The Uniqueness Form of Kendi from the Museum Collection

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ABSTRACT

In Southeast Asia, the Kendi is regarded as a type of traditional pottery. It can also be found in other
countries, such as Asia, and the Middle East, and some European nations. Despite this, its usage is
strongly related to Southeast Asia's culture. According to the study, although Kendi is no longer used in
society, it is still used for home decorating. Misunderstandings and confusion regarding its usage have
been caused by the word Kendi. In addition, younger generations may not be familiar with the type of
shape and use of Kendi due to various technological innovations, such as water filters. The research aims
to classify and identify the various characteristics of Kendi. In order to collect in-depth information,
qualitative research methods which include observation and interview, were used. As a result of this
research, it has become clear that Kendi comes in many forms. The shape of the Kendi, which is not only
focused on one shape such as the shape of the round body, makes it a unique artifact. This research helps
the community understand the value of art and Kendi, and it is hoped that various parties can do further
research on it. This is because the Kendi has a variety of unique shapes and looks to be studied. The
museum can also use this discovery for future research and knowledge. It is intended that future
academics examine the form of this Kendi in greater depth, not only on the motifs and forms but also on
the art of carving and the manner of creating Kendi found in Malaysia in particular.

Keywords: Kendi, Traditional pottery, Form, Characteristics

INTRODUCTION

People in Southeast Asia have used Kendi for a long time in rituals and everyday life. It is a well-known
type of vessel in this region. Gold, silver, or bronze are used to make the Kendi and its predecessor, the
Kundika. In sculpture and painting, the Kendi is often seen in the hands of the Hindu gods Brahma and
Shiva, Maitreya, the future Buddha, and the compassionate Avalokitesvara (in Mahayana Buddhism). It was used to hold holy water that had been blessed by the gods and collected from sacred rivers. It was used in the coronation ceremony of a king, who washed himself with the water as a symbol of being clean (Dawn, 2003).

Kendi is a Malay term that is derived from the Sanskrit name Kunda, which is derived from kundika. Some academicians believe that the term Kendi developed from the word Kundi, which in turn derived from the word kundika, which means "water vessel" (Phyo, 2011). It is well known that the spout and neck without the handle are the distinguishing features of kundika and kendi vessels. The kundika features an oval or pitcher-shaped body with a long, sharply pointed neck and a tiny hole in the center. The lengthy neck is separated by a circular flange that supports grasping (Dawn, 2003).

Kendi is used for a variety of ceremonial purposes and specific rites in addition to their primary function as containers for drinking water. The Kendi is a well-known vessel type in Southeast Asia, and it has played a vital part in the region's ceremonies and everyday life from ancient times (Dawn, 2003). The aim of this research is to determine the uniqueness of the form of the Kendi collection from the National Museum Malaysia, Islamic Art Museum Malaysia, and Museum of Asian Arts. In order to achieve the research objective of obtaining information, the study is guided by the following objectives, which are to identify and classify the characteristics of the form of Kendi.

This research will have significant implications for the country's development sector since a tourism product can attract a large number of visitors to a region, given that a product like the kendii is a tool used in daily life and would evoke memories of its use. Therefore, heritage artifacts such as kendii are a significant instrument for the tourism industry due to their distinctive appearance, which allows them to attract a large number of tourists and enhance the competitiveness of tourism sites (Mustaqin & Wahyuningsih, 2015).

Besides that, the goal of this study is also to help them in researching and understanding the significance of aesthetic quality in art, as well as the uniqueness of the Kendi form, in order to aid them in their future research and knowledge. Students will also gain a new understanding as a result of this investigation, particularly in regard to the form and function of the Kendi. This research may be utilized to learn more about the kendii, including its form, function, and motif, and to increase our understanding of it. The findings of this inquiry will be valuable to the museum unit as a source of information for future investigations.

This study has two limitations, one of which is a lack of previous research on the subject. There have not been many studies done on Kendi by prior scholars. This is because research is currently concentrated on pottery such as Labu Sayong and Terenang. Furthermore, the lack of Malaysian Kendi makers is a weakness of this study. This is because there are no Kendi makers, making it difficult for researchers to identify Kendi with distinct characteristics, particularly in Malaysia. Kendi manufacturing could not continue due to a lack of Kendi makers in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been several studies in the past that have addressed the early history of the appearance of Kendi in Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia. The prior study that was utilized in this part is about the views of previous researchers on topics linked to the form of Kendi and its motif, as well as the role of the usage of the Kendi in everyday life, religion, and ceremonial settings.

Historical Background

For thousands of years, Kendi have been made and sold extensively across Southeast Asia. Despite the fact that Kendi was first created in China during the Tang Dynasty (618-906 CE), it was mostly
exports from Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam that became significant producers (Karen Loh, 2019). There is no known date or location of origin for Kendi's creation. There have been discoveries of ancient, spouted beakers in southern Europe, West Asia, Central Asia, North India, North China, and Japan, leading some to speculate that Kendi may have originated in one of these places. West or South Asia is usually considered to be the most likely source of origin, in part because of linguistic similarities between West and South Asia and Southeast Asia (Khoo, 1991). The widespread usage of the Kendi in contemporary South-East Asia shows that it has been around for a long time. Despite the fact that archaeological evidence for the early era exists, as well as scientific data for the first appearance of the Kendi on the island part of the area, the evidence is too fragmented to build a chronological framework.

The Kendi is believed to be used only in Indonesia and to have only been introduced to Europe as private property after being discovered there. The fact that the Kendi occurs often in Dutch paintings from the seventeenth century demonstrates the item's appeal at the time as an exotic thing from the Orient (Adhyatman, 1987). Kendi is known by several different names in Indonesia, depending on the location or culture in which it is found. It is referred to as Kundi, Gundi, or Kamandalu in Java. On the Indonesian island of Lombok, it is referred to as Ceret or Cerubuk. South Sulawesi is referred to as Busu, Aceh is referred to as Geupet Bahlaboh, and Lampung is referred to as Hibu. However, in Indonesian, the jug is referred to as Kendi (Winata, 2019).

Pottery is available in a number of forms in addition to its traditional shape, which is characterized by a circular body section and a long, high neck. In addition, there is pottery with a nozzle (spout) that is formed like a glass of milk. Kendi is the name used in ceramic (pottery) terminology to describe pottery that has this form.

When pottery was created, it is likely that the artist had certain goals in mind. The significance of Malay pottery in the history of pottery production in the eastern nations may be traced back to the 16th century. A source of inspiration for the country's pottery manufacturers and makers, this Malay pottery has been around for centuries. This has been self-certified by archaeologists from the Chinese government, who claim that the Kendi were alien to the Chinese people living in China at the time of their discovery. The Kendi that is created is tailored specifically to fulfill the needs of the Malay people across the archipelago (Othman, 1981).

Forms of Kendi

The Kendi's form has changed significantly throughout the ages, but it has always had a more or less spherical body, a straight neck, and a spout situated at an angle on the shoulder with no handle, regardless of the period (White, 2018). The Kendi seems to have been created with the intention of being held at a precise height in order to allow water to be poured into the mouth. The bottle is filled from the neck and held by the neck, and the water is sipped from the spout of the bottle (White, 2018). Kendis are available in two variations: plain and patterned. The form may be either masculine or female in appearance, with the male form having an angular shape with square shoulders and the feminine form being round in appearance. When it came to particular uses of the forms, there was no tradition that specified how they should be utilized (Loh, 2019).

Kendi has a circular body, a straight neck, and a mouth that resembles a bottle. The Kendi is distinguished by a spout situated at an angle on the shoulder and the lack of a handle. The Kendi may have originated as a metal shape since the junctures of the neck and spout at acute angles to the body are metallic traits (Mendoza, 2014). The shape of the Kendi may be determined by specifying the proportions of certain sections (anatomy of the form). From an anthropological or archaeological standpoint, the Kendi contains at least three significant anatomical components: the orifice, the body, and the base. From an aesthetic standpoint, the container often comprises the lip or mouth, neck, shoulder, belly, and base or foot. In addition, some shapes feature the head, throat, spout, handle, or waist, which may be described in further detail (Winata, 2019).
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The investigation was carried out using a descriptive qualitative methodology through fieldwork in the form of interviews and observational studies, as well as collecting research. This investigation makes use of a qualitative descriptive technique in conjunction with a cultural perspective. Fieldwork in the form of interviews with curators, specialists on Kendi, and collection studies are among the activities that are included in this investigation. The process of collecting data starts with an overview of research, investigation, information retrieval, and documentation, as well as a comprehension of the aims of the study. Data were gathered via official interviews, photos, and video recordings in addition to observations and site visits. Field research in the form of observational interviews with curators and other professionals who are knowledgeable about Kendi and collection studies was carried out in Kuala Lumpur. The National Museum of Malaysia, Museum Department of Malaysia, Museum of Asian Art, Universiti Malaya (UM), and Islamic Art Museum Malaysia are among the institutions that were explored during this research. The appropriate museum curators were the subjects of the interviews that were carried out.

![Research Framework](https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/ijad/index)

Figure 1: Research Framework
FINDINGS

The findings of the investigation are summarized and displayed in table format in the report. In addition, a discussion of the findings is provided to investigate the solutions to the study issues. Most of the information comes from a collection of 13 Kendi that are housed in three different museums in Malaysia: the National Museum, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, and the Museum of Asian Art. There are only five Kendi selected for this journal. The purpose of the study is to identify and classify the characteristics of the different forms of Kendi that have been responded to. Interviews, observations, the internet, and various printed materials such as books, papers, and journals were used to collect primary and secondary data, respectively. The data was acquired from these various sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kendi</th>
<th>Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. This Kendi’s handle has a long and wide curved design that resembles a bridge connecting two points.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. This Kendi’s lid is shaped like a mosque dome. Because this Kendi is from Malaysia, it's probable that the lid was taken from the dome of a mosque, which is a place of prayer for Muslims.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. This Kendi's spout is designed like a bird's beak. A bird with a tapering beak is used as a model for a Kendi spout. Birds are also associated with the archipelago, like pigeons, which served as messengers in ancient times.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. This Kendi’s body is shaped like a semicircle.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E. This Kendi’s base is quite broad, like a bowl.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. The Form of Kendi

Figure 1: Kendi 1
(Source: Kendi 1 is from National Museum Malaysia)
| Figure 2: Kendi 2  
(Source: Kendi 2 is from Islamic Art Museum Malaysia) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. This <em>Kendi</em> 2 features a cover that is formed in two different ways: one like a leaf, and the other like a pea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. This <em>Kendi</em>’s spout is shaped like a circle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. This <em>Kendi</em>’s neck resembles a little bamboo tree. Bamboo became popular in ancient times when it was used to make rafts and house poles. As a result, the shape of the <em>Kendi</em> neck is inspired by the appearance of a significant shape in Malay society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The <em>Kendi</em>’s body has the form of a spherical cushion and is ribbed flat. The ribbed body form is in the shape of a pumpkin, or a kind of sour fruit known to the Malays as <em>Asam Gelugur</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. This <em>Kendi</em>’s base has a base that is shaped like a wide base.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Figure 3: Kendi 3  
(Source: Kendi 3 is from Islamic Art Museum Malaysia) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. This <em>Kendi</em> has a bird-shaped lid and a wider mouth shape.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. This <em>Kendi</em> is lengthened and has a tiny dent neck for easy hold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The <em>Kendi</em> spout is designed to resemble the mythological bird Garuda. The eagle is a source of pride for the Indonesian community since it contributes to the country's harmony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. This <em>Kendi</em> has a body that is shaped like a boat. It is because this <em>Kendi</em> was used in the era of trade, making the shape of the body of this <em>Kendi</em> resemble a boat used during sailing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. This <em>Kendi</em> has four legs in the form of a zoomorphic animal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A. This *Kendi* has a portion that resembles an open hat at its mouth.

B. The *Kendi* has a narrow neck for easy holding.

C. This *Kendi* has a mammiform spout, which means that its shape is similar to that of a woman's breasts when seen from above.

D. This *Kendi* has a body in the form of a pear.

E. This *Kendi* has a small concave shape base.

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A. This *Kendi's* mouth area has the appearance of being somewhat tapered and expands as it moves lower, taking the form of a cap.

B. This *Kendi* has a neck form that is characterized by a high baluster and a broad collar that is attached to it.

C. This *Kendi* appears to have a spout in the shape of a bulbous, ringed spout.

D. This *Kendi* has a body that is shaped like a "flying saucer," and the waist of the *Kendi* is angular.

E. This *Kendi* has a tiny concave base form.
Classifying the Characteristic of form of Kendi

Table 2. The Characteristic of Kendi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Kendi</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Handle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>National Museum Malaysia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kendi 1</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kendi 2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kendi 3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Museum of Asian Art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kendi 4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kendi 5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the results of identifying and classifying the characteristics of Kendi through the three museums, it can be observed that the Kendi in the National Museum of Malaysia has all of the characteristics linked to Kendi, with the exception of the neck. Although there is not a Kendi at the Islamic Art Museum Malaysia that has a handle, there are two Kendi that have a lid, two Kendi that have a spout, one Kendi that has a mouth, and two Kendi that have a neck, body, and base or foot. At the Museum of Asian Art at the University of Malaya, there are two Kendi that have a spout, mouth, necks, bodies, and base or feet.

CONCLUSION

The chosen Kendi have several shape features, including a handle, lid, mouth, neck, spout, body, and base or foot, as determined by the find. Depending on how each pitcher is made, it has a unique set of features and shapes. Because it is the most prominent aspect of the Kendi, the shape is often depicted on the body and spout. The specialty of the Kendi makes it a Malay heritage that must be protected. In Malay culture, Kendi is frequently used as a tool for daily use or ceremonies, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia. This is due to the fact that it has historically been a significant instrument that has been utilized by this civilization. It should not be forgotten, and it is to be utilized frequently so that younger generations will not forget how to use it properly. The aesthetic value of the Kendi is frequently connected with an underlying meaning that serves as a description of societal philosophy, values, beliefs, ideals, and even standards.
The cultural inheritance that serves as the foundation for today's generation's lives should be treasured and respected. Those who are aware that Kendi exists will have a greater appreciation for its function, as opposed to viewing it merely as an exhibit in the museum by itself. Crafts such as making Kendi like this one deserve to be preserved and brought to the attention of the general public by a number of different groups. In addition, it is impossible to protect this history without first achieving a deeper level of comprehension. Because there are not many people in Malaysia who create Kendi, the existence of Kendi in the country is not widely known. It should be the obligation of the party responsible to enhance the number of experts in the creation of the Kendi in order to ensure that they are not lost to history throughout the course of time. It is recommended that the study of the Kendi be expanded throughout Malaysia in order to gain a deeper understanding of the appearance of the Kendi, that are not only in museum collections but also in the hands of individuals, so that this history is not lost.

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REFERENCES


