

# A Production Pottery, Chengdu,

China 2017

The day before we left China, we had a surprise trip to a production pottery outside Chengdu. This had been organised by the archaeologist who had showed us around the ancient kiln site at Qionglai. After seeing so many traditional ways of making and firing and ancient ceramics in museums we were looking forward to seeing a modern factory.



We were met by the manager who had worked his way up from the shop floor. After seeing pots in the show-room we wandered into the huge production area. To our surprise the pots were being made by hand which was not what we expected.

Huge pots were being made in several stages in the local red clay. First the pots were thrown, often by two men, up to a certain height. The coils were added and thrown up. The thick walls were then paddled out until thin and the pot a rounded shape. Tall thin pots were made by joining sections together. Once finished, two people with lengths of material would carry them outside to dry.



*Throwing the pot.*



*Beating out the sides until round.*

*Carrying the pot out to dry*



Halfway through our visit we were invited to a sumptuous lunch in a visitor area and shown where the clay is dug. From there we could climb on a walkway to the top end of a Dragon Kiln. It was huge but had not been fired since 2005 when damaged by the infamous earthquake in the area.



*Delicious Chinese lunch*

Now they use a vast trolley kiln so here was some modern equipment at last. We watched workers loading one of the trolleys for the next firing. Most of us were glued to the superior throwing skills of these men and the huge strength involved. In the shop, smaller items were available so we had a chance to buy souvenirs before leaving.



*Ancient Dragon climbing kiln*

There were several smaller potteries in the area and we stopped at one where we watched a lady carving on a large pot.



*Modern trolley kiln*

It was a fitting ending to a great trip where we had seen pots from BC to the present day and enjoyed the stunning scenery of Sichuan Province.

*Jane Gibson*