



Reflecting Nature

17th Century Chinese Ceramics For
The Japanese Market: Kosometsuke & Koake





A SPECIAL EXHIBITION AND SALE

Reflecting Nature

17th Century Chinese Ceramics For The Japanese Market:
Kosometsuke & Koake

SAT. 30th & SUN. 31st October 2021
11am to 6pm

Venue:
2nd Floor 15 Duke Street
St James's
London SW1Y 6DB

Foreword

It is a strange coincidence that my first catalogue in print as Robert Bradlow Fine Art should cover the 17th century Chinese wares for the Japanese market. This was the subject of my degree thesis at SOAS, which I submitted thirty years ago this year.

I was drawn to the innovative designs of these 17th century ceramics and was fascinated how the potters and decorators at Jingdezhen adapted to the new commercial reality of that time. This had come about as a result of the withdrawal of imperial patronage during the tumultuous period between the Ming and the Qing dynasties.

This exhibition is a joint venture with a young Asian private collector, who manages the Mujintang Collection. The pieces were purchased by her in Japan from 2013 and I am delighted to be associated with this area of Chinese ceramic production again.

As with other areas of Chinese export porcelain, these wares have traditionally been, by and large, ignored by Chinese collectors as they partly represent a foreign aesthetic. It is also true that they would not have been in free circulation within China as they were sent directly overseas to Japan. However, these pieces tell an interesting and important story of China's ceramic past and illustrate fascinating cross cultural references to both of these Asian cultures that have been historically linked in so many ways.

With this exhibition, I have decided to actively reverse the online only trend that has been brought about by Covid-19. As vaccination rates in the world's developed countries are reaching levels that are beginning to allow face to face human contact and travel without quarantine again, I thought that I would print a catalogue and hold a short two day pop up gallery in St James's, London. I believe that this is a very exciting development not only for the business, but also for the market and society in general, as we move on from what has been a very challenging year and a half.

I wish all my clients and friends continued health and good fortune and I look forward to seeing some of you at the exhibition.

Best wishes,

Robert Bradlow, 28 October 2021



Kosometsuke: Old Blue and White for Japan

Kosometsuke is an unfamiliar word to many and derives from the Japanese words *ko* (old), and *sometsuke* (blue and white). These wares were made for the Japanese market at Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province from the Tianqi period (1621-1627) of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).

These blue and white wares captured the imagination of the Japanese and were extensively used in the tea ceremony and *kaiseki* cuisine in Japan. They were initially called *Nanking Sometsuke*, *Sometsuke* or simply *Nanking* in the early Edo period (1600-1864). It was not until the Bunsei era of the late Edo period (1818-1830) that the term *kosometsuke* was formally coined, in order to differentiate the wares from the imported *Shinwatari* (new goods) blue and white wares produced during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).

Interestingly, these terms are unknown in traditional Chinese art history, as well as to Europeans that ordered the contemporaneous *Transitional* wares. Additionally, there has been almost no *kosometsuke* shards discovered in Jingdezhen. Most excavations of *kosometsuke* have been found in the *Edo* (Tokyo) area, other Japanese cities and the port of Nagasaki, where Chinese goods were traditionally imported.

It was not until 2018 that Huang Qinghua, the founder of the Tang Ying Society in Jingdezhen, and associated experts and scholars held a special exhibition titled: *Colourful Japan: Special Exhibition of the Porcelains Made at the End of Ming Dynasty for Japan*. It showcased *Kosometsuke* works and about a hundred matching shards from Jingdezhen. This was the first monumental exhibition in mainland China on *Kosometsuke* which unraveled the mystery of its production that had, for a long time, puzzled researchers and connoisseurs.

During the reign of the Wanli Emperor (1572-1620), orders of imperial wares from Jingdezheng were increased to such an extent that the imperial kilns could not cope with the significant increase in demand. As a result, a number of private kilns stepped in to help with production. The Wanli Emperor's insatiable appetite for porcelain created a scarcity of high-quality clay and resulted in wares produced in the latter part of his reign to have characteristics such as rim frits (*mushikui* in Japanese) and kiln grit to the base. Interestingly though, these rough wares were admired by the mainstream Japanese tea schools as they conformed to the aesthetic of *wabisabi* or rustic elegance, that was in vogue at the time.

The Japanese tea masters ordered wares of unusual shapes made of heavy clay, which included water containers such as the *mizusashi* (Exhibit 1), *kogo* (incense boxes) (Exhibit 8), *koro* (incense burners) (Exhibit 10), *hiire* charcoal burner (Exhibit 18), *mukozuke* side dishes (Exhibits 12,13,17), and *kashibachi* sweetmeat dishes (Exhibits 12 and 13). These are called *chaki kosometsuke*, and were used in tea ceremonies and on formal occasions. This is in contrast to the *joki kosometsuke* (flat wares) such as bowls and dishes (Exhibits 2, 3 and 6) whose shapes were readily seen on traditional Chinese ceramics.

The sources of inspiration for *kosometsuke* wares were numerous and some shapes were inspired by Japanese Shino and Oribe wares produced during the Azuki-Momoyama period (1568-1600). In terms of decoration, influences came from late Ming publications such as the painting manuals: *Hasshu Gafu* and *The Fang Family Compendium of Ink Cakes*. The influence of late Ming publications were thus an important thread in tracing *kosometsuke*'s development.

The rich cities along the Yangtze River and the Chinese imperial examination system brought about an expansion of the literati class, however, those that failed to secure an official post, had to pursue other avenues, which often included a career in artistic production. This strong prevalence of literacy aided the widespread transmission of thought and the circulation of images, which were often based on the natural world.

From a global historical perspective, China (in particular the Southern Jiangnan region) and Japan experienced significant inflows of silver from Portugal and Spain due to the thriving export trade in the late 16th century. It was this early mercantile activity that propagated the international export trade, which was primarily centred on commodities, such as spices, silks, porcelain and other luxury goods seen as exotic in Europe.

Politically, the death of the Wanli Emperor signified an era of weakened central control from Beijing and boosted regionalism within China. Domestic kilns thrived and ceramic artists often took inspiration from everyday life (Exhibit 14); from Buddhist/Daoist parables (Exhibits 9,11 and 21) and rhymes (Exhibits 9 and 20) as subject matter. Congratulatory phrases (Exhibit 9), auspicious wishful patterns (Exhibit 23), as well as landscape scenes (Exhibit 20) were also sources of inspiration.

These artistic subjects would have seemed foreign to their Japanese recipients, as they would not have understood the linguistic puns and symbolic imagery that was used exclusively by the Chinese literati trained artists. Nevertheless, these wares were embraced by the Japanese mainly due to their charm and rustic elegance. *Kosometsuke* wares should therefore not be seen as artworks created solely according to Japanese taste and sensibilities, but instead as a genre of artwork that was produced through collaboration between these two nations.

Contemporaneously to this, Japanese tea taste was shifting due to significant political change that had taken place. The incompatibility between the newly established Tokugawa shogunate (established by Tokugawa Iyasu (1543-1616) in 1603 and the previous Toyotomi Hideyoshi regime, excluded the great tea master Sen no Rikyu (1522-1591) and his disciple Furuta Oribe (1544-1614). They had practiced *wabisabi* and both had previously pledged their loyalty to Hideyoshi.

The rising tea school of the Tokugawa era was that of *Enshu* (Kobori Enshu (1579-1647) - a disciple of Oribe), which was popular among many of the feudal Daimyo lords. The shapes of the wares that they used were still based on inherited archetypes from Oribe wares (Fig 1). However, the material that they now preferred to use was fine porcelain painted in blue and white, as well as over-glazed (*wuca*) enamels. The *Enshu* School incorporated *kosometsuke* and *Shonzui* wares for the new *Buke-cha* (Samurai or warrior tea) as a showcase to welcome the new Tokugawa era.

The concept of *Kireisabi*, (beautiful elegance), brought about the development of *Shonzui* wares, whose fine clay had none of the peculiar *mushikui* rim frits of *kosometuke* and consisted of auspicious patterns that were densely painted onto the porcelain body.



Fig 1. An Oribe stoneware quince-shaped bowl, Japan, Edo Period, 17th century, 24.1cm long. Photograph © Ishikawa Nanao Art Museum.



Fig 2. Exhibit 13.



Fig 3. Exhibit 9.

The Edo Kan'ei era (1624-1644) in Japan ran contemporarily to the Chongzhen era (1628-1644) in China, and *Kosometsuke* wares were mostly being replaced by *Shonzui* ones from this point. Exhibits 8 and 22 are examples of *Shonzui* wares and exhibits 17 and 19 illustrate the transition from *Kosometsuke* to *Shonzui*, from their shape and vivid colouring. It is noteworthy that exhibit 9, the sweatmeat *kashibachi* dish, is bordered with the *ichimatsu* chequer board pattern. This design can also be seen at the imperial villa Katsura Rikyu in Kyoto (Fig 4.) and on traditional kimonos.

In exhibit 9, the immortal pointing to the sun and the inscription to this effect, is a pun on wishing one a speedy promotion. This is therefore an exemplary of Sino-Japanese artistic collaboration.

A similar dish to the maple leaf-shaped *mukozuke* (Exhibit 9) was once excavated from the Honmaru palace in Edo castle. There is a dragon painted to the centre of the dish, which could suggest that it may have been owned and used by a person of rank.

The 'lion' incense burner (Exhibit 4) and the 'wave' dish (Exhibit 16) both employ *fukizumi* blowing ink technique, which is extremely rare in Chinese ceramics, but commonly seen in Japan on early Imari wares (Fig 5.) Another item from the exhibition that is similar to Imari ware is the tiger dish (Exhibit 3) (Fig 6). The tiger motif originally came from the Korean Peninsula and from there it was transmitted to Japan (Fig 7). Wares with these motifs were highly prized in Japan and were often re-ordered from Jingdezhen.

Although the quatrefoil shape of the crab dish (Exhibit 13) (Fig 2), the *Biwa* shape (Exhibit 12), and the landscape painting (Exhibit 20) can be compared with depictions in late Ming publications, the three feet attached to the base already exhibit traces of Japanese influence. The peach incense box and cover, *kogo* (Exhibit 7) and the playful horse (Exhibit 6) can also be compared with depictions in late Ming publications.

To conclude, it should be noted that there were significant political and economic factors at play in early 17th century Japan that brought about the demand for *kosometsuke* wares from Jingdezhen. The gradual cultural evolution resulted in changes of taste that brought about the demand for the more refined *Shonzui* wares. But it should also be noted, that none of this would have been possible without the effect of the political and social turmoil on the kilns of Jingdezhen during the period of transition between the fall of the native Ming dynasty and the full establishment of the Manchu Qing dynasty.

We hope that this exhibition will help to illustrate the cultural outlook of East Asia in the 17th century and that it may be possible to gain a glimpse of this and enjoy the charming variation of *Kosometsuke* wares through the twenty-three selected pieces of this exhibition.

Yichien Tsai and Robert Bradlow

Ms Yichien Tsai (BA Hons) SOAS, University of London, is manager of the Mujintang Collection and is currently enrolled at the Graduate Institute of Art History at National Taiwan University.



Fig 4. Japanese interior illustrating the *ichimatsu* pattern.



Fig 5. A Hizen ware early Arita blue and white dish, with rabbit and cloud design, Japan, Edo Period, early 17th century. Photograph © Toguri Museum of Art.

Terminology explanation

Hiire - has a flat base for containing charcoal and ashes, burnt to produce elegant fragrance to please the guests.

Mizusashi- a clean water container used in the tea ceremony.

Mukozuke- a side dish which are usually used to plate sashimi raw meat and sliced shellfish in a kaiseki cuisine.

Kaiseki - a simple meal that the host of a tea ceremony gathering serves to the guests before tea, [2] and is also known as cha-kaiseki.

Kashibachi - a deep bowl or a dish placing Japanese sweets.

Koro - an incense burner, which usually comes with three feet.

Kogo - a small porcelain box, used to contain precious scents.

Notes

- 林克彦, 〈古染付雑想〉, 《古染付: このくにのひとのあこがれ, このくにのひとのねがい》, 東京: 石洞美術館, 2017年8月, 頁9。
- 中路のぶ代, 〈見えてきた新たな古染付像〉, 《目の眼月刊誌》, 第479号「特集古染付と祥瑞」, 2016年8月。
- 大象視界, 〈中國瓷器: 幾百年前日本的「愛馬仕」, 景德鎮特展中〉, 網路報導: 瀏覽日期2021/9/17。
- 金澤陽 〈17世紀前期の東アジア海陶磁交易—古染付の時代を中心に—〉, 《古染付: このくにのひとのあこがれ, このくにのひとのねがい》, 東京: 石洞美術館, 2017年8月, 頁22。
- 謝良明, 〈關於葉形盤-從台灣高雄縣左營清代鳳山縣舊城聚落遺址出土的青花葉紋盤談起〉, 《故宮文物月刊326期》, 台北: 國立故宮博物院, 2010年5月。
- 林克彦, 〈古染付雑想〉, 《古染付: このくにのひとのあこがれ, このくにのひとのねがい》, 東京: 石洞美術館, 2017年8月, 頁16。
- 林克彦, 〈古染付雑想〉, 《古染付: このくにのひとのあこがれ, このくにのひとのねがい》, 東京: 石洞美術館, 2017年8月, 頁16。
- 林克彦, 〈古染付雑想〉, 《古染付: このくにのひとのあこがれ, このくにのひとのねがい》, 東京: 石洞美術館, 2017年8月, 頁16-17。
- 《古染付と祥瑞》, 出光美術館, 2013. *Kosometsuke and Shonzui— The Blue and White Tea Ceramics of Japanese Admiration*. Tokyo: Idemitsu Museum of Arts, 2013.
- 中路のぶ代, 〈見えてきた新たな古染付像〉, 《目の眼月刊誌》, 第479号「特集古染付と祥瑞」, 2016年8月, 頁34。
- 白洲信哉, 〈見えてきた新たな古染付像〉, 《目の眼月刊誌》, 第479号「特集古染付と祥瑞」, 2016年8月, 頁37。
- 中路のぶ代, 〈見えてきた新たな古染付像〉, 《目の眼月刊誌》, 第479号「特集古染付と祥瑞」, 2016年8月, 頁33。
- 謝良明, 〈關於葉形盤-從台灣高雄縣左營清代鳳山縣舊城聚落遺址出土的青花葉紋盤談起〉, 《故宮文物月刊326期》, 台北: 國立故宮博物院, 2010年5月。



Fig 6. Exhibit 3.



Fig 7. A blue and white Arita dish, with tiger and bamboo design, Japan, Edo period, mid 17th century, 19.6cm diameter. Photograph © Toguri Museum of Art.

1. A BLUE AND WHITE 'KRAAK' STYLE CYLINDRICAL WATER CONTAINER,
MIZUSASHI, MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PERIOD (1620-1627)

明天啟 青花卡拉克水指

The tapering sides rising to a flattened rim, painted with a figure seated under a willow tree in a fenced garden in a mountainous river landscape, below a band of florets and trellis, above three applied animal mask feet, the base is unglazed and slightly concaved, Japanese wood box

Height: 17cm, black lacquer cover,

Provenance: Purchased in Kyoto, 2015.
Mujintang Collection.

The piece is decorated in typical 17th century style, with a figure seated under a willow tree in a fenced garden in a continuous mountainous river landscape. The floral panels on a trellis ground below the rim are reminiscent of the formal patterns of 'Kraak' ware. Curiously, the potter has applied three 'mask' feet, as if he was making a censer, but in this case they serve no practical purpose, as they stop short of the foot. This water container is a rare form and it is interesting to see the adaption of shape and decoration of the European export 'Kraak' style into a Japanese tea ceremony water container. The *mizusashi* was used to bring water to the Japanese tea room. It was only touched by the host and was used to replenish the water in the kettle (*kama*) at the end of certain ceremonies.



2. A RARE BLUE AND WHITE CIRCULAR 'LAOZI AND OX' DISH, MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PERIOD (1620-1627)

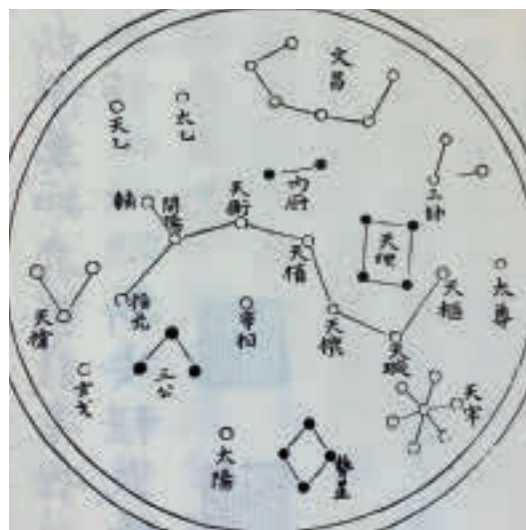
明天啟 青花老子騎牛北斗七星圖盤

The steep rounded sides rising from a short tapered foot to an everted rim, the interior painted with Daoist Laozi riding an ox against Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper, with a boy seated on a rocky ledge, Japanese wood box

Diameter: 20.3cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2013.
Mujintang Collection.

This dish is painted in fairly free and spontaneous style and the artist has used various thinner washes of blue to give tonal variation and a sense of depth to the scene. The design is quite striking as the painted decoration contrast strongly with the large areas of white that are left free of paint. For a design of the Seven Stars, see *Ink Garden of the Cheng Family*, published 1595, p. 44, illustrated below.



3. A BLUE AND WHITE CIRCULAR 'TIGER' DISH, MING DYNASTY,
TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花松下老虎紋盤

The steep rounded sides rising from a short tapered foot, to an everted rim, painted to the interior with a tiger standing on a rocky outcrop beneath the moon and pine tree branch in a river landscape with a waterfall, Japanese wood box

14.5cm diameter

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2015.
Mujintang Collection.

For a similar dish sold at auction, please see Christie's London, *The Peony Pavilion Collection, Chinese Tea Ceramics for Japan* (c. 1580-1650), 12 June 1989, lot 241. For another example in a slightly simpler design, please see S. Marchant and Son, *Transitional Wares for the Japanese and Domestic Markets*, June 1989, p. 23, pl. 23. For another example, please see Kawahara, Masahiko, *Ko-sometsuke*, Kyoto, 1977, Monochrome Section, p. 162, pl. 641. This design of a tiger in a landscape, was most likely to have been inspired by *Ink Garden of the Cheng Family*, published 1595, p. 1180, illustrated below.



4. A BLUE AND WHITE 'LION' INCENSE BURNER, KOGO, MING DYNASTY,
TIANQI PERIOD, (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花獅子香爐

The cover modelled as a lion seated with its head turned to the left, decorated in the *fukizumi* ink blown technique, the base painted with panels of flowers reserved on a blue ground, Japanese wood box

Height: 14.6cm

Provenance: Purchased in Kyoto, 2014.

For a larger incense burner of similar design, but with its left front leg resting on a brocade ball, please see Butler, Sir Michael, Medley, Margaret, and Little, Stephen, *Seventeenth Century Chinese Porcelain from the Butler Family Collection*, 1990, p. 43, pl. 7. This design of a lion standing erect may have been inspired by designs in *Ink Garden of the Cheng Family*, p. 8.



5. A BLUE AND WHITE MAPLE LEAF-SHAPED 'DRAGON' TRIPOD DISH,
MING DYNASTY TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花楓葉型龍紋三足盤

The sloping sides rising to an everted rim, painted to the interior with an animated four-claw dragon chasing after a flaming pearl amongst flame scrolls, below a thin band of foliage at the rim, on three circular feet, Japanese wood box

Length: 20.7cm

Provenance: Purchased in Kyoto, 2016.
Mujintang Collection.

This sturdily potted leaf-shaped dish is boldly painted to the interior with an animated four-claw dragon in deep blue cobalt tones, which is reminiscent of dragons depicted on Wanli period blue and white examples. The inspiration for this design may have derived from an earlier design from the *The Fang Family Compendium of Ink Cakes*, Volume 1. p. 39, illustrated below.



6. A BLUE AND WHITE AND COPPER-RED CIRCULAR 'GRAZING HORSE' DISH,
MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花釉裡紅斑馬紋盤

The steep sloping sides rising from a short tapered foot to an everted rim, painted to the interior with a mottled horse with its head lowered chewing a tuft of grass beneath a willow tree, the moon and swirling clouds painted in copper-red, Japanese wood box,

Diameter: 15.1cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2014.
Mujintang Collection.

This delightful dish is well potted and covered with a clear and even glaze. The depiction of the horse is rather humorous with its body twisted as it turns its head to the left to eat tufts of grass. For a similar set of five dishes, with four feet, please see Kawahara, Masahiko, *Ko-sometsuke*, Kyoto, 1977, Monochrome Section, p. 156, pl. 6





7. A SMALL BLUE AND WHITE PEACH-SHAPED INCENSE BOX AND COVER, KOGO, MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花桃型香盒

The rounded sides rising from a flat unglazed base and painted with two flower sprays, the interior with an oval compartment divided by a shallow central ridge, the slightly domed cover, painted with a flower and leaf spray, Japanese wood box

Length: 3.8cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2015.
Mujintang Collection.

This small peach-shaped box is delicately potted and painted in a rather simple spontaneous style with flower sprays, that hints at the Kangxi style nearly a hundred years later.



8. A BLUE AND WHITE INCENSE BOX AND COVER , KOGO, MING DYNASTY, CHONGZHEN PERIOD (1627-1644)

明崇禎 鳥形祥瑞香盒

The rounded sides of the box rising from a recessed unglazed base, painted with scrolling *lingzhi*, the domed cover moulded to simulate the veins of a lotus leaf, painted with a dense scale diaper ground inscribed *ji* (good fortune), below a bird finial, Japanese wood box

Height: 6.8cm

Provenance: Purchased in Kyoto, 2014.
Mujintang Collection.

This box is very delicately potted and has an interesting combination of designs. The band of *lingzhi* is painted in a free and fluid style. For a tea bowl with a similar inscription on a scale diaper ground, please see S. Marchant & Son, *Ming Porcelain for the Japanese Market, Kosometsuke & Koake*, London, 2008, p.23, pl 6. For another incense box and cover where the cover varies in design from the *lingzhi* design box, please see *The Blue and White Tea Ceramics of Japanese Admiration*, Idemitsu Museum of Art, 2013, pl. 66, Fig 1.



Fig 1.

9. A BLUE AND WHITE SQUARE 'IMMORTAL' DISH, MING DYNASTY,
TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花市松紋樣指日高昇皿

The sloping sides rising from a short straight foot to an everted rim, painted to the interior with with an immortal standing on a river bank, with his right arm raised, inscribed *zhi ri gao sheng* (may your chance of promotion be just around the corner), below a the everted rim decorated in a chequered (*ichimatsu*) pattern, Japanese wood box

Width: 21cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2013.
Mujintang Collection.

This form of heavily potted square dish is not a traditional Chinese shape and it is possible that Japanese ceramic models were submitted to Jingdezhen to be copied. For a dish of similar form with chequered (*ichimatsu*) design please see Kawahara, Masahiko, *Ko-sometsuke*, Kyoto, 1977, Monochrome Section, p. 85, pl. 323. For the application of this pattern on Japanese architecture, please see *Shokintei* teahouse at the Katsura Imperial Villa in Kyoto built in the early Edo period.

In many ways it is clear that this dish is not the ideal of ceramic perfection in that it is rather heavily potted, it has a number of glaze frits to the edges of the rim and there are areas of kiln grit adhered to the glaze to the interior and the exterior. However, having said that, there is a certain appealing rustic charm about the piece, which would have appealed to the Japanese *wabisabi* taste at the time.

The four-character inscription to the interior of the dish reads *zhi ri gao shen*, referring to the action of 'pointing to the sun'. It is a congratulatory expression to wish someone a speedy promotion. A similar inscription can be seen on a white jade plume holder, which sold at Christie's New York on 21 March 2014, lot 2529.



10 A BLUE AND WHITE INCENSE BURNER, KORO, MING DYNASTY,
TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花祥瑞紋香爐

Of cylindrical form, the straight sides rising from a short tapering foot to a flat rim, painted with four panels of diaper, comprising square spirals, interlocking circles, square diaper with foliage and rounded spirals, all below a thin band of trellis at the rim, the upper surface of the rim is painted with a chevron pattern, with a pierced silver cover, Japanese wood box

Height: 5.3cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2014.
Mujintang Collection.

For a similar similar incense burner on a varied diaper ground, but with the addition of circular panels of birds and tree branches, please see S. Marchant & Son, *Ming Porcelain for the Japanese Market, Kosometsuke & Koake*, London, 2008, p.58, pl. 28.



Alternative views.



11. A BLUE AND WHITE CIRCULAR 'BODHIDHARMA' DISH, MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花達摩蘆葦圖盤

The rounded sides rising from a short tapered foot to a slightly everted rim, painted to the interior with Bodhidharma standing on a reed, with his arms tucked into his long robe and his head framed with a mandorla, Japanese wood box

Diameter: 21.2cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2013.
Mujintang Collection.

This is a rare and unusual design, which focuses only on the subject himself and omits all the background (the sea) to the scene. This design of Bodhidharma was most likely inspired by an illustration in *Ink Garden of the Cheng Family*, published 1595, p. 1052, illustrated below.





12. A BLUE AND WHITE BIWA-SHAPED MUKOZUKE TRIPOD SERVING DISH,
MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花琵琶三足皿

The rounded sides rising from three tall circular feet to a slightly everted rim, painted to the interior with insects and flowers and strings of the instrument, Japanese box

Length: 19.6cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2014.
Mujintang Collection.

For a similar set of five dishes, please see Kawahara, Masahiko, *Ko-sometsuke*, Kyoto, 1977, Colour Section, p. 207, pl.16



13. A BLUE AND WHITE QUATREFOIL QUINCE-SHAPED TRIPOD SERVING DISH,
MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花木瓜型蟹爪紋三足皿

The rounded sides rising to a slightly everted rim, painted to the centre of the interior with a crab, surrounded by butterflies and other insects, on three round feet

Width: 16cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2013.
Mujintang Collection.

For a similar set of five dishes, with four feet, please see Kawahara, Masahiko, *Ko-sometsuke*, Kyoto, 1977, Colour Section, p. 179, pl.147. The crab stands in a rather humorous manner in the centre of branches of water weed, the latter which accentuates and frames the various fluted sections.



14. A BLUE AND WHITE CIRCULAR 'BOYS WITH KITES' DISH, MING DYNASTY, (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花童子風箏圖盤

The sloping sides rising from a short tapered foot to an everted rim, the interior painted with two boys flying a kite, below a band of scrolling *ruyi* and three linked oval motifs, Japanese wood box

Diameter: 16cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo in 2014.
Mujintang Collection.

This design of children flying kites was most likely inspired from a more complex depiction of the same subject from *The Fang Family Compendium of Ink Cakes*, 1588, Vol 3, p. 16, illustrated below.



15. A BLUE AND WHITE CIRCULAR 'SQUIRREL AND GRAPE VINE' DISH, MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PEI, (1621-1627)

明天啟 青花松鼠葡萄紋圓盤

The steeply sloping sides rising from a short straight foot to an everted rim, painted to the interior in deep cobalt tones, depicting a squirrel eating some grapes from the ground, below trailing vines suspended from a horizontal support, Japanese wood box

Diameter: 15cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2013.
Mujintang Collection.



16. A BLUE AND WHITE CIRCULAR 'SHELL AND WAVE' DISH, MING DYNASTY,
TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

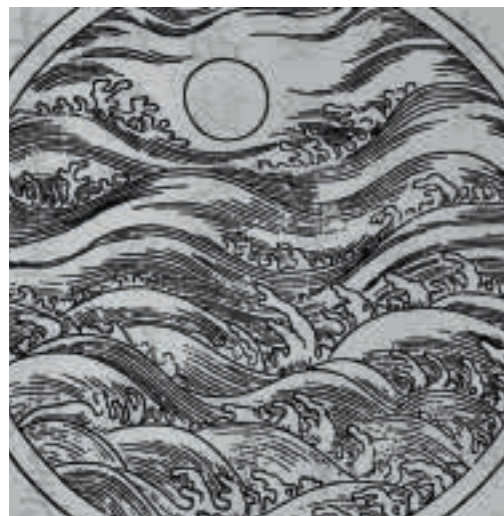
明天啟 青花海螺波紋盤

The rounded sides rising from a short straight foot, to an everted rim, painted to the interior with breaking waves below a full moon, depicted in the *fukizumi* ink blown technique, Japanese wood box

Diameter: 17.5cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2013.
Mujintang Collection.

The glaze of the dish has a real tactile quality when held in the hand and is slightly more heavily potted than would expect. The moon was formed by laying down a small rounded disc to the dish's surface, to which the decorator would have then blown cobalt through a tube around it, cleverly giving the suggestion of the night sky with stars and clouds. For a design of the waves and the moon, see *Ink Garden of the Cheng Family*, published 1595, p. 26, illustrated below.



17. A WUCAI QUATREFOL-SHAPED 'LUOHAN' DISH, MING DYNASTY,
TIANQI OR EARLY CHONGZHEN PERIOD, CIRCA 1630

明天啓或崇禎早期 五彩羅漢海棠形盤

The rounded sides rising from a short foot to an everted rim, the interior painted with a luohan to the centre seated on an oval mat, surrounded by a 'cracked ice' pattern in green, yellow, aubergine and iron-red, seal mark to the base, Japanese wood box

Length: 17cm

Provenance: Sotheby's Hong Kong, 26 May 2014, lot 613
Mujintang Collection.

Exhibited: *Transitional Wares and Their Forerunners*, Oriental Ceramics Society of Hong Kong,
1981.

Literature: Kilburn, Richard, *Transitional Wares and Their Forerunners*, Oriental Ceramics Society of
Hong Kong, 1981, p. 177, pl. 151.

For a similar design on a diamond-shaped dish, please see S Marchant and Son, *Transitional Wares for the
Japanese and Domestic Markets*, London, June 1989, p. 48, pl. 82. In this, the question is raised as to whether
the design surrounding the figure could be a stone floor, rather than 'cracked ice', which would suggest a more
three-dimensional interpretation of the scene to the viewer.



18. A RARE WUCAI INCENSE BURNER, HIIRE, MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PERIOD
(1621-1627)

明天啟 五彩周敦頤香爐

The tapering cylindrical sides rising from a spreading foot to a straight rim, painted to the sides with two panels of figures in gardens and a figure fishing in river landscapes and two with *Zhou Dunyi* seated and admiring lotus in a garden, with a recessed unglazed base, pierced metal cover, Japanese wood box

Height: 8.4cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2014.
Mujintang Collection.

This well potted incense burner is unusual in that it has panels of predominantly underglaze-blue, alternating with those that are exclusively painted in overglaze enamels. There are four narrative scenes depicted on this hiire, two with *Zhou Dunyi* admiring a lotus; King *Wen* of Zhou seeking the advice of the scholar *Jiang Ziya*, later known as *Taigong Wang* and another depicting the legendary *Jiang Ziya* retiring as a recluse to spend most of his time fishing after his disappointment with the reign of the Shang dynasty.



19. A WUCAI CIRCULAR 'MONKEY AND DEER' DISH, MING DYNASTY, TIANQI OR EARLY CHONGZHEN PERIOD, (1620-1644), APOCRYPHAL CHENGHUA MARK

明天啟後期至崇禎 五彩爵祿

Painted to the interior with a monkey sitting on a rock beside a deer below fruiting branches and a swooping bird, with panels of flowers on a diamond pattern ground to the sloping rim, Japanese wood box

Diameter: 20.7cm

Provenance: Purchased in Tokyo, 2016.

The image of the monkey *hou*, the deer *lu* and the wasp *feng* form the rebus *juelu fenghou* (may you receive high rank and emolument). For a wucaï dish of similar design, please see Kilburn, Richard S. *Transitional Wares and Their Forerunners*, Hong Kong Oriental Ceramics Society, 1981, p. 130, pl. 162 and for another example please see S. Marchant & Son, *Ming Porcelain for the Japanese Market Kosometsuke & Koake*, London, 2008, p. 82, pl. 43.



20. A KOAKE HEXAGONAL SHONZUI-PATTERNED 'RIVER LANDSCAPE' TRIPOD STAND, MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啟 五彩山水紋六角三足盤

Painted to the interior with a figure in a sampan in a river landscape with retreats on an island, bordered with panels of diaper and lattice, below similar thin bands to the everted rim, the exterior with a poetic inscription in iron-red, on three claw feet, Japanese wood box

Width: 25cm

Provenance: Purchased in Yokohama, 2014.
Mujintang Collection.

For a similar hexagonal dish with three feet and an iron-red inscription to the exterior please see Kawahara, Masahiko, *Ko-sometsuke*, Kyoto, 1977, Colour Section, p. 78, pls. 58 and 59.

The poem was originally written by the Northern Song poet *Shao Yong* (1012-1077) and is a poem with numbers that reads:

yí qù èr sān lǐ (Once a time, we walk leisurely for two or three miles)
yān cūn sì wǔ jiā (On the way, we see four or five villages)
tín tái liù qī zuò (Six or seven temples and)
bā jiǔ shí zhī huā (Eight, nine or ten branches of flowers)



21. A WUCAI CIRCULAR 'IMMORTAL' DISH, MING DYNASTY, TIANQI MARK AND PERIOD (1621-1627)

明天啓 五彩仙人圖盤 「天啓年製」款

The steeply sloping sides rising from a short straight foot to an everted rim, painted to the interior with a Daoist immortal painted holding a fan beneath clouds and above breaking waves, the inscription reading: *Lang Yuan Penglai san dao ke* (Guests of the Three Islands of the Penglai Elysium), Japanese wood box

Diameter: 17cm

Provenance: Purchased in Yokohama, 2015.
Mujintang Collection.

For a dish from the same series with the same inscription depicting the the Daoist immortal *Zhongli Quan*, please see Little, Stephen, *Chinese Ceramics of the Transitional Period: 1620-1683*, China Institute of America, New York, 1983, p. 52 and 53, pl. 13a. For three similar dishes from this series that sold at auction, please see Christie's London, *The Peony Pavilion Collection*, 12 June 1989, lots 307, 308 and 309. For a slightly more colourful and detailed version of this dish, please see Kawahara, Masahiko, *Ko-sometsuke*, Kyoto, 1977, Colour Section, pl. 38.



22. A SET OF FIVE UNDERGLAZE BLUE AND ENAMELLED CIRCULAR SERVING DISHES, MING DYNASTY, CHONGZHEN PERIOD (1627-1644)

明崇禎 五彩樹下人物菱花盤 一組五客

Each painted with a rustic figure carrying a bundle on a staff balanced on his shoulder, walking beneath a blossoming tree on the bank of a turbulent river, Japanese wood box

Diameter: 21cm

(5)

Provenance: Purchased in Kyoto, 2014; Mujintang Collection.

For a similar single dish sold at auction, please see Christie's London, *The Peony Pavilion Collection, Chinese Tea Ceramics for Japan* (c. 1580-1650), 12 June 1989, lot 316.



23. A WUCAI CIRCULAR 'PEACH' DISH, MING DYNASTY, TIANQI PERIOD
(1621-1627)

明天啟 五彩石榴紋盤

The steep rounded sides rising from a short tapered foot to an everted rim, painted to the interior with branches of fruiting peach, below swirling clouds and and the moon, inscribed with with a poem, Japanese wood box

Diameter: 20.8cm

Provenance: Purchased in Yokohama, 2013.
Mujintang Collection.

The two lines of the poem were written by the Southern Song civil official/poet *Xie Fangde* (1226-1289 AD) and read: *xun de tao yuan hao bi qin, tao hong you shi yi nien chun*. '(We) chanced upon the peach garden to flee the chaos of the Qin dynasty, and welcomed another year of spring as the peach blossomed'.

Xie's battles against Yuan Mongols reminded him of the famous Classical Chinese prose 'Peach Blossom Spring' written by Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420CE) poet and civil official *Tao Yuanming* (365-427 AD). It is an influential fable, describing people's search for eternal peace against the backdrop of the tyrannical Qin dynasty. Many Chinese literati of the later dynasties quoted this story, so did *Xie*. For most Chinese today, a peach blossom garden is a metaphorical expression for Utopia.

This dish has a firing crack from its first firing, which has been highlighted in green enamel to each side prior to the second (enamel) firing. This would tend to resonate with Japanese taste who more readily accepted imperfections in the manufacture of a piece as it reflected a rustic, more simple aesthetic. For a similar design of peach, *The Fang Family Compendium of Ink Cakes*, 1588, Volume 4, p. 12, illustrated below. For two inscribed dishes of similar design, please see two examples from the Sekido Museum of Art publication, Tokyo, 2017, pl. 159 and 160.





1



2a



2b



3



19



20



21



4



5



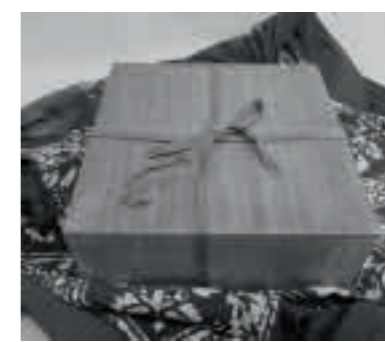
6



7



22a



22b



23



8



9a



9b



10



11



12



14



15



16a



16b



17



18

Kosometsuke: Old Blue and White for Japan 給日本的老青花



圖1 / 明天啟 (1621-1627)
五彩木瓜型羅漢冰裂紋盤
18.2 x 11.5 H 1.9cm

圖2 / 明天啟 (1621-1627)
青花桃型香盒
D 3.8 H 2.8cm



圖3



圖4

圖3 / 明天啟後期至崇禎 (1621-1644)
五彩爵祿封侯圖盤
D 20.7cm

圖4 / 明天啟 (1621-1644)
青花蓮蘆葦盤
D 21.2cm



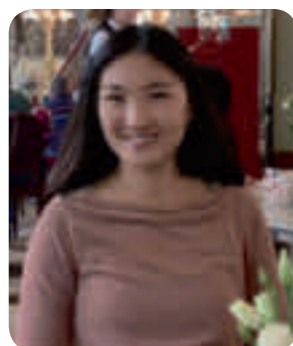
圖5



圖6

圖5 / 明天啟 (1621-1627)
青花松下老虎紋盤
D 14.5cm

圖6 / 明天啟 (1621-1627)
青花釉裡紅斑馬圖盤
D 15.1cm



沐錦堂主人 蔡宜倩



Robert Bradlow Fine Art
羅伯特·布萊德羅

古染付，專指以明末天啟年間（1621-1627）為主從中國景德鎮銷往日本青花瓷器。這些在日本被用於茶道及食膳的器皿從江戶初期16、17世紀之交魅獲日本人的心，在當時被稱作「南京染付」、「染付」、或「南京」，到江戶末年文政時代（1804-1830）才被正式稱作「古染付」，以此對比江戶時代持續的訂製品「新渡」。¹ 奇妙的是，以上這些日文名稱在中國陶瓷史中一概不見，對於同時期銷往西方歐美市場的轉型期青花來說更是陌生。更令人費解的是，古染付製造地景德鎮在過去未發現符合的出土破片，絕大多數出土物都是在江戶地區、長崎商港及日本的大都市。² 直至2018年，景德鎮唐英學社的創始人黃清華及其他專家學者們才舉辦【東瀛異彩—明末日本來華訂造瓷特展】展出了百餘片古染付標本，向學界證實了古染付曾在景德鎮多處燒造，突破學界多年來的困惑。³

在台灣，青年收藏家蔡宜倩所經營的沐錦堂（Mujintang Collection）專攻中國外銷瓷，她的收藏近年來在與日本關西、東瀛、紐約佳士得和中國嘉德成功地合作幾場專場之後，更受到英國倫敦蘇富比中國藝術部門前主席羅伯特·布萊德羅（Robert Bradlow）的青睞。因考量到全球疫情未歇，雙方便攜手策劃了一場線上結合線下的展覽，呈現沐錦堂80餘件精美收藏中的20件，準備在2021年「倫敦亞洲藝術週」期間（10/28-11/6）登場。《CANS藝術新聞》特別針對此次展覽採訪到蔡宜倩小姐（Yichien Tsai）及前主席Robert Bradlow，期許為華人讀者帶來更豐富的藝文資訊。

1. 林克彥《古染付雜想》，古染付-このくにのひとのあこがれ かのくにのひとのねがい，2017/8/8，東京：石洞美術館 P.9
2. 中路のぶ代《見えてきた新たな古染付像》，目の眼月刊誌 第479号特集古染付と祥瑞，2016/8月
3. 黃清華，東瀛異彩-明末日本來華訂造瓷特展，2018，<https://www.xuehua.us/a/5ebf936c5445100ba54555f8?lang=zh-tw>

CANS藝術新聞：請談談沐錦堂（Mujintang Collection）和Robert Bradlow Fine Art共同策劃古染付展的契機？

Robert：我第一次遇見沐錦堂的蔡宜倩小姐是在今年的年初，她與我聯繫並表示想為她有系統的收藏（如明末的漳州窯和景德鎮的古染付）尋找新主人，像是公私立博物館這種能完整展示她整批收藏的地方。在聯繫了英美地區幾位潛在的買家與成功的交易之後，我想或許可以不用實體展出就可為市場提供這些藏品。在過去的一年半由於新冠病毒，旅遊交通往返變得異常困難。因此，很多的商業世界都必須移往線上發展，特別是藝術市場、拍賣公司、藝術經理人都必須快速地做出改變。其中一個在線上辦展與銷售的重要因素是基於信任。我在國際藝術拍賣市場耕耘近30年，並在掌管倫敦蘇富比中國藝術部門的那十年達到高峰，許多客戶都知道我的為人和我所體現的價值。

蔡宜倩：我非常榮幸在社交平台上由於共同興趣的貼文而認識Robert，並發現我們同為倫敦大學亞非學院的畢業生。他向我表示當他也還在SOAS求學時期，他就有注意到這批景德鎮銷往日本的陶瓷，我發現在學術研究和文物鑑賞上我們一拍即合。在成功地與英美地區的藏家如巴特勒爵士及與美國學者史蒂芬·立特爾長期合作的茱麗亞及約翰寇蒂斯夫婦交易數件精品後，羅伯特便提議將藏品運往倫敦舉辦此一展覽。

CANS藝術新聞：請分享本次展覽精選20件精品的標準及其特色。

Robert：我想刻劃出古染付多樣的形狀和紋飾。在這場展覽中有9件圓盤、5件多形狀的皿、1個水指（圖7）、3件香爐（圖10）和2個香盒（圖2,9）。有動物圖案的圓形盤是最值得注意的，例如老虎、龍、猴子（圖5,8,3）和馬（圖6）。7件有人物圖樣，例如有乘蘆葦渡河的達摩（圖4）、周敦頤愛蓮、童子放風箏等，這些民間景致無疑喚起了日本茶道對枯寂美感的追尋。



圖7



圖8

圖7 /
明萬曆（1573-1620）
青花克拉克水指
D 18 H 17cm

圖8 /
明天啟（1621-1644）
青花楓葉型龍紋向付
20.6x20.7 H.3.3cm



圖9



圖10

圖9 /
明崇禎（1627-1644）
青花鳥型祥瑞香盒
D 5.2 H 6.8cm

圖10 /
明天啟（1621-1644）
五彩周敦頤香爐
D 10.4 H 8.4cm

蔡宜倩：古染付的圖樣及形狀來源相當多元，形狀方面有日本中世紀桃山時代的茶陶，如至野、織部燒；圖樣方面也可對比明末中國的出版物，如《八種畫譜》及《程氏墨苑》。其中一展品為楓葉造型的向付（圖8），此類器物曾在江戶城的本丸出土，該展件中間又繪有中國的四爪龍紋，推測前身應為權力階級的所有品。⁴ 古染付也影響到日本的伊萬里燒，有一件與初期伊萬里相似的是老虎紋盤（圖5），此類母題來自於朝鮮半島，流傳至日本受到喜愛，日方才又再跟中國訂製。另外一件值得一提的是一件木瓜型小碟（圖1），繪有一羅漢坐在蒲團上讀經，背景是五彩的冰梅文。這件展品曾在1981年香港東方陶瓷協舉辦的「明末清初瓷展」中展出，實為珍貴。

CANS藝術新聞：透過本次展覽，您們希望帶給觀眾怎樣的認識？

蔡宜倩：古染付不只是日本茶人單方面訂製瓷，應該是中日文化合作交融的文物。⁵

萬曆皇帝去世後來自北京政治上的控制逐漸衰弱，民黨興起，陶工便以常見的庶民題材為母題。一方面，日本的茶道品味也隨者政治上發生變化。開啟江戶時代的德川將軍由於和豐臣家的不合，秀吉方的御用茶人如千家、織部的枯寂品味在德川時代不被採用，取而代之的是遠洲品味，在大名之間傳播。⁶ 相較於桃山時代的陶器皿，武家茶採用了許多的青花古染付瓷器作為新時代的展現。

總結而論，中日兩國在經濟跟政治上的因素使得十七世紀初期的日本向明朝景德鎮下訂古染付瓷器，而文化因素及品味的轉變使得日方訂購更精緻的祥瑞瓷。希望此次透過20件嚴選的展覽可以刻劃出17世紀東亞的模樣，而觀者也可透過展品一窺古染付的多樣性及魅力並肯定其在中國陶瓷史上的地位。

4. 中路のぶ代《見えてきた新たな古染付像》，目の眼月刊誌 第479号特集古染付と祥瑞，2016/8月 p.33

5. 古染付と祥瑞，出光美術館，2013，東京

6. 中路のぶ代《見えてきた新たな古染付像》，目の眼月刊誌 第479号特集古染付と祥瑞，2016/8月 p.34

