

Song Dynasty Jizhou Temmoku

from
the Philippine Archipelago



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TEMMOKU FOUND IN THE PHILIPPINES: JIZHOU TEABOWLS

During the Song and Yuan Dynasties in China (10th-14th Century), a distinctive group of black-glazed teabowls were made that were imported to Japan, where they were particularly admired. The Japanese literature refers to these teabowls as “Temmoku”. They were eventually integrated into the formal Japanese tea ceremony, and over time evolved into revered cultural objects. Temmoku teabowls became legendary heirlooms, handed down from one generation to the next, and a well-documented literature about the origins and history, even of individual teabowls exists — several are designated as National Cultural Treasures of Japan and the most celebrated earn individual names, widely known to Japanese tea connoisseurs.

Two kilns were famous for the production of Temmoku. A kiln in Fukien Province, known as Jian (or Chien) was the source of most of the teabowls that were first imported into Japan by Buddhist pilgrims. Fukien Province produced the best tea in China during the Song Dynasty, and records from the Northern Song court document what type of Jian

bowls Emperors drank tea from. The other major kiln that produced Temmoku is Jizhou (in the earlier literature, Chi Chou); a variety of very distinctive teabowls have long been known from these kilns at Yonghe, Jiangsi Province. The ceramics from the Jizhou kilns found in the Philippines have a remarkable diversity of form and decoration. These are the subject of the present monograph.

Tea drinking became popular in Song Dynasty China. The Jizhou kilns specialized in providing teabowls for tea-drinking gatherings, and the potters at these kilns developed a wide diversity of alternative choices. Several different groups of Temmoku teabowls from Jizhou became famous in the literature of later dynastic periods. These include Leaf, Paper-cutout and Turtle shell (“Taihi”) Temmoku. Examples of these classic Song Dynasty Jizhou Temmoku teabowls recovered from the Philippines are shown in Figures 1-3.

There are several types of Jizhou teabowls that are much less familiar, but for which there is direct evidence for their



Figure 1
Leaf Temmoku



Figure 2
Paper-cutout Temmoku



Figure 3
Turtle-shell Temmoku



Figure 4

White splashed hemispheric bowl



Figure 5

Green teabowl



Figure 6

Paper-cutout glaze-resist teabowl

presence at the Jizhou kiln site (Figures. 4-6). Hemispheric bowls splashed with a bluish-white matte glaze have clear links to Tang Dynasty vessels splashed with a similar bluish-white ash decoration. A greenware bowl (Figure 5) suggests a link to Yüeh and perhaps Yaozhou-ware. These teabowls have technical features, particularly with respect to the treatment of the foot and the unglazed region at the bottom of the teabowl that suggest an early stage of production. The vessel in Figure 4 has a foot that is extremely rough; a well-defined footrim and base are absent, and the clay has inclusions. In the bottom exterior, there is a considerable amount of a caramel slip visible beyond the boundaries of the main black coffee glaze, with rough particles stuck to it.

These features are shared by a number of other teabowls, and we suggest that these are “early production” features and that it was not long before a much more finished treatment of the foot and base, an absence of coarse inclusions, and a more careful treatment of the slip that extended beyond the glaze became routine. The rough features would be expected to affect what customers were willing to pay for a particular teabowl, and therefore there should have been a strong economic incentive to improve. Thus, the presence of “early features” in a teabowl suggests a product of Jizhou at the initial stages of teabowl production.

An unusual group of paper-cutout teabowls that have not been described before also have these “early” features; these were made using the “glaze resist” technique, used much more widely for long-necked or meiping vases. In the vessel shown in Figure 6, the technique has been applied to a teabowl. Thus, among the Jizhou teabowls found in the Philippines, there are both well-known types described previously from important international collections of Song Dynasty pottery (Figures 1-3), as well as relatively unique types (Figures 4-6), not generally illustrated in the standard literature on Chinese ceramics.

LEAF TEMMOKU

Perhaps the most celebrated Song Dynasty Jizhou ceramics are Temmoku teabowls decorated using a real leaf; most surviving examples are heirlooms in private collections in Japan. These teabowls were clearly regarded as highly desirable in some 10th–13th century societies in the Philippine archipelago, and the diversity of Leaf Temmoku teabowls recovered in these islands is greater than from any other source. Many of the Leaf Temmoku from the Philippines have novel features. In major museum collections of Chinese ceramics, Leaf Temmoku teabowls

generally have a plain black coffee glaze with the leaf fired so that only an impression of the leaf veins remains. As illustrated in this section, many Philippine Leaf Temmoku teabowls have a leaf that is largely intact. There are hemispheric bowls with unusually large leaf impressions. Some bowls have a mixture of a caramel-brown and black-coffee glazes onto which the leaf is affixed. Finally, there are Leaf Temmoku teabowls in which the leaf is green or white, unprecedented styles not previously documented.

Plate I. Leaf Temmoku with Caramel Glaze

Leaf Temmoku teabowl

Song Dynasty, 11th-13th Century

Diameter 16.2 cm Height 5.5 cm

In this leaf-temmoku teabowl, the background glaze is not the plain black-coffee color found in most other leaf temmoku teabowls, but is a rich caramel brown, mixed in with the darker black-coffee glaze. This is revealed in the exterior of the bowl (shown below) where the two different undiluted glazes flow into each other. As a consequence, after firing, the leaf itself has a variegated-color pattern, reflecting the color of the background. The leaf is

otherwise similar to other teabowls previously illustrated in that the veins of the leaf are revealed after firing in the kiln. Another feature of this teabowl is that the clay is very light grayish where exposed, and appears to be much finer than in most Jizhou teabowls of any type (except a few that have a similar caramel brown background with a Taihi Temmoku motif).





Plate I

Plate II. Jizhou Amber Leaf Temmoku Teabowls

Conical Leaf Temmoku teabowl

Jizhou kilns, Song Dynasty, 10th-12th Century

Diameter 11.5 cm Height 4 cm

These conical teabowls have a typical black-coffee background glaze, with a single leaf laid out in the interior. The leaf has a rich variegated amber color. This appears to be the most common type of Leaf Temmoku recovered in the Philippines. The unglazed region and the treatment of

the foot of the smallest teabowl shows “early production features” suggesting that this was made earlier in the Jizhou kilns than the other teabowls illustrated in the figure. It is the smallest Jizhou conical bowl recorded from the Philippines.





Plate II

Plate III. Unusual Leaf Temmoku Teabowls

Top: Temmoku teabowl with a green and yellow leaf

Song Dynasty, 11th-13th Century

Diameter 15.5 cm Height 5.5 cm

Bottom: Leaf Temmoku hemispheric teabowl

Jizhou Kilns, Song Dynasty, 11th-13th Century

Diameter 12 cm Height 6 cm

The temmoku conical teabowl (top) has a dark chocolate glaze both inside and out with a single leaf in the interior that is greenish and yellowish, with the edges colored amber, and a dark chocolate glaze both inside and out. It is unclear how the color of the leaf was achieved; presumably some additive (perhaps a celadon-type mixture) was used, yielding the striking, multi-colored effect.

The unusual leaf-temmoku bowl shown at the bottom is almost hemispheric in shape, with a large leaf applied on the uniform black-coffee glaze. After firing, the leaf was yellowish-brown. This teabowl has a sharply demarcated thicker region inside the bowl adjacent to the rim. The exterior is undecorated. This leaf-temmoku teabowl is very distinctive in style, different from all other leaf-temmoku vessels illustrated in the literature.





Plate III

Plate IV. Green and Amber Leaf Temmoku

Top: Temmoku teabowl with bright green leaf

Song Dynasty, 11th-13th Century

Diameter 15.5 cm Height 5.5 cm

Bottom: Conical Temmoku teabowl with 2 leaves

Song Dynasty, 11th-13th Century

Diameter 15.9 cm Height 6.6 cm

The bright green color of this Jizhou teabowl is unique and striking. This and the bowl on Plate III represent an effort by the Jizhou potters to have a natural-looking leaf as a decorative motif. Among Jizhou Temmoku teabowls, this is a striking contrast to the majority type where most of the leaf tissue is gone and only the veins remain — this teabowl represents an effort to create an accurate impression of an intact green tree leaf.

The unusual leaf-temmoku teabowl on the bottom has a typical black-coffee glaze with two similar-sized elongated leaves arranged on opposite sides of the interior. The leaves have fired to a caramel-brown color. The arrangement of the leaves in the lower bowl is reminiscent of paper-cutout teabowls with two motifs on a plain black-coffee glazed background, and may very well be contemporaneous.





Plate IV

Plate V. White Leaf Temmoku

Temmoku teabowl with white leaf
Song Dynasty, 11th-13th Century
Diameter 15 cm Height 6.3 cm

This teabowl, provisionally assigned to the Jizhou kilns, differs in style from other Jizhou leaf Temmoku bowls in several respects. The treatment of the leaf is unprecedented; it may have been covered with a white slip or other treatment to render the starkly white color of the leaf, which contrasts with the dark glaze. Most other leaf Temmoku bowls are conical; this bowl is flared at the lip, and most-unusually carved on the exterior. This type

of carving is unprecedented in leaf Temmoku. A final unusual feature is the treatment of the foot, in which the base is glazed with the same dark glaze found in the rest of the bowl. Shown below are a side view of the floral design on the exterior (leftmost), as well as a second example of this type of leaf Temmoku bowl that is the same type, but with a carved dragon on the exterior.





Plate V

PAPER-CUT AND PAINTED TEABOWLS

Paper-cut designs to decorate the interior was a signature feature of Jizhou teabowls. The potters experimented with a number of techniques, and ultimately evolved elaborate glazing protocols that produced striking effects. For one set of these teabowls, a dark chocolate-brown glaze was first applied, and paper cutout stencils were laid out on the interior (typically floral or animal motifs). The bowl was then given an application of a lighter-colored glaze, and during firing the mixture of glazes led to different colors being generated in different regions of the bowl. The paper cutout emerged as a dark motif contrasting with a lighter

background. These teabowls were generally decorated outside with splashes of lighter glaze, sometimes resulting in a complex mixture of colors. An advantage of the paper-cutout Jizhou teabowls is that once a standard glazing protocol was established, each individual teabowl could be made to suit a large customer base with diverse tastes. The paper cutouts could easily be made to the customer's specifications. In the 13th-14th centuries, the cutouts were gradually replaced by bowls with the same motifs, but painted with slip, which probably required a simpler glazing/firing protocol.

Plate VI. Matching Teabowl and Cupstand

Teabowl and cupstand with paper-cutout prunus blossom motif

Song Dynasty, 11th-13th Century

Bowl: Diameter 11.5 cm Height 5.8 cm

Cupstand: Diameter 16 cm Height 3.9 cm

This teabowl has a dark chocolate-brown glaze, decorated with reddish/bluish streaks on the exterior; the interior of the bowl has 5 stylized prunus blossoms with 1 blossom at the center of the bowl. A lighter glaze has been applied over the chocolate-brown glaze, and during firing, a hare's fur effect was achieved as the glazes flow downwards and mixed, with an iridescent reddish glow created near the rim. The same decorative scheme is used for the cup stand, which also shows 5 prunus blossoms distributed around the raised rim where the cup sits. The foot of the cupstand has a broad rim, with the exterior vertically rising and glazed; the unglazed interior is beveled towards the base.

Very few matching pairs of Jizhou teabowls and cupstands survive. The most famous Jizhou teabowl of this type is a classic heirloom brought to Japan (known as "Densei Temmoku", venerated by the families that owned them and handed down from one generation to the next). This particular Jizhou teabowl, now a National Cultural Treasure of Japan was once owned by a famous tea master, Matsudaira Fumai, in the 18th Century, who designated it as an "omeibutsu" (the highest quality bowl that could be used for the formal tea ceremony). This teabowl from the Philippines is clearly in the same style and probably roughly contemporaneous with the famous "Omeibutsu teabowl".





Plate VI

Plate VII. Phoenix Motifs in Jizhou Teabowls

Two Ran Temmoku teabowls

Song to Yuan Dynasty, 12th-14th Century

Top: Diameter 15 cm Height 5 cm

Bottom: Diameter 16.7 cm Height 6 cm

The teabowls have a phoenix motif, but are rendered in different ways. This motif was so common that many Jizhou teabowls of this type reached Japan, where it is referred to as “Ran Temmoku”. The bowls have a tortoise-shell-like speckled marking on the exterior, but the phoenix design dominates the interior. The lower bowl shows a hemispheric bowl with three paper-cut phoenixes and a floral design in the middle. The conical bowl shown on top has the phoenix design painted using a creamy

yellowish slip, with two stylized butterflies between each phoenix and a somewhat crudely painted keyfret border. These are among the most ubiquitous design elements in the Jizhou teabowls from late in the production cycle, probably Southern Song or early Yuan. Painted teabowls became the most common type later, but these are underrepresented in the Philippine recoveries of Jizhou teabowls. Another conical Ran Temmoku bowl is shown below.





Plate VII

Plate VIII. Unique Animal Cutouts

Top: Bowl with animal motifs on a bluish-white background

Song Dynasty, 11th-13th Century

Diameter 16.5 cm

Bottom: Bowl with two fish motif on a black coffee background

Song Dynasty, 10th-13th Century

Diameter of bowl 15.5 cm

The unique paper-cutout bowl shows three rats in the interior on a bluish-white design. In the interior of the bowl near the rim, there is a sharp demarcation between the rim region (which has a much whiter overglaze in the bottom bowl) and the rest of the interior. The exterior of the bowl is dark chocolate brown with bluish round spots, a very unusual motif for a Jizhou bowl. The foot is well finished with a neatly demarcated base and a wide footrim, which is unglazed. Another similar bowl, shown below, has clearly been made by the same kiln in the same style, but shows fish instead of three rats. These types of bowl have not been illustrated in the prior literature on Jizhou ware.

The bottom teabowl on the opposite page has a common motif in Chinese ceramics, two fish. However, an unusual feature is that the fish differ from one another. The teabowl (left, below) shows a bird on a branch motif, which became a standard motif of Jizhou painted vessels in the 13th-14th Centuries, but has not previously been described for teabowls. A similar motif on a meiping vase was also recovered from the Philippines (center, below). Most such vases have “prunus blossoms on a branch” as the paper-cutout motif.





Plate VIII

TAIHI AND OTHER SPLASHED TEABOWLS

The Jizhou potters made a variety of teabowls that used the splash technique originally developed in the Tang Dynasty to decorate ewers with a dark brown, almost black glaze. The most successful of the Jizhou efforts were splashes that were amber and yellowish when fired, resembling the shell of a hawksbill turtle. There was widespread use of objects made out of polished turtle shell in China, so Turtleshell (Taihi) Temmoku was apparently a popular,

commercially-successful Jizhou kiln product applied to many types of vessels, not just teabowls. However, among the Philippine finds, teabowls that have been splashed either with a matte-white glaze, similar to that used in the Tang Dynasty, as well as a matte-yellow glaze are regularly encountered. In the later periods of production however, the tortoiseshell-like teabowls dominated by far, and the other types of splashed Jizhou teabowls became rare.

Plate IX. Turtle Shell-Glazed Bowl

Taihi Temmoku teabowl
Song Dynasty, 11th-13th Century
Diameter 16.5 cm Height 6 cm

This is the classical Taihi Temmoku brought back to Japan by Zen Buddhist pilgrims. The glaze is intended to resemble the turtle shell that was used in China for a wide variety of decorative objects. This vessel is a “Yankou wan” teabowl, identical in shape to teabowls being produced in the Jian kilns. The rim is thickened and grooved so that as tea is being consumed, it is delivered in small sips, as

desired by tea connoisseurs. This is the true Taihi glaze, that was used for a wide variety of different vessels by the Jizhou potters, and is probably the best-represented glaze decoration in the Jizhou-ware vessels found in the Philippines. Shown below is a hemispheric bowl with a Taihi glaze.





Plate IX

Plate X. Diverse Splashed Jizhou Teabowls

Two Splashed Bowls

Song period, 10th-13th Century

Top: Diameter 12.5 cm Height 6.5 cm

Bottom: Diameter 16 cm Height 6.5 cm

The bowls have a splashed decoration; the bowl on top a typical turtle-shell glaze, but instead of the dark chocolate glaze, the background is mostly a light chocolate brown with darker glaze mixed in, and is either referred to as turtle-shell or tiger-fur Temmoku. The bowl at the bottom

has bluish-white splashes reminiscent of ewers or jars in the Tang Dynasty. These bowls are splashed both inside and outside. Shown below are additional splashed bowls.





Plate X

Plate XI. Impressed Jizhou Teabowls

Two Jizhou bowls with incised motifs

Five Dynasties or Northern Song, 9th-11th Century

Top: Diameter 15.5 cm Height 5.5 cm

Bottom: Diameter 15.3 cm Height 5.2 cm

These bowls are described in the literature as products of the Jizhou kiln, but apparently very few intact vessels have survived. These examples from the Agusan region of Northern Mindanao both have an impressed floral motif.

Shown below are three seldom seen Jizhou kiln teabowls. The glaze used in each bowl was different, a warm-brown glaze on the conical bowl on the top left, a

glassy Qingbai-type glaze on the lower left, and a glassy celadon glaze on the bowl on the right. All of them share the same motif, babies surrounded by flowers. The motif is clearly rendered differently in each case, but this was a very popular motif in the early Northern Song period, also found in Ting and early Jingdezhen ware.





Plate XI

PERSPECTIVES

Some Jizhou teabowl types only found in the Philippines so far, specifically the paper-cutout bowls with animal motifs in the interior on a blue/white background glaze are decorated in the exterior in an unusual way. Light bluish glaze was applied as circular spots on the dark background. This is reminiscent of a fabled product of the Jian kilns early in the Northern Song, the partridge-spotted teabowl that was highly esteemed and was praised by a 10th-century poet. The recovery of these types of Jizhou vessels (particularly since these were apparently found with Jian teabowls) suggests that diverse teabowls from both kilns were available to a tea drinker in Northern Song China. The fact that many of these Jizhou types have not been described from teabowls brought to Japan by the Zen Buddhist monks indicates that at least some of the material that reached the Northern Mindanao sites may have predated the visit of Buddhist pilgrims from Japan to the monastery in Zhejiang, which Japanese tradition suggests, was the key event that initiated the importation of Temmoku into Japan, which became the major source of Jian and Jizhou teabowls described in the ceramic literature.

Reconstructing a Jizhou Chronology

A comparison of Jizhou teabowls from the Philippines with those in international collections (or with the intact vessels recovered at the kiln site) is revealing. Kiln-site vessels probably represent mostly the later stages of Jizhou production. The leaf Temmoku teabowls seen in international collections and at the kiln site are mostly plain dark-chocolate glazed bowls, which when fired in the kiln, vaporized the leaf tissue to the point where only the pale golden colored veins remained. In contrast, the Philippine material has a much greater diversity of different types of leaf teabowls. Jizhou potters may have tried experimenting with different glazing/firing protocols to produce diverse effects. In some of the Philippine leaf teabowls, there are unsightly marks on the glaze resulting from an interaction between the leaf and the glaze material; when certain leaves and firing protocols were used. Having a uniform glazing and firing

protocol, and choosing leaves so that only the veins remain as a ghostly impression could have resulted in a more consistent product, which is why this type may have become dominant in the later, presumably more commercial stages of Jizhou production. This scenario might also apply to the splashed teabowls recovered from the Philippines; in international collections, the transparent amber, true “Taihi Temmoku” type dominates, and this could also be due to the mastery of glazing and firing protocols to yield a consistent product that enjoyed commercial success.

Finally, the paper-cutout teabowls in international collections are of the type with a lighter glaze, with the paper-cutout motif coming out in black. By using a set glazing protocol, and applying the paper-cutout design that the customer specified, the Jizhou kilns may have ramped up production while satisfying the individual preferences of a diverse clientele. Consumer taste may have led to these types of paper-cutout teabowls to replace the simpler paper-cut designs on a plain, dark-chocolate background. Thus, in many ways, although Jizhou teabowls seem diverse in international collections, the Philippine material suggests that these largely represent a mature commercial production stage where firing protocols that yielded the leaf Temmoku with only the veins remaining, the Taihi Temmoku with the clear amber splotches and the paper-cutout Temmoku with the lighter glaze around black cutout motifs became predominant. In contrast, most of the Philippine material discussed above may represent an earlier, more experimental phase, with a greater diversity of different styles attempted. Those that proved technically difficult to implement, or which did not yield a consistent product, or which failed in the marketplace are not found outside the restricted region in the Philippines that we suggest somehow gained unusual access to Jizhou teabowls early in the Northern Song Dynasty.

There is a variety of circumstantial evidence that supports a Northern Song assignment for most of the novel Jizhou teabowl Philippine material that we have documented in this booklet. Shown in Figure 8 is a Taihi Temmoku ewer recovered from Northern Mindanao; clearly a highly

sophisticated vessel, representative of the mature production stage of Jizhou. This was found together with the Qingbai Jingdezhen warming bowl and wine pot (Figure 7), a famous Jingdezhen product that has been widely illustrated. A very similar Qingbai vessel was assigned to the 12th Century of the Northern Song period. The fact that the two vessels (Figures 7 and 8) were recovered at the same time from Northern Mindanao supports a date for most of the Northern Mindanao Jizhou Temmoku material to be Northern Song.

We should note that diverse Jizhou vessels have been found all over the Philippines, but Northern Mindanao has been a consistent source of almost all of the unusual Jizhou teabowl types recovered. Some of the material from elsewhere, such as the Ran Temmoku teabowls (shown in Plate VII) are much more likely to be later products, usually assigned to the Southern Song. There are vases painted under

the glaze in iron oxide (Figure 9) found in the Philippines that are generally thought to be from the late Southern Song to the early Yuan period. Jizhou kiln products appear to have been continuously imported into the Philippines over the entire Song Dynasty; it will be of interest to correlate which sites in the Philippines yield which vessel types.

There is little doubt that the Philippine material, because much of what has been recovered has been preserved intact, often in pristine shape, serves as a valuable source of Jizhou ceramics that can be correlated to what is discovered at the kiln site. In the future, by integrating the finds from the various localities of the Philippines with the archaeological data from the kiln site, an increasingly accurate chronology of Jizhou ware, as well as a more precise dating of various Philippine ceramic sites should be greatly facilitated.



*Figure 7 Taihi Temmoku ewer
(Dafoe/Davis Collection)
photo: Ashley Haugen*



*Figure 8 N. Song Qingbai vessel
(Dafoe/Davis Collection)
photo: Ashley Haugen*



*Figure 9 Jizhou painted
vase with a phoenix motif*



Diverse Jizhou vessels decorated using the glaze-resist paper-cutout technique.

Front cover: Jizhou conical teabowls using diverse decorative styles

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