Volume VIII, Number 1 Jun - Sep 2014

Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter

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museumnewsletter@gmail.com
Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum

The Phanom Surin Shipwreck: New Discovery of an Arab-style Shipwreck in Central Thailand

Photos Courtesy of the 1st Regional Office of Fine Arts Department of Thailand

In September 2013, the archaeologists of the 1st Regional Office of Fine Arts Department in Ratchaburi received a report from the Subdistrict Administration Organization of Phan Thai Norasing in Samut Sakhon that Mr. Surin and Mrs. Phanom Sringamdee, the owners of a shrimp farm near the Wisutthi Warawat (Klang Klong) Temple, discovered the keelson of a shipwreck, as well as other parts of a ship's infrastructure, and many ceramic shards still buried several meters deep under the muddy ground in a shrimp farm. The location of the shipwreck was exactly onshore in central Thailand, around 8 kilometers from current shoreline. According to the previous research, it was assumed that the area in which this shipwreck was found had once been the former shallows of the Gulf of Thailand and the ship was one of two Tang shipwrecks ever found in Southeast Asia.

Fig. 2 Possible round grinding stone.

Fig. 1 Current view of the Phanom Surin Shipwreck excavation.

The 1st Regional Office in Ratchaburi and the Underwater Archaeology Division of the Fine Arts Department of Thailand cooperated in immediately beginning the rescue excavation, and they named this shipwreck the "Phanom Surin Shipwreck", after the name of the land owner who donated some area to protect the site. The excavation is still ongoing. During the progress of the excavation, the archaeologists found the structure of the wooden ship almost intact (Fig. 1) with its cargo of many ceramic shards, a part of basketwork attached on a ceramic, dammar (resin) inside a jar, a possible round grinding stone (Fig. 2), a possible round stone anchor, rattan ropes,

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Letter from the Editor

This issue is about the contacts between the Tang Dynasty and Southeast Asia during the 9th to 10th centuries. The issue contains two articles regarding shipwrecks in the South China Sea. The first article is about the new discovery of the shipwreck of Phanom Surin sunk in the area of a former shallow of the Gulf of Thailand which is now a part of the lower central plain of Thailand. It was found that its assemblages may be simpler and older than the Belitung assemblages, as mentioned in the second article. Additionally, one hidden key site people did not know is the possible port of Laem Pho located in Chaiya, Surat Thani. On the east coast of the middle part of the Malay Peninsula, this was a destination for Tang export products supplied by maritime trade routes. They were distributed to some cities located deep inland, especially Chaiya, as it was the territory of the Srivijaya Kingdom. I hope you enjoy reading these articles. Moreover, the restoration of the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum may be finished before the end of this year. We are looking forward to welcoming you at that time.

Fig. 3 Betel nuts.

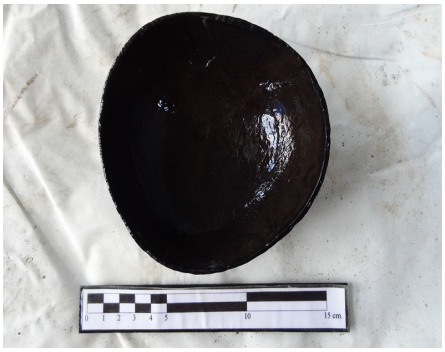

Fig. 4 Coconut shell with small hole.

fiber ropes, rice grains, betel nuts (Fig. 3), coconut shells with a small hole (Fig. 4), fishbone, ivories, and other animal horns.

The ship was built with a 17.65 meters long rectangular keelson and the bottom of keelson is pierced through with many holes for mortise and tenon joints with the frames, but a keel has not been found yet. The bow possibly faced to the south and the ship collapsed to the larboard since only its starboard was above the ground. The hull planks were enforced and stitched with fiber ropes (Fig. 5) and every drill-hole was probably sealed using putty of dammar that was found as evidence in a torpedo-shaped stoneware jar (Fig. 6). Two round masts had collapsed and lay on the larboard, of which one was 17.37 meters high. This ship building is similar to the Arab-style of the Belitung shipwreck sunk near the Indonesian island of Belitung (Michael Flecker,

Fig. 5 Stitches of each hull plank using the fiber robes enforced and stitched.

Fig. 6 Shards of torpedo-shaped stoneware jars: the mouths (above left), an Arabian inscription on some upper part (below), its shape (above right) and the dammar stuck on its inside wall (middle left).

2000; 2001; Krahl, Guy, Wilson and Raby, 2010). Hence, the Phanom Surin shipwreck is assumed to be an Arab-style of ship as well.

The ceramic shards were found in a number larger than other items and were full of variety, coming from several origins.

The first type is the carinated earthenware pots with cord marked or incised designs (Fig. 7), related to the ceramics commonly found in a large number on the Dvaravati sites in central Thailand, including some parts of northeastern Thailand dur-

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Fig. 7 Shard of Dvaravati carinated earthenware pot.

ing the 5th to 10th centuries.

The second type is a portion of torpedo-shaped stoneware jars that the archaeologists believed were possibly from India or the Middle East. Dammar was found stuck on their interior walls (Fig. 6). However, the identification of this type of jar is still unclear because they are similar to the amphorae produced somewhere in Greece or Egypt around the 8th century and usually found from the shipwrecks on the maritime trade routes in the Mediterranean Sea; but the archaeologists do not believe that the amphorae came across from those regions to Southeast Asia.

The last type is Chinese Tang ceramic shards that were produced

Fig. 8 Shards of Tang Guanchong green glazed jars, first half of the 9th century.

from at least two kilns, specifically the Guanchong kilns in Xinhui and the Fengkai kilns, both kilns situated in Guangdong. The Guanchong green glazed jars with four to six handles partially glazed only on their upper part had a flat unglazed base, and

Fig. 9 Tang Fengkai unglazed jar still stringed the original fiber robes, first half of the 9th century.

some of them were inscribed with only the single Chinese character “吉” (Ji) onto its shoulder that was possibly a part of the full word “大吉” (Daji), which means “lucky”. These are dated approximately to the first half of the 9th century (Fig. 8). A Fengkai unglazed jar with six handles, with the original fiber ropes still strung together in all handles, with a brown clay body was approximately dated to the first half of the 9th century, similar to the Guanchong jar (Fig. 9).

The current conclusion is that, by taking into account all the evidence, especially the dating of ceramics, as well as all the shipwreck’s assemblages which were possibly the foodstuffs and consumer goods the sailors needed to survive, the shipwreck can be dated to around the first half of the 9th century or earlier. However, this shipwreck is still under an ongoing excavation and in a number of its assemblages the archaeologists cannot know what should be counted as cargo for sale that this ship carried in the past. Its assemblages also show that this ship has a sailing area between the Indian Sea for India or the Middle East, the Gulf of Thailand for Southeast Asia, and the South China Sea for the southern region of China.

Fig. 10 Locations of Phanom Surin shipwreck and Dvaravati cities: current shoreline (blue) and Dvaravati shoreline (black). *Phongsi Wanasin and Thiwa Suphachanya (1981) and Dr. Trongjai Hutangkura (2014)*

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According to previous research by Phongsi Wanasin and Thiwa Suphachanya in 1981 about the geomorphology of the former shoreline of the Gulf of Thailand and the settlement pattern in the Dvaravati period during the 5th to 10th centuries, they indicate this shipwreck sunk in the former shallow coastal waters of the Gulf of Thailand during a period of ebb tide sometime in the 9th century or earlier and it probably arrived to Southeast Asia for direct contact with any Dvaravati ports along the coast of the Gulf of Thailand or any Srivijaya ports on the Malay Peninsula and in the Indonesian Islands (Fig. 10).

Preeyanuch Jumprom
jpreeyanuch@hotmail.com

The Belitung Shipwreck and Its Ceramics Cargo

Photos Courtesy of the Seabed Exploration and Sulung Segara Jaya Catalogue and the Research Agency for Marine Affairs and Fisheries Archives, Indonesia

The discovery of the Belitung shipwreck and its remarkable cargo widely known as the "Tang Cargo" could be said as one of the largest discoveries of underwater archaeological remains in Indonesia. The shipwreck was first found by a local sea cucumber fisherman and then he informed and "sold" the point location to the shipwreck salvage company in Indonesia, PT Sulung Segara Jaya, which then collaborated with the German shipwreck salvage company, the Seabed Exploration, led by Tilman Walterfang. Both companies later conducted a survey and removal of shipwreck cargo from September 1998 to April 1999 under the direction of underwater archaeologist Michael Flecker. The Tang cargo case was then handled by the Indonesian National Committee of Salvage and Utilization of the Valuable Objects Cargo of Sunken Ships (which at that time was under the Ministry of Politics and Security Coordination, and later shifted to the Research Agency for Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries on January 2003). To keep the collection intact as opposed to selling objects individually, Walterfang sold the Tang cargo for $32 million U.S. dollars in 2005 to the Sentosa Leisure Group, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Sentosa Development Corporation in Singapore.

The Belitung shipwreck and its cargo were found at 17 to 18 meters of depth and about 1.8 miles off the coast of Belitung Island in Karang Hitam Waters, South China Sea, Indonesia. Geographically, the Belitung shipwreck is located at coordinates 02°40'49.9" S and 107° 35' 31.2" E and administratively located at Batu Itam Village, Sijuk District, Belitung Regency, Bangka Belitung Archipelago Province. Actually, this find is of extremely significant value to the underwater archeology in Indonesia related to maritime history and the history of trading among the countries in the regions of the Middle East, India, Indonesia, and China. Furthermore the Belitung is the first shipwreck contemporary with the Tang Dynasty ever found in Southeast Asia. Herein lies the first archaeological evidence for direct trading between the Middle East or the Western Indian Ocean and China, as well as the proof of sailing activities from the 9th century which passed through Indonesian waters (Sudaryadi, 2011).

Michael Flecker believed the ship was an Omani *dhow*, today known as *The Jewel of Muscat*. Flecker mentioned the keel is 15.5 meters long with stitched hull planking. This *dhow* is estimated to have sailed on the Maritime Silk Road from China to the Middle East because lots of bowls were decorated with geometric decorations and Koranic motifs that were clearly intended for Middle Eastern markets, which implied the objects were produced to order by Middle Eastern customers. Sonia Kolesnikov-Jessop (2011) stated that the ship and its cargo showed a significant trade relationship between the Tang Dynasty (the 7th to 10th centuries) in China with the Abbasid Dynasty (the 9th century) in Iraq. The earliest piece bears an inscription mentioning the third year of Kaicheng, equivalent to 838. Other inscriptions date to 826, during the reign of the Jingzong Emperor.

Of the entire artifacts recovered from the shipwreck, most of them are mainly the Changsa ceramics (60,000 pieces, mostly bowls), named after the Changsha kilns in Hunan where they were produced (Flecker, 2000). The Changsha kilns were active by the end of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and declined after the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907-960) period. Its top product was a grayish

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green glazed ware, but all iron based earth colors occur. The Changsha style is particularly notable for its tri-color decoration, and especially its early painted decoration of figures, natural ornaments and calligraphy, as well as applied ornaments or dipped, painted and splashed glazes. By painting their designs directly onto the clay body or slip coat and then covering them with a clear glaze before firing, potters could protect their designs in a way not previously possible. The colors used in the underglaze designs varied from brown and green hues; and sometimes, but rarely, a blue underglaze color seems to have been used (Nillson, 2013). Other than the Changsa ceramics, there are some Ding white glazed wares produced from Hebei and Yue ceramics produced from Zhejiang.

In the Belitung shipwreck, those ceramics were placed in the large storage jars to protect them from breakage (Fig. 1). Mostly the ceramics cargo were mass produced with cheap production costs, however, not all were mass produced, especially a number of very rare blue and white wares with floral lozenge motifs surrounded by sprigs of foliage because blue and white wares started to mass produce since Yuan Dynasty. They are believed to be the earliest known complete Chinese blue and white wares (Hays, 2008).

Ceramics which were found in this shipwreck consist of earthenware, stoneware and porcelain ceramics. The discovered earthenware ceramics comprise 12 pieces of the green splashed cups with fish and a drinking straw attached (Fig. 2), a green splashed ewer with incised design and dragon lid (Fig. 3), and green splashed ewers with dragon spout. Porcelain ceramics comprise 23 white glazed pieces, including a saucer with a four-foliate rim (Fig. 4), a white glazed bowl with a disc-shaped foot, a white glazed saucer with bamboo leaf, a white glazed cup with handle (Fig. 5), and another white glazed cup, for instance.

Fig. 1 Changsa ceramics placed in large jar. Photos *Michael Flecker*

Fig. 2 Green splashed cup with applied fish and straw. *(h. 10.7 cm, d. 9.2 cm)*

Fig. 3 Green splashed ewer with incised design and dragon lid. *(h. 105.8 cm)*

Fig. 4 White glazed saucer with foliate rim. *(h. 2.6 cm, d. 14.3 cm)*

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Fig. 5 White glazed cup with handel. *(h. 7.7 cm, d. 7.8 cm)*

The majority of discovered artifacts are stoneware ceramics, such as white glazed large covered jars, white glazed flasks, white glazed bowls with a disc-shaped foot, white glazed large ewers, white glazed ewers, blue and white dishes with double lozenge and foliate motifs (Fig. 10), blue glazed spittoons with copper red design, slop bowls, green glazed lamps (Fig. 8), green glazed dog figurines (Fig. 9), a bowl with saucer attached, green glazed jars, green glazed jarlets with lids, green glazed vases, begonia-shaped green glazed basins with six lugs in mottled brown, green glazed saucers, copper green and red glazed cups, bowls with dragon medallions (Fig. 11), jarlets with two handles, jarlets with two handles in snakeskin glaze, jars with two lugs, four lugs, and six lugs, jars with incised dragon and palm designs, brown glazed lamps, a green and brown glazed bird whistle (Fig. 9), brown glazed rasps in the form of a fish (Fig. 9), watercraft figurines with dragon design, brown glazed watercraft figurines, oil lamps in the form of a cup, green glazed bowls with an underglaze painted peacock, bowls on a splayed foot with landscape design, bowls on a splayed foot with flower design, underglaze dishes, underglaze cups, bowls with underglaze fish, birds, duck, peacock, scripts, pagodas, trees, red and brown cloud, abstract designs (Fig. 6 and 7), and bowls with underglaze lotus designs.

There were many green glazed wares in the cargo, such as twin-fish ovoid flasks, flasks with incised design (Fig. 15), ovoid ewers with four-lobed body (Fig. 15), pear-shaped ewers, large bowls shaped-like a cherry apple flower, bowls shaped-like a cherry apple flower, oval bowls with incised decoration, bowls with a four-lobed body, bowls with a splayed foot, dishes with incised decoration, tetragonal dishes with an incised flower (Fig. 13), flat-bottomed dishes with five-foliate rims, saucer, cups with conical body, cups with incised design, covered boxes, large bowls with four lugs, incense burners (Fig. 12), and spittoon (Fig. 14).

Fig. 6 Bowls with underglaze painted fish design (left) *(h. 5.0 cm, d. 15.0 cm)*, bird design (center) *(h. 5.0 cm, d. 15.0 cm)*, and peacock design (right) *(h. 9.0 cm, d. 23.0 cm)*.

Fig. 7 Bowls with underglaze script (left) *(h. 5.0 cm, d. 15.0 cm)*, tree design (center) *(h. 9.0 cm, d. 23.0 cm)*, and lotus design (right) *(h. 5.0 cm, d. 15.0 cm)*.

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Fig. 8
Green glazed lamp. *(h. 22.3 cm, d. 20.0 cm)*

Fig. 9
Brown glazed rasp in the form of fish (above) *(h. 2.4 cm, l. 18.0 cm)*, green and brown glazed bird whistle (below left) *(h. 4.0 cm, l. 7.0 cm)*, and green glazed dog figurine (below right) *(h. 7.8 cm)*.

Fig. 10
Blue and white dishes with double lozenge and foliate motifs.

Fig. 11
Blue and red glazed incense burner (left) *(h. 13.5 cm)*, green splashed underglaze bowl with dragon medallion (center) *(h. 4.6 cm, d. 14.0 cm)*, and brown glazed disk (?) (right) *(h. 2.0 cm, d. 15.1 cm)*.

Fig. 12
Green glazed incense burners. *(h. 11.8 cm, d. 10.2 cm & h. 14.5 cm, d.12.3 cm)*

Fig. 13 Green glazed tetragonal dish with incised flower (left) *(h. 2.8 cm, d. 15.4 cm)*, green glazed bowl shape like a cherry apple flower (center) *(h. 4.3 cm, d. 9.3/12.0 cm)*, and green glazed bowl with splayed foot (right) *(h. 8.4 cm, d. 15.2 cm)*.

Fig. 14 Green glazed spittoon. *(h. 11.2 cm, d. 15.5 cm)*

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Fig. 15 Green glazed flasks with incised designs (left and ceter) *(h. 23.8 cm & h. 25.2 cm)* and green glazed ovoid ewer with four-lobed body (right) *(h. 21.5 cm)*.

In 1999, The Indonesian national committee mentioned that 47,759 ceramics were sent to New Zealand for the desalination pocess. A large number of ceramics and other artifacts, including 18 pieces of gold and others, have currently become part of the collection of the Art Science Museum, Singapore. However, there are still several thousand ceramics currently stored in the Cileungsi Warehouse in West Java, Indonesia, which is under the authority of the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (Fig. 16). At the present, the ceramics are in the process of re-inventory and are waiting for further conservation efforts. Re-inventory is necessary because the data and information on the number of these artifacs is still conflicting because the national committee has undergone organizational changes three times and experienced the transition from one ministry to another ministry. This had implications for the transfer of the secretariat office, archives transfer and the transfer of artifacts from one warehouse to another.

Nia Naelul Hasanah Ridwan
niahasanah79@gmail.com

Fig. 16
Changsha ceramics in the process of desalination at Cileungsi Warehouse, Indonesia.

Review of Ceramic Finds in the Port of Laem Pho

Back in 1982 to 1983 the Fine Arts Department of Thailand established the first project of survey and excavation on Laem Pho after the discovery of many ceramic shards around 5 square kilometers on the beach and shallow seabed of the headland. The project was led by Khemchati Thepchai, who was an archaeologist responsible for that area at the time, and he also published an article entitled "Ceramic Finds from Laem Pho in Chaiya" in *Muang Boran Journal*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1984.

In general, Laem Pho is a headland located on the joint between the mouth of Tha Chana River and the Gulf of Thailand on the east coast of the middle part of Malay Peninsula in Chaiya, Surat Thani (Fig. 1 and 2). The results of the survey found some constructions, specifically many possible freshwater ponds in the plan of a pentagon, some pedestals of brick construction and one wooden rudder preserved in the temple museum of Kaeo Temple in the capital Chaiya, which was around 10 kilometers far from the west of headland. Meanwhile, only five excavation pits on the beach and surrounding sand dunes were excavated and a large number of ceramic shards were found and identified as Chinese ceramics, which numbered more than Persian and domestic ceramics mixed in the same stratigraphy. All of the Chinese ceramic shards dated to the Tang Dynasty were categorized into at least five types, consisting of unglazed, white glazed, green glazed, underglaze brown and green, and brown sprayed (Fig. 3, 4 and 5) wares, that were produced at Xingtai kilns in Hebei, Changsha and Gongyi kilns in Henan, Yue kilns in Zhejiang, Fengkai, Xinhui, Meixian and other kilns in Guangdong, all produced in the first half of the 9th century. A very few Persian blue glazed wares were also found that archaeologist suggested were probably produced in the eastern region of Persia around the early 9th century.

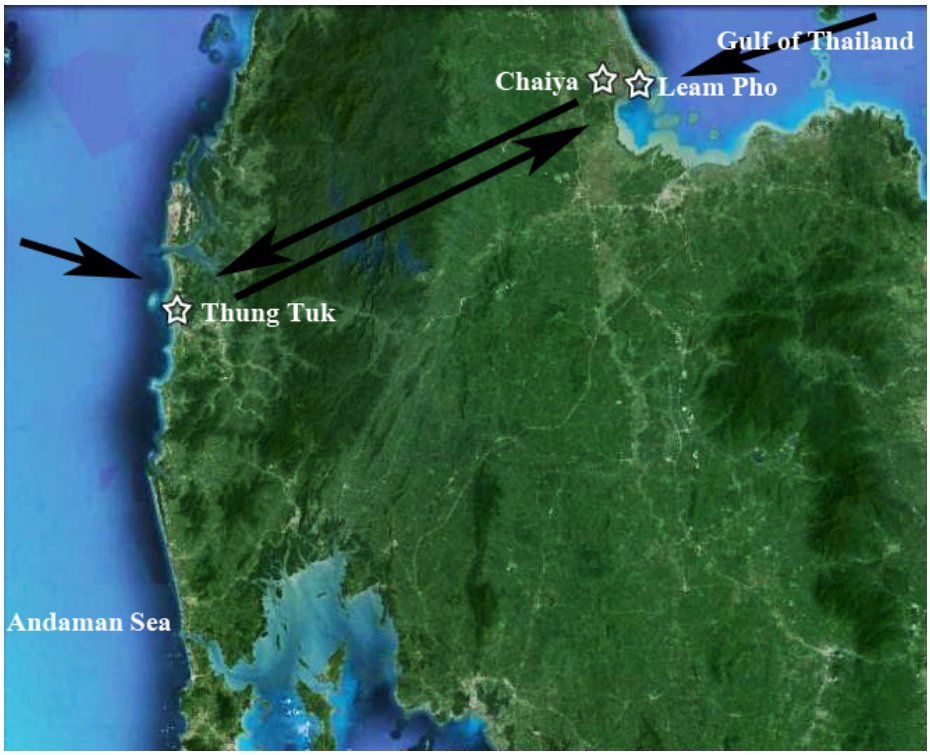

Fig. 1 Selected site locations and trans-peninsular route on the middle part of Malay Peninsula. *Tharapong Srisuchat (2004)*

Khemchati Thepchai's interpretation suggested Laem Pho was a port (he called it an "Entrêpot"), connected with the Chinese maritime routes, which started from some ports on southern and central China. More-

Fig. 2 Ceramic shards around the beach of Laem Pho. *Amara Srisuchat (2001)*

Fig. 3 Various types of Tang ceramics recovered from Laem Pho. *Chaiya National Museum*

Fig. 4 Changsha brown sprayed ewer, first half of the 9th century. *Tharapong Srisuchat (2004)*

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Fig. 5 Changsha underglaze brown and green bowls, first half of the 9th century. *Amara Srisuchat (2001)*

over, Laem Pho was a possible to link to some cities deep into the land, especially Chaiya. However, the Underwater Archaeology Division of the Fine Arts Department of Thailand has not ever surveyed underwater in that area yet, but it is possible that there may be some ship sunk somewhere on the area.

Chaiya was a big city having four Buddhist temples, including the Phra That Chaiya, Wiang, Kaeo and Long Temples with some Buddhist and Hindu artifacts found around the city. The architectural forms of these temples had been influenced by the Southern Indian and Srivijaya architectural styles, with which they had contact, especially during the 8th to 13th centuries. In her review in an article entitled "Background to Sri Vijaya Story, part I to V" in *The Journal of Siam Society*, from vols. 62.1 in 1974, 62.2 in 1974, 63.1 in 1975, 64.1 in 1976, and 64.2 in 1976, Mom Chao Chand Chirayu Rajani suggested the word "Chele-focbe" (the French spelling to which she referred from O. W. Wolters's book) appearing in a Chinese Tang chronicle written by Yijing (a Chinese Buddhist monk, 635-713); and she assumed the word "Chele-focbe" to be Chaiya on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, as Yijing recorded when he arrived there in 671. All evidence supports Chaiya as a part of the Srivijaya Kingdom.

In 2004, Tharapong Srisuchat published his results of archaeological research as an article entitled "Ancient Ports and Trans-peninsula Routes in Upper Malay Peninsula" in *The Proceedings of the Seminar on Thailand-Malaysia: Malay Peninsula Archaeology Programme*. The most interesting part of his article related to previous research is the interpretation about Laem Pho as one of the east coast ports which linked the maritime trade routes from China and trans-peninsula routes to Thung Tuk (Mueang Thong), which was another port located in Ko Kho Khao, Phangnga on the west coast connecting to the Andaman Sea as a part of the Indian Ocean, during the 9th to 10th centuries (Fig. 1). His interpretation is based on the comparison of many Tang ceramics, Persian ceramics, and glass beads assumed to have been produced in India or Persia. These were found in both ports and were possibly special items of merchandise, as well as being similar.

In conclusion, the port of Laem Pho was one destination of Tang ceramics supplied by maritime trade routes to which the Belitung and Phnom Surin ships used to travel before they sank. All the above evidence also supports idea of trade relations, especially in the 9th century, between the Tang Dynasty and Srivijaya Kingdom, including the varieties of products and cultures, maritime trade routes, trans-peninsular routes and the locations of inland cities and ports for contacts with the kingdoms in the Middle East, India, China and Southeast Asia through the Malay Peninsula, which lay between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Atthasit Sukkham
atthasit.s@bu.ac.th

Changsha Ewer in the Shape of a Bird

Changsha kilns, Henan,
Tang Dynasty,
first half of the 9th century.
Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum, Bangkok University

An ewer in the shape of a bird with the head as spout, tail as handle and two applied wings on the shoulder in lower relief. Low rounded neck and everted foot rim and flat base. Gray stoneware with fine cracked yellow glazed and painted with green and brown patches.

Ewer is a type of jug that is shaped -like a vase and that was used for carrying and storing liquids such as water, tea or wine. Sometimes "ewer" and "jug" are used interchangeably, but a jug has a wide mouth, and a gently tapering body.

The Changsha kilns are situated in southern China and produced during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). They are also called the Tongguan kilns due to their discovery in the present area of Wazhaping, Tongguan town, Changsha city in Hunan province.

The Changsha kilns were active by the end of the Tang Dynasty (618-906) and declined after the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period (907-960). Its main product was the grayish green glazed wares and a famous typical shape was the short-spouted ewers with a globular body and a straight neck. Several kinds of product were also produced including molded figures and wheel-thrown pots, jars, dishes, and other shapes with complex surface decorations.

The use of colors on underglaze wares varied by their yellow, brown and green hues but it was rare that the blue color seemed to have been used.

Tang ceramics were found around the Southeast Asian Insular and Peninsular regions, the Indian subcontinent, the Indus Valley, Sri Lanka, the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, as far inland as Samarra and the Abbasid capital, as far west as old Cairo in Egypt and Antioch on the Syrian Coast, and as far south as the Comoros Island and Zanzibar. However, the quantity of Tang ceramics found in Thailand is very small.

Burin Singtoaj
burin.s@bu.ac.th

A Report on the Conference of Research on Chinese Export Ware Found in Thailand during the Past Three Decades

Fig. 1 Presenters join VIPs on stage to open the conference.

For 417 years the ancient Thai capital of Ayutthaya was an important hub for global trade. Ryukyuan trading ships in partnership with Ayutthaya became the middlemen for the exchange of Chinese ceramics, as well as the Thai Si Satchanalai (Sangkhalok) and Bang Rachan (Mae Nam Noi) wares and ceramics from Japan and Vietnam, with the markets of the world, as proved by the huge caches found in shipwrecks in the Gulf of Thailand. From August 1st to 2nd, 2014, Ayutthaya became the entrêpot for a special atmosphere, heady with scholarship, for sharing new knowledge about some very well beloved old topics. The Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum of Bangkok University, SEAMEO SPAFA Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts, the 3rd Regional Office of Fine Arts Department in Ayutthaya and Thammasat Museum hosted a conference of *Research on Chinese Export Ware Found in Thailand During the Past Three Decades* at the Woraburi Ayothaya Convention Resort.

Fig. 2 Mom Rajawongse Dr. Rujaya Abhakorn and Dr. Mathana Santiwat.

Fig. 3 Organizers of the conference, Pariwat Thammapreechakorn (center) with SEACM staff.

Mom Rajawongse Dr. Rujaya Abhakorn, Director of SEAMEO SPAFA, and Dr. Mathana Santiwat, President of Bangkok University, opened the conference. The Director of the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Dr. Pariwat Thammapreechakorn, with his staffs of the SEACM, graciously and expertly took care of the organization and logistics.

It was my role to have volunteered to help prepare the background with the English necessary for the conference and to have been a volunteer consultant to the SEACM and their English newsletter which I help to edit. It was a pleasure to meet old friends and many visiting overseas scholars in the field, and have a re-

Fig. 4 Cultural show by Thanombutra School.

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Fig. 5 Keynote speakers Viengkeo Souksavatdy and Dr. Li Boaping including Dr. Mathana Santiwat, Dr. Pariwat Thammapreechakorn and Dr. Boonrod Vuthisatkul who are in charge of the SEACM (from L).

Fig. 6 Author (center) with GET '14 graduates Natthapong Matsong on his right and Thachsorn Tantiwong on his left.

Fig. 7 Past NMV presidents Beverly Frankel and Fumiko Boughey enjoy a light moment with Dr. Li Baoping in front of Mahathat Temple, Ayutthaya (from L).

union with about 20 Thai curators that we in our Bangkok National Museum Volunteers' GET program had trained to guide in English, as well as meet with their seniors and bosses at this conference.

The keynote speakers included: 1) young Chinese world renowned expert from University of Sydney Dr. Li Boaping, who addressed "The Advances in Study of Ancient Kiln Sites and Chinese Export Ware in China" which concentrated much on export ware for the Japanese tea ceremony; 2) Viengkeo Souksavatdy, Deputy Director-General, Department of Heritage of Lao PDR, who showed "Chinese Export Ware Found in Lao PDR", and 3) Dr. Pariwat Thammapreechakorn, Director of Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum, Bangkok University, presenting "Chinese Export Ware Found in Thailand: Advances in Identity, Origin and Dating".

Presentations included "Ceramic Trades on the Chao Phraya River Basin, Central Thailand during the 9th to 14th Centuries", by young Japanese Dr. Ko Mukai, Visiting Fellow, Center for Cultural Resource Studies, Kanazawa University, who took his PhD. at Silpakorn University with one of the NMV's mentors Dr. Amara Srisuchat, Senior Adviser to the Fine Arts Department as his adviser, and who wrote and presented completely in Thai; also young Thai collector-author-scholar Thayakarn Wong-on, presenting his "Relative Study between Chinese Export Ware: The Golden Age of the Nan Chang Temple in Chiang Mai Province". Several of our Bangkok National Museum Volunteer trainees also presented, including Natthapong Matsong, curator at the Nan National Museum on "Overview of Chinese Export Ware Found in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province" and Thachsorn Tantiwong, curator at the National Museum, Bangkok on "Economic Role of the City in the Lower Ping River Basin before the 18th Century: A Case Study on Evidence Found at Traitrueng City in Kamphaeng Phet Province".

Past NMV presidents Beverly Frankel and Fumiko Boughey also attended, and the three of us were hosted for dinner by Pim Praphai Bisalputra and husband Jeffrey Sng who wrote the book *Bencharong & Chinaware in the Court of Siam: the Surat Osathanugrah Collection* about Surat Osathanugrah's, the late owner of Bangkok University, the SEACM and its holdings, collection of bencharong ceramics. Pim and Jeffrey gave a lecture on this subject some years ago to the NMV. They drove us to the new VOC Museum named Baan Hollanda Museum built in Dutch style on the site of the Dutch "Factory" enclave and also to the neighboring shipyard. Later we enjoyed drinks at their resort hotel *IUDIA* with their small museum which contained

Fig. 8 Qing blue and white bowl with *Vajrayana* esoteric Buddhist symbols on exterior.

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Fig. 9 Yuan blue and white octagonal lustral water jar, probably a diplomatic gift, found in the crypt of Mahathat Temple, Ayutthaya.

not only bencharong, but also many pieces of Chinese blue and white. Many of the scholars and VIPs from the conference joined us at the resort museum, which lies across the river from the Phuthaisawan Temple, the first temple built by Ayutthaya's founder King Uthong (Ramathibhodi I), 1351 AD. Their view of the temple from *IUDIA* at night is awe-inspiring.

On the late afternoon of the second day we all visited the ruins of Mahathat Temple to view the inlaid fragments of Chinese blue and white ceramics, the Phet Fortress where so many ships carrying Chinese ceramics and others stopped to off-load, and the Chantrakasem Palace of the Deputy Kings, now a museum, where another of our GET graduates Naruemon Kao-ngoen is the head of museum, with a fine collection of import ceramics, including Chinese blue and white as well as polychrome.

It was all a very serious, joyful, respectful, on-task, well-organized and gracious gathering of like-minded scholars, a welcome break from their day-to-day hectic lives of research and an important time to share new findings and celebrate our work. We members of the NMV are greatly appreciative to our friends at the SEACM and the other organizes and sponsors for allowing us the privilege of attending this conference and to all our hosts for providing us with memorable learning experiences in this vast area of scholarship.

John Toomey
john.j.toomey@gmail.com