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Who Turns the Toys of Channapatna? Indian turned wooden lac ware and the role of Fair Trade in the design and commercialisation of the craft

The hand-turned wooden toys of Channapatna, India, fall from the lathe semi-finished – their bright coloured lac finish is applied while on the lathe. This paper examines how commercialisation of a highly specialised craft impacts on a group of craftspeople. The once thriving toy shops that line the streets of Channapatna (on the road from Mysore to Bangalore) compete for the few remaining customers. Designs can be moulded and changed according to the demands of the global market, but this could compromise the craft and affect the community. This paper examines commercialisation of this traditional craft in the developing world and the implications this has for Fair Trade.

Fair Trade is already recognised as playing an important role in sustainable development; it has been researched and documented in many different ways, including economic, geographical and historical approaches (Anderson 2009). By starting again and approaching the analysis from the object with a material culture approach – ‘the things’ themselves, their biographies, their life histories, along with their production and consumption (Attfield 2000: 11–42) – the toys of Channapatna start to reveal where some of the risks and challenges lie when mainstreaming a traditional craft for the commercial market.

In South India wooden lac toys are made exclusively in the Channapatna area, Karnataka, and in Etikoppakka, Andhra Pradesh. These locations are defined by the craft; Channapatna is also called ‘Toy Town’, with a large banner proclaiming it as you enter the town. This paper focuses on the toys of Channapatna.

The research draws on participative ethnographic fieldwork in Channapatna and oral testimony interviews along with product analysis, conducted in January 2012. Testimonies included both young and old artisans, one of whom started work in the 1940s; the father of another artisan went to Japan in the 1960s. Also interviewed were representatives of two Fair Trade organisations: Shilpa and Maya Organic. Many of the toys shops of Channapatna were visited.

I worked with the toy makers of Etikoppakka in Andhra Pradesh in the mid 1980s and then visited Etikoppakka and worked in Channapatna in 2012. This gave me a high level of access to speak to and then formally interview the artisans.

Toy making in Channapatna is part of the vast array of craft manufacture in India, which is often organised in clusters. Mr Sanjay Agarwal, the Development Commissioner for Handicrafts in India in 2007, acknowledges the presence of six million artisans in India, in 530 regional clusters. The production of toys in Channapatna is just one of these artisan cluster groups (Ranjan and Ranjan 2009).

The literature refers to a group called the “Chitragars” who were engaged in wood-turnery’ (Campbell 1991; FAO). In Channapatna today, although the Chithragararu are the ‘art makers on the products’, which may be the group who are being referred to, they are not necessarily wood turners. The name for the lac ware artisan is Aragubannada Karakushala Kelasagararu in Kannada (the local language of Karnataka).¹

Today there are both Hindu and Muslims working on lac ware products. Some communities are mixed, and some, such as at Yelakeri, are only Hindu, while others, such as at Makhan, are only Muslim (Campbell 1991).

Different sources quote different numbers of artisans working in the lac ware in Channapatna. This may be because the lac ware artisans are often part of the informal sector, working from small workshops, and thus the exact demographics of the artisans involved in the craft are hard to determine exactly. Many of the producers work in their own small workshops (see Figure 1). The highly skilled artisans move from one workshop to another depending on the work (Ventatesh 2012).

Channapatna is located between Bangalore and Mysore, and the main road is lined with toy shops (see Figure 2). The toys shops visited for this research

included (i) Sri Kaveri Handicrafts Emporium, (ii) Sreenidhi Handicraft Emporium, (iii) Karnataka Toys Emporium, (iv) Moon Star Toys Factory, (v) Kanishka Arts and Crafts, (vi) Sri Beereshwara Arts and Crafts, (vii) Sri Lakshmi Venkateswara Toys Emporium, (viii) Vinayaka Handicrafts Emporium and (ix) SLV Toys Handicraft Emporium.

The number of wooden turned lac toys in museums is low; they were toys for children to be played with and then thrown away. Even in the makers' own homes the toys have not been kept. When one retired craftsman, Sharief Khan, who was born around 1930, was asked if he had kept any of the old pieces he had made he said 'No, gone, history gone' (Khan 2012). By piecing together the writings and the oral testimonies, this study retrieves some of this lost history.

Today the toys of Channapatna are still a highly specialised and skilled craft, controlled by the person at the lathe, with only simple tools and few aids to help. The craft itself is still defined not only by the skills but also by the indigenous raw materials. Firstly, the lac, a resinous substance produced by the female lac insect in the Indian forest. This is a distinct substance from lacquer used in China and Japan, which is a tree resin. There are pockets of artisans working in lac and wood all over India. Franco Brunello (1973) claims in *The Art of Dyeing and History of Mankind* that the word lac is derived from the word laksha and has the same meaning as the word lakh, meaning one hundred thousand, and refers to the enormous numbers of insects which make up the lac.

I observed that the price varies with the quality, which is turn is reflected in the colour, with the lighter the colour the higher the quality, and the more translucent it is (see Figure 3). The sticks of coloured lac are prepared by heating the seed lac over a small fire and mixing the powdered colour into the lac using two sticks.

The second specific raw material is the timber. Figure 4 shows the timber merchant Kendaya, who had just made a delivery of Hale wood (*Wrightia Tinctoria*) to Katerpillar Toys. Ideal for turning, it is an indigenous tree found in the forests and on village wastelands in Channapatna. Because it is fast-growing, the wood merchant estimated that he could cut his trees every seven to eight years. Venkatesh explained: 'It is not giving good fire. Therefore village people are not interested to use this wood. It is very soft and not usable for any other thing, only for toys,

not used for any other purpose, like furniture or anything like that' (Venkatesh 2012).

Walter Jack, a British designer who worked in Channapatna in 1985, said: 'I asked to see the timber store and I think I walked past without realising and they showed me what really looked like a pile of twigs'. He went on to say: 'if you took the wood that is in Channapatna to any wood worker within 100 miles in the UK they would say forget it, you cannot make anything out of that' (Jack 2012). So the craft is also built around a local timber which is available and regenerates quickly.

As I observed, after drying, the bark of the wood is removed using an adze, or if the timber is square the corners are roughed off. Traditionally production would have been in the home on a bow lathe and by both men and women (Campbell 1991). Today production is mainly by men standing at a mechanical lathe driven by a series of belts from an engine. The wood is knocked into the chuck of the machine lathe using a small adze as a mallet. It is skilfully turned to size using a variety of handheld tools. Once it has been turned to its final smooth shape, a stick of solid coloured lac is pressed against the rapidly spinning wood on the lathe. Ranjan and Ranjan note, and I saw for myself, that the friction melts the lac and spreads it over the wood (see Figures 5 and 6), changing different coloured sticks when necessary for each colour applied.

Finally, for polishing the lac on the lathe, to achieve the hard bright finish the leaf of the screw pine *Pandanus odoratissimus* is used to burnish the lac to the high polish level. Where the lac is spread over the required area of the turned timber the screw pine leaf is pressed against the lac until it shines (see Figure 7). This process can be assisted, as I observed, with a little oil, or greased with a little human sweat. Walter Jack, describing the finish, said: 'it looks like a Rolls Royce finish'. The hard, highly polished finish, a credit to the artisan, is beautiful and seems contrary to the quick and natural process by which it is achieved.

The screw pine leaf, which adds the shine to the finished toys, is cut and purchased locally (see Figure 8). Where clumps of this sharp-leaved plant have become established it is allowed to continue to grow so that it can be harvested for this purpose. It is fast growing and abundant. After drying, it is soaked in water and the sharp spines are cut off. One leaf can last the toy maker all day. When the leaf is used to burnish the lac, a small amount of colour from the lac may be left on the leaf, in which case a new part of

the leaf is then used to avoid mixing the colour from the leaf with the new lac being burnished.

Finally, lines or grooves can be cut into the lac to expose the wood underneath and the burnished lac ware separated from the lathe using a parting tool. If necessary, delicate hand-painting is applied over the lac to create features such as the eyes of dolls.

The history of the craft is not known exactly. The artisans themselves, and in publicity supporting their sales, claim that the craft was patronised by Tipu Sultan. At the time of his defeat by the British in 1799 the craftsmen were alleged to have dispersed and settled at Channapatna. It is likely that Tipu Sultan, the Sultan of Mysore from the death of his father in 1782 until his own death in 1799, would have had wood turners amongst the groups of artisans that were patronised by him. Many blogs and articles claim that Tipu Sultan brought the combination of the lac with the turned wood from Iran or Persia. Tipu's Tiger, a large wooden life-size toy depicting a tiger eating a British soldier, which was owned by Tipu Sultan and taken by the British at the time of his defeat, has had the original paint finish painted over many times, and so the original finish is not known. Despite a strong oral history this research did not find written documents supporting the Tipu Sultan link and requires further research.

The first turned wooden figures may have had a sacred or religious role originally. Venkatesh reports that his father in the 1970s used to make 'some gods like Shiva, Shiva lingam, like some dolls, Indian dolls' (Venkatesh 2012). These traditional god figures still retain these long-standing sacred connections and are still made from lac ware today and sold in the shops around Channapatna (see Figure 9).

In 1904 the ruling prince of Mysore sent Mr Makiladad Mia Bavasmia to Japan to learn more about the craft, and on his return he introduced the hand lathes (Kalanjia 1996).

Sharief Khan was trained at the Industry School in 1942 for three years starting at the age of 12. He remembered that he started at 7.30 am and worked until 5.30 pm with an hour break for lunch and received 2 Rupees stipend a month. The Maharaja of Mysore took an active interest in the craft and Sharief Khan remembers meeting him and that he reviewed their work. The training school had its own sales system and after, finishing his training, Khan continued to supply the Industry School.

After coming out from the school I made for orders, which I was given. Directly the school people gave me orders of what to make, whatever I learnt there like engine or aeroplane, those pieces I was making them in my own house and supplying to them. (Khan, 2012)

At the end of the War of Independence, Channapatna was making not only dolls and toys but also designs featuring aeroplanes and tanks. Sharief Khan remembers working on a large order of wooden tanks to be given as school prizes.

Ilay Cooper and John Gillow in the book Arts and Crafts of India (1996) describe urban based crafts that had catered for the British and the Indian elite and certain crafts that had become organised as export industries. The situation was to remain virtually unchanged throughout the 50s and 60s.

In Channapatna, the manufacture of toys and dolls fits the description given here of an urban-based craft which remained virtually unchanged. Khan remembered that it was just after 1947 or '48 that the first shops started to sell the toys independently of the government agencies. He also said that the pieces were more intricate then. The Channapatna lac ware at the National Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum in New Delhi from the mid-twentieth century have more detail than the toys made today.

The American Jaki Chandani worked with the artisans of Channapatna in the '60s and '70s and opened the trade to the USA (Kalanjia 1996: 12). The All India Handicraft Board opened in 1977 and the first director brought in Japanese consultants, and Nizam Hujrath Masterji also travelled to Japan and returned with orders for nesting dolls (Khan 2012). The influence of the Japanese can still be seen in the dolls today (Figure 10).

In the 1970s enthusiastic westerners started to become importers of crafts at the same time as the rise of Bollywood and the decline of western influence on the local market for toys (Cooper and Gillow 1996: 23).

Today there are two Fair Trade organisations based in Channapatna today that seek to wholesale the wooden toys not purely for profit: Shilpa, who sell through SIPA, and Maya Organic.

Two of the main ways of recognising Fair Trade are through Fairtrade International (previously called Fairtrade Labelling Organisation or FLO) and the

World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO, previously called International Federation of Alternative Trade, IFAT). They agreed a joint charter of Fair Trade principles in 2009.² The charter recognises that there are many products that can be Fair Trade and states that: 'Clearly one mode of operation cannot address all the problems experienced in different product sectors (from coffee to crafts)'. In this way FLO, which is the best known organisation working in Fair Trade, recognises that there can be Fair Trade crafts, although they do not have a standard to recognise crafts and so do not have any crafts carrying the FLO label.

The charter also explains that there are two routes to market for Fair Trade products, which are also recognised in the EU Report of Fair Trade and Development (EU, 2006).

Firstly, product certification, for which there are standards for many commodities from tea to timber, from coffee to cocoa, and more being developed all the time. The compliance to the standard is audited and these products can then carry the Fair Trade label.

In order to do this the standard has to define what it applies to. In the case of a commodity, for example coffee, this is not difficult, but for a craft there many different forms and no one common definition. Consequently, to date, there is no FLO product standard for a Fair Trade craft.

The other method of recognition of Fair Trade is through the integrated supply chain where the products are made or produced and sold by organisations that have Fair Trade as a core value throughout the organisation. The organisations that specialise in this route can be members of the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO). In 2010, WFTO had 472 member organisations and individuals in seventy-four countries (WFTO, 2010). Here the consumer usually recognises the product as Fair Trade through the brand of the member organisation. For example, Traidcraft in 2012, who sell many Fair Trade crafts in the UK, reassured their customers that their crafts are Fair Trade through assurance in their own monitoring process.

It is significant that the role of craft work within Fair Trade is declining in the percentage of the Fair Trade goods sold. In percentages, the certified trade (not including crafts) is almost twelve times bigger than the non-certified Fair Trade, and while the non-certified (including crafts) grew by 6 per cent, the

certified grew by almost 43 per cent in the same period (Keir 2007; DAWS 2011).

Another indicator of the declining role of crafts within Fair Trade is the level of research on craft compared to commodities such as food and coffee. For instance, The Fair Trade Institute aims to list all the Fair Trade publications from 1992 to today in print or in journals. In the early archives there are many references to craft work; however, recently there is increased focus on food and a clear decline in the inclusion of craft products.

This raises the question of whether craft work is still even relevant to Fair Trade production, or has this decline in interest arisen because the customer only wants to buy labelled products? Is the decline taking place because WFTO – the organisation working with craft work – has been badly governed in recent years, as stated in the Hivos and Cordaid report (2011)? Or is it because Fair Trade has never succeeded in defining formally what Fair Trade craft work is? Although these issues are not the subject of this essay, they are nevertheless of long-term importance and interest, requiring further research.

There is thus as yet, and significantly to this research, no formalised definition of Fair Trade craft product, although there is now a label in development to recognise one (WFTO, 2013).

In 2013 the first dedicated Fair Trade Organisations were audited against the new World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) Fair Trade Guarantee System and will be able to label its product Fair Trade. A craft product made in Fair Trade conditions in the global South will now be able to have a credible label (WFTO AGM 2013). Although the two Fair Trade Organisations based in Channapatna are not yet externally audited, both Maya Organic and Shilpa are members of WFTO. Fair Trade aims to create employment to disadvantaged communities. It can sell exclusively in the local market, but often it does this by selling to overseas and sometimes mainstream markets. With these markets come constraints and changes to the craft.

Fair Trade has engaged with wooden lac toys since at least the 1980s. For example, in 1986 Oxfam bought a turned wooden lac necklace from Etikoppakka. How does the selling of a uniquely skilled craft to the western market impact on both the product and its producers? The World Fair Trade Organisation has ten Fair Trade principles, which should be followed by Organisations who are members (WFTO 2011). Principle Three is called 'Fair Trading Practices' and in

it WFTO recognise the role of design and state that the Fair Trade Organisation 'avoids duplicating the designs of patterns of other organizations without permission.'

Shilpa has had regular design sessions, using both national and international designers. The designer needs to know not only the local craft they are working in detail, but also the commercial restraints that impact the final cost of the product as well as what market they are designing for. Katherine Ladd in 'Consuming Goodness' writes on the challenges of using western designers in developing countries, specifically in Africa. Ladd writes that it 'requires a pragmatic and unpatronising acknowledgement of the values, hopes and desires of those who create the object' (Ladd 2005).

The Hove Museum craft gallery signage states, in response to the question 'What is Craft?': 'The process of making is a personal journey of self discovery and self expression'. But this may not be the perspective of the traditional craftsman. One of the themes of crafts is how the ideas are developed not as original new ideas but instead are generated out of the community. Gell in *The Enchantment of Technology* says that the Trobriand woodcarver 'does not seek to create a new type of canoe board, but a token of an existing type, so he is not seeking to be original'. Soetsu Yangagi describes the craftsman as pointing the way like a compass; as one piece is copied and developed by others 'the object now no longer belongs to the work of the individual' (1972).

As stated, the town of Channapatna is defined by its toys; the toys are everywhere, hence it is called Toy Town. When asked about design protection Ventakatesh, who works with Shilpa and SIPA, stated: 'no, we don't have any protection, we are happy to share with all the peoples, we are always thinking to keep all the peoples with us, we are not only separate people'. This is in contrast to what I observed in 2012 Maya Organic, where there were signs saying 'no photography'.

In 2005 the Geographical Indicators registry granted a GI certificate in recognition of the tie of the locality to the unique skills of and materials of the turned lac ware of Channapatna, but this is very little used or known (Manoj 2006), although it could be a useful tool for crafts (Ballyn 2003). The question is whether design protection is appropriate for a traditional craft, made in a community. Is it appropriate to a product which is at least and often mainly derived from the skills and experience of the community,

where Fair Trade seeks to acknowledge its producers and work in partnership? Maybe the use of Geographical Indicators within Fair Trade needs to be further developed.

In Mombasa in May 2011 WFTO added the following sentence to its Principle 3: 'Fair Trade recognizes, promotes and protects the cultural identity and traditional skills of small producers as reflected in their craft designs, food products and other related services.' This works well in world shops where the identity of the producer is celebrated and advertised, but as the product enters the mainstream this is more difficult to maintain. Many Fair Trade craft-made products are bought as gifts and, as Gloria Hickey states, 'to be successful as a gift those associations with craft would have to be shared by both giver and recipient'; in this case craft 'is not a safe choice' (Hickey, 1996), Glenn Adamson (2009) states with regard to crafts that 'they send mixed messages they can be unselfconscious or pointedly reformist. They are cultural texts that require decoding ... This is never a simple matter'. And so as the hand-turned wooden toys of Channapatna sell to a large market, their identity as both craft and nationality become more and more masked.

SIPA went to Italy and saw how popular football is there and came back with the idea to make football key rings, fridge magnets, etc. Bhupathy of Shilpa recalled how he and Kaleem sat down to develop these whistles after Ramasamy of SIPA came back from Italy realising how much everyone loves football. 'In the beginning with that Ramasamy thought we sat and discussed whistle, key chain, fridge magnet, sharpener, all the things. Then we made the samples. Even though this painting he has to ask me how to do it. I gave him some little idea and then he succeeded to make it, and it sold in thousands' (Kaleem, 2012)

WFTO Principle 6 requires that the organisation has 'commitment to non-discrimination, gender equity and freedom of association'. In 1991 when Campbell researched the lac ware craft for FAO it was found that 'more urban than rural women are involved, over 90% continue to work on hand lathes, most women continue to be in the household sector, women continue to produce traditional products required for local markets, women's earnings are significantly lower than men's and the number of women in lac-turnery is declining. The women lac ware producers of Channapatna traditionally made beads and simple items'. I observed that mechanization, resulting in larger orders and electrification, encourages the development of larger production units and small

to medium-size factories. These are replacing the household units where the women used to work. Without training to transfer their skills to the power lathe, women are being excluded from the new mechanised industry.

At Maya Organics they proactively train women in the use of the power lathe:

training for girls in lac ware – the people used to be scared of the machines and all. They don't want to work, so slowly we started building the confidence and then we put them into the working place and start training, and now in our organisation there are more than 50% women working in the craft. (Bano, 2012)

This appears to support the position of WEIGO in that 'women producers have experienced significant progress in meeting their practical and strategic needs through participating in collective forms of enterprise and linking to Fair Trade markets' (Jones, 2011).

Producers of crafts in developing countries are mainly part of the informal sector 'working in units that are not regulated by the government and do not receive social protection through their work' (ILO, 2002). For example, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 2002 estimated that 93 per cent of employment in India was informal.

Craft work is a significant contributor to the Indian economy. It is estimated that it is 15 to 20 per cent of the total workforce and the market is around US\$4.6 billion. The export of handicraft in 1996 was US\$154 million and increases year on year – in 2000/1 it was US\$434 (Government of India 2011). With such enormous implications it is not surprising to see that the Government of India wishes to have significant control, input and investment in this sector.

One issue that immediately arises once the toys have to fit global regulations is safety. In response to this, in 1995 the South India Producers Association (SIPA) held a workshop at Bangalore Design Institute on the use of natural dyes and wooden toys with three SIPA groups and forty-eight artisans taking part. Subsequently SIPA organised one more training in a HRED centre, Padappai (in the suburbs of Chennai), for the wooden toys along with Kalamkari, handloom fabric, palm leaf, and natural fibres. This was training in how to use locally made colours to colour the lac, returning to the traditional way of making colours.

Venkatesh when interviewed (2012) said:

You know that Shilpa has helped to give us some technical improvements in our craft ... who are expert in the products, so it required some child standards. Then we adapted our toys. That's how we got our export orders ... and we get the colours, how to make the natural colours, from Shilpa.

Here he is referring to a workshop on 'The Technique of application of Natural Dyes on Lacquerware Craft', which was conducted in Shilpa with the direct help of SIPA for the benefit of artisans in 1995. The training was given by Roshan Kalapesi, who is the founder of Paramparika Karigar, an organisation that organises fairs around India and aims to preserve and promote the traditional arts and crafts of India. When I visited I observed that Shilpa achieved the non-toxic finish on the toys as required by the international market by using paint tested for international standards for toxicity mixed with the natural lac. The awareness has now changed. With the new colours so a new look has come to the toys – more translucent colours and more of the wood showing.

There are conflicting and contradictory roles created in the commercialisation of the craft. On the positive side, as the craft becomes more mainstream and gains larger orders it has potential to generate more income, and encourage the maintenance or generation of the crafts skills, but at the same time it both loses its traditional identity, and thus exposing itself to copying by other craftspeople, and may also compromise Fair Trade principles.

And so some significant changes and design developments can be tracked and attributed to both Government and Fair Trade Organisations in Channapatna. Copying is part of the craft tradition, and the use of Geographical Indicators is perhaps a more appropriate form of protection than design protection for traditional crafts.

If, on the other hand, the toy has more of the local identity and is hence more difficult to copy, the hand-finished appearance also makes it more difficult to sell, as discussed by Hickey. The craft item then has to connect to the consumer, which is difficult when the consumer and producer are in different countries, unless through a world shop which celebrates rather than hides the identity of the producer. Although the toys have now become popular in a wider market it has been at a cost. The process of moving to a global market has meant sacrificing aspects of the product's

local identity and, in turn, products become easier to copy by other toy-making countries such as China.

Although the craft's centralisation can lead to improved quality and capacity, it can also exclude women producers unless they are proactively trained. Fair Trade Organisations have made interventions such as training women and training in toy safety that have helped the craft. Daniel Miller states that 'it is clear that one of the key struggles of modern life is to retain both a sense of authentic locality... and yet also lay claim to a cosmopolitanism that at some level may evoke right to a global status'. It is with these challenges and both the help and hindrance of two Fair Trade Organisations that the toymakers of Channapatna are developing their craft

Notes

1 Information collected during field visit January 2012 and confirmed by email correspondence with Mr Bhupathy, 10/12/2012

2 Charter of Fair Trade Principles available at: www.fairtrade-advocacy.org.



Figure 1. Many of the workshops are small and form part of the informal sector. Photograph by the author, January 2012.



Figure 2. The Channapatna shops are stacked from floor to ceiling with toys. Interior of Vinayaka Handicraft Emporium. Photograph by the author, January 2012.



Figure 3. The resin is secreted by the lac insect (*Lacifer lacca*), harvested in the forests of India, processed into discs of 'seedlac' and sold to the toy makers of Channapatna by the kilo. Photograph by the author, January 2012.



Figure 4. Kendaya, a wood merchant in the town of Channapatna, has been a merchant for 40 years. He is sitting on a newly delivered load of timber (*Wrightia tinctoria*), outside the production unit of B. Venkatesh. Note the trees are small, from 14 to 25 cm in diameter on average. Photograph by the author, January 2012.



Figure 5. The wood is shaped on the lathe using a turning chisel. The hand guides the chisel to shape the wood. The fast rotation of the machine lathe dictates the symmetrical rounded shapes, and it is the skill of the producer that shapes the wood. Photograph by the author, January 2012.



Figure 6. Applying the lac, the batti is held against the fast turning wood, where the friction melts the lac and sticks it to the wooden shape. At first the lac is rough and uneven. Photograph taken by the author at Shilpa Trust, January 2012.



Figure 7. The lac is burnished with the screw pine leaf. The pressure melts the lac. As soon as the lac is the desired thickness and shine, the leaf is moved onto the next area. I observed that the larger the diameter of the piece of wood being polished, the more difficult it is to burnish. Photograph by the author, January 2012.



Figure 8. The dry leaf is known locally as kevda or talegiri, also called screw pine – the sharp spines are removed before use. Photograph by the author at the workshop of B. Venkatesh, January 2012.



Figure 9. Traditional Hindu Vishnu god figure on sale in Channapatna today. Also note the educational games on the right. Photograph by the author, January 2012.



Figure 10. Toys for sale in Vinayaka Handicraft Emporium, B. M Road, Channapatna. The dolls are for sale to the local Indian passing tourist. These dolls have a distinctly Japanese look to them. Photograph by the author, January 2012

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