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Faculty of Design.

Department of Printed Textiles.

MING BLUE AND WHITE CERAMICS.

A HISTORY AND REVIEW OF A PRIVATE COLLECTION.

Submitted to the Department of History
of Art and Design and complementary Studies
in candidacy for the B.Des in Printed Textile
Degree.

by

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SWIFT BROOK
BOND

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INTRODUCTION:

MING meaning 'brilliant' in Chinese, is commonly known as 'china' due to its export to the West. I intend to concentrate on blue and white ceramics solely, as apart from the vast range of ceramics in Chinese history. My initial reason for choosing Ming as a subject for my thesis was due to Mr. Patrick Mulvaney's private collection of Ming ceramics. After seeing the collection I was taken with the beauty within the designs and the individual appeal of each piece. Hand painted, each one holds its own certain look and has a history of its own to tell. I intend to cover aspects of the Ming dynasty's history such as the rise of the first Ming emperor, the origins of the works and its influences on Western ceramics at that time and on ceramics in latter years, such as Dutch Delft and English Willow Pattern from the 17th and 18th century. Other areas I intend to cover are the trade links established between China and the Western World which had never been established before or to a great degree since. Most importantly I intend to study Mr. Mulvaney's collection, which I have most generously been allowed to study. Finally I intend to explain and define the motifs within the collection and within Ming ceramics as best I can, to try and give the reader an insight to Ming.

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The land is being offered for sale at a public auction, and the highest bidder will be awarded the land.

The land is being offered for sale at a price of [Price] per acre, and the total price of the land is [Total Price].

The land is being offered for sale on the [Date] of [Month] [Year], at [Location].

Chapter 1. The influence of Ming has been felt by most of us. We are nearly all, for instance, familiar with blue and white Dutch delft ware or English willow pattern, much copied in today's table wares. Yet the wares that have been exported to the West or neighbouring countries of the Near East were of lower and cruder standards compared to those held in China. Ming ceramics first appeared in Europe in the fifteenth century and flooded the western market at one stage during the seventeenth century. Today, the choices of Ming wares may still be bought only in China or neighbouring countries.

As a pure white porcelain the surface was generally decorated with pictorial scenes from Chinese mythological stores and detailed geometric shapes. Throughout the reign of Hung Wu, the Ming used slightly varying tones of cobalt blue pigment used for decoration, with the introduction of orange, green, red and yellow on the more exclusive pieces, held exclusively for the Imperial Court.

Distinctive features of Ming ceramics are wide-mouthed jars, high shouldered vases, tall beakers and narrow rimmed dishes which had a distinction of their own.

Blue-and-white porcelain has been the principal product of China's ceramic industry since the middle of the fifteenth century, both in home trading and for the export market. It was the first of the Chinese ceramics to branch out and be exported to neighbouring countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and other parts of the adjacent mainland. This in turn had a major role in influencing their ceramic design.

1. The Ming dynasty came into being with the collapse of the Mongol Yuan dynasty in 1368. Established under its first emperor Hung Wu, who set up his new capital in Nanking, this dynasty brought blue and white ceramics to their peak of development under imperial patronage. Ching-te Chen, being the primary kiln, became the paramount centre in China, maintaining its leading position until the present day.

2. Chun Yüan-Chang, the founder of the Ming dynasty, was born in 1328 as the son of poor peasants. Like the founder of the Han dynasty in the third century before Christ, his rise from poverty to the Imperial throne was due to his sheer intelligence and ability to take advantage of troubled times. At an early age during a famine, he was sold by his parents to a Buddhist monastery where he learned to read and write. Later he left the monastery and became beggar. At the age of twenty-five he joined a band of the rebels that were merging in China at that time. The aspiring revolt was due to the mistreatment of the Chinese by the Mongol dynasty. This régime, weakened by corruption and inefficiency, slowly crumbled. A number of rebellious factions emerged, the apathetic Mongols were unable to suppress the surge of civil unrest and thus retreated back towards their territory in the North of China.

Chun Yüan-Chang, being a man of initiative, was distinguished from the other rebel leaders by his ability to organise. The areas which he then held were assimilated into one single system of administration thus recruiting and providing an ever growing base for further advances. By 1356 Chun Yüan-Chang had captured Peking, the

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further movement. By 1368 Chen Yuan-jun had captured Beijing, the

Mongolian capital at that time. He then declared himself the first emperor of a new empire known as Ming.

The Ming empire covered roughly the same area that the People's Republic of China does today. The emphasis to revert back to Chinese tradition, after nearly one hundred years of foreign rule under the Mongols, enhanced the revitalisation of Chinese Arts. It was an era of enormous vitality and inspiration. Thanks to this a new lease of life, the Chinese, for the first and only time in their history, made serious attempts to explore the rest of the world. Naval expeditions sailed to the East Indies, India, Ceylon, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and finally to the coast of Africa. The advantages of these expeditions were reaped by both the Chinese traders and the countries to which they sailed. Returning with cargoes of rare objects and exotic animals, the courts of Nanking and Peking showed a wealth and sophistication unknown to the Western world; hence the trading countries developed new ceramic styles due to the influence of Chinese blue and white. Blue and white also developed in Annam, modern day Vietnam, and in Swatow, a province of Fukien.

3. The origins of these first pieces of Chinese blue and white porcelain cannot be ascertained at this moment, for the reason that the data available is insufficient and can only be increased through archaeological excavations. Nevertheless scholars and researchers involved in this subject continue in their search for fresh information.

Through China's ceramic history, traced back over 2,500 years before Christ, blue and white has had an important place within this history, mainly due to a whole range of original and decorative motifs. The inspiration and the unique way in which it was glazed and fired, led to its perpetual and lasting looks even to present day, nearly 623 years later.

4. Painted earthenware was already in common use in the Yuan-Shao Neolithic culture of northern China. By the time of the Shang dynasty (1523 B.C. - 1028 B.C.), the Chinese potters had discovered that certain materials would melt at high temperatures in the kilns to form a glossy coating or glaze on the surface of ceramic ware, serving to seal the vessel as well as to decorate it. With

increasing knowledge of the development of firing techniques, the Shang potters found that firing at even higher temperatures would make this coating more dense, and so make the vessels impervious to liquid. The production of ceramic wares continued to further the development of techniques and refinement of styles during the ensuing dynastys of the Chou (127 B.C. - 256 B.C.), Ching (211 B.C. - 206 B.C.) and Han (206 B.C. - A.D. 220).

⁵. Innovations of true translucent porcelain developed in the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618 - 906). The technique of brush painting in coloured pigments under a transparent glaze was first used at Ch'angsha during the T'ang dynasty. The pigment used was iron oxide, which gave a green-brown hue under the glaze. ⁶. Cobalt blue, most probably imported from Persia, was also used as a lade glaze colourant in T'ang pottery. These two highly significant developments had an important bearing on the development of the underglazed cobalt blue decorative techniques in blue and white porcelain.

⁷. The Suang dynasty (960 - 1279) was a period of great artistic development, and its classic, sophisticated taste was reflected in the elegant shapes and monochrome glazes of the Sung ceramics. Shapes of monochrome glazes varied within the Sung dynasty from deep olive green, thick opalescent light blue which was often aesthetically splashed with crimson or purple for additional decoration. Rare jade-like bluish green and the pure ivory white.

⁸. By the Yuan dynasty (1279 - 1368), the techniques of ceramic production were well developed. At this stage it was only with the new decorative styles and new material that the potter found scope for further experimentation and innovation. However the new Mongolian rulers' disinterested attitude in the arts provided a more liberal artistic environment which was to the advantage of the expermintal potter, who in turn produced a new direction in decorative motifs. The realisation of the development of blue and white lead back to the Yuan dynasty. The underglaze blue technique provided an ideal medium for a whole new range of Chinese decorative expressions, often depicting the rich mythology and symbolism which were so much a part of Chinese life. But it was during the Ming dynasty that blue

and white came a pinnacle of design and elitist craftsmanship.

The production of ceramic wares was carried out in a large number of centres throughout China, the locations determined by the local availability of suitable clays. For the entire period, when the manufacture of blue and white flourished,⁹ Ching-te Chen, a ceramic region in the Kiangsi province was the headquarters or the guiding light literally to the Chinese ceramic industry. The city had a very large population engaged in hundreds of porcelain factories and workshops. As with everything under emperor Chu Yuan-Chang, the division of labour was widely practised in a systematic way. In larger factories it was so minutely ordered that one man painted the blue ring near the top of the cups and bowls, another outlined the design, another painted on the blue washes and yet another painted the reign marks on the bases. This is not to mention many others who prepared the clays, ground the colour, moulded the wares and fired the kilns. Each man had his own part to play in the finished blue and white piece, making each piece a sum of many mens' skills. The manufacture of porcelain in China was in fact an example of the earliest application of modern industrial mass production methods.

¹⁰ Kaolin or china clay is the principal ingredient of the porcelain body. This type of clay was named after the mountain in which it was mined, the Kaolin Mountains near Ching-te Chen. Although this clay is not exclusive to Ching-te Chen it also occurs in various other parts of China. The Kaolin when mixed with the crystalline feldspathic china stone or Pai-Tun-T'zu, also mined near Ching-te Chen, and fired at a temperature of about 1300°C, then turns into a hard, translucent porcelain or 'china'. This glossy coating is also made from china stone or Pai-Tun-T'zu with the addition of a little lime and wood ash to help in the fusing.

In the manufacture of blue and white the white clay body is first moulded and allowed to dry. The decoration or motifs are then painted in greyish cobalt pigment on the unglazed and unfired body. The entire object is then covered with liquid glaze and dipped into a milky glaze mixture. After firing in the kiln, the soft clay body fuses into a hard porcelain and the film of opaque glaze changes into a transparent glossy coating, revealing the cobalt decoration below

which, under the high temperature has turned the cobalt decorative motifs from dark grey to blue. Since blue and white requires only one firing, it has always been one of the most economical of decorated porcelains to manufacture.

11. The cobalt pigment used was from both imported and home produce. Before the sixteenth century, most of the cobalt was imported from Persia and this was called Su-ma-ni or Su-ni-po blue by the Chinese, perhaps after the Persian name for cobalt, Sulimani. The imported cobalt pigment produced a brilliant blue colour, yet the home produced cobalt was of a paler lighter tone. Eventually both forms of cobalt were mixed for economic reasons due to the rise in cost and the scarcity of Persian cobalt. By the time of the late Ming period, local cobalt called Shin T'zu Ching from Rei Chou was commonly used. This explains the various tones of blue throughout Ming ceramics which characterises and identify the wares of different periods.

of the Ming period

which, under the high tariff, has turned the copal industry
into a mere trade in raw materials. Since also the white rubber only
one thing, it has always been one of the most economical of
associated products in the industry.
If the copal industry had been from the beginning
and more numerous, before the sixteen century, most of the copal
was imported from Peru and this was called copal de Peru or copal de
Peru by the Spaniards, because of the fact that the name for copal,
Gulfon, the Spanish word, signified a brilliant, white
color, yet the most produced copal was of a white lighter tone.
Eventually both forms of copal were used for economic reasons
and to the time to come the quality of Peruvian copal, by
the time of the Spaniards, had been called copal de Peru and
during the last century, the copal industry has expanded its various
uses of this substance, from candles, which characterizes and
locally the use of it in the industry.

COPIES 13000

Fig: 1.

CHRONOLOGICAL DATA

The dynasties, rulers, and reign names listed below are those of particular interest to this study.

CHINA

SUNG 960-1279

YÜAN 1260-1367

(Nineteen years elapsed between Khubilai's election as Khan and the extinction of the last Sung pretender. The only Yüan reign period mentioned here is Chih-cheng, 1341-1367.)

MING 1368-1644

(Normally each new emperor continued to use the old reign name until the end of the calendar year in which he came to the throne. Thus the dates of actual tenure are not identical with the dates of the reign periods. For the Ming Dynasty both sets of dates are given below.)

Emperors	Years and Moons	Reign Names	Years
T'ai-tsu	1368(1)-1398(5)	Hung-wu	1368-1398
Huei-ti	1398(5)-1402(6)	Chien-wen	1399-1402
Ch'eng-tsu	1402(6)-1424(7)	Yung-lo	1403-1424
Jen-tsung	1424(8)	Hung-hsi	1425
Hsuan-tsung	1425(6)-1435(1)	Hsüan-te	1426-1435
Ying-tsung	1435(1)-1449(8)	Cheng-t'ung	1436-1449
T'ai-tsung	1449(8)-1457(2)	Ching-t'ai	1450-1457
Ying-tsung (again)	1457(2)-1464(1)	T'ien-shun	1458-1464
Hsien-tsung	1464(1)-1487(8)	Ch'eng-hua	1465-1487
Hsiao-tsung	1487(9)-1505(5)	Hung-chih	1488-1505
Wu-tsung	1505(6)-1521(3)	Cheng-te	1506-1521
Shih-tsung	1521(4)-1566(12)	Chia-ching	1522-1566
Mu-tsung	1566(12)-1572(5)	Lung-ch'ing	1567-1572
Shen-tsung	1572(6)-1620(7)	Wan-li	1573-1620
Kuang-tsung	1620(8)-1620(9)	T'ai-ch'ang	1620
Hsi-tsung	1620(9)-1627(8)	T'ien-ch'i	1621-1627
Chuang-lieh-ti	1627(8)-1644(3)	Ch'ung-chen	1628-1644

CH'ING 1644-1912

Reign Names	Years	Reign Names	Years
Shun-chih	1644-1661	Tao-kuang	1821-1850
K'ang-hsi	1662-1722	Hsien-feng	1851-1861
Yung-cheng	1723-1735	Tung-chih	1862-1874
Ch'ien-lung	1736-1796	Kuang-hsü	1875-1908
Chia-ch'ing	1797-1820	Hsüan-t'ung	1909-1911

IRAN

The principal events related in this account of the Ardebil Collection took place when Iran was controlled by the Timurids (1369-1500) and during the first half of the Safavid Dynasty which reigned from 1501-1736. The genealogy of the Safavid rulers through Shāh 'Abbās I is sketched in the first chapter.



Chapter 2.

A new cycle of ceramic designs and decoration was vastly growing in a complexity and assortment of motifs that were to grow and develop with undiminished inspiration.

These motifs were developed, elaborated and defined into a decorative story probably never surpassed in richness and variety. In the course of Ming decoration and design and later Ch'ing dynastys, this decoration was applied to lacquer, textiles, jade, ivory, metalwork etc.

Variations between individual pieces through mixed cobalts and atmospheric conditions in the kilns have produced every effect from pale and even greyish blue to rich dark shapes approaching navy, often revealing specks of blackish brown. Other variations may be due to the cobalt's origins and quality. Others in the handling, in the brush strokes, heaviness of hand of the individual painter and quality of freedom and spontaneity shown. Another Ming trait was filling in the backgrounds with a wash of cobalt; yet due to economic reasons, e.g., the increase in price of cobalt, the demise of this method eventually happened, although not before this style of decoration left its mark on the whole character of blue and white design in years to come.

Characteristics of Ming porcelain consists in borders of diamond diaper pattern predominant and classic scrolls and concentric waves. This geometric pattern is common on the exteriors of the Ming pieces and they were decorated by lotus panels. Generally the decoration of the central areas of the wares fall into two main types dominated by aquatic and terrestrial plants, respectively. The usual aquatic scene is of a lotus pond, sometimes including ducks; there are also several examples of large fish surrounded by symmetrical arrangements of eelgrass and other water plants. Land scenes customarily show one or more traditional stylized garden rocks, and a variety of plants which include bamboo, banana, grape, morning-glory and water melon and a variety of other meaningful plants and symbols. Lotus is sometimes placed within these combinations, and occasionally phoenixes and ch'i-lins appear.

12. Examples and Meanings of decorative motifs within Ming porcelain.

Artemisia Leaves are symbols of good fortune used in decorating.

This decoration appears quite frequently among the 'Kraak' ware of the late Ming period (1567 - 1722).

Bamboo is a symbol of longevity because it remains green throughout the winter. It bends in the wind but does not break, and is symbolic of this scholar who remains loyal even in poverty.

Bamboo is one of the Three Friends with Prunus and Pine.

Bananna Tree is admired for its fruit, shape and ornamental appearance.

It is the symbol of self education because of the legend which tells of the scholar who wrote on plantain leaves because he had nothing else to write on. The leaves are used as decoration around the base and neck of jars and on bowls.

Basket of Flowers is a symbol of Chinese love for flowers and the emblem of Lan Ts-Ai Ho, who was one of the Eight Immortals and the patrol saint of florists; it is a decorative motif often used in the early Ch'ing period (1644 - 1795).

Classic Scrolls; are used as decorative forms on bowls, jars and dishes. There are number of variations. The origin of these patterns is uncertain however Chinese potters were using scroll decoration as early as the Neolithic period.

Cloud Collar; a decorative form possible derived from the Ju'i head or lappet. This in turn is derived from the Fungus or Ling Chih, the Plate of Long Life and Immortality. This decorative motif may also have a Persian or Mongolian origin.

Blackberry, Lily and Crapemyrtle in floral sprays, together with peonies and chrysanthemums, are frequently found on the square water

Fig: 2.

FIG. -2
FLORAL SPRAYS



LOTUS SPRAY



CHRYSANTHEMUM SPRAY



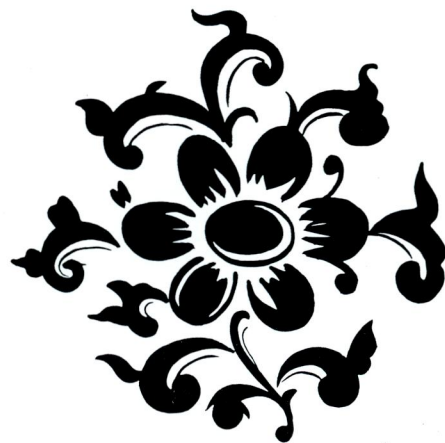
PEONY SPRAY



CHRYSANTHEMUM SPRAY



FLORAL SPRAY



CHRYSANTHEMUM SPRAY

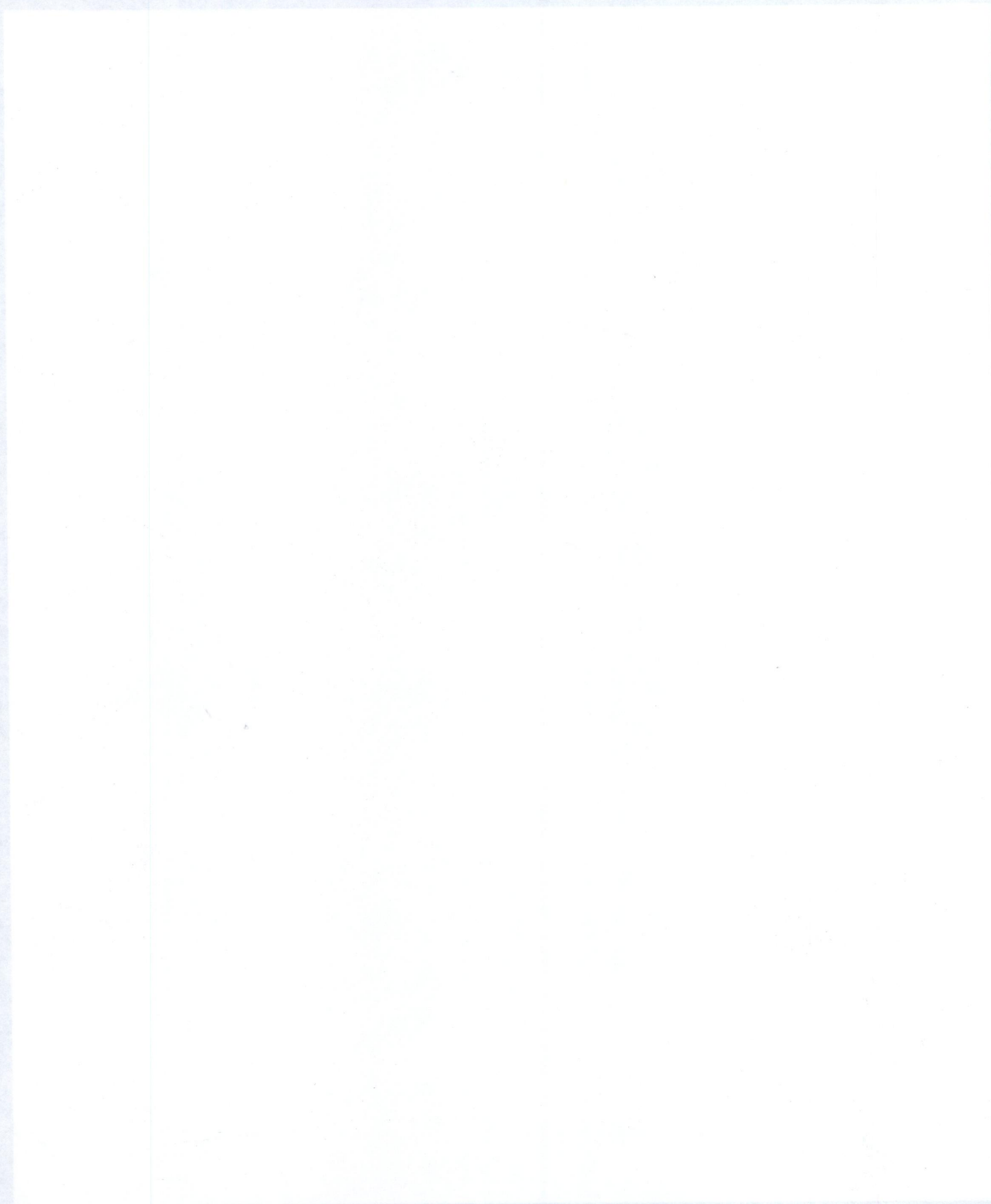


Fig: 3.

FIG. - 3.

PANELS



CHRYSANTHEMUM SCROLL



CHRYSANTHEMUM SCROLL



PEONY SCROLL



LOTUS SCROLL



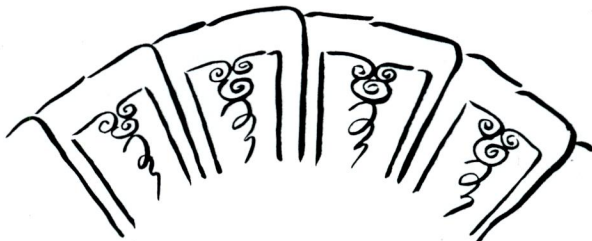
SIMPLE DOUBLE LOTUS PETALS



DOUBLE LOTUS PETALS



SCALLOPED LOTUS PETALS



LOTUS PANNELS CONTAINING LEAF-FORMS



Fig. 4.

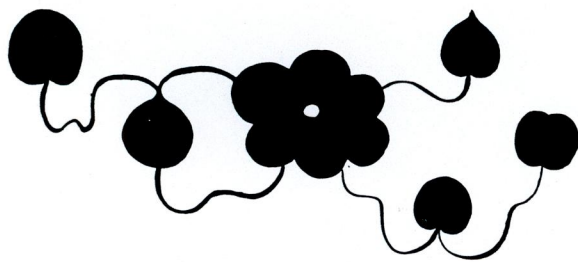
FIG. - 4.

WATER VEGETATION

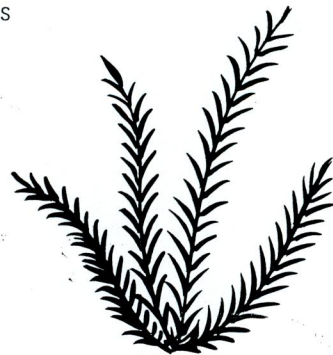
water vegetation : these appear especially commonly together with ducks and/or fish. No attempt has been made to identify them by their botanical terms.



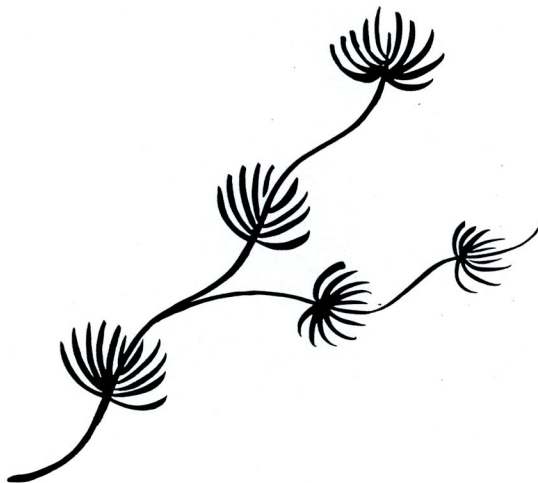
EEL GRASS



WATER CHESTNUT



FEATHERY GRASS



WATER VEGETATION



WATER VEGETATION



pots and jarlets of the early fourteenth century. Unlike the peony and chrysanthemum there seems to be no symbolism attached to these flowers.

Deer or Lu meaning 'official recognition', the deer is also credited with living to a great age and is supposed to be the only animal which can find the sacred fungus, Ling chih, the plant of Long life and Immortality.

Fish or Yu meaning 'super abundance', the fish is therefore a symbol of wealth and abundance. The Carp with its armour-like scales and because it struggles against the current has come to be the symbol of perseverance and martial attributes.

Buddhas Hand Citron is an inedible, fragrant lemon used in religious ceremonies and for scenting rooms. Because of its shape, which resembles the position of Buddhas hand, it is the symbol of Buddhism. It is also the symbol of wealth because of the 'hand' seems to grasp money. The name Fu Shou is a homophone for Fu meaning 'Happiness' and Shou meaning 'Long Life'. It is also called Finger Lemon.

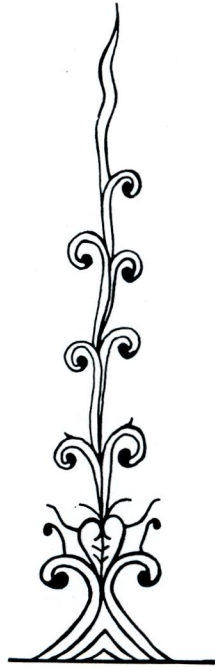
The Crane is another symbol longevity. It is supposed to live for six hundred years, and in decoration is often found with the Pine. The Crane appears in many Chinese legends, second only to the Phoenix. It is said to fly with the immortals and carry the souls of the departed to Heaven.

The Bee is an emblem of industry and thrift. The Chinese bee is smaller than the foreign varieties and is of a gentle disposition; a bee's nest near a house is said to bring good luck. Bees were kept by monks in the mountain temples of China. Their honey was used for sweet meals and bees wax for candles.

The Butterfly is a symbol of joy, summer and married happiness. It is sometimes called 'the Chinese Cupid', because of the story of a

Fig. 5.

FIG. - 5.
VEGETAL FORMS



TENDRILLAR SPRAY



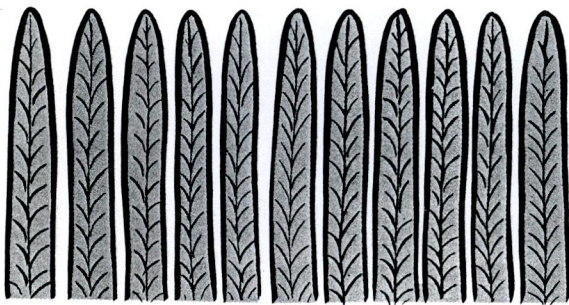
EPIDENDRON



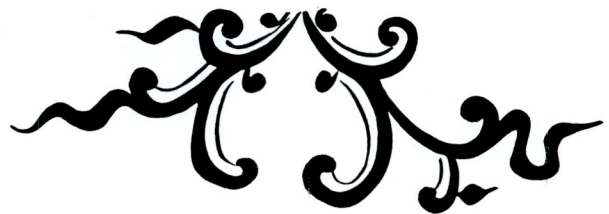
LEAF-SPRAY



VEGETAL SPRAY



PLANTAIN LEAVES



VEGETAL SPRAY



Fig. 6.

FIG. - 6.

GEOMETRIC DESIGNS



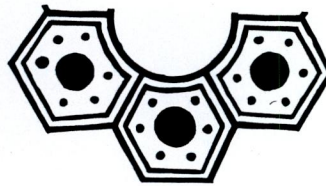
DIAPER PATTERN - KAWUNG DESIGN



KEY-FRET DESIGN



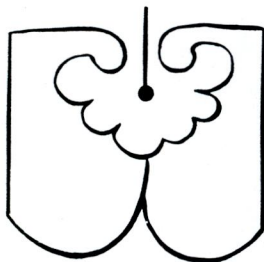
WAVE PATTERN



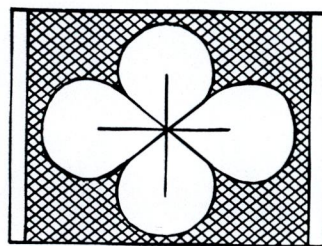
PATTERN OF SEVEN DOTS



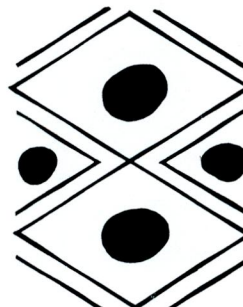
HANGING TREFOILS



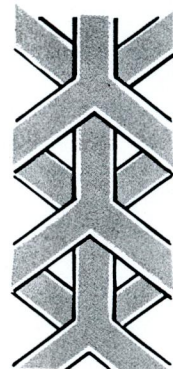
CLOUD COLLAR



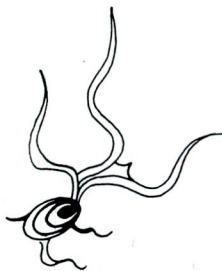
ROSETTE ON CROSS-HATCHED GROUND



CONCENTRIC RHOMBS



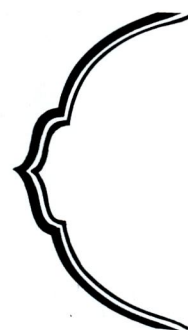
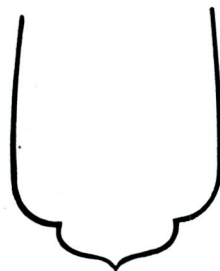
TRIFID FORMS



FLAMING PEARL



LOTUS PANEL



OGIVAL MEDALLION



Fig. 7.

FIG. - 7.

SCROLLS

some of the more frequently encountered scrolls.



CLASSIC SCROLLS

CLOUD SCROLLS

CALLIGRAPHIC SCROLLS



young student who, when chasing a butterfly found himself in a garden where he met the beautiful daughter of a retired magistrate. He was so struck by her charms that he was determined to study hard, achieve success and win the young lady for his wife. Other animals of marital happiness and faithfulness are ducks, who are said to mate for life. In decoration the very often appear with the Lotus flower, the symbol of fruitfulness and offspring.

The Cat is sometimes called the 'domestic fox', is regarded as the protector of silk because cats keep away rats which destroy silkworms. Even the picture of a cat on the wall was believed to give protection. As cats have night vision they are credited with keeping away evil spirits and it is said to be unlucky if a cat is stolen from a house.

The Fungus; this grows at the roots of the trees and because it can be dried and preserved, it is also called the Plant of Long Life or Immortality. The design of the Ju'i sceptre is derieved from the fungus as it appears in many decorative forms, as a Cloud Collar, Cloud Scrolls, and Ju'i Lappet.

Diaper; Trellis is a repeating geometrical pattern used for borders and to fill in between bands of decoration. It may be derived from the key fret, thunder pattern a 'swastika' etc. There are several forms of this geometrical pattern.

The Lotus is an emblem of summer, and because its numerous seeds, a symbol of fruitfulness and offspring. The flower is a symbol of purity and perfection because it is a thing of beauty in contrast to the mud in which it grows. It is an emblem of both Buddhism and Taoism. As a decorative motif it is also used as a scroll within panels.

The Peony is an emblem of spring. The tree Phoney is called the King of the Flowers and is regarded as a symbol of riches, honour, love, effection and feminine beauty. In decoration it is used as a single flower, a flowering branch as a scroll.

The Chrysanthemum is an emblem of autumn and steadfast friendship and is associated with a life of ease and retirement. It is sometimes called the China Aster. Chrysanthemums are cultivated throughout China and are much admired. The Chrysanthemums was said to hold powers of a tonic, sedative and also used a cosmetic.

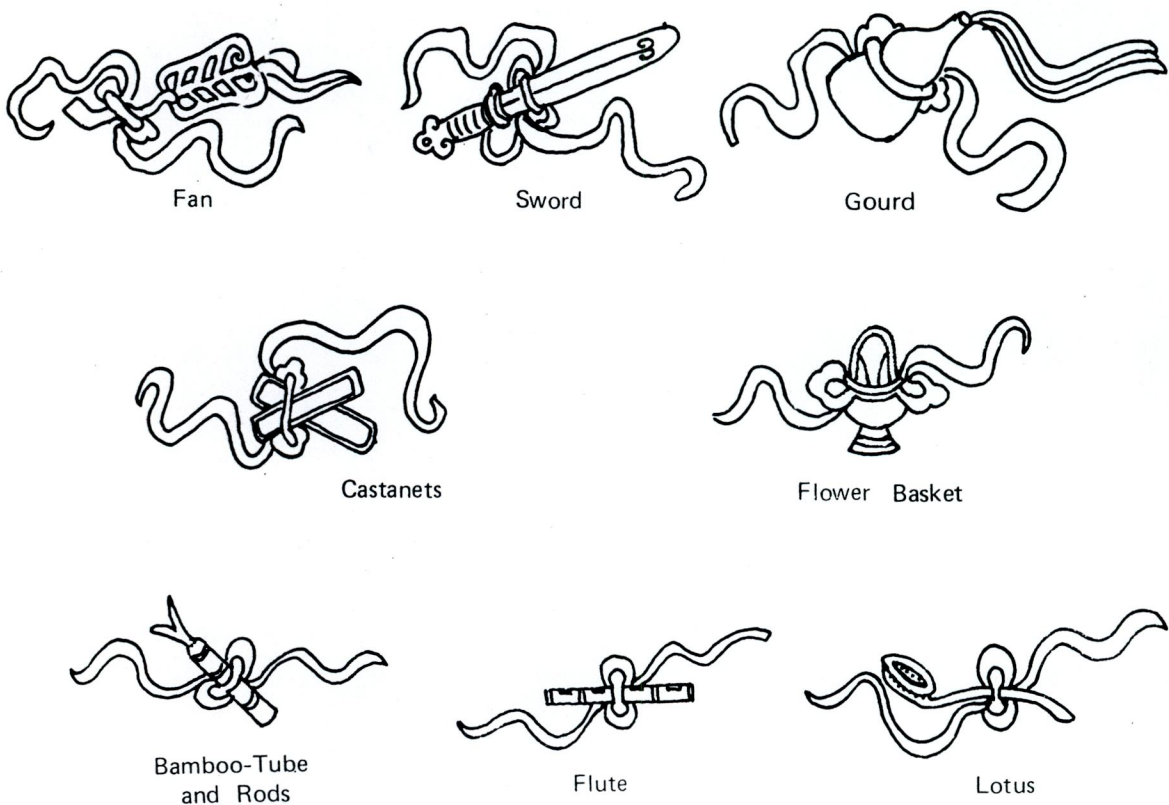
Fig. 8.

Religious Symbols.

Originally the Taoist religion set as its goal the status of immortality through everyday events and objects. Thus we find the eight emblems of the eight immortals often representing their owners. Similarly, the eight treasures of these immortals. There are also the eight Buddhist symbols, auspicious objects derived from signs on the Buddha's foot.

Although only a few of these 24 emblems occur in Annamese ceramics, I have reproduced them all here for the reference of the reader. The ones which do occur in Annamese wares so far as the writer is aware, are marked with an asterisk.

FIG. 8.
EMBLEMS OF THE EIGHT IMMORTALS



Fan of Chung-Li Chüan, attributed to be capable of resuscitating the dead.

Sword of Lü T'ung-pin for dispelling demons.

Gourd of beggar Li T'ieh-Kuai, containing all magical cures and drugs.

Castanets of Ts'ao Kuo-Ch'iu, patron of the theatrical profession.

Flower basket of Lan Ts'ai-ho, who is the patron of gardeners.

A drum of a bamboo-tube and rods of Chang Kuo Lao.

Flute of Han Hsiang-tzu, patron of musicians.

Lotus of Ho Hsien-ku, the only definite female member of the troop, who is a sort of Chinese 'Cinderella'.



Fig. 9.

FIG. 9.
THE EIGHT TREASURES



Pearl



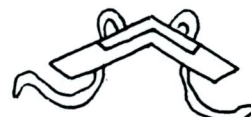
Coin



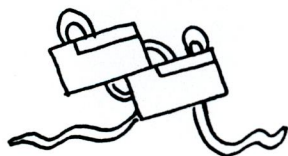
Lozenge



Mirror



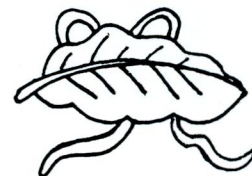
Stone Chime



Books



Rhinoceros Horns



Artemesia Leaf

- *Pearl : one of the eight treasures; it is often found in association with dragons and kylins.
- Lozenge : credited to be the emblem of victory.
- Stone Chime : also known as the musical stone.
- *Rhinoceros Horns : a pair symbolises happiness and are attributed with the property of detecting poison by sweating.
- *Coin : some were used for warding off evil.
- Mirror : also for warding off evil spirits, by revealing their presence; often a mirror is hung over the main door of a house facing the entrance to a road, to protect the occupants from spirits and evil.
- Books : symbol of literacy
- Artemesia Leaf : endowed with the property of warding off sickness.



Fig. 10.

FIG. 10.

THE EIGHT BUDDHIST SYMBOLS



Wheel of Law



Conch Shell



Umbrella



Canopy



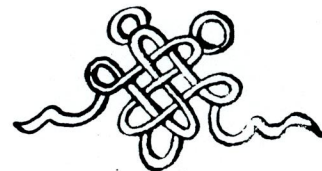
Lotus



Jar



Fish



Endless Knot

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Wheel of Law | : also known as the <i>chakra</i> . |
| Conch Shell | : emblem of a happy, safe voyage. When blown into, the sound signifies the voice of Buddha. |
| Canopy | : symbolic representation of the lungs of immortality. |
| Umbrella | : symbolic representation of the spleen of divinity. |
| Lotus | : symbol of purity (see under Flora). |
| Jar | : used for storage; symbolic representation of Buddha's stomach. |
| Fish | : see under Fauna. |
| Endless Knot | : because it has no end, it symbolizes longevity. |



Mr. Patrick Mulvaney is the owner of the pieces mentioned within this thesis. His interest in oriental artefacts stemmed from his earliest years.

Patrick Mulvaney was born in Shang-Hi, China, in 1930, the son of an executive of B.A.T., (British American Tobacco Company). His father was one of the first white traders to go deep into North China and established trade links there. However with the outbreak of war, Patrick was evacuated to California while his father was taken prisoner in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. Even though he only had brief encounters as a child, oriental design fascinated him. Patrick was then sent to England to further his education and study at Mill Hill school in north London. On leaving school he joined the Royal Irish Fusiliers and was then posted to Berlin in 1950's.

Patrick, like his father joined the ranks of B.A.T., and was then sent to West Africa where he met his wife Monica, whom he married in Accra in 1957. Throughout his career Patrick and his family were posted to various places within Asia where their love and interest in blue and white ceramics grew. It started after several vacations to Cherita beach, (opposite the volcano Krakatoa). Beachcombing there revealed many shards of Ming wares, washed up from the wrecks of sunken trading vessels, most of them suspected of being Dutch super cargoes. A large collection of these shards still exist at Cherita beach. With this their interest was kindled they set about collecting whole pieces. Obtained from a variety of sources, many from outside the usual trading channels; some, for instance came from families from the various places they visited who were still using them as household domestic wares. From 1976 until 1980 they lived in Singapore where they purchased the bulk of their collection, Monica turning her attention to collecting snuff boxes. Most of the pieces within their collection were bought because of their uniqueness rather than to acquire the ultimate Ming collection. This collection was compiled purely for its aesthetic beauty rather than as an investment.

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After leaving Singapore and spending a few years in London the family finally settled in Cork bringing with them their precious collection. Patrick retired from B.A.T., and acquired the 'The Bunratty', a public house, as a family business. Here continued to collect different artefacts such as Irish Pub antiques, Post War American stamps and various other collectable items.

Today the pub still holds valueable memories of the Mulvaney's travels; for this aspect it won the best Black and White Public House Award in 1983. Sadly, Monica died in Schull in 1988 so now Patrick lives alone in a cottage by the sea surrounded by his oriental artefacts.

Fig. 11. Annamese, Coverbox, 3½" x 3".

A coverbox of flattened globular form; decorated in underglazed dark blue almost navy pigment; the top lid with six panels of alternate decorative lotus panels and fishbone design surrounds an inset central motif of a diamond within a circle. The base of the coverbox coincides with the top and continues with lotus panels surrounding a floral spray.

Fig. 12. Annamese, Jarlet, 4" x 4".

A jarlet of globular form; decorated in underglazed blue almost black pigment; four panels of lotus blossoms separated by four diagonal line panels, these panels are then surrounded by two parallel lines. The base consists of a fairly heavy floral spray with a chrysanthemum flower within.

13. Annamese Ceramics have often been confused with South Chinese wares. This unfortunate mistake could be caused by the fact that once, during the years from the Han dynasty 220 AD., through to the T'ang dynasty 618 AD., the southern borders of China stretches as far as Thanh-Hoa. This southern territory was known as Nam Viet or Nam Yueh; ^{14.} until 1803, the year following the establishment of the National Capital at Hué in central Vietnam, when the emperor Gia-Long requested that his country henceforth be known as Vietnam, the official Chinese designation for the country remained Annam, literally meaning 'Pacified South'. The Vietnamese ceramics were called 'Annamese'. Vietnamese wares formed a distinct class oriental ceramics in their right.

15. This was first recognised during the widespread excavations that took place mainly in Thanh-Hoa province in Vietnam during the 1920's and 1930's.

The ceramics produced by the Annamese in Vietnam in the early fifteenth century were generally known as 'domestic cult ware'. This ware was decorated with underglazed blue often with

unglazed whiteish body applique decorations of long dragons and rosette buttons, attributed to T'ang. Dark bodied unglazed wares elaborately modelled were attributed to Tao-Ha a region within Vietnam. A turning point in the development of Vietnamese ceramics in the fifteenth century was undoubtedly the result of the invasion of Ming wares in 1407 up until the Chinese occupation in 1428. With that, the immigration of potters would also have attributed to the influence of Ming design on Annamese wares.

^{16.} Whether or not Annamese potters used cobalt to underglaze decoration before the Chinese invasion is unknown. It is known that they did use underglazed black for decoration and is thought the transition to blue was made in the first quarter of the fifteenth century. There was a profusion of Chinese-inspired shapes and a whole array of new decorative motifs and arrangements. It was with blue and white that the potters of Vietnam reached the pinnacle of their craft. In retrospect the Vietnamese potters developed their own distinctive variants of shapes and designs. Unfortunately development from this high standard in the fifteenth century became stagnant up until the seventeenth century.

During the time of high development within Annamese wares, Ming ceramics were in strife. This period was known as the 'interregnum' period. The time between the end of Hsüan-té period (1435) and the beginning of the Chêng-hua reign (1465) is known as the ceramic interregnum. Internal upset in China took its toll on porcelain production, and left the way open for other countries with ceramic industries to exploit the trade markets. It seems more than coincidental that the classic period of Annamese ceramics was contemporary with blank period in Chinese ceramic history.

Fig. 13. Large Swatow Dish; 12" in diameter.

Surrounded by an exterior lip the central motif of loosely painted floral spray, circled by a thin blue line which in turn is surrounded by a biscuit coloured circle, developed due to the stacking process used

Fig. 11.

ANNAMESE, COVERBOX.

Fig. 12.

ANNAMESE, JARLET.

during firing, again two thin lines and finally on the outside wall there are three equally similar loosely painted floral sprays almost a calligraphic scroll.

Not much is known about the origins of Swatow wares, recognized as gray, buff or white stoneward with a feldspathic glaze and with gravel adhering to the base of the vessels is descriptive of many Swatow wares rather than some south China wares. ¹⁷ More distinctive of Swatow than some other wares is the relative solidity and crudeness in construction and a casual, folkish style of decoration. The designs were painted with a wet brush freely inscribing the design, leaving blobs of colour where the brush strokes end. However difficult lies of identifying Swatow as a distinctive group of Oriental trade ceramics consists, mainly because Swatow is not a ware; rather, it is a class known through traders and collectors who marketed and appreciated outside China. A tradition of what Swatow consists of formed over time, as well as a belief that these ceramics were more easily obtained as antiquities or otherwise from the general vicinity of Swatow, a port in Northern Kwantung, now named Chan-t'ou.

As to where and when these pieces were made is not clear but to know, they belong to the province of Funkien. The pieces may have been made at Ch'ao Chou a pottery centre from the Sung dynasty which is within two miles of Funkien. ¹⁸ Other opinions that there may have been more kiln sites in the surrounding area have recently come to light through excavations and collection of shards from historic kiln sites, sites, such as Jao-P'ing and Lo-P'ing, both in the vicinity of old Swatow. From records of Portuguese origins, it is believed these Swatow designs were made in the mid sixteenth century. ¹⁹ This region and its earthenware was obviously regarded as fairly insignificant up until the 1860's when it became a treaty port. Up until then it was never even marked on maps of the Ming dynasty.

Swatow blue and white design falls into categories, a. with a uniformed style of decoration, b. which lacks uniformity. The peculiar lack of style which applies to the amorphous, larger part of blue and white could be due to management techniques in the

Fig. 13.

LARGE SWATOW DISH.

potteries. Evidently, several hands coping one pattern were involved in the process of decoration. Crowding, irregularities between centres and borders, mismatches between outlines and washes are common. The stylish group provides contrast with simpler, less fully patterns and broadly brush lines that can hardly be produced by several decorators working on one assembly line. There is archaeological references linking Swatow to Indonesia.

At present, a potter by the name of Lida May in Ballydahob, County Cork has taken an interest in these wares and she is presently producing a collection of contemporary ceramic ware based on examples within Mr. Mulvaney's collection.

Fig. 14. A Collection of Miniature Cover-Boxes. Approx. $1\frac{1}{2}$ " X $\frac{3}{4}$ "

These cover boxes contain various designs of geometric forms and typical Chinese floral sprays of contrasting scales.

Fig. 15. Dish of Early Ming, late 15th Century. 6" in diameter.

This dish with rounded sides and whole bottom base is beautifully designed with a central motif of a 'red biscuit' fish among water weeds. ²⁰ An unusual piece for its time, due to the introduction of additional colour apart from blue and white was uncommon. Generally the addition of colour was held for pieces of the Imperial Court or for far more ornamental wares. With close observation one can see the incision of diagonal lines actually within the clay, presumably put there while the piece was wet and waiting to be fired.

Fig. 16. Dish of Late Ming, 17th Century. 9" in diameter.

Decorated with a central motif of a pearl and a cloud scrolls, surrounded in the cavetto with three phoenix; quite loosely painted with some attention to detail on the body. The base to the design is of a pure white

Fig. 17.

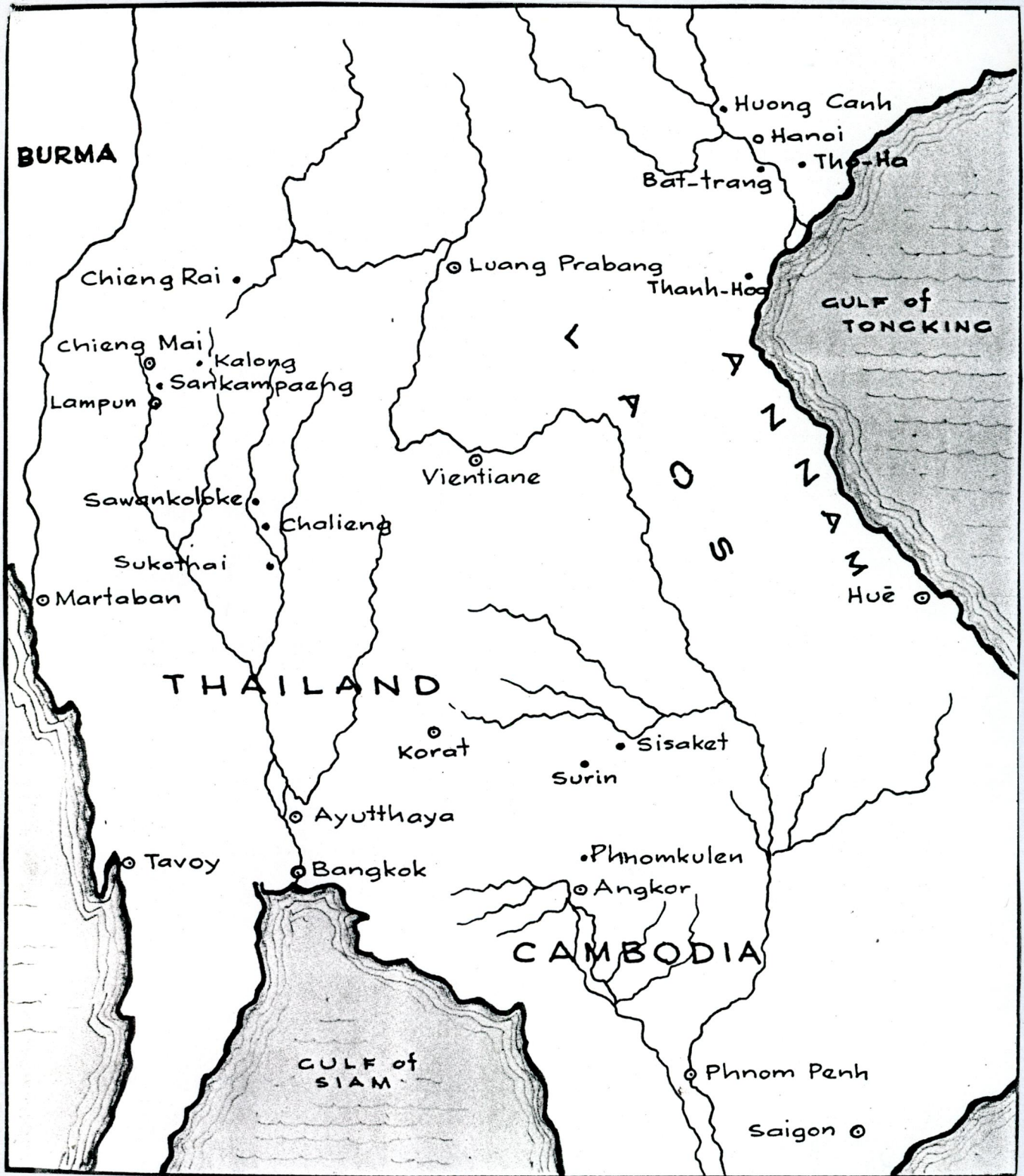




Fig. 14.

COLLECTION OF MINITURE COVERBOXES.

Fig. 15.

DISH OF EARLY MING, 15th CENTURY.

Fig. 16.

DISH OF LATE MING, 17th CENTURY.

porcelain with highlights the rich blue of the phoenix.

Fig.18. Two Jarlets, of Middle to Late Ming. 3" x 4".

On the left; this jarlet is decorated with lotus scrolls. As with the Swatow designs, variations of tone within the design is due to the application of design with a wet brush.

On the right; as opposed to the previous jarlet, this design is highly decorative with a chrysanthemum motif surrounded by enlarged sprays of lotus panels.

Fig.19. Rice Dish, of Middle Ming. 8" in diameter.

Showing both sides of this bowl, both with different pictorial scenes yet painted in the same manner. One side portrays dancing deers and cranes, the other portrays a pine tree and sprays of lotus and flowers. With regards to the meanings behind the decorative motifs, this particular piece holds an abundance of good fortune for its owner, Mr. Mulvaney. The central motif within this dish, is one of a peony, which is said to endow the owner of the piece with riches, honour and love.

Within the collection shown, this is probably my favourite piece, simply because of the methodology behind it, and the crispness of the painting.

Fig.20. Dish of Early Ch'ing. 10" in diameter.

Highly decorative blue and white underglazed design.

There is a pictorial central motif of a crane placed in a setting of mountains, chrysanthemums, trees and floral sprays. The outside wall is decorated with six identically simplistic peony's, separated by a layered fish scale design. The reasons for placing this piece in the Ch'ing period are due to the use of a darker tone of cobalt and a tendency to favour pictorial designs within the piece.

TWO JARLETS, OF MIDDLE TO LATE MING.

RICE DISH, OF MIDDLE MING.

DISH OF EARLY CH'ING.

Fig. 21. Rice Dish, Ming. Actual Size.

This is an example of an enamelled piece from the Ming period. As you can see from the photograph this piece did not withstand the test of time as well as any of the other examples of underglazed blue and white pieces. Hence proving the point that underglazed decoration whether it be blue and white or not, is far superior to other forms of ceramic decoration.

Mr. Michael Robinson, ceramic expert at the Ulster Museum, informed me that the Mulvaney Collection is unique in Ireland and is one, if not the only, private Ming collection held within Ireland. Other examples more accessible to the general public are at the National Museum of Ireland, and other fine examples can be found at the Chester Beatty Library.

Descriptions of these pieces were taken from examples given in Sotherby's catalogues and from Chena Lammers book 'Annamese Ceramics in the Museum Pusat d'Jakarta'.

Fig. 20.

RICE DISH, MING.

Porcelain has long been a commodity in the maritime trade between China and Southeast Asia, also between China and countries further West. The route by sea played an important part in the transaction of commerce, cultural and religious ideas, as well as scientific and agricultural techniques. The basic need of China was for aromatic products and spices, as well as precious items such as pearls, ivory, rhinoceros horns and other tropical produce which China could obtain only from overseas.

The use of aromatic products has long been a way of life with most of the Chinese people, except for the lower class of society. These spices were used for personal hygiene, impurifying the air, in fumigation of the houses and in seasoning of food. In return for these aromatic products and spices, China would trade with and would export, silk, textiles, ironware, copper (mostly in the form of coinage), objects of handicraft, pottery and porcelain. The latter products were in great demand from all parts of the world, because of their practical use. They were also considered luxury items because of their inherent beauty and the monetary value attached to imported goods. Porcelain, apart from its being highly regarded as a valuable object, constitutes first and foremost the material evidences for a chapter in the history of the commercial activities of China, both for its inherent interest and for the long lasting influence it had on the pattern of trade between China and other countries.

For many centuries' foreigners' were banned from entering inland China. Fortunately there was an exception to this rule. The exception was to Jesuit priests.²¹ One individual priest, named Father d'Entrecolles, a pioneer in the early eighteenth century, described in a letter the working of the city Ching tē Chén. This information was relayed to France in the form of two letters the first written in 1712 and the other ten years later. Because these letters and their contents of how ceramic production was run in China, ceramic development increased greatly in Europe, as these letters were published worldwide. Translated by Du Halde's a French translator, this

enabled Europeans to their first insight to see beyond what was by all accounts a 'closed country'.

22. THIS VILLAGE (IT WAS SO TERMED ONLY BECAUSE IT WAS UNWALLED), IN WHICH ARE COLLECTED THE BEST WORKMEN IN PORCELAIN, IS A POPULOUS AS THE LARGEST CITIES OF CHINA. IT IS RECKONED TO CONTAIN A MILLION OF INHABITANTS.....IT EXTENDS A LEAGUE AND A HALF ALONG THE BANKS OF A BEAUTIFUL RIVER....THE PEOPLE COMPLAIN THAT THE BUILDINGS ARE TOO CROWDED AND THAT THE LONG STREETS WHICH THEY FORM ARE TOO NARROW.....

THIS VILLAGE....IS AN ASYLUM FOR A GREAT NUMBER OF POOR FAMILIES, WHO COULD NOT SUBSIST ANYWHERE ELSE. CHILDREN AND INVALIDS FIND EMPLOYMENT HERE, AND EVEN THE BLIND GAIN A LIVELIHOOD BY POUNDING COLOURS... CHING-TÉ CHÉN CONTAINS ABOUT FIVE HUNDRED FURNACES FOR MAKING PORCELAIN....THE FLAMES AND CLOUDS OF SMOKE WHICH RISE FROM THEM IN DIFFERENT PLACES, SHOW EVEN AT A DISTANCE THE EXTENT AND SIZE OF THIS CELEBRATED VILLAGE; TO THOSE TO APPROACH BY NIGHT IT HAS THE APPEARANCE OF A LARGE CITY ON FIRE.

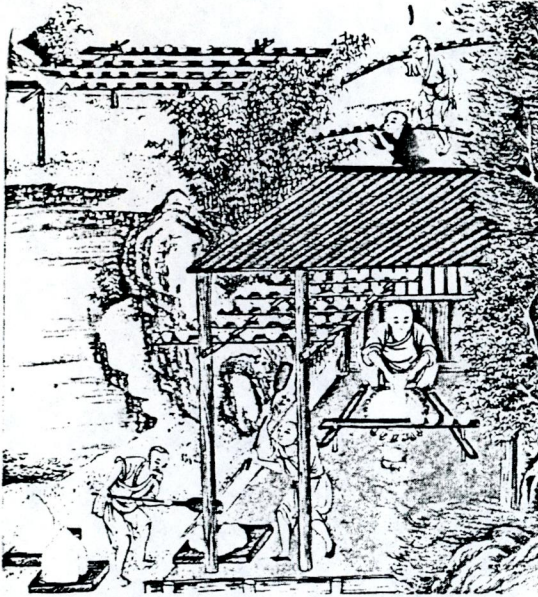
This account is from a translation of Abbé Grosier's French text, a two volumed work entitled A General Description of China, in 1788 and was a description of Ching té Chén in the eighteenth century. The second text gave details of raw materials, the forming of the ware, their decoration and firing.

In Father d'Entrecolles' second letter of the 1st September, 1712, he remarked 'In Europe people hardly see anything else but a vivid blue on a white ground, though I believe that our merchants have also imported some of the other kinds....'.

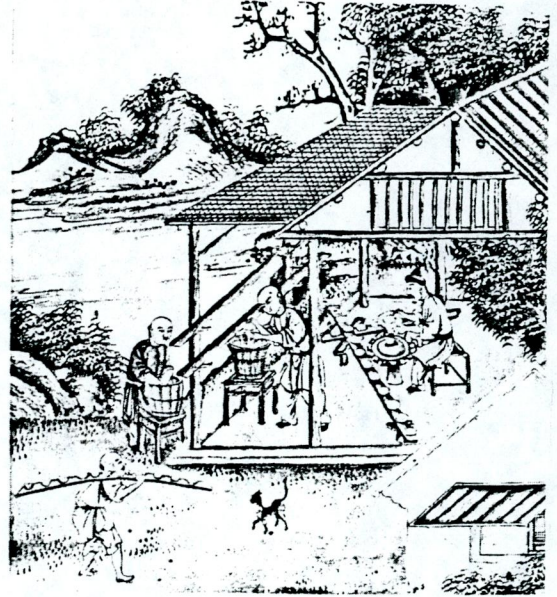
With increasing interest in China large 'super cargoes' at that time known as 'Supra-Cargo's' were sent to China to trade for their fine wares. Hence the development of the East India Company. Because of these voyages products of Chinese silks, porcelain and laquer were now available to the general public, whereas previously they were only available to royalty and dignitaries.

Initially the Portuguese were pioneers in trade with China, transporting goods to markets such as Lisbon and Antwerp. The demise of the market in Antwerp came in 1585 with the closing of Schelott, hence the shift or emphasis on trade to Amsterdam.

Fig. 22.



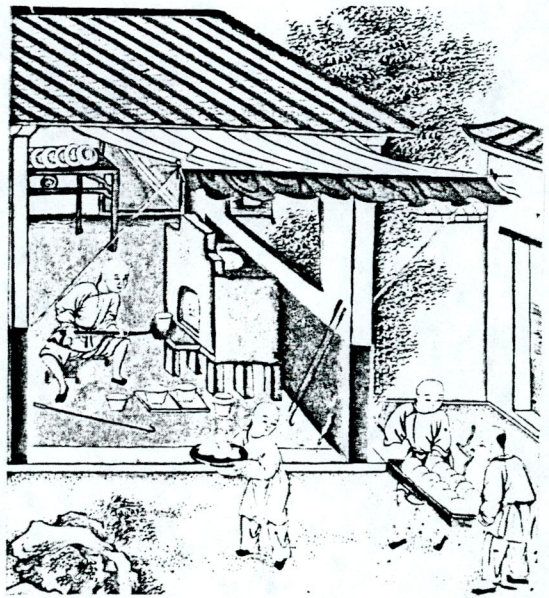
55 The preparation of the clay, the making and drying of porcelain. Gouache on paper, one of a set, 30 x 28 cm, Canton, late 18th century. Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden.



56 The finishing and glazing of porcelain. Gouache on paper, one of a set 30 x 28 cm, Canton, late 18th century. Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden.



57 Filling the saggars and stacking them in the kilns. Gouache on paper, one of a set, 30 x 28 cm, Canton, late 18th century. Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden.



58 Firing porcelain decorated with overglaze enamel colours in a muffle kiln. Gouache on paper, one of a set, 30 x 28 cm, Canton, late 18th century. Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden.



59 The selling of porcelain stored in a depot. Gouache on paper, one of a set, 30 x 28 cm, Canton, late 18th century. Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden.

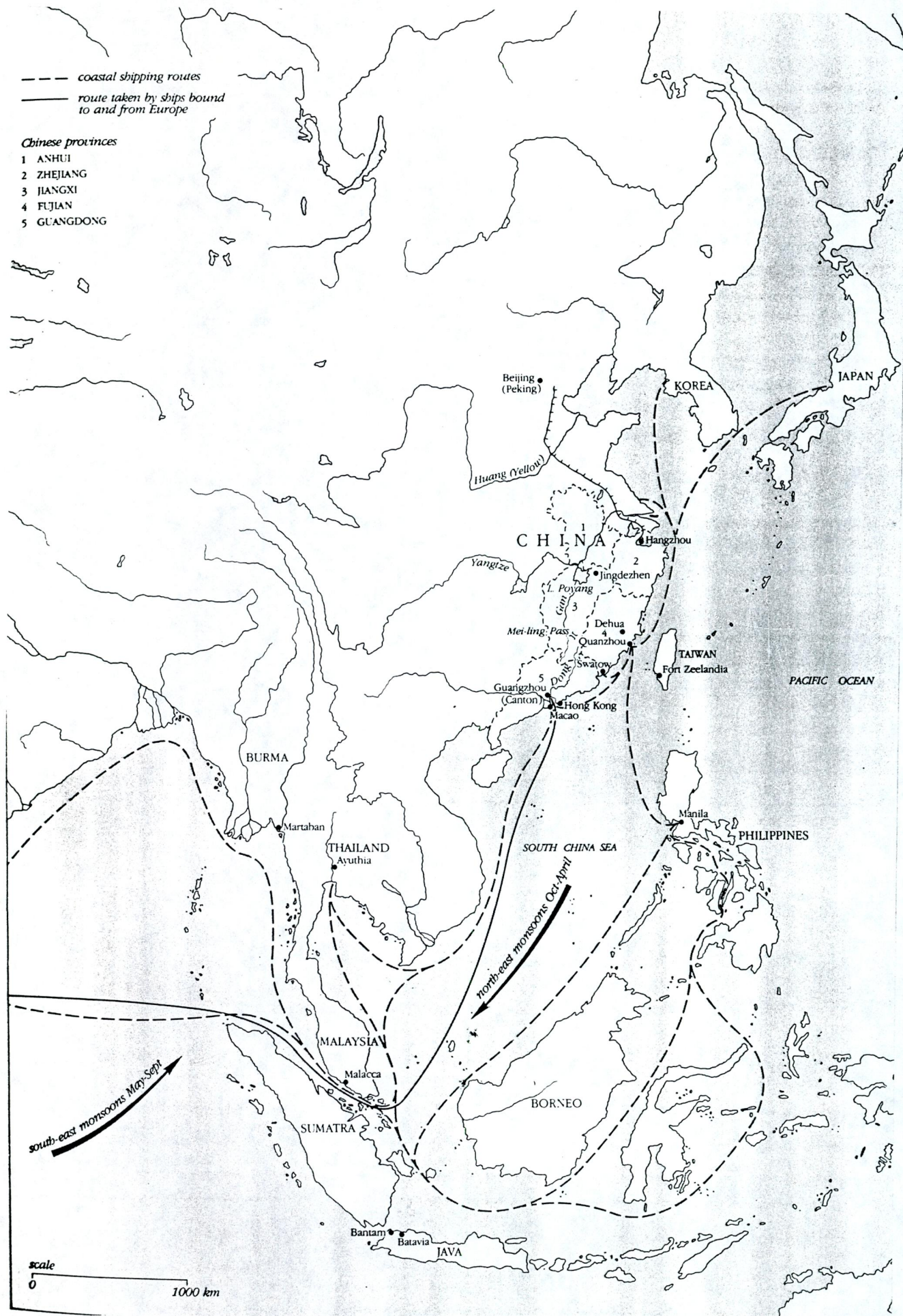


60 Porcelain being transported in tubs to Canton over the Meiling Pass. Gouache on paper, one of a set, 30 x 28 cm, Canton, late 18th century. Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden.

The Portuguese had a monopoly on this market for so long they began to come up against competition by the Dutch in the form of Dutch East India Company. Due to bad politics between these two countries, the Dutch ventured an alternative route to China by way of a northern passage. Unfortunately this was unsuccessful. ²³ Cornelis Houthman, a merchant, attempted to voyage via the south route, around the Cape of Good Hope in 1595 - 1597. His voyage was successful thus leading the way for further voyages. With the south seas afloat with Dutch ships all belonging to private companies chaos inevitably followed. ²⁴ The solution to this problem came in 1602 when the decision was made to combine the various companies into one. This company was known as Verenigde Oost India Compagnie (V.O.C.), later known as The Dutch East India Company. There was six so called 'chambers' namely Amsterdam, Middleburg (Zealand), Rotterdam, Delft, Hoorn and Enkhuizen. Ships sailed from the Cape of Good Hope to the Magella Straits, so as to monopolize on all respective ports.

The Portuguese already established, battled for custom against the Dutch, acts of piracy often occurred and valuable cargoes were often seized. Other underhanded means of profit existed between the Dutch and the Portuguese, both desperately trying to undercut each other, by intercepting the flow of goods to the other and outpricing them. Circumstances became ludicrous when finally the Dutch occupied the island of Pehoe, but were driven out by the Chinese navy in 1624. A solution finally came in the form of diplomatic negotiations whereby, nothing was to be placed in the way of the Dutch. ²⁵ The Dutch then established themselves on Formosa, which at that time was not considered part of the Chinese empire. The Chinese junts then acquired permission to sail and trade with the Dutch. The arrangement was most agreeable to both parties involved. Inevitably Formosa became a rich trading port and also became a point for trading between Japan and China. ²⁶ In 1639 Japan closed its frontiers to all foreigners except China and Holland. With the fall of the Ming

Fig. 23.



dynasty in 1644 and rise of its successor, the Ch'ing dynasty trade and foreign relations began to decline, hence the end of the great trading era within Chinese history.

Already European potters were duplicating wares inspired by what they had seen coming from the Eastern shores. The Chinese began to produce 'Western Wares', specifically for the western market. These wares had a European look, and did not necessarily have an authentically Chinese look. The bulk of export handled by the Dutch East India Company was decorated with Chinese motifs. A number of pieces were also bought in completely white, in order to be decorated and painted in the Netherlands or elsewhere. After the initial influx of porcelain to the general public, traders knew what was popular and what wasn't. These seadogs regulations would read as follows:

27.
TO BE TAKEN WITH ALL FAULTS, AS CRACKED,
 SNIP'D OR RUB'D EDGES AND NONE TO BE REFUSED
 EXCEPT PHYSICALLY BROKEN BELOW THE RIMS:
 NO RINGING TO BE ALLOWED, NOR ANY ALLOWANCE TO
 BE MADE ON ANY LOTS, ON PRETENCE OR NOT
 ANSWERING THE SAMPLE, DIFFERENCE OF FIGURES,
 OR PAINTING OR ANY INEQUALITY OR DISPROPORTION
 OF BOWLS OR PLATES, CUPS OR SAUCERS, OR ANY
 OTHER GOODS THAT MATCHED TOGETHER, EACH LOT
 TO BE TAKEN MORE OR LESS.....

This was a report from the minutes of a committee of correspondence from September, 1709 of the Honourable East India Company, in relation to Captain Stringer's voyage of 1710 - 1711.

These porcelain wares were so popular to Europeans because of their versatility. These wares were known as domestic wares, useable in homes and not entirely for ornamental use; by means of the Supra-Cargo's, transport became available for Chinese merchants to trade at low prices. Before the 1740's there were no English porcelain manufacturers, even up until the 1800's, these manufacturers required three or more years to complete a large order. Early cargoes of the English East India Company catered for utilitarian wares and had a

European feel to their designs. ²⁸ Some of the earlier imports were probably earthenware or stoneware and not translucent porcelain. The first of the English cargoes to set sail for China was the London East India Company who received a Royal Charter on 31st December, 1600, its full title being 'The Governor and Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies', more informally known as 'The New Company' to stop any confusion between the two companies. Inevitably there was rivalry and on July 22nd, 1702 there was an amalgamation of the two companies. ²⁹ Yet the official amalgamation was not until March, 1709 when the new company was known as 'The United Company of Merchants Trading to the East Indies', then popularly known as 'The Honourable East India Company'.

³⁰ In 1596 two London merchants, Richard Allot and Thomas Bromefield set off for the Chinese coast on a voyage to Peking with a letter from Queen Elizabeth I requesting that English merchants be allowed to trade for Chinese goods; unfortunately they never reached China. Some of the earliest examples of Chinese porcelain came from the captured Portuguese vessel The 'San Jago'. Its cargo was auctioned in Holland in 1602 and some sixty tones of chinaware from the 'Catarina' was sold in 1604.

Before the introduction of Chinese wares or production of English porcelain, most English families ate from pewter plates or from wooden trenchers. British earthenware was still clay or brick-coloured. The white salt-glaze or cream-coloured bodies had not yet been introduced. Both on the Continent or in Britian there were various types of tin-glazed earthenware of the delft type but these wares were far from practical, the covering white glaze easily chipped away from the clay body in normal day to day use. This earthenware proved unsuitable for all important teawares and more tablewares. From the housewives point of view the oriental porcelain plate, with its pleasant feel and its durable covering glaze, was a godsend, hence vast numbers were shipped to Europe and must have been snapped up.

Christie's is to auction the contents of a South Asian trader, wrecked off Vietnam in 1690, when 'Chinamania' was at its height

IT COULD be the bargain-basement sale of the century. Some 28,000 pieces of Chinese porcelain recovered from a South Asian junk, wrecked off the coast of Vietnam around 1690, are to be auctioned by Christie's in Amsterdam on 7-8 April on behalf of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

It was a weighty decision for the Vietnamese government to sell their treasures to the capitalist West. An inter-ministerial committee, chaired by the prime minister himself, was required to suspend the country's law banning the export of antiques.

Christie's are hoping the sale will earn around £1.5m, on the assumption that the quantity of porcelain available will push down prices to around half or a third of normal levels. They expect no American buyers since the US government bans its citizens from purchasing goods of Vietnamese origin.

The wreck was found by local fishermen off the island of Con Dao in 1989 and they brought up the first pieces. Visitors began to buy them for a song and made so much money re-selling, that they came back for more. As prices rose, the local people — with wages under £5 a week — took to diving with little or no equipment, which resulted in terrible accidents. Some of the divers got the "bends", others broke limbs or damaged their eardrums. This is how the discovery came to the attention of the authorities. They sent in better-equipped divers, but the difficulties of raising the cargo defeated them too.

A Swedish underwater survey firm based in Singapore, Hallstrom Oceanics, was finally commissioned to recover the cargo against a percentage of the auction proceeds and Christie's was chosen from among 22 groups tendering to handle the sale — mostly expatriate Vietnamese. I haven't found anyone who will tell me about the in-fights and dramas between the groups competing for the treasure. But over two years ago, David Howard, a respected English dealer, was approached mysteriously about it. He got a phone call from a man with a foreign voice who sent him four albums of photographs.

Some of the photographs showed people kneeling among quantities of little blue and white vases laid out on the floor. From the timing of the approach — it was before Hallstrom brought up the bulk of the cargo in the spring of 1991 — Howard's contact may well have been acting for the fishermen's clients before the government took charge. Whatever the source, he heard no more.

The junk seems to have worked

its way down the South China coast, picking up little white figures, known as *blanc de chine*, from the Fujian kilns around Amoy, then provincial blue and white wares from the area around Swatow and finally putting in at Canton to pick up a large consignment of blue and white porcelains which had come down the Pearl River from Jingdezhen, the ceramic capital of China, whose kilns supplied the imperial household.

It was carrying some utilitarian ceramics to trade with the little kingdoms it passed along the way, 500 or so brown pottery lamps and another 500 grey glazed storage jars. But the bulk of the cargo was intended for the European market. The junk's goal was presumably Jakarta, or Batavia as it was then known, the walled town built by the Dutch on the Island of Java which served as the main entrepôt centre for the Dutch East India Company in its trade with China and Japan. The island of Con Dao, 100 miles south of Vung Tau on the Vietnamese coast,

was the last place that boats could take aboard fresh water before setting sail for Malaysia and Indonesia.

Christie's has christened the porcelain the "Vung Tau Cargo", since the Vung Tau province includes the is-

land of Con Dao, and the provincial administration has played a central role in organising the diving and the sale. A special Vung Tau sticker will be applied to every piece of porcelain in the auction.

Much of the porcelain in the sale has been extremely rare until now. It is made in European forms, imitating wine glasses with knopped stems, or tall drinking glasses known as *roemers*. Many pieces have spiral panels in low relief — common in Europe, but quite untypical of Asia. It is not known what the Chinese craftsmen used as models, maybe utilitarian pewter and glass supplied by the captains of Dutch ships, or wooden models sent out from Holland by the Dutch East India Company — they are known to have sent wooden and lacquered models to Japan. Colin Sheaf of Christie's points out that many of the forms are characteristic of effects achieved when turning wood on a lathe.

There must also have been some European prints available to the craftsmen, probably wood-block prints. One series of vases is decorated with a pattern of Dutch houses bordering canals and the backs of these have a ribbon swag distantly inspired by baroque wood carving. The covers of one series of vases are painted with a European king carrying an orb and sceptre with his queen

beside him. Even some of the flower and landscape decoration carries echoes of European prints when it uses cross-hatching for shading — a technique favoured by printmakers but foreign to China.

China had been riven by civil war for much of the seventeenth century as the Manchus from the north ousted the Ming court to establish the Qing dynasty. The porcelain kilns of Jingdezhen were seriously disrupted from the 1650s to 1683 — very shortly before this cargo was manufactured. It suggests that special efforts may have been made to revive the industry by manufacturing for foreign markets, at a stage when local potters had little knowledge of what Europe wanted. Better communications soon led to the direct commissioning of dinner services, and the type of vases which make up the bulk of this cargo slipped in importance.

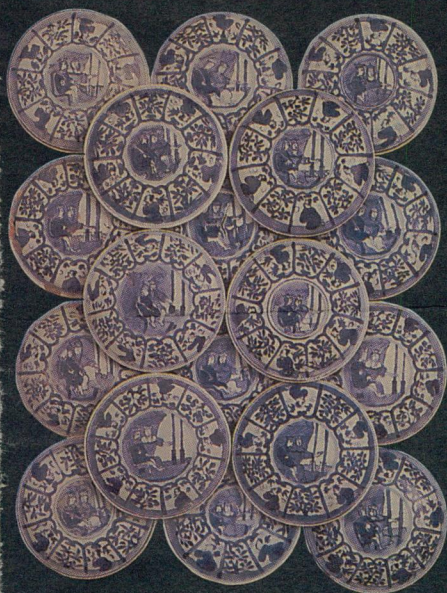
In the late seventeenth century porcelain began to pour into Europe from China and Japan, mostly via the Dutch East India Company, setting off a fashion for dense displays of vases, often incorporated into the architecture of a room. Magnificent designs were made by the Huguenot architect Daniel Marot for William and Mary in Holland, who imported the fashion to England, establishing porcelain rooms at Kensington Palace and Hampton Court.

Daniel Defoe noted the fashion in *A Tour thro' the Whole Islands of Great Britain*. Queen Mary, he wrote, "... brought in the Custom or humour, as I may call it, of furnishing houses with China-ware which increased to a strange degree afterwards, piling China upon the tops of cabinets, scrutores [writing stands], and every Chymney-Piece, to the tops of the Ceilings, and even setting up Shelves for their China-ware, where they wanted such Places." It became known as "Chinamania".

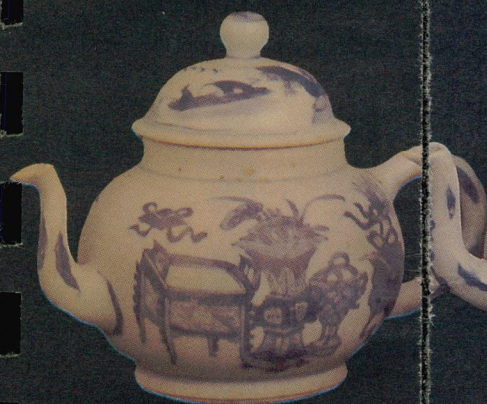
Christie's hopes that its sale will rekindle the fashion, for how else are they to get rid of it all? They have converted the 29,000 pieces into 1,000 lots which will take them two whole days to sell. In the case of the doll's-house vases they have converted 3,500 items into 35 lots of 100 each. The larger vases are combined into pairs or garnitures of 5 to 13 pieces. About 800 lots are angled at private collectors, carrying estimates that run from £100 to £5,000. Then there are vast composite lots which Christie's hopes may be taken up by department stores or dealers.

Parallels will obviously be drawn with Christie's 150,000-piece sale of the contents of a wrecked Dutch East Indiaman in 1986, known as the Nanking Cargo. The sale became a sensation, with prices averaging five times estimates and the subsequent retail trade multiplying them by four or five again. Current prices for Nanking pieces — which were of later date than the Vung Tau cargo — are roughly in line with the 1986 auction but many retail purchasers have got their fingers burnt. In the depths of a recession, it is unlikely that there will be any similar price explosion this time round. □

Fig. 24.



The cargo includes: top, covered jars and vases; above, cup-covers decorated with a European monarch; right, goblet depicting Dutch canal houses; below, tea-pots imitating Western silverware, and left: a goblet with knopped stem



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The Dolomites, running a to Cortina d'Ampezzo, and had just had a huge dump unique narrow, rock-walled c

There was more skiing in a resort. We hit rain-saturate only point the skis from one We passed through valleys across ice boulders of avalanche glacier we finally got deep back up and skied it throu

The final day, in Cortina, stairs cut into the ice to reach of this offered a choice of could touch the side by eier shoulder. The snow at 3,000 i three separate powder faces c spring snow on the valley wonder there is a waiting

BIVIO, SWITZERLAND
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CONCLUSION:

I don't know if this thesis has translated my fascination with Ming China adequately. I wish I could express my enthusiasm without the restriction imposed by the form necessitated by the fact that this is a thesis and not just a personal appreciation. For instance, it is impossible to convey the feelings of historic mystery I felt having eaten out of a bowl which was used for the same purpose it was used for five hundred years ago. That for me is the centre of this study. Hypothetically speaking, I would love if this ware was still more domestic, so that everybody could appreciate it for what it is and not just an expensive collectors' items.

What I find attractive about blue and white is its simplicity in both shape and design. For example, take the Swatow Plate in Fig. . It is both striking yet somehow crude, unpretentious, durable and serviceable. What an excellent alternative to the reams of plates, bowls and cups that we see everyday and yet still, largely escape our notice!

It seems that most of us equate Ming ware with the ubiquitous 'Ming Vase' that sits on a stand and is a collectors' item. Blue and white has been related to the status of the 'ugly sister' of ornamental Ming. I personally do not agree with this point. Due to its use of two basic colours (and occasional use of a third) blue and white, I think, has a far more definitive style which can be applied to all areas of design and yet still be instantly recognisable and coherent.

Finally I would like to say that what, to me, is most important here is the uniqueness of each piece. It is possible to write a thesis on almost anything, it is much harder, I think, to find something that one actually wants to investigate in depth, and that will hold up to such scrutiny. Formalities aside, this thesis adds nothing new to the vast volumes written already on this subject,

but I hope it has served as a testament for my respect
for, of the the best of all art forms.

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GLOSSARY:

- Biscuit: The name given to a once fired ceramic body on which there is no glaze.
- Feldspar: A basic ingredient in many clay bodies as well as glazes. It is an igneous rock material occurring in a number of forms, all containing alumina and silica, together with varying proportions of fluxing elements.
- Kaolin: A white relatively aplastic clay, largely free of ferrous impurities, which fires white. It occurs in many parts of China and is an essential ingredient in porcelain. When used alone, virtually an impossibility it fuses into a homogenous mass at about 1,750°C.
- Porcelain: A ceramic ware constituted of two ingredients, Kaolin and Chinastone, or Petunte (pai-tun-tzu), a felspathic material from decomposed granite. When fired it is very hard, normally white, vitrified and translucent.
- Slip: Clay reduced to a liquid, often creamy in consistency, by the addition of water.

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