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Pottery

Slide 1

This potter in a village in North India spins his wheel by placing a staff in a hole on its surface and rotating it rapidly. His wheel, made of stone, rests on a cone pivot much like a top. The stone's weight is sufficient to keep it spinning at a very fast rate for a period of time. In back of the potter are the vessels that he has already finished and set out to dry, and an upturned bed called a charpoy.

Slide 2, 3

In these next two slides the potter pulls and finishes the rim of this pot which will probably be a storage vessel. Notice the squatting position in which he works. This is a very common, and very comfortable, sitting position for most Indians while they work and relax. You will notice this quite a bit in the following slides.

Slide 4

This potter is spinning his wheel by pulling at its spokes. The potter's wheel is actually an old cart wheel that has clay packed around the outside rim to make it heavy enough to spin for a long time. The clay in the middle of the wheel is centered and ready for 'throwing'--the term we use for making pottery on a wheel.

Slide 5

This potter is throwing a medium-sized container in a standing position. The vessel in back of the wheel is filled with water that the potter uses to keep the clay soft and slippery so that he may easily mold the shape of the pot.

Slide 6

With the wheel still turning, the potter cuts the pot off the wheel with a string, and will lift it carefully and put it on the ground to dry.

Slide 7

This young potter mass-produces dishes and cups to be used in tea and sweat shops. These pots are not glazed for permanent use. Once the tea has been drunk, or the sweet eaten, the container is thrown into the gutter and broken into many pieces. The small bits of clay very quickly become earth once again. In the back of the potter his wife loads dried pots in a basket to be fired or baked in a kiln.

Slide 8 This potter in West Bengal works in his shop with his small son watching. Pottery, like most Indian crafts, is a skill that is traditionally passed on from generation to generation.

Slide 9 This potter, having thrown his pot on the wheel, rounds out the bottom with a mallet while the clay is still soft. This type of pot is used to hold water, and will rest in a cloth or grass-made ring so that it may be set down without spilling or be carried comfortably on the head.

Brass

This series of slides were taken in Central India in a small town named Champa. They depict the various stages of making brass plates, called thali in Hindi.

Slide 10 One man fires (heats to a high temperature) a lump of brass until it is red hot. He then transfers it to the middle of a circle of men, placing it on a small platform of tar on the dirt floor.

Slide 11 Each of the men in the circle have a mallet with which they hit the lump of hot brass, gradually flattening it into a flat shape. Each man hits the plate in turn; no one hits at the same time.

Slide 12 The men are careful to pound the plate rhythmically, one at a time, to keep from hitting each others' mallets or hands. They all must hit the plate with equal pressure, so that it grows outward evenly. Notice in the slide how each hammer is at a different level. The sound and rhythm of the hammers is very musical. The flattened brass piece is then given to another man who pounds it out with another kind of hammer into the desired shape.

Slide 13 The blackened brass is then scraped off of at least the inside of the plate, if not both sides. The outside may be left black, a coating which protects the plate.

Slide 14 The last stage of the process is the decoration of the plates. This is the only stage in which women are involved; in fact, it is exclusively a woman's job. The designs are made by pounding a nail on the brass with a small hammer. The woman works rapidly, freehand, and without hesitation or deliberation between taps. The complexity of the designs vary greatly.

Slide 15

The finished product. These brass plates and vessels are bought by weight rather than being individually priced.

Weaving

Slide 16

In this picture we see a woman turning a charkha or spinning wheel. Spinning and weaving cloth is thousands of years old in India, and the actual form of the spinning wheel has survived many centuries.

Slide 17

Here is a similar wheel operated by a young boy.

Slide 18

These women are forming silk thread without the use of a spinning wheel. They are drawing a single thread from each of three silk worm cocoons, and are twisting them together by rolling them on their thighs to form the thread. When a young girl first begins to learn this job she will put a brick shingle on her thigh to protect it. But eventually she will begin to roll the thread on her leg and a protective callous will develop. After the thread is rolled together with the right hand, it is spun onto a spindle with the left.

Slide 19

This picture shows a weaver near Delhi setting the lengthwise threads (called the warp) into position on a loom.

Slide 20

In this next scene, the weaving thread (called the woof) is woven into the cross threads in order to make a woman's sari -- a garment that consists of five or more yards of cloth.

Slide 21

Cloth is dyed in this shop in Udaipur. The cloth is folded, dipped into the brilliant red dye, and hung out to dry by an assistant.

Miscellaneous Crafts

Slide 22

"Historical continuity in the arts and crafts of India is a responding theme--even in the twentieth century. It is reaffirmed here at Mahabalipuram among the student sculptors who hammer and chisel hard granite blocks just as their forefathers did more than one thousand years ago. This ongoing craftsmanship is preserved and protected by government subsidy. Gifted young men from all

over South India regularly come to Mahabalipuram to attend a four year school of instruction in the art of sculpture. Many of the students are sons of former students, and it is not uncommon for father and son to work side by side."¹

Slide 23 This is a marble and alabaster shop in Agra, North India. The workmen here design and make objects with beautiful inlaid patterns.

Slide 24 This craftsman in Hyderabad makes paper by hand, and presses it against a clean, white-washed wall to dry.

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Slide 25 This is a fiber rope maker near Delhi. The sticks prevent the finished rope from becoming tangled.

Slide 26 These men are weaving fiber mats. The children of many families learn these skills at a young age and are able to contribute substantially to their family's income. Notice the young boy in this picture, using his feet to keep the cross-strings taut.

Slide 27 The metal smith in this picture is making a sythe, an implement used for harvesting grains. He pounds the edge to make it razor sharp.

Slide 28 This village smith in Madhya Pradesh works on a rim of a cart wheel while his assistant works the bellows that keep the fire hot.

Slide 29 This jeweller in Delhi strings bead necklaces while he exhibits his wares beside a street. notice, again, the use of the toes to hold one end of the necklace.

Slide 30 This woman is making matches in a small shop in Bombay.

Slide 31 A carpenter in North India creates a simple lathe by drawing a bow back and forth to spin a piece of wood on a horizontal axis which is kept steady between two rocks. He is now painting the cut wooden object (maybe a toy) as he spins it with the bow.

Slide 32 Here we see a carpenters' settlement in Madras.

¹ Timothy F. Reilly, "The Coromandel Coast," Visual Ed. Inc. 1976.

Slide 33

The shoemaker is a common figure on many city streets in India. He makes as well as repairs shoes.

Slide 34

This Tinker of Chitral (Northwestern Pakistan) uses an ancient styled bow-drilled to make the holes in which he will fasten metal staples to hold broken pieces of china together. He puts pitch from pine trees on the edges of each broken piece as glue. This is one of his mended pots! It is water-tight and works like new. It is amazing that in this country it costs less to have this man spend hours and hours to mend a tea pot than it does to buy a new one.

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<u>Slide Number</u>	<u>Collection</u>
1-3	Ken Swift
4-6	Michael Flueckiger
7	Ken Swift
8	Spink #218
9-15	Michael Flueckiger
16	*Coromandel Coast #37
17	Spink #241
18	Michael Flueckiger
19	Spink #242
20	Spink #243
21	Spink #245
22	*Coromandel Coast #20
23	*North Indian Plain #19
24	Spink #236
25	Spink #240
26	Spink #235
27	Spink #238
28	Spink #223
29	Spink #237
30	Spink #234
31	Spink #221
32	Spink #222
33	Rajasthan collection
34	Bob Rasmussen

*Visual Education Inc., 1976