The Collection of Zhangzhou Ware at the Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden, Netherlands

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**Definition: What is Zhangzhou (Swatow) Porcelain?**

A large family of provincial porcelains, often with vigorously painted decoration, made around 1600, used to be called “Swatow”. The name referred to the port of Shantou in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, “Swatow” in the historical Dutch records.

It was only in the 1990ties, that the kilns, where this type of porcelain was actually produced, were discovered in Zhangzhou, Fujian Province. The term “Swatow” is therefore often replaced now by “Zhangzhou”.

The term “Swatow” was apparently introduced by antique dealers and collectors, but it is not clear when the use of the term started. Robert L. Hobson (1872–1941), former keeper of the Asian Department of the British Museum and author of *The Wares of the Ming Dynasty*, which was published in 1923, did not use the term “Swatow”, but did refer to “coarse ceramic ware” instead. The term “coarse”, *grof* in Dutch, appears in documents of the Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie, or Dutch East India Company (VOC), as far back as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Zhangzhou (Swatow) porcelain was produced in a limited number of shapes: mostly large dishes, but also bowls, covered boxes, jars and small plates. It differs in almost all respects from the contemporary porcelain made at Jingdezhen.

Zhangzhou (Swatow) wares were made in a rather coarse manner, often with kiln grit adhering to the base. Most typical are the large dishes, decorated in blue-and-white designs, polychrome enamels and, less commonly, monochrome colours with slip decoration. The very original and imaginative designs are often freely and spontaneously painted on the crudely potted porcelain, which was full of impurities. No two examples are alike, which gives these wares a very special charm.

Zhangzhou (Swatow) wares were only made for export, but seemed to have been sent no further than Asia. They were also desired by European traders – the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish – for the inter-Asian trade. These wares were easily traded in South East Asia and would fetch a high price. Probably their size and colourful, lively decorations made them prestigious objects as symbols of wealth and status. They were as highly valued in Southeast Asia as the more delicate porcelain wares from Jingdezhen were.

The shapes of Zhangzhou (Swatow) wares were well adapted to the customs of the people on the archipelago and perfectly suited to their lifestyle, during which much time was spent sitting on the ground. These large dishes were handed down from generation to generation as family heirlooms. Wares of this type were also exported to India, the Maldives and the Middle East.

Zhangzhou (Swatow) wares were long neglected by Western collectors; there are only a few examples in European museums, with the exception of the Princessehof Museum in Leeuwarden.

With around 170 pieces, the Princessehof Museum in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, has the largest and most important collection of Zhangzhou (Swatow) ware worldwide. How this collection was formed in Leeuwarden, a small town in the northern province of Friesland?
View of the display of Zhangzhou (Swatow) wall at the Princessehof museum
The Princessehof Collection and Nanne Ottema (1874–1955)

The ceramic collections of the Princessehof Museum go back to an important and passionate collector: Nanne Ottema (1874-1955).

He was born in Leeuwarden in 1874, and in 1900 married the rich farmer’s daughter Grietje Kingma. In 1918 he succeeded his father in his business, which was the largest notary office in Friesland.

Ottema had started collecting early, and collected practically anything in the domain of applied art. He was especially lucky with Chinese ceramics, which became, and continue to be, the pride of the Princessehof Museum.

Nanne Ottema, photograph undated

Nanne Ottema never made it to the Far East. He acquired the Chinese porcelain from antique dealers in the Netherlands and had built up a network of friends who collected for him in the former colonies of the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei. One such friend, Anne Tjibbes van der Meulen (1862-1934), gave his collection, which he had hunted down in the Middle East and the Dutch East Indies, to the Princessehof Museum and continued to undertake acquisitions for Nanne Ottema during his travels.

Another collector, Reinier D. Verbeek (1841-1926), had amassed an impressive collection of “Swatow” wares while living and working in Sumatra. After his death it was donated to the museum by his heirs and today is still considered to be the most important collection in the world.

When Nanne Ottema died in 1955 his collections became the property of the Ottema-Kingma Foundation (OKS), which continues to acquire Chinese porcelain as permanent loans for the Princessehof Museum to this day.

The collections are housed in the historical buildings of the Princessehof in Leeuwarden, former residence of Marie-Louise of Hessen-Kassel (1688–1765), widow of the last stadtholder of Friesland. In later years it became...
the Municipal Museum, and in 1917, thanks to the fortunate combined action of the mayor of Leeuwarden and
the notary Nanne Ottema, the latter was able to move his collection in this building.

Ottema himself published a number of books on Chinese porcelain, based on the Princessehof collections and
with special attention given to export ceramics found in Indonesia, “Swatow” wares and martabans. One such
book was *Chinesche Ceramiek. Handboek geschreven naar aanleiding van de verzamelingen in het Gemeentelijke
Museum het Princessehof te Leeuwarden* (Chinese Ceramics. A Handbook), which was first published in 1943.
Nanne Ottema refers to these large dishes and jars as *grove porceleinen*.

Ref.: Romijn 1967; Bak 1999.
Collecting Zhangzhou (Swatow) on Sumatra: Reinier D. Verbeek

The mining engineer Reiner D. Verbeek (1841-1926) was a friend of Nanne Ottema. Verbeek had worked on Sumatra, where he collected Chinese and Japanese porcelain, particularly Zhangzhou (Swatow) ware. In 1910 he was repatriated and settled in The Hague, and in 1917 he donated a part of his collection to the museum. After Verbeek died in 1926, his heirs donated further ceramic gifts to the museum in 1929 and again in the 1940s and 1950s.

The island of Sumatra occupies a strategic position on the major ancient East-West maritime trade route. It was known as Suvarnadvipa, the Island of Gold, according to Indian sources. Traditionally on this island Chinese porcelain was highly appreciated as status symbols by a wealthy class of Muslims. There were also areas where pre-Islamic beliefs were still strong, and so foreign Chinese ceramics had special significance for their “magic” qualities.

Verbeek had published two long articles about his collection. One would expect that he would give some background information on the circumstances and the context where and how he found the pieces of his collection, but he only remarks that the collection comes “from the various corners of our East Indian archipelago”.

His real interest was to put together a collection representative of the development of Chinese porcelain from the Song dynasty (960–1279) onwards, a collection of all types of Chinese – and Japanese – porcelain (he collected Japanese ceramics, too, subsuming it under Chinese wares). Lacking all the material available now, it seems he relied on old obscure Chinese texts and tried to match these vague descriptions to the porcelains he had collected. Many of the export pieces, particularly Zhangzhou (Swatow) wares, are heavy and sturdy and decorated in an unrefined style with the bases left uncleaned – which Verbeek in many cases interpreted as a sign of antiquity.

Ref.: van Campen 2003; Stroeber 2013
John Pope - A Distinguished Visitor at the Princessehof

It was “on a sunny afternoon” in June 1950 when John Alexander Pope (1906–1982), former director of the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., found himself “ringing the bell in the charming 17th-century facade on a quiet street in Leeuwarden, in Holland’s north-western province of Friesland” (Pope 1951). Nanne Ottema, by then director of the Princessehof Museum, opened the door to his distinguished guest and together they visited the collections.

Entrance of the Princessehof Museum, Leeuwarden

Pope published a report of his visit and in doing so introduced the American public to the Chinese porcelain at the Princessehof Museum. He was very impressed and remarked that the American museums themselves own comprehensive representations of Chinese ceramics in examples of superb quality and condition. But these “masterpieces” are just one part of Chinese ceramic history. What the American museums do not have is the “immense variety of provincial and export wares which began to leave China in Yuan (1279–1368) and early Ming times and swelled to a veritable flood in the 16th century” (ibid). Pope was particularly impressed by the collection of “Swatow” wares, which “strike the American visitor as most unusual. No comparison need be made between these and the imperial pieces, or even many of the less perfect types in our museums, they are an altogether different thing” (ibid.).

Ref.: Pope 1951
Appreciation of Zhangzhou ware in China and Japan

“Swatow” or Zhangzhou ware was never appreciated by the Chinese elite. It was regarded as unsophisticated and coarse, which could be sold abroad to various “barbarians” at a high price. These large, heavy, boldly decorated pieces, with kiln grit still adhering to the base, were not considered appropriate for the Chinese elite.

It was only in the last decades, with the excavations of the kilns in Zhangzhou, Fujian province, these wares were given attention and studied by Chinese archaeologists and ceramic historians. Their interest in Zhangzhou ware is in most cases not based on the aesthetic appeal of this market.

Accordingly, Zhangzhou ware is not part of collections of Chinese ceramics in China, be it museum or private collections.

The Japanese, however, valued Zhangzhou ware for centuries. This love and appreciation the Japanese showed for the aesthetic fascination with Zhangzhou ware is reflected in the important collections formed and preserved in Japan. As early as 1933, Seiichi Okuda published a first study on Zhangzhou ware. Now many important museums like the Osaka Museum of Oriental Ceramics, the Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum and the Seikado Bunko Museum, Tokyo, own collections of Zhangzhou ware.

Ref.: Okuda 1933; Saito 1987; Osaka 1990; Tokyo 1997

Cover of the catalogue of the Seikado Collection, Japan
Research on the Zhangzhou (Swatow) Collection at the Princessehof Museum: Barbara Harrisson (1922-2015)

There was not much interest in research on “Swatow” porcelain in the 20th century, not only in China proper, but also among Western academic experts on Chinese ceramics and museum people. John Pope, with his fascination for the Princessehof collection, was the exception.

In the year 1955, Aga-Oglu for the first time summarized what was known about “Swatow” in the West, and established a first classification according to the techniques of production, referring to the collection of the Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan.

However, the first to realize that “Swatow” wares were an important part of Chinese export ceramics, was Nanne Ottema, who had acquired it for the collection of the Princessehof Museum from Reinier D. Verbeek. Ottema died in 1955, the year Aga-Ogly raised the Western interest for “Swatow”.

In 1964, Hessel Miedema (1929-2015), at that time curator at the Princessehof Museum, published a first catalogue of the Princessehof collection of “Swatow” ware and suggested for the first time a typology.

In the year 1977, Barbara Harrisson (1922-2015), a pioneer in the Western world for the appreciation of Chinese trade ceramics, became director of the Princessehof Museum. In her book Swatow in het Princessehof, published in 1979, she catalogued and interpreted the “Swatow” collection, focussing on the questions of technology and iconography for the first time in a systematic way. In her book Later Chinese Ceramics in Southeast Asia, published in 1995, she was summing up and modifying some aspects of the results of her former research.

Ref.: Aga-Oglu 1955; Miedema 1964; Harrisson 1979; Harrisson 1995
The Present Study: New Light on the Princessehof Collection of Zhangzhou (Swatow) ware

The present study will present a new interpretation of the Princessehof collection. It will critically summarize research done so far, often published in remote and not easily accessible sources, particularly in Chinese and Japanese language.

Most of this knowledge was not available when Barbara Harrisson published the results of her research in 1979 and 1995 respectively.

Three important fields of new knowledge will be considered:

1. During the 1990’s, the kilns, where “Swatow” was produced, were discovered and excavated around Zhangzhou, Fujian province. New knowledge about the methods of production and technology came to light. By having located the kiln sites the term “Swatow”, by which to this wares was referred, seems misleading, and should be replaced by the term “Zhangzhou ware”.

2. Shipwrecks carrying Zhangzhou ware
   In the last two decades, a number of shipwrecks containing a load of Zhangzhou ware were salvaged. Shipwrecks are important for dating and can point to the role Zhangzhou ware played as a trade good in the inter Asian and international trade.

3. Recent publications
   The developments mentioned above lead to new research of existing collections, followed by a number of publications. Material from Indonesia and the Philippines was published by Adhyatman and Tan respectively; Cricks catalogue covers a private collection of Chinese export ceramics, collected in Southeast Asia, which includes numbers of Zhangzhou wares. Canepa’s research and book for Jorge Welch summarised important information; Sargent included the Zhangzhou pieces he had acquired for the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass. USA, into his monumental work on Chinese export ceramics; Stroeber published a choice of Zhangzhou pieces from the Princessehof collection as part of Ming export ware for the inter-Asian markets.

Ref.: Adhyatman 1999; Canepa 2006; Tan 2007; Crick 2010; Sargent 2012; Stroeber 2013
The Kilns of Zhangzhou Ware

The Excavations of the Zhangzhou Kilns

Zhangzhou (Swatow) wares have unique characteristics which stand out from the production in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, the “porcelain capital” of China since ancient times.

Unlike the fine material used to make porcelain in the kilns of Jingdezhen, Zhangzhou ware has a much coarser quality and a different craftsmanship, which gives this ware its distinguishing marks.

For the kilns, where “Swatow” wares were supposed to be produced, a number of kilns sites were suggested in the south of China, mainly in the provinces Fujian and Guangdong, where for centuries ceramics for the local market, but also for export was made in numbers of minyao, private kilns.

In the early 1980’s, shards of blue and white wares had been recovered from several kiln sites of minyao in Pinghe county, Fujian province. As a result of a series of systematic archaeological excavations in the 1990’s, the kilns producing what was called “Swatow” were finally recovered in the region of Zhangzhou prefecture in the south of Fujian province.

Chinese archaeologists, with support from Japanese research institutions, excavated a number of kilns as the production sites of Zhangzhou ware: Wanyaoshan and Dongkou in the hills of Pinghe, Huzilou in Nansheng, Dalong and Erlong in Wuzhai, Xiuzhuang, Guanbei and Zhucuo in Zhao’an, Pingshu in Zhangpu, Huotian in Yunxiao, Meiling in Nanjing and Dongzi in Hua’an. There are probably more kiln sites to be discovered.

It seems the town of Zhangzhou served as a kind of assembly point for the products of the local kilns before they were shipped abroad. It therefore became customary not only with Chinese archaeologists and ceramic historians, but also internationally, to refer to the types of wares produced around Zhangzhou as “Zhangzhou ceramics” or “Zhangzhou ware” instead of the familiar, but misleading and historically no longer justified term “Swatow”.

Ref.: Canepa 2006; Canepa 2012 (Chinese); Li 2006; Li 2007; Crick 2010

Excavated shards of Zhangzhou ware
The production of Zhangzhou Ware

During the process of extensive excavations around Zhangzhou no entire kiln complex was discovered so far. Zhangzhou wares were produced not in large kiln complexes like in Jingdezhen, but in rather small, family-owned workshops. They had sprung up where clay was available and close to rivers to ship their products.

These workshops specialized on one or several types of products, shapes or designs, which explains, that there is a great variety of wares, be it the colour of the clay, the design, or the amount of sand adhering to the base.

From excavated sites of remains of kilns can be concluded, that for firing Zhangzhou ware there were two types of kilns, both constructed from brick: the traditional single or multi-chambered climbing “dragon-kiln” and a modified version, the so called “stepped dragon kiln”, whose inside resembled a staircase. It allowed the potters to load pieces of different size individually, larger pieces rather below and smaller pieces higher up.

Most Zhangzhou ceramics were thrown on the wheel, some made in moulds. The smallest pieces like jarlets are only a few centimetres in height, large and heavy plates often of a diameter up to 50 cm. They were fired in saggers, to protect them from impurities. To avoid adherence the pieces had to be raised from the floor. This was done by putting them on a bed of sand, on the floor of the kilns or inside the sagger. It seems the potters in the Zhangzhou kiln used a kind of rather coarse sand and did not bother to wipe the glaze on the foot of the vessels clean. This explains the adherence of sand on the bases and the sides of many Zhangzhou wares. It is a characteristic of Zhangzhou wares and called shazhu qi “sandy foot ceramics” by Chinese archaeologists.

Ref.: Li 2007

Base of GRV 1940-29, with kiln grit
Shapes of Zhangzhou Ware

Of the more than 150 pieces of the Zhangzhou type preserved in the Princessehof collection most of them are large dishes with a diameter of around 40 cm. There are a few jars of around 35 – 40 cm high, a couple of small jarlets, and some smaller dishes and bowls.

There was, however, a much wider repertoire of shapes of Zhangzhou wares. It seems, that Reinier Dirk Verbeek (1841-1926), who collected Zhangzhou ware on Sumatra in the beginning of the 20th century and gave his collection to the Princessehof Museum, focused on accumulating large dishes. One reason might be that they were the easiest available, another reason his theory on dating Chinese ceramics by using his collection of Zhangzhou dishes (see A 3).

The large dishes come in two shapes – one with an everted rim, and the other with a straight rim, the so-called saucer- shape. Both types have a thick and often unevenly cut footring which tends to slant inward. It is not glazed or sometimes hastily glazed.

A second group are bowls, again in different shapes, with an everted rim or in the shape of a klapmuts, the latter part of the repertoire of Kraak ware made in Jingdezhen for the Dutch market.

The Zhangzhou kilns produced different sizes of vases, beakers shaped like an Albarello Jar and flower pots.

Zhangzhou jars, ca. 35-40 cm high, were utilitarian vessels. They were made in two parts and luted together in the middle. Most of them have on the shoulder four grooved handles for a cord to run through to facilitate transport.

Small jarlets have always been popular in Southeast Asia for being used as burial objects. They were imported already during the Yuan (1279-1368) and the early and middle Ming dynasty of the 15th and 16th century. They have a globular body and a small mouth.

A popular type were round covered boxes in many shapes and sizes.

The collection of Zhangzhou ware at the Princessehof Museum, the main body consisting of large dishes, is therefore less a reference collection for a wide variety of shapes, but of decorative designs and techniques.

Ref.: Harrisson 1979; Tan 2007; Stroeber 2013
Zhangzhou Ware with Monochrome Glazes

Zhangzhou wares with monochrome glazes are rather rare. The Princessehof collection of Zhangzhou ware has fifteen ceramic objects of this type.

The number of glaze colours of monochromes is limited. There is a blue blackish cobalt blue, and a rather opaque greyish white glaze, sometimes with a greenish celadon or bluish tint and crackled.

For the blue glaze the dish was first dipped into a thick and opaque white glaze and then covered with a thinner cobalt blue glaze. The same process was applied for celadon glazes, where a light green glaze was applied over an opaque white glaze.

The dishes are made of porcellaneous stoneware coloured grey-white and with black specks. Most of the dishes have unglazed grey or buff bases, marked by sharp concentric grooves. The foot ring is low, slanting on the exterior and straight on the interior. Coarse particles of grit adhere wherever the glaze reached the edge of the foot.

A second type of dishes is larger, also with a low foot ring, slanting on the exterior and on the inside slightly undercut. These dishes are covered with thick whitish glazes, and when a celadon green glaze was added, the white glaze is still visible on the base.

The only decoration of monochrome Zhangzhou wares are incised patterns under the glaze, done while the clay was still "leather hard". The engraved design repeats the blue and white repertoire and style: dragon, phoenix, carp leaping out of waves, cranes, lotus and peonies. The execution is sketchy and vibrant. The cavetto can be decorated with incised dragons or floral scrolls.

The precise dating of monochromes is difficult. Production seems to have begun in the late 16th century and continued until the mid-17th century. A couple of fluted dishes were brought up from the Hatcher wreck, dated 1643-1646.

Ref.: Ottema 1945; Harrisson 1979; Adhyatman 1999; Canepa 2006; Tan 2007; Crick 2010
Zhangzhou Ware with Slip Decoration

Slip is liquid clay mostly used as an undercoat for glazes to produce a smooth surface. The slip applied as decoration on Zhangzhou ware is a fine white porcelain clay diluted to a creamy consistence. It was used under the glaze as well as decoratively applied to the already glazed surface.

The technique of painting in white clay slip on a monochrome ground was used in the Wanli period (1573-1620) at Jingdezhen, Jiangxi. The British Museum preserves a couple of monochrome vases glazed in blue and brown with a white slip decoration from this period.

It seems that this technique was also used in the kilns of Zhangzhou. Shards of this ware were excavated at the kiln sites of Huazhilou (Nansheng) and Dongkou (Wuzhai).

Vessels with this type of decoration are large dishes, bottles with a garlic shaped mouth, censers and boxes.

These wares were first given an overall white slip coating, and afterwards glazed in monochrome blue, brown, or light celadon. The painting was done in low relief on the glaze in slip, a solution of water and fine clay.

The unique and fine designs of Zhangzhou slip decorated ware are of a decorative technique quite different from other blue and white or polychrome Zhangzhou wares and asked for special expertise of the potters. The designs were painted with white slip of different density using dots and lines to produce delicate effects. The most frequent pattern was a bouquet of three flowers with radial petals and feathery leaves, painted on brown or blue glazes. These stylized flowers, often taken as chrysanthemums by a Western eye, are called *kembang kates* “papaya flowers” in Indonesia. They appear on dishes with an everted rim. This pattern was very successful and dishes with this design can be found in Southeast Asia, Japan, Sri Lanka, India and Europe.

Slip decoration on a brown glaze was particularly popular in Japan, where it was called *mochibana de*, literally “Mochi-flower style”. *Mochibana* is a traditional Japanese New Year’s decoration made from *mochi*, little balls of rice-cake that look like flowers.

Less elaborate slip patterns on a light celadon glaze are found in Southeast Asia and the Philippines.

Ref.: Harrisson 1979; Harrison-Hall 2001; Canepa 2006; McElney 2006; Crick 2010; Sargent 2012; Stroeber 2013
Zhangzhou Ware with Decoration in Underglaze Cobalt Blue

Most objects in the collection of Zhangzhou ware in the Princessehof Museum are painted in underglaze cobalt blue. Blue and white Zhangzhou porcelain was produced in enormous quantities and is best represented in museum collections. In the 16th and 17th century, while blue and white porcelain of the Kraak style was made in enormous quantities, to be exported to the West, Zhangzhou blue and white was most popular in Southeast Asia as well as in Japan.

The cobalt used for the designs has a wide range, from silvery blue, rich blue, even purplish, to a dry black.

The shapes include large dishes, jars and jarlets and boxes, and the designs are varied.

Barbara Harrisson in her pioneering work from 1979 on “Swatow” in the Princessehof collection suggested two groups for blue and white designs, the “simple style” and the “complex style”. In her later study she diversified her categories into the “conservative family”, “persistent family” and “versatile family”. The “conservative family” includes designs applied directly and with a rather big brush, without outlining the motifs. The designs are often stylized. With the term “persistent family” Harrisson referred to designs with outlines filled with wash, used over a long period of time. The group called “versatile family” includes different styles in a later production period.

Crick in her catalogue and study from 2010 again diversified Harrisson’s “families” and attempts on the basis of new archaeological material, marine as well as land-, to develop a tentative stylistic system for Zhangzhou blue and white wares.

This classification is useful and practical; however, as Crick emphasises, the recovery of new archaeological material could lead to a further modification of this system.

1. “Sketchy decoration”
These wares are decorated with a vigorous, brushed style, painted freehand and spontaneously. The design could hardly be produced by several workmen working on an assembly line, but was created by an individual artisan.

It seems the designs were inspired by blue and white wares made in the private kilns minyao.

During the 16th century, motifs were rendered sketchily and pseudo-naive, often with a sense of humour. Motifs include bold and strange dragons, qilin, fish and flowers, particularly what is interpreted as chrysanthemum, peonies and lotus. Lotus seems to be the only distinctive flower. The “chrysanthemum” or camellia is composed of swirls encircled by scrolling lines, and dots surrounded by dashes. The cavetto of pieces with “sketchy decoration” sometimes have blossoming branches, and on the rim a band of scrolls or lattice work of lozenge diaper.

2. “Composed decoration”

This group of Zhangzhou ware shows influence from Jingdezhen wares, particularly with the central scenes and the rims. The designs are outlined and filled in with washes.

Similar to Jingdezhen blue and white made in the Jiajing era (1522-1566) rims of dishes have oval medallion on a fish scale ground. Many dishes have a design similar to the contemporary Kraak style: radial panels with alternate decorations.

The central scene has the traditional themes also often used in Kraak ware: deer under pine trees, ducks on a pond, cranes, phoenixes in a garden.

The designs of the “composed decoration” seem not, like in the “sketchy style”, the work of one individual artisan. Obviously, several hands were involved in the process of decoration. This sometimes resulted in rather crowded designs and mismatches between outlines and washes. A number of designs are outlined with a kind of pinholes, indicating the use of stencils to accelerate work.

This group includes simple and complex designs, but there does not seem an evolution. Workshops specialised on a certain type of designs or produced different designs simultaneously.
Shards of this type were found in Fujian at the Zhangzhou kilns of Huazilou (Nansheng), Erlong, Dalong (Wuzhai), Dongkou and Wanyaoshan (Pinghe).

3. “Full “rim-to-rim” decoration”

The third group defined by Crick refers to a few large dishes, large stem cups or deep “klapmuts” type shapes, whose designs of the main motifs as well as the rims are more intricate. Animals like dragons, phoenix, pheasants, landscapes or ships form the central décor; the rims have often wide lobed medallions, reserved against lattice or fish scale background.

Examples with the characteristic of this group were found in the wrecks of the Binh Thuan (ca. 1608) and the Witte Leeuw (1613), but not on the San Diego (1600).

Ref.: Pope 1951; Harrisson 1979; Canepa 2006; Tan 2007; Crick 2010; Sargent 2012; Stroeber 2013
Zhangzhou Ware with Decoration in Overglaze Enamels

An important group of Zhangzhou porcelain is decorated in overglaze enamels. The designs were applied over an often crackled cream-white glaze. Colours used include red, green, turquoise and black for the outlines.

Overglaze technique was of ground breaking significance in the history of ceramic technology. Low firing glazes were applied to already fired white slipped stonewares or porcelain, and then given a short firing of ca. 800 degrees to mature the enamels and give them a bond with the transparent high temperature glazes beneath.

Although blue and white dominated the production in Zhangzhou, the potters devoted much effort to satisfy the demand for polychrome porcelain during the late years of the Ming.

Production seems to have started in Zhangzhou in the late 16th century. Zhangzhou ceramics on the shipwreck of the San Diego, dated 1600, included only two enamed pieces, an oblong box and a bowl.

The Binh Thuan junk, which sank around 1608 off the South of Vietnam and was salvaged in 2002, was the first cargo dedicated of Zhangzhou ware. It included roughly equal numbers of blue and white and overglaze enamel decorated wares and some pieces combining cobalt underglaze blue and overglaze enamels, mostly dishes, bowls, jars and boxes. The cargo was for the Southeast Asian or Japanese market.

It seems wares decorated in overglaze enamels were produced in the same kilns which produced blue and white: Huazilou (Nansheng), Wuzhai and Wanyaoshan (Pinghe), Huotian (Yunshao).

Their decorations are related to the Zhangzhou blue and white designs: animals, phoenix, qilin, dragon and fish.

Ref.: Flecker 2002-2003; Canepa 2006
**Zhangzhou Ware with Decoration in Overglaze Red and Green**

A distinctive group with imaginative and bold designs in vibrant colours are the wares painted dominantly in red, green and yellow. They are found on dishes, boxes and jars.

Iron red is a lead based enamel with the red pigment from iron oxide. It first appeared during the Song dynasty (960-1279). The finer the iron oxide is ground, the brighter the red comes out. The palette is from yellow, orange and bright red to a full dark red.

Lead enamels generally consist of three parts lead oxide and one part powdered quarts, to which a small amount of metallic oxides is added.

To use it for porcelain decoration the powder is mixed with water, glue, terpentine or oil to produce a paste of even consistency which is then applied to porcelain surface with a brush.

With 700-800 degrees in a muffle kiln this mixture will turn into a glass like substance.

Green could be created by mixing copper oxide with lead and quartz sand. With a high lead content green turns dark emerald. Light or dark green is the same enamel but with different amounts of iron added.

Enamelled pieces were fired twice: the first firing for the transparent glaze, and the second, lower firing, for the enamels.

Iron yellow was first used in Cizhou pottery during the Northern Song dynasty (960-1179), together with red and green. It was probably created by a low concentration of iron oxide in a lead solution, the same as was used to create the yellow to amber colours in the sancai of the Tang dynasty (618-907).

The combination of red, green and yellow enamel was first used in the kilns of Cizhou, Hebei province, in the north of China, during the Northern Song period (960-1127) or — according to Wang Qingsheng — during the Jin dynasty (1115-1234). In China, these designs are referred to as Song honglue cai “Song red and green colour”.

The wide use of red and green enamels was perfected in Jingdezhen during the Jiajing period (1522-1566). Like Cizhou ware in red and green, these pieces were not sophisticated, but made for the local market, painted in inspired, free and varied designs of flowers, birds, qilin, landscapes, and figures.

This taste for lively designs seemed to have spread from the Cizhou kilns in the north to the kilns in the south, to Jingdezhen and particularly to Zhangzhou, Fujian.

Zhangzhou ware decorated in red and green was mainly made for the Southeast Asian and Japanese market.
GRV 1929-77

Ref.: Wood 1999; Wang 2002
Zhangzhou Ware with Decoration in Turquoise, Green, Red and Black Enamels

Another distinctive group of Zhangzhou ware is painted in turquoise, green, iron red and black enamels. Brilliant turquoise was created by using salpeter instead of lead to make the quartz sand and copper powder melt into a turquoise-blue alkali glaze. Its earliest appearance seems to have been in the pottery of the Tang dynasty (618-907). It is then found on northern Cizhou wares during the Song (960-1279) and on the 'shufu' wares of the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), produced in Jingdezhen. Turquoise alkali glaze continued to be used in combination with lead-based overglaze enamels from the early Ming period (1368-1644) up until today.

Black enamel made its appearance during the 15th century. Initially used for flat washes, it later became indispensable for providing thin black outlines for overglaze enamel painting.

It was made from the same cobalt pigments used for underglaze decoration, but possibly from an impure and low grade cobalt not suitable to be used as underglaze blue. A good grade cobalt could also be mixed with some lead to give a solid black.

On Zhangzhou ware, the decoration with turquoise, red, green and black was built up in two layers. At first the thin, black outlines, which identify the silhouettes of the motifs as well as their details, were painted on the glaze, later covered by turquoise and green. The turquoise layer is over the black outlines of birds, animals, mythical beasts and humans; a green layer over leaves. Barbara Harrisson remarked, that the combination of
black outlines and green or turquoise covers is generally poor or mismatched. She argues, that either different decorators working on different skills and speed did the painting or stencils were used to cover the black outlines.

Motifs on Zhangzhou red and green wares are of the familiar kind – animals, birds and flowers; they have often equivalents in blue and white. Motifs painted in turquoise, however, are frequently new.

One of the large dishes in the Princessehof collection is painted with a elegant lady in a dancing pose, surrounded by flowers and auspicious objects (OKS 1868-169). Like the other dish of this type, decorated with a strange looking lion, (GRV 1929-338), it is made of pure white porcelain, quite different from the coarse material Zhangzhou is normally made of. The backsides are plain. Zhangzhou ware of this type was probably produced for the Japanese market, where – because of its eccentric qualities - it was appreciated by Japanese tea masters.

Ref.: Seikado 1997; Canepa 2006; Stroeber 2011; Sargent 2012; Stroeber 2013
Zhangzhou Ware with Decoration in Combination of Underglaze Blue and Overglaze Enamels

Zhangzhou ware decorated in a combination of enamels and underglaze blue are rare. The shapes include dishes, bowls, and small jars. They are all made of comparatively rather pure white porcelain, the designs complex combinations of elements like animals, plants.

To produce the design, the potter had first to paint the parts done in cobalt blue. After high firing the space left empty for the enamelled decoration was filled with designs in red, green, turquoise, the motifs outlined in black, and fired a second time at lower temperature.

It seems that this type of ware, which was – compared to the Zhangzhou blue and white and the “common” polychrome pieces – difficult and time consuming to produce and had to be sold at a high price.

It was probably intended for the Japanese market, to be appreciated by Japanese connoisseurs and used at the Japanese rituals of drinking tea.

Most of the pieces of this type of combination of underglaze cobalt blue and overglaze enamels include the decorative element of the “red roundel”, particularly appreciated by Japanese connoisseurs; many pieces of this type are preserved in Japanese collections and have influenced later Japanese ceramic design.

Ref.: Seikado 1997; Stroeber 2013
Common Motifs

The design and the motifs on Zhangzhou ware seem to be unique and distinctive, only to be found on this particular ware. However, references for Zhangzhou ware are found on other wares; Zhangzhou ware is not an isolated group. It shows many links with porcelain produced earlier and/or in other kilns in China. The potters and artisans working in the kilns of Zhangzhou came out with their own versions and established their own highly creative and individual identity.

The links of Zhangzhou are definitely not with the refined wares produced in the official kilns guanyao at Jingdezhen, but with the non official, private kilns minyao in Jingdezhen and the coastal provinces in Southern China, Jiangxi, Fujian and Guangdong.

The output of Ming minyao was much bigger than the production of the guanyao, the official kilns. These “provincial” wares were popular on the domestic and overseas markets and represent primary sources for the study of politics, social customs, economy and overseas trade during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Still, most publications focus on imperial pieces only. As a result, there is still no comprehensive framework of classification and dating for minyao. To make things even more complicated, Ming artisans copied a great number of designs from pattern books which were used for several decades; similar motifs appear in different periods, painted in different styles.

During the last few decades archaeological research flourished in China. A new generation of archaeologists and scholars does not focus any more exclusively on Chinese imperial ware, but realizes the historical relevance of ceramics produced in the private kilns. A good example is the excavation, research and publication on a number of mostly blue and white wares from Ming burials and kilns with a dated context in Jiangxi province. Styles and typologies of the blue and white pieces recovered provides the start of a standard point of reference for the authentication and dating of pieces in public and private collections.
**Penglai, the Islands of the Immortals**

GRV 1929-36

The shape of this splendid, large-sized dish is rare: a large dish, supported by a low flared stand.

The design in cobalt blue is an interesting version of the traditional design of the Penglai paradise, according to Taoist belief a group of islands in the Southern Sea, the island of the immortals.

The motifs are painted in different shades of cobalt blue, outlined by darker areas, filled with contrasting washes in lighter blue, creating a dramatic effect.

In the center the attention is drawn to two human figures in the foreground, a traveler with a stick and his servant, pointing to the three stylized islands with bizarre rocks, composed of undulating fields. The landscape, high mountains, pagodas, is encircled by six medallions, each filled with a coiled dragon. The ground has swastika-enclosing diapers, interspersed by small frames filled with lotus flowers. A continuous band of aquatic flora and artemisia leaf is below the edge. The outside has a vigorous lotus scroll.

Ref.: Stroeber 2011
The so-called “Split Pagoda” Motif

GRV 1929-64

One of the most intriguing design on Zhangzhou ware is commonly referred to as “split pagoda”. It occurs only on enamels.

The design is composed of a centre, enclosed and edged with bands, and a border of separate motifs.

The colour scheme is characteristic for late polychrome wares with a vivid turquoise combined with black outlines. Four border elements parallel this scheme. The others are executed in red.

The design is only known from large dishes close to 40 cm in diameter, and it seems to have been made exclusively for export. No examples of this design are reported from collections in China. In contrast in Japan and maritime Southeast Asia “Split Pagoda” dishes are well known.

Four medallions are painted on the border in turquoise with black outlines. Short thorns or flames radiate outward across the outlines. Similar medallions were used in Jingdezhen during the 16th century for dishes made for Portuguese Christian clients. Here they are in underglaze blue, circular to heart shaped, thorned, and variously filled with the initials of the Jesuits : I.H.S. and the Royal Portuguese arms.

For an example in the Princesshof collection see Stroeber 2013, no. 78.

The exterior of these dishes of the Zhangzhou type is always plain, the base unglazed. Around the foot there are commonly white splashes of glaze and kiln grit.

“Split pagoda” refers to the centre design. It is painted with abbreviated landscape elements, indicating a marine environment, on three horizontals. The top has a row of peaks, the middle the architectural outlines of a three-tiered pagoda split vertically into two halves by a narrow channel free of decoration. The channel expands into an oval cell at the bottom, containing miniature gates and pagodas.

The combination and non realistic proportions of the pictorial elements look strange: in late Ming, however, creative Chinese used the element water, river or waterfall, as separating elements in a landscape, often abbreviated and in a semi abstract way.
The cavetto is decorated with four roundels, enclosing sketchy landscapes. The roundels are edged by bands of short, radiating flames. They alternate with iron red, irregular seals with indecipherable or difficult to read Chinese characters in seal script.

Sometimes these seals are referred to with the Japanese term *imbande*, “printblock type” given to them in Japan, where the “split pagoda” design seems to have been very popular.

This unusual motif provoked much discussion with Western ceramic historians.

Margaret Medley in her book *The Chinese Potter*, published in 1976, simply called it a “mystery”. Regina Krahl remarked on the example in the Topkapi Sarai collection, Istanbul: “The model or inspiration for this subject is still a mystery: it can be interpreted as a waterfall rushing down from the mountains into a lake, and therefore visually splitting the pagoda in the background in two. This would be a highly unusual form of representation and may have been the result of misinterpretation or over stylization of its originals”.

And a Norwegian collector suggested, that the pagoda could refer to the Little Wild Goose pagoda in Xi’an, which was damaged (“split”) by a number of earthquakes in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Barbara Harrisson in her “Swatow” book from 1979 considers two interpretations: a Taoist landscape depicting the inner circulation of man, as well as the notion that the “split” gates of shrines in Bali were commemorated by this pattern “ (p. 109).

Harrisson came back to this question in an article in *Aziatische Kunst*, 2003. She refers to the “split pagodas” or rather “split gates” as parts of complexes of Hindu temples on Bali and Java, related to the Hindu Majapahit Period (13th-15th century), known as pura.

But why a “split gate” from a Hindu temple on Bali should appear on a dish made in China for a market in Southeast Asia, which was – at that time – rather dominated by Muslim rulers and culture?

She suggests, that this design around 1620, probably related to the familiar Buddhist multi storied pagoda, while the Muslim clients in Southeast Asia associated the motif with their mosques.

But what does the cell, the bubble, mean in this context? Splitting the pagoda or mosque to expand as a cell enclosing more pagodas en miniature?

Harrisson interpretation is, that it depicts a symbolic expression of the inland trade. Coastal cities, like Surabaya, were surrounded by walls for protection. To proceed into the inland, maritime traffic had to file through gated channels and rivers. The channel – splitting the pagoda – probably symbolises water course, a river leading inland.

In his book from the year 2006 Ni compares all these interpretations as a kind of Western “Chinese whisper”.

He interpreted the motif in a completely different way, referring to the meaning of the “bubble” in Chinese visual language.

In Chinese art, the “bubble” is traditionally a device to express a dream or something imagined. On several designs on woodblock prints or porcelain of the seventeenth century a bubble comes out of the head of a person to denote he or she is dreaming, the content of the dream filling the “bubble”. The same idea could be true with the image of the paradise landscape of the Penglai islands mountains depicted on this dish. The Penglai islands, in Taoist tradition the
dwellings of the immortals, was a most popular motif on Zhangzhou dishes.

Stroeber in her book from 2011 follows Ni with the interpretation of the “bubble” as an association of Penglai.

What made this design desirable for the Japanese, who did not seem to care about the meaning of the “split pagoda”, but called this type *imban*de – “printblock type” referring to the four red “seals”?

The Princessehof collection has a very rare dish, a Japanese version of this type of design, made around 1650-1660 in the kilns of Yoshino, Japan (OKS 2009:1), which “quotes” the *imban*de from the Chinese original, but combines it with different elements and colours not found on Zhangzhou ware (see G 4)

Ref.: Harrisson 1979; Krahl and Ayers 1986; Harrisson 1995; Harrisson-Hall 2001; Canepa 2006; Ni 2006; Stroeber 2011
Western Motifs: The Marine Rose

Navigation is represented on a distinct group of Zhangzhou dishes, decorated in cobalt blue and of rather big size of more than 40 cm. They have curving sides and straight edges. The centre of the design is formed by a marine rose with radiating lines. Around the marine rose are sailing ships with two masts and two tiers of sails, large fish and the elements of the Penglai islands, the islands of the immortals, represented by three mountains. A gigantic fish is leaping from the waters. The border has four oval medallions, filled with emblematic patterns.

Marine roses were not part of Chinese cartography until the 20th century; they were part of a specific Western tradition of mapping known as portulan charts. The name portulan charts comes from the Italian portolano, meaning “port” or “harbor”. They are simple maps of navigational routes across water, using compass directions Portulan charts were mapping sea routes, but did not focus on the routes on water, rather mapping the coastlines along these sea routes, going back to the documentation of places in old rutters, tracks. The earliest surviving examples of this type can be dated into the 13th century, but they were still used in the 17th century.

How the marine rose found its way into the design of this dish? It seems the Chinese at that time had seen Portuguese or Dutch sea maps, using a marine rose. An example of a Chinese sea map made around the time Zhangzhou porcelain was produced and exported, around 1600 – is the so-called Selden Map. The map shows the whole of Southeast Asia and its maritime sea routes in a scale and in a style unknown in any comparable map of the period. It was made in the end of the Ming dynasty, around 1608-1609; nothing is known about the maker. The map entered the Bodleian Library in 1654, given by the English scholar John Selden (1584-1654), as part of a large collection of more than 8000 manuscripts. It is not known, from whom or where Selden acquired this map, which now bears his name. The Selden map is oriented in usual Chinese style with north at the top, because traditionally Chinese subjects faced upwards to the emperor, who looked “down” south.

The ships sailing the sea on the Zhangzhou dish are again not Chinese junks. The type of ship dominating the global trade were the galleons and the carracks. Galleons are large, multi-decked sailing ships used primarily by the European from the 16th – 18th century. Galleons were powered by wind, using sails carried on three or four masts.

Another Western type were the carracks, caracca or nao in Genoese and Spanish, nau in Portuguese. They were three or four masted sailing ships developed in the 15th century by the Genoese for commercial purposes, and widely used by European 15th century maritime powers. The Portuguese and the Spanish used them for oceanic travel and to explore the world.
On traditional European sea maps showing the Pacific and the Indian Ocean appear sea monsters or giant fish, symbolizing the dangers of sea faring at that time.

Ref.: Canepa 2006; Brook 2013
The Trade to the Indonesian Archipelago

Chinese porcelain was one of the most successful trade goods in the global network. The merchants, most of them from the southern China provinces of Guangdong and Fujian, exported vast quantities of ceramics to Japan and Korea, South East Asia, India, the Middle East, even East Africa.

The kilns, where Zhangzhou ware was made, were discovered in the southern province of Fujian. This province has a long ceramic tradition. Particularly during the Song (907-1279) and Yuan (1279-1368) dynasties private kilns around Zhangzhou had produced qingbai wares and celadons for a local market as well as for export.

Zhangzhou ware was not made for a local market. Almost no specimens were discovered by archaeological surveys in Fujian province. But it is found in enormous quantities throughout the archipelago, Philippines and Indonesia, and Japan. Obviously, it was produced mainly for the inter-Asian trade.

Zhangzhou is situated in the south of Fujian province, only around 50 km from the important seaport of Yuegang, where shipments with ceramics would start.

When the Ming court had opened the new port of Yuegang in Zhangzhou county in the 1540’s, and the official trade ban was lifted in 1567, trade flourished immediately. By the end of the 16th century, more than 100 ships each year sailed from Yuegang to Japan and many Southeast Asian destinations, serving different groups of clients.

The same period saw a massive emigration from Chinese coastal provinces like Fujian to Southeast Asia; Chinese communities settled there, but kept close commercial ties to their home province, thus establishing a network of trade which facilitated the spread of Fujian export items like Zhangzhou ceramics to Southeast Asia.

The kilns of Zhangzhou started to fall in decline after the fall of the Ming in 1644. The final blow was dealt when the Kangxi emperor (1662-1722) of the new dynasty ordered in 1662 an evacuation of all residents from the coastal regions of Fujian and Guangdong. The strategy was to cut off any coastal support for the resistance against the new dynasty of the Qing (1644-1911).
The majority of kilns in Zhangzhou did not resume production. Dehua and the kilns in its vicinity replaced Zhangzhou as major blue and white ceramic production centres; Yuegang as an "international" port failed to recover to its previous glory.

**Fujian**
The port of Yuegang is only about 50 km from Zhangzhou prefecture in southern Fujian, the production sites of Zhangzhou porcelains. When in 1567 the trade ban was lifted, Chinese merchants, particularly from the coastal provinces of Fujian and Guangdong, were once again allowed to trade freely.

Around 1620, by the end of the Wanli reign (1573-1620), the declining fortunes of the Ming necessitated sharp decreases in court orders for the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen. Private kilns in Fujian and Guangdong however were able to find new clients and cater the tastes of different markets. They became prominent manufacturers for the ceramic trade. The range of products included not only blue and white or white porcelain from Dehua, but the range of ceramics made in the kilns of Zhangzhou. This period, from the mid 16th to the mid 17th century, represents the peak of production and export of Zhangzhou. It coincided with the heyday of the port Yuegang, which declined with the rise of the Xiamen in the mid-17th century.

The evolution of the Chinese ceramic industry in the late Ming took place in the broader context of a growing trading network. Among the maritime participants again were the coastal merchants and junk owners, especially of Fujian, who sailed to the trading centres of maritime Southeast Asia. Large sea borne trading enterprises came into existence that possessed the military capabilities and a talent for negotiating with foreigners. This lasted from the mid 16th century until 1683, when the Qing court regained hegemony over South China and its ceramic industry.

OKS 1986-32

NO 2632

Publ: Harrisson 1979, no. 147, p. 78; Harrisson 1995, pl. 23 a/b, p. 18
The Use of Zhangzhou Ware on the Archipelago

In China, where the large dishes of the Zhangzhou type were made, there was no functional use of large and heavy dishes for serving or taking food. Chinese sat on chairs, and ate from rather small bowls, placed individually in front of each guest, the way it is still practiced in China and Chinese restaurants worldwide. Large dishes, be it the Zhangzhou or celadon type, were made exclusively for export to Southeast Asia and Japan. How were they used in their new cultural context?

To find out about the use of Zhangzhou ware on the Indonesian archipelago one would turn to old photographs and anthropological literature. But these texts, when describing the use of Chinese stoneware of porcelain on the archipelago, are mostly non explicit about the identity of the ceramic itself. Reports and illustrations have emphasized on the people and their rituals, not on the precise nature of the ceramics they used. Indigenous descriptions or illustrations are not known. It is therefore difficult to reconstruct the traditional use of ceramics.

OKS 1979-033

Zhangzhou ware, particularly with special designs, was to play an important part in Islamic ritual of offering rice and flowers far into the 20th century, particularly at the Islamic courts.

People from the Muslim dominated rich trade centers and coastal areas in maritime Southeast Asia were best able to afford imported ceramics. They cultivated tastes for collecting ceramics to build social prestige, connoisseurship, opinions and beliefs.

Chinese porcelain dishes and jars were appropriate for dispensing food and drinks in communal feasts. Zhangzhou ware was used as a status symbol for communal banqueting.

They were also good heirloom and conversation pieces, useful for paying debts, giving to brides, for psychic healing and other exchanges which required the display of decorum and wealth.

Receiving and entertaining guests in a grand manner was a traditional custom on the archipelago. The fascination of the Europeans with such luxurious and bountiful reception can be imagined. Chinese porcelain, at this time not yet well known in Europe, played its part.

One of the first Western travellers to report on Chinese porcelain in South East Asia was the Italian scholar and explorer Antonio Pigafetta (c. 1491–c. 1534), who was born in the Republic of Venice. He had travelled with the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521) and his crew on their voyage to the East Indies. During the expedition, After Magellan was killed in Macatan in the Philippines in 1521, Pigafetta was one of the eighteen men who returned to Spain and later to Venice. This voyage completed the first circumnavigation of
the world. His *Relazione del primo viaggio intorno al mondo* [Report on the First Voyage around the World] was published in 1525.

Pigafetta reports the high appreciation of Chinese porcelain and its use at the courts of the South East Asian rulers he visited. It seems that it was custom to place the large dishes on the ground for communal eating at banquets.

While visiting the Philippines, Pigafetta met the king of Cebu in 1521. He found him ‘sitting on a mat. …’ He was eating turtle eggs served up in two porcelain dishes set out on another mat on the ground.’ And at the palace of the king of the island of Mindanao ‘supper was brought, which consisted of rice and fish, very much salted, in porcelain dishes’. Later in 1521, Pigafetta arrived in Borneo. When the group of foreigners were invited by the sultan to have dinner at the governor’s house, food was brought from the palace kitchen. ‘There came nine men to the governor’s house, sent by the king, with as many large wooden trays, in each of which were ten or twelve china [porcelain] dishes, with the flesh of various animals, such as veal, capons, fowls, peacocks, and other, with various sorts of fish, so that only of flesh there were thirty or thirty-two different viands. […] We had supper on a palm mat; at each mouthful we drank a little china cup of the size of an egg full of the distilled liquor of rice; we then ate some rice and some things made of sugar, using gold spoons made like ours’.

In 1598, John Davies, an Englishman, visited the Muslim kingdom of Aceh. He recalls his visit to the king: “I sate downe in the Kings presence, who dranke to me in aquavitae and made me eate of many strange meates. All his service is of gold, and some in fine porcelane. Hee eate upon the ground without table, napkins or other linen.” (Volker 1971, p. 193)

William Marsden (1754-1836), an English orientalist and pioneer in the scientific study of Indonesia, lived in Bengkulu, Southwest Sumatra, from 1771-1779. He commented about the way of receiving guests in Sumatra, the Indonesian island where most of the Zhangzhou ware dishes now in the Princessehof Museum were collected.

“They are wont to entertain strangers with much more profusion than is met with the rest of the island. If the guest is of any importance, they do not hesitate to kill, beside goats and fowls, a buffalo or several, according to the period of his stay and the number of attendants. One man has been known to entertain a person of rank an his suite for sixteen days, during which time there were no less than a hundred dishes of rice spread each day.” And further: “They have dishes here, of a species of china or earthenware, called batu benauang, brought from the eastward: remarkably heavy, and very dear; some of them being valued at forty dollars a piece. The breaking of one of them is a family loss of no small importance. “The term batu benauang refers to a dish only used for special occasions, and might well refer to the highly appreciated Zhangzhou ware dishes.

It seems that the use of Zhangzhou wares as well as other Chinese ceramics in Southeast Asia was mostly determined by religious practices or showing status.

Islam had spread rapidly in maritime Southeast Asia starting from the 11th century. By the 15th century, it was firmly established on the Malay peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Brunei and Northern Borneo.

In the 16th century, Christian faith was introduced to the Philippines and other areas in Southeast Asia first by the Portuguese and later by the Spanish.

Chinese ceramics recovered – among other grave goods - in the cemeteries in maritime Southeast Asia, mostly date into the 13th to 16th century. Both religious beliefs do not require burial practices which involve burying the dead with their belongings.

Only in a few cases, Zhangzhou ceramics were found underground as part of the burial.
Canepa e the appointment of a datuk, a Malay honorary title used in West Sumatra.

Ref.: Pigafetta 1525 in Alderley 1874; Adhyatman 1990; Canepa 2006; Tan 2007; Stroeber 2013

For the ceremony on the Islamic courts in Solo, Yogya and Cirebon in fertility rites see Adhyatman 1990, p. 45 – 46

Canepa 2006; Tan 2007.
Zhangzhou Ware for the Muslim Kingdoms on Indonesia

The arrival of the Europeans around 1500 had created additional overseas markets for Chinese potters. Because the Jingdezhen potters could no longer meet the increasing and insatiable demands, the kilns of Zhangzhou, with its supplies of raw materials for ceramics production and the ease of transport by rivers, seized the opportunity and became an important production centre for export wares.

Early Chinese records of trade to Southeast Asia go back to the late Song dynasty (960-1279). The Zhu Fanji (Description of Foreign People) by Zhao Rugua, compiled in the early 13th century, refers to shipment of Chinese porcelain and silk to the Nanhai, the "Southern Sea", how the archipelago was called, to barter for pearls, tortoise shells and other items.

Early in the 16th century Islamic kingdoms were appearing throughout the Indonesian archipelago: Aceh in North Sumatra, Banten in West Java, and Macassar in South Sulawesi.

It was the kings and the nobility who played a role in determining trade, navigation and trade politics. They were even owners of merchant ships. The important and lucrative trade in this period usually became a monopoly of the state, which gave the Muslim elite the power to determine prices and trading conditions.

Trade centres were situated along the coast. Transit trade ships from China, India and the Middle East transported Indonesian products – mainly agricultural products – to the north in exchange for Chinese wares, mainly silk and ceramics, and to the west against textiles from India and Persia.

The merchants were Arab and Malaysian, but many were Chinese, often from the Chinese coastal provinces Fujian and Guangdong, which lived in trading centres like Banten and Batavia in Chinese quarters. Chinese merchants had settled on the Southeast Asian archipelago and became middlemen, a highly important role in trade. Later, after the arrival of the Europeans, who were not permitted to enter China, these Chinese merchants had to organize everything, from the orders to the kilns, the financing, checking and transport.

Chinese merchants were also visiting kampungs or villages to purchase direct from the farmers. They took with them merchandise from their own country, which must have included ceramics. This might explain how ceramics found their way to small inland villages.

Ref.: Stroeber 2013
The Trade of Zhangzhou Ware to Portugal

The Santos Palace in Lisbon, Portugal, now the French embassy, has an unique room, casadas porcelanas, created between 1664 and 1687: inside the pyramid vault the four triangular sides are covered with over 260 pieces of blue and white Chinese porcelain, the earliest dating from around 1500, the latest from the middle of the 17th century. Among numbers of Kraak porcelain, made in Jingdezhen, there are three Zhangzhou dishes. The Santos Palace documents the dominant role Portugal played in the China trade. The Portuguese were the first European power to show up in the South China Sea, coming via the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa in the early 16th century. Their aim was to monopolise the great profits in the spice trade.

In 1511, they had conquered Malacca and seized a part of the Southeast Asian trade. They traded directly from India to China and Japan via Malacca, exporting Indonesian spices and importing Indian textiles and Chinese ceramics.

In 1517, they reached the port of Yuegang. Because in Yuegang the imposition of the trade ban was less stringent and effective, the Portuguese tried, in some cases successful, to cooperate with the local elite. But in 1548, they were driven out of the coastal provinces. In 1577, however, the Chinese government allowed the Portuguese to base themselves at Macao in exchange for promises that they would assist Chinese forces on land and at sea.

The Ming court finally realized the futility and difficulties of keeping the ban. By legalising and officially recognising Yuegang as the port for foreign trade in 1567, it hoped to curb corruption and smuggling activities. Yuegang benefited from the new policy and became an important international port of the late Ming period. The Portuguese were the biggest buyers of Chinese ceramics in the 16th century. The most impressive testimony is the ceiling of the Santos Palace, covered with Chinese porcelain.

Ref: Goldschmidt 1984; Carswell 2000; Canepa 2006
Zhangzhou Ware in the Spanish “Manila Galleon Trade”

In 1521 a Spanish expedition led by Ferdinand Magellan (c. 1480–1521) sailed west across the Pacific, reached the Philippines and claimed the islands for Spain. In order to be able to trade with these Southeast Asian islands, an eastward maritime route had to be identified to enable galleons to return to the Americas. This was the beginning of the so-called “Manila Galleon Trade”, aptly named Nao de China in Spanish, meaning “ship from China”. It was the beginning of globalised trade, and brought porcelain, silk, ivory, spices and other exotic goods from China to the Americas in exchange for New World silver, mined in Mexico and Peru.

Some of the galleons from Manila en route to Acapulco carried Zhangzhou wares. A number of shipwrecks and excavations brought new light on Zhangzhou ware traded between Southern China and Mexico.

In 1595, the Spanish galleon San Agustin, under the command of Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeno, lost cargo at Drakes Bay, California. Besides some Fujian ware of the Kraak type the cargo consisted of cruder Zhangzhou ware.

The most important dated shipwreck of the “Galleon Trade” was the San Diego, a Spanish galleon which sank 1600 near Batangas, the Philippines, after an exchange with the Dutch warship Mauritius. It carried a huge cargo of Chinese porcelain, gold and silver, nautical instruments. The ceramic cargo included 500 blue and white pieces of Chinese porcelain, most of them from Jingdezhen and to be dated into the Wanli period (1573-1620), around 750 storage jars - Chinese, Thai and Burmese, and numbers of Zhangzhou ware, plates, vases and jars, the majority decorated in underglaze cobalt blue. Only three pieces painted in the red and green palette were found.

Excavations on Spanish colonial sites in Mexico, North America and the Caribbean revealed shards of Zhangzhou ware, often together with Kraak ware. Zhangzhou shards were found, for instance, in Panama Viejo, old city of Panama, present day Alabama, USA, dating 1600-1620.

Ref.: National Museum of the Philippines 1993; Shulsky, 1998-99; Crick 2000
The Trade to The Netherlands

The Dutch were relative late participants in the Asian trade. They had served as middle men between Northern and Southern Europa and used their position to make high profits reselling luxury items like porcelain and other exotic goods imported by the Portuguese via Lisbon and Antwerp, where the Dutch visited regularly.

In 1602 they established the powerful Dutch East India Company, Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) as a chartered company, to trade directly with China. The Netherlands became the most dominant maritime traders in Asia in the 17th century.

The VOC had started out looking for the riches of the East, and tried to establish sea routes to the East interfering with the Portuguese monopoly on sailing the route round the Cape of Good Hope, and was granted exclusive trading rights east of the Cape of Good Hope.

In 1595 Cornelis de Houtman (c. 1565-1599) led an expedition round the Cape, which the following year reached the port city of Bantam on the north-west coast of Java, close to the Spice Islands, the Moluccas or Moluccan Islands. The profits were not as high as expected, but it was instrumental to getting direct access.

In 1617, the Dutch seized from the sultan of Bantam (Banten) a small port of nearby Jakarta in Java, and were authorized to trade in Jayakarta, which was renamed Batavia. The town became the regional headquarters of the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, with a central government, the Hoge Regering, which supervised and administered all trade in Asia.

The Dutch had used military power and heavily armed ships to eliminate competition. In order to dominate the maritime trade they repeatedly attacked and looted the ships of the Portuguese and Spaniards and the junks of the Chinese which were loaded with the goods they desired.
Already in 1609, the VOC had opened a factory in Japan in Hirado, near Nagasaki, on the western coast of Kyushu. The Dutch were in competition with the Portuguese, who until then were the only Europeans trading directly with Japan and supplying Chinese goods.

The activities of the VOC lead to the expulsion of the Portuguese and the closure of the country for all Westerners in 1639, sakoku, with the exception of the Dutch, who were allowed to stay because they did no Christian missionary work. The VOC factory was moved in 1641 to Deshima, a small artificial island in Nagasaki harbour, which had originally been built for the Portuguese to separate them from the Japanese population.

The Dutch had not succeeded in getting a trade permit to China. The VOC therefore established in 1624 a trading post in Fort Zeelandia on Formosa, Taiwan, an island not far from Fujian.

In the 1630’s, the civil war in China and finally the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644, affected the export industries of Fujian. A private association of maritime shippers was founded to conduct business, which continued to export Chinese wares to the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Japan and giving support to the Ming.

In the year 1661, the Dutch base on Taiwan was attacked by a son of Zheng Zhilong, Zheng Chenggong (1624-1662), named Koxinga by the Dutch. He had by that time assumed leadership of the association. But the Qing consolidated forces, and Koxinga died in 1662.

When the Dutch gained control of the Moluccas in 1641 and Banten in 1682, they became able to dominate the maritime trade.

**Ceramic Trade**

From the middle of the 16th century, the Jiajing period (1522-1566), the Chinese ceramic trade with its global partners entered a new, vital era. The Southeast Asian city states and their ceramic traders were gradually replaced by the Portuguese, followed by the Dutch, and later the English. As the focus of the ceramic trade shifted from Asia to Europe and the New World, these participants exerted their own tastes and preferences. This period saw the rise of new provincial kiln centres, with the desire to satisfy the tastes of new foreign clients by an enormous variety of wares.

In the ceramic trade the Dutch could make use of the good connections and networks established by the Portuguese and Spaniards. The inter-Asian trade system provided a basis for a network of local trading factories and fortresses. The VOC dominated the ceramic trade in the 17th century, but did not have a monopoly on trade. The Portuguese and English as well as the Indians and the Arabs were also buyers.

The porcelains received from China were recorded by the VOC. Volker (see Volker 1954) estimates, that in the period from 1602 to 1682 about 12 million pieces were transported by the VOC in the inter-island trade.

This does not include ceramics traded by the Portuguese, Spanish, British, Arabs, Thai and Indonesian themselves.

Porcelain for the inter-Asian trade, particularly for Southeast Asia, consisted of fine porcelain, produced in Jingdezhen, and what in Dutch registers is referred to as "grof porselein", "coarse porcelain". Zhangzhou porcelain certainly belonged to the latter type and was one of the many goods used by the VOC as part of the inter-Asian trade.
Volker reports for the 1630’s: “Though the bulk of the porcelain, especially for the home market, was now conveyed from Formosa to Batavia in Dutch ships and Company junks, Chinese junks kept sailing for Batavia direct. Most of the porcelain in their cargoes, however, was of a different variety, the so called “coarse porcelain”, the principal ceramic commodity of the insular trade in those days.

The popularity of coarse porcelain in the archipelago is documented by the records of the VOC.

Three or four junks came to Bantam each year, with a cargo of raw and woven silk, silk thread, and fine and coarse porcelain.

A VOC account of 1608 states, that 150 pieces, 1-4 bundles of coarse porcelain bowls costing 60 florins were shipped to Sukadana on the west coast of the island of Borneo. On September 11, 1617, Cryn van Raemborgh reports that from the vessel Arent, off Jambi, Sumatra, coarse dishes are in demand there. In 1633 and 1634, “the usual junks arrived at Batavia with quantities of coarse porcelain”.

In 1634 the king of Aceh, ruler of a powerful Muslim kingdom, ordered a shipment of coarse porcelain, which in all probability refers to Zhangzhou ware. In 1636 he received the porcelain he had ordered, a total of 120,400 pieces, an amazing number.

Large orders of coarse porcelain continued to be made in the early 1640’s. The VOC ship Van de Graaff, which sailed from Formosa to Batavia in 1640, had a cargo of 33,229 pieces of fine porcelain and 63,570 pieces of coarse porcelain.

In 1641 the dagh registers of the VOC mention for the first time the orders of 300 “red food dishes”. Could this refer to the Zhangzhou red and green wares, what the Japanese called gosu akei?

It is difficult to identify forms and designs of different types of ceramics from material based on commercial documents. Large dishes of the grove porseleinen are mentioned, and that they are traded in the inter-island trade. After 1624, when the Fort Zeelandia was established on Taiwan, the VOC became more interested in the ceramic production for Europe and new markets in Japan as well.

Some of the most splendid dishes from the Princesshof collection stem from this period, the second quarter of the 17th century, when the South of China was still untouched by the collapse of the Ming, and the Dutch had a brief sojourn on independent Taiwan.

Ref.: Volker 1954
Zhangzhou Ware at the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa

The Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, held a central position for maritime trade routes linking Europe with the East. In the 17th century, starting from 1652, it served as a base for the Dutch East India Company, the VOC; later, from 1795, for the British. The base was mainly for planting grains, vegetables and fruit and keeping cattle providing supplies for the ships on their way.

The evidence of Chinese porcelain at the Cape of Good Hope is documented by excavations of colonial sites and shipwrecks.

On these colonial sites large numbers of “grove porseleinen”, many of them Zhangzhou wares, were excavated. It seems that part of the Asiatic trade of the VOC was not shipped to the Netherlands, but was destined for the Cape. Dishes and bowls of the Zhangzhou type seemed to be used as domestic utilitarian wares by the commoners, while “fine” wares made in Jingdezhen were used by the colonial officials.

Apart from excavations a number of shipwrecks carrying Chinese porcelain were salvaged at the Cape, which was dangerous for Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch ships. In 1630, the Portuguese ship Sao Goncalo, returning from Goa, sank on the Cape on the return voyage to Portugal in Plettenberg Bay, while undergoing repairs. Artefacts at the associated camp site included Chinese porcelain of the Kraak and Zhangzhou type.

Ref.: Klose TOCS 57, 1992-93; Klose OCS newsletter 2003; Woodward 1974
The mounted Zhangzhou Plate at Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany

Only very few complete Zhangzhou porcelains are preserved in historical European collections. A beautifully mounted blue and white dish is one of the most splendid pieces of the collections in Schloss Favorite, Rastatt, Germany.

The large plate of blue and white Zhangzhou, of a height of 10.3 cm and a diameter of 42.9 cm, is painted in the center with a standing phoenix, surrounded by peonies and rocks, the border with eight large and eight small panels, filled with sprays and – the narrow ones – with pendant “jewels”. the outline and wash style, with in the center a phoenix in a garden setting with lingzhi, under the rim eight large and eight narrow panels, filled with flowers and auspicious objects, painted in colbalt blue in the “outlines and wash” style.

The dish is mounted on the rim and around the foot ring in gold – and silver, South Germany or Bohemia, ca. 1665-1690.

The dish belonged to the collection of margrave Herman von Baden (1628-1691), and is preserved in Schloss Favorite near Rastatt, Germany, one of the oldest German “Porcelain Palaces”, and one of the very few historical collections of Chinese porcelain collections still housed at its original place. It comprises blue and white , mostly of the Kraak style, Dehua (Blanc de Chine) and Yixing stoneware, a collection of 368 pieces.

The palace itself was probably built around 1710/11 by the margravine Sybilla Augusta von Baden-Baden (1675-1733).

Chinese porcelain at Sybilla Augustas Favorite was “used”. An inventory from the year 1691 mentions together with the plate a ewer, which did not survive. The combination – together with the mounting – suggests, that the plate was used as a lavabo.

Ref.: Grosse 1998
Zhangzhou Ware in Japan

An important market for Zhangzhou wares was Japan. Archaeological finds confirm that blue and white and overglaze enamelled wares were imported to Japan in large numbers during the Momoyama (1568–1615) and the early Edo (1615-1868) periods. The demand for Zhangzhou seems to have been concentrated in metropolitan areas such as Edo, Kyoto, Osaka, and in commercial cities such as Sakai, Nagasaki and Hirado.

Export of Zhangzhou ware to Japan increased at the end of the 16th century. Besides blue and white wares, particularly dishes with panelled Kraak style designs called fuyode in Japan, Zhangzhou dishes and bowls with overglaze designs in dominating red and green, called aka-e in Japanese, seemed to have become very popular.

Some of the excavations can possibly provide a clue for dating. The first appearance of Zhangzhou ware in Japan is documented by excavations of Zhangzhou shards from the Negoro Temple, Iwade, Wakayama. It was burnt down in 1585.

Shards of Zhangzhou ware were found during excavations of Momoyama castles. The Hizen castle was erected by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536/37–1598), the dominant daimyo of the Momoyama period, to launch his invasions of Korea. In 1590, Hideyoshi took residence in his new castle in Osaka and lived there until his death in 1598. The castle was completely destroyed in 1615. The excavated material from the Hizen and Osaka castles include numerous shards of Zhangzhou wares. The blue and white dishes with floral medallions reserved on a scale pattern can be dated into the period around 1600. Shards of the red and green aka-e type were excavated at Osaka sites dated after 1615. It seems that around that time the immense popularity of the imbande design started.

Another clue for dating are the shards of Zhangzhou ware found during the excavations in Sakai city, to be dated before 1615. Blue and white as well as polychrome material came to light.

Sakai during the Momoyama period was a thriving port. It had become rich as the main port in the lucrative trade with China.

Besides Chinese porcelain, the excavations recovered other Southeast Asian ceramics like wares from Vietnam and Thailand.

Zhangzhou ware shards were also recovered from the residence of a priest at the Kofukuji-temple in Nara. It was destroyed by fire in 1642, therefore the Zhangzhou wares must have been imported there prior to this date.
It seems that Zhangzhou ware was highly appreciated in Japan. It appealed not only to the rich merchants of the affluent cities. Representing the aesthetics of spontaneity, imperfection, Zhangzhou ware fitted perfectly into the aesthetics of the sophisticated and eccentric aesthetic conceptions of Japanese tea masters, the arbiters of taste of the Momoyama period.

Ref.: Tokyo National Museum 1975; Kotz 1988; Canepa 2006
The Aesthetic Appreciation of Zhangzhou Ware in Japan

The love and appreciation the Japanese showed for the aesthetics of Zhangzhou ware is reflected in the important collections preserved and the formulation of a special terminology to aesthetically appreciate Zhangzhou ware.

Almost all important Museum collections hold numbers of Zhangzhou ware: The Tokyo National Museum, Kyoto National Museum, the Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka, the Idemitsu Museum, and the Yamato Bunkakan, Nara. The most important collection is in the Seikado Bunko Museum, Tokyo, and the Aichi Prefectural Ceramic Museum, Seto. One of the first publications on Zhangzhou ware was researched and written by the Japanese author Seiichi Okuda in 1933.

The Chinese traditionally created detailed and systematic aesthetic criteria for almost everything in the domain of art or applied art. But there is no terminology for aesthetics or designs of Zhangzhou wares in China. It was the Japanese, who developed terms to relate to the different designs of Zhangzhou.

Zhangzhou ware in Japan was generally referred to as ko-aka-e, “old red decorated ware” or gosu aka-e, “red decorated gosu ware”, ko meaning “old”, aka “red” and e “design” or “picture”. It is believed that this term was used by Japanese tea masters to indicate that these wares originated not in Jingdezhen, but rather in kilns in southern China, which in ancient times were located in what was called the Wu district, gosu in Japanese. That the Japanese referred to the whole group of Zhangzhou ware generally as gosu akae reflects the great appreciation of designs dominated by flaming red. Gosu ao-e wares were mostly featuring blue, designs - aoi in Japanese-, decorated in a combination of underglaze blue and – mostly red and green – enamels. Ceramics glazed in monochrome brown or blue and decorated with white slip were highly appreciated in Japan and called mochibana de -“mochi flower style”. Mochibana is a traditional Japanese sweet made of mochi, white rice cakes, which is tied to willow trees at New Year. Brown glaze with slip was also called kakiji-mochibana- de, referring to the colour of the kaki fruit. And monochromes glazed in blue and decorated with white slip were called aiji-mochibana-de.

The aesthetic terminology of Chinese Zhangzhou by Japanese connoisseurs, relating the colours of their glazes to their origin from Southern China and traditional Japanese customs and fruit, reflects the high appreciation of Zhangzhou wares in Japan.

Ref.: Canepa 206; Stroeber 2013
The Use of Zhangzhou Ware in Japan

Archaeological finds confirm that Zhangzhou ware painted in blue and white and overglaze enamels was exported to Japan in large numbers, starting in the late 16th century. It became highly appreciated during the Momoyama period (1573-1603). During this era, the demand for Zhangzhou porcelain seems to have been concentrated in metropolitan areas such as Edo, Kyoto and Osaka, and in commercial cities such as Sakai, Nagasaki and Hirado. Shards of Zhangzhou ware came to light also in several castles around Japan.

Most Zhangzhou porcelain was imported to Japan via the port of Sakai, near Osaka, a prosperous city with a cultivated elite.

Sen no Rikyu (1522-1591), known as the greatest master of the tea ceremony, was originally a merchant of Sakai. Because of the close relationship of the tea ceremony and Zen Buddhism and because of the prosperity of the citizens, Sakai became one of the main centres of tea ceremony in Japan. It is therefore not surprising, that Zhangzhou wares, available in abundance in Sakai, attracted the attention of the tea masters and were used increasingly for the tea ceremony, chanoyu in Japanese.

In the Japanese tea ceremony, a number of vessels are employed for special purposes. All vessels should blend into a particular kind of aesthetic system creating an atmosphere of naturalness and refined simplicity. What was the fascination for “coarse” Zhangzhou ware in Japan, a culture with a highly sophisticated taste for ceramics? It seems that the free and vigorous, often bold style of decoration in bright colours strongly appealed to the taste of a certain group of aesthetics.

The Japanese tea masters of the Momoyama and early Edo period, the arbiters of taste, were always looking for the most extravagant, eccentric or sophisticated designs, and became therefore attracted by the appeal of Zhangzhou ware, particularly by wares decorated in the palette of red and green enamels, gosu ake in Japanese, and with red roundels in the style of kinrande. Zhangzhou bowls for sweets, small jars and boxes for incense therefore fitted perfectly into the sophisticated aesthetics of the “perfection of imperfect” of the chanoyu.

And there were other uses for large Zhangzhou dishes in Japan in the Momoyama and Edo period: they were used for lavish banquets. Japanese people, like the Chinese, traditionally ate from bowls and small dishes. In
Japan, they were served on individual dining trays. Thus the use of large dishes for dining was not necessary. From the Momoyama period onwards, however, large dishes became popular among the wealthy urban elite. The growing popularity of these dishes during the 16th and 17th century can probably attributed to the world-wide boom of this style of Chinese dishes produced at different kilns. In Jingdezhen, Kraak style porcelain was produced for a western market, but became also popular in Japan; the kilns in Longquan produced large celadon dishes for a Middle East, Southeast Asian and Japanese market, and the kilns of Zhangzhou in Southern China produced large dishes decorated in blue and white and overglaze enamels in bold designs for the Asian and Southeast Asian markets.

Reacting on this international boom in this type of ceramics, Japanese ceramic workshops at Hizen, Seto, Bizen and Shigaraki started their own production of oversized dishes. Looking at genre painting and woodblock prints from the Momoyama and early Edo period, oversized dishes frequently can be seen in depictions of formal gatherings as an important part of vessels used for banqueting. In 17th century Japan it was called teinai yuurakuzu “pleasures in the mansions” and depicted on lavish screens.

Ref.: Idemitsu Museum of Art 1998; Tea
Shipwrecks and the Problem of Dating Zhangzhou Ware

Zhangzhou type wares were made during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) in the area of Zhangzhou, Fujian province. According to most Chinese archaeologists, kilns which produced the Zhangzhou wares, were active in the period from around 1575 to 1650. But it is also discussed if an earlier start of the production already in the Jiajing era (1522-1566) could be possible. The Wanli era (1572-1620) is considered to represent a peak, and the late Ming and early Qing (1644-1911) the decline.

The presence of Zhangzhou ware on shipwrecks from around the middle of the 16th century to the late 17th century would suggest, that production and export of these wares were considerable starting in the Jiajing period to the late Wanli period, from around 1560 to 1620. It declined after the end of the Ming dynasty in 1644.

There are still no criteria to establish a precise timeline for production. Shipwrecks, often considered to help more precise dating, would fail or be too vague in the case of Zhangzhou wares. The load of the San Isidro (mid 16th century) contained also pieces decorated with late 15th century patterns from Jingdezhen. Zhangzhou wares on the San Diego (1600) and later shipwrecks like the Binh Thuan (ca.1608), the Witte Leeuw (1613) and the Hatcher Cargo (1643-1646) were of the blue and white type with outlines and filled with wash. No precise development or evolution of shapes or styles appeared so far.

However, it is evident, that the shipwreck ceramic evidence is only a small piece of the puzzle and that more research should be carried on. Nevertheless, the recoveries on shipwrecks have added to a growing body of reference collections that could help in the construction of a more accurate typology of this type of export ware.

Nan Ao No. 1, 1560-1580
The Nan Ao shipwreck no. 1 was located in the sea off Shantou, Guangdong province. It was salvaged in 2010. The wreck consisted mainly of Zhangzhou blue and white ware and a small quantity of Jingdezhen blue and white.

The Nan Ao shipwreck is dated 1560-1580, end of the Jiajing period (1522-1566) to early Wanli (1573-1620). A blue and white bowl in typical Jiajing design has a Jiajing mark Da Ming Jiajing nian zhi (Made in the Jiajing period of the great Ming), and a bowl has a fu gui jia qi (Excellent Wares for the Wealthy Nobility) mark, also typical for the Jiajing period.

The blue and white Zhangzhou ware salvaged from the Nan Ao are of the type decorated in “sketchy decoration”, calligraphic strokes in a free and spontaneous way, not of the outline and wash decoration.

Huiqing, imported cobalt, was used for the decoration, showing a purplish tone when used together with local cobalt. Officially, there was a ban on foreign cobalt for the minyao, the private kilns. However, it must have been available to Chinese minyao in the Jiajing period.

San Isidro, mid 16th century
Another known wreck with early Zhangzhou blue and white wares is the San Isidro. The San Isidro was discovered near the coast of Zambales in the Luzon Island of the Philippines in 1994. It contained a cargo of mostly blue and white from China as well as stoneware jars and iron bars. The majority of the blue and white belonged to the Zhangzhou type: dishes, saucers, bowls, jars and boxes.

A Vietnamese box and two Thai jarlets were also found.
It was argued that the wreck could be a “retailer” type, a vessel transporting cargo from bigger trading vessels such as Chinese junks that cannot dock on shore, directly to the land-based traders. Most pieces from the San Isidro are preserved in the National Museum of the Philippines, Manila.

Ref.: Goddio 1997; Cuevas 1997; Tan 2007

San Felipe, 1576
The San Felipe sailed from Manila and was wrecked off the west coast of Mexico. The 600 shards found in 1999–2000 suggest experimentation by the despatching Chinese merchants, not yet sure of Spanish tastes. It carried some Zhangzhou ware with decoration in “sketchy decoration” of the calligraphic style.

San Diego, 1600
The San Diego was a Spanish warship which sunk during the battle with the Dutch vessel Mauritius in December 14th, 1600, off the coast of Batangas province, in the south western part of Luzon, Philippines. More than 34 000 objects were recovered, among them ceramics, armours, silver coins, gold objects and navigational objects. Of Chinese porcelain more than 5000 pieces were found, of the Kraak and Zhangzhou type wares.

The Zhangzhou wares consisted mainly of the blue and white type, dishes, plates, bowl, jars, jarlets and boxes. The designs consisted mostly of animals, painted in the outline and wash technique of the “composed decorations”, and show a closer similarity to the designs of contemporary Kraak ware made in Jingdezhen than the Zhangzhou pieces painted in calligraphic style discovered on earlier shipwrecks. Three pieces are painted in the palette of red and green overglaze enamels.

 Besides Zhangzhou and Kraak wares, more than 750 stoneware jars made in China, Thailand and Burma were also found on the San Diego.

Ref.: Desroches and Goddio 1994; Crick 2000; Tan 2007

Bin Thuan, first decade 17th century
The Bin Thuan was found 2001 off the coast of Bin Thuan province, Vietnam. More than 60 000 artefacts were recovered, among them numerous pieces of Zhangzhou wares of different decorative types: painted in cobalt blue, overglaze enamels and a combination of both.

Nearly 20 000 pieces of blue and white Zhangzhou ware was found, dishes, plates, bowls, jars and boxes. Most of the designs, typically painted in the “composed decoration” of the outline and wash technique, have a central motif, encircled by a panelled border. The decorative motifs include phoenix, deer under pine trees, cranes above rocks and waves and ducks in a lotus pond and chrysanthemum- motifs also used on Kraak porcelain made in Jingdezhen.

The Bin Thuan could be dated into the first decade of the 17th century. An archival reverence to the VOC representative in Johore, written on the 21st of July 1608, mentions, that “I Sin Ho, the Chinese merchant, while returning with his junk to Johore was lost somewhere about Cambodia”. It is not possible to identify the Bin Thuan shipwreck as being the junk of I Sin Ho that sank off Southern Vietnam, but the date of the porcelain cargo and the geographical location coincides with the Chinese junk.

Ref.: Flecker 2002-2003; Canepa 2006

Witte Leeuw 1613
The VOC ship Witte Leeuw, returning from Bantam to the Netherlands in 1613 with 1,311 diamonds, a sapphire from the king of Arakan, spices and Chinese Ming porcelain, exploded and sank at St. Helena after attacking two Portuguese carracks anchored on the island of St. Helena. It was discovered in 1976.
The diamonds were gone, but the 300 pieces of Chinese porcelain and 300 – 400 kg of shards were salvaged. The porcelain cargo included Kraak ware, a few fine wares from Jingdezhen and numbers of Zhangzhou ware, all painted in cobalt blue. The motifs vary, but almost all are in the decorative style of Kraak ware, with a centre and a panelled rim and executed in the outline and wash technique.

Comparable Zhangzhou wares have been found on several VOC ships like the Mauritius, which sank in 1608, and the Banda, which sank in 1615.

Ref.: Van der Pijl-Ketel 1982

**Sao Gonzalo, 1630**

The Sao Gonzalo was a Portuguese ship that sank in 1630, while undergoing repairs, near Port Elizabeth, in the Plattenberg Bay on the south coast of South Africa, on a return journey to Portugal from Goa.

The shipwreck is known to lie somewhere on the bottom of Plattenberg Bay, but has never been found. However, Kraak porcelain and ware of the Zhangzhou type were discovered during excavations of a campsite near the coast in 1980. The camp has been built by the survivors of the shipwreck.

Ref.: Canepa 2006

**Hatcher Cargo, 1640’s; Vung Tao, 1680’s**

The Hatcher Cargo, a shipwreck dated into the 1640th, carried Zhangzhou ware only in small quantities. The Zhangzhou type found on the Vung Tau, dated into the 1680th, were even fewer, a confirmation of the decline of the Zhangzhou kilns.

Ref.: Sheaf and Kilburn 1988; Joerg and Flecker 2001
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