Gaps in Ceramic Production/Distribution and the Rise of Multinational Traders in 15th Century Asia

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Abstract: The political map of 15th century Asia is a turbulent one. The menace of Mongolian power had been removed from most of the continent, allowing the Han-Chinese and Koreans in particular, to reestablish their respective societies and economies. A new Asian world order was coming into being in which China played a key role. The newly introduced Chinese tribute trade policy institutionalized foreign trade with China as an inter-governmental system. The fact that this new policy severely restricted Chinese merchants in their international trade activities, clearly demonstrates the authority of the new Ming regime. Paradoxically, this Ming policy did not only encourage Asian traders to engage more actively in this profitable official tribute trade, but also in illicit private trade. New or improved technologies developed along with new Asian trade relationships, enhancing the volume and intensity of trade. The widespread acceptance of Islam in the Malaysian peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and even at the Chinese court, constituted a major element of social change in the region.

This article discusses high-fired glazed ceramics of 15th century Asia against this background of political, social, technological, and economic changes. In particular the so-called "gap" theory is examined, which surmises the existence of gaps in ceramic production and trade of this period. The authors suggest that Asian ceramic trade in this period be viewed as a multinational enterprise with new international participants. They point out that besides the presence of non-indigenous, multinational traders, a rise in regional ceramic centers with indigenous traders specializing in local trade may also be detected. This paper focuses its discussion on two such dynamic ethnic groups: Sino-Southeast Asians and Ryukyuans.

Key Words: South China Sea, ceramic production gap, ceramic export gap, multinational traders, Ryukyu

I. Introduction

What kind of high-fired stoneware and porcelain was made in 15th century Asia? What new patterns in international trade emerged in 15th century Asia? Why and how did China lose its dominant position in the Asian ceramic market to Siam (Thailand) and

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Chiao-chih 交阯 (north Vietnam) and Chan-p'o 占婆 (Champa in central Vietnam) in particular? Why did countries like Korea and Japan, which had competent ceramic manufacturing capabilities, opt not to join in this international competition? These are some of the questions discussed at the 1998 ACRO/The Field Museum Asian ceramics conference held in Chicago last October.

The political map of 15th century Asia was a turbulent one. Menacing Mongol power had been removed from most of Asia, allowing China and Korea in particular to reestablish their societies and economies. A new Asian world order started coming into being with China playing a central role. As part of this, the new Chinese tribute policy institutionalized foreign trade by requiring formal documents, or 'tallies', issued by the central government, placing foreign commerce on a government-controlled, state-to-state basis. This new policy, while clearly demonstrating the power and authority of the new Ming regime (1368-1644), severely restricted Chinese traders doing business abroad. Paradoxically, this restrictive Ming policy actually encouraged more traders, Chinese and others, to crisscross the South China Sea and Indian Ocean not only to foster profitable official tribute trade but also to engage in illicit private trade. This was particularly true after the 15th century.

The century also saw some major social changes. New or improved technologies such as ceramic making, shipbuilding and navigational skills seem to have been shared throughout Asia. The latter two in particular fostered new Pan-Asian trading relationships that enhanced the volume and intensity of trade. Another major social change was the widespread acceptance of Islam in the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Borneo and even within the Chinese court itself. The famous 15th century admiral Cheng Ho 鄭和, for example, was a Chinese Muslim.

One of the principal questions behind the conference is how well were these new political, social, technological and economic changes reflected in the high-fired glazed ceramics of 15th century Asia? Some observers see that there were gaps in ceramic production and trade developed during this period. The authors propose to examine this question by viewing ceramics as trading commodities, and by giving ceramic manufacturing, markets, and government policies a high research priority. We see Asian ceramic trade of this period not only as a multinational business with new, non-indigenous participants entering the competition, but also as a collection of regional ceramic centers with indigenous traders specializing in local trade.

It is highly feasible that the competition attending this 15th century multinational business is responsible for the improved quality in wares and expanded production in Vietnam, Siam, Korea, and Japan. Whether the Chinese potters and government were

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aware of or felt threatened by their neighbors' new strength is hard to determine. The facts that Siam and Vietnam became major exporters of ceramics, diminishing the lion's share of a market formerly held by China, must have something to do with price, quality and delivery, as well as financial and business infrastructures. But it is ultimately the market itself which dictated shapes, decoration, and quality. This, perhaps, is the reason why ceramics made in different parts of Asia tend to have many similar features, implying, for instance, that the new Islam market in Asia had a widespread influence on the design of the new blue-and-white wares.

We will concentrate on two issues in this paper. Firstly we will examine the 'Ming Gap' theory and its place in the study of 15th century Asian ceramics. Secondly, we will discuss the rise of a class of multinational traders and their possible impact on Asian trading patterns.

II. The 15th Century Gap Theory

As far as we can see, when scholars talk about a 15th century ceramic gap there are in fact not one but two gaps of a different nature. The first is a ceramic production gap in China of 30 years, stretching roughly from 1435 to 1465. The second is a ceramic export gap which relates to Chinese ceramic exports to Southeast Asia during the 15th century. As the 'gap' concept has been used frequently by scholars, we feel there is a need to clarify what the term may mean.

1. The Production Gap in China

Based on the almost complete absence of ceramics with imperial reign marks of Cheng-t'ung 正統 (1436-1449), Ching-t'ai 景泰 (1450-1456) and T'ien-shun 天順 (1457-1464)[1] —which means fewer surviving pieces from the imperial factory in Ching-te-chen 景德鎮[2] —and the relatively few examples of commercial trade

1. There are at least three vessels with 'T'ien-shun' reign marks but their authenticity has not been universally accepted. See Feng Hsien-ming (Feng Xianming) et al., *Chung-kuo t'ao-tz'u shih* [A History of Chinese Ceramics] (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-she, 1982), p. 407; and Keng Pao-ch'ang (Geng Baochang), *Ming Ch'ing tz'u-ch'i chien-ting* [A Guide for Identifying Ming and Ch'ing Ceramics, Ming Volume] (Hong Kong: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1984), pp. 65-66.
2. Keng Pao-ch'ang, op.cit., p. 59; T'an Tan-chiung indicates statistically the absence of ceramics of these three reigns in the Palace Museum in his volume *T'ao-tz'u hui-lu* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1981), pp. 100, 118.

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ceramics datable to that time span, scholars refer to that 30-year period as the 'dark age' or 'gap'[3]. This period is also known as 'the interregnum'[4] of Ming ceramic history because of Emperor Cheng-t'ung's absence for seven years until he returned to the throne and changed the reign to T'ien-shun.

When arguing for the existence of this gap, scholars often cite several well-known imperial decrees issued between 1435 and 1465. These decrees generally forbade the production or sale of certain kinds of ceramics (**Table 1**: Years 1436b, 1438, 1447, 1454 and 1459, 1464). An obvious shortcoming of this view, based as it is on the absence or presence of reign marks and imperial decrees, is that any such gap can be shown to have existed only in one particular production area—namely, the imperial kiln compound at Ching-te-chen, Kiangsi 江西 province.

But what did other commercial or private kilns in Ching-te-chen do during this 30-year period? What did other Chinese kilns outside of Ching-te-chen make? If we piece together published but infrequently cited information, we find that there were at least 14 kiln complexes operating in the 15th century (**Table 2**). We are confident that more kilns will surface when enough interest prevails. It is clear that the 'gap', if it existed at all outside Ching-te-chen, was not absolute.

What one can be sure of is that China was going through major social and economic changes around the mid-15th century. With the capital firmly settled in Peking instead of Nanking 南京, the Grand Canal began to play a very major role in connecting North-South internal trade. Silver began to emerge as the backbone of the economy, yet the Ming government still insisted on using paper notes as the currency in government payments and foreign trade. Specialized industry became more localized, with many enterprises concentrating in the Lower Yangtze River area.[5] Ching-te-chen indeed became a major ceramic town—an indisputable point frequently made by scholars. But

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3. For example, see Hua K'e-Kung (Hua Kegong), "Ts'ung Pei-ching ch'u-tu Ming ch'u min-yung ch'ing-hua tz'u tan Ching-te-chen," *Jingdezhen Taoci*, vol.1 (1988), p. 55; see also Chou Ku-ch'eng's (Zhou Gucheng) discussion in *Chung-kuo ku tz'u hui-k'ao* (Tientsin: T'ien-chin jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1991), pp. 152-165.
4. For example, see John Carswell, "Blue-and-White Porcelain in China," in J. Carswell ed., *Blue and White Chinese Porcelain and Its Impact on the Western World* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985), p. 30; Roxanna Brown, *The Ceramics of South-East Asia: Their Dating and Identification* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 27; and Wang Ch'ing-cheng (Wang Qingzheng), *Underglaze Blue and Red* (Hong Kong: Multi-Art Press, 1993), p. 15.
5. For example, see Shiba Yoshinobu, "The Lower Yangtze Economy and the Trading Networks of Maritime East Asia During the Ming Dynasty, the Significance of the Transitional Age of the Sixteenth Century," in *China and the Maritime Silk Route*, Second Volume (Fuchou: Organization Committee of

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what we should also ask is whether the rise of Ching-te-chen caused other ceramic centers to lose interest, and if not, how many kept up even though vastly overshadowed by the new ceramic capital. Later we will argue that during the early Ming period, kilns at Lung-ch'üan 龍泉in Chekiang 浙江were just as active as, if not more active than, the kilns of Ching-te-chen.[6]

Early in the 1980s the gap theory was challenged by eminent scholars such as Feng Hsien-ming 馮先銘[7] and John Alexander Pope[8] who argued sensibly that the absence of reign marks does not necessarily mean the absence of production at imperial kilns. The present writers share their view. If there was indeed a nationwide ceramic production gap, one would certainly have read about it in the literature and other documents. Just consider the inconvenience to the 53,000,000 residents of China during that period, if for 30 long years they could not replace the pots they broke.[9] Besides, why would the government or commercial potters want to starve the market when there was no particular shortage of skilled labor, clay, fuel or demand? In fact records with reference to ceramics indicate that imperial production did continue during the 'gap' (**Table 1**: Years 1441b, 1457, and 1459). In addition to imperial production, private kilns not only thrived but also became involved in filling imperial orders: in 1436a and 1441 a private potter named Lu Tzu-shun 陸子順 supplied ceramics to the Kuang-lu Ssu 光祿寺, the Court of Imperial Entertainments (**Figs. 1-2**).

Our contention is that production at imperial kilns during the 'gap' period might not have been of very high quality, but that it certainly did not cease. The decrees which have been cited by pro-gap theorists could be used to argue equally well for a no-gap theory—the industry was in chaos and production was sufficiently out of control to cause repeated alarms to officials.

When one examines manufacturing sites, it seems that the archeological data do not support the gap notion either. Ten years ago local archaeologists excavated a sequence of Ming imperial factories at Ching-te-chen, revealing foundations of workshops which

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Quanzhou International Seminar on China and the Maritime Silk Route,1994), pp. 71-108.

6. Ceramic specialists see that there were two major centers of ceramic production in 15th century China: kilns in Ching-te-chen and its neighborhood made mostly blue-and-white porcelains while those in Chekiang specialized in green-glazed stoneware.
7. Feng Hsien-ming et al., op.cit., p. 374.
8. John Alexander Pope, *Chinese Porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1981), pp. 101-105.
9. China had a million people more in those 30 years than the years immediately before the 'gap'. See Liang Fang-chung (Liang Fangzhong), *Statistics on Household, Land, and Land Tax in Chinese History* (Shanghai: Shanghai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1980), p. 200.

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were active immediately before the gap, during the reigns of Yung-le 永樂 (1403-1424) and Hsüan-te 宣德 (1426-1435).[10] There was no trace of a workshop belonging to the gap period which supposedly followed. However, the excavators do not think that production was terminated after Hsüan-te's reign. Instead they suggest that evidence of producing ceramics after Hsüan-te—i.e., during the gap period—was destroyed by later activities such as the construction of a road in the 20th century.[11] It is important to note that not far from the Yung-le and Hsüan-te production site, archaeologists have located yet another imperial workshop dating to the Ch'eng-hua 成化 period (1465-1487), immediately after the gap.[12] This shows that imperial production sites in Ching-te-chen did shift location over time.

The increasing data recovered from burials, such as those located in Kiangsi and Kwangtung 廣東 provinces, argue for the absence of a gap in the mid-15th century.[13] Further, ceramics collected from construction sites in Peking also argue for a steady production of blue-and-white wares in Ching-te-chen.[14] A recent breakthrough has come from vigorous archaeological investigations at the Ming imperial precinct in Nanking,[15] where a parallel palace, in addition to the one in Peking, was maintained throughout the Ming period. The Nanking finds fill in the 'gap' considerably, as ceramic fragments from layers dated to the 'gap' years are plentiful. The Nanking ceramic data still needs further scrutiny before they could be reliably used. But for the time being they serve well for an argument in support of an active production phase in the mid-15th century.

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10. Liu Hsin-yüan (Liu Xinyuan), "Imperial Porcelain of the Yongle and Xuande Periods Excavated from the Site of the Ming Imperial Factory at Ching-te-chen," in *Imperial Porcelain of the Yongle and Xuande Periods Excavated from the Site of the Ming Imperial Factory at Jingdezhen* (Hong Kong: The Urban Council , 1989), pp. 54-81.
11. Liu Hsin-yüan, op.cit., p. 56.
12. Liu Hsin-yüan, "A Study of the Site of the Cheng-hua Imperial Kiln at Ching-te-chen and Related Archaeological Finds," in *A Legacy of Chenghua* (Hong Kong: The Tsui Museum of Art, 1993), pp. 48-87. Apparently Liu does not doubt the existence of imperial kilns in these years. See also his article, "Yuan Dynasty Official Wares from Jingdezhen," in Rosemary Scott ed., *The Porcelains of Jingdezhen* (London: Percival David Foundation, 1993), p. 40.
13. For example, see Huang Yün-peng, "Blue-and-White Popular Ware in Ming Dynasty and its Divisions into Periods," *Jingdezhen Taoci*, no.3(1986), pp. 28-45; Song Liang-pi, "New Evidence on Several Pieces of Zhengtong, Jingtai and Tianshu Periods recovered in Guangdong Province," *Relics from Jiangxi*, no.2 (1990), pp. 16, 78-81.
14. Hua K'e-kung, op.cit., pp. 55-57, 60. Hua's observations were based on pieces of 15 different painted designs, collected from nine construction sites in Peking.
15. Chang P'u-sheng (Zhang Pusheng), "Ceramic Finds from the Ming Palace Site in Nanjing," in P. Lam & H.Y. Yau eds., *A Legacy of the Ming* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1996), p. 11.

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2. The Chinese Export Gap

Thus, we are not convinced that a clearly recognizable production gap can be proved to have existed during the 15th century. However, this does not mean that there was no gap in China's ceramic exports. In order to determine whether a marked decline in those exports actually occurred, we must turn not only to Chinese historical sources and overseas archaeological evidence, but look to historical data from other countries as well.

In Southeast Asia the idea of a 'Ming Gap' first took roots in the 1950s when Tom Harrisson failed to locate any archaeological sites containing early Ming ceramics in Sarawak.[16] The idea caught on among other researchers who study Southeast Asian ceramic trade. Roxanna Brown's 1998 article, "Hsüan-te-marked Trade Ware and the Ming Gap" in Oriental Art summarizes some of the latest views on this issue. Harrisson recognized that there were post-14th century ceramics in Indonesia, the Philippines and Brunei, but could find none in or near the Sarawak River Delta. Hence the early 'Ming Gap' concept was geographically clearly defined and applied only to the western part of Borneo. Harrisson further speculated that the conversion of the Brunei Sultanate to Islam may have caused the center of trade to shift from the Sarawak River Delta to Brunei.

Archaeological work in Sarawak and Brunei in the last 20 years has partially refuted the 'Ming Gap' theory of Harrisson's. Now it seems neither that the Sarawak area is void of post 14th century Chinese wares,[17] nor that Brunei only developed during Ming times.[18] Harrisson, however, is right that Brunei became a major ceramic market in the 15th-16th century. Kota Batu, a site joined to the present day Brunei capital, is probably the richest site anywhere in Borneo in terms of the concentration of imported glazed ceramics from other Asian countries. Brunei archaeologists see that the ceramic trade penetrated the coastal area beginning in the late 14th century and moved inland,

16. Tom Harrison, " 'The Ming Gap' and Kota Batu, Brunei," *The Sarawak Museum Journal* (New Series), vol.8: no.11 (1958), pp. 273-277.
17. Lucas Chin, "Trade Pottery Discovery in Sarawak from 1948 to 1976," *Sarawak Museum Journal* (New Series), vol.30: no.46 (1997), pp. 1-7.
18. Like Sarawak, Brunei is now known to have been very active during the 10th-14th centuries, as exemplified by a number of archaeological sites such as Teresun Kupang. For example, see Karim bin Pengiran Osman, "A Report on Archaeological Excavation and Exploration on Pulau Terindak and its Surrounding Area," *Brunei Museum Journal*, vol.7: no.4 (1992), p. 29.

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sinking deeper roots into the local market.[19] Just how much of the archaeological material found in Brunei belongs to the 15th century has still to be determined, but there can be little doubt that some does. Reliable statistics on the 15th century phase of Kota Batu cannot be obtained until ceramic specialists can specify more fully which wares belong mainly to the 15th and not the 14th or 16th century.

Was there a 15th century gap in Chinese wares exported to parts of Southeast Asia other than Brunei? The general notion is that after the 1370s, the newly instituted Chinese tribute system greatly restricted China-based merchants from going abroad. Chinese goods left the country either in connection with official trips or via foreign visitors whose missions were approved by the Chinese Government. This situation did not change until the 16th century when the official Ming tribute system was severely challenged by illicit trade. Hence the Chinese trade volume of the 15th century should have been smaller than those from centuries preceding or following it. It is important to note that scholars supporting the export gap theory do not necessarily see a hypothetical production gap as a decisive factor. These scholars seem to visualize the export gap as covering the entire 15th century.

To verify the export gap notion, it is necessary for us to compare quantitative data on Chinese ceramics recovered from relevant overseas archaeological sites. In countries where high-fired ceramics were already being made, as in Japan, Korea, Siam, Vietnam, Champa and Cambodia, indigenous potters are likely to have satisfied a significant portion of the local market. Hence attempts to study changes in proportions of archaeological Chinese ceramics found in these countries should be done in light of local ceramic production, as well as social, economic and political conditions. Such an attempt will be outside the scope of this paper. We will just briefly touch on Thai and Vietnamese production here.

Siam and Vietnam had become notable ceramic exporters in the 15th century. Some Southeast Asian specialists believe that their success was a direct result of the shortage of Chinese ceramics.[20] This shortage, they felt, made possible for the Southeast Asian producers to increase ceramic production which eventually cut deeply into traditional

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19. P.M. Shariffuddin & Matussin Omar, "Distribution of Chinese and Siamese Ceramics in Brunei, " in Southeast Asian Ceramic Society ed., *Chinese Celadons and Other Related Wares in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Southeast Asian Ceramic Society, 1979), pp. 70-71.
20. For example, see John Guy, *Oriental Trade Ceramics in South-East Asia, Ninth to Sixteenth Centuries* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 51; Amara Srisuchat, "Merchants, Merchandise, Markets: Archaeological Evidence in Thailand Concerning Maritime Trade Interaction between Thailand and Other Countries Before the 16th Century A.D.," in *Ancient Trades and*

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Chinese dominated markets. However, the rise of Vietnamese and Siamese kiln centers does not prove the existence of a Chinese export gap. We think it is equally possible that the entire international ceramic market was expanding and that Siamese and Vietnamese producers made products which satisfied certain segments of that growing market. Perhaps their price, design, delivery, or other factors appealed to some consumers while others continued to buy from China. The Chinese may have lost market share but this does not necessarily mean they experienced a significant drop in exports.

Let us turn our attention to places where there was no indigenous production of high-fired stoneware. The absence of 15th century Chinese ceramics in those places is certainly not conspicuous. Kota Batu in Brunei is one example. Ryukyu (Okinawa) is another. Both imported many Chinese ceramic wares between the 14th and 16th centuries. In summarizing the results of research at five archaeological areas in Okinawa, Richard Pearson shows that there was a 100-fold increase in blue-and-white wares from Yüan 元 to Ming times: the sites had only 16 Yüan but 1629 Ming sherds, many of which are earlier than the 16th century.[21] Hence archaeological data from Kota Batu and Okinawa do not yet support a gap theory of shortage of Chinese ceramics.

We also argue that 15th century Ryukyu traders might not have been aware of any gap in ceramic supplies from China. Records show that between 1420 and 1470 they were able to acquire significant numbers of Chinese green glazed wares. We shall discuss this point further in the next part of the paper.

While land sites in the Philippines and the Malay Peninsula have not yet yielded enough data for a quantitative approach,[22] recent shipwreck sites offer a new understanding of 15th century trade. Several 15th century wrecks were recovered from Malaysian and the Philippine waters, such as the Pandanan[23], Lena shoal[24], Luuc[25], and

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Cultural Contacts in Southeast Asia (Bangkok: National Culture Commission, 1996), p. 248.

21. See Figure 9 in Richard Pearson, "Prestige and Ritual in the Ceramics of the Gusuku Period in Okinawa AD 1000 to AD 1609," unpublished paper presented at the 1996 ACRO/ Field Museum Asian Ceramics Conference, Chicago.
22. For example, see Larry Gotuaco, Rita Tan and Allison Diem, *Chinese and Vietnamese Blue-and-White Wares Found in the Philippines* (Manila: Bookmark Inc., 1997); John Addis, *Manila Trade Pottery Seminar* (Manila: The Research Foundation in Philippine Anthropology & Archaeology Inc., 1976). While these authors bring out good local data, they are primarily concerned with the issues of identification and dating.
23. Christophe Loviny, *The Pearl Road: Tales of Treasure Ships in the Philippines* (Manila: Asiatype Inc. & Christophe Loviny, 1996); Allison Diem, "The Pandanan Wreck 1414: Centuries of Regional Interchange," *Oriental Art*, vol.43: no.2 (1977) pp. 41-44.
24. Frank Goddio, *Weisses Gold* (Gottingen: Steidl Verlag, 1997), pp. 79-101.
25. "Shipwrecks in the Philippines," *ACRO Update*, no.4 (1998), p. 5.

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Royal Nanhai.[26] Detailed reports of those wrecks are yet to be published, but our general impression is that several contain large amounts of Chinese ware together with varying quantities of Siamese and Vietnamese wares. Even though these wrecks do not represent every decade of the 15th century, they help better define the duration of the gap.

Has a corresponding Chinese export gap been observed in countries west of Sumatra? Scholars who work in that area are either unaware of the gap theory, or adopt the gap notion without question. Carswell, for instance, mentions the shortage of 15th century Chinese wares in India.[27] Willets, on the other hand, refers to the great green-glazed ceramic collection at Salar Jung Museum at Hyderabad in India, dated to early Ming times.[28] The famous collections at Ardebil in Iran[29] and Topkapi in Turkey[30] contain many excellent 15th century Chinese blue-and-white and green-glazed pieces, which certainly were exported at that time.

It seems that a better understanding of the Chinese export gap should include an identification of that gap. We must determine whether this was a period of low export or a complete absence of export. We need to further define the export gap in terms of regional markets and more specific time frames.

III. The Rise of a Class of Multinational Traders

In the 15th century more Asian countries became involved in international business. Traders from Ryukyu, Siam, Champa, Chiao-chih, Java, Palembang, Malacca, Brunei as well as China frequently crisscrossed the South China Seas. In the following part of this paper we will argue that the increased participation of various countries was largely due to the rise of a class of multinational traders and that this led to the development of new ceramic trade patterns between 1400 and 1500.

When one takes a wide-angle view of the ceramic production scene in 15th century Asia, one finds six countries made high-fired ceramics: Champa, China, Japan, Korea,

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26. Sten Sjostrand, *A Brief Description of the 'Royal Nanhai' and Its Artefacts* (Endau: Nanhai Marine Archaeology Sdn. Bhd., 1997).
27. John Carswell, op.cit., pp. 30-31.
28. William Willets, *Ceramic Art of Southeast Asia* (Singapore: The Southeast Asian Ceramic Society, 1973), p. 34.
29. John Alexander Pope, *Chinese Porcelains from the Ardebil Shrine* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1981).
30. Regina Krahl & John Ayer, *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul* (London: Sotheby

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Siam and Vietnam. Although the ceramics of Korea and Japan were excellent, they were not exported in any significant quantity for reasons yet to be examined in detail.

Prior to the 15th century, trade ceramics from China, northern Vietnam and northern Thailand were in international circulation. New entrants to the international ceramic scene were Cham wares from central Vietnam and stoneware jars from Central Thailand. Naturally traders from the producing countries were involved in selling these wares. However, one is surprised to find that traders from Ryukyu were heavily involved in ceramic trading activities—a non-producing country which was practically unknown in intra-Asian trade prior to the 15th century.

Thanks to the various vigorous programs of publishing the *Rekidai Pawan* 歷代寶案, a collection of the Ryukyu official documents on foreign relationships, the ceramic trading activities of Ryukyu may be better documented than any other Asian country.

1. Ryukyu and Its Trading Partners

Between the 1420s and 1470, the Ryukyu government sent more than 50 business envoys to Southeast Asia: mostly to Siam, Malacca, Java and Palembang **(Table 3)**; and more than 200 envoys to China.[31] These were diplomatic as well as trading missions. As would be expected, Ryukyu brought Southeast Asian, Ryukyuan and Japanese products to China, and brought Chinese and Japanese products to the Southeast Asian states.

A standard package of state gifts from Ryukyu to Southeast Asian rulers (which can be understood as import duties or bribes) regularly included 2,420 pieces: 20 large glazed-green plates, 400 small green-glazed plates and 2,000 small green-glazed bowls **(Table 3)**. Since Ryukyu did not make green-glazed stoneware at that time, since Japanese and Korean wares of the 15th century have never been found in Southeast Asia, and since Siam (a green-glazed ceramics producing country itself) frequently received the same gift packages from Ryukyu, there is little doubt that these green-glazed wares were made in China.

Throughout the 15th century Ryukyu gave away at least 95,000 pieces of green-glazed ceramics as state presents to Southeast Asian recipients. That figure, however,

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Parke Bernet, 1986), 3 volumes.

31. Cheng Liang-sheng, *Ming-tai Chung Jih kuan-hsi yen-chiu* [The Dissemination of Chinese Culture to Japan in the Ming Era: A Study Based on the Account of Japan in Ming History 1368-1644] (Taipei: The Liberal Arts Press, 1985), pp. 40-42.

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must represent but a small fraction of the wares that passed through their hands. The *Rekidai Pawan* shows that ceramics were also a major class of merchandise on 21 of these Ryukyuan ships, although quantities of other trade wares as opposed to gift wares are not specified.

One certainly wishes for more details about those non-quantified shipments of ceramics and to know how well Ryukyuan traders had penetrated the inter-Asian commercial system. As each shipful of ceramics would have contained many times the volume of ceramic gifts, the 21 Ryukyuan ships would have carried millions of pieces to Southeast Asia. The total volume of ceramics hauled by Ryukyu would have been much larger, since a fair number of the wares would have remained in the Ryukyus. We have good reasons to believe that most of these ceramics were produced in China.

What further surprises us is that Ryukyu did not seem to have any trouble getting green-glazed ware at any time during the 15th century, especially the time of the supposed production gap.[32] The data after 1470 do not indicate the types and quantity of state gifts, probably due to a change in the recording format. If Ryukyu experienced any shortage of Chinese green-glazed ware, it could only have been in the late 15th century.

How did Ryukyu manage to keep up the supply of Chinese wares if there really was a Chinese export gap? Why did Ryukyu only include green-glazed but not blue-and-white wares in their gifts to Southeast Asian trading partners? We think Ryukyu might have had a special, or even direct, connection with kilns in Chekiang and Fukien 福建, the centers of Chinese green-glazed ceramic production. These must have been very special arrangements because in theory the tribute system in force at the time precluded foreigners from trading directly with Chinese suppliers. For instance, one decree states:

> In the 9th month of Cheng-t'ung the 12th year [i.e. 1447], it was forbidden to carry out private selling of white background-blue design porcelain to members of foreign diplomatic missions by citizens, soldiers, merchants at towns along the pony express route in the two capitals [Nanking and Peking], Kiangsi, Honan 河南, Hunan 湖南, Hupeh 湖北, Kwangtung, Kwangsi 廣西, Kansu 甘肅, Ta-t'ung 大同, and Liao-tung 遼東.[33]

This decree has been much cited in arguments for a tightening control over the tribute trade system. Two points, however, should be noted for the purpose of understanding

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32. There is no document for the years between 1442 and 1463 (Table 3) which might have been missing. Chinese records show that Ryukyu was active throughout those 21 years, having sent at least 17 envoys to China (See Cheng Liang-sheng, op.cit., pp. 40-42).
33. Ku Yen-wu (Gu Yanwu), *Jih-chih-lu Chih-yu*, chüan 2.

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Ryukyu's accessibility to Chinese green-glazed ware. First, Chekiang and Fukien were, curiously, not included in the list of 'forbidden areas' even though the two provinces handled much of China's maritime trade. They were not only major ceramic producing provinces in their own right, but were important outlets for Ching-te-chen wares as well. Fukien in particular was the usual port of entry for Ryukyuan envoys. Second, the decree forbade only private selling; business under the banner of diplomacy was apparently tolerated. Ryukyu may have had a special status in this regard, having established the trading rights of its envoys in Chekiang as far back as 1404 with the approval of Emperor Yung-le. The Minister of Rites at that time filed a case against Ryukyu because the envoy had secretly shopped for ceramics in Lung-ch'üan, Chekiang province. The emperor responded:

> People come here from far away to profit themselves. The court should be considerate of them, not penalize them.[34]

Whether after that Ryukyu was given the green light to deal directly with potters and ceramic agents in Lung-ch'üan is not mentioned in documents. But the large quantities of green-glazed wares carried by Ryukyuan ships had to come from somewhere.

There could be a number of reasons why Ryukyu favored green-glazed ware as state gift. Firstly, Chekiang kilns specialized in green-glazed ware at that time. If indeed Ryukyu traders had a special relationship with Chekiang, then naturally green-glazed ware was what they could get. Another possible reason why Ryukyu preferred green-glazed wares may be their price. An entry in the Ming records shows that green glazed wares were consistently cheaper, selling for about 1/3 the price of blue-and-white.[35] It is also possible, of course, that the Southeast Asian customers preferred the jade-like effect of the green glazed wares or, as West Asians are reputed to have believed, attributed poison-detecting properties to these wares.[36]

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34. *Ming-shih*, chüan 323.
35. *Ta Ming hui-tien*, chüan 113.
36. Apparently Ryukyu had access to blue-and-white wares as well. In 1470 they gave Korea 20 blue-and-white plates, 20 blue-and-white bowls and 1 white jar, in addition to a number of green glazed vessels (see Hsü Yü-hu, *Ming-tai Liu-ch'iu wang-kuo tui-wai kuan-hsi chih yen-chiu* [Studies on the Foreign Relations of the Kingdom of Ryukyu, 1368-1661] (Taipei: Student Book Co. Ltd., 1982), p.245). Presumably those blue-and-white pieces were produced at Ching-te-chen. It is interesting to note that at about this time Korea too made excellent blue-and-white wares (see Kim Young-won, *Choson Paeja* [Choson White Wares] (Seoul: Daewonsa Publishing Co.Ltd., 1992), pp. 54-61).

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The entries in the *Rekidai Pawan* reveal at least seven other interesting points related to this discussion. Firstly, Ryukyu's foreign trade was handled by the state, reflecting a system reminiscent of Ming government policies. Secondly, states like Siam at some point monopolized the selling of ceramics from Ryukyu, and determined the price unilaterally. This too is reminiscent of the Ming style of treating foreign envoys. Thirdly, the Ryukyuan ships usually carried some ethnic Chinese either as interpreters or regular crew members. Fourthly, all the documents between Ryukyu and other states were written in the Chinese language. Fifthly, Ryukyu sold shipments of ceramics to Palembang but never presented ceramics as gifts to the king or officials there. Sixthly, none of Ryukyu's Southeast Asian trading partners, not even a stoneware producing country like Siam, ever returned ceramics as gifts to Ryukyu. Lastly, the documents do not contain any evidence of direct business contact between Ryukyu and polities in the Philippines, Borneo, or Indochina.

We think all these points have some bearing on our understanding of regional Asian networks formed over a long time in response to the China trade. It is clear that these networks became more sharply defined in the 15th century. Take trade language for instance: when Europeans became active in Southeast Asia in the 16th century, they noted that Malay was widely spoken in the region. But back in the 15th century, Chinese too seems to have been a language commonly used in trade. People who were able to speak, read and write Chinese naturally would have become highly employable in the eyes of their fellow Asians. We will argue later that in the 15th century, ethnic Chinese were particularly available in the pan-Asian trade.

Not only did Ryukyu employ ethnic Chinese for business in Southeast Asia, but Southeast and South Asian countries also hired ethnic Chinese as interpreters and staff members of the envoy delegations. According to the Chinese dynastic record, *Ming shih-lu* 明實錄, at least 35 missions from Siam, Java, Palembang, Pangasinan, Bengal, Champa and Cambodia included ethnic Chinese to represent those polities in various capacities.[37] While an economic and diplomatic role for Chinese immigrants is not a new concept in 20th century Southeast Asia or the Americas, it is interesting to find that the pattern of immigration and naturalization from South China to other parts of Asia was already accelerating in the 15th century.

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37. Geoff Wade, "The Ming shih-lu as a Source for Southeast Asian History—14th to 17th Centuries," unpublished paper presented at the 12th Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, University of Hong Kong, June 1991, pp. 116-117.

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2. Chinese Immigrants in Southeast Asia

Did Ryukyuan traders carry Siamese, Vietnamese, Korean or Japanese ceramics as well? They probably did to some extent, but perhaps were not the major traders of those wares, as documents do not seem to substantiate that claim. This leads us to consider Asian traders of another ethnic group—the Chinese. Travelers visiting Southeast Asian countries in the first four decades of the 15th century noted six substantial overseas Chinese communities—each with a thousand or more people—in Palembang in Sumatra, Tuban, Gresik, Surabaya, Trowulan in Java, and Melaka in the Malay Peninsula.[38] Elsewhere, for historical reasons, one would expect many Chinese to have lived in Chiao-chih and Ryukyu. These overseas Chinese could have been farmers, fishermen, miners or craftsmen, but it is most certain that some must have been entrepreneurial merchants just as their counterparts today.

Individual Chinese from coastal Kwangtung, Fukien and Chekiang in particular had been traveling and trading abroad for centuries before the 15th century. But then they were more likely to be sojourners who traveled back and forth between China and their trading posts abroad. By the 14th century, it was not unheard of for Chinese sea merchants to maintain two families—one in their home town in China and one in their foreign outpost. Abroad they dressed in local style, married local women and had children from those marriages, as observed by Chou Ta-kuan 周達觀 when he visited Cambodia in the early 14th century. Chou cites in his book *Chen-la-feng-t'u-chi* 真臘風土記 the case of Hsüeh 薛, a fellow Wen-chou man from southern Chekiang, who stayed in Cambodia for over 35 years. Chou reasons that Cambodia offered better economic opportunities and easier lifestyles which lured Chinese sailors to settle abroad.

> [People in Cambodia] do not need [full attired] clothing, food is easy to acquire, women are easy to get, households are easy to maintain, utensils are easy to have enough of and business is easy to do.

These count among the universal reasons why emigration from some countries to others has continued down to the present day.

In addition to better economic and personal attractions abroad, the rise of the overseas

38. Ma Huan, *Yingyai Shenglan* [The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shores], trans. & ed. J.V.G. Mills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1970); Kung Chen, *Hsi-yang fan-kuo-chih* [A Record of the Foreign Countries in the West Ocean], ed. Hsiang Ta (Xiang Da) (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1961).

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Chinese communities in the 15th century was probably due to Ming emigration laws and foreign trade policies. Emperor Yung-le's 1402 decree allowed overseas Chinese to return to China as Chinese citizens, thus ending the illegal status of those residing abroad.

> Those Chinese who hid [abroad]...will be pardoned, allowed to return to their own profession and become regular citizens. But if they persist in their wrongdoing without repentance, our army will clear them off and then it will be too late for them to regret.[39]

Subsequently the Ming regime began to recognize the expatriate status and indeed value of overseas Chinese, thus anticipating Machiavelli's idea of decentralization a century later.[40] The Ming government bestowed titles and gifts on overseas Chinese. For instance, Liang Tao-ming 梁道明, the community leader in Palembang as recorded in the *Ming shih-lu*, chüan 48, received lavish presents in exchange for allegiance to China during the Yung-le reign. In the 1420s, another Chinese in Palembang, Shih Chin-ch'ing 施進卿, was appointed by the Ming government as the local Chinese community leader. What is important is that neither Liang nor Shih returned to their home towns in Kwangtung to live happily ever after. Shih died in Palembang and passed leadership to his daughter, probably a child by a local mother.[41]

Chinese emperors of the late 15th century recognized all the benefits—economic, political and otherwise—of having loyal overseas Chinese. A notable demonstration of this is Yung-liang 用良 of Java. He visited his Fukien home town five times and was granted permission to build ancestral halls there.[42] The opportunity to display filial piety continues to beckon overseas Chinese to return.

Were Liang's, Shih's and Yung-liang's continued involvement with China motivated purely by patriotism and root-searching sentiment? Maybe. But one should also bear in mind that there were repeated warnings issued by the Ming government in 1402, 1404, 1433, 1444, 1449, 1453, 1471 and 1472 against private trading with foreigners. These warnings were often accompanied by arrests along the China coast and land routes between Yunnan 雲南 and the upper states of Southeast Asia. Life was not easy for Chinese businessmen whose livelihood depended on foreign trade. Yet Liang, Shih and Yung-liang evidently thrived. Why were they immune from arrest? When they

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39. *Ming T'ai-tsung shih-lu*, chüan 12 (I).
40. Antony Jay, *Management and Machiavelli* (New York, Chicago & San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968), pp. 58-67.
41. Ma Huan, op.cit., "Palembang."
42. *Ming Ying-tsung shih-lu*, chüan 43.2a.

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visited China were they considered foreign traders or members of foreign tribute missions? Did Southeast Asian merchants and officials see the advantages of partnering with well connected overseas Chinese? **(Figs. 3-4)**

In any case, we may assume that Chinese leaders like Liang and Shih whose role in Palembang was recognized by the Ming government did manage to trade with China under official auspices of some kind. If one accepts the forgoing assumption, it will not be hard to understand why Ryukyu did not bother to send ceramics to Palembang where the local leaders seem to have had their own trading hotline with China through local Chinese communities. It is also easy to understand why Southeast Asian states did not return ceramic gifts to Ryukyu. We will not speculate whether Ryukyu and Palembang Chinese competed for favorable trading terms with the Ming or Palembang government.

It is not yet possible to demonstrate that ceramic production in China was closely connected with the growth of overseas Chinese communities. Also, 15th century documents do not show the extent to which overseas Chinese suppressed or promoted ceramic production and sales in their host countries. What we do see is the emergence of new patterns: the rise of multinational Chinese traders residing or working abroad because of restrictive Ming foreign trade and emigration policies; the rise of Ryukyu as a key intra-Asian trader; and the expansion of indigenous ceramic industries in Siam, Vietnam and Champa. We see this coupled with the rise of the Muslim population of Southeast Asia, some of whom were also ethnic Chinese.

3. Other Asian Traders

Traders indigenous to other Southeast Asian ceramic production countries were also important in the international trading scene. The 15th century produced several extraordinarily capable and long reigning leaders in this area. King Sejong of Korea (1418-1450), King Trailok of Siam (1448-1488) and King Le Thang Tong of Vietnam (1460-1497) all created climates within which their countries' cultural and economic horizons could greatly expand.

We have other questions. How many indigenous traders, including China-based sea merchants, were descendants of Sino-foreign parents? How many overseas Chinese whose ethnic identity is assumed to be Han because of their names on documents were, in fact, Korean, Vietnamese or Sino-Ryukyuan? How many of the ceramics sold to Southeast Asia were used by Chinese immigrants? How did ceramics in import markets differ from those of the indigenous population in volume, style, and price?

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IV. Conclusions

By introducing a new tribute system using official permits, the Ming government tried to eliminate private foreign trade. At least in theory, the volume and price of imports and exports were channeled through and regulated by the government. Interestingly, this system of restricted trading seems to have caught on among other Asian countries like Siam and Ryukyu. To what extent Ming trading practices were copied by other Asian countries is another subject begging for serious study. Siam's efforts to control the price of ceramics brought by Ryukyu could have been inspired by Chinese practices, or could have been an attempt to protect a promising local industry.

The Asian economy of the 15th century was highly dynamic, with national governments actively involved in business opportunities. Perhaps never before had Asian governments participated so fully in the ceramic business. Our challenge is to chart and explain the rises and falls of Asian ceramics of this period and relate them to the societal activities of that time. As indicated above, one explanation of the present writers is the evolution of trading systems, due partly to an increasingly active overseas Chinese community and to the rise of Ryukyu as a major factor in commerce around the shores of the Yellow, China and Java seas.

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TABLE 1:
CHINESE RECORDS RELATED TO CERAMIC PRODUCTION 1430-1465

Date	Details
1430	The 9th month. The court ordered to stop ceramic production at Jao-chou 饒州 (Ching-te-chen) for reasons of economy. Earlier, the Nanking Minister of Works was asked to make more white ware with dragon and phoenix designs.
1433	Ching-te-chen produced 443,500 food pieces with dragon and phoenix designs from the Ching-te-chen Imperial Kiln for the Imperial Kitchen.
1436a	Lu Tzu-shun of Fu-liang 浮梁 sent 50,000 pieces of ceramics as tribute gifts.
1436b	The court ordered to stop all ceramic firing projects and to send officials and eunuchs back to Peking.
1438	The 12th month. The court instructed the office of Tu-ch'a Yüan 都察院 to issue posters which were to forbid the selling of blue-and-white wares with official designs made at Kiangsi kilns, and to forbid presenting the wares as gifts to the families of officials.
1441a	The 5th month. Kuang-lu Ssu needed white ware with gilt dragons and phoenix designs. The order was filled by Lu Tzu-shun of Fu-liang.
1441b	Eunuch Wang Chen 王振 found faults on imperial wares and asked to dispatch eunuchs to supervise the production of ceramics.
1447a	The court forbad illegal production of ceramics with official designs at Jao-chou.
1447b	The 9th month. It was forbidden to carry out private selling of white background-blue design porcelain to members of foreign diplomatic missions by citizens, soldiers, merchants at towns along the pony express route in the two capitals, Kiangsi, Honan, Hunan, Hupeh, Kwangtung, Kwangsi, Kansu Ta-t'ung and Liao-tung.
1454	The 5th month. The court ordered to cut down ceramic production at Jao-chou by 1/3.
1457	The court sent eunuchs to supervise ceramic production.
1459	The 11th month. Kuang-lu Ssu petitioned to have 133,000 pieces of ceramics made at Jao-chou in Kiangsi. The Minister of Works replied that the Jao-chou people were hard up (after a recent famine), and asked the order to be reduced to 80,000 pieces.
1459	The court ordered lead-glazed kilns to fire once every 10 years.

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1464　The 1st month. Eunuchs who supervised the firing of ceramics at Jao-chou prefecture in Kiangsi and Ch'u-chou 處州 prefecture in Chekiang were ordered to terminate unfinished firing projects, and to return to Peking.

Sources:

Ming-shih (Shih-huo-chih), *Ming shih-lu, Yi-chang ta-shih-chih, Kiangsi ta-chih, Ta Ming hui-tien*, Ku Yen-wu's *Jih-chih-lu*.

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TABLE 2: CERAMIC KILNS IN 15TH CENTURY CHINA

Province	Kilns
Chekiang	Lung-ch'üan, An-fu 安福[43]
Fukien	Chiu-yao 舊窯[44] **(Figs.5-6)**
Honan	K'ai-feng 開封[45], Ch'ing-hua 清化[46], Hung-yao 紅窯[47]
Hopei	Chen-ting 真定[48]
Hunan	Yang-wu-ling 羊舞嶺[49]
Kiangsi	Ching-te-chen[50], Hu-t'ien 湖田, Shih-pa-t'an 十八灘[51], Yao-li 窯里[52] **(Figs.7-8)**, Chi-an 吉安[53]
Kwangtung	Hui-yang 惠陽[54]
Shansi 山西	Liu-li 琉璃 wares

43. Li Te-chin, "Technology of Longquan Ware Manufacturing," in Chuimei Ho ed., *New Light on Chinese Yue and Longquan Wares* (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, The University of Hong Kong, 1994), pp. 91-92; Feng Hsien-ming, op.cit., p. 391.
44. The dating of this kiln was based on its association with white wares and absence of blue-and-white wares. Surveys by Chuimei Ho in 1995-1996.
45. Ibid., p. 396.
46. Chao Ch'ing-yun, *Honan t'ao-t'zu-shih* [A History of Ceramics in Honan] (Peking: Tzu-chin-ch'eng ch'u-pan-she, 1993), p. 137.
47. Ibid., pp. 137-138.
48. Ibid., p. 396.
49. Chou Shih-jung, "Lüeh-t'an Hunan Yüan, Ming, Ch'ing t'ao-t'zu," [Brief discussions on Ceramics of the Yüan, Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties] *Jingdezhen Taoci*, no.2 (1984), p.78.
50. Liu Hsin-yüan, op.cit..
51. Huang Yün-p'eng, "Ming-tai min-chien ch'ing-hua te tuan-tai," [Blue-and-White Popular Ware of the Ming Dynasty and Its Division into Periods], *Jingdezhen Taoci*, no.3 (1986), pp. 32-33.
52. Yen Li, "Ming-tai Ching-te-chen min-chien ch'ing-hua chih-tz'u-yeh shu-lüeh," *Jingdezhen Taoci*, no.3 (1988), pp. 16-25.
53. Yu Chia-t'ung, *Jiangxi taoci shi* [A History of Ceramics in Kiangsi] (Cheng-chou: Hoan University, 1997).
54. Tseng Kuang-i (Zeng Guangyi) , "Longquan-Type Celadon Wares Made in Guangdong Province," in Chuimei Ho ed., *Ancient Ceramic Kiln Technology in Asia* (Hong Kong: Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong.Kong, 1990), p. 38.

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TABLE 3:
GREEN-GLAZED WARES FROM RYUKYU TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN STATES

YEAR	FROM	TO	LG GREEN PLATE	SM GREEN PLATE	SM GREEN BOWL	CERAMIC CARGO
1419	Ryukyu	Siam				some
142?	Ryukyu	Siam	20 pieces	400 pieces	2000 pieces	one shipful
1425	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	
1425	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1426	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	
1427	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1428	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1428	Ryukyu	Palembang				one shipful
1428	Ryukyu	Palembang				one shipful
1429	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1430	Ryukyu	Java	20	400	2000	
1430	Ryukyu	Palembang				one shipful
1431	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	
1432	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1432	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1433	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1433	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1434	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1434	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1435	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1436	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1437	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	
1437	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1438	Ryukyu	Palembang				
1438	Ryukyu	Palembang				
1438	Ryukyu	Siam				
1438	Ryukyu	Siam				
1439	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	200 (?)*	
1440	Ryukyu	Palembang				

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1440	Ryukyu	Palembang				
1440	Ryukyu	Java		400	2000	one shipful
1441	Ryukyu	Java		400	2000	
1441	Ryukyu	Java		400	2000	
1442	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	one shipful
1442	Ryukyu	Java		100		two shipful
1463	Ryukyu	Malacca	20	400	2000	
1463	Ryukyu	Sumatra	20	400	2000	
1464	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	
1464	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400		
1464	Ryukyu	Malacca	20	400	2000	
1465	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	
1465	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	
1465	Ryukyu	Malacca	20	400	2000	
1466	Ryukyu	Malacca	20	400	2000	
1467	Ryukyu	Sumatra	20	400	2000	
1467	Ryukyu	Malacca	20	400	2000	
1468	Ryukyu	Malacca	20	400	2000	
1468	Ryukyu	Malacca	20	400	2000	
1469	Ryukyu	Malacca	20	400	2000	
1469	Ryukyu	Siam	20	400	2000	
1470	Ryukyu	Malacca	20	400	2000	
1470	Ryukyu	Korea**	20	100	1 jar or wine	
1419-1470		94,960 p.	760	16,200	78,000	

52 BUSINESS ENVOYS:

28 to Siam	58,500	500	10,000	48,000
9 to Malacca	21,780	180	3,600	18,000
7 to Palembang	0	0	0	0
5 to Java	9,720	20	1,700	8,000
2 to Sumatra	4,840	40	800	4,000
1 to Korea	120	20	100	0
	94,960	760	16,200	78,000

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Sources:

1. Chuta Ito & Yoshitaro Kamakura, *Nankai-ko-toji* [Ancient Ceramics of the South Seas] (Tokyo: Houn-sha, 1937), appendix 1-46.
2. Hsü Yü-hu, op.cit., pp. 113-268.

*The amount should perhaps be 2,000 instead of 200 pieces.

**Korea also received another 50 large green glazed bowls, 20 blue-and-white plates, 20 blue-and-white bowls and one white jar from Ryukyu.

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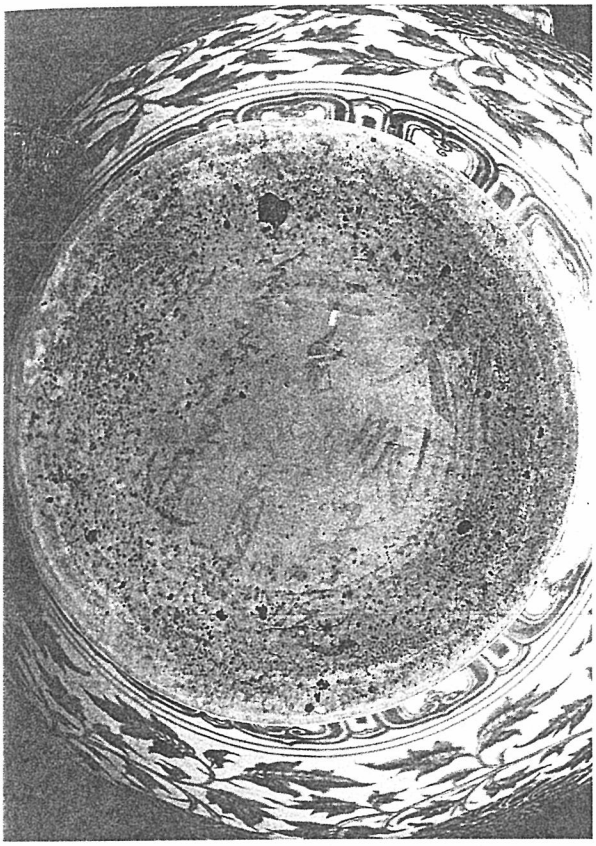


Fig. 1

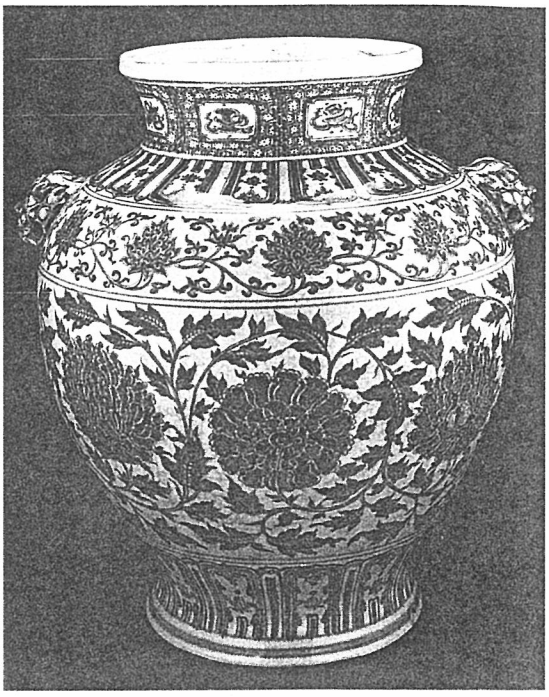


Fig. 2

Figs. 1 and 2 show two views of a Chinese blue-and-white jar finely decorated in courtly style floral painting. The inscription at the base records that Ch'eng Chin 程進 offered the jar to a temple in the third year of Cheng-t'ung (1437). This piece is a good example of high quality porcelain made at a commercial kiln.

Photograph ©, The Art Institute of Chicago. All Rights Reserved. 1997.391.H.43.8cm. Gift of Stanley Herzman in memory of Gladys Wolfson Herzman. Photographer: Robert Hashimoto.

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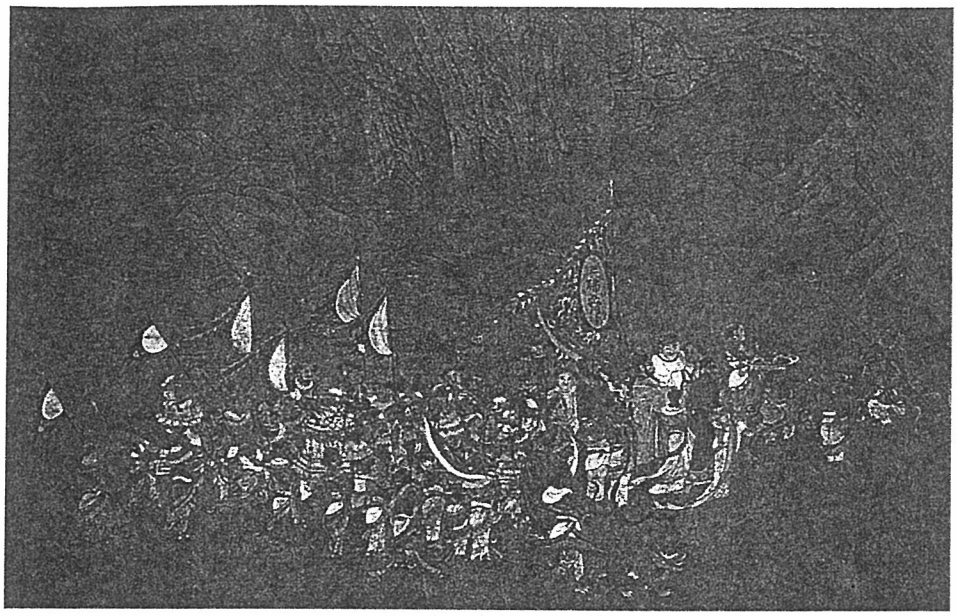


Fig. 3

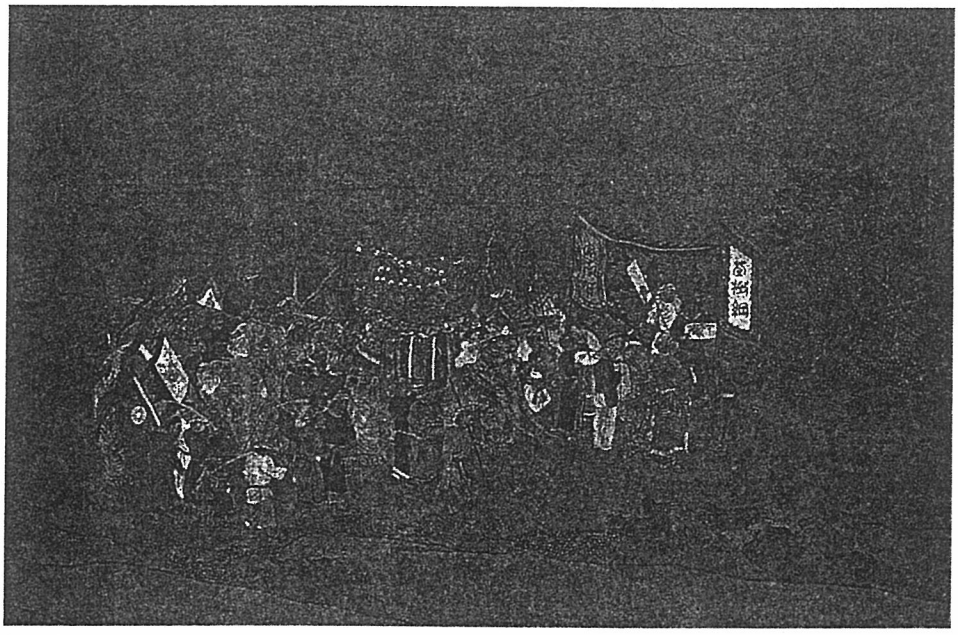


Fig. 4

Fig. 3 and 4 are two sections of a handscroll illustrating tribute bearers to China, attributed to the 18th century but as a copy of a 16th century painting. Fig. 3 shows the delegates of San-fo-chi 三佛齊 (in Sumatra) who bring corals and rare animals on pedestals. The group is led by several men in Chinese Ming costume.

Fig. 4 shows a joint tribute mission from Teng-liu-wang 登搯網 and another Southeast Asian state, led by several men in Chinese robes. Two of the men also wear Chinese-style hats.

Chinese painting in ink and color on silk. H.11.7/8". Inscribed title: Tribute Bearers Long Scroll by Ch'iu Shih-chou 仇十洲. Signed: Tung Ch'i-ch'ang 董其昌. Denver Art Museum, 1971.40. Gift of Dr. Robin Rinden. Photographer: Cynthia Nakamura.

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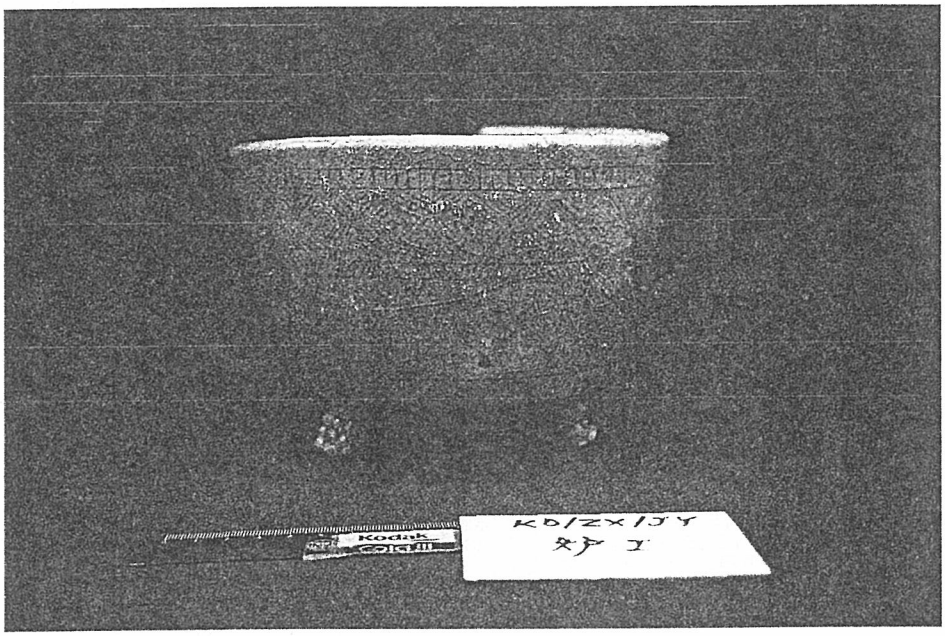


Fig. 5 Green-glazed censer from Chiu-yao kiln, An-hsi, Fukien. 福建安溪舊窯

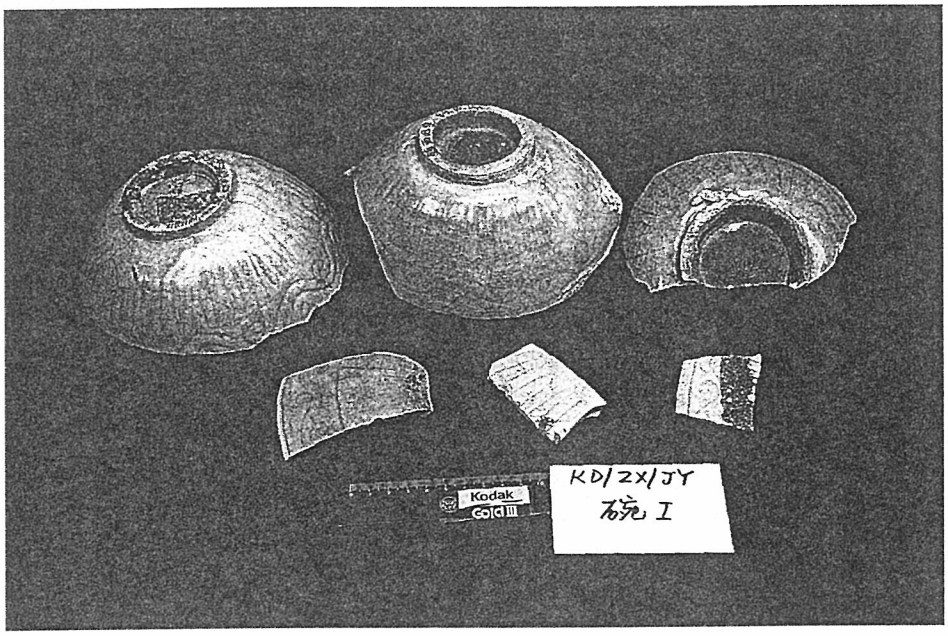


Fig. 6 Green-glazed bowls from Chiu-yao kiln, An-hsi, Fukien.

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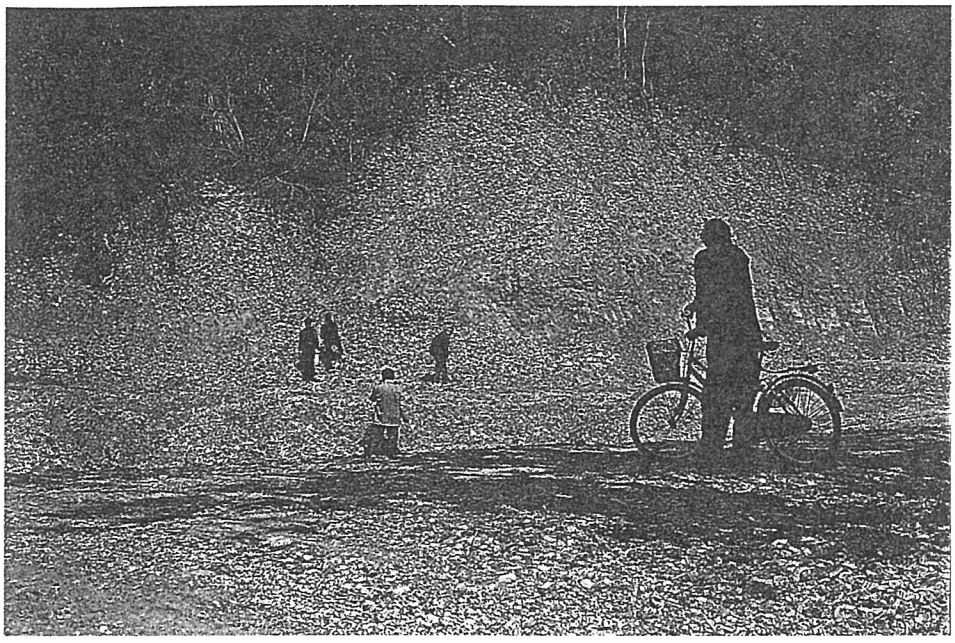


Fig. 7 A section at Li-shu-tan kiln, Yao-li, Kiangsi. 江西窯里栗樹灘

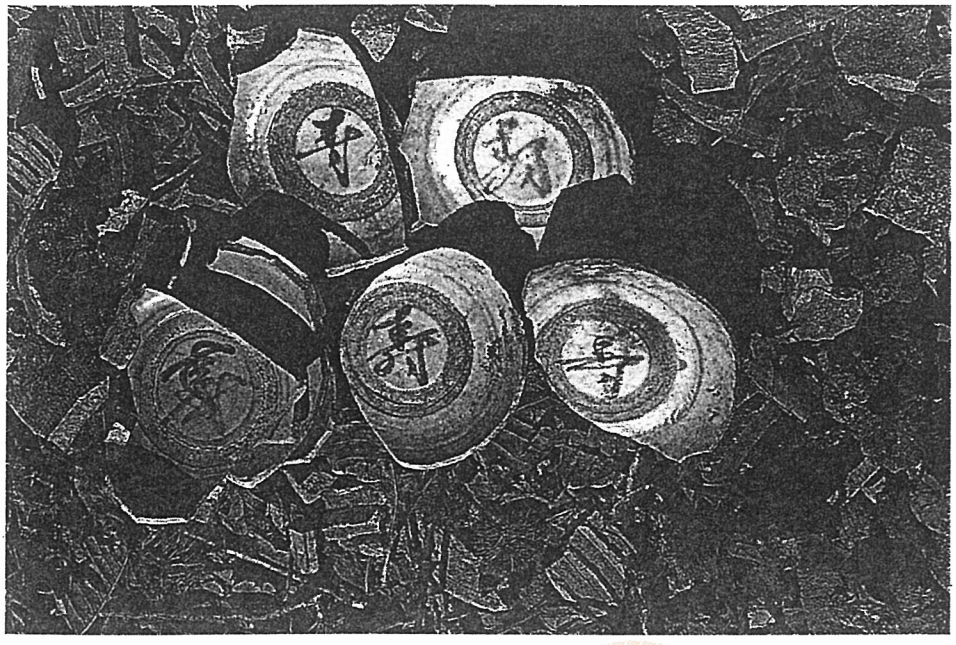


Fig. 8 Bowl fragments at Li-shu-tan kiln, showing the character *shou* 壽.

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