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## BHUTAN STANDARD

### SPECIFICATIONS AND PROCESS OF MAKING BANGCHUNG (BAMBOO BOWL)



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## Contents

FOREWORD .....	iv
1 Scope .....	1
2 Normative References .....	1
3 Terms and Definition .....	2
4 Raw materials .....	3
5 Composition of Bangchung .....	4
6 Stages of making .....	4
6.1 Harvesting .....	4
6.2 Splitting .....	4
6.3 Treatment .....	4
6.4 Seasoning .....	4
6.5 Stripping .....	4
6.6 Smoothing .....	5
6.7 Dyeing .....	5
6.8 Weaving .....	5
6.9 Finishing Touch .....	5
7 Type and sizes .....	6
8 Patterns .....	6
8.1 Motifs .....	7
9 Test .....	8
9.1 Physical test .....	8
10 Tools .....	8
11 Diagram .....	9
INFORMATIVE .....	10
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	11

## **FOREWORD**

This Bhutan Standard for Specifications and process of making Bangchung (Bamboo Bowl) was drafted by Textile Working Group and adopted by Bhutan Standards Bureau after the draft finalized by the Textile Technical Committee TC 06 and approved by the Bhutan Standards Bureau Board (BSB Board) in June 2021.

This standard is subject to systematic review after five years to keep pace with the market trends, industrial and technological developments. Any suggestions and further information may be directed to the concerned Technical Committee.

## BHUTAN STANDARD FOR SPECIFICATIONS AND PROCESS OF MAKING BANGCHUNG (BAMBOO BOWL)

This standard prescribes the process of Bangchung making. It covers the detailed specification of requirements, procedures and raw materials used in Bangchung making carried out by the Craftsperson.

No normative references are cited.

### **3 Terms and Definition**

For the purpose of this standard, the following definitions shall apply.

- 3.1 Bangchung: Pair of spherical shaped hand woven bowl made from thin and slender Bamboo. It consists of two pieces, lid and the base. Both lid and base have two layers each where outer layer is made from dyed bamboo strips known as chishab. The inner layer is made from natural bamboo strips known as Nangshab.
- 3.2 Chisab: Outer layer of the Bangchung.
- 3.3 Nangshab: Inner layer of the Bangchung
- 3.4 Shatha: Thin piece of leather attached to the Chishab of the lid.
- 3.5 Shi/Tsa/Zhou: Smoothened strips made from bamboo splits.
- 3.6 Tsharzo: Craft of making cane and bamboo products
- 3.7 Yula: Climbing bamboo species with smooth and flexible culms with long shiny internodes found in warm broadleaf forests.



## 4 Raw Materials

Sl/No.	Local Name	English name	Scientific name	Function
1	Yula/Ringshoo		Neomicro calamusandropogonifolius	Used for making main weave
2	Zhushing		Bambusa	Used for making main weave
3	Zhang		Dendrocalamussikkimensis	Used for making main weave
4	Sokshing/So		Dendrocalamushamiltonii	Used for making main weave
5	Munji/Menji	Cane	Calamusacanthospathus	Mainly used for making stitching thread but also used for making rims
6	Gri	Cane	CalamusLatifolius	Used for making rims
7	Yongka/Jung	Turmeric	Curcuma Longa	Used for dyeing
8	Khomang Chup	Sweetening quince	ChaenomelesLagenaria	Used as mordant in dyeing
9	Tshosar	Dye powder	NA	Used for coloring
10	Khempa	Mugwort	Artemisia vulgaris	Used for insects treatment
11	Tsa	Salt	Sodium Chloride	Used for insects treatment

## Note:

- Artisan prefer to use Yula species for its elasticity, soft nature and easy to weave compared to other species of bamboo which are stiff.
- The Zhushing, Zhang and Sokshing/So are generally referred as Pakshing.

## **5 Composition of Bangchung**

5.1 The main weave = 80% Yula/Pakshing

5.2 The rim = 10% Gri

5.3 The thread used for joining the main weave with the rim is = 10% Munji/Menji

## **6 Stages of Making**

### **6.1 Harvesting**

6.1.1 Culms free from pest are harvested from the forest. The extreme top and bottom lengths are chopped off according to desired sizes, then bundled and carried to production center/homes.

### **6.2 Splitting**

6.2.1 Bamboo culms are split and inner white layer are removed. For ease of working, drying faster and for using the raw material in future, splitting and stripping the inner white layer has to be carried out when the bamboo culms are green.

### **6.3 Treatment**

6.3.1 Yula

6.3.1.1 While using Yula, only the inner layer (NangShab) strips are treated in boiling water to tan the strips which gives better presentation of the finished products.

6.3.1.2 While using other species, both the inner and outer layer of the strips has to be treated with salt or Artemisia(Khempa) solutions for following reasons:

- i. To protect the product from damage caused by insects.
- ii. To make the strips smooth for easy weaving.
- iii. To get more strips and less wastage.
- iv. To avoid moist and keep product free from fungus.

Note:

- a. The amount of salt for the solutions needs to be maintained. Usually one tbsp of salt is enough for 5-6 liters of water where approximately 3-4 kg of bamboo strips can be treated. A slight increase in the quantity of salt can deteriorate the quality of the strips.
- b. For the treatment of 5 kg of bamboo strips, usually 3 kg of chopped Artemisia is used in 5-6 liters of water.
- c. The bamboo strips have to be boiled in water for approximately 15- 20 minutes. When the bamboo strip is boiled, the color of the bamboo strips will turn from green to yellow, which indicates the treatment is completed.

### **6.4 Seasoning**

6.4.1 After the treatment process, the split bamboos has to be dried (sun/air) properly for 4-5 days and the bamboo splits has to be kept away from rain and water to have good quality strips.

### **6.5 Stripping**

6.5.1 After the seasoning process, thin strips are made from bamboo split. The ones with finer splits are kept for weaving the outer layer (Chishab) and broader splits are used for weaving the inner layers (NangShab).

## 6.6 Smoothening

6.6.1 The strips are further smoothened by rubbing with the help of small knife for several times over the strips.

## 6.7 Dyeing

6.7.1 Smoothened bamboo strips are dyed to make the outer layer of the Bangchung colorful. There are two types of dyeing method, Tshoning and Tshosar. In Tshoning method, turmeric treatment is given to the smoothened strips to have vibrant colors and then over dyed with Tshosar( dye powder). In Tshosar method, the smoothened strips are directly dyed with Tshosar powder. The colors dyed are red, blue, green & yellow using Tshosar (imported dye powder).

6.7.2 Following are the dyeing process:

- i. The bamboo strips are boiled in turmeric and KhomangChup solution for maximum of 1 hour to get yellow color, the base dye.
- ii. Yellow dyed strips are then dried thinly in shade for 1-2 days.
- iii. The yellow colored strips are then soaked and boiled into individual dye solution of red, green, black & blue for an hour.
- iv. Wash the dyed strips in cold water to remove the excess dye from the strips.
- v. The dyed strips are dried thinly in the shade for 1-2 days.

## 6.8 Weaving

6.8.1 After the strips are completely dried, then the pattern of the Bangchungis designed using dyed strips.

6.8.2 Weave the outer layer of Bangchung with the dyed strips and weaves the inner layer of the Bangchung with the natural color strips.

6.8.3 After completion of both the outer and inner weaves, the extra strips need to be aligned and trimmed.

6.8.4 Both the weaves are folded together to make a spherical shape using an arched circular cane strip(made from Gri), in a process the rim of Bangchung is formed.

6.8.5 Smaller thread made from fine cane strips of Munji/Menji are used for joining the inner & outer weave with the rim forming Bangchung.

6.8.6 Thin piece of leather is attached to the Chishab of the lid, which assist in opening.

## 6.9 Finishing touch

6.9.1 Excess frame on woven Bangchungsare cut off the seam by tying the frames on inner and outer sides. The fine bamboo hairs are burned lightly to maintain the smoothness of the Bangchung.

Note:

- a. The lid rim should be left relatively smaller in size to fit the base rim.

## **7 Type and sizes**

There are four types of Bangchung. It is categorized depending upon different sizes;

- i. Bhathra: The smallest sized Bangchung used to store accessories. The size ranges from 5 to 6 inches in diameter.
- ii. Nyikema: Nyikema means two share of a men's meal. It is the medium sized Bangchung traditionally used for serving rice. This is popularly used Bangchung in the country compared to other types. The size ranges from 8 to 9 inches in diameter.
- iii. Matrangma /Bangtra /Tangkama: Is double size of Nyikema and traditionally used for packing food for more people and at the same time it is also used for carrying food items for community gatherings. The size ranges from 12 to 13 inches in diameter.
- iv. Dhagangma: Dha means arrow and Gangma means full, which literally translates to a Bangchung that has a diameter equivalent to the length of an arrow used in performing rituals known as Tshedhar. Traditionally, it was used to store grains, Tshedhar and other valuables after the religious rituals. The size ranges from 24 to 25 inches in diameter.

## **8 Patterns**

The pattern of Bangchung is determined by the number of colors used, more the number of colors more the intricate. The combinations are as follows:

- i. Karchang: It is a single color, usually natural bamboo color.
- ii. Machang: It is a combination of two colors except white. The common combinations are yellow & red and yellow & green.
- iii. Takthrachema: It is a combination of natural bamboo color and red color.
- iv. Ngasumpa: It is a combination of three colors, which has to be included white color towards the end of the weave.
- v. Ngazhipa: It is a combination of four colors.

## 8.1 Motifs

8.1.1 JadramMeto: The symbol of cross with simple motifs surrounding the cross.

8.1.2 Yuruchema: Is an endless knot symbol signifying absolute stability.

8.1.3 Dorjimetho: Is a thunderbolt symbol signifying stability.

8.1.4 TenkhebMeto: Is an inspiration from the patch work. Fabrics with this motifs are used in altar of Buddhist home.

8.1.5 PherangMeto: Literally means spreading motif. This is the first or basic motif learned while learning the Bangchung weaving skills.

8.1.6 DorjiZhikorMeto: Thunderbolt motif surrounded by small motifs.

8.1.7 DorjiJadramMeto: Is a double crossed thunderbolt motifs.

8.1.8 Jab Meto: Motifs that supports other motifs to stay intact. Woven in between the main motifs



Fig: 1 JadramMeto



Fig:2YuruChema



Fig:3Dorji Meto



Fig:4 TenkhebMeto



Fig: 5 PherangMeto



Fig: 6 DorjiZhikorMeto



Fig: 7 DorjiJadramMeto



Fig:8 Jab Meto

## **9 Test**

### **9.1 Physical test**

#### **9.1.1 Quality of the weave**

- i. The finer the strips better the quality and broader the strips inferior the quality.
- ii. The stitch joining the rims and bamboo weave should be strong and well finished.

#### **9.1.2 Number of color used in the weave**

More the number of colors in the weave the product are considered intricate and better.

#### **9.1.3 Examination of color**

The color fastness of the Bangchung is examined.

#### **9.1.4 Fitting of lid to the base**

- 9.1.5 Verify whether the product is affected by insects by hitting the finished product on the solid objects.  
If it is affected then the frass will fall from the product. Generally, small holes made by insects are seen on the rims of the Bangchung if it is affected.

## **10 Tools**

10.1 Patang: Knife used for cutting bamboo culms from forest.

10.2 Dozom/Gi: Daggers and knives used for splitting, stripping & smoothening of bamboo strips.

10.3 Nung: Is handmade needle specially designed to stitch the bamboo weave and the rim.

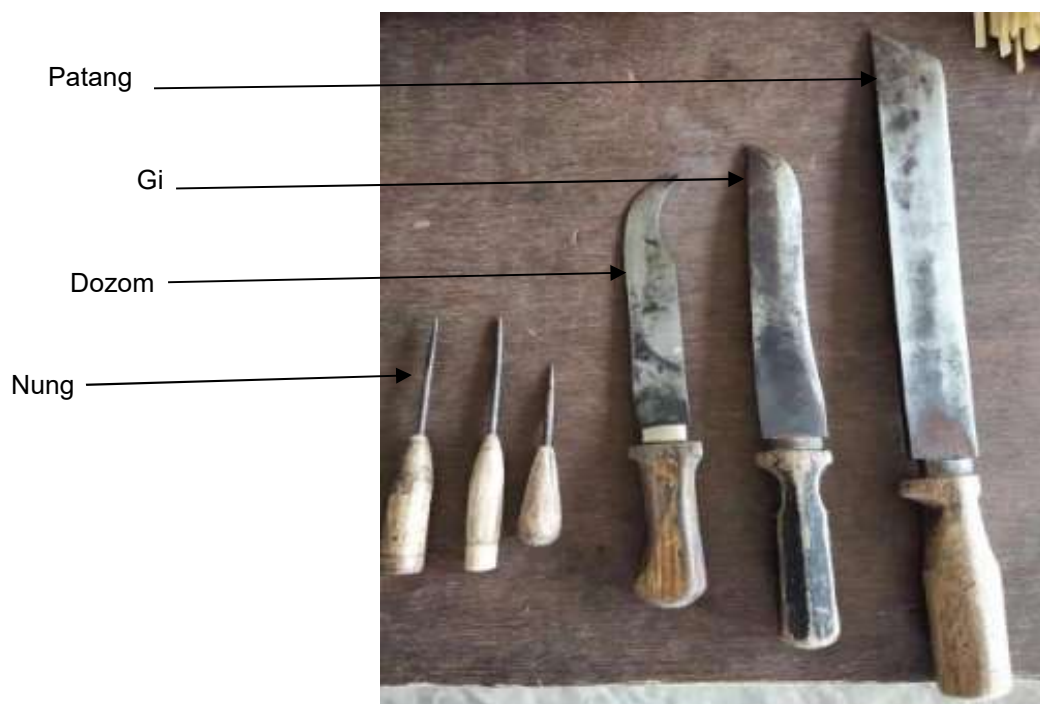


Fig: 9 Tool sets

11 Diagram



**(INFORMATIVE)**

- 1) The annual harvesting period starts from November to May.
- 2) The communities producing Bangchung in the country are Bjoka, Nangla Gewog under Zhemgang Dzongkhag, Silambi & Gongdu Gewog under Mongar Dzongkhag and Kangpara Gewog under Tashigang Dzongkhag.



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