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# Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter

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## Phetchaburi's Treasure Hunter

In recent years, people have become interested in a small group of "treasure hunters", diving in the Phetchaburi River, as is evidenced in the media's presentation of the story about this high school teacher and his students interested in history, art and antiquities, and also by a negative view of them as "National Treasure Looters", and such other epithets.



Figure 1 The ancient objects found and exhibited at Mr. Kittiphong's house.

This activity started three year ago when Mr. Kittiphong Peungtang, a teacher at Suwanrungsarit Vittayalai School, Phetchaburi, proposed to exhibit old palm sugar pots to reflect a unique feature of the local lifestyle. But he could not find these items to display in time for the occasion of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Phetchaburi city.

In the Phetchaburi River he was looking for palm sugar pots that used to be transported by boat. Mr. Kittiphong and his students take the opportunity when the water level in the Phetchaburi River becomes low to try to find ancient objects from the

Dvaravati to Ayutthaya periods; and so far they have found many palm sugar pots, earthenware jars, and ceramic shards. Those finds now are currently on view at his house in Phetchaburi.

Note that palm sugar pots were also reported as found in the Ko Kradat and Ko Khram wreck sites.



Figure 2 Mr. Kittiphong and his student recovering the ancient objects from the Phetchaburi River.



Figure 3 Palm sugar pots.

**References :**  
FineArts Dept, 1990, **Underwater Archaeology in Thailand II : Ceramics from the Gulf of Thailand**  
Green J.N, 1981, **The Excavation of the Ko Kradat Wreck Site Thailand 1979-1980.**  
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### Letter from the editor

Greetings from the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum.  
First, we must apologize for the sudden disappearance of the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter. All our readers will probably know of the passing of Dr. Roxanna Brown, who was our museum's Southeast Asian ceramic expert. At that time we were shocked and disoriented. We realize that the museum newsletter was widely received with approval before that sad event; and, so, we attempt now to revive it again. This first "revival" issue may not be perfect and may not meet your expectations after your long wait. However, we ask your patience and your feedback to help us to improve it. We promise we will try our best and we hope for your continued support.

## The Hutian Kiln Site and Its Firing Method

The Hutian kiln site is one of most famous ceramics sites in Jingdezhen. It was built during the Five Dynasties period and its boom was from the Song to Yuan Dynasty. By 700 years later, in the middle of the Ming dynasty, it had declined. This kiln site comprises about 400,000 m<sup>2</sup>. In the village surrounding the site, were found a great deal of porcelain pieces and many kinds of tools which had been used to make and fire porcelain. From those tools the characteristics of each period are apparent



Figure 1. Hutian kiln site.

Bluish-white porcelain originated in Jingdezhen and a large number of bluish-white porcelain was found in the Hutian site. The firing technology changed in three stages with the passage of time, each change increasing the number of bowls that could be fired at one time.



Figure 2. The excavated ceramics.

Each successive improvement also streamlined the usage of sagars and economized on their materials. In the first stage the potters used an upright firing method with a few stacking sagars



Figure 3. Upright firing method with bowls stacked in sagars.

In the second stage, in order to expand production, the firing technology of bluish-white porcelain was changed to upside-down stacking of several pieces in one sagar. But this way was not very effective because the sizes of the bowls thus stacked were not the same and different sizes require different firing times. This method of firing produced what is called the “man’s mouth” porcelain.

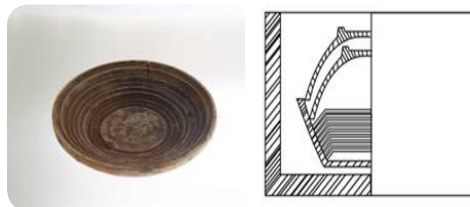


Figure 4. Upside-down firing method with bowls stacked in sagar.

In the last stage, to solve this problem of variant size and timing, the potter improved this firing method by combining the upside-down firing method with a stack of rings.

Xu Tingting

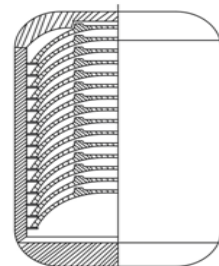


Figure 5. Sagar of stacked rings.

### Editor

Several months ago, I received a letter from Xu Tingting, a graduate student at Jingdezhen Ceramics Institute in Jiangxi province, so I would like to sincerely thank her for her interest and her kind comments about our newsletter and for her awareness of the importance of Southeast Asian ceramics in the history of world ceramics.

### Call for Articles.

The Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter is inviting all members to submit articles for the Newsletter.

Please send your articles or comments and suggestions to the Newsletter Editor at [museumnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:museumnewsletter@gmail.com).

Please take note that there will be no honoraria for articles published.



## New in brief...

From May 4th to 6th, 2012, the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum arranged a trip to visit some industrial ceramics kiln sites of ancient Siam during an Ancient Industrial Ceramics Kiln Site study excursion. Our group started with a visit to the Suphanburi National Museum to study Bang Pun jars, and then went on to the Bang Rachan kiln site in Singburi. On the second day we explored the Koi Noi and Pa Yang kiln sites of Si Satchanalai, near Sukhothai, and then toured the Ramkhamhaeng National Museum, in Sukhothai. We finished the 3rd day of our trip at the Kamphaengphet National Museum.



Figure 1. Group at the Suphanburi National Museum



Figure 2. Dr.Pariwat Thammapreechakorn guiding at the Ramkhamhaeng National Museum



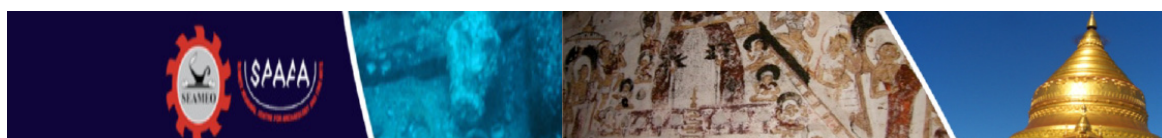
Figure 3. Visit to the Old Sukhothai kiln site



The Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum's Continued Knowledge Dissemination Program holds special lectures for Bangkok University's student body and the public. This year's first lecturer was Mr. Sitthard Srikotr, special Lecturer in the Department of History, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kasetsart University, who gave a talk on "Flood, Location and Water Management in the Ancient Cities of Thailand" on August 18, 2012.



A team from the Fine Arts Department of Thailand visited the collection storage of the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum to study our Knowledge Management Program, with reference to identification of ancient objects, specifically Thai ceramics. The Fine Arts Department will publish this program in their handbook to be distributed to the National Museums throughout Thailand.



## Announcement: 1st Call for Papers

SEAMEO SPAFA, Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts, will host The 1st International Conference on Southeast Asian Archaeology May 7-10, 2013, at Burapha University, Chonburi province, Thailand. Papers on the development of Southeast Asian archaeology are invited to be submitted and, if accepted, shall be compiled into one or more volumes which will summarize the current state of archaeology in Southeast Asia. The program includes a one-day excursion in Thailand. Information on the conference program, accommodation, registration fee, excursion program, etc., will be announced soon.

For more information, please visit [www.seameo-spafo.org/upload/files/forweb.pdf](http://www.seameo-spafo.org/upload/files/forweb.pdf)

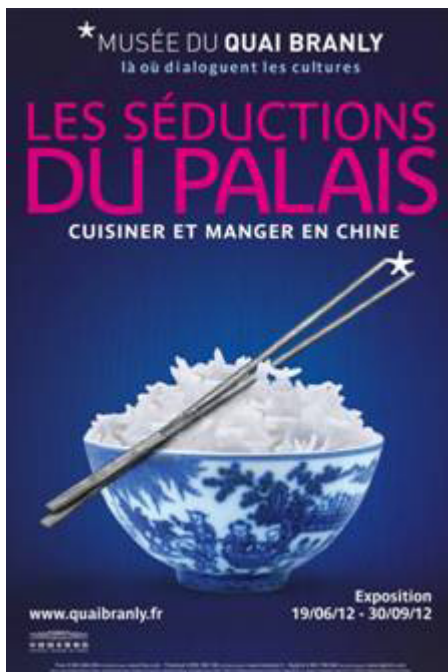
## Interesting Exhibition

The current exhibition at the Museum Quai Branly, "The Seductions of the Palace", presents the traditions of the Chinese table through a hundred objects, mostly from the National Museum of China, partner of the exhibition, complemented by a selection of works from the Musée Guimet of Asian Arts.

This exhibition runs from June 19 to September 30, 2012, and its more than one hundred objects of tableware and Chinese cooking take us back into all the periods of Chinese dynasties. "The Seductions of the Palace" brings together many everyday phenomenon of ancestral Chinese culinary art from 7000 years ago, continuing on until its present transformations.

Thus, the two-part exhibition reveals the history of Chinese food. The first part is dedicated to the kitchen in China and it invites us to rediscover the history of Chinese food. The history of tableware is there, too, exemplified through many objects such as dishes from different eras - Tang, Song, Ming.

The second part of the exhibition returns to the expansion of Chinese cuisine throughout the world with numerous maps and illustrations: tea, noodles, wok cooking, extending even to the West. The exhibition is curated by Jean-Paul Desroches, curator at the Musée Guimet of Asian Arts, and Yan Zhi, National Museum of China, and is presented in partnership with the National Museum of China.



The Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum is still closed for repairs due to last year's floods.

## Coming in the Next Issue:

EurASEAA Dublin 2012  
14th International Conference



\* Report from EURASEAA Dublin 2012, first time for a ceramics panel.



\* 2012 International Symposium on Ancient Ceramics: Its Scientific and Technological Insights, Jindezhen, 22-28 October, hosted by the Shanghai Research Society of Science and Technology of Ancient Ceramics, jointly with the Institute of Ancient Ceramics.

\* Report of SEACAM pieces lent to the upcoming exhibition at the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore.