

A Study of *White Porcelain Cup and Stand with Inlaid Grass and Flower Design and “Taeiljeon” Inscription*, a Bequest of Lee Hong-kun

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Ceramics of the early Joseon period (朝鮮, 1392–1910) mainly consists of white porcelain and *buncheong* ware (粉青沙器, *buncheong sagi*), and the latter developed out of the waning inlaid celadon tradition of the late Goryeo period (高麗, 918–1392). White porcelain can be classified into the soft-paste white porcelain that succeeded Goryeo white porcelain and the hard-paste porcelain that began to be produced using techniques introduced during the Joseon era. The latter is similar in nature to Chinese white porcelain of the Yuan (元, 1271–1368) and early Ming (明, 1368–1644) periods. Joseon white porcelain was decorated with a variety of techniques, including the inlay method inherited from Goryeo as well as the painting of designs in underglaze cobalt-blue, iron-brown, or copper-red. Some vessels are left completely undecorated.

The inlay technique is the most outstanding decorative feature of Goryeo ceramics, and was originally borrowed from inlaid lacquer and metal wares. This technique began to be applied to the production of ceramics around the twelfth century and continued into the fifteenth century when it was applied to decorate *buncheong* ware and white porcelain.

However, inlaid white porcelain has only rarely been excavated from Joseon kiln sites, and since few extant examples

with absolute dating are available, it becomes difficult to examine the background and circumstances behind the production of this type of ceramic, such as its invention, development, and decline.

In this regard, *White Porcelain Cup and Stand with Inlaid Grass and Flower Design and “Taeiljeon” Inscription* (太一殿銘 象嵌白磁盞托; hereafter “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand), a bequest of Lee Hong-kun (pen name Dongwon) to the National Museum of Korea, provides highly useful information on the relative dating of Joseon inlaid white porcelain based on the “Taeiljeon” inscription on the stand and the decorative design (Fig. 1). Although the purpose of the inscription has yet to be fully understood and consequently calls for further research, recent excavations have provided a wealth of data that allows conjectures about where vessels with such an inscription would have been produced

This paper offers insight into the meaning of “Taeiljeon” through the study of existing literature and the place of production of the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand based on excavation findings. In addition, it analyzes the decorative style of the cup and stand to project the date of production, thereby offering a glimpse into the creation of inlaid white porcelain during the Joseon dynasty.



Fig. 1. White Porcelain Cup and Stand with Inlaid Grass and Flower Design and "Taeiljeon" Inscription. Joseon, 15th century. National Museum of Korea



Fig. 1-1. Stand. Height: 4.1 cm, Diameter: 16.0 cm (mouth); 4.6 cm (foot).



Fig. 1-2. Cup. Height: 5.6 cm, Diameter: 10.3 cm (mouth); 4.7 cm (foot)



Fig. 2. Buncheong Bowl with Stamped Design and "Jangheunggo" Inscription. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 7.0 cm, Diameter: 19.7 cm (mouth). National Museum of Korea

Records Related to Taeiljeon

Apart from tombstones, the "Taeiljeon"-inscribed stand is the only extant example of Joseon inlaid white porcelain bearing an inscription (Fig. 1-1). This inscription is crucial because it provides a clue as to where the cup and stand were used. According to a record from 1417 in the *Joseon wangjo sillok* (朝鮮王朝實錄, Annals of the Joseon dynasty), the government ordered that porcelain or wooden vessels offered as tribute be inscribed with the names of the government offices for which they were to be used (Entry for the 20th day of the fourth month of the 17th year, *Taejong sillok*, vol. 33) (Fig. 2). It is therefore likely that this cup and stand were made for use at a government office after the above order was issued. Most likely, they were used for ritual purposes at the Taeiljeon (太一殿), the government office in charge of conducting Taoist rites called *choje* (醮祭) or *chorye* (醮禮), which were offered to the North Star.

In Taoism, the North Star was deified and referred to as

Taeil (太一, great unity), Taeilseong (太一星, star of great unity), or Taeilsin (太一神, god of great unity). It was believed to bear influence over war and contagious disease. Honoring of Taoist deities continued in the Joseon royal court despite the adoption of Confucianism as the state ideology. In the *Yongjae chonghwa* (慵齋叢話, Assorted writings of Yongjae), Seong Hyeon (成俔, 1439–1504) described the main function and roles of the Sogyeokjeon (昭格殿), the most important Taoist office of the Joseon dynasty, and wrote that rites for the North Star were performed at the Taeiljeon (Jeong Jaeseo 2006, 116–118).

The cup of the "Taeiljeon"-inscribed cup and stand has two long, flat ears (Fig. 1-2). Gold or jade versions of this type of vessel, known as *yangjian* (兩耳盞) or *ssangjian* (雙耳盞) (both meaning "cup with two ears"), were used at state rites according to illustrations of ritual vessels in the "Garye seorye" (嘉禮序例, Introductory remarks on festive ceremonies) of the *Orye* (五禮, The ceremonies of the Five Rites) in the *Sejongsillok* (Fig. 3). While the gold or jade cup in the above illustration differs from the cup of the "Taeiljeon"-inscribed cup and stand in terms of the precise

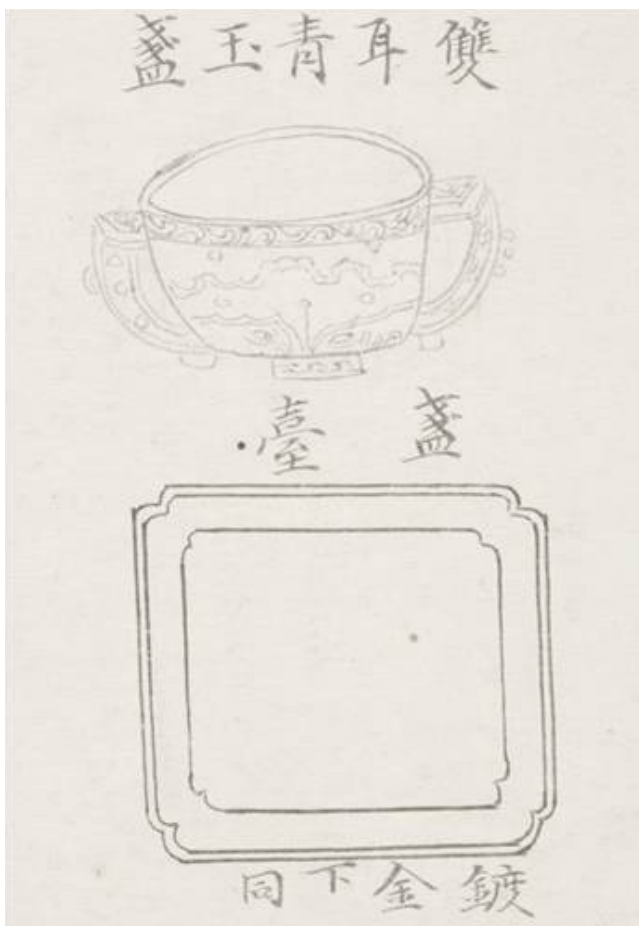


Fig. 3. Illustrations of ritual vessels in the "Garye seorye" of the Orye in the *Sejong sillok* (http://sillok.history.go.kr/id/kda_20004006_002)

form of the ears and design on the body, its use in state rites suggests that less-expensive ceramic cups of the same type were produced for use in the provinces as ritual vessels (Figs. 4 and 5).

Some scholars regard the "Taeiljeon"-inscribed cup and stand as examples of white porcelain used at the royal court in the early Joseon period. Despite its high-level use, however, it is a soft-paste porcelain ware with a crude design. In this regard, it is believed to have been made after the Taeiljeon was established inside Gyeongbokgung Palace and after 1417, when the order was issued to inscribe the names of government offices on porcelain vessels. However, it was probably not made after 1425, when high-quality white porcelain produced at kilns in Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do Province was offered as tribute to Emperor Hongxi (洪熙帝, r. 1424–1425) of Ming China (Entry for the 15th day of the seventh year, *Sejong sillok*, vol. 27) (Kim Youngwon 1995, 127–128). Others view the "Taeiljeon"-inscribed cup and stand as ritual vessels used at the regional Taeiljeon office. This belief is based on records stating that *chorye* rites were performed in an office established in a region that corresponds to the celestial position of the North Star according to the *pungsu* (風水, Ch. *feng shui*) theory (Kwon Sohyun 2003, 81–84). A study of historical records containing such terms as "Taeiljeon," "Taeil," and "Taeilseong" will help illuminate the history and nature of the Taeiljeon and

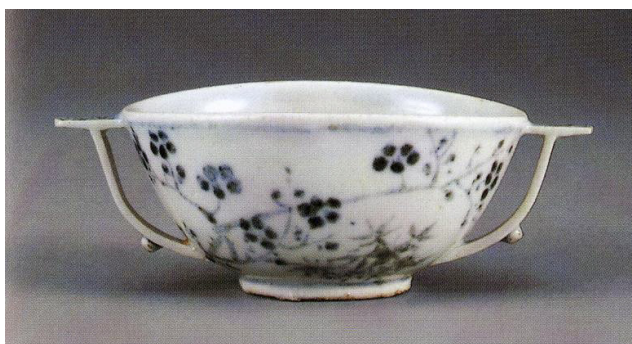


Fig. 4. White Porcelain Cup with Two Ears with Plum Blossom and Bamboo Design in Underglaze Cobalt-blue. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 3.7 cm, Diameter: 8.3 cm (mouth); 3.5 cm (foot). Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art (Kim Jaeyeol 2000, p. 201)



Fig. 5. White Porcelain Cup with Two Ears. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 4.5 cm, Diameter: 7.8 cm (mouth); 3.7 cm (foot). National Museum of Korea

identify the place and time of the use of the "Taeiljeon"-inscribed cup and stand. Records related to Taeil in the *Joseon wangjo sillok* are as listed in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, records continue to mention "Taeil" through the first half of the nineteenth century. Records regarding the relocation of the regional Taeiljeon according to the movement of Taeil in the sky, which may have relation to the "Taeiljeon"-inscribed cup and stand, appear until the first half of the sixteenth century. Later records simply mention Taeil only. The following is a Taeiljeon-related remark from 1412 in the *Taejong sillok*:

"Lanterns were hung up at the palace to hold the rites to Taeil on the first full-moon day of the year, and in this regard the king told

	Year	Details
1	Taejo, Year 2 (1393)	<i>Choje</i> rites for Taeilseong performed at the Sogyeokjeon
2	Taejo, Year 3 (1394)	<i>Choje</i> rites for Taeilseong performed at the Sogyeokjeon
3	Taejo, Year 6 (1397)	The Taeiljeon closed and its functions merged with the Sogyeokjeon
4	Taejong, Year 1 (1401)	[Officials] dispatched to the Sogyeokjeon to perform <i>choje</i> rites to Taeil in the annex hall
5	Taejong, Year 1 (1401)	Performed <i>choje</i> rites for Taeil
6	Taejong, Year 4 (1404)	"As Taeil is the deity of heaven, it has been worshipped and revered for generations . . ."
7	Taejong, Year 5 (1405)	<i>Chorye</i> rites for Taeil performed
8	Taejong, Year 10 (1410)	<i>Chorye</i> rites for Taeil performed at the Sogyeokjeon
9	Taejong, Year 12 (1412)	Lanterns hung up at the palace to hold rites for Taeil on the first full-moon day of the year
10	Taejong, Year 12 (1412)	Command issued that repairs be made to the regional Taeiljeon in Tongju
11	Sejong, Year 2 (1420)	Rainmaking rituals (祈雨祭, <i>giuje</i>) performed for Taeilsin at the Sogyeokjeon
12	Sejong, Year 7 (1425)	"Although the <i>chorye</i> rites performed for Taeilseong are an old practice . . ."
13	Sejong, Year 7 (1425)	Rainmaking rituals performed to Taeilseongsin (太一星神) at the Sogyeokjeon
14	Sejong, Year 16 (1434)	<i>Chorye</i> rites performed at the Sogyeokjeon
15	Sejong, Year 22 (1440)	The propriety of holding rites to Taeil is to be discussed
16	Sejong, Year 25 (1443)	Rainmaking rituals performed to Taeil at the Sogyeokjeon
17	Munjong, Year 1 (1451)	Rainmaking rituals performed to Sajik (社稷, gods of land and grains) and <i>chorye</i> rites performed to Taeil
18	Sejo, Year 4 (1458)	The rainmaking rituals and <i>chorye</i> rites were performed to Taeil at the Sogyeokjeon and rain fell overnight
19	Sejongjong, Year 7 (1476)	". . . after 45 years, Taeil is moving in that direction. During Goryeo, the rites were held in Tongcheon, and with the foundation [of Joseon], the 45th year [since the previous movement] fell in 1434 and the rites were moved to Uiseong . . ."
20	Sejongjong, Year 7 (1476)	Choe Howon has determined that Taeon should be the location for the <i>choje</i> rites for Taeilseong, but the senior ministers are to be further consulted
21	Sejongjong, Year 7 (1476)	The officials of the Gwansanggam (觀象監, office of astronomy and geomancy) discussed the relocation of the Taeilgung (太一宮, Palace of Taeil)
22	Sejongjong, Year 8 (1477)	Taeiljeon [Taeilseong] moves from <i>geobang</i> (乾方) to <i>ganbang</i> (艮方), and from <i>ganbang</i> to <i>sonbang</i> (巽方)
23	Sejongjong, Year 8 (1477)	The Taeiljeon is to be moved to Taeon in Chungcheong-do Province
24	Sejongjong, Year 12 (1481)	"If we dispatch Taoist masters (道流, <i>doryu</i>) of the Sogyeokseo (昭格署) to the <i>chambong</i> (參奉) official of the Taeiljeon . . ."
25	Yeonsan, Year 8 (1502)	The high officials discussed Choe Howon's appeal to publish and disseminate the <i>Taailgyeong</i> (太一經, Taoist scriptures on Taeil)
26	Jungjong, Year 1 (1506)	"Please reinstate the <i>chambong</i> post at the Taeiljeon as in the past . . ."
27	Jungjong, Year 6 (1511)	"The Song Emperor Renzong (仁宗, r. 1022–1063) prayed early for rain at the Taeilgung and considerable rain fell overnight..."
28	Jungjong, Year 11 (1516)	Closure of the Sogyeokseo and related work discussed
29	Jungjong, Year 13 (1518)	"Regarding the rites, there are the Samcheongjeon (三清殿) inside and the Taeiljeon outside . . ."
30	Jungjong, Year 13 (1518)	"The issues regarding the Taeiljeon or the Sogyeokseo have not suddenly become controversial, but have been pointed out by many in the past...These institutions are ultimately related to Taoism. At a time when all heresies have been abolished, how can we leave the Taeiljeon as it is?"
31	Jungjong, Year 13 (1518)	"Though the Sogyeokseo has been closed down, the Taeiljeon in Chungcheong-do Province has yet to be demolished accordingly..."
32	Jungjong, Year 17 (1522)	"Examining the works undertaken at the Sogyeokseo, there were very many, such as <i>samgyecho</i> (三界醮), <i>yeongbocho</i> (靈寶醮), or <i>taeulcho</i> (太一醮) . . . It is right to reduce the costs at least . . ."
33	Jungjong, Year 18 (1523)	"As we pray to Taeil, I wish to pray for the same things at Jongmyo (宗廟, royal shrine) and the Sajikdan (社稷壇, state altar) and have discussed the matter many times with my officials but . . ."
34	Jungjong, Year 23 (1528)	Make repairs to the Taeiljeon
35	Jungjong, Year 35 (1540)	An order was made to write down a provision on the rainmaking rituals so that people can use it as grounds for the future
36	Myeongjong, Year 5 (1550)	"A meteor has fallen to the south of Taeilseong but . . ."
37	Myeongjong, Year 9 (1554)	"As the <i>choje</i> rites are held for Taeil and the Buddha at the Sogyeokseo . . ."
38	Injo, Year 21 (1643)	The meteor moves from Taeilseong to . . .
39	Jeongjo, Year 22 (1798)	"Though Taeil is held precious . . ."
40	Suho, Accession year (1800)	"Taeil is in the center . . ."
41	Sunjo, Year 30 (1830)	". . . [he] sought Taeil. . ."

Table 1. Records related to Taeil in the *Joseon wangjo sillok*

Heo Jo (許稠, 1369–1439) from the Ministry of Rites to consult the classical texts and report to him. Heo Jo informed the king that he had found no mention [of the Taeil rites] in the *Wenxian tongkao* (文獻通考, Comprehensive examination of literature) from the Song dynasty but only in the *Sangjeongnye* (詳定禮, Prescribed ritual text) from the preceding dynasty [Goryeo], which states

that the rite has its origins in the rites to Taeil held during the Han dynasty." (Entry for the 15th day of the first month of the 12th year, *Taejongsillok*, vol. 23)

The above record indicates that the *chorye* rites for Taeil

were initiated during the Han dynasty in China, and that Taeil was worshipped across the ages and into Joseon. Another related record comes from 1404 in the *Taejong sillok*:

“As Taeil is the deity of heaven, it has been worshipped and revered from generation to generation since the Han dynasty, and many times wonderfully good omens have been received. Therefore, in the previous dynasty the Taoist office Daecheongwan (大清觀) was established in addition to Bogwongung (福源宮), Sogyeokjeon, and Jeongsasaek (淨事色), and a separate office was established [and relocated] according to the movement of Taeil in the sky—from *ganbang* (between the east and the north) to *sonbang* (between the east and the south) to *gonbang* (坤方, between west and south) to *geonbang* (between west and north)—and the officials held the *chorye* rites there Because Taeil is a benevolent star, there are no outbreaks of disease where Taeil stays and the nation is at peace.” (Entry for the 20th day of the second month of the fourth year, *Taejong sillok*, vol. 7)

As this record states, during the Goryeo dynasty there was a regional Taoist office in charge of performing rites in the location corresponding to the position of Taeil in the sky. The *chorye* rites were held there to ward off misfortune and disaster. Major events such as warfare could take place only after the *chorye* rites had been held. The above record also demonstrates that not only during the Goryeo dynasty but also in Joseon there was an office established according to the celestial position of Taeil and that the *chorye* rites were held there. Joseon was a Confucian state, but from the foundation of the nation and that the reign of its first king Taejo (太祖, r. 1392–1398), Taoist rites were held at the Sogyeokjeon within the capital, and the Taeiljeon and the Samcheongjeon formed part of the Sogyeokjeon. Along with the Bogwongung and the Singyeokjeon (神格殿), the Sogyeokjeon was one of the three main Taoist offices established under the growing influence of Taoism during the Goryeo period when there were as many as 15 Taoist offices. However, with the foundation of Joseon as a self-proclaimed Confucian nation, these offices were all destroyed in 1392, except for the Sogyeokjeon. In 1466, the 12th year of the reign of King Sejo (世祖, r. 1455–1468), the Sogyeokjeon was renamed the Sogyeokseo and reduced in scale. Although the Sogyeokseo retained its function as the office in charge of conducting Taoist rituals, such as the rites to the Three Pure Ones (三清星辰, *samcheong seong-sin*), debate continued about its abolishment. Finally, in 1518, the 13th year of the reign of King Jungjong (中宗, r. 1506–1544), the Sogyeokseo was closed down following the demands of Jo Gwangjo and other Confucian scholars. It was later briefly revived, but was shut for good during the reign of King Seonjo (宣祖, r. 1567–1608) after the Japanese invasions of the Korean

Peninsula (1592–1598) (Gong Junwon 2009, 652–653).

Evidently, during the Joseon dynasty the *chorye* rites for Taeil were held both at the royal palace and in the regional Taeiljeon office. The Taeiljeon at the palace was merged with the Sogyeokjeon, as evidenced by a record from 1397 stating “The Taeiljeon was closed and merged with the Sogyeokjeon” (Entry for the 29th day of the eighth month of the sixth year, *Taejo sillok*, vol. 12). A record from six years later indicates that an order was made for repairs to the Taeiljeon in Tongju (present-day Tongcheon, Gangwon-do Province). Regarding the regional Taeiljeon office, a record from 1277 in the *Seongjong sillok* reports:

“Taeil moves from one palace to the next every 45 years, from *geonbang* to *ganbang*, from *ganbang* to *sonbang*, from *sonbang* to *gonbang*, from *gonbang* to *geonbang*, and from *geonbang* to *jungung* (中宮, center)” (Entry for the 18th day of the intercalary second month of the eighth year, *Seongjong sillok*, vol. 77)

The above indicates that Taeil passed through five directions, remaining in each celestial position for 45 years before moving on to the next. The location of the regional Taeiljeon office was changed according to the movement of Taeil in order to hold the *chorye* rites at the proper place. Records exist of discussions over the region that should correspond to the celestial position of Taeil. In 1476, the third royal secretary Im Sahong (任士洪, 1445–1506) said:

“Taeil moves its position every 45 years. During the Goryeo period, the rites were held at Tongcheon. In the present kingdom [of Joseon], the 45th year [since the previous movement] fell in the *gabin* year (甲寅, 1434), and the office for the rites were then moved to Uiseong. The *musul* year (戊戌, 1478) will be the next 45th year, so the rites must be moved to *gonbang* [the next position of Taeil]. Sogyeokseo says that Mt. Manisan will be the place that corresponds to *gonbang*” (Entry for the 24th day of the eighth month of the seventh year, *Seongjong sillok*, vol. 70)

After saying this, Im suggested that the king have the *pungsu* master Choe Howon (崔瀨元, born 1431) identify the proper region to hold the *chorye* rites to Taeil and then discuss the appropriateness of Choe’s choice. Five days later, Im is recorded again, this time saying:

“Choe Howon told me that, having studied the directions, he found Mt. Manisan to correspond to *taebang* (兌方, west), and that Taein in Chungcheong-do Province was the true *gonbang*. Hence, he said that the rites to Taeil should be transferred to Taein. However, this cannot be relied upon and I pray that you have all precedents from the past be consulted.” (Entry for the 29th day of the eighth month of the seventh year, *Seongjong sillok*, vol. 70)

From this we can see that Taeon was considered as the next location for the *chorye* rites to Taeil. Aside from the records noted above, there are several others from the reign of King Seongjong (成宗, r. 1469–1494) that reveal concerns over where the Taeiljeon should be established according to the celestial position of Taeil. Discussions continued as to where the Taeiljeon should be relocated after Tongcheon and Uiseong, and in 1477, Taeon once again came under consideration as the next location. The *Dongguk yeoji seungnam* (東國輿地勝覽, Augmented survey of the geography of Korea) and the *Daejeon hoetong* (大典會通, Compendium of the Great Code) state that in 1478, the Taeiljeon was moved from Uiseong to Taeon. Today, Taeiljeon sites remain at both locations.

From these records, it appears that the Taeiljeon inside the royal palace ceased to function as an independent office after it was merged with the Sogyeokjeon in 1397. From the time of the Goryeo period to 1434, the regional *chorye* rites were held in Tongcheon, Gangwon-do Province. Over 45 years from 1434 to 1478, they were held in Uiseong, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province. Thereafter they were held in Taeon, Chungcheongnam-do Province.

If the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand were the property of a Taeiljeon office, four possibilities present themselves: first, it was used at the Taeiljeon office that was located inside the palace until 1397; second, it was used at the Taeiljeon that was in Tongcheon until 1434; third it was used at the Taeiljeon in Uiseong from 1434 to 1478; and fourth, it was used at the Taeiljeon in Taeon from 1478 onwards. The next section of this paper attempts to determine in which of these four periods the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand were produced and used based on analysis of the design and the place of production.

Analysis of the Design on the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed Cup and Stand

The cup has a mouth that turns inwards, a yellowish-white glaze, and fine crackling over the entire surface. It was fired with the foot placed on spurs made of fire clay mixed with sand. Two thin lines run around the cup at the top and bottom, and in the space in between is a simplified grass and flower design incised in double lines. The stand has an everted rim and shows traces of being stack-fired on spurs of fire clay mixed with sand.

Extant white porcelain vessels with inlaid designs, both heirlooms and those excavated from kiln sites, can be divided into five types according to their motifs and the style of the major design: scroll type, varied scroll type, floral spray type, double-line grass and flower type, and other types (e.g., dragon design,



Fig. 6. White Porcelain Bowl with Inlaid Lotus Scroll Design. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 7.6 cm, Diameter: 17.5 cm (mouth); 6.2 cm (foot). National Museum of Korea



Fig. 7. White Porcelain Jar with Inlaid Lotus Scroll Design. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 18.2 cm, Diameter: 9.1 cm (mouth). National Museum of Korea

fish design, rope design) (Kwon Sohyun 2003, 99–101). Examples with scroll designs can further be divided into two categories: those with a flowing S-shaped scroll, as seen on *White Porcelain Bowl with Inlaid Lotus Scroll Design* and *White Porcelain Jar with Inlaid Lotus Scroll Design*, both in the collection of the National Museum of Korea, and those with a variation of a leafy scroll design, such as a highly simplified scroll form, as can be found on *White Porcelain Jar with Inlaid Peony Scroll Design* in the collection of the National Museum of Korea and *White Porcelain Bowl Shard with Inlaid Lotus Scroll Design* that was excavated from Usan-ri kiln site No. 17 in Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do Province (Figs. 6 through 9).

The floral spray design can be seen on *White Porcelain Bottle with Inlaid Lotus Design* in the collection of the National Museum of Korea (Fig. 10). Other types of designs inlaid on white porcelain



Fig. 8. White Porcelain Jar with Inlaid Peony Scroll Design. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 12.0 cm. National Museum of Korea



Fig. 9. White Porcelain Bowl Shard with Inlaid Lotus Scroll Design. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 5.3 cm. Excavated from the Usan-ri kiln site No. 17 in Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do Province. National Museum of Korea



Fig. 10. White Porcelain Bottle with Inlaid Lotus Design. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 33.5 cm, Diameter: 7.6 cm (mouth); 9.6 cm (foot). National Museum of Korea



Fig. 11. White Porcelain Jar with Inlaid Rope Design. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 22.2 cm, Diameter: 10.8 cm (mouth); 11.5 cm (foot). National Museum of Korea



Fig. 12. White Porcelain Jar with Inlaid Entwined Tree Design. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 17.1 cm, Diameter: 9.0 cm (mouth). National Museum of Korea



Fig. 13-1. White Porcelain Flat Bottle with Inlaid Grass and Flower Design. Joseon, 1466. Height: 22.1 cm, Diameter: 3.7 cm (mouth); 7.7 cm (foot). Excavated from the Tomb of Lady Jeong of Jinyang-gun. Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art (Kim Jaeyeol 2000, p. 74)



Fig. 13-2. White Porcelain Inlaid Tombstone. Joseon, 1466. 20.4 x 38.6 cm. Excavated from the Tomb of Lady Jeong of Jinyang-gun. Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art (Kim Jaeyeol 2000, p. 73)



Fig. 14. White Porcelain Bottle with Inlaid Grass and Flower Design. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 14.7 cm, Diameter: 4 cm (mouth); 5.9 cm (foot). National Museum of Korea



Fig. 15. *Buncheong Flat Bottle with Incised Grass and Flower Design.* Joseon, 15th century. Height: 23.7 cm, Diameter: 5.4 cm (mouth); 8.2 cm (foot). National Museum of Korea



Fig. 16. *Buncheong Bottle with Incised Grass and Flower Design.* Joseon, 15th century. Height: 19.0 cm, Diameter: 12.3 cm (mouth); 5.3 cm (foot). National Museum of Korea



Fig. 17. *Buncheong Bottle with Incised Grass and Flower Design.* Joseon, 15th century. Height: 26.5 cm, Diameter: 6.5 cm (mouth); 8.2 cm (foot). National Museum of Korea

include rope designs, entwined tree designs, fish designs, and dragon designs (Figs. 11 and 12).

The design on the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand features elements of scroll designs, which spread across the surface like vines, as well as those of floral spray designs, which rise up from the bottom. However, the design on this cup and stand can be more precisely classified as a double-line grass and flower design, since two sets of lines constitute the design along with other motifs. A similar design can be seen on *White Porcelain Flat Bottle with Inlaid Grass and Flower Design* in the collection of Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art (Fig. 13-1). Highly unique in appearance, this flat bottle has a mouth and foot in the shape of a truncated circular cone and a disk-shaped body. The body is a near-perfect circle which grows thinner toward the sides so that the edge is almost sharp and blade-like, similar to a discus used in athletics. The bottle is made of soft-paste, characteristic of the first half of the Joseon period, and displays a light yellowish color with fine crackling over the entire surface. The black inlaid design on each side of the flat body is composed of a circle indicated in double lines in the center and a double-line border around the outer edge. In the center is a simple floral design, while in the outer register is a grass and flower design executed in double lines that is a variation of a lotus or peony scroll. At the bottom where the body joins the foot is a single lotus blossom done in simple lines.

This flat bottle was excavated from the tomb of Lady Jeong of Jinyang-gun, mother of Kim Yun, magistrate of Eonyang County in Gyeongsang-do Province. The tomb’s location is in present-day Buksang-myeon, Geochang-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do Province. Also discovered from the tomb is *White Porcelain Inlaid Tombstone*, which features seven vertical inlaid lines that divide the surface into seven sections in which the epigraph is inscribed

(Fig. 13-2). The section in the middle bears the inscription “Tomb of Lady Jeong of Jinyang-gun” (晉陽郡令人鄭氏之墓), indicating who is buried in the tomb, while the rest of the inscription contains information on her family, the cause of her death, and its year. Lady Jeong died in 1466, suggesting that the flat bottle would have been made around the same time. Apart from tombstones, this bottle is the only inlaid white porcelain artifact from the Joseon period that can be clearly dated.

Another vessel showing similar design characteristics is *White Porcelain Bottle with Inlaid Grass and Flower Design* in the collection of the National Museum of Korea (Fig. 14). Here too, a grass and flower design executed in two thin lines rises up from the bottom of the vessel. Moreover, there are two pattern bands, one at the shoulder and another at the bottom. That on the shoulder features a variation of a scroll design executed in a single line, and the one at the bottom shows a lotus petal design. The scroll band at the shoulder is a feature commonly seen on *buncheong* bowls and bottles, which indicates a link between inlaid white porcelain and inlaid *buncheong* ware.

Designs made with two parallel lines are commonly found on *buncheong* wares with incised grass and flower designs (Kim Youngwon 1982, 4–6), a prime example being the *Buncheong Flat Bottle with Incised Grass and Flower Design* in the collection of the National Museum of Korea (Figs. 15 through 17). Hence, the similarity between the inlaid grass and flower designs created with double lines on white porcelain and the incised designs of the same type of pattern on *buncheong* ware provide a basis for estimating the date of the inlaid white porcelain vessels. The expression of simplified grass and flower designs in double lines can be compared with the grass and flower designs on numerous *buncheong* jars and bottles that were excavated at the Chunghyo-dong kiln site on Mt. Mudeungsan in Gwangju



Fig. 18. *Buncheong Jar Shard with Incised Grass and Flower Design.* Joseon, c. 1457. Height: 12.8 cm. Excavated from Chunghyo-dong (District W2, layer 8), Gwangju Metropolitan City. Gwangju National Museum



Fig. 19. *Buncheong Bottle Shard with Incised Grass and Flower Design.* Joseon, c. 1451–1477. Height: 17.0 cm. Excavated from Chunghyo-dong (District W2, layer 6), Gwangju Metropolitan City. Gwangju National Museum

Metropolitan City from the layer dated to around 1457 (Figs. 18 and 19).

Study of the Place and Date of Production

Examination of the place of production

As previously mentioned, it can be presumed that cups with one ear on either side were produced for ritual use. Among the ritual cups with two ears excavated from kiln sites in Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do Province, and those from regional kiln sites including Chunghyo-dong in Gwangju Metropolitan City, none from the Gyeonggi-do kiln sites have two straight, flat ears. In



Fig. 20. *White Porcelain Cup Shards with Two Ears.* Joseon, c. 1457. Height: 4.6 cm. Excavated from Chunghyo-dong (District W2, layer 8), Gwangju Metropolitan City. Gwangju National Museum



Fig. 21. *White Porcelain Cup Shard with Two Ears.* Joseon, 15th century. Height: 4.4 cm. Excavated from Sabu-dong, Goryeong, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province. Daegu National Museum



Fig. 21-1. Detail (base)

contrast, cups with two ears made with soft rather than hard paste were produced at regional kilns, especially the Chunghyo-dong kilns, which have layers clearly dated to the fifteenth century (Ahn Sunghee 2005, 153–156) (Fig. 20).

The shape of the ears and the form of the cups excavated from Chunghyo-dong demonstrate certain differences from the cup of the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand. Recently, however, a shard of a highly similar cup with two ears was excavated from the Sabu-ri kiln site in Goryeong, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province, where both white porcelain and *buncheong* wares were produced (Figs. 21 and 21-1). Like in



Fig. 22. White Porcelain Flat Bottle Shard with Inlaid Design. Joseon, 15th century. Height: 17.6 cm. Excavated from Sabu-dong, Goryeong, Gyeongsangbuk-do Province. Daegu National Museum

the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand, the mouth is turned inwards, the glaze is a yellowish-white color, the entire surface is covered with fine crackling, and the foot shows signs of having been fired on spurs made of fire clay mixed with sand. It, too, was made with soft paste, and the shape of the ears is also distinctly similar to that seen in the cup of the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand. It therefore furthers discussion on where the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand were made. Moreover, while none of the relics from the Sabu-ri kiln site feature the same kind of design as that on the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand, the finds of a shard of an inlaid white porcelain flat bottle and other relics suggests that the Chunghyo-dong kilns were a major production site for soft-paste inlaid white porcelain (Fig. 22).

The *Jiriji* (地理志), the geography section of the *Sejong sillok*, which was compiled from 1424 to 1432 and published in 1454 together with the *Sejong sillok*, records 139 porcelain kilns and 185 stoneware kilns in the chapter “Tosanjo” (土産條, local products). It contains a record on the local products of Goryeong-hyeon, Gyeongsang-do Province, which states, “In Yehyeon-ri

to the east of Goryeong there is a kiln producing high-quality ceramics.” The location mentioned is believed to correspond to today’s Sabu-ri in Gisan-dong, Goryeong. The Sabu-ri site has yielded a large number of shards of not only *buncheong* vessels with stamped designs and inscriptions including the Chinese characters 仁 (*in*, benevolence), 殿 (*jeon*, hall), 河 (*ha*, river), 世 (*se*, world), and 大 (*dae*, large), but also shards of white porcelain bowls, dishes, bottles, jars, and stem cups, as well as a number of saggars. Used for the firing of high-quality wares, the saggars offer a glimpse into the kind of production undertaken at the Sabu-ri kilns. The quantity of saggars discovered is second only to the quantity of *buncheong* ware found there, and many of the saggars have shards of white porcelain stuck to their interiors (Daedong Cultural Heritage Research Institute 2012, 151–155).

As to the period during which the Sabu-ri kilns were active, considering that the *Jiriji* is a record of the period between 1424 and 1432, the Sabu-ri kilns must have been in operation between the 1420s and 1430s. Moreover, some *buncheong* bowls and dishes excavated from the site feature stamped designs roughly brushed over with a coat of white slip, rather than densely stamped designs. They show a combination of stamped and brushed slip techniques, a characteristic that Kang Kyungsook dates to 1450–1480 (Kang Kyungsook 2000, 137–152), so the operation of the Chunghyo-dong kilns is presumed to have continued through this period.

Examination of the date of production

This section of the paper provides an overview of the place and date of production of the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand. Based on records related to the Taeiljeon, there are four possible periods in which the cup and stand could have been used.

First, the period prior to 1397 can be ruled out, since the cup and stand bears the inscription of “Taeiljeon” and thus must have been produced after the 1417 issuance of the order to mark all ceramic and wooden vessels paid as tribute to the state with the name of the government office in which they were to be used.

Strata (Date)	Type	Inlaid	Stamped	Sgraffito	Incised	Brushed white slip	White porcelain
Area E2-W1 (1424–1432)	Large bowls, dishes		○				
	Others	○		○			
Area W3	Large bowls, dishes		○				
	Others				●		
Area W2, Layer 9–7 (around 1457)	Large bowls, dishes		○				●
	Others				○		
Area W2, Layer 6 (1451–1477)	Large bowls, dishes		○				
	Others				○		
Area W2, Layer 3 (1477–1483)	Large bowls, dishes		○			○	○
	Others				○	○	
Area W2, Layer 2 (1490–1510)	Large bowls, dishes					○	○
	Others						

Table 2. Finds from the Chunghyo-dong kiln site (● indicates a small number of relics)

Second, it is said that the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand were excavated in Gyeongsang-do Province, but regardless of whether or not this is true, it is highly likely that they were indeed made in that province, judging from their shape, quality, and the form and style of the design (Choi Sunu 1964, 566–567). Factors that support this include the flat bottle that was excavated alongside a tombstone dated to 1466 from the Geochang region of Gyeongsang-do Province (Figs. 13-1 and 13-2); the shard of a cup with two ears excavated from the Sabu-ri kiln site in Goryeong; and the discovery of other inlaid white porcelain vessels made of soft paste. In addition, when the grass and flower design executed in double lines on the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand is compared with similar designs on *buncheong* vessels excavated from the fifteenth-century layer at the Chunghyo-dong kiln site in Gwangju Metropolitan City, the cup and stand can be dated to around 1457 when *buncheong* vessels with similar incised designs were produced.

Vessels excavated from the Chunghyo-dong kiln site offer insight into when the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand were produced since the archaeological strata of the site give clear evidence of the production dates of the excavated vessels. The excavated finds can be classified by date and design, as shown in Table 2 (Gwangju National Museum 1993, 45–139).

Incised *buncheong* vessels were found in large numbers in three layers at the Chunghyo-dong kiln site: Area W2, Layers 9 through 7; Area W2, Layer 6; and Area W2, Layer 3. Vessels with grass and flower designs in double lines similar to the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand were excavated from Area W2, Layer 8, which is dated to around 1457, and Area W2, Layer 6, dated to 1451–1477.

As for the use of the cup as a ritual vessel, a comparison of *buncheong* ritual vessels excavated from the Chunghyo-dong kiln site with the illustrations of ritual vessels in the *Orye*, *Sejongillok* shows that no overt changes were made to ritual vessels between 1420 and 1450, but afterwards *buncheong* ritual vessels underwent gradual changes such as exaggeration and simplification of their form and design. Judging from excavated finds, this period of change is generally considered to be 1450–1470 (Chung Sora 1999, 19). That is, after 1450, a departure from the standard model of ritual vessels occurs through simplification and transformation. Therefore, the simplified designs of the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand, which differ from the standard designs in the illustration of the *Sejongillok*, can be said to exemplify a characteristic feature of ritual vessels of this time.

Through a comparative study of the relics excavated from the Sabu-ri kiln site in Goryeong and the Chunghyo-dong kiln site in Gwangju Metropolitan City, it can be concluded that the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand were produced for tribute purposes sometime between 1434 and 1478, when their intended place of usage, the Taeiljeon, was located in Uiseong.

Conclusion

Inlaid white porcelain from the Joseon dynasty shows how the inlay technique from the Goryeo dynasty was eventually applied to white porcelain. However, there has been a lack of understanding and awareness of this type of white porcelain. This study of the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand has provided momentum for the examination of the design as well as the places and dates of production of Joseon white porcelain featuring inlaid designs.

The fifteenth and sixteen centuries were a period of transition from Goryeo celadon to Joseon white porcelain. This period saw the emergence, development, and disappearance of *buncheong* ware. As pure white porcelain became firmly established as representative of the Confucian ideology of Joseon and continued to be produced through the end of the dynasty, the tradition of inlaid white porcelain was eventually put to an end. The emergence, development, and disappearance of inlaid white porcelain is therefore an important progression that reflects an important facet of ceramic history of the first half of the Joseon dynasty. This was studied through the “Taeiljeon”-inscribed cup and stand, and it is hoped that great strides can be made in research in this area as more information related to Joseon inlaid white porcelain becomes available.

Translated by Cho Yoonjung

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