

## Craft Arts and Tourism in Ceramic Art Village of Kasongan in Yogyakarta

SP. Gustami,<sup>1</sup> Laksmi Kusuma Wardani,<sup>2</sup> Agus Heru Setiawan<sup>3</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Yogyakarta is one of Indonesia's major tourist destinations. This is due to its nature, interesting, unique and fantastic ancient cultural and art sites. Creative industries and the ceramic crafts play an important role in the development of tourism in Yogyakarta. In this paper, ethnographic approach is used to describe the creative process and the ceramic crafts industry in the village of Kasongan, Yogyakarta. Based on the results of the field research, the authors conclude that the ceramic crafts tourist village of Kasongan is moving toward greater commoditization whereby the ceramics centre is now more oriented towards meeting the needs of tourist industry in Yogyakarta. Due to extensive interaction and the positive response from the general public, ceramic crafts practitioners of Kasongan experience unique and characteristic creative period. The crafters manage to negotiate between the old and the new values, in the village one can find both traditional pottery and new, creative and innovative ceramic products of export quality. Today, Kasongan is a trade mark ceramic tourism village that is entering the global era.

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### 1. Introduction

Yogyakarta carries a status of a special region (often referred to as *daerah istimewa*) in Indonesia. In addition to this, the city carries a number of various attributes that the Indonesians use to refer to it: sometimes it is called "the city of culture" (with the *keraton* of Yogyakarta as the cultural centre of Java), "the city of independence struggle," "university city," and "the city of art." During the revolutionary period, Yogyakarta once became the centre of governance and the centre of struggle for independence of Indonesia. Yogyakarta also attracts young people from other islands of Indonesia who come here to learn a variety of skills and study. This is why it is also known as the "city of education." Currently, Yogyakarta can be considered to be one of the major tourist destinations in Indonesia, due to its nature, unique ancient cultural and art sites (Hill and Mubyarto, 1978:36).

Such a popular tourist destination has a high demand for cultural souvenirs. One can say that tourism in Yogyakarta is closely connected to the local traditional craft arts. One major impact of tourism here is that it led to the commoditization of the surrounding nature, of the ancient cultural sites, of the performing arts, including the commoditization of a variety of craft art centres that existed before tourist "invasion." The creative process and the products of local artisans are unique. These craft art centres are spread in and around Yogyakarta: in Gunung Kidul, Bantul, Kulon Progo, and Sleman.

Both domestic and foreign tourists can observe creative processes of these artisans. They can even purchase these creations as a souvenir to take back home. In addition, travellers also receive satisfying and memorable care. The impression of the tourists is further strengthened by the surrounding beauty of nature and of the well-designed setting, the uniqueness of the creative process and the unique products of local craftspeople, as well as by the hospitality of the communities who are directly involved in sustaining the craft centres.

There are a variety of crafts in and around Yogyakarta, including woodwork, metalwork, ceramics, textiles and batik, leather craft, and others. This paper focuses on the study of ceramics craft art of Kasongan in

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<sup>1</sup> Professor of Fine Arts, University of GadjahMada, Email: spgustami@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup> PhD Candidate in Performing and Fine Arts Research Department, University of GadjahMada, Lecturer in Interior Design Studies Programme, Petra Christian University, Email: laksmi@peter.petra.ac.id

<sup>3</sup> MA Candidate, Anthropology, University of GadjahMada, Lecturer in Photography Department, Art Institute of Indonesia Surakarta, Email: khawhoel@gmail.com

Yogyakarta. Kasongan becomes an interesting place for a study because in the recent decades it experienced significant growth in all aspects of this craft: shape, design, materials, techniques, production processes, and marketing. These changes are taking place due to the establishment of dynamic interaction and more extensive communications.

Kasongan is a tourist village in the Regency of Bantul. This place developed into a centre of ceramic craft arts. A feasibility study about commoditization of Kasongan ceramic crafts centres was done by the University of GadjahMada. One of the impacts of this initiative is that today, the ceramic crafts produced here seek to meet the tourists demand for souvenirs. The site became an important tourist destination and is frequented by tourists. The tourists have an opportunity to witness the authentic creative works in the numerous ceramic craft art centres that were established in the area. Craft art became a commodity product, a material for sale to consumers locally, nationally, and internationally.

## **2. Research Methodology**

This paper is written on the basis of a preliminary research. The study focuses on the centre of ceramic crafts in Kasongan. Actual and factual data in the context of production practices, the process of creation, and the product innovation is obtained and elicited from local practitioners. The data was gathered also from observation of the environment, lifestyle, and response of local practitioners toward tourism in Yogyakarta. In addition, special attention was also given to the history of Kasongan.

There are two categories of cultural tourism. First, cultural tourism includes study tours, performing arts, folklore, pilgrimages, festivals, and visits to the historical sites. Second, cultural tourism in a loose sense seeks to broaden one's outlook, expand knowledge, add individual experience, and lead to new findings (Prohaska, 1995). This form of tourism is supported by written text that describes a certain reality of a tourist destination. This written text helps cultural tourists (or, consumers) of the second type to achieve their objectives, overcome their boredom, and also motivates purchase (Mossberg, 2007).

This study was done using ethnographic approach. This approach allows the researchers to give a detailed description of the subject and of the object based on the data and facts found in the field (Spradley, 1972). The data was obtained through open-ended interviews, participant observation, and visual documentation.

We chose the ceramic crafts centre of Kasongan because the ceramic crafts here remain productive, creative, and innovative. The products of local crafters are even able to reach the global market. This indicates that the continuity and change in ceramic crafts of Kasongan is in line with the interests of local and global consumers. After the 2006 earthquake, the centre of ceramic crafts of Kasongan rose rapidly and dynamically. Soon after the earthquake, it was able to stand on its feet and invite domestic and foreign tourists to visit. Data collection aimed to find the views, conceptions, strategies, programs, activities, and basic government policy in regards to the existence of the tourism centres of ceramic crafts in Kasongan, also on the attitudes, responses, and actions of local practitioners in relation to tourism in Yogyakarta.

The collected information was analysed to depict the reality of life of ceramic practitioners who create new, innovative products and, at the same time, are able to meet the market interests. Descriptive analysis is used to give an overview of the condition of the surroundings, social behaviour, history, production techniques, and ceramic products. This analysis also looks at the creative ideas, processes and creative work patterns, and the impacts of innovation that enabled the crafters to penetrate the global market. We hope that this descriptive analysis will contribute positively to the mapping of arts and cultural tourism potential in Yogyakarta.

## **3. Discussion**

### **3.1. History of a Tourist Village of Kasongan**

Kasongan is believed to have existed before 1825. Kasongan was mentioned in the *pathoknegari* (decision from the Yogyakarta *keraton*), namely, in the warrant to conduct *pengajian* (a gathering at which Islam is discussed) in several areas in Yogyakarta, covering Dhongkelan, Kasongan, and PlasaKuning (Carey, 1986:9). In 1832, there were still few *ulama* and *santri* (Islamic scholars and students) in these three areas.

This is due to the fact that at the time the Muslim leaders were more focused on the Java War (1825-1830). In The Chronicles of Dipanegara (*Babad Diponegara*) it is explained that a teacher of *pengajian* the *pesantren* (boarding school for Islamic studies) of Kasongan was *Kyai* (Islamic teacher) Abdulraupi and *Sheikh* (Islamic religious leader) Abdulatip, who both died while fighting the Dutch. Their death led to the decline of the *pesantren* in Kasongan.

Prior to 1825, Kasongan was an area of special autonomy referred to as *perdikan*<sup>4</sup> and consisted of three hamlets, namely Kajen, Sentanan, and Tirto. These hamlets' names were inspired by its community leaders and the residents' activities. In Kajen, there was a *pesantren*, where citizens carried out *pengajian* (root word is *kaji*). At that time Kasongan was still a place for learning to read the al-Qur'an and Islam, which was supported by the mosque that was presented as a gift by the Yogyakarta *keraton*. The name Sentanan was drawn from the leader of the hamlet, who was also from the royal family of Yogyakarta *keraton*. The members of the royal family were referred to as *sentanadalem*. One of the rulers of this hamlet was *Ratu Kudus* (Queen Kudus) whose tomb could still be found in the village until the tomb was moved to another place due to the construction of public facilities in the area (Gustami, 1988:23; Raharjo, 2013, personal conversation). Finally, Tirto is another word for water. There was a spring in this hamlet that supplied the water needs of the communities. This spring water was also used to irrigate the paddy fields.

At that time, these hamlets were part of one territory referred to as *kebekelan* (district). These hamlets were part of *kebekelan* of Kasongan. The centre of this *kebekelan* was Sentanan and was led by a leader who was referred to as *bekel*. *Pemutihan Pathok Negari* (1832) explains that the area of *kebekelan* Kasongan was in the beginning equal to seven *jungs*,<sup>5</sup> one *jung* equals to four *bahus*,<sup>6</sup> one *bahu* equals to 7,196.5 square meters (Carey, 1981:3,7). The total area of *kebekelan* Kasongan at that time was a lot bigger than the area of today's *kampung* (village) Kasongan. Until early 1832, the village remained to be a *perdikan*.

In 1941, *kebekelan* Kasongan changed its status to *kelurahan* (district). Kasongan kept this status of *kelurahan* since the colonial period up to independence. In 1946, a change took place in the structure of village government as part of the simplification measure of administrative units. Four *kelurahan* were being merged into one *kelurahan*. Thus, the four *kelurahan* of Paitan, Srimbitan, Bangen, and Kasongan were incorporated into a *kelurahan* called Bangunjiwa. Kasongan status was reduced to that of a *kampung* Kasongan. Changes happened again in 1987, when the *kelurahan* was replaced with a term *desa* (another name for village), headed by a village head. *Dusun* (hamlets) was now under *desa*. Bangunjiwa village consisted of 19 *dusuns*, five of which represented the centre of ceramic crafts. These were Kajen, Tirto, Gedongan, Sembungan, and Kalipucang. *Kampung* Kasongan was included in the *dusun* of Kajen. This change was based on the Government Interior Regulation of 1979.

Tourist village of Kasongan is on the highway Yogyakarta – Bantul, between the city of Yogyakarta and the tourist site of the Selarong Cave in the *kabupaten* (regency) Bantul. During the Java War, the Selarong Cave was used by the Prince Dipanegara as a fortress against the colonial enemy. At that time, Kasongan became one of the defense frontlines of the Dipanegara soldiers. Mataram Sultanate at this time was facing pressure from the colonial rulers. The oral tradition of the local people tells us that Kasongan was originally a farming community that had rice paddy fields and farming gardens. But an event occurred where a saddle horse owned by a Dutch officer was killed in the paddy fields. The Kasongan residents did not dare to acknowledge the ownership of the rice fields where the officer was killed. They were afraid to face heavy sanctions imposed by the colonial government, so, they were forced to relinquish their ancestral ownership of the fertile land. Since then the Kasongan residents have lost the right to own the ancestral land. They, then, settled on the arid lands of the Kasongan area.

This arid area of current Kasongan further was transformed by *Kyai* Abdulraupi into the area of *kundhi*, that is, the pottery artisans. The area then became known as the potters' residential area. In The Chronicles of Dipanegara (*Babad Dipanegara*) it is explained that *Kyai* Abdulraupi and *Sheikh* Abdulatip were teachers of the Koran as well as soldiers of Dipanegara. They fought against the Dutch soldiers. Both were killed in a combat on October 25, 1825 (Carey, 2007:937). The event was recorded in the book of Dipanegara Chronicles (*Babad Dipanegara*), S. B. 157, written by Dipanegara in 1831 in Manado and reprinted in 1911.

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<sup>4</sup>Means special autonomy because of a special condition of a place. Part of the kingdom (sultanate, in the case of Yogyakarta) but exempt from the obligation to pay taxes and tribute to the ruler. This was granted to certain villages before 1962.

<sup>5</sup>A local measurement unit.

<sup>6</sup>*ibid.*

Battles between the soldiers of Dipanegara against the Dutch, which resulted in the death of Kyai Abdulraupi and Sheikh Abdulatip, occurred in the area of Kasihan. Dipanegara forces led by the head of *kelurahan* and the head of *beke* against the Dutch were armed with long bamboo spears. They fought the Dutch up to the area of Kasihan (Veth, 1875:369).

Kyai Abdulraupi is more known as Kyai of Kasongan among the local communities. His name was even further simplified to Kyai Song. This name is closely related to the production of objects made by the clay artisans using a low temperature fire. Burning in the practice of Kasongan means the clay is baked in kiln until it turns gray or black. This is a process which is called *gerabah* or *tembikar*, earthenware or pottery. The product that was created by the artisans had a significant aesthetic quality. This is why their crafts is then referred to as the ceramics craft art or *senikerajinan keramik*.<sup>7</sup> All the terms that refer to the product that is made by the artisans in Kasongan, be it pottery, ceramic, or ceramic craft arts, essentially refer to the peculiar production process of Kasongan clay artisans using a low temperature firing.

As a result of its fast-paced growth, Kasongan became known as the centre of ceramic crafts. Progress shown by Kasongan as a tourist village had an effect on the surrounding areas, which also helped to enliven Kasongan's existence as the centre of ceramic craft arts. *Dusuns* that helped to enliven Kasongan are Sembungan, Tirto, Gedongan, and Kalipucang (Raharjo, 2008:43).<sup>8</sup>

In the aftermath of the Yogyakarta earthquake in 2006, Kasongan is still in the process of recovery. Despite this, it is notable that the Kasongan pottery artisans readily and quickly started overcoming problems caused by the earthquake. Soon after the earthquake they actively started taking orders from their aficionados. They tried to rise up and grab consumers interests both at home and abroad. Several business units of production of ceramic crafts in Kasongan successfully obtained large orders. This can be seen as a sign that local artisans are beginning to stand on their feet in the aftermath of the earthquake. The revival of the ceramic crafts gives great hope for the improvement of socio-economic situation, especially, for the wider Kasongan community.

The ceramic craft art has spread widely in the communities adjacent to Kasongan. Nonetheless, it is only Kasongan that is widely known among the general public. Kasongan has become a place that is commonly owned by the pottery artisans in that area. Its success is seen as the commemoration of Kyai Song who had paved the way to this craftsmanship (in his attempt to solve the difficulties faced by the community during the Java War). It also has become a trade mark for a successful tourist pottery village.

### **3.2. Kasongan in the post-earthquake period**

As mentioned before, Kasongan is located on the highway Yogyakarta –Bantul, at kilometer 6.2. This intersection is marked with magnificent arch-shaped gate with the inscription that reads "Kasongan Tourism Village". In the right hand corner of the gate there is a welcome signpost that reads, "Welcome to Small Pottery Industry attraction site of Kasongan". This is an indication that Kasongan community prefers to call themselves as pottery artisans rather than ceramic artisans. Kasongan practitioners and residents feel satisfied and comfortable with the title potter because in the history of the village of Kasongan, pottery-making became a profession that allowed them to survive. The fact that they managed to learn a new craft and be good at it demonstrates their resilience and strength.

However, the use of the term "ceramics" is already widely accepted and used by the general public to refer to the works of ceramic crafts practitioners of Kasongan. The Kasongan practitioners do not have to stick with the term *gerabah*. Term "gerabah" refers to objects, such as *cowek* (meant plate at the time, today refers to spice masher), *cuwo* (bowl), *kendhil* (pot for cooking rice), *kendhi* (pitcher), *kuwali* (pot for cooking vegetables), and the like, and to pottery that can break quite easily. Gerabah in the context of Kasongan is not necessarily limited to products made from burnt clay with a low temperature, but it also refers to all kinds of objects made of clay without burning that can easily break. Today, most people consider the products by the Kasongan crafters to be ceramics.

<sup>7</sup>The name was later changed to *senikriyakeramik*.

<sup>8</sup>Dusun Sembungan consists of the following villages: Nglentong, Sendang Semanggi, and Sembungan itself; Tirtodusun consists of the villages of Kudus, Goren, Turen, and Tirto itself; dusun Gedongan consists of Jerotabag, Jagan, Lorjagan, Sekarpetak, Klampisan, Kalongan, and Gedongan itself; dusun Kalipucang consists of the villages of Kembang, Gesik, Jambumete, and Kalipucang itself.

The long history of Kasongan is deeply embedded in the minds and hearts of local practitioners. Until today they are proud of it being called a pottery village. They do not feel the need to look for other, more modern terms that are often used to refer to it, such as ceramic crafts or ceramic art, although their work has experienced changes that increased the aesthetic value, eventually leading to a successful entry into the global market. Each week, two or more container trucks enter Kasongan to transport a variety of first-rate products for export to other regions or abroad. In this area, including the surrounding communities of Sentanan, Kalipucang, Tirto, Sembungan, and Gedongan, there are 421 business units of ceramic producers. Each of these units employs at least ten persons (Raharjo, 2008:395). This shows the improved aesthetic quality of Kasongan ceramic crafts led to rapid development. The ceramic craft itself is becoming more unique, creative, and meets the aesthetic taste of the market.

Villagers tend to retain the natural authenticity of their residential areas. There seems to be less of a strong desire for modernisation among the Kasongan residents. The authenticity of natural settings is still maintained, although there are some parts that could be improved. Stores and art shops attract visitor's attention and are lined up by the side road of the main street. This has direct implication for the rise of the land prices in this area. The price of land on the side road of the village main street rose rapidly and is quite expensive. Despite, there is a growing competition of those willing to buy a piece of land here. The desire to own land in the main street is for building a workshop, sales store or art shop, as well as a living space. If the land is not sold, it is generally leased out for ceramic shop.

Although being a ceramic crafter is promising and profitable, there are also locals who survive as farmers, traditional non-market oriented pottery crafters or construction workers. Therefore, the potters who have a big ceramics business find it difficult to recruit local young people to learn to become practitioners of ceramic crafts. This is why they recruit workers from outside the region. In addition, profession of a ceramic practitioner is seen as a dirty work because of working with clay. Despite the fact that this profession is likely to increase revenues, it is less attractive to young people. Elderly, women ceramic practitioners generally continue on making traditional pottery, because its manufacture does not require heavy thinking to compete in the market. The fatalistic thinking still persistent among the majority of Kasongan potters, only a few forward-thinking practitioners are willing to enter the era of global market competition. This group of forward-thinking practitioners, of course, must be equipped with management skills, and have the means of modern technology and communications, so that they can be involved in intensive communications through cyberspace. Generally, business units that have high production capacity have been using the modern means of communication intensively. They make use of information and telecommunications services, both for promotion, sales transactions and ordering. After the earthquake of 2006, Kasongan has risen from the worst socio-economic conditions. The post-earthquake success of Kasongan spread out further away from the centre of the tourist village to the eastern areas of the Bedogriver.

The surrounding nature and the social environment in the quiet but dynamic village of Kasongan also continued to create peace and harmony among the villagers. The nature and the traditional social environment is still well preserved, without refusing the opportunities to change. There is some adequate infrastructure development. For example, today it is easier to access the residential areas in Kasongan due to road development. One big change that cannot be missed in this village is the development of roads. In the 1970s, the village alleys were still very narrow, dirty, and dusty, now they are wider and asphalted. Kasongan has a village gate and a connecting bridge between the villages over the Bedog river. This makes it easy for all types of public transportation to access the production places, even in the residential areas of the village, away from the main road.

Entrance gate to Kasongan looks grandiose. It impresses with its shape, decoration, and color that is typical of ceramic crafts of Kasongan. This shows strong determination of the community and of the local government in promoting ceramic crafts products of Kasongan to the public outside of their own community. The shape of the gate is inspired by the gate of the Yogyakarta *keraton*. In addition, it pays respect to the memory of KyaiAbdulraupin with incorporation of a form that represents a dome of a mosque on the roof of the entry gate.

The gate consists of three entrances. The middle entrance is the main gate. It is large, wide and high so that big trucks can pass through it to pick up the containers with ceramic products. Both the right and left side entrances are smaller, narrower, and lower. These two entrances are pedestrian entrances. The three of

them represent one big gate that demonstrates the will of the people of Kasongan. The presence of this tourist village has an important impact on the social and economic lives of the communities in this area. It increases the incomes of the communities. This gate can be found easily by those who take Yogyakarta – Bantul highway. The gate in this context also becomes a pointer that makes it easy for visitors to find the ceramic craft industry centre of Kasongan.

Above the right and the left side entrance door, there is a horse-shaped ornament that is standing upright. The main gate pillars are decorated with the original flowerpots, which represent decorative ceramic products that were produced in the past by the many practitioners of Kasongan. On the main gate pillar, there are motifs of geometric shapes, those of *tumpal*(zigzag),<sup>9</sup> rhombus, antefix, and triangles that contain stylized foliage form, more similar to the form of mountain-like shape used in the ancient times and commonly applied to the walls of the temples. This list of ornaments used also includes the ornament of *kalpataru* or "tree of life" that was widely used as a decorative element on the pillars of the Mataram *keraton* and of the Mataram cemeteries during the era of the Islamic Mataram dynasty. Shape of mountain, temple, antefix, kalpataru, and the banyan tree used in decoration contain profound philosophical meaning associated with the water of life. Banyan tree has the ability to store the amount of water twelve times higher than that of the other tree species given they have the same size of the trunk. Therefore, this tree is considered a sacred tree, the tree of life or the tree that keeps the water of life.

The complex design of the entrance gate shows the love of the Kasongan community towards their craft. The horse was often replicated by the ceramic crafters of Kasongan in the 1980s. This horse became a major ornament for this gate. Several decades ago, this form was very popular and characteristic of the Kasongan ceramic crafts products. The horse figure was certainly inspired by the historical events in connection to the killing of the saddle horse belonging to the Dutch officer in the rice fields (BabadDipanegara, 1831). They immortalized this object in their craft as a toy, piggy bank, and a decoration. This is why it also became a decorative element of this entrance gate. It must also be known that in the past many potters used a horse for transporting their merchandise. This was another reason for the creation of such a form of decorative ceramics produced by many Kasongan ceramics artisans.

On the left side of the entrance gate there is a group of *ojek* or motorcycle taxists who are ready to take tourists into the area for a visit. Group of these *ojeks* is well organized, so, the service runs smoothly. The fact that the local transportation is organised well shows the extent of the effect that tourism development has on the village. Although, we need to realize that tourists who come to Kasongan generally bring their own vehicles. The existence of *ojeks* who are ready to serve the tourists is one of the notable public services available in this area. Of course, they require a fee for services commensurate with a mileage and locations to be visited.

In the right corner of the gate, we can see a signpost that is put in between the two supporting pillars, with a *brunjung* roof on top like in *ajoglo*<sup>10</sup> house, completed with *molo*(crown decoration of a joglo house roof) decorated with typical Kasongan ceramic craft art. The supporting pillars were also given a signpost stylized in the form of *ketupat*,<sup>11</sup> carved, and polished with green color. The colour reminds the Mataraman decorative art style that was widely used in building the Yogyakarta *keraton*. The shape of the ornament *tumpal* (zigzag-shaped ornament used in batik motif) in green color became a distinctive style of Mataraman decorative art. This demonstrates that the ornament on the entrance gate is full of meanings supported by the use of this soothing green color. Unfortunately, there are also many modern banners and posters hanging around taking away the impression of the beauty of the gate.

Infrastructure in the area was developed further. The main street of the village is wide, asphalted, so the inter-village transport runs smoothly. Two times or more times a week, the streets of this tourist village is mainly occupied by container trucks, truck-hauls and small cars transporting ceramic craft products outside the region or for export. The arrival of container trucks and other trucks is a sign of the dynamic life of Kasongan ceramic crafters and indicates that their socio-economic situation is improving. Today, youths from the village continue their studies to higher levels of education. There are more and more university-educated youths. This fact, once again, reflects the fact that the level of welfare of these communities is rising.

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<sup>9</sup>This is often used as a border design on the edge of a *sarong*

<sup>10</sup>Traditional Javanese house.

<sup>11</sup>Traditional food from rice cooked in a coconut leaf that has a rhombic shape.

Five-hundred meters further from the entrance gate we find a large banyan tree standing tall right in the middle of the road junction. Approximately five hundred meters further on there is a magnificent, strong, and wide bridge that can be passed through by trucks transporting containers of ceramic craft products. This bridge was built as a means of connecting Kasongan with outsiders. Better infrastructure provides more convenience for people who want to visit it. This bridge crosses over the Bedogriver. Bedogriver since long was useful both for production of the pottery and for fishing. Bedogriver provides material that aids in pottery-making, such as the fine sand that originates from the lava flood of Mount Merapi brought downstream. In the past, this fine sand was highly needed by the artisans as a major ingredient to mix with clay because it contains a volcanic alluvial that is very good for mixing clay. This mixture of sand forms pores in the pottery body that helps the process of drying and low temperature firing. The fire in the kiln was produced by burning dry leaves or straws.

The bridge that was built across the Bedogriver can be considered to be a sign of the growing development of this tourism village. It marks that the village has entered the industrial era and the era of commoditization. Kasongan crafts centre offers a range of commodity products to tourists. This connecting bridge plays an important role as a key means through which the trucks transporting containers of Kasongan pottery move toward the outside, bigger markets. And, it is not only the container trucks that pass through this bridge, but also smaller traders who carry their merchandise on their bicycles to the close-by buyers, traditional markets or traditional shops in nearby towns.

If we drive westward across the bridge, we end up in the village of Kasongan. If we continue on up to three kilometers westward, the person will reach the *kelurahan* Bangunjiwa, right at the northeast corner of the intersection. At this intersection, there is an inlay leather crafts centre that makes leather wayang prototypes, with the shop of a famous artisan named Sagio. Because of his expertise, Sagio was appointed as the courtier of the Yogyakarta *keraton*. Sagio lives in the village of Gendeng. Not far from his studio, there is a studio of inlay leather decoration in the house of a Fine Arts professor named Sunarto.

The Kasongan pottery of *keren* (small stove), *anglo* (big stove), piggy bank, and flowerpots are sold around or deposited into shops selling pottery items in urban areas. It is often women who do this. Historically, Kasongan potters were mostly women. Then later on, men started to dominate this craft and at this very transition time, the production practices started to change. The main street became filled with pottery stalls and shops, art shops, art galleries of ceramics crafts. Rows of shops and pottery art galleries offered souvenirs to tourists. These developments also encouraged the growth of new, creative and innovative designs, leading to more demand for the ceramic crafts of Kasongan.

Further, the design and the typology of products changed. The crafters now produce not only kitchen appliances but also decorative objects. All of this led to further socio-economic and behavioural changes, in part due to the ever increasing demand. One of the impacts of this we can see in the residential neighbourhoods. There are new modern houses being built. They often function as living quarters, a workshop studio and a shop.

Now, ceramics crafts centre of Kasongan have entered the era of globalization, so the stores of ceramic crafts are spacious, built with new, creative and innovative designs. The new creations are worthy to be offered to both domestic and foreign consumers. Nevertheless, the sign system in the tourist village of Kasongan is still inadequate. Although the sign system is required in order for tourists to be able to locate themselves easily. The tourists would also be able to enter the production units that are inside the village, away from the main road. Besides this, there are too many banners, ads, and posters that are scattered around the area, thereby creating less pleasant outlook and disturbing the surrounding beauty. Therefore, public awareness needs to be raised to address some of these shortcomings.

### **3.3. The creative process and product development in Kasongan**

During the Java War (1825-1830), the crafters in Kasongan played a dual role, namely as craftsmen and as frontline soldiers in facing the enemy attack. This community, according to Raffles, produced '*perbot*' or *pottenbakkens-Wiel*, i.e. household appliances such as kitchen utensils (Raffles, 1817:165), which is made of clay and then burned at a low temperature. Pottery products were on demand among the wider community, both living in rural and urban areas. They produced pottery products of *kendhil*(pot for cooking rice), *kuwali*(pot for cooking vegetables), *cowek*(plate), *jun*(water carrier), *genthong*(big vase for keeping water, in a bathroom or kitchen), *anglo*(stove for cooking with coal), *keren* (stove for cooking with firewood),

flower pots, and *plempem*(sewerage pipes). *Anglo* and *keren* were very popular with the Dutch families as kitchen appliances for cooking because they can reduce air pollution and are fuel efficient. Vases were very popular because they could be used to beautify the residential environment. At that time, the crafters sold their products by going around the residential areas, including those of the Dutch.

The conditions of crafters were concerning, because their income was very small and there was no progress. The crafters lived in Kasongan that was arid, remote, and isolated, a rural area that was away from the city of the king. Their income solely depended on pottery. Social reality and living conditions changed after Indonesia's independence, although the changes were happening slowly. In 1931, the data shows that there was a crafter named Kijembuk who started to develop his products in the form of toys for kids, including toys shaped as whistles and piggy banks. Whistles were in the shape of a bird, while the piggy bank were in the shape of elephants and horses. At that time the artisan already started decorating their products with white and black finishing and with gold and silver prada.

The gold and silver pradadye were originally used for metal coating, as it was commonly applied to the chandeliers imported from England. As it is known, Indonesia was colonised by the British for eleven years (1900-1911). Thus, many household products made of metal (iron) were imported from England. In fact, the essence of a pradadye was already long known to the people here, because it was a common painting technique applied in the dyeing process of the shadow puppet prototypes. This prada color was also used to polish pottery toy products.

In 1950, the government paid bigger attention to Kasongan pottery. At that time the term pottery was replaced with craft, following the usage of the term in the name of the Department of Arts, Crafts and Carpentry at the Indonesian Fine Arts Academy (ASRI) in Yogyakarta. The Organisation of Economy, Trade and Industry of Indonesia under the auspices of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Indonesia conducted a training on design of ceramic crafts industry. The outcome of their training was exhibited at the Jefferson Library in 1961, and two year later enlivened the international exhibition in Washington DC, USA. The exhibition was organised with the help of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Republic of Indonesia and with the involvement of an artist named Widayat from the Indonesian Fine Arts Academy (ASRI)(Kiln Club of Washington DC, 1963). He was the one who gave a new design guidance to the crafters, after he learned the art of ceramics in Japan. At that time there was a change of the usage of the term "kundhi" which turned into "pengrajin," which in Indonesian spelling changed to *perajin*, all meaning crafter. The activity started to be called craft. Now the work of practitioners of Kasongan is better known as ceramic crafts art

The state of pottery crafts art drew attention of a senior artist Saptohoedoyo, who was also a lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts of Indonesia (ASRI) in Yogyakarta, and of an observer EtyLarasatiSuliantoroSulaiman, a lecturer and director of the Academy of Agriculture in Yogyakarta. They conducted some coaching for potters of Kasongan. In 1976, several outstanding craftsmen trained by Saptohoedoyo, namely crafters Ngadiyo, Panjul, and Boangcreated a model of an archaic boat sculpture with a person on its bow. The result was impressive. Other potters who were under the guidance of EtyLarasatiSuliantoroSulaiman made flower pots that is used for keeping *janur*(young coconut leaves) that are used in traditional Javanese weddings or other traditional rituals.

Until 1985, Kasongan was still isolated, with a dusty village road, not paved, but there was already a narrow bridge. In the whole village, there were no signs of significant changes happening. Meanwhile, all the efforts and research projects were being conducted by experts and specialists as well as related institutions. Many experts published their written works on ceramic art of Kasongan. They also provided guidance on improving the material processing, design development, technological development, and marketing of their works in a variety of forums, both through research and community service, seminars, workshops, and training.

Related institutions were also increasingly implementing development programs so that the remote Kasongan would be more widely known and more developed. Village roads were asphalted, ceramic art shops (artshop) started popping up on the side of the main road selling various kinds of decorative ceramic craft products. All of this eventually could lessen the difficulties of the Kasongan artisans. Interaction with the artists, scholars, experts, and arts students was increasing further bringing a positive influence in an effort to increase the revenues of these crafters (Pramono and BambangSoebeno, 1981). This increase became more apparent in 1988, because at this time Kasongan ceramic crafts products successfully



penetrated overseas markets, such as the United States, Japan, Germany, and Canada (Kedaulatan Rakyat, January 9, 1988).

The uniqueness of the original Kasongan ceramic crafts can be seen through the characteristic shapes derived from the values of local knowledge, so that the works carry a unique character. New innovations made by the practitioners of the ceramic crafts illustrate the level of creativity of the crafters powered by elaborate finishing. Production techniques and firing is already using a new method to improve the quality of products to meet the market demands. Nonetheless, the resulting ceramic artwork is still in the category of earthenware because it uses low-temperature firing technique, not yet using high temperatures. The firing is still done within the range of 600-900 degrees Celsius.

Ten years later, the changes in the ceramics arts centre of Kasongan were happening more dynamically. There were more and more educated citizens of Kasongan, earning both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Many native people of Kasongan continued their studies to more advanced levels at such education institutions as the Indonesian Art Institute Yogyakarta, Graduate School of GadjahMada University, Yogyakarta State University, and other universities. Many of them continued to cultivate expertise in ceramic crafts. In 2008, one of these young people named TimbulRaharjo earned his doctoral degree at the University of GadjahMada. In addition to working in the field of ceramic crafts business, he is also a lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Indonesian Art Institute in Yogyakarta. Today, TimbulRaharjo is a chairman of the Society of Kasongan Pottery. This society aims to help 540 Kasongan ceramic artisans.

After the earthquake of 2006, the village Kasongan has entered a new era, no longer as an isolated area in the interior, but it had turned into a centre for ceramic crafts industry, with trucks transporting the containers of ceramic products manufactured in Kasongan to the markets locally, nationally, and internationally. Kasongan has become one of the major tourist destinations of Yogyakarta with workshops and art shops that provide public services for recreation, education, and information. Kasongan is rich with a variety of products for the ceramic crafts, including souvenirs for tourists. Confidently, crafters of Kasongan show their capabilities by opening big art shops.

Modernization in Kasongan is like mental virus that spreads very quickly and that affects the joints of people's lives. The community that lived communally became individualistic. Having a personality is highly respected and is seen as an expression of self-identity. An individual in the arts is at the core of the struggle of the modern artists. The artists aim to have their own personality in their art. They often aim to find themselves, their own personality through their works. Every artist should have a personal style that is different from other artists. However, there is a tendency that poses this as a problem and this is starting to be rejected by many people, including the artists themselves.

Symptoms of modernization among the practitioners of Kasongan ceramics industry started with the initiatives of the Department of Industry and aimed to develop the art of pottery to a more advanced level. For that purpose, many pundits and experts conducted trainings and gave guidance, especially in regards to the development of the design that eventually led it leaving the traditional local style. Further, the idea of pushing forward the pottery art of Kasongan was being actively promoted. Manufacturing activities that initially concentrated on producing earthenware have progressed to adjust to consumers' demand. This progress can be seen more in the aftermath of 2006 earthquake. The ceramics industry expanded from its original location in the western bank of Bedogriver to the eastern banks of the river. Development of the industry is characterised with the existence of large workshops and art shops that are lined up on the main street of the village.

Despite these developments toward further commercialisation of ceramics industry and new opportunities that come with it, the young people in the community still do not show interest in the local craft and do not become ceramic artisans. They are more interested in pursuing other professions. For example, they are interested in manufacturing. Today, the statistics of Small and Medium Enterprise Organisation of Special Region of Yogyakarta (UKM DIY, Usaha Kecil Menengah Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta) from 2012, shows that the ceramic crafts industry is centred on four villages of the Bantul regency: Kasongan, Kajen, Bangunjiwo, Kasihan. There are as many as 592 business units, involving as many as 2475 crafters with an investment amount of 1,442 million dollars (Department of Industry, Trade Cooperatives and SMEs DIY Local Government, 2012). Small value of the investment is still likely to be increased if there is more coaching, especially, in the field of development, design, management, information systems and telecommunications

that is supported by good governance and the tourist management (this includes the availability of informative sign systems, for example).

Here are some examples of ceramic art made by the crafters in Kasongan. This is a traditional ceramic artwork mixed with elements of contemporary art.



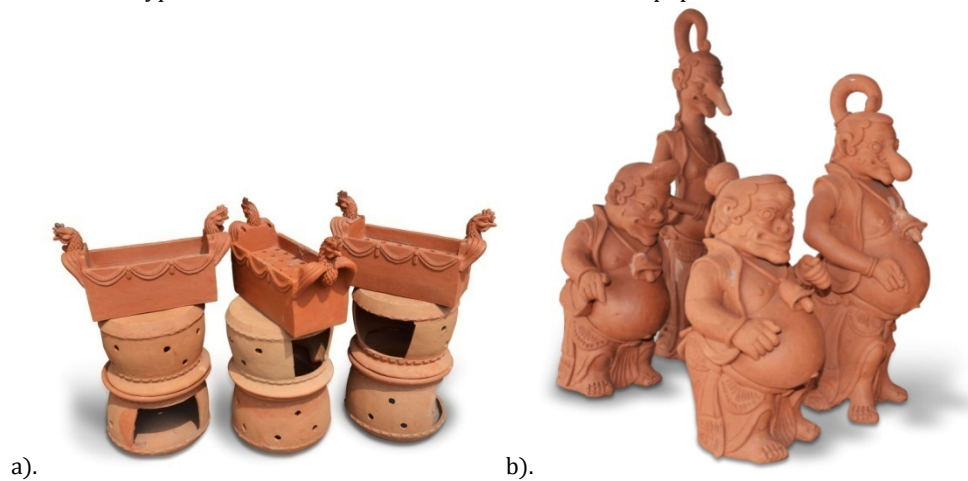
Photograph 1.

a& b: Ceramic artwork with a scaly dragon-shaped crown.

c: Ceramic horse equipped with a saddle and beautiful accessories.

d: Ceramic mythical bird, mounted by god Vishnu.

These three types of ceramic items are traditional that are still popular in the local market.



Photograph 2.

a: Ceramics in the form of *anglo* and *keren*.

This pottery represents traditional Javanese cooking utensils.

b: *Punokawan*-shaped ceramic (Semar, Gareng, Petruk, and Bagong, four courtier characters of the epic Mahabharata).



Photograph 3. Ceramic sculpture with a religious theme.



Photograph 4. Various forms of decorative ceramics for interior and exterior space in the showroom of Teguh Permono. The showroom was established in 2007. In addition to the local market, the ceramic works of Teguh are also exported to South Africa and Spain.



Photograph 5. New-style ceramic, work of Timbul Rahardjo.

Some of them are exported to the United States, the Netherlands, Germany, and Canada.

### **Conclusion**

The artisans of Kasongan passed on the pottery-making tradition from generation to generation for centuries. Therefore, Kasongan ceramic crafts practitioners have inherited instinctual expertise and skills in pottery-making. Until today, they still can earn a living as potters. In their work, they manage to combine the old and new values.

Artisans of traditional pottery still survive and have a separate market segment than can co-exist along with the creative and innovative products of export quality. There is a growing similarity between the traditional and the modern products. The peculiarity of ceramic art and the unique character of traditional pottery is being marginalized by modernity and is disappearing. The beauty of the physical form is being adapted to the tastes of the market.

Thus it can be said that the unique characteristics of original pottery of Kasongan is disappearing. This is due to the growing influence of the global market and the demands of standardization that come with it. Utilization of information and communication technology among the crafters is increasing. This, in its turn, contributes to the development of the ideas about the importance of standardization as a guarantee of a global consumer demand and security. Designs and new techniques then just aim to meet the market demand, product orientation, thus, is based solely on market tastes.

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