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# Asian Art & Culture

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As the plane from Bangkok descended through a low, late-autumn cloud cover, the rural landscape of northern Vietnam came into view. For the first time I saw contours and colors to replace flat black-and-white newsprint images. Scattered across a broad plain, square farmhouses built of whitewashed bricks with red tile roofs enclosed interior courtyards. Green fields full of winter crops alternated with brown harvested ones, and countless small round ponds reflected the gray of the sky. I commented on the ponds—like scattered pearls—and was enlightened by my seat-mate: “Those are bomb craters.”

That landscape—and its suddenly altered meaning—was prophetic of what I was to learn on the three-week study trip to northern Vietnam. The Institute of

Ethnology in Hanoi, part of the National Institute for Social Sciences of Vietnam, had invited me to visit Vietnam to study ce-

ramic production. But of course I harbored, in addition to scholarly questions about historical and present-day pottery, anxious curiosity about what it would be like simply to find myself *there*. The vision from the airplane window would take on added significance during a visit to a large pottery-making community whose former mainstays of jars and jugs had been replaced almost entirely by bricks and roof tiles, for which a voracious demand existed as people built or rebuilt homes. (The facades of the new houses proudly bore, in foot-high letters, their dates of construction.) Formerly the potters had dug clay from beneath the rice paddies, but bomb craters, blasted several meters into the earth, had revealed a deeper-lying stratum of clay that enabled them to expand their production.

My guide in the introductory exploration of Vietnamese ceramic production was Dr. Diep Dinh Hoa, an archaeologist attached to the Institute of Ethnology whose interest in ethnoarchaeology had led him to conduct numerous studies of ceramic production during his thirty-year career. He prepared an itinerary and traveled with me to museums and research institutes in Hanoi and surrounding cities, to towns where ceramic production took place, and to villages where utilitarian pots still played a traditional role in household and farming activities. Dr. Hoa spoke English, French, Russian, and Chinese, but our interpreter, Nguyen Thanh Son, also played a key role in giving voice and meaning to what we saw. He was a university-educated “city kid” who himself was learning for the first time about *gom* (pottery), and he diligently kept a growing vocabulary list in his notebook, as I did in mine.

During our first days together at the institute, Dr. Hoa gave me an intensive tutorial on ceramics in Vietnam. He challenged the conventional image of a single “Vietnamese” pottery that has been introduced to the English-reading public over

## In Search of Ceramics in Vietnam

■ Figure 1. Jar, Vietnam, Later Le dynasty, 15th century. White clay, cobalt decoration under colorless glaze, iron slip on base; 37.0 x 23.5 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, 1992.12. Purchase—Friends of Asian Arts and the Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program. This jar bears decorations of mythical lionlike beasts, peony scrolls, and lotus-petal panels. Its execution is close in style to decor of a bottle dated to 1450, now in the Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul. This jar was also exported from Vietnam and was found in Indonesia.

the past two decades through a series of publications and exhibitions. That sequence of historical wares, spanning the eleventh through seventeenth century, is a succession of ivory-glazed ware with brown iron decoration; plain green-, brown-, and white-glazed wares; and pieces with decoration painted with iron or, later, cobalt (figs. 1–4). Most such wares are formed from fine-grained, grayish-white clay, and many have a “chocolate foot”—a coating of iron slip inside the foot ring. Strictly speaking, that series represents only the fine-quality glazed ceramic production sponsored by the ethnic Vietnamese, who call themselves Kinh.<sup>1</sup> But the borders of the modern nation of Vietnam enclose members of fifty-three other ethnic groups as well, some of whom still produce distinctive varieties of earthenware and stoneware. Moreover, in addition to fine glazed ceramics, Kinh potters also produced unglazed or roughly glazed utilitarian pottery for cooking and storage. Finally, Chinese ceramics have long occupied a position of esteem within the total range of ceramics in use. Even now, the ritual cup of tea or coffee offered at the outset of every formal meeting is likely to appear in a petite, floral-painted porcelain cup made somewhere in southern China.

As an archaeologist, Dr. Hoa was interested in the full scope of ceramics produced and used within Vietnam. Drawing on fieldwork conducted throughout the length of the country, he sketched out a landscape of diverse techniques, specialized products, and complex market interactions. He had observed Cham potters in central Vietnam (former locus of the Cham kingdom) and Khmer artisans in the south. Some potters made porous earthenware, suitable for cooking over wood fires, while other groups produced nonporous stoneware storage jars. For example, he told of potters of Tay ethnicity in one village in central Vietnam who specialized in small earthenware pots used for cooking rice and reeling silk; they used the cash realized

from selling their pots to buy large stoneware water jars made by Kinh potters working nearby. Later, in the ethnographic galleries of the Museum of Fine Arts in Hanoi, he pointed out a range of utilitarian jars and bottles made of unglazed gray or ruddy clay or glazed in olive green or brown, identifying them by province, ethnic group, and purpose. Whether slender or stout, their forms had evolved over centuries to become just right for holding wine or fish sauce, tea or medicine, salt or fat. They seemed to belong to that cultivated rural landscape I had seen from the air, and I longed to know more about them.

Finally, during those first days, we determined our itinerary of visits to museums, archaeological sites, and pottery-producing areas. All visits depended on permission from provincial and local authorities, which had to be

■ Figure 2. Bowl, Vietnam, Later Le dynasty, 16th–early 17th century. Off-white clay, cobalt decoration under colorless glaze, iron slip inside foot; 10.4 x 13.2 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, 02.13. This bowl, probably made at one of the pottery centers in the Red River Delta, was exported to Japan, where tea drinking over several centuries stained and darkened the body and glaze, and gold lacquer was used to repair chips and cracks.



■ Figure 3. Ewer, Vietnam, Ly or Tran dynasty, 12th-13th century. Off-white clay, incised, molded, and applied decoration under pale green glaze; 17.9 x 17.1 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, 1992.31. This ewer represents the high-temperature green-glazed ceramics of Vietnam that are becoming the focus of greater scholarly attention. The rounded handle and molded spout in the shape of an abstract bird's head are typical of such ewers.



■ Figure 4. Pillow, Vietnam, Ly or Tran dynasty, 13th-14th century. Off-white clay, iron decoration under underfired, nearly opaque white glaze, iron slip on base; 9.8 x 12.1 x 16.7 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, 1985.37, gift of Dean Frasc . Iron decoration under a colorless or pale green glaze appears on many Vietnamese ceramics dating from the twelfth to nineteenth century, after which it was replaced in popularity by cobalt. This pillow in the shape of a tortoise is said to have been discovered in the site of an old monastery in Bangkok.



obtained in advance. Travel to the large pottery-manufacturing town of Bat Trang had already been arranged, since Dr. Hoa knew I would be interested in seeing the cobalt-decorated porcelain that represented the current phase of a long history. He had not anticipated my intense curiosity about the community of Huong Canh, in Vinh Phu Province, which he had described as making unglazed brown jars used, among other things, for pickling pork or mustard greens. The Huong Canh jars that he showed me from his own collection bore vertical ribbing that gave a corduroylike texture to the plain cylindrical forms. That distinctive texture suggested a possible answer to a long-standing mystery in the study of ceramics in Japan. Similar jars had entered Japan in the sixteenth century and

become important as tea ceremony utensils, but Japanese collectors were unaware of their origins and knew them only as *namban*, or “southern barbarian” wares; could they have come from a kiln somewhere in northern Vietnam? I hoped that arrangements could be made in time to permit an investigation. Meanwhile, we set out on other visits.

## CHU DAU

The highway heading southeast from Hanoi toward Hai Duong, the capital of Hai Hung Province, cut across the flat land of the Red River Delta. As we would learn from the displays in the newly rebuilt provincial museum, this fertile area with its network of rivers leading to the coast has long supported pottery production and trade as well as farming. The museum’s collection included two massive jars—one of white Thanh Hoa ware with brown iron decoration, one of unglazed brown stoneware—that had been excavated from tombs in an old market town. Both jars were found full of Chinese *qingbai* (bluish white) and cobalt-decorated porcelain and Longquan-type stoneware dating to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, together with Vietnamese white-glazed pottery of similar date—someone’s proud possessions amassed through direct or indirect association with a lucrative international trade.

Moreover, the museum cases also held evidence—in the form of ceramic shards excavated within the nearby village of Chu Dau—that one important trade item had been manufactured locally. Distinctive cobalt-decorated Vietnamese pottery has been found in collections and sites as far-flung as Turkey, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia (see fig. 1), and Japan (see fig. 2), but the first evidence that allowed

scholars to identify a site within Vietnam for its production came from the village of Chu Dau, in Nam Sach district.<sup>2</sup> A clue had been provided by a famous Vietnamese bottle in the collection of the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul, Turkey: around the bottle’s shoulder ran an inscription declaring the cobalt decoration to be the work of a potter from Nam Sach district in the year 1450.<sup>3</sup>

Excavations conducted by Vietnamese and Australian archaeologists in the 1980s, after Chu Dau villagers had reported finds of shards, demonstrated convincingly that blue-and-white plates,

■ Figure 5. The newly dedicated museum in Chu Dau, a village in the Red River Delta that produced glazed ceramics





■ Figure 6. A Chu Dau villager holding a fragment of a fifteenth-century green-glazed stem bowl found on the path

bowls, and covered boxes of the sort found along the international sea trade route had been made in Chu Dau. Of particular interest was the discovery, alongside those wares, of a range of other glazed wares, including brown, green, and white high-temperature monochrome glazes as well as “apple-green” lead glaze tinted with copper. Some bowls combined green or brown glaze on the outside with cobalt decoration on the interior. The excavators even found some unglazed stonewares of the *namban* type. These shards suggested the diversity of production at a single site.

A variety of firing procedures was indicated by the discovery of saggars (coarse clay containers used to protect glazed ceramics from kiln debris during firing) and both multipointed setting disks used to support individual glazed pieces and flat rings used to separate stacks of glazed pieces. When glazed pieces were fired in stacks, a ring of glaze was cut or wiped away from the center of each bowl to provide a resting place for the foot ring of the bowl above it. Individual firing is thought to predate firing in stacks. This preliminary evidence suggests that Chu Dau was active over several centuries and produced a wide range of wares for both local use and export.

When we drove across the Tai Ping River and into the village of Chu Dau, we were led by village officials to a small rectangular building facing a pond at the center of the village (fig. 5). As we approached, followed by a friendly crowd of villagers, we noticed that the whitewash was sparkling white and the laying of the roof tiles was still in process. Red letters across the facade read “10-10-1990.” Inside, speeches of welcome by the officials delivered over cups of tea explained that the old building had just been refurbished and rededicated (on October 10, Ho Chi Minh’s birthday) as the site museum for Chu Dau ceramics, and we were the first foreign visitors.

No displays were yet on view in the museum, but the village itself offered ample evidence of pottery production in the past. Shards lay underfoot everywhere, and one man obligingly dug out of a rain-abraded dirt path a fragment of a green-glazed stem bowl (fig. 6). The present-day village, which no longer produces ceramics, would appear to be built right on top of the old kilns, workshops, and rubbish heaps; the recent series of excavations had been carried on in villagers’ gardens and alongside ponds.

Back at the museum, the staff opened the door of the storeroom to reveal tiers of shelves stacked with excavated shards. Striking was the range of green-glazed wares,



which have not yet been identified in large quantities in overseas excavations (perhaps for lack of knowledge of their existence). Some thick-walled bowls bore hand-carved lotus motifs in the center of the interior and had been fired one at a time in saggars. A misfired stack of twenty shallow bowls from a site called Pho Hien had been stuck together by the thin green glaze that was applied over a white slip concealing the gray body; inside the unglazed ring of the uppermost bowl, iron had been used to paint a simple flower design. The whole stack had rested on a thick clay ring inside a tall sagger.

According to the evidence gathered by a series of excavations, Chu Dau was just one of at least half a dozen pottery-producing centers, including Cay, Ngoi, Hop Le, and Pho Hien, located along the riverine network in the delta.<sup>4</sup> The rivers were the key to bringing in raw materials and sending finished products out to the coastal ports. Cay is still active as a production center; both its clay and its firewood come from a great distance away on the far side of Chu Dau. Local lore holds that Chu Dau ceased production about three hundred years ago, when its potters moved north to Bat Trang.

## BAT TRANG

Hanoi became the capital city of the independent kingdom of Vietnam in 1010. Just fifteen kilometers from Hanoi, the town of Bat Trang has been a major production center of ceramics for both domestic use and export since the fifteenth century at the latest. Today it is a town of about one thousand households, and more than three thousand adults are active as skilled workers in the ceramics industry.

When we reached the town about nine one morning, noisy, energetic activity engulfed us. The narrow streets, lined on both sides by the high walls of workshop compounds, were crowded with people in brisk motion, carrying pots in varying stages of completion on boards balanced on shoulders or in pairs of baskets suspended from shoulder poles, wheeling bicycles adapted with wooden frames to carry baskets, or leading pony carts full of clay or coal (fig. 7). Coal, we learned, was the main fuel in the present day: ground into powder, it was mixed with clay and formed into

■ Figure 7. A busy lane in the pottery-producing town of Bat Trang





■ Figure 8. A gateway to a pottery workshop in Bat Trang supporting a bundle of firewood. On the walls are dry cakes of coal dust mixed with clay, used as fuel in the kilns.

■ Figure 9. Broken bowls providing a protective edge on a wall in Bat Trang

■ Figure 10. The roofs of coal-burning kilns rising above workshop roofs and courtyards in Bat Trang

flat cakes that were stuck onto any available wall to dry. (Scarce and costly wood was used only to start the fire.) The whitewashed walls of houses and workshops had long since turned black through repeated applications of these fuel cakes, and the unpaved lanes were blackened as well, providing a striking contrast to the town's gleaming white product (figs. 8, 9). Towering above the walls, gates, and



■ Figure 11. Independent salesmen, who will take the pots they buy from Bat Trang workshops by bicycle to sell in distant markets



rooftops were tall, narrow rectangular kilns built of brick with tile roofs, in which the coal cakes were used to fire stacks of saggars containing the wares (fig. 10).

On one corner we came across a cluster of men wearing olive green pith helmets, busily engaged in packing straw-wrapped porcelains into bamboo baskets attached to the carrying racks of their bicycles (fig. 11). Chatting with them, we learned that they were the means by which much Bat Trang porcelain reached local markets. They bought wares direct from workshop owners and pedaled them to their chosen destinations, sometimes even taking their bicycles by truck to a distant city. One young man who had been selling Bat Trang pots for five years explained, “People here are well off because of this business. We wear old clothes, but we have money in our pockets. People in Hanoi dress well, but they have no money.” Son laughed wryly as he translated.

We ducked through a gateway into the courtyard of one workshop to learn more about the manufacturing process. The workshop was completing an order of delicately fluted small pitchers that were to be sent to Algeria (fig. 12). The shapes had been formed by slip casting in plaster molds, but their decoration of grapevine motifs was painted by hand. The decorators, all young women and men with sharp eyesight, sat on both sides of a long table in one room of the workshop, dipping their brushes (fabricated from old ballpoint pen cases) into dishes of artificial cobalt pigment (fig. 13). Each pitcher would sell for two thousand *dong*—about thirty cents. There were thousands of them in all stages of completion around the workshop premises.

Dr. Hoa knew Bat Trang well. He led us through the maze of streets down to

■ Figure 12. A woman in a Bat Trang workshop sorting cobalt-decorated pitchers



■ Figure 13. Decorators in a Bat Trang workshop

the riverbank, where narrow boats were unloading clay and coal, through a small gate, and across a courtyard filled with potted plants. The quiet, old-fashioned house belonged to his friend Tran Van Ngan, a retired secondary-school teacher who was also the seventeenth generation of an old family of Bat Trang kiln owners. Between leisurely draws on a water pipe, Mr. Ngan narrated the history of Bat Trang, whose name means “place for bowls.” Since the start of pottery production in the fifteenth century, people in Bat Trang had been born to be potters and learned about ceramics while

still in the womb. “We make pots out of our own desire, not because of anyone’s order,” Mr. Ngan observed.

Before the coal-fired kilns came into use around 1970, the usual Bat Trang kiln had been a long, low multichambered brick structure.<sup>5</sup> The wood used as fuel was stoked through openings in the top of each chamber, and the firing specialists wore special wooden clogs for walking on the hot roofs. The stokers were employed by the kiln owners, who relied on their expertise and took special care of them before each firing, hosting a lavish feast for the men and their families that was said to be

second only to the feast held at a funeral. The old Bat Trang kilns had made beautiful green glaze and crackled white “mutton-fat” glaze that the coal-burning kilns cannot produce. Bat Trang kilns had also fired the tiles for the floors of the royal tombs in Hue.

At lunchtime we stopped for a bowl of noodles in a small restaurant. The cups of reddish, fragrant tea that accompanied the noodles were refreshing but unfamiliar, and we asked what the beverage was. Dr. Hoa explained that it was a special tea made from the buds and flowers of the tea plant. Such tea was drunk only in Bat Trang, to quench the great thirst of the kiln-firing specialists.

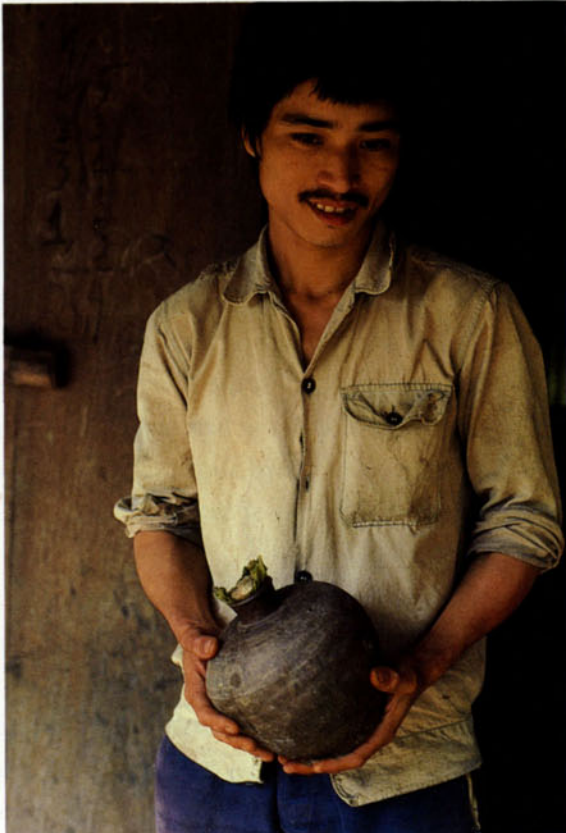
## HUONG CANH

On our various excursions we kept encountering examples of unglazed brown stoneware, and my thoughts kept returning to Huong Canh. The newly refurbished displays of the Bac Thai Provincial Museum included a case full of Huong Canh products and potters’ tools, and more vessels were in storage. The museum showcased the cultures of the ethnic minorities of northern Vietnam. Huong Canh products that served minority customs included a drum body (used by the San Chai

ethnic group in Ha Tuyen Province, along the Chinese border) and a vat in which rice was fermented into wine and then sipped through straws (used by Tai-speaking minorities, among others).

In Bac Thai Province, we spent an afternoon in a village occupied by both Tay and Kinh. When the community headman, a Kinh, wanted to serve us tea, his son brought out the tea leaves in a small brown jar plugged with paper (fig. 14). In the traditional home of one elderly Tay woman, built on stilts and reached by a ladder, another jar of the same shape stored fish sauce, a basic condiment. We asked about the other pots arrayed around the large single room of her home. Unglazed brown pots of various shapes and sizes were used to hold drinking water; to store rice, salt, and pickles; for washing; to cook vegetables or fish; to collect scraps for feeding the pigs; as a chamber pot. All were products of a pottery that had formerly sold its wares in the nearest market town but that no longer operated. A few porcelain bowls, “for rice and soup,” were stored on a bamboo shelf against one wall, and some others served as lids for jars. In various markets we saw another important shape made in unglazed stoneware, the coffin (fig.

■ Figure 14. A plain brown stoneware jar holding tea leaves for village hospitality





■ Figure 15. Rectangular clay coffins for sale in a market

■ Figure 16. Freshly formed roof tiles drying on top of a wall in Huong Canh that also holds drying cakes of coal. Propped on top of the wall are discarded brown jars, the former mainstay of Huong Canh production.



15). Shaped either as a rectangular lidded box or as a covered jar, this vessel was required by Buddhist practice in northern Vietnam for secondary burial of the bones, which were collected, washed, and reburied three years after the first burial.

Finally, just a few days before I was due to leave, the message came that permission to visit Huong Canh had been granted. To reach the town, we drove almost fifty kilometers to the northwest along a narrow highway lined with new brick houses and crowded with trucks, buses, motorcycles, and bicycles. As we

entered Huong Canh, piles of bricks and roof tiles (each stamped with the name “Huong Canh”) stood beside the road; in the distance, on the far side of a canal, walls and roofs of pottery workshops crowded together and freshly formed roof tiles lay drying in the sun. To my surprise, there were no jars in sight.

The commune office, where we drank tea and learned basic information about the town, was located in a beautiful century-old building, with an ornamented plaster facade and carved ceiling beams, that had been first a landlord’s house, then a French garrison headquarters. Of the population of about ten thousand, two-thirds were farmers and one-third potters, although several hundred people now worked in Hanoi. The brown vessels that I sought once had been the

mainstay of production, although roof tiles had also been made since sometime in the last century. As the result of recent changes in national economic policy, the decision-making process on what to produce had been transferred from the commune to the individual workshops; in response to market demand, production had shifted overwhelmingly from vessels to roof tiles and bricks. The cast-iron hand-operated presses that stamped out thousands of tiles per day impressed the name “Huong Canh” on each one to develop customer loyalty (fig. 16). Only one or



春山芳草地  
黃花酒  
白雲

■ Figure 17 (left). Giang Van Tu of Huong Canh holding a wine ewer he decorated in 1980

■ Figure 18 (right). Hau Noi, ancestral deity of Huong Canh potters. Offerings of food and incense were left by kiln owners praying for successful firings.

■ Figure 19 (below). Tran Thi Quy of Huong Canh demonstrating the use of a split-bamboo tool that leaves ribbed markings as it compresses the wall of a large jar. This work is usually done by men.

two households still made the vessels we had come in search of.

One man whose lifelong work had been involved with Huong Canh pots was Giang Van Tu, aged eighty-two (fig. 17). At the age of seven he had begun working as clay preparer, pot decorator, and kiln firer in various Huong Canh workshops (other specialists formed the pots). He moved from shop to shop as work schedules required, receiving payment after each kiln firing as well as extra gifts from the kiln owners at Tet, the Vietnamese New Year.

The New Year was also the occasion when Huong Canh potters honored the potter ancestor, Hau Noi (fig. 18). On the sixth day of Tet, people brought flowers and food offerings in procession to the small whitewashed shrine building next to the Buddhist temple. Kiln owners also visited the shrine before a kiln firing to pray for success.

Tran Thi Quy, aged forty-two, was described by her husband as “the last person in the district—no, in the whole province—who makes jars.”<sup>6</sup> (Dr. Hoa, who had noted at least fifty workshops making jars on his last visit to Huong Canh in 1988, was shocked by the rapid shift to roof tiles.) The workshop used by Mrs. Quy’s family was one of a row of small buildings that backed onto a large pond created by past excavations for clay. She had been taught by her father to work on the “sitting wheel” set into a depression in the workshop floor and used to throw small shapes. She crouched on her heels in front of the wheel while her daughter, aged twelve, spun the wheel by kicking it with her right foot. Mrs. Quy also knew how to use the “standing wheel,” set on a post, for coiling and throwing large vessel shapes that her husband then finished. Watching her husband at work, I finally understood the reason for the corduroylike texture on Huong Canh pots. The closely spaced vertical marks were left by the tool—a section of bamboo, split lengthwise—that “skipped” as he dragged it around the cylindrical containers to smooth and compress the walls (fig. 19).





## DIVERSITY

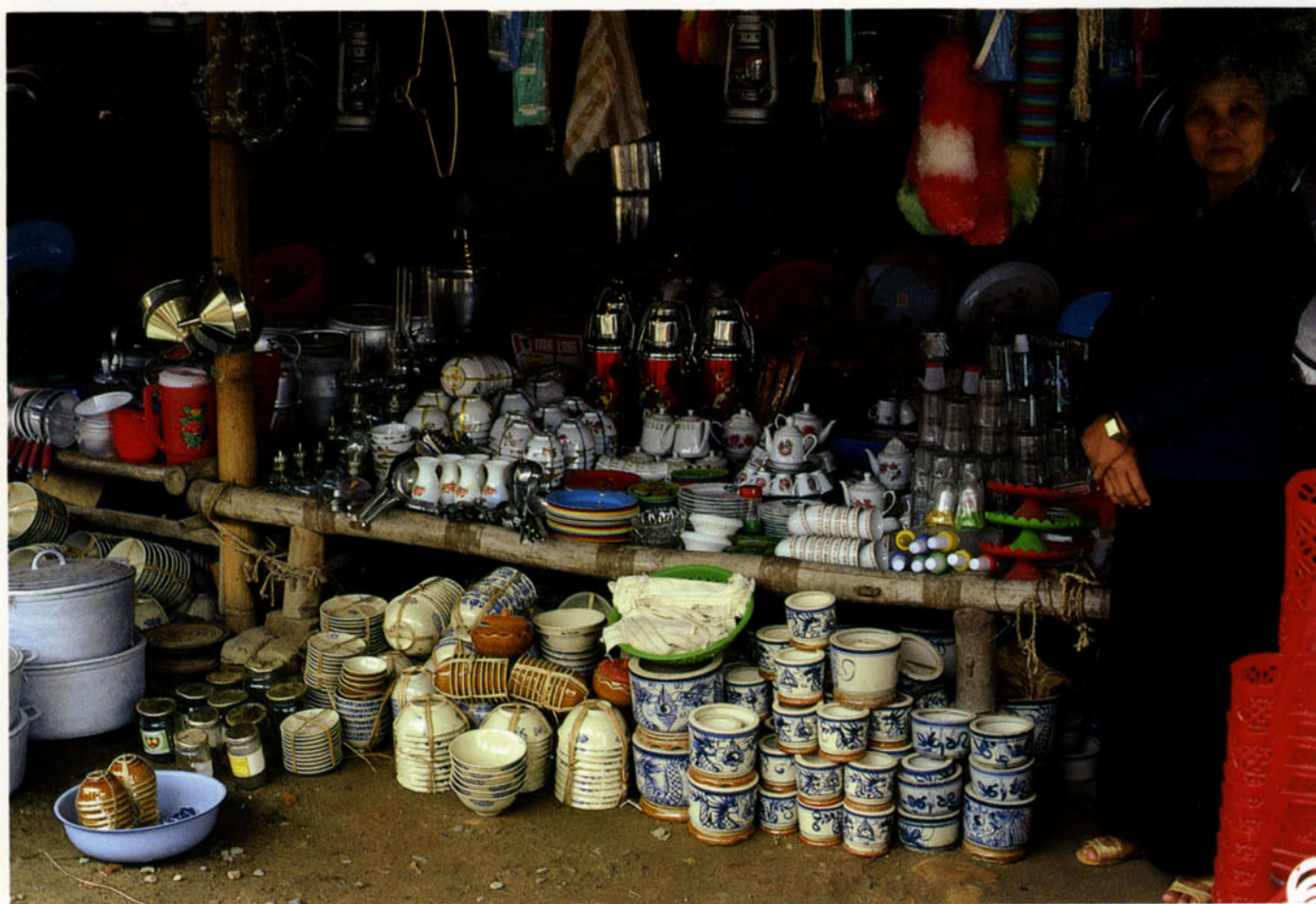
By the end of the brief three weeks, a thick notebook and numerous rolls of film confirmed my impression of great diversity in the historical uses and contemporary production of ceramics in Vietnam. Although Huong Canh potters were actively switching from jars to roof tiles in pursuit of the most lucrative market, varieties of utilitarian jars were still made at other centers and were to be seen in every market (fig. 20). By the side of the road in the town of Lang Son, on the border with the Chinese province of Guangxi, I even saw stacks of large and small brown-glazed jars from Tho Ha, in Ha Bac Province, a full day's ride to the south; they were going to be carried across the border to be sold in the nearest Chinese market. Coming the other way in the steady stream of unofficial cross-border trade were cheap mold-formed porcelains that competed with the products of Bat Trang (fig. 21). Everywhere on the highways we saw young men with baskets full of pots strapped to their bicycles—independent entrepreneurs heading to their chosen markets.

I had to leave unexplored many current production centers described by Dr. Hoa. One that particularly intrigued me was Phu Lang in Ha Bac Province, which made storage jars partially glazed with iron slip applied carelessly to the vessel shoulders so that it ran down the body in teardrop-shaped streaks. In Dr. Hoa's estimation, "Those potters get a grade of zero for skill but a ten for art!"

I also admired the energy and diligence of the scholars I met at the Museum of History and the Institute of Archaeology in Hanoi. Although facilities for publication were meager, they continued writing studies and excavation reports. They

■ Figure 20. Brown-glazed storage pots for sale in a market





■ Figure 21. Chinese porcelain teapots and teacups and Bat Trang bowls and incense burners in a market stall

were also actively seeking funding for collaborative surveys and excavations of key sites; so far, Australian and Japanese collaborative projects were under way. The understanding of Vietnam's historical production of ceramics and its role in the international ceramics trade in East and Southeast Asia is still in a rudimentary stage, but it is poised for exciting development.

The customs inspectors at the airport laughed when they saw that the bundle of dirty clothes in my suitcase cradled a brown-glazed stoneware jar from Tho Ha—bought from that stack in Lang Son. As my souvenir of my brief visit to Vietnam, that jar stood for countless potters, pots, markets, and village kitchens. As I looked down from the window of the departing airplane on those red roof tiles, I imagined that each one was stamped with the logo of a busy workshop in Huong Canh, watched over by the god of potters. ■

## NOTES

1. These ceramics have often been called "Annamese" after the name, meaning "pacified south," used by the Chinese to designate a portion of northern Vietnam that was sometimes under Chinese control. "Vietnamese" is the term preferred by Vietnamese scholars.
2. The discovery was announced in Ha Thuc Can and Nguyen Bich, "Discovery of the Chu Dau Kiln," *Arts of Asia* 19, no. 3 (May/June 1989): 116–21.
3. This famous bottle is illustrated and discussed in Roxanna M. Brown, *The Ceramics of South-East Asia: Their Dating and Identification*, 2d ed. (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 28, pl. x; John Guy, *Ceramic Traditions of South-East Asia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 48–49.
4. A map of the sites appears in Aoyagi Yoji et al., "Archaeological Research of Old Kiln Sites in Vietnam—Preliminary Report," *Journal of East-West Maritime Relations* 2 (1992): fig. 5.
5. In 1933 another type of kiln—a Chinese-style, multichambered "dragon" kiln—was introduced to Bat Trang from another pottery center close to the Chinese border, but like the local kiln it consumed large quantities of firewood. The one "dragon" kiln we noticed was no longer in use.
6. Dr. Hoa explained that within almost all ethnic groups, including the Kinh, potters were usually women. Men customarily worked at other stages of production, including firing; only recently had they become involved in making pots, due in part to the influence of the art schools established by the French.

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Tran, Khanh Chuong. "Ceramic Kilning in Vietnam." *Vietnamese Studies* (Hanoi), n.s., no. 16 (1987): 88–114.

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