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# PATENT SPECIFICATION

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## (54) A REST FOR A RICE SPOON

(71) I, TAIICHI ONO of No. 88, 4-chome, Biwajima-dori, Nishi-ku, Nagoya, Japan, a citizen of Japan, do hereby declare the invention, for which I pray that a patent may be granted to me, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in the following statement:—

This invention relates to a rest for temporarily depositing a rice spoon.

In oriental countries, a rice spoon is used for serving boiled rice from a pan or a rice tube to individual rice bowls or dishes. The rice spoon is usually made of wood or plastics material, and its size is fairly large because it is used for serving and not for personal eating. Hitherto it has been customary to leave the rice spoon in the rice cooking pan, electric rice cooker, vacuum rice jar, or leave it on the lid of the rice pan or other cooker. The rice spoon is then covered in sticky boiled rice grains. This is not only an unseemly way to handle a rice spoon but is also insanitary, the spoon being liable to be contaminated with dirt or by flies or other insects.

According to the present invention there is provided a rest for temporarily depositing a rice spoon in order to keep it clean and sanitary, said rest comprising a base, a pair of resilient gripping members on the base for firmly holding the handle portion of the rice spoon and a cover on the base, said cover being arranged to protect the bowl of the rice spoon from undesirable materials without itself touching the bowl of the spoon. The rest may be made of wood, metal or plastics material.

The present invention provides a rest for a rice spoon which has been used for serving rice and which thus has its bowl covered in rice. Tables and cooking vessels in kitchens and dining rooms need not then be soiled and sanitary conditions can be improved, in addition to protecting the spoon from insects and dust.

Two embodiments of the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a side view of the first embodiment in accordance with this invention;

Fig. 2 is a plan view of the first embodiment;

Fig. 3 and Fig. 4 are respectively vertical sectional views taken along the lines III—III and IV—IV of Fig. 2;

Fig. 5 is a perspective view showing the first embodiment in use;

Fig. 6 is a side view of the second embodiment in accordance with this invention;

Fig. 7 is a vertical projection view of the second embodiment looking from the rear side;

Fig. 8 is a plan view of the second embodiment;

Fig. 9 is a vertical sectional view of part of the second embodiment taken along the line IX—IX of Fig. 6; and

Fig. 10 is a plan view of Fig. 9.

In the second embodiment shown in Figs. 6 to 10 component parts similar to those in the first embodiment of Figs. 1 to 5 have the same reference numerals for the sake of better understanding.

First of all, referring to Figures 1 to 5, the first embodiment will be described in detail. A rice spoon S is shown deposited almost horizontally in a rest in accordance with this invention with the openable cover of the rest closed (the open position of the cover is shown in chain-link lines). A base 1 of the rice spoon rest is composed of a bottom plate 1a, a pair of upright arms 1b, 1b, a pair of lugs 1c, 1c which project horizontally from the arms 1b respectively and in confrontation to each other with a small clearance e therebetween, and a pair of vertical lugs 1h, 1h confronting to each other with a clearance f therebetween, which is larger than said clearance e and a little smaller than the thickness t of the handle of the rice spoon S, all of these being integrally made. The above-mentioned arms 1b, 1b are cantilevers, so that the clearance e therebetween (at the tip of horizontal lugs 1c, 1c) and the clearance f between the vertical lugs 1h, 1h are adjustable by a screw bolt 2 fitted therebetween and a nut 2'.

The rice spoon S is, when deposited in this rest, covered at its enlarged bowl portion Sa by a two-part cover 3 having a lower half 3a

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which is either integrally made with the base 1 or secured thereto by means of any suitable means or method, for example, adhesion, and an upper half 3b which can be opened wide about a hinge 4 as far as a position shown in Fig. 1 with a two-dot and chain line. Both halves of the cover 3 are notched at 3a<sub>1</sub> and 3b<sub>1</sub> in Fig. 1 respectively so as not to be touched by the handle Sb of the rice spoon S. On the outer side of the upper half cover 3b is disposed an integrally made and horizontally projecting lug 3b<sub>2</sub> (shown in Fig. 4) for putting a finger thereon when opening or closing the cover; just under the lug 3b<sub>2</sub> of the upper half cover is a guide lug 3b<sub>3</sub> for guiding the upper half cover 3b on to the lower half 3a when the cover is closed.

Now the function and effects of the embodiment of Figs. 1-5 constructed as above-mentioned will be described. Assume that the base 1 of the rest has been placed at an appropriate position and the upper half 3a of the cover 3 is opened about the hinge 4 with a finger on the lug 3b<sub>2</sub> to the position shown in Fig. 1 with a two-dot and chain line. A rice spoon S, while being gripped by a hand at the handle Sb, is lowered in a manner such that the lower half of the bowl Sa of the spoon S is put into the lower half 3a of the cover 3. At this time the handle Sb, which is firmly gripped by three fingers, i.e., middle, medial, and small, with the index finger (or the thumb) resting on the finger support 1d disposed on the top of the arm, is pushed down as shown in Fig. 5 against a slight friction generated between the vertical lugs 1h, 1h (which are chamfered for smooth receiving of the handle Sb). As the thickness t of the handle Sb is a little larger than the clearance gap f between the vertical lugs 1h, 1h, there is created an appropriate resistance or grasping force by the resilience of the cantilever arms 1b, 1b. The handle Sb thus pushed down can be naturally positioned abutting on the lugs 1c, 1c which are confronted to each other with a clearance e far smaller than the thickness t of the spoon S. When the fingers gripping it are removed followed by closing of the upper half cover 3b, the deposit of the spoon S is completed.

A primary advantage of this invention is that the bowl portion Sa of the spoon S is deposited, even when the same is sticky with boiled rice grains, in the rest, without any portion of the spoon S being in touch with the inside of the cover 3, which not only gives an impression of cleanness but also provides a good sanitary condition by keeping flies, dust and other undesirable matters from coming on to the spoon S. A second advantage is that the positioning of the spoon S is quite easily performed, because the handle Sb is retained with the pair of integrally made vertical lugs 1h, 1h by taking advantage of their resilience as cantilevers, and rests on the

pair of horizontally projecting lugs 1c, 1c with a small clearance e therebetween. A third advantage resides in that the depositing is performed simply with one hand, because the depositing is carried out with an index finger of the gripping hand resting on the overhanging portion 1d. A fourth advantage is the adjustability of the resistance between the arms 1b, 1b by means of the screw bolt 2 and nut 2', even when the thickness t of the handle Sb of a spoon S is different. And the fifth advantage is that the space inside the covers, the upper half 3b and the lower half 3a, is designed to be fully ample so as not to touch the spoon S covered with rice grains thereon.

In a second embodiment which is represented in Figs. 6 to 10 a base 1 is integrally made of plastics material with an upright wall 10 on the longitudinal center line of the base 1 and a lower half 3a of the cover 3 of elongated oval shape. An upper half 3b of the cover is pivotally attached to the lower half 3a by a hinge 4 in such a manner as to cover the lower half 3a. In other words, the cover 3 can be opened up with the lower half 3a fixed to the base 1, for receiving the bowl portion Sa of the rice spoon S. On both sides of the wall 10 are clamped a pair of shaped grips 5, 5' by means of a screw bolt 2 and a nut 2'. These grips 5, 5' are provided with finger portions 5a, 5'a, which are divided into a plurality of fingers just like those of a human hand, and are shaped as shown in Figure 9 to form a narrow clearance e' therebetween which is a little smaller than the normal thickness of a handle Sb of the rice spoon S.

With regard to the manner of depositing a rice spoon S into this rest this is similar to that used with the first embodiment. First of all the upper half 3b of the cover is opened; and a spoon S gripped in one hand at its handle portion Sb is placed almost horizontally into the lower half 3a of the rest in such a way that the lower half of the bowl portion Sa of the spoon S can be received therein. At the same time the handle Sb of the spoon S is inserted between the pair of rows of fingers such that the direction of the thickness of the handle Sb is gripped by those fingers 5a<sub>1</sub>, 5'a<sub>1</sub>, 5a<sub>2</sub>, 5'a<sub>2</sub>, . . . , until it contacts the top of the wall 10 and is thereby firmly retained in a substantially horizontal position.

That the spoon S is retained almost exactly horizontally and that it is gripped with an appropriate gripping force regardless of the varying thickness of the handle Sb is assumed to be ascribable to the fact that each finger 5a<sub>1</sub>, 5'a<sub>1</sub> exhibits respectively a suitable gripping force. Such a satisfactory gripping can be obtained only by use of a plurality of fingers. Many patient experiments testified that the above two important requirements can be fulfilled only by grips having a plurality of fingers; grips consisting of only two

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opposing jaws are inferior since the gripping force is made by narrowing the clearance  $e'$  to the minimum.

In this regard the finger type grip is an improvement, in that a relatively small force is enough to retain the spoon S in a horizontal position, which ensures that the bowl portion  $S_b$  of the spoon S does not droop, and in turn keeps the inside of the cover 3 clean.

The last but not the least important comment on this invention is:

- (1) the cover is not necessarily required to be in two parts, i.e., it may be a single component which covers the base 1 from above;
- (2) the hinge 4 is not essential, either;
- (3) the rest is not necessarily required to be upright i.e., it may be, for example, arranged horizontally on the room wall or the side of a refrigerator.

**WHAT I CLAIM IS:—**

1. A rest for temporarily depositing a rice spoon in order to keep it clean and sanitary said rest comprising a base, a pair of resilient gripping members on the base for firmly holding the handle portion of the rice spoon and a cover on the base, said cover being arranged to protect the bowl of the rice spoon from undesirable materials without itself touching the bowl of the spoon.

2. A rest for temporarily depositing a rice spoon and as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cover is in two parts, an upper half and a

lower half, and the lower half is integrally made with, or secured to the base, with the upper half being openable about a hinge.

3. A rest for temporarily depositing a rice spoon and as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein said pair of gripping members are integrally made with, or secured to an upright wall on the base.

4. A rest for temporarily depositing a rice spoon and as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein said pair of gripping members are integrally made with, or secured to the base.

5. A rest for temporarily depositing a rice spoon and as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4, wherein said pair of gripping members are each divided into a plurality of fingers, with the fingers of each gripping member being curved outwardly away from the fingers of the opposing gripping member.

6. A rest for temporarily depositing a rice spoon and as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5, wherein the rest is tilted at any angle from vertical to horizontal position.

7. A rest for temporarily depositing a rice spoon in order to keep it clean and sanitary, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figures 1—5 or Figures 6—10 of the accompanying drawings.

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