

80. IMPRESSED BOWL

Tran dynasty, 14th century

Stoneware, H: 6.4 cm × D: 14 cm

Viet Nam National Fine Arts Museum, 3933-G2 1167

The term "green wares" (or, in the past, celadon) is applied to a group of high-fired, green-glazed stoneware or porcelainous stoneware. To achieve the green color, wood-ash glaze is mixed with clay and 2 to 5 percent iron, then fired in a reduction (low-oxygen) atmosphere. The potter regulates the oxygen by closing the kiln's intake ports at a precise internal temperature, which is determined by observing the degree of incandescence within the kiln through a peephole. This technique results in a wide range of the color green.

Vietnamese celadons tend to be either olive or a pale straw color, rarely exhibiting the unctuous quality characteristic of Chinese *longquan* ceramics that is achieved through bubbles in the glaze that scatter light.¹⁰ This vessel, however, has a glaze that is thicker and closer to the *longquan* wares than most, and the form of the vessel and decoration descends directly from that tradition.

The exterior has a lotus-petal design, a popular motif for these ceramics, and the interior, a floral motif. Instead of the daub or covering of iron oxide painted on the base of Vietnamese ceramics during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, one unusual feature of this bowl is the inscription in Chinese characters that reads "man mountain." The significance of the inscription remains obscure; it may just be a whim of the artist.

LITERATURE

Bich Nguyen, *An Artistic Collection of Vietnamese Ceramics* (Viet Nam National Fine Arts Museum, n.d.).

