

Sangalok Wares

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Sangalok is the name given to a kind of Thai ceramics which was produced during the Sukhothai period from about late 13th to late 15th century AD in the area of the present Sukhothai province. "Sangalok" is supposed to be a corruption of the name of an ancient city "Sawankalok", now a district of Sukhothai province.

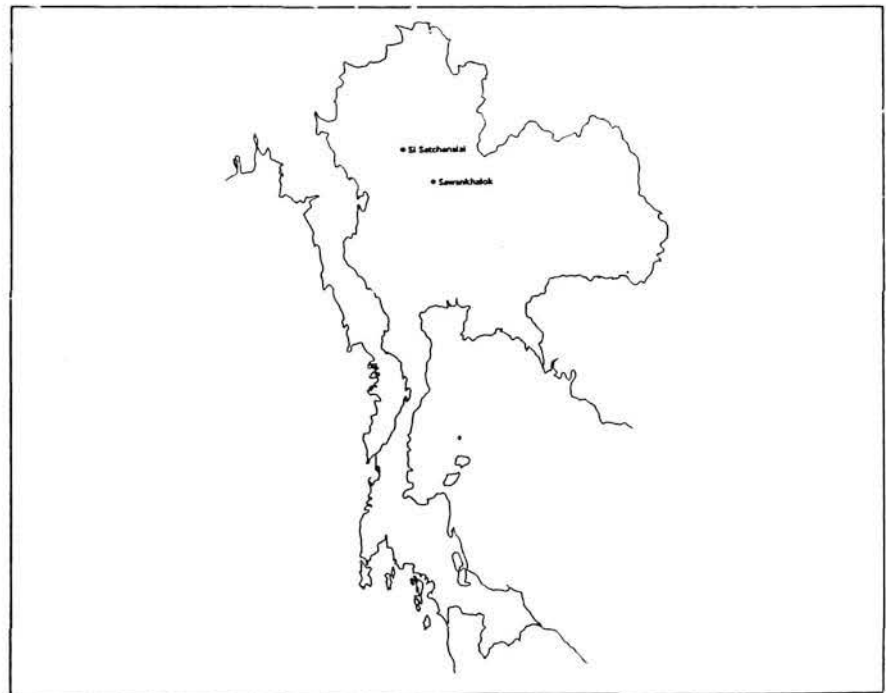
The kiln sites of Sangalok ware are situated at latitude 17° 47' 36". There are two important sites:

1. Sukhothai kilnsite is in the old Sukhothai district and produced plates and bowl with white glaze and underglazed black designs with the patterns of fish in a circle, fish and weeds in a circle and discs.
2. Koh Noi or Payang kilnsite is in the Si Satchanalai district. In this area there are two sites one called *Tao Yak* (Tao means "kiln"; Yak means "guardian" or "demon") which produced architectural figures and decoration. The other,

sited about 1 kilometre from the former is called *Tao Payang*. It produced many kinds of objects with green or celadon glaze, creamy white glaze, brown glaze whilst also producing objects with painted underglaze black and overglazed gold brown designs.

Formerly, it was thought that the objects with dark brown glaze were produced separately in other kilns, called the *Chaliang* kilns

"Chaliang" is the old name of Sawankalok which during the 15th century was merged with the old Si Satchanalai city to form the city of Sawankalok. Later, Sawankalok was again divided into two districts: Sawankalok and Si Satchanalai. However, excavations and sherds wasted during firing show that the brown glazed objects were fired in the same kiln at Payang as the other kinds of celadon or white wares.



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A map of Thailand showing the kiln sites

Both Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai kilnsites are called Tao Turiang. Turiang is supposed to be a corruption of the name "Fuliang", an important kilnsite in Ching-te-chen in China.

Description of Wares

The ceramics from the Sukhothai kilnsite are not of good quality. The claybody is stoneware but rather rough with painted slip before glaze. Three basic design were used: a fish in a circle, a fish and weeds in a circle and discs painted in underglaze black.

The Sangalok wares from Si Satchanalai kilnsite have a good quality - the claybody was delicate and the colours ranged from red to white grey. Many patterns of flowers, fish and weed, phoenix, spiral etc. were represented and done with high craftsmanship. They were glazed straight to the body without slip.

Construction of Sangalok kilns

Sangalok kilns usually were constructed with bricks in an arched ovoid form. They were similar to the kilns of Jingdezhen in Kiangsi, China, but much smaller. The kiln was divided into three parts - the front for fire, the centre for the wares and the rear for the chimney. However, some kilns were also constructed with clay. Excavations revealed the presence of many styles of kilns.

The wares or objects ready for firing were placed in the kiln by

resting them on long supports fixed in the floor. Other were piled with clay discs having 5 - 6 spurs inserted in-between. Traces of these spurmarks appear on the Sangalok plates or bowls except the one on top. This peculiar feature is very common in the Sangalok wares of Sutkothai kiln; rare in wares from the Sawankalok kiln. In both kilnsites, the potters never used saggars for firing the wares as was practised in China.

Styles

Many styles of Sangalok wares produced for different purposes exist, for example:

1. Wares for religious purposes specifically for Buddhism in the form of images of Buddha and his disciples and models of stupa;
2. Architectural decoration in the forms of door-guardians (demons), rooftiles, divinities, finials, balustrades, etc;
3. Utensils for daily living such as plates, bowls, bottles, jars, covered boxes, kendis, lamps, stemplates, etc;
4. Toys or ceremonial objects such as figurines, warriors, water droppers, mother and child figures, erotic figures, man and cock figures, chess pieces, animal figurines, etc.

Types

The claybody of Sangalok wares

is stoneware, fired at the temperature of about 1150-1280°C. The various types are classified according to their glaze and decorative designs: green or celadon glaze, dark brown glaze, creamy-white glaze, white glaze painted with underglazed black designs, white glaze painted with overglazed gold-brownish designs, white glaze with inglazed gold brownish designs, and semi-stoneware painted with red enamel on slip.

The Sangalok wares have a close affinity with those produced in Lopburi and China. Each style is described below.

1. Lopburi style

Lopburi ware is also known as Khmer ware. It can be seen in the form of animal figures and large vessels which were used for the storage of dry food or water. All of these objects have the characteristic brown glaze.

2. Chinese style

The wares are in the form of celadon plates with everted rims similar to those produced in China, at the Longquan kilns, during the Yuan dynasty (14th century A.D.). Other forms are the pear-shaped and gourd-shaped bottles.

This similarity shows that the Sukhothai Kingdom had a relationship with its neighbouring areas and countries.

Samples of the Sangalok wares

