

Design Resource

Intricate Coconut Carving - Parra, Goa

Coconut Shell Craft

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and
Sandhya B.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/intricate-coconut-carving-parra-go>

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Introduction

Coconuts are a vital part of the daily diets of many people. It is known for its usage. The fruit, husk and the shell everything is used. The coconuts when they are immature contain water and are called as tender coconuts. When they are mature even, they sometimes contain water, which is used to get oil from the kernel. Charcoal can be obtained from the shell and coir from the fibrous husk. Over the period of time, the use of coconut has become part of daily life. The oil that is obtained is used in cooking and frying, also widely used in soaps and cosmetics. The husks and leaves can be used as materials to make products for furnishing and decorating. The word coconut can mean the entire coconut palm, seed or fruit.

The parts of coconut that is – the fruit, husk and shell all have their various uses. To be particular the coconut shells have gone through this innovative stage where it is used as utility and decorative products. The outer layer of shells is sanded, modified to look better and used as cutlery items or decorative items. In India, the traditional areas that cultivate coconut are the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Odessa, West Bengal, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Karnataka. Four southern states combined account for almost 92percent of the total production and the other states in the northeast account for the remaining 8.44percent. The places having coconut production also have coconut-based products – coconut water, coconut toddy, coconut shell-based products, coconut wood-based products, coconut leaves, and coir pith.

The coconut palm is abundant in its presence on Goa's land and in the lifestyle of the cultural communities. Every part of the tree has utilitarian value. Artists have transcended utility to artistic and decorative with the use of their creativity. Over a hundred more items are crafted using the shell of the coconut.

The coconut master craftsman, Vijayadutta Lotlikar is from Parra, Goa. He has been working with these coconut shells for about 25years and has won many prizes and awards for his works on coconut shells. He has made more than 500designs in which 90percent of them are utility ones. The products are cutlery items, decorative ones, oil lamps, table items, spoons coffee/teapots, cups and more that are all durable. Earlier there was an issue where the coconut product partitioned from the base with the conduct of oil but later after a lot of research work the craftsman has come up with a solution, the products don't part with the conduct of ghee, oil or soup items and it still remains with the base which wasn't the same earlier. There is more durability than before from new techniques discovered. Demand for the product has increased after the research work and tests. With a lot of experience and learning from exhibitions, he has improvised the products in quality and quantity. Not in bulk production but for small scale-wise this man runs the craft and is very well-known. The machines are simple and innovated by the craftsman themselves. Anyone can work for a longer time without getting exhausted by these machines. He has got his book "coconut" the art of coconut craft published that compiles everything about coconut shells and tips while working with coconuts. He has travelled to many places. Coconut shells available in Goa are better to work on than ones that of other states and countries he says.

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The thickness and the color of Goan coconut shells are better when compared to other states and countries (Thailand and Srilanka) and it is also an advantage. Purses, buttons, lamps, jewellery designs and cutlery stuff are made at his place. Now gold and coconut, silver and coconut combinations are on his mind to work on. There is a lot of demand in India and abroad. Coconut shell is handy stuff, which foreigners would prefer to carry from the tourists' destination, Goa. The technology is developed to reach more people. The advantages are that these coconut shells are eco-friendly. The craftsmen tried out products that were made of plastic into coconut shell products. For Ex: pens, pencil boxes, water bottles, clips and more were displayed at an exhibition held at the school where he taught. These products surprised the audience and were a huge hit. Motivated by this the craftsman started to work more on them. He got good reviews and did shows, and was called for workshops not just from around Goa but also from other states as well. This led to the expansion of their craft and inspired him to do more. Even today the craft is maintained and developed. Training is given to the people and to the people who are interested in learning this craft. It was started as a hobby first and now a good business is made of coconut shell craft. Initially, he wanted to try a box out of coconut shell and today he has innovated more than hundreds of utility products. It was a surprise to his friends and they all gave him good feedback that he could start off to do something with coconut shell craft ideas. These ideas boost him and ever since it has been an ongoing practice like there's no stopping. Like the craftsman says anything can be made out of coconut shell and the innovations on coconut shells are going on. The craftsman has got National Award and has won many other prizes for his craftwork, since the craft is eco-friendly it makes it even more appealing. He has become an entrepreneur in coconut shell craft and has made a Limca record for an eco-friendly oil lamp of 8.3 feet. He has a collection of lamps whose height ranges from an inch to the biggest one (8.3feet). His Catholic friends have been an inspiration for the intricate cross carvings. He has a collection of Goan Crosses carved along with innovative ones.

Intricate carvings of crosses that the craftsman has done:

1. Goa cross
2. Supreme Sacrifice
3. Papal Cross
4. Right Cross
5. The Shamrock
6. Egyptian Cross
7. Tau cross with a snake
8. Russian Cross
9. Agony
10. Vine Cross
11. Endless love
12. Sacred heart
13. Omate Cross
14. Mystical Cross
15. Cross in Exultation
16. Pope Cross
17. Grandeur and Humility
18. Saving Cross
19. Pommee

Along with crosses of micro-series ranging from .03, .04 and .05.

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Mr. and Mrs. Vijay Dutta Lotlikar.

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National Award of the Coconut Development Board.

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Tools and Raw Materials

The tools that are required for coconut shell craft are:

- **Filing Tools:** Three different filing tools are used to sand the coconut shell.
- **Pens (white marker):** Pens are used to draw the reference lines to carve.
- **Papers:** On which drawings are usually done and are cut along the outline.
- **Scissors:** Scissors are used to cut papers.
- **Wood Polish (lacquer):** Wood polish is used to get the quality look for coconut shell products.
- **Threads:** Threads are used to stitch the zipper to coconut shell pouches.
- **Coping Saw:** Coping saw is used to cut along the designs marked on coconut shells.
- **Carving Gauges:** Carving gauges are used to carve intricate designs.
- **Triangular File:** Triangular file is used to trim and sharpen the edges.
- **Drill Machine:** A drilling machine is used to drill holes in coconut shells.
- **Glue:** Glue is used to stick two separate coconut shells together.



Coconut shell.

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Jewellers saw tool.



Different grades of sandpaper.



Scissor.

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Steel Material Portable Hand Saw.

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Making Process

The coconut shell is neatly taken out from the fibrous husk. The shell is cut into half and the fruit or the kernel is taken out neatly. The shell is sanded with three different files, the first one is used to roughly file out the fibrous roots, the second one helps file better to give a smooth finish and the last filing tool helps to give a finished and much smoother look to the coconut shell. Once the coconut shell is sanded it is ready to be glued to the base or it's cut according to the design that the craftsman decides to make.

The making of coconut shell craft involves simple steps:

1. Collection of coconuts
2. Filing
3. Cutting
4. Polishing/varnish
5. Finishing

1. The Collection of Coconuts: The coconuts are collected of various sizes from places. The mature coconut is preferred because it is lignin hence there is no threat of germs attack. The immature coconut contains water and fruit and is cellulose. So the mature coconut is durable and preferable to work on.

2. Filing: The coconuts are collected the fibrous husk and kernel part is removed and cleaned to get only the shell. The shell is sanded with three kinds of filing tools until a smooth finish is obtained. Sanding with smaller grains of sandpaper gives a good finish to the surface.

3. Intricate Carving and Cutting: The coconut shells are sanded. They are cut into desired shapes and sizes required for an article to be made with a coping saw. The intricate cross work is done with the coping saw. The shape of the cross and the designs are marked on the coconut shell with a marker. With the help of coping saw it is cut along the line and the Cross-is obtained. The sides of the cut coconut piece are filed. The carving gauges are used to give intricate designs and cut the intricate designs.

4. Polishing: The cut coconut shells are stuck to the coconut shell base with adhesive (glue) and are given a coat of varnish (wood polish) to obtain a neat and glossy effect.

5. Finishing: Drilling holes in a pattern, carving on shells, fixing electric wires to coconut lamps, holes for buttons, and all the external furnishings are done. With all these furnishings done the products are ready to be packed. Items vary in weight between 100g to 200g approximately.

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Artisan use a silicon carbide paper to get a smooth finishing.

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Artisan draw the outer surface on the shell.



Cut out the outlines portion.



Carefully artisan carve the coconut shell because of hardness.

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After carving artisan start to design the product using triangular pile.



Triangular pile gives the proper and smooth design on shell.



5x7 inch Cristian cross.



Article is made with small hole and hooks are attached.

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Using triangular pile artisan makes large hole for coconut shell lamp.



Bulb is placed inside coconut shell lamp.

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Artisan gives wire connection to coconut shell lamp.



3x7 inch coconut shell lamp.

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Beautiful Coconut shell lamps.

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Products

Coconut shell craft is an eco-friendly craft and is supported for the same reason. It has led to a wide range of products in which ninety percent of them are based on utility. There are decorative lamps, oil lamps from an inch to the biggest size (that is 8.3 feet). Cutlery items – Spoons, forks and more, decorative ones– oil lamps, table lamps, coffee/teapots, candle stands, showpieces, vases, earrings, jewellery, kitchenware, scenery and more. Appreciation of these products, innovations and plans to take this coconut shell craft on a larger scale is going well. Coconut shell tiles are being made. It generates a healthy environment. The coconut products are eco-friendly and attractive as well.



Coconut shell decorative product.

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Coconut ball bag.



Coconut shell Elephant piggy bank.



Multipurpose pot Jar (25 years old).

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Beautiful coconut shell Candle holder.



Coconut shell jewellery pot.

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Coconut shell decorative product.



A unique candle stand made out of coconut shells and shaped like a single flower.

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Coconut shell cat.

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Wine bottle.



Coconut shell decorative products.

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Coconut shell furniture.



Coconut shell crab toy.

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Coconut shell decorative products.



Ape to Man to Nerd Product.



Different types of Cristian cross.

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Different types of Cristian cross.



Different types of Cristian cross.



Coconut shell different type of buttons.

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Video



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Contact Details

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