

Batik Indah

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Lombok Pottery Factsheet



The ancestors of the Sassaks came from the Hindu based empire of Java which flourished in the 14th century. Although nearly all Sassaks are now Muslims, their language and arts reflect their Hindu/Buddhist roots.

The wide range of pottery reflects the importance it holds in village life. Each type of pot has a specific form and name linked to its use within daily or seasonal life and religious celebration. The lives of the Sassaks are closely linked with the harvesting and planting of rice. Water is also of fundamental importance. There are specific pots for the collection, storage and serving of water, as well as vessels for pouring water. Rice storage jars are still made and used according to specific ritual requirements.

The pottery is made using clay dug locally. Greyish brown, the clay becomes a beautiful rich red brown colour when fired. The potters work the clay by hand, sometimes using a round stone and wooden paddle. Firing takes place as soon as the pots are dry. The pots are stacked in a pile with firewood, coconut husks etc. Once the fire is going well, the stack is covered with rice straw which burns out to leave a thick ash cover holding the heat for the final stages of firing. Some of the pots are burnished using a "slip" (a mixture of clay, water and plant extract) which is applied to the surface before firing and then compacted using obsidian stone or other small tools. When fired, this produces a beautiful sheen to the pot.

