



Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter

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Guan Celadons

One of China's Lost Legendary Kilns Rediscovered

Guan is a term used to refer to objects for imperial, not commoners', use, in this case meaning that the kiln was actually established and managed by the court. Chinese porcelain reached its peak during the Song dynasty with five distinct regional styles including the imperial kiln, the Ru kiln, the Ge kiln, the Ding kiln and the Jun kiln. The Ru kiln was considered superior to the others in firing technique and color, producing a mysterious hue of celestial blue. According to legend, the late Northern Song Emperor Huizong commanded the potters to reproduce the color of the sky clearing after rain. This Ruzhou (Ruzhou Ru) porcelain became the imperial ware, yet it suddenly disappeared

and, until recent excavations, only 60 to 100 pieces were extant and to be found in the national museums of China, Britain, and Japan. The pieces pictured here are all Northern Song Ru or Southern Song Guan wares sent to the imperial court during the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) and were recently on exhibit in the Toyokan of the Tokyo National Museum (TNM). This left the world with the puzzle of locating the Ruzhou kilns, where the highly esteemed Guan (Kuan) celadons were produced. To complicate matters, with the recent unearthing of old kiln sites and scientific analysis, we have now come to realize the likely existence of even more as yet still undiscovered kiln sites.



Fig. 1 Shards from imperial Jiaotianxia kilns, Southern Song Guan ware; collected from Hangjia City, Zhejiang, Southern Song dynasty, 12th to 13th century, Tokyo National Museum

Letter from the Editor

Since the 11th century onwards, maritime connections helped East Asia and Southeast Asia to grow together as they established diplomatic and trade relations for regional and international maritime exchanges with each other. This issue contains news of some progress in ceramic studies between the 11th and 18th century in China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Singapore. John Toomey discusses recent finds of the formerly rare and mysterious Chinese Guan celadons dated from the 11th to 13th century. Walter Kassela updates his research on the Vung Tau shipwreck ceramics, focusing on the base marks of Qing Jingdezhen blue and white wares and Burin Singtoaj also writes about another Ming Jingdezhen blue and white ware with a base mark in the collection of the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum. And there are more details on archaeological training and research around Asia in the news in brief.



Fig. 2 Celadon glazed vase with peony design, Northern Song dynasty, 10th to 11th century, TNM



Fig. 3 Small celadon glazed bird, Yue ware, Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period to Northern Song dynasty, 10th to 11th century, TNM (top) and celadon glazed ewer with carved peony and arabesque design, Northern Song dynasty, 10th to 11th century, TNM (below)



Fig. 4 Celadon glazed ewer with arabesque design, Yaozhou ware; attributed provenance: Korea; Northern Song dynasty, 11th century, TNM

In the case of Ru, fortunately, a villager's accidental find near the Qingliang-si Monastery, Baofeng County, Henan, in 1986 led to excavations from 1987 that unearthed coins in the same strata dating between 1086 and 1106, spanning 20 years of the reigns of Emperors Zhezong and Huizong. The production period for Ru is generally agreed to have been from 1087 to 1125. Henan is referred to as the cradle of the Chinese civilization and was once a production center for chinaware. After repeated tests at the Nuclear Physics Lab of Zhengzhou University, researchers found that the newly discovered pieces have the same "celestial blue" color elements and formula as the Ru pieces in the Palace Mu-

seum, with only some pieces having minor differences. Just 100 meters away archeologists unearthed 15 furnaces, two workshops and various tools for making porcelain, glazing materials and fragments of Ruzhao porcelain, making it likely that this was a porcelain producing center.

Analysis of the frit showed that it was made up of the same formula as in the glaze of Ruzhou pieces. A high concentrate of agate, a silicon dioxide gel with high iron content readily available in a nearby quarry, was also found in it, which, along with the kilns' good reduction atmosphere, is thought to have boosted the celestial blue color of the glaze. The pieces were fired in two steps. First the body of fine, compact clay was bisque fired. Then, after the application of the frit, the pieces were uniquely placed on three to five spurs in the kiln for the second firing. This enabled almost the entire body of the piece to be glazed, leaving it with only a few sesame-seed shaped scars on the bottom, distinguishing Ruzhou wares from previous wares. Most of the pieces have fine crazing, and some even developed the broken ice effect. Had Huizhong been dissatisfied with the many unglazed parts left on the Ding ware that he had been using for Imperial functions, as the contemporary Northern Song scholar Lu You would have us believe? A more likely reason for his change of preference could be that he considered himself to be a T'aoist Emperor, and he may have wished to revive a rare kind of blue porcelain produced by the Yue kiln in Zhejiang in the Five Dynasties period (907-960), which had a fresh and elegant color that signified "nothingness in tranquility".



Fig. 5 Celadon glazed bowl with foliate rim, Southern Song Guan ware, 12th to 13th century, TNM

More than 1.2 million pieces for imperial and sacrificial purposes have since been unearthed at the excavation site. Some of these have rare features such as a rectangular tray or

beautiful designs and complicated carvings. Note that some Guan celadons have a lovely pea green or lime green glaze.



Fig. 6 Celadon glazed vase with phoenix handles, Longquan ware, Southern Song to Yuan dynasty, 13th century, TNM



Fig. 7 *Beishoku* (Rice-color) celadon glazed vase, Southern Song Guan ware, 12th to 13th century, Tokiwayama Bunko Foundation



Fig. 8 Celadon glazed jar with coiled dragon ornament, Southern Song to Yuan dynasty, 13th century, TNM

Vung Tau Shipwreck Porcelain Base Marks

The Vung Tau wreck was discovered off the Con Dao islands near the southern tip of Vietnam in 1990, and is dated to 1690 of the Kangxi reign (1662-1722) of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). A very high proportion of the Vung Tau shipwreck Jingdezhen blue and white porcelains contained base marks, but there is virtually no published information on this subject. Independent study of several hundred Vung Tau blue and white porcelains has resulted in the identification of 28 distinct underglaze blue base marks, along with one vase with a gilded base. The firsthand examination of actual objects included 119 items from the collection of this writer, a total of 38 items from the collection of the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum (SEACM) at Bangkok University, and hundreds of other items from a vast number of various sources in Vietnam and elsewhere.

The extensive and interesting variety of base marks on this middle period of Kangxi cargo provides a wealth of information and is an invaluable aid in the identification and dating of early Qing dynasty porcelain. The 29 underglaze blue base marks identified from 87 items and the number of each type included in this study are as follows:

- *Ding* (ancient vessel) with 4 legs in double circle - 4
- *Ding* (ancient vessel) with streamers in double circle - 3
- Lozenge with ribbons and streamers in double circle - 4
- Cross-hatched square in double circle - 5
- Conch with streamers in double circle - 4
- Gourd with streamers in dou-

ble circle - 3

- Precious jewel or pearl with ribbons and streamers in double circle - 1
- Precious jewel or pearl with ribbons and streamers - 1
- 6 character Commendation Mark in double circle (variant no. 1) - 7
- 6 character Commendation Mark in double circle (variant no. 2) - 1
- Cross-hatched lozenge with ribbons and streamers in double circle - 4
- Twin fish in double circle (variant No. 1) - 3
- Twin fish in double circle (variant No. 2) - 3
- Double circle only - 3
- Lotus in outline form - 6
- Artemisia leaf with cross-hatching - 4
- Artemisia leaf without cross-hatching - 1
- Swastika or *wan* character (representing ten thousand) - 6
- *Lingzhi* fungus in double circle - 8
- *Lingzhi* fungus - 5
- Dragonfly in double circle - 1
- Bee in double circle - 2
- Crouching mouse within a double circle - 1
- 4 character Hall Mark in a double circle (variant No. 1) - 2
- 4 character Hall Mark in a double circle (variant No. 2) - 1
- Cash symbol with streamers in double circle - 1
- Plum (*prunus*) blossom in double circle - 1
- Rhinoceros horn with streamers in double circle - 1
- Gilded base vase - 1

The base marks most frequently encountered on the Vung Tau shipwreck porcelains include the *lingzhi*

(sacred fungus) and the lotus in outline form. Most, if not nearly all, of the Jingdezhen underglaze blue decorated cups and saucers examined contained a base mark, frequently in the form of one of these two marks. The range of objects containing base marks included dishes, bowls and vases in addition to cups and saucers. All of the examples represented here have underglaze blue décor, except for a monochrome white cup shard with a *prunus* blossom base mark within a double circle.

The beaker vase included in the study is the only known example of the use of gilding as a base mark on ceramics recovered from the Vung Tau shipwreck. However, Jorg and Flecker (2001: 134, 138) do indicate that four incense burners, with elaborate underglaze blue décor, each had three strips of gold leaf embedded in the glaze in the interior of the vessels. They go on to speculate that these unique items were probably private trade wares and not part of the main cargo.

Auspicious symbols are important in Chinese culture and the meanings of those represented by these base marks are as follows:

- *Ding, Ting*, or incense burner - ancient ritual vessel.
- Lozenge represents victory and is one of the eight precious objects (jewel, cash, open lozenge, solid lozenge, musical stone, pair of books, pair of rhinoceros horns, and artemisia leaf).
- Conch shell is symbol of the reach of Buddha's teaching and one of the eight Buddhist symbols of good fortune (conch shell, lotus,

wheel of law or knowledge, parasol [umbrella], endless knot [Mandala], pair of golden fish, victory banner, and treasure vase).

- Double gourd symbolizes fertility and a wish for many sons, as

well as healing and protection from disease.

- Precious jewel or pearl refers to riches, pure intentions, genius in obscurity, and the granting of wishes; is one of the eight precious objects.

- Commendation Mark - praises the quality, rarity or preciousness of an object.

- Pair of fish is symbol of marital harmony, freedom from restraint and one of the eight Buddhist



Ding - 4 legs Ding - Streamers

Lozenge

Cross-hatched square



Conch

Gourd

Precious Jewel or Pearl



Commendation Marks

Cross-hatched Lozenge

Twin Fish



Twin Fish

Double Circle

Lotus

Artemisia Leaf

Fig. 1 Examples of each of the 29 base marks - Part 1 of 2

Vung Tau Shipwreck Porcelain Base Marks

symbols of good fortune.

- Double circle only - may have been intended to serve as a border to be later filled in with a mark, or be used in lieu of an actual mark.

- Lotus flower symbolizes purity and is one of the eight Buddhist symbols of good fortune.

- Artemisia leaf is symbol of healing and health and is one of the eight precious objects.

- Swastika (*wan* character) symbolizes the heart of Buddha, used as a Buddhist symbol and lucky sign; can also be a pun for ten thousand, myriad or infinity.

- *Lingzhi* fungus - the sacred mushroom of Daoism.

- Dragonfly is an emblem of summer and symbolizes instability and weakness. The first character of the dragonfly's name in Chinese is a pun for "pure" and for "celebration."

- Bee symbolizes industriousness and thrift; is a homonym with abundance.

- Mouse is curious, has sense of humor, is popular, quick witted, clever, has an optimistic nature, and a positive outlook; symbolizes fertility, abundance and wealth.

- Hall mark - states in or for

which hall, studio or workshop an object was made.

- Cash symbol signifies wealth; ancient coins are believed to have the power to ward off evil.

- Plum (*prunus*) blossom is emblematic of perseverance and



Gilded Base



Artemisia Leaf

Swastika

Lingzhi Fungus



Dragonfly

Bee

Mouse

Hall Mark



Hall Mark

Cash Symbol

Prunus Blossom

Rhinoceros Horn

Fig. 2 Examples of each of the 29 base marks - Part 2 of 2

purity; the five petals of the blossom make it a very auspicious plant as five is a sacred number in China, and the five petals represent the five blessings - old age, wealth, health, love of virtue, and a peaceful death.

- Rhinoceros horn has traditionally been highly prized for its medicinal value. It is believed to be able to cure a wide range of illnesses and is considered an antidote to poison. A single or pair of rhino horns is also one of the eight treasures (coin, *ruyi* scepter, coral, lozenge, rhinoceros horn, silver ingot, stone chime, and flaming pearl).

Published information on the Vung Tau shipwreck porcelain base marks is extremely limited. There are no references or illustrations regarding base marks in Christie's (Amsterdam), *The Vung Tau Cargo, Auction Catalogue*, 7 April 1992 and 8 April 1992. In Jorg and Flecker, *Porcelain from the Vung Tau Wreck: the Hallstrom Excavation*, 2001, a few references to base marks are included, but no photos nor illustrations of any marks are provided except for a "tripod" mark on a saucer, which was not actually part of the Vung Tau Cargo excavated material.

Photos of each of the 29 base marks are provided below, along with collages (base only, base and full view) of all of the 87 items included in the study, grouped by base mark (*Ding* Mark through Gilded Base). A list of references is also provided. The Kangxi period is particularly rich in the use of base marks, and this is vividly illustrated in the foregoing. Although this brief study and summary of Vung Tau shipwreck base marks does not claim to be conclusive, it does represent a starting point which may serve as the basis for further research.

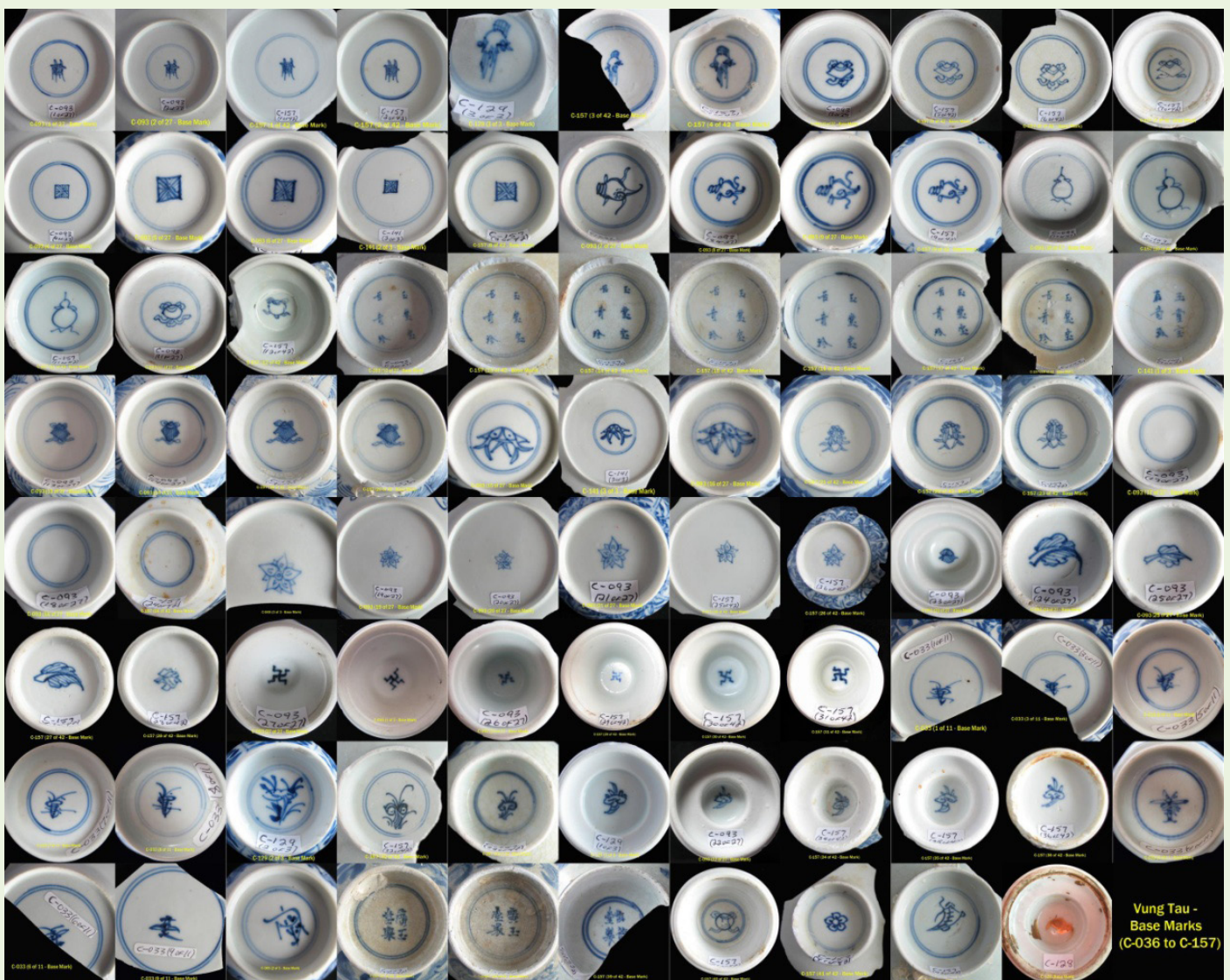


Fig. 3 Photos of base of each of the 87 items included in the study grouped by mark (*Ding* Mark through Gilded Base)

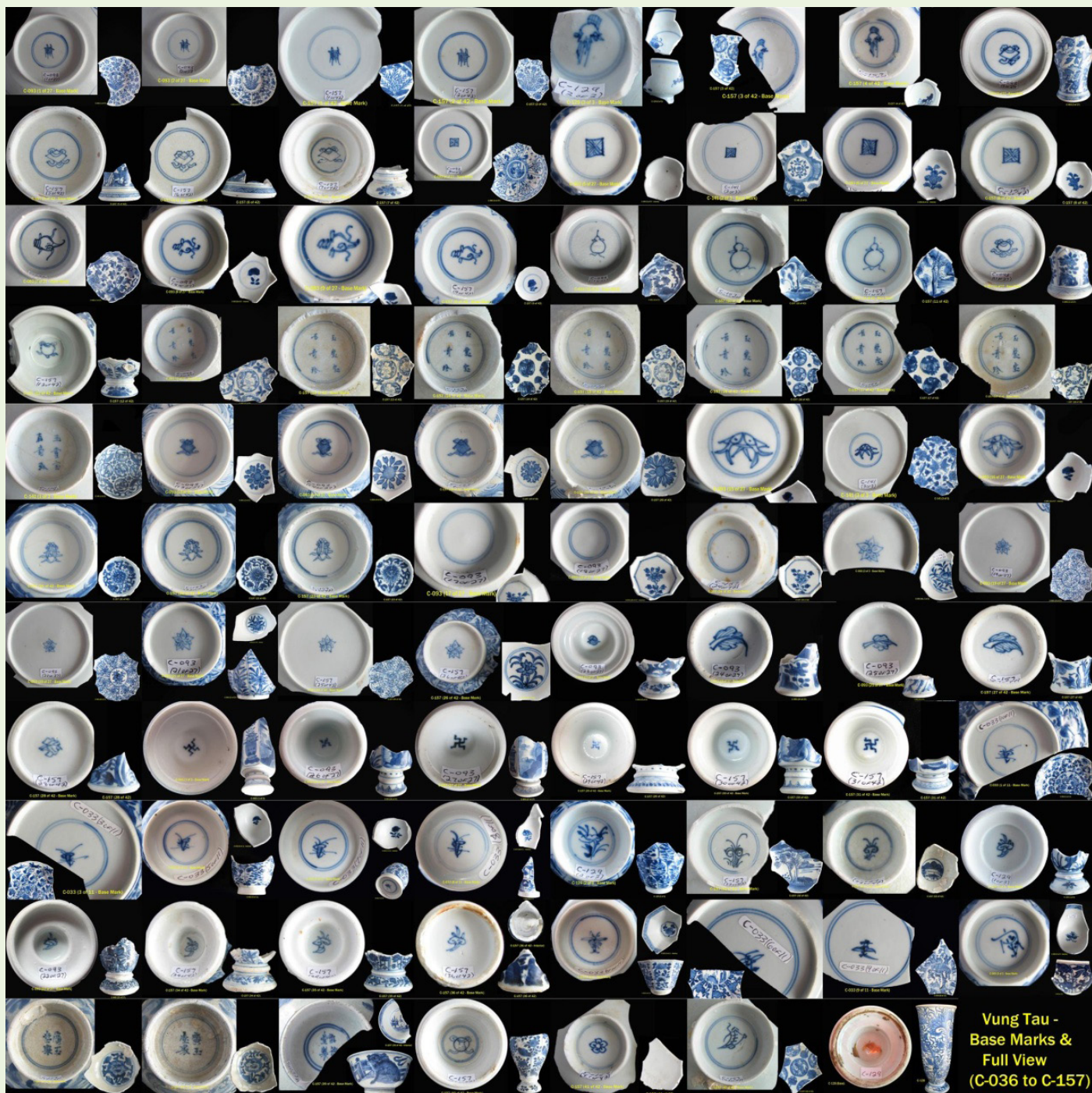


Fig. 4 Photos of each of the 87 items (full view) included in the study grouped by base mark (*Ding* Mark through Gilded Base)

Numerous references were consulted in the preparation of this article, but space constraints do not permit including a listing. Please contact me for more references of this article.

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Collection Review

This Jingdezhen blue and white bowl in fine condition is dated to the 16th century between the Late Zhengde (1506-1521) and Early Jiajing (1522-1566) reigns. It has a wide mouth with low and thin unglazed foot-rim and glazed bottom. The decoration is a painted design of cranes flying in the clouds in the center and on the exterior. The reign mark Chinese characters for “Xuande Nian Zhao” were painted on its bottom, in an attempt to copy the work of the Xuande reign.

During the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the quality of Jingdezhen porcelain falls into two distinct basic groups. One was made strictly for the imperial court and the other for the domestic and export markets. Because imperial ware was made to strict specifications, personal artistic expression by the decorators was simply not allowed. As a consequence of strict quality control, imperial porcelain may tend to appear artistically lifeless but is famous for its technical qualities. Private kilns, on the other hand, made whatever form and decorative styles were in fashion and acceptable to foreign buyers. On

these wares individual decorators displayed their own styles of painting based on personal interpretation

of traditional designs, making them lively, innovative and individual. Early Ming imperial wares were often decorated with thick outlines filled in with blue by applying small strokes. Others in the Middle and Late Ming periods used thin outlines filled in with blue. Domestic and export wares used similar techniques but were less constrained – those outlines were often overlapped and the filled color frequently overflowed the outline margins.

Jingdezhen blue and white wares entered into their golden period during the Yongle (1403-1424) and Xuande (1426-1435) reigns. They were renowned for their exquisite glaze, rich blue color and numerous and elegant designs. Cobalt was imported from Persia as a raw material for glazing

Blue and White Bowl

Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi
Ming dynasty, early 16th century

Diameter 15.7 cm.
Height 6.7 cm.

Provenance Tak, northern Thailand
Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum, Bangkok University

to create a unique hue of blue with natural blackish-blue or silver-gray spots. This characteristic of glaze is impossible to be imitated and perhaps disappeared since the late period of the Chenghua reign (1465-1487) onwards, when the import of cobalt was decreased and cobalt mined in China was utilized, sometimes in varying mixtures with imported cobalt. Local cobalt with lower iron oxide was used instead, but it failed to bring out those unique spots as previously.

Based on its archaeological context in Thailand, this form of bowl was found inside the great stupa in the Chedi Sung Temple in Chiang Mai, in the Tak-Omkoi burial site in Tak and some temples in Nakhon Si Thammarat.

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News in Brief

Training on Knowledge of Ancient Ceramics in Temple Museums for Buddhist Clergy, Thailand

On May 14th-15th, 2015, the Phra Chetuphon Vimolmangklararm Rajwaramahaviharn Temple, well-known as Wat Pho, the Temple of the Reclining Buddha, in cooperation with the National Discovery Museum Institute (NDMI) and the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum (SEACM), Bangkok University, conducted training entitled “Knowledge of Ancient Ceramics in Temple Museums for Buddhist Clergy.” The workshop aimed to train the participants in the preservation of a large number of ancient ceramics kept in Thai temples and teach Buddhist clergy how they were significant. The training also showed how to build up the network of temple museums cooperating with other national specialized institutes to work on preservation of artifacts in the temple museums for the new generation of Buddhist monks. The main venues for training comprised the Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum, the Bangkok National Museum, Phra Chetuphon Vimolmangklararm Rajwaramahaviharn Temple Museum and the Rachathiwat Ratchaworawihan Temple Museum, which preserve and display a large number of valuable ceramics in their exhibitions.

The lead instructor was Dr. Pariwat Thammapreechakorn who is currently the Director of SEACM. Over 50 Buddhist monks attended this training as they were in charge of the ar-



Fig. 1 Training participants, opening ceremony at Bangkok University, Rangsit Campus (top). The field trip included a visit to the Phra Chetuphon Vimolmangklararm Rajwaramahaviharn Temple Museum (bottom)

tifacts and temple museums around Bangkok and its surroundings. The course covered the Khmer, Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai, Lanna, Chinese and European ceramics as well as Bencharong (overglaze enameled), Lai Nam Thong (gold washed), Chakri (Thai Chakri dynasty's ceramics with palace design) ceramics in the course. In fact, all types of ceramic from the 11th to 20th century are usually found in the temples as they were valuable ceramics donated by Buddhist laymen for a long period of history. These artifacts also are related to international diplomatic and

trade relations.

In summary, the training was an excellent and successful opportunity for Buddhist monks to understand how significant the learning was and will be a great beginning for cultural management and preservation in temples.

***Southeast Asian
Ceramics Museum,
Bangkok University***

Conference Discussion on Special Topics in Khmer Studies 2014, Cambodia

The Conference on Special Topics in Khmer Studies (COSTIKS) is a free annual event which brings together experts in a given field to discuss the state of the research. COSTIKS is a collaboration among APSARA National Authority, Friends of Khmer Culture, Center for Khmer Studies, École française d'Extrême Orient and the University of Sydney. Now in its fifth year, in 2014 the COSTIKS theme was titled "People, Pots and Places: New Research on Ceramics in Cambodia". Proceedings took place at the new APSARA conference hall in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from December 6-8, 2014. The three days of the conference were each based on one of the three themes: 1) ceramics production; 2) ceramics use and consumption; and 3) ceramics trade and importation. 36 papers were presented (with scholars from Cambodia, France, Australia, China, USA, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Korea, Thailand and Hungary). In total, over 150 scholars and students attended including those from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the National Museum of Phnom Penh and the Cambodian Royal University of Fine Arts, Cambodia. A bilingual (Khmer – English) translation service was provided.

The conference was opened by H.E. Dr. Tan Bun Suy, Deputy Director of APSARA, and the three conference themes each warranted a keynote address. For ceramics production Dr. Don Hein presented "The Order of Angkor in the Evolution of Ceramic Kilns in Southeast Asia"; for use and consumption Dr. Armand Desbat



Fig. 1 Conference participants inspect the new sherd reference library at EFEO Siem Reap (top). The conference field trip included a visit to the Tani Kiln Museum (bottom)

spoke about "The CerAngkor Program: Assessment and Prospects", and for trade and importation Dr. Li Baoping presented "Ceramics in Chinese Trade and Diplomacy with the World: the Ming Dynasty". The full conference program and abstracts are still currently available at <http://siemreapconference.org>.

In addition, several post-conference events were also held. These began with the conference after-party which featured a live kiln firing demonstration at EFEO on the Monday night. The kiln was a ¼ scale model based on the excavated remains of Angkorian kilns. The following day a skills workshop was held at EFEO

which showcased the newly opened sherd reference library and also gave the students a more informal environment to learn from the experts. On Wednesday a field trip was made to the Tani kiln museum followed by the Norodom Sihanouk museum.

In summary, the conference was a resounding success for all those involved and provided a great opportunity for ceramicists, both experts and novices, to present the latest research and foster collaborative links.

David Brotherson
Organising Committee
COSTIKS 2014

Excavations Reveal New Terracotta Army at Ancient Emperor's Tomb, China



Fig. 1 Chinese archaeologists are working on uncovering more than 1400 well-preserved clay soldiers dating from about 200 BCE

China's famous terracotta army is about to be reinforced: Fresh excavations on a burial pit in the ancient capital Xi'an are expected to uncover 1500 more of the life-sized clay figurines.

The excavation, which began again in April 2015, is centered upon a 200 square meter patch of the 56 square kilometer underground mausoleum of China's first emperor, Emperor Qinshihuang, who reigned in 221 BCE.

Archaeologist Yuan Zhongyi told media that he anticipated the burial pit would contain 1400 more terracotta warriors and archers, along with about 90 horse-drawn chariots.

Progress has so far been promising, he said, adding, "Their colorful paint is also relatively well preserved."

The excavation site, known as "Pit No. 2", has previously produced several particularly fine specimens in-



Fig. 2 A new excavation project started today to look into Pit No. 2 on the terracotta warriors

cluding one with a distinctive green-colored face.

The number of clay figurines expected to be uncovered is based on the positioning and density of previous discoveries in the area.

Nanhai One: Removal of Silt Reveals Shipwreck Artifacts, China

An important step has been made in the recovery of thousands of relics from a famous Song dynasty ship which sunk in the South China Sea about 800 years ago.

After one year of hard work, silt covering thousands of artifacts loaded within the ship has been largely cleaned up. The mystery shrouding the ancient merchant ship and its treasures could soon be lifted.

It's estimated that there are 60,000 to 80,000 relics inside the ship, including gold artifacts, brass and iron wares, and a large amount of porcelain. Now that the mud and silt has been mostly cleaned up, one can see densely arranged relics exposed.

The discovery of the sunken ship in 1987 was said to shed new light on the Maritime Silk Road, through which China's silk, porcelain and other artifacts were transported to Southwest Asia, the Middle East all the way to Africa and Europe. But the wreckage was not lifted from the ocean floor until December 2007.

It was then placed in a pool-type container called the "Crystal Palace", which became part of a Maritime Silk Road Museum built on the site, in the city of Yangjiang, Guangdong.

At the museum, visitors can witness the salvage process, and marvel at the thousand artifacts already extracted from the ship. Made of gold and porcelain by Song artisans, they were meant to be sold overseas. Some of the more recently restored

relics bear strong influences from the Middle East.

Nanhai One is the oldest and largest sunken ship ever found in China. The remaining ship body is 21.8 meters long, with 13 large cabins to contain goods. It is expected to take another two to three years to take out all the relics from the wreckage.



Fig. 1 Relics are seen in the wrecked ship "Nanhai No. 1" at a museum in Hailing, South China's Guangdong, December 30, 2014.

China Daily

'Excavation Jackpot' at Empress Place Archaeological Dig, Singapore

Singapore's biggest archeology dig has unearthed an estimated two tonnes of artifacts, the country's largest haul ever, the National Heritage Board (NHB) said on April 16, 2015. The two-month project at Empress Place, in front of the Victoria Concert Hall, wrapped up last Sunday. "It's an 'excavation jackpot'", said Mr. Alvin Tan, assistant chief executive officer for Policy and Development at the NHB, "with some pieces dating back to the 13th century".

Some of the more significant artifacts uncovered, he said, will be put on display in museums once cataloguing and research work has been completed.

Lead archaeologist Lim Chen Sian added that the artifacts provide more insights into Singapore's early beginnings, and may reveal further details about life in Singapore before the early colonial days. "We are seeing lots of brand new things, which is helping us to rethink the chronology of ancient Singapore or Temasek," said Mr. Lim. Some of the artifacts, for example, date to around the mid-17th century and could plug some gaps in the understanding of our history prior to the arrival of Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819, he added.

Artifacts unveiled at a press conference today included a piece of "imperial grade quality" porcelain measuring 34 centimeter in diameter and Buddhist figurines. Such discoveries, Mr. Lim said, could also possibly shed more light on religious and cultural mindsets back then. The findings from this project, he added, suggest that areas in the vicinity, including the City Hall area, might be of historical value, making them possible excavation sites in the future.

The excavation was a collaboration between NHB and the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS). The site excavation divided into 13 zones- started in February 2015 with the approval of the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA). The project was led by a five-man archaeology team, assisted by an average of ten volunteers daily.

The first phase of the project, which ended on February 26, drew online comments from members of the heritage community who said that the deadline for excavations at six of the zones had been a "last minute notification" something NHB and ISEAS clarified was a misunderstanding.



Fig. 1 Lead archaeologist Lim Chen Sian (left) and volunteers, Natalie Khoo (middle) and Young Wei Ping (right) reveal their finds from the Empress Place Archaeological dig. Photo: Tristan Loh/TODAY



Fig. 2 An estimated two tonnes worth of artifacts were recovered from the Empress Place archaeological dig. Some artifacts that were recovered dated back to before Singapore's colonial days. Photo: Tristan Loh/TODAY



Fig. 3 One of the most “erotic” artifacts that the team unearthed was a tiny pumpkin shaped jar that showed an intimate couple copulating. The artifact most likely belonged to the Yuan dynasty. Photo: Tristan Loh/TODAY

ing. Time extensions, said the NHB’s Mr. Tan, are usually granted based on the quantity and quality of the artifacts found at the site. “What would happen is that Chen Sian’s team would notify NHB and we will also work with URA and the contractors to see how we can allow more time,” he said.

Of the remaining seven zones, three were fully excavated, while the rest were monitored by the archeology team, with some zones assessed to contain nothing of significance.

***TODAY via the Southeast
Asian Archaeology
Newsblog***