots for soup, general cooking, steaming, herbs and hot water. They are also used for all kinds of rites and ceremonies such as *gbɔto* (puberty rites), *venɔvikɔnu* (twin rites), etc. The Krobos also produce cooking pots but the making of bowls seems to dominate all aspects of pottery hence a huge trade among the potters.

Those centres that make soup pots agreed on the name of *detsize* (palm nut soup pot) for

the preparation of soup in general apart from Todze and Vume who name the soup pot as *kutu*. The name *kutu* seems to be foreign to Eveland hence it might have been borrowed from the Krobos who also call it *kutu* or the Asantes where the inhabitants of Vume believed to have originated from. It should be noted that although it is known as “palm nut soup pot”, other soups can be prepared in it as well.

Pots for general coking, *nudaze*, acquire other names associated with leprosy *kpotomali* (rimless pot) linked to a leper’s shrunk fingers and the preparation of a meal called *akplē* (corn flour meal) respectively. Majority of the centres that make pots have similar shapes of the *nudaze* as well as a few other centres that engage in the making of *kpotomali*. The mouths of these pots especially *kpotomali* are moulded thick and wide to accommodate the vigorous movement of the paddle when it is used in stirring *akplē* and other similar meals. *Nudaze* is a multi-purpose pot which can also be used for boiling hot water, tubers and any other solid foods prepared in the home.

Other cooking pots include those used in preparing foods such as *yakayake* (grated cassava meal) and *abolo* (steamed corn meal) that demand the use of steam for the preparation. They are characterised by single or multiple perforations underneath to permit vapour from boiling water to cook the meal. The pots are either perforated saucers attached or detached from them. Interestingly, the same type of pot otherwise called *aholuze* is used for vodun rites. These pots are the most common in the middle belt around Dzodze Kuli, Dzogbefime, Fiagbedu and Vume in the southern belt where maize meals are their favourites.

Palm-wine is one of the favourite local drinks in Eveland hence the making of a number of pots to support its activities. Apart from Kpando and Adedome, potters call the tapping pot as *lubu* and *mumli* respectively. Other centres who make the same pot call it *gbaze*. *Gbaze* and *mumli* have similar shapes while *lubu* has no overlapping rim but a small hole with a

circumference of about 1.5 centimetres wide. This is to avoid insects and dirt from entering the wine. The Krobos also make palm-wine tapping pot called *mumui* similar to *lubu*, see **Plate 4.29**. Other names which include *ahaze*, *ahatrɔze* and *adzafize* are specifically used for storage, pouring and measuring palm-wine respectively. The names of these last three pots reflect exactly on what they are exclusively used for. The Krobos on the other hand have no specific names for palm-wine related pots but can use any pot such as *duduɔ* (water pot) for similar activities.

For the roasting of cereals and legumes, two types of bowls are made mostly at pottery centres around Dzodze, namely; Kpodoave, Fiagbedu, Kuli, Dzogbefime and Zomayi. They are named *soɲu* and *soɲuvi* in terms of big and small size respectively. *Soɲu* is also called *galitɔgba* because it is used for the roasting of gari while *soɲuvi* is called *eblitɔgba* because it is used for roasting mostly corn. The latter is also used by priests for roasting leaves, roots, animals to form black powdery substances for medicinal purposes.

Grinding bowls are made in nearly all Ewe pottery centres. However, the most prolific centres engaged in these aspects of pottery are Todze, Ahlihadzi and Klokofe. The bowls acquire their names from their sizes, height, thickness or thinness of the rim, footed or footless base, potter's origin and the specific use. *Agbagã* (big bowl) is named so by Todze and Ahlihadzi potters because it represents the biggest of all bowls. *Koloe zɔkpoe* or *zɔgba* (short-footed bowl) made by Kpando Bame and Vume Klokofe potters have an all round footing. Again, *totetegba* is named so by Todze potters because of the flat rim while *toɖeɖegba* is called so because of its thin rim. A footless bowl is called *vegba gɔmekpo* by Ahlihadzi potters while Vume Klokofe potters call it *gomeɖufɖu*. *Uegba* literally means native bowl. *Aɖɔtigba* is used by Ahlihadzi and Todze potters to indicate short prop and knob supports for the bowl.

Apɔɔyiwa is an adopted name by Ahlihadzi potters who claim their ancestors come from Krobo. Coincidentally, the Krobos also assign the name, *apɔɔyiwa* to this category of bowl.

Eating bowls are also named according to the nature of the inner surface, patronage in the past, height and the specific use. *Emeniɛ* or *vegbamenini* meaning smooth within is a term used for eating bowls. Kpando potters claim that the Asantes used to patronise the eating bowls hence the name *Asante Koloe*. *Fufugba* acquired its name from the fact that *fufu* (pounded yam, plantain, cassava, etc.) a favourite dish among a section of the Eves is best enjoyed in it. *Koloe zɔkɔkoe* is named so by Kpando potters because of its elongated stand. Though it is meant for serving food during funerals, the name does not reflect on its use. The most important idea here is the differentiation of textured bowls from the smooth ones.

Another type of bowl which is made by Todze potters only is *kpakpaxegba* (duck bowl). It is a drinking trough for domestic animals yet it is named after the duck. Ducks are common birds reared around Adidome and that is the reason for calling it so. However, most domestic animals such as chicken, doves, goats, etc drink from it.

Apart from pots and bowls, Eve potters also make two types of local stoves, namely; *nakemlekpui* and *akamlekpui* (firewood and charcoal stoves). Only three centres have a flair for this category of pottery. These include; Kpando Bame, Dzodze Kpodoave and Ahlihadzi. They are created for convenience since they can be used for cooking all kinds of meals and can also be carried around easily. The Krobos make only the *late* (firewood stove), the *akamlekpui* version of the Eves. Another significant pottery vessel made by the Krobos which is similar to vodun saucers is *ngɛyu* (saucer) used for the base of the turn-table on which bowls and pots are modelled.

Pots, bowls, dishes and basins for ceremonies, include those used for; *yeye* and vodun worship, twin worship, puberty, fertility, divination, etc. While some of the vessels look plain

without any attachments or decorations, others have animal and human figures, objects, etc. made on them. Again, they are either made in realistic or abstract form. The Krobos do not make such types.

There are three versatile vessels made by Ave-Dzalele, Dzodze Kuli and Dzogbefime potters which are used for ceremonies in most Ewe communities. These include; *agozi* (miniature pot), *zedzẽ* (red pot) and *vegbadzẽ* (red bowl). *Agozi* is used for installing gods, vodun and *yeve* on one hand and for installing *Amegashie* (seer), *Bɔkɔnɔ* (diviner) and *Hũnɔ* (custodian of gods) on the other. While the bottom and sides of some *agozi* are perforated for the exit of spirits, others are left so or made with a cover. Usually the *agozi* contains a number of selected herbs, blood and objects related to the deity. The pot and its contents are buried in the soil. The spot is identified with a plant, small fence, stone or a human or animal figure modelled in clay or cement. *Agozi* functions as a power house for its custodians.

Zedzẽ which is coated with red clay slip looks just like *nudaze* (cooking pot). It is devoid of incision or black stains from *akati* (charcoal tree). It is made in all the pot making centres because of its limitless use in domestic and religious rites. It is small in size, so, it is called *zevi* (small pot) in Kpando Bame and used for *gbɔto* (puberty rites). It is also called *adãdaze* (heroic pot) by Ave-Dzalele potters and used for rituals in the *yeve* shrine.

Uegbadzẽ or *agbadzẽ* (red bowl) is mainly used for feeding all kinds of spirits. Usually it forms the base of two bowls with the other inverted. Figures of the deity are modelled on it or left just like that for feeding vodun, gods, ghosts, etc. It is also called *kolo* by Kpando potters which is usually used in the shrine. Though it is used for sacrifices, it is also a drinking trough for domestic birds such as fowls and doves.

Among all the pottery centres the most creative and productive of *yeve* and vodun pots are Dzodze Kuli and Dzogbefime. The reason might be that they are close to Togo and Benin

where vodun worship abounds. The first category of vessels which have exclusively snakes sculpted on them are called *daze* and *dagba* (snake pot and snake bowl). Some of the snakes include; cobra, adder, python, vipers, green mamba, etc. Typically, they are moulded in a ring shape on top of lids and the side of pots. Pots and basins without lids have snake figures moulded on the side. Additionally, the snake figures are modelled within the basin. These figures are textured to reflect the true nature of the snakes so that spirits can identify and be attracted to inhabit the vessels. The snake figures become a god for that matter symbol of worship for the devotees.

There are other pots which are a combination of snake and *agozi* or animals. Some of them are named as *gozida* (*agozi* snake), *gozida dakpui* (*agozi* short snake), *gozida daɔɔfu* (*agozi* sea snake), *mamida* (mami wata snake), *dalekpɔ* (snake capture tiger), *adzapka gozi* (crocodile *agozi*), etc. A combination of *agozi* and a snake or *agozi* and an animal is an indication that the power of the snake or animal lies in the strength of the pot. It is like a sheath in which all the powers of the vodun are kept and reinforced occasionally with drinks and blood. A combination of a snake and tiger known as *dalekpɔ* is an indication that the power of the snake surpasses the tiger. Again, *mamida* is a combination of mami wata and snake. It indicates that the mami wata, which is a water spirit manifests as well in snake form.

A number of animals are solely sculpted on the lid of vessels. In vodun worship their natural names are not used but they are assigned spiritual names. For example, the crocodile which is known in Eve as *lo* is spiritually called *adzakpa*, chameleon known as *agama* is called *lisa*, *agbo* which is known as ram is called *agbosu* and the female dwarf is also called *age*. These names are given to the devotees immediately they are initiated into the vodun or *yeve* religion. Irrespective of the sex, names assigned to each person stands for a wife. As a

rule, *shi* which means wife or spouse is added to the name of the animal e.g. *adzakpashi*, *lisashi* and *ageshi*.

The spouse names as enumerated above can also be used broadly to represent people who worship any form of snake or are associated with a particular religious group: *dashi* (snake spouse), *yeveshi* (yeve spouse), *vodunshi* (vodun spouse) and *mamishi* (mami wata spouse). Again, there are other names that are given to the devotees of a specific vodun or *yeve* which are names of the people who first worshipped the vodun or *yeve*. E.g. *dangoe* (female), *dakpo* (male), etc.

To portray vodun pots as sacred and to differentiate them from ordinary ones, they are smeared with a white clay substance called *ye*. Mama Attachie of Kuli confirmed that, this act is meant to preserve the purity of the pot. Another aspect of pottery is the fertility vessel. It is an abstract piece which is created by Dzodze Kuli and Dzogbefime potters.

In brief tools, materials and methods play a major role in the making of pottery vessels. The potters tools and materials control the whole process of pottery therefore they pay much attention to how they handle them. The shapes and decorations are much similar than varying from centre to centre. The size of the mouth and body of vessels determine what use the pot will be put to. Not all pots are decorated and those without *kodzẽ* are for ceremonial purposes, e.g. *kolo*, *zevi*, *zedzẽ* etc.

Question 2: What philosophical ideas can be identified with Eve pottery?

Eve potters give a number of reasons why they primarily make round shapes. Most of them used words like inheritance, tradition and *mamanu* (legacy of a grandmother). Mama literally means, grandmother. This is to say that Eve pottery is an inherited skill from mothers. Customarily, it is accepted as a symbol of motherhood since the making of pots remains in the

domain of women or mothers. The Krobos also maintain that making round shapes is an inheritance from their grandmothers.

Eve potters claim that round pottery vessels are able to contain and hold much substances although the shapes look insignificant in terms of size to the ordinary person. The idea of containment seems to toe the line of the Krobos. Pots are also said to be well-balanced on *nakemlekpui* (local stove) with equal distribution of heat when used for cooking. Again potters maintained that water and food substances prepared in pottery vessels taste better and do not go bad when preserved for some time. They assented to the fact that the clay and its allied materials which are used for making pottery are natural and pure hence they do not emit chemicals that have distasteful effect on food substances.

Most sizes of pottery vessels are determined by the amount of clay the hand can contain at a time. The first size or the smallest size in this regard may be a handful of clay or half of it. Subsequent sizes may follow with halves or handful of clay added to them. Also, a number of containers have been used to determine the size of pots in particular. These include; *gaze* (aluminium cooking pots) by Bame potters, jerry can by Adedome, gallons (keg size) by Dzalele, and buckets by Vume potters.

Again, while some potters claim to use experience gained in making pots over the years, others depend on the use of the mind and the eye which also conforms to the idea with Krobo potters. The latter group revealed that the sizes are formed in the mind and it just requires the help of the eye to establish them physically. However, Todze potters who make bowls mainly hold that prices of bowls determine what sizes are made. Apart from water pots which generally have numerous sizes, others do not usually have more than five.

Names are assigned to pottery to identify them for specific activities and with individual communities that make them. For instance, *nudaze* is specifically for cooking, *detsize* for

soup, *amatsidaze* for boiling herbs, *yakayakeze* for preparing steamed cassava meal called *yakayake*, *tomedeze* for fetching water, etc. The name *soɲu* and *soɲuvi* (gari and corn roasting bowls) are peculiar to people of Dzodze and its environs while the same set of bowls is known among the Ave people (Ave-Dzalele) as *galitɔgba* and *eblitɔgba* respectively. Among the inhabitants of Kpando (Bame) any form of bowl is called *koloe* while other centres such as Adidome Todze will call it *agba* or *vegba* at Zomayi. Similarly, the Krobos assign specific names to pottery vessels according to how they are used.

Long-established general names of pottery can be identified among some centres (Ahlihadzi and Bame) to preserve the native identity placed on them. For instance, in Ahlihadzi, typical bowls for grinding and eating are called *vegba* (native bowl), Kpando potters have *anyigbaze* (ground pot) for all pots. Some names assigned to certain pots and bowls are alien to Eveland. While Todze and Vume potters call *detsize* (soup pot) as *kutu*, Ahlihadzi calls a footless grinding bowl *kpuplɔka*. *Kutu* is of Krobo origin. It is interesting to note that the Krobos also use the name *apɔtɔyiwa* for *kpuplɔka*. So, it is practicable to say that the Eves might have acquired both names from the Krobos who might have also got it from the Akans.

Also, some pots might have acquired their names as a result of the occurrence of some unfortunate past events or just to instill fear in children to be cautious when using particular pots. One of such pots is commonly called around Dzodze as *ekuze* (death pot). Pots are also linked with a lepers shrunk fingers. This is a cooking pot known as *kpotomali* commonly found among potters around the middle belt (agotime Adedome, Ave Dzalele, Dzodze Kuli, Dzogbefime and Zomayi).

The treatment of the base also tells to a large extent what names pottery assumes. Pots with an all round footing are referred to as *ɔɔgomeze* or *afɔtize* in Adedome and Vume

respectively. Bowls with all round footing are also known by Bame potters as *zəkəkoe* and *zəkpuie* (elongated and short footed), Todze and Ahlihadzi as *afɔtizɔgba* (footed bowl) and Klokofe as *zɔgba* (footed bowl). Those without footing are called *gomekpo* or *gomefufu* in Ahlihadzi and Klokofe. With four props beneath the bowl, the Krobos name the footed bowl as *kpɔtse* and it is used mainly for grinding vegetables while the footless bowl is called *apɔɔayiwa* and *baka* used for grinding and eating respectively. Some pots also derive their names from the manner in which they are made. A pot which is finished on the laps is called *atadzizevi*. *Atadzi* refers to “on the lap” and *zevi* refers to “small pot”. In its totality it means “small lap pot.”

With ceremonial vessels, the figures of humans, animals or objects and the surface treatment in terms of colour determine how a pot or bowl acquires its name. Each vessel takes the name of the figure sculpted on it. For instance, a pot or bowl with the figure of *lisa* (chameleon) is referred to as *lisaze* (chameleon pot) or *lisagba* (chameleon bowl). A pot or bowl smeared with red clay slip is known as *zedzẽ* (red pot) and *agbadzẽ* (red bowl) respectively. *Zedzẽ* and *agbadzẽ* derive their names from the red colour used on them. These category of pots and bowls are completely absent from the list of Krobo potters.

Eves generally consider pots to be beautiful when they are well finished with shiny surface, ringed with lines, smeared with *ekɔdzẽ* (red), stained with *akati* and painted with coal tar pitch (black) solutions. Kpodoave potters said red creates warmth and is linked with the colour of fire while black is associated with strength. This is the reason why coal tar pitch is used on the rim of *soɲu* to prevent cracking. Red which is seen as blood by Kuli potters is associated with life for the fact that the soil sustains plant life. For shiny effects, substances such as kerosene, shea butter and palm oil are used. However, Krobo potters attribute the red clay slip colour and the glossy surface of pottery ware as beauty only.

Potters also use proverbs and proverbial songs to express deep pottery ideas in and around their setting. These Eve proverbs focus on pieces of advice, outwitting people, fertility, advocacy for peace, perseverance in industry, volume of containers, etc. One proverb seems to run through most of the centres: *tome dela egba ze* “one who goes to fetch water at the stream is responsible for the breaking of a pot.” The Krobos also allude to the fact that proverbs are deep thoughts which help potters to express themselves figuratively. The same proverb which seems to run through all the Eve centres is also the same with the Krobo potters: *paya lo le wia buε* - “One who fetches water breaks the pot.” Among all the pottery centres, Kpando Bame seems to stand tall in terms of proverbs and proverbial songs. In agreement with Gyekye’s assertion, Eve proverbs are examined and interpreted within their respective context.

Question 3: In what ways does Eve pottery express Eve culture?

Generally, all Eve potters, established that pottery is more of a way of life rather than an income generating activity. Words such as passion, satisfaction, interest, love and fulfilment all allude to the fact that potters think about their commitment to the industry more than the financial gains. Again, potters also revealed that pottery is an inherited career and it does not seem lucrative of late, yet they cannot abandon it all-together for other jobs which are more rewarding financially. Affirmatively, they said for the sake of continuity they have to remain in the industry to fulfil their ancestors’ wishes.

Kuli and Dzogbefime potters specifically said that the demand for pottery meant for traditional worship (*Yeve* and *Vodun*) makes it rational for them to continue in the pottery industry. With others like Bame, Adedome, Vume and Todze, the demand for using pottery for the various food processing activities gives them the push to continue making pots.

In terms of utilitarian purposes, most of the potters accepted that earthenware is more hygienic than the modern vessels. In explaining this point further, they said food and water tastes better in pots because they are endowed with the natural quality from the earth. Again, it was pointed out by majority of potters that naturally, pots are preferred vessels for traditional religious activities that is why they are still being used.

Generally, it was accepted that pots are used directly or indirectly in performing various rites, rituals and ceremonies in all communities. They include rites pertaining to birth, puberty, marriage and death. It is interesting to note that pots are used most frequently in the performance of birth and death rites. This extremity points to the fact that the way-in (birth) and way-out (death) of man on this planet earth is a mystery. No doubt special preference is given to these two rites in all the Ewe communities as confirmed by the potters. As such, a deceased person is bathed using a small pot.

Apart from the general ones, specifically pots are used in the installation of deities and initiation of novitiates into religious groups such as *yeve* and *vodun*. Due to the sacred nature of religious vessels, it requires old ladies who have passed childbearing age to make them. Again, depending on the rite, pots vary from place to place. For example, in Kpando, puberty and twin rites are held in high esteem therefore *gbotozevi* and *venovize* are made to that effect. In Kuli and Dzodze where *Yeve* and *Vodun* worship are common, figurative pots of animals and human beings are sculpted on the pots and bowls.

The geographical location of pottery centres also inform the repertoire of vessels Ewe potters make. For example, potters living in and around forest belts (Kpando and Adedome) make a lot of pots for cooking and storing food substances. Conversely, those in the savannah and coastal belts produce mostly bowls; *sonu* and *agba* for roasting and grinding respectively. Vume, a coastal pottery centre near the Volta estuary (Sogakofe) is an exception from the

latter categorization. The fact is that, they migrated from a forest zone in Denkyira, Ashanti Region, and make pots similar to Kpando Bame and Adedome who live in the forest belt. The inference is therefore true that most potters within the forest belt make mostly pots.

It is also observed that, Eves living along the forest belt eat a lot of meals (*fufu* and *amɔwɔ* - mixed corn and cassava dough mixed) with soup while those within the savannah and the coastal zone mostly eat meals like (*akplẽ*, *yakayake* and *abolo*) with vegetables ground in earthenware bowls.

Finally, villages living near river beds and large watercourses engage in pottery for the fact that they have good clay. All the pottery centres reveal that the clay which is used for pottery is obtained near river beds. An example is Kpando not far from the Volta where they fetch some of the clay, Todze and Vume also downstream the Volta Lake, etc. and a host of others.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

Chapter four discussed the assembling, analysis and interpretation or of the data in descriptive form using appropriate pictorial illustrations. This Chapter summarises the main findings of the study, draw conclusions and make general recommendations.

5.1 Summary of Projections

The main problem of this study is that the philosophical and cultural components of pottery have not been understood and appreciated due to inadequate and proper documentation of the Eve pottery vessels. This research focuses on the tools, materials, methods and uses of indigenous pottery in their philosophical and cultural milieus, so as to unveil and document them to the benefit of Eves in particular and Ghanaians in general.

The objectives of the study are:

- iv. To identify and discuss indigenous Eve pottery tools, materials, methods and uses in selected centres in the Volta Region.
- v. To find out the philosophical implications of Eve pottery.
- vi. To find out the extent to which Eve pottery expresses Eve culture.

As regards a guide to the conduct of this research, three research questions were formulated. These include:

- iv. Are there specific Eve pottery tools, materials, methods and uses which are peculiar to the selected centres?
- v. What philosophical ideas can be identified with Eve pottery?
- vi. In what ways does Eve pottery express Eve culture?

The research methodologies adopted included descriptive, explanatory and grounded theory. The data gathering tools were interview and observation. The study covered six Districts in the Volta Region of Ghana where indigenous Ewe pottery is a predominant occupation.

The review of related literature was discussed under the following headings: The history of the Ewes; the art of women in Africa; indigenous pottery processes; traditional education and how it is transmitted; philosophical concepts of indigenous pottery; cultural concepts and practices in indigenous pottery; and traditional religion and its relationship to pottery.

Altogether, 12 pottery centres made up of a total of 84 respondents were randomly selected for the interview. Also, three resource persons were sourced for additional data which respondents were unable to provide.

5.2 Summary of the Major Findings

The study found out and concluded that:

- i. Generally, the tools are acquired by potters themselves or fashioned by woodcarvers and blacksmiths. They are used for three functions; forming, finishing and decorating. The frequency in using some tools e.g. *ababe* and *kpezɔzɔrɔe* by all centres give credence to the value potters attach to shaping and polishing of pottery wares. The shape and the surface quality is an indication of a beautiful and a well finished pot.
- ii. Taboos regarding clay are still strictly adhered to in selected pottery centres. Specific days are set aside for the land gods to rest, therefore digging clay on such days is prohibited. It is believed that going contrary to this norm will result in the breaking of the wares during firing especially.

- iii. Primarily, Eve pottery is still hand-built in small quantities by women in all the pottery centres. All pottery is made on the ground hence the name *anyigbaze* or “ground pot.”
- iv. Typically, pottery is not linearly decorated but heavily painted with red contrasted with black which are obtained from clay, plants and coal tar.
- v. Eve potters generally make round shapes termed *Mamanu* (legacy of a grandmother). These pottery forms are still traditional, they have not changed, the same round or circular shapes are continually made. Their quality can be seen when they balance well when carried on the head; when placed on the local stove; heat is evenly distributed when cooking; and water and food substances taste better than other containers.
- vi. Two methods are common to all Eve pottery centres; *pinch* and *coil*. The pinch is used in the making of small pots while a combination of the pinch and coil are employed in making huge pots.
- vii. A number of reasons account for the success of making distinctive pottery at each centre. These include; the geographical location, availability of pottery tools and materials, the kind of domestic activity people are engaged in as well as religious beliefs and practices.
- viii. Philosophically, Eves regard pottery as life sustaining objects. Life is associated with good health and well-being. This idea is fully clad in the making and use of pottery. This emphasizes the fact that irrespective of what pottery is used for it is well thought-out as enhancing life.
- ix. In determining the various sizes of pottery they are compared with other containers such as gallons, kegs, aluminium cooking pots and buckets.
- x. To preserve the mark of identity of pottery vessels, Eves assign specific names to them, e.g. *vegba* (native bowl).
- xi. Pots are valued as symbols of beauty when their surfaces are rendered smooth and painted

with red clay slip, stained with plant dyes and coal tar pitch, ringed at the rim and neck, and emerges whole after firing. Eve potters consider red and black as colours of beauty, but Amenuke's (1991) idea of Ghanaian notions of colour is absolutely different.

xii. The use of proverbs is a common thing with pottery and it is characterised by daily life situations such as advice, hard work, fertility, industriousness, etc.

xiii. Culturally, pottery as a way of life is more self-fulfilling than making financial gains.

Potters have passion and interest regarding the making of pots because it is a legacy they must to preserve.

xiv. Pottery vessels are used in the performance of various rites and ceremonies among the Eves e.g. rites of passage - birth, puberty, marriage and death. Most importantly of late, birth and death have been given much preference than the other two.

5.3 Summary of Conclusions

In conclusion, Eve pottery, irrespective of what the numerous containers are used for, go a long way to enhance human life. With this idea, every aspect of the pottery procedure, i.e. the use of tools and materials, the methods employed in making wares are all geared up towards the achievement of this goal.

The main material, clay, is in abundance and therefore the industry can continue to thrive. Despite the down trend of the industry of late attributable to the influx of plastics and other containers into the Ghanaian market which are competing with pottery, Ghanaians for that matter Eves will still need pottery containers for specific purposes.

5.4 Recommendations

i. The forming methods being used pose a number of health hazards to potters. Most complain of waist pains, and this has resulted because of the way they bend down going

round the ware as they form it. It is therefore suggested that, just like it is done elsewhere among the Krobos where wooden platforms are raised, the Eves will also adopt such techniques.

- ii. The experts in pottery are mostly elderly women who are dying every so often and the few young ones are not able to adequately answer questions posed to them on indigenous Eve pottery. It is therefore recommended that the right people (elderly) are sourced for to elicit vital information from them before all is lost about Eve pottery.
- iii. It is recommended that government and non-governmental organizations motivate the youth through the building of pottery centres that will enhance and cut down labour and incomes invested in pottery as well as create marketing opportunities for the products made. This is not to change the process completely but to have a conducive working environment for all who wish to be potters.
- iv. Finally, it is recommended that pottery should be introduced in the schools of prospective communities engaged in pottery activities. This will equip the youth with the prerequisite skill, so that those who drop out of school can be gainfully employed as well as preserve the legacy the ‘grandmothers’ have left behind.

5.4 Suggestions for further Research

The Eve pottery industry is a very broad one. The researcher was unable to adequately cover all areas. Some of the potential researchable topics for researchers who wish to conduct their study in this area include:

- i. The symbolic significance of religious containers, e.g. vodun and *yeve*.
- ii. The extent of change in Eve pottery and how it affects the industry.
- iii. The role of pottery in traditional religion among the Eves.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Question 1: Are there specific Ewe pottery materials, tools, methods and uses which are peculiar to selected centres?

Clay digging and preparation

1. Where do you dig clay?
2. Which group of people dig clay in your locality and why?
3. On what days do you normally dig your clay and why?
4. Are there any taboos associated with the clay digging process?
5. What happens if you ignore taboos during the digging of clay?
6. Do you believe that clay is endowed with some forces which need to be revered?
7. Do you perform any rites at the clay pit?
8. After digging clay how do you prepare it for pottery?
9. How many types of clay do you use? Why?
10. How do you determine that clay is well prepared for use?
11. How do you keep your clay from drying?

Tools

12. List and describe the tools used in pottery.
13. How are the tools obtained?
15. Are there any rites performed to pacify the tools before and after they are used?

Methods

16. List and describe the methods used in pot making?
17. What makes the methods convenient in the making of pots?

Building and Modelling

18. Do you use one method in the building and modelling of pots?
19. If not, why a combination of different methods?

Finishing and Decorating

20. At what stage do you decide to finish and decorate a pot? Why at such a stage?
21. What kind of finish and decoration do you apply to pots and why?
22. Do the decorations have any relation with the shapes and use of pots?
23. What pot is considered beautiful and acceptable for use?

Drying and Firing

24. How and where do you dry your pots?
25. How do you establish that the pots are ready for firing?
26. What type of firing method do you use in firing pottery?
27. How long do you fire the pots?
28. Do you give any treatment to the pots while they are in the hot or cool?

Uses

29. What are the uses of pots?
30. Do you have pots made for both specific and general purposes?

Question 2: What philosophical ideas can be identified with Ewe pottery?

Shapes of pots

31. Why do Ewes make round and circular pots?
32. What is the symbolic significance of the round-shaped pots?
33. Are there any strong bonds between human beings, particularly woman and pots?

34. Are these shapes linked with other living things and objects in nature, why?
35. What sizes of pots are peculiar to your locality?
36. What ideas are related to the different sizes of pots?
37. Do the shapes communicate any message to the potter and the user as well?

Historical and proverbial aspects

38. Are there any historical/mythological facts pertaining to the emergence of pots?
39. Are there any conceptual ideas from ancestors that inspire you to make pots?
40. Are there any notable proverbs linked with pottery?
41. What is the significance of proverbs in pot making?

Name

42. What does ze (pot) mean in Eve?
43. Why are specific names assigned to pots?
44. What meanings are associated with the names assigned to the various pots?
45. Do the names add some value to the pots?

Materials and Tools

46. Why is clay and not any other related material e.g. soil used in pot making?
47. What makes *etsu* different from *anyi*?

Colour and Motifs

48. What materials do you use as colour?
49. What is the symbolic significance of the colours applied to pots?
50. On which type of pots do you apply these colours? Why?
51. What type of marks and motifs do you apply to pots as decoration?
52. What is the meaning of the marks and motifs used in the decoration of pots?
53. Are there any reasons for choosing such motifs in decorating pots?
54. Do the motifs have any relationship with the forms and how they are utilized?

Question 3: In what ways does Eve pottery express Eve culture?

Geographical location

55. How does the location of your village affect pottery making?
56. Are the forms influenced by the activities pertaining to the locality?
57. Why are the types of pots made in your locality different from other communities?

Pottery as a way of life

58. Do you consider pottery as a job or a way of life?
59. How do the cultural, social and religious activities dictate the types of pots made?
60. How do the forms and designs of pottery affect activities of daily living?
61. What makes pottery inseparable from human life and activity?
62. How is pottery related to beliefs, values, attitudes, etc?

Function

63. Why are pots still being used in your community?
64. What motivates you to make pots?
65. What attracts people to accept and use your pots in the locality and beyond?
66. How are pots used in the stages of life: birth, puberty, marriage and death?