



Solapith

Introduction

Nature has always been one better on man. Compare "Sholapith" the core of a plant (*Aeschynomene Aspere*) that grows wild in wet marshlands of Bengal and Assam, Orissa and Deccan and the artificial "thermocole" produced in a laboratory. In fact, in malleability, in texture, in its luster and sponginess, in its ability to turn into "light as air" beautiful ornamentation - thermocole just does not come close to "Sholapith". "Sholapith" work is every uniquely of Bengal.

The Craftsmen or 'malakars' work with their special iron knives or 'kath' to fashion intricate objects out of it and people decorate their house, temple with those items on the occasion of marriage ceremony, religious function and other festivals. During the celebration of local festivals like Kati Puja, Manasha Puja, Charak Puja, Bash Puja and many more, deities are made of "kuhila" and the painted mask made from the Kuhila are worn Crowns (locally known as "Topor") made of these are worn by both bride and groom during the marriage ceremony of Bengali/Raj- Bongshhi community.



Decorative sola pith statue



Decorative sola pith item



Raw Materials

Main raw material of this craft is the stem of the kuhila plant . In the months of february/march the seeds are sown in the pit area. These grow up into a matured one within five or six months. People collect those Kuhila plants before the ditch dries up. These plants becomes light when dried. These are then cut into fine pieces (Pith) as per the requirement of the product to be made The outer harder brown skin is removed by expert hands to reveal the inner soft Éwhite portion of the stem and then the inner portion is fragmented into different shapes and reinforced by colouring as required. Regarding the creativity of these crafts, it has it's own unique styles. The feasibility and proficiency of the artists carries the tradition of antique creation and dexterity. The crafts can claim the superiority and the artisan's success and popularity due to its artistic beauty and perfect expressiveness as well as its wonderful fineness.

Product Range

Skilled craftsmen shape this reed into many objects: scaled down models of temples, churches and mosques, carved images of Gods/Goddess (like Durga, Kali, Ganesh and so on), marriage headgear ("Topor" & "Mukut"), flowers and garlands, toys are all crafted from this reed.

Apart from toys and images, big and small, some shola-pith craftsmen also create items that form an integral part of most of the major religious rituals - mainly in the form of "Solar Saaj" - which is the ornamentation and decoration for sacred images. This latter form uses foils, sequins, beads or artificial pearls mounted on cupboard. Since these foils were once used to be imported from Germany by post or 'dak' the decoration came to be known as "Daker Saaj".

PRODUCT & PRICE RANGE

Name of the craft : Decorative Sola pith item

Product	Description	Price range
Sola+ Bamboo Sola+ Clay	Face idol	70-200
	Decorative sola pith item	80-250
	Face idol	90-250
	Decorative sola pith statue	1000-1500