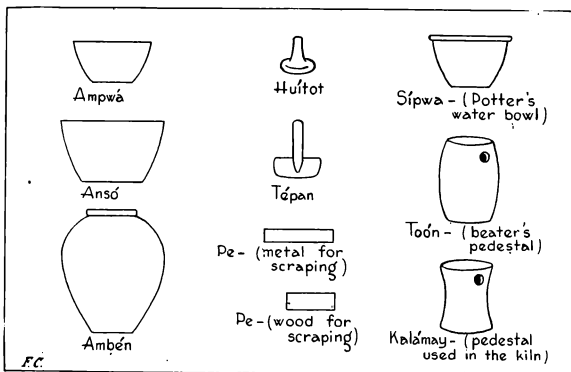


Jar Making

By FRANCISCO CARBALLO
With illustration by the author



THE MANUFACTURE of earthen vessels; such as, jars, pots, and other household utensils, is an old native industry antedating the coming of the Spaniards to the Philippines. Despite the advent of modern household metal utensils, a great number of people, particularly in provincial communities, still use earthen cooking pots and water jars which are locally produced. Glazed plant pots and jars for holding water and fish preserves are manufactured by local Chinese potters, but high grade earthenware, chinaware, and porcelain are imported from China, Japan, the United States, England, Holland, and Germany. The important jar factories just outside of Manila are in Mandalayon and Makati along the banks of the Pasig in Rizal province. Others are located in various provinces.

The first step in jar making is the

preparation of the clay, which is secured from fields nearby. After removing roots and little stones from the clay, it is placed on a tile-covered floor. Mixed with the needed amount of water, it goes through the process of kneading under the hoofs of two or more carabaos which are made to tread round and round upon the mass of clay, which is about ten feet in diameter and one foot thick. When the clay is kneaded to a proper consistency, it is brought inside the *kamalig*, as the long factory building is called, where it passes foot-power kneading after the right amount of sand has been mixed with it. When the clay is mellow, then it is ready for the potter's wheel.

The master potter is the most important employee in the *kamalig*. He is called the *maestro* for he is the master of the wheel. With his deft hands he

turns rolls of clay into graceful jars. Let us watch him shape a *tapayan*, or big water jar.

Seated on a raised bench, the potter turns the horizontal wooden wheel with his right foot. This wheel rests on a metal pivot heavily greased and so it turns freely. Near him, on the right, is a vessel of water for moistening his hands, and on the left is a pot of sand which is applied on the wheel to prevent new jar bottoms from sticking to the wood. Seizing a roll of clay which his assistant has placed beside him, he places it on the middle of the turning wheel and skillfully shapes it upward into a basin-like vessel. This bottom third of the jar is called the *ampwa*. The potter's assistant keeps the *ampwas* in a cool part of the *kamalig* where they are allowed to dry a little for three days. As there are various steps in jar making, and these require several days, in our today's visit we shall see only the making of jar bottoms. In order to see how the different steps are actually done, more than one visit will be needed.

When a hundred *ampwas* have been made and dried a little, one at a time they are taken to the potter's wheel for the addition of the second third. The heightened bottom now looks like a huge bowl. In this stage it is called the *ansó*. The *ansós* are dried a little for three days, and then returned to the maestro for the addition of the last third, including the shoulder and the mouth. This stage of the finished raw jar is called the *ambén*.

On the third day, the *manghahampas*, or beater, begins beating each jar to give it uniform thickness and shape. The

jar is placed on the *toón*, or pedestal. Holding the *huitot*, or earthen pestle-like implement in his left hand inside the jar, and the *tepan*, or wooden patter, in his right, he begins beating the circular jar wall between these implements, working upward as he beats round and round the vessel. After a hundred jars have been beaten into shape, these are set aside for final drying.

The drying process is a risky one. The raw jars are covered with pandan mats to protect them from too much heat or drafts from the outside which may crack their brittle bodies, and are uncovered when the temperature is just right. After twenty-one days or more, the jars are entirely dry and they are ready for the kiln.

The kiln is a long oven built on sloping ground under a roofed wing of the *kamalig*. It is made of big bricks and adobe stones, and usually holds four hundred assorted jars at a time. After the raw jars have been placed in the kiln, the firing begins. This is in charge of the *pugonero* who, on certain days during the firing, is aided by five kilncarers. The firing goes on night and day for three days, and as the last day approaches, the fueling is gradually lessened to prevent the cracking or melting of the red-hot jars. On the last day, the fire is put out, and the jars are left in the kiln for two or more days for cooling. When properly baked, the jars are of a metallic brown hue.

After cooling, the baked jars are classified and placed in the storeroom ready for sale locally or sent to city and pro-

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vincial customers. The *tapayan* is generally used for holding water, but it is also used for storing *bagoong*, syrup, native sauce, salted fish and other food products. These sizes of jars are manufactured in the kamalig:¹

	Capacity	
	kerosene cans	liters
Kaang	6	108
Primera	5½	99
Segunda	4	72
Tercera	3½	63
Gusi	1½	27

Other sizes and shapes of jars for various purposes may also be ordered according to specifications and prices agreed upon. Defective jars are mended with cement and sold at reduced prices. Broken ones are sold to Parañaque customers who use them for lining their salt field beds.

Workers in a jar factory are paid by quantity production, the master potter and the beater being the highest paid.

Jar making is a very old industry. The methods and implements used are primitive. Some of the terms used show later Chinese influence. The output is not large due to foreign competition in the form of empty oil drums, and galvanized iron and glazed containers imported from abroad. With government assistance and private initiative, the quality and the quantity of the locally produced jars may be improved and thus save this useful industry from finally dying out.

¹ Most of the data in this short article were secured at the factory located in Baranka, Mandalayon, just opposite Makati, Rizal. The owner is Mr. Ceferino Francisco.

JOE AND THE BURGLAR

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Father and Mother came home from school at five o'clock.

"Get ready, Joe," the mother said. "We shall all go to the show after supper."

"May I spend the night at home with Rod, Mamma?" Joe asked. "Rod's mother has already given her consent."

"They are showing a beautiful picture at REX, Joe, but if you prefer to stay at home with Rod, you may do so," the mother replied.

At eight o'clock, father and mother were ready for the show.

"We're going, Joe," said the mother as she descended the stairs. "Be good boys, while we are away. We will not be back until eleven o'clock."

As soon as his parents were gone, Joe and Rod went to the window and loosened the ends of the wire that held the window blind. They replaced it in such a way that a little weight placed on it would cause the blind to drop down. Then they tied the lower end of the wire that hung from the wood above to the center of the wire across the window.

"All set, Joe?" asked Rod.

"All set," Joe replied. "Now let's lie down and pretend to be sleeping."

With eyes shut but ears open, they waited patiently for any sound from the window. The clock struck ten. Nothing happened so far. Ten minutes later, they heard a faint sound. Then there was a light tap on

EARTHQUAKES

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No one feels safe during an earthquake. All that one can seem to do is to pray and go out under the open sky, far from houses and buildings, and wait in terror until the earth is safely stable again for frightened feet.

the lower part of the window.

"That's a ladder," Joe whispered.

In reply Rod gripped Joe's hand.

Then something below the window creaked at short intervals.

"He is climbing the ladder now," again whispered Joe.

Rod gripped Joe's hand harder.

Soon the blind moved. A hand grasped the wire. One end fell down. The man pulled it with a jerk. The wood above fell down hitting the man on the head. Man and wood fell to the ground. The two boys jumped up from the bed and ran to the window. The man was lying flat on the ground with the wood across his body. He was unconscious.

"Rod, run to the municipal building and report the matter to the Chief of Police," said Joe. "They must come to arrest him before he regains consciousness."

"I'm off," Rod said as he ran toward the door.

Ten minutes later, the Chief of Police and two policemen came. In a few words, Joe explained what had happened.