

67.

Yingqing Bowl with Molded Lotus Design

影青印蓮紋瓷碗

Diameter: 15.3 cm. (6 in.)
Height: 6.0 cm. (2 5/8 in.)
Southern Song period
13th century A.D.

南宋

The deep bowl opens generously from a strong straight foot surrounding a recessed base. The cavetto is mold-impressed with a composition consisting of six panels separated from each other by narrow raised borders, each panel containing a pair of lotus blooms emerging from lotus pad leaves, the panels radiating like the petals of a flower from the medallion in the well, which is decorated with two further blossoms on scrolling tendrils separated by smaller flowers, with a key-fret border below the mouth rim. The raised motifs appear white where the clear bluish-white glaze has thinned exposing the color of the pure white body. The glaze covers the bowl save for a portion of the base and the mouth rim. The glaze extends over the foot but stops short of a roughly circular area on the base that has burned a pale orange-buff color in firing. The pale orange unglazed rim was once covered in a silver band that now only partially remains.

The style of the molding on this dish is similar to the “brocade” style of the previous bowl, influenced by northern Ding ware (cat. no. 66). And yet, it is not quite “brocade”-like. The various elements of the design seem to be independent and separate rather than being woven together. It is also far from that end of the spectrum dominated by fluid, flowing, free and easy organic designs produced by calligraphic incising and carving practiced at kilns north and south alike. Compartmentalizing the design, however, as was done here, reigned in energy and fluidity. It is as if the motifs have been corseted, held in place, producing an entirely different effect. Such compositions might have derived from the celadon styles produced in the north, the “northern celadons” of Shaanxi and Henan provinces, which evolved to some degree under the influence of Tang gold and silver wares.

The most frequently seen subject in bowls with six-paneled compositions is comprised of flowers or plants in vases and basins, a vessel centered in each panel, represented here by two of the rather numerous examples in museum collections (figs. 1-2). Further examples are illustrated in the Japanese exhibition catalogue of

selected pieces from the 13th-century ceramic hoard discovered in Sichuan province (fig. 3).

A bowl excavated at the Hutian kiln in Jingdezhen was decorated with a variation of the design in which the floral arrangements are set against a blank ground, unlike the other examples with more fully developed backgrounds (fig. 4). Another type of bowl from Hutian was decorated exclusively with flowers, like the present dish, but the Hutian piece depicts a variety of flowers in contrast to the exclusively lotus décor of the present bowl (fig. 5).

In the post Song period the potters and decorators at Jingdezhen combined the old with the new: the panel-based compositions of the Song period with newly developed decorative techniques that looked to the future—underglaze cobalt and copper painting. The Jingdezhen craftsmen were like sponges, absorbing influences and ideas wherever available while originating creative solutions that continued to change the face of ceramic art. The success of Jingdezhen was ensured because of this metamorphic capacity and, without ever suffering a hiatus in activity, remains today the center of porcelain manufacture in China.



Fig. 1: *Yingqing* bowl, Southern Song-early Yuan period, 13th-14th century A.D., Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, after Stacey Pierson, ed., *Qingbai Ware: Chinese Porcelain of the Song and Yuan Dynasties*, London, 2002, no. 20, p. 63.

Fig. 2: *Yingqing* bowl, Southern Song period, 13th century A.D., Carl Kempe collection, after Jan Wirgin, *Sung Ceramic Design*, London, 1979, pl. 27a.



Fig. 3: *Yingqing* bowl, Southern Song period, 13th century A.D., excavated in Sichuan province, after *Newly Discovered Southern Song Ceramics: A Thirteenth-Century "Time Capsule,"* Tokyo, 1998, pl. 104, p. 89.



Fig. 4: *Yingqing* bowl, Southern Song period, 13th century A.D., excavated at Hutian, Jingdezhen, after *Jingdezhen Hutian yaozhi*, shang, Beijing, 2007, fig. 102, p. 127 (drawing).

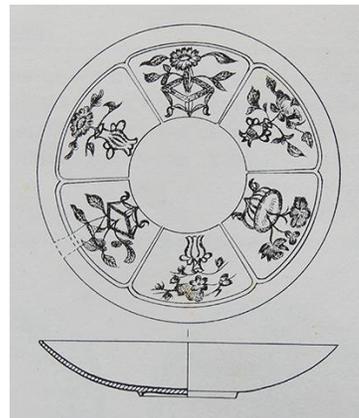




Fig. 5: Shard of a *yingqing* bowl, Southern Song period, 13th century A.D., excavated at Hutian, Jingdezhen, after *Jingdezhen Hutian yaozhi, shang*, Beijing, 2007, fig. 127:1 (drawing).