



# Title the Function of Pottery in the Iban Community in Sibu's Longhouse, Sarawak

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## Abstract

Tajau or more commonly known as pot is an inherited heritage for generations by the Iban in Sarawak. It is made of clay and each tajau has its own uniqueness in terms of sculpture, height, size, shape and color. Tajau also become a symbol of wealth in the family. Owners who have a lot tajau number often associated with wealth and generosity of the food especially when tajau filled with rice. Moreover, tajau have a variety of functions in everyday life Iban use. The research is based on the function, beliefs, taboos and other types of tajau.

**Keywords:** function; types of tajau; beliefs; symbol

## 1. Introduction

Indigenous peoples in Sarawak are indeed rich in cultural and heritage inherited from generation to generation. There are 27 ethnic groups in Sarawak. Each ethnic has different language, culture, heritage and way of life.

Iban communities mostly live in Sungai Saribas, Skrang River, Batang Lupar River and Rajang River. Therefore, they are better known as seafarers or Sea Dayaks.

Among the well-known culture and heritage amongst these communities is the use of tajau. In the course of everyday life, the Iban community has been using the *tajau* since the 9th century. *Tajau* or better known as jars is synonymous among the Iban community. In addition, *tajau* has another term called something.

The uniqueness of heritage and culture in Sarawak is a valuable asset inherited from hereditary ancestors. The uniqueness gives a positive impact on the richness of the ethical community in Malaysia. *Tajau* is one of the heritage and cultural heritage found in Sarawak. *Tajau* is a large jar made of clay (1). The appreciation of the use of *tajau* in the culture of the former Iban community in the land of Sarawak is very clear and gives a deep meaning to the lifestyle practices of the community. This is clearly evident when *tajau* is one of the mandatory collections in every Iban community in Sarawak.

## 2. Literature Review

In general, the objects that come from clay in the form of pottery and crockery have long been the practice of society in some places in Malaysia. The practice of art has existed since the Neolithic period (2) and is also one of the oldest artistic values in the world after the Stone Age.

Benedict Sandin (3) stated that each room door would have to provide a special shelter to place a *tajau*, a sword (metal tray), a pitcher, ankle, a gong, complete in the yard of their living room. *Tajau* is considered as a symbol of inherited heritage property that has been accumulated from the past generation to the present time. This opinion is also supported by researchers Derek Freeman (4), that "almost every Iban longhouse contains precious old plate and bowl, but it is in a jar (*Tajau*) The most interesting will be taken". Additionally, according to Edward Enggu (5), the highest value raised or acquired by the Iban community is in reference to the three main points, the first of which is courage, both of which are the amount of rice earned, and the third is the *tajau*.

The impact of the use and production of pottery began to spread and absorbed among the natives of Sarawak in the 9th century through the arrival of traders from china who started trading in the waters of Santubong, Sarawak using the exchange system of goods (6). This pottery has received a good response from Sarawak's indigenous people as the fine hand-drawn and beautiful Chinese hands on the surface of the pot have attracted their attention.

## 3. Methodology / Materials

In this study, the methodology used by the researchers, through qualitative research. The researchers did not use quantitative methods for the study is focused on the collection of data through interviews, observation and documentation.

In 1996, Hashim explained that field work is the pillar of cultural research. Field work is also a cultural researcher personal experience during live together with members of the public to be studied. It is used as a cultural and scientific research studies conducted highly dependent on notes and descriptions that have been collected by researchers. The time factor, the researchers affect the environment and personal experience and it involves almost all life activities of community members surveyed.