

SOME UNUSUAL THAI AND CHINESE USES OF CERAMICS

by

C. Nelson Spinks

Considering the elements of animistic magic almost universally associated with pottery and pottery-making, it is not surprising that the Thai and the Chinese from early times have made and used an extraordinarily wide variety of ceramic articles; principally, of course, household bowls and jars.

In my earlier book on Thai ceramics¹, I attempted to explore some of the more unconventional uses of ceramics in southeast Asia, especially in Siam. Here, I endeavour to explore further that fascinating but esoteric subject on the basis of additional research and observation, and describe some strange if not bizarre uses of ceramics by the Thai and the Chinese.

I have yet to encounter any small Thai earthenware or glazed stone-ware plates or dishes, for the same reason I have never seen such wares among the Chaliang, Sukhōthai and Sawankhalōk and other glazed wares of the Thai: the Thai simply did not use such utensils for serving their food because they have traditionally preferred to eat directly from their incomparable earthenware *mòh khao* (rice-cooking pots), or off a piece of banana leaf cut and folded to improvise a dish or plate².

- 1) C. Nelson Spinks, *The Ceramic Wares of Siam*, second revised ed. (Bangkok, The Siam Society, 1973), chapter 10.
- 2) Even today the banana leaf tray is in vogue among the Thai for serving certain kinds of custards, and many roadside vendors in the rural districts still offer their patrons rice and *kaeng phet* (Thai: "hot curry") on the traditional banana-palm leaf. That simple utensil, known to the Thai as a *krathong* or "*kathong*", is made from a square section of the broad leaf of the banana palm cut and folded to make a shallow, box-like tray, the corners of which are held firmly in place by small slivers of bamboo called *marklat*. Today, however, in their ready acceptance of mechanical convenience as a substitute for tradition and taste, some Thai food vendors now dispense with the esthetic bamboo *marklat* and secure the corners of their mass-produced palm-leaf *krathong* by means of wire staples!

The old Chaliang brown-glazed stonewares were mostly made to serve primarily as storage vessels, which may account for their limited, almost standardized forms, with undecorated surfaces. The unadorned, pear-shaped, vase-like pieces and the primitive-looking, little-eared brown jugs were most likely made for holding oil, or such condiments as *namplā* (fish sauce), or for medicinal or cosmetic preparations. None of the early Chaliang brown-glazed stonewares appears to have been made for use as a cooking utensil, a function reserved by tradition for the thin-walled earthenware *mòh khao* or *mòh kaeng*.

Precision-made covered bowls or boxes, as distinguished from storage jars with loose-fitting lids, are rather rare among the early brown-glazed Chaliang monochromes. Apparently that type of container was not manufactured in southeast Asia until after the advent of Chinese influence, around the beginning of the fourteenth century A.D. It would also appear that that new form was developed among the Annamese wares, and may have reached Siam from that source. Such pieces were later produced *en masse* by the Thai Sawankhalōk potters in painted wares, celadon and brown glazes.

The typical Chaliang brown glaze was made from some ferriferous material that was probably readily available in the vicinity of the Chaliang-Sawankhalōk ceramic complex. Painted decoration was applied to the Sawankhalōk decorated wares directly to the paste, not over a slip as in the case of the Sukhōthai painted wares³.

The curious Ayudhaya period earthenware pot (see figure 1) with a handle, chimney spout and flat base, was probably a special pot for making soup, similar to the metal soup-pots that appear even today in Thailand near the end of a meal in a Chinese restaurant, in which the soup is kept hot by burning charcoal placed inside the chimney-like spout

3) On page 64 of *The Ceramic Wares of Siam*, I mistakenly wrote that the painted decoration on the Sawankhalōk pieces was applied directly to the light slip over which a glaze was finally added. That error was called to my attention by Mr. Azuma Yoshikuni in his well-known article "Sukotai no Yakimono" (Sukhōthai wares) that appeared in the ceramic journal *Tōetsu* (Tōkyō), October 1968, p. 16.

projecting from the center of the vessel. The Chinese refer to such a utensil as a *niuhi huaylao*, which may be simply translated as a "fire pot for cooking soup". The vessels used in Chinese restaurants in Thailand today, however, are usually made of aluminium or brass, rather than earthenware. Moreover, the modern metal *niuhi huaylao* does not have a spout and handle, as this old earthenware piece had, for the hot soup is merely ladled out of the metal pot from around the chimney-like projection by means of a large spoon, and transferred to individual serving bowls.

A curious Thai ceramic hunting device is a celadon-glazed chicken figurine (the centerpiece in figure 2) which was made at the kilns in the *amphoe* (District) of Phān in Chiang Rāi Province, northern Thailand. That piece is not a figurine, however, but a bird-call whistle that was probably used to attract wild jungle fowl or other birds to be netted. Similarly, the Phān kilns also produced attractive celadon-glazed fish-net weights (some examples of which are shown in figure 3). Another curious Thai device is the ceramic pellet, for use in the *prāyučāt*, or blowpipe, or with the ancient pellet-bow in hunting birds and small game. Ceramic pellets were known as *lūk prāi*. They are still used by country-folk in northeast Thailand, as anyone who has engaged an Isān (northeastern Thai-Lao) gardener knows⁴.

The Thai kilns at Sukhōthai and Sawankhalōk produced large quantities of ceramic building materials, especially roof tiles (see figures 4, 5 and 6) and other ceramic construction materials, such as balustrades and finials (figure 6). The Thai of that era also made considerable quantities of ceramic drainpipes (*tòh nam dīn phao*) to drain water from one pond (*srah*) to another⁵.

The Thai further produced various kinds of ceramic drums for both orchestral and military use. Known in Thai by the general terms *thōn* or *thāp*, most such drums are of a cylindrical shape, and are generally

4) The use of ceramic pellets in blowpipes by the Malays is also discussed at length by Charles Walter, William Skeat and Charles Otto Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula* (New York, Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1965), vol. II, *passim*.

5) See especially *Sannābōrankhadī Samai Sukhōtai* ("Antiquities of Sukhōthai"), (Bangkok, Department of Fine Arts, 1964), plate facing page 13.

made of a hard-fired earthenware over one or both ends of which hide, snakeskin or lizard skin was tightly stretched to make a percussion instrument. Such drums were specially popular in the northeast, where they are still manufactured in Khon Kaen Province and continue to be used for musical and theatrical performances at *wat* fairs, or on other festive occasions. Such drums formed an essential part of the local northeast Thai orchestra, and are still in use today.

The most popular type of Thai ceramic drum is a gourd-shaped instrument, the large end of which is covered with lizard or python skin. That type of drum is called the *thōn mahōrī*. The Thai also use a flat, disc-shaped drum with hide or skin on only one side. It is sometimes made of hard-fired earthenware, but more frequently is carved from a large block of wood, or made on a light frame of plaited strips of bamboo or rattan. Called the *lām that* drum, it is used principally in a popular ballad-type performance of that name, a kind of antiphonal recitation sung or spoken to the accompaniment of vigorous beating of one or several *lām that* drums. Such recitations are specially noted for their ribaldry, and when I have seen such performances in the countryside, I have always noticed that the wives of the local officials quietly withdrew very early in the performance.

Some of the drums of Java and other Javanese musical instruments were introduced into Siam and adopted by the Thai in the Ayudhaya period (A.D. 1350-1763). They were popularly called *klòng khaek*, i.e. foreign or Javanese drums⁶.

The most unusual use of ceramics of which I am presently aware were the so-called "geophones" that the Chinese employed in ancient times. They were large, hard-fired stoneware jars, over the open ends of which

6) See Dhanit Yupho, *Thai Musical Instruments*, translated into English by Mr. David Morton (Bangkok; The Sivaphorn Press, for the Department of Fine Arts; 1960). pp. 31-66. Another curious type of drum introduced from abroad was the *klòng marikan*, i.e. the American drum, a military type of snare drum that the Thai presumably copied from American models. See also the very useful study of Thai musical instruments by Kurosawa Tatsuo, *Investigation of Musical Instruments in Thailand* (Bangkok, Nippon-Tai Bunka Kenkyū-jo [Japan-Thailand Cultural Research Institute], 1941); text in Japanese and Thai. See also the *Thai Encyclopaedia*, vol. I, pp. 890-94, under *klòng* (drums).

a specially thin hide was tightly stretched to make a very sensitive diaphragm. The jars were set in the earth at the bottom of deep shafts, so that the sound of any digging or tunnelling operations by an enemy force during the siege of a walled or highly fortified town could be detected by troops on defense duty with the jars, who had been selected specially for their acute hearing. Such troops manned the "geophone" jars around the clock. With sets of such jars placed at appropriate locations, it was possible by the simple method of triangulation to pinpoint the exact location of the enemy's siege operations and take appropriate measures⁷.

One important rôle of ceramics which the Thai regrettably have neglected was its widespread use elsewhere as grave furniture. Thanks to that very ancient custom of burying ceramics, weapons, and various artifacts with the dead in Indonesia, China and elsewhere, many examples of ceramic ware have been preserved, enriching thereby our knowledge of the peoples who made such objects. Some of the Neolithic peoples who once occupied parts of what is now Thailand followed that historically valuable custom, and today we know far more about them than we would ever have known had they not used ceramics and other artifacts as grave furniture.

But between the later de-emphasis in Buddhism of the acquisition and retention of earthly things, and its custom of cremating the dead, the Thai limited the interment of corporeal remains to placing the ashes after cremation in a reliquary vessel of some kind, which in turn was placed in a brick reliquary tower, or *chedi*, within the precincts of a monastery or Buddhist burial ground, if the deceased had been a person of some social or political prominence. Otherwise, the ashes

7) There are occasional references in Chinese classical literature to such curious devices. For example, note Alfred Forke, "Der Festungskrieg im alten China", in *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* (919), pp. 103-116. Such devices were also mentioned in the *Taipo Ying-ching*, as quoted in *Tung Tien*, which suggests their use in the early T'ang period (A.D. 619-906). A Western parallel of "geophones" was noted by the Greek historian Oiktbis in *Polybius* (Loeb Classical Library edition), xxxi, 28, pp. 12-25. See also Benjamin E. Wallacker, "Studies in medieval Chinese siegecraft: The siege of Yu-pi in A.D. 546", *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. XVIII no. 4, August 1969, pp. 789-802.

remaining after a cremation were, in many instances, merely thrown into a stream or scattered unceremoniously into the sea. In some rare cases, however, other objects including amulets and personal effects were also placed in the mortuary urn or in the *chedi*, such as the objects and artifacts that have been found at various Hindu-Buddhist burial sites in the northeast, at a few sites in the far north of Siam, and elsewhere in the country⁸.

Another ceramic form widely used by the Thai from early times was the making of first sun-dried, and later kiln-fired, stoneware amulets and figurines, most of which had a deep-seated animistic or religious and talismanic character. Some of the very early earthenware or plasterware figures found in Thailand date, of course from the Buddhist Mòn Kingdom of Dvāravātī (A.D. sixth to eleventh centuries). That kingdom extended over a considerable area around Suphanburī, west of present-day Bangkok and north of Nakhon Pathom. Take, for example, the attractive Mòn terracotta figure illustrated in figure 7, and the plasterware figure shown in figure 8, both of which have an almost Mona Lisa-esque quality to them⁹.

Talismanic amulets made and used so widely in Thailand come in a great variety of shapes and styles, and range over an extended geographical area as well as chronologically from ancient times to date. The

8) For example, see *Plans and Reports of the Survey of the Excavations of Ancient Monuments in the North-East of Thailand* (Bangkok; Sivaphorn Press for the Department of Fine Arts; 1959), in Thai and English, especially pp. 58-59; and the more recent survey *Sombat Silpa Cak Borwien Kūen* ("Relics Recovered from the Bhumiphon Dam Site in Northern Thailand"), (Bangkok; Sivaphorn Press for the Department of Fine Arts; 1960), with text in Thai but all captions for illustrations in both Thai and English. That significant work illustrates and explains examples of ceramics, gold, silver and bronze artifacts, including some miniature reliquary vessels in bird and animal shapes found at sites in northern Thailand that were subsequently flooded after completion of the enormous Bhumiphon Dam, near Tāk, on the Ping River. Among the ceramics were some interesting examples of Sung and Ming wares, all of which are illustrated in the volume.

9) I recovered those pieces at an old Mòn *chedi* site near Suphanburī, and they are now in my collection. (Photographed for the author by the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.)

Thai use the term *phra phim* for an amulet, which literally means a "sacred imprint", thus implying that such objects were literally printed or stamped. Actually today, most *phra phim* are made of moulded clay that has been pressed or stamped in a die, and then fired in a kiln to make them into a hard, almost indestructible stoneware. Nevertheless, the implication of having been printed or stamped is significant, since it may recall techniques from ancient India and China, where (as M. Georges Coedès has suggested) at one time designs were indeed printed or stamped on cloth or paper¹⁰.

The real Thai amulet is a figure cast in metal or moulded in clay. Amulets of the latter type are often produced in Thailand by devout Buddhists as a merit-making act. They are distributed by the donor to friends and supporters, while the remaining pieces are turned over to the monastery where they were made for sale as a highly acceptable fund-raising operation on behalf of the monastery, which in a sense holds a copyright on their manufacture. The figures on such amulets generally represent a well-known local Buddhist image or a picture of a famous local monastery, thus making *phra phim* very appropriate mementos or souvenirs for pilgrims and others visiting the monastery.

According to M. Coedès, the custom of making small holy images by means of a stamp or die appears to have been strictly a Buddhist practice. With all his extensive research on such an esoteric subject, M. Coedès states that he cannot recall any records of any Brahmin figures made in that fashion and for that purpose. On the contrary, such Buddhist amulet figures have been found at practically every important Buddhist site in Asia, from the Northwest Provinces of India and the Chinese province of Honan to the ancient caves of the Malay Peninsula, among the ruins of Sukhōthai and Sawankhalōk, and to the shores of Annam.

10) Georges Coedès, "Siamese votive tablets", *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. XX part 1, June 1926, translated into English by Mr. W.A. Graham; pp. 1-23, with 15 plates. The subject of Thai amulets printed or stamped on paper or cloth has also been surveyed by the late Phrayā Anumān Rājadhon in his "Thai charms and amulets", *ibid.*, vol. LIII part 2, July 1964, pp. 171-192, with five plates and one line drawing.

While originally made perhaps as souvenirs for devout Buddhist pilgrims, in time *phra phim* were accorded talismanic and magical powers. Consequently, they were later collected primarily for that reason, rather than as memorabilia of visits to famous *wat*. With the Buddhist veneration for images, the mere act of making an image or a statue, or for merely paying the costs of its manufacture, had long become established among devout Buddhist as a significant source of merit-making¹¹. There naturally, almost inevitably, developed a great deal of ceremony, ritual and lore about the processes of making *phra phim*, and at many monasteries their manufacture became a complicated and highly esoteric rite. For example, clay and herbs would be gathered from no less than 108 different localities, that number being a ritually magic figure. With Buddhist prayers and *sutra*-chanting, the clay and herbs would subsequently be worked into a malleable mass that could be easily moulded in a die. After moulding, the images were briefly sun-dried and then kiln-fired. Customarily, the greater the number of *phra phim* cast and fired at such ceremonies, the greater the amount of merit achieved thereby. The most auspicious number to aim at in a ceremony of that kind was a mere 88,000 *phra phim*, again a ritually magical number that was guaranteed to improve the efficacy of the amulets¹².

Throughout the history of Buddhism there has always been a special significance attached to performing some worthy act repeatedly, when associated with prayer and merit-making; the more times the worthy act is performed, the greater is the amount of merit accrued thereby. Thus in some Buddhist countries, special mechanical devices, such as the prayer wheels developed and used in Tibet and Nepal, were employed to achieve the greatest possible degree of repetition and con-

11) Coedès, *loc. cit*, p. 2, footnote 1.

12) For the complicated calculations and origin of the figures 108 and 88,000, see I. W. Mabbett, "Devarāja", in *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. X no. 2, September 1969. pp. 202-223, especially p. 211 which discusses the 108 towers constructed on and in junction with the ancient Khmèr temples. The total would be 109, of course, counting the massive central tower.

sequently accumulate the greatest possible amount of merit. Accordingly, printing, stamping or casting such objects as *phra phim* would also logically achieve those advantages¹³.

Being hard-fired, a *phra phim* becomes virtually an indestructible stoneware that will last for centuries. Thus *phra phim* from ancient India, or those recovered from old *chedi* or monastery ruins of ancient Sukhothai, are most highly prized by the Thai for their remarkable talmismanic powers and magical properties, presumably having acquired extraordinary attributes by their long association with such a religiously significant locality. Mere age alone also seems to accord *phra phim* special powers and virtues. Some very ancient *phra phim* or those cast at some specially auspicious time or in a very favored locale, are believed to be capable of preventing a gun or pistol from being fired, of deflecting the path of a bullet, or of warding off sword or dagger blows, thus rendering the wearer of such charms invulnerable to wounds. Other *phra phim*, it is said, have the power to ward off any manner of disease or disasters, to protect the wearer from the machinations of evil spirits, or reputedly give the wearer extraordinarily good fortune in love, lottery contests, or wagering on race-horses, boxers, gamecocks, or fighting-fish.

Phra phim, especially the auspicious ones, are usually encased in gold and suspended from a gold chain worn around the neck. The charms printed on paper or cloth are sometimes merely carried in the wallet, but it is more proper and decorous as well as propitious to wrap them in thin sheets of gold, enscribed on their inner sides with appropriate symbols and auspicious marks. The rolled sheets of gold can be strung on a gold chain and worn as part of a necklace.

Even today the Thai place great store in their *phra phim*, and both men and women can frequently be seen with their necks loaded down with protective charms. I was once told the story of a man who was so burdened with *phra phim* and their heavy gold chains that he was unable to swim when he fell off a boat into the river, and so drowned! That may be an apocryphal tale, but it could have happened.

13) For an excellent account of how Buddhist ideas of repetition and multiplicity may have contributed to the development of printing in ancient China, see T.E. Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1925), *passim*.

Some Thai make a special point of visiting *wat* and other Buddhist establishments for the sake of collecting *phra phim*. Scholarly books are written on the subject to guide the collector, and at *wat* fairs there will often be a very learned fellow on hand who, for a modest fee, advises collectors of the efficaciousness or merits of their *phra phim*, and will suggest (in the latter case) what supplementary devices they may require: for example, some additional *phra phim* or perhaps just a spot of talismanic tattooing on one's chest or back.

Some years ago I attended a famous amulet-casting ceremony at the well-known Wat Mahā That in Nakhōn Śrī Thammarāt in the south-central part of peninsular Thailand. The casting was under the sponsorship of, i.e. its costs were being defrayed by, the distinguished General Pao Śrīyanon, then Chief of the Thai National Police and Deputy Minister of the Interior. On that august occasion he was attended by a number of political notables and other retainers, as well as some distinguished Buddhist monks and laymen, when no less than the requisite number of 88,000 *phra phim* were scheduled to be made during special ceremonies extending over several days and nights.

Among those officiating at the ceremonies was a famous Thai *mòh dū*, or seer, renowned for his occult powers: *Archarn* Chum Chaikhiri, that is "Professor" Chum, whom I had known for some years since he had first been in the service of H.E. Mr. Sukhit Nimmānahaeminda, later Thai Ambassador to the United States, and an elder brother of the well-known Chiang Mai banker and scholar Mr. Kraiśrī Nimmānahaeminda. I still have a memorable photograph of Professor Chum taken at the time of the *phra phim* casting ceremony, showing that distinguished seer consecrating me with lustral water that was to render me, with the collaboration of the appropriate amulets, invulnerable to knife wounds.

In 1959 in Bangkok I attended the cremation of my former coadjutor, Dr. Pan Lachabhandhu, at Wat Makut (Mongkhut). His family kindly presented me with one of the *phra phim* he had worn for many years, a very old and venerable piece from Sukhōthai. It has since carried me through many dangerous passages in bandit- and fever-infested jungles,

enabled me to survive an airplane crash in West Pakistan and various illnesses including a severe heart attack and a very dangerous aneurysm. I shall always treasure that *phra phim* and keep it about me.

Descending from the sublime to the mundane, I shall conclude this article on ceramic esoterica and curiosities by reference to the hard-fired tobacco-pipe bowls that the Thai formerly made. Of course, such objects date from a much later period in Siamese history, after the introduction of the tobacco plant from the Americas to Asia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by the Portuguese, and the subsequent spread of growing tobacco and smoking its cured leaves in small earthenware and stoneware pipe bowls. This interesting subject has recently been treated by a distinguished French scholar, M. Christian Velder¹⁴. Several of the pipe bowl pictures by M. Velder are almost identical with one I found in 1965 at the excavation site for a new hotel in Chiang Mai, both as to its shape and style of incised decoration. M. Velder also found at a Lao site a number of ceramic lamps, almost identical with those found at the Amphoe Phān kilns in Chiang Rāi Province, northern Siam¹⁵. One of the pipe bowls illustrated by M. Velder is incised with a picture of Suwanna Hong, the mythological goose-vehicle of Hindu lore, while another bowl portrays a bird that appears to be eating a snake and could, therefore, be a representation of the Hindu deity Garuda.

The relations of the Vientiane pipe bowls and other finds to Chiang Mai and northern Thailand is not as strange as may first appear. According to M. Velder, such pipe bowls and the other objects he excavated just outside Vientiane on the road south to the Mekong River landings at Tha Nalseng and Tha Dūa (opposite Nong Khai in Thailand), were all patterned after prototypes that had been brought to Vientiane from Chiang Mai, along with other art and ritual objects, transferred from the kingdom of Lannā Thai to Vientiane in A.D. 1547 for the coronation of H.M. King Settheaethiwāt of the Lao Kingdom of Vientiane¹⁶.

14) Christian Velder, "La poterie du Vat Satthanak, Vientiane (Laos)", *Felicitations Volumes of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. II (Bangkok, The Siam Society, 1965), pp. 199-200, with three plates.

15) See Spinks, *op. cit.*, p. 123 and plates nos. 11 and 45.

16) Velder, *loc. cit.*, p. 124.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that much more excavation and research should be done on the many contemporary Thai earthenware and other kilns, a herculean task, which to be done properly would require months of field investigation in Thailand in the more remote parts of the country to examine even a small fraction of the many local contemporary kilns and their unique earthenwares. Such work would require, of course, munificent funding. One day, perhaps, in some future existence I may be able to attempt that stimulating and exciting task.



Figure 1. Ayudhdhayā period earthenware ewer with painted decoration on the tubular section on the inside of the vessel; height 11 cm., diameter of body 15 cm.
(Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Osborne Hauge)



Figure 2. *Left*: a small 4.5 cm. *kěndi* in a shape suggestive of a dolphin. Grey and Chaliang brown glaze. *Center*: A Sawankhalōk celadon bird figure with incised underglaze decoration to suggest feathers. Unlike the usual bird figurines, this piece has the legs and feet distinctly modelled. On the base of the piece, near the tail, is a hole about $\frac{1}{2}$ cm. in diameter, while at the tip of the tail is a very small hole (about 2.5 mm. in diameter). This extraordinary piece is actually a whistle which gives a loud note when it is blown by means of the small hole at the tip of the tail. Height 10.5 cm. *Right*: A small Sawankhalōk painted-ware covered bowl; height 4 cm. (Collection of Mr. Edward Masters)

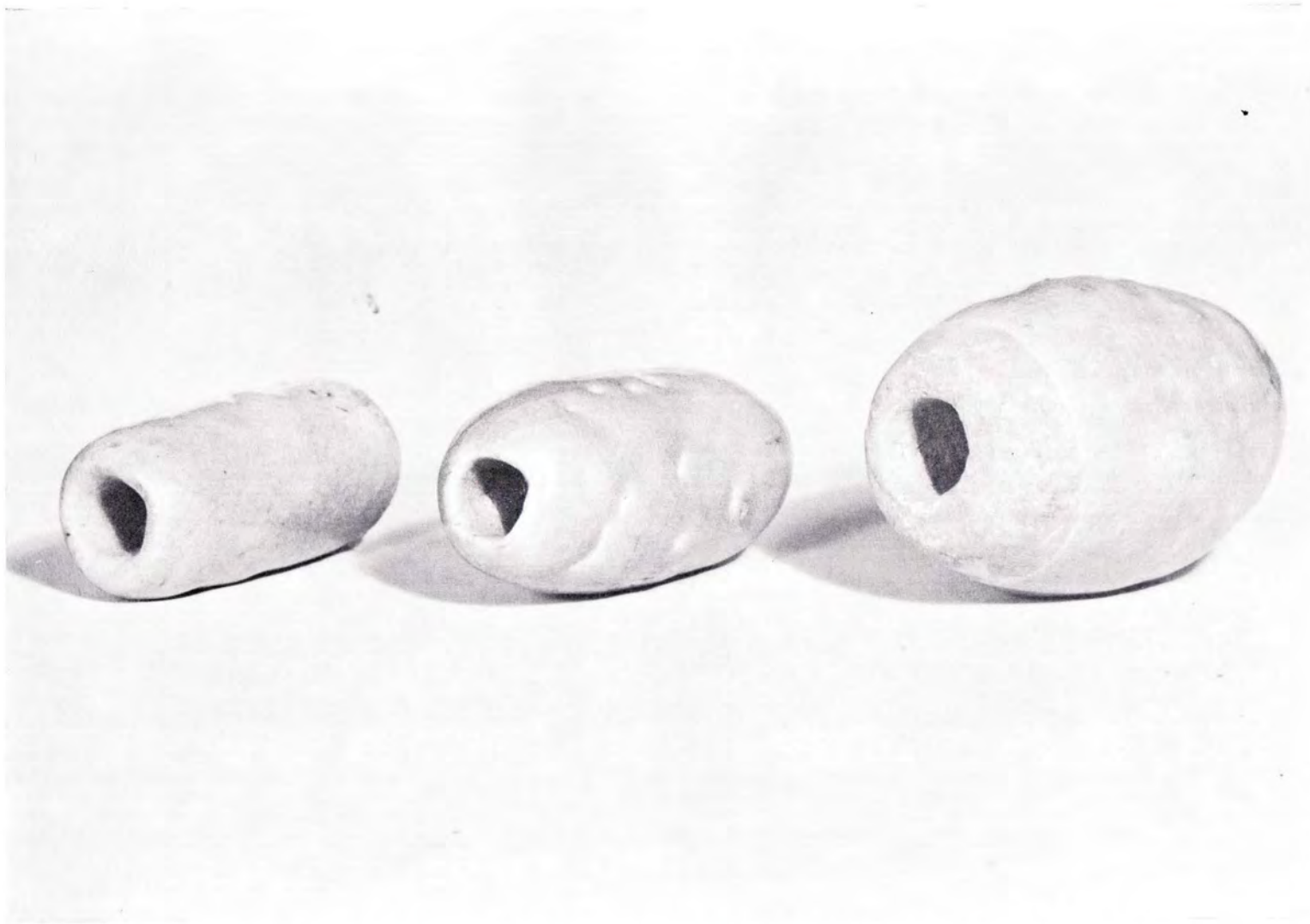


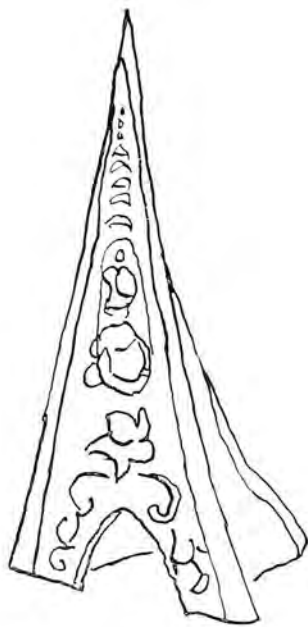
Figure 3. Ceramic fishnet weights with celadon glaze: excavated at the Amphoe Phān kiln site in Chiang Rāi Province.
Length of weight at right 7.75 cm; diameter 5 cm. (Author's collection)



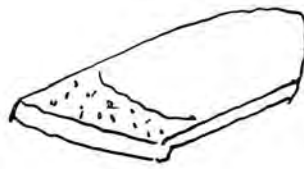
Figure 4. A pair of Sawankhalōk end-tiles with grey glaze and a floral motif in high relief; height 26 cm.
Photograph by courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum (Negative No. 112; Museum No. 256-1938).



Figure 5. Glazed roof end-tile made during the Ayuddhayā period. The figure and the border of the tile have a bright orange glaze, while the ground is a mouldy, vertiginous sort of green, like corroded copper. Height (tile only) 19 cm. (Mounted by author on an ebony base. From the author's collection.)



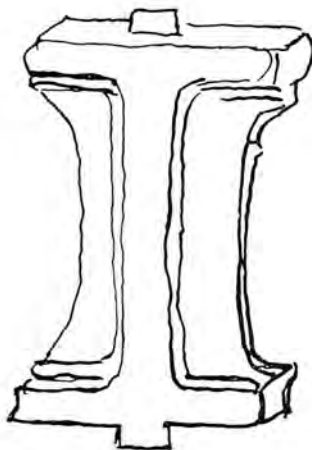
Finial



Roof tiles



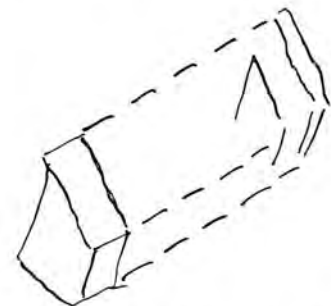
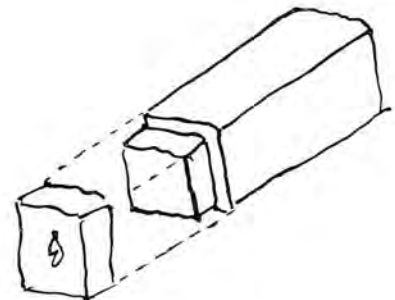
Singha



Mortise and tenon joints



Finial



After: *Sannābōrankhadi
samai Sukhothai* *

Figure 6. Examples of Sukhōthai building pieces.



Figure 7. A Mòn terracotta figure of a *devanama* (*thephanom*: เทพนม), a goddess or celestial being pictured in the attitude of adoration. Excavated from the site of a reliquary tower (*chedī*: เจดีย์) near Suphanburī, west of Bangkok. Height, exclusive of teak base, 15 cm. (Author's collection)



Figure 8. Mòn plaster head of a celestial being. Excavated from the ruins of a *chedī* near Suphanburī, central Thailand.
Height above wood base 12 cm.
(Author's collection.)