

Special Feature

# Perception of Goryeo Celadon in the Context of the Late Joseon Period

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## Issues

This study will look at the following questions: how did Goryeo celadon, which flourished during the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392) and was known to contemporary China and Japan, suddenly drew interest from Korean and Japanese scholars in the modern period (late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) when it started to be collected and reproduced, and even exhibited around the world; and how was it perceived during the Joseon dynasty (1392-1919).

Starting from the twentieth century, Korean scholars such as Go Yuseop 高裕燮 (1905-1944) as well as Japanese scholars, took an interest in studying Goryeo celadon. This interest grew after large Goryeo kiln sites were discovered in Daegu-myeon, Gangjin in 1913 and the Japanese Governor General office of Korea led a ground survey and conducted site mapping. Goryeo celadon gained fame with the establishment of the Yi Royal Family Museum, and the activities carried out by the Yi Royal Family Art Manufactory (Jang 2005; Bak 2004) (Figure 1).

Although Goryeo had a long history of porcelain production and made a variety of green and white ceramics, modern circumstances do not explain how Goryeo became synonymous with “*bisaek cheongja*” (jade-green color celadon). This leads to another question about what circumstances in Joseon society triggered modern scholars’ interest in Goryeo celadon specifically, how did contemporaries perceive it and what was

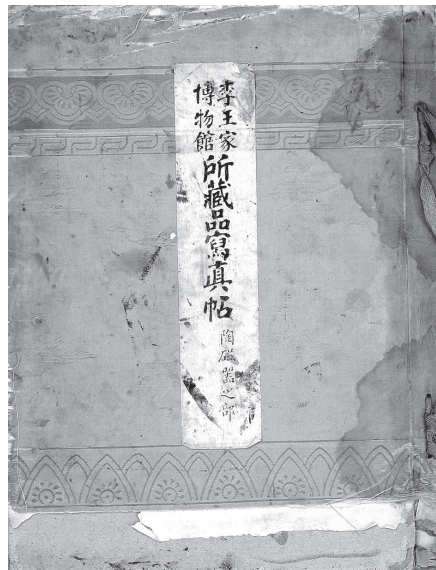


Figure 1. Photo Album of Yi Royal Family Museum's Collection-Ceramic Section, Kimdaljin Art Archives & Museum

the collective memory of Goryeo celadon accumulated over generations during the Joseon period.

The examination of different documents, including historical records and collections of literary works regarding Goryeo, finds that the Joseon period is significant in constructing a memory of Goryeo celadon. Starting from the late eighteenth century, Goryeo celadon was collected and appreciated. In particular, the writings of literati and historians show that they understood Goryeo celadon as *bisaek* celadons. This almost coincides with the time when Goryeo's history was being reconsidered and written during the late Joseon period. Around this time a great number of woodblock-printed books from China poured into Joseon and were frequently reproduced by block printing or hand copying. In the process, texts on Goryeo were circulated. This means that the accumulation of information and the formation of understanding Goryeo were already in progress through texts and physical artifacts in the Joseon period.

This study aims to introduce and make an in-depth analysis of the accounts of Goryeo celadon found in the documents produced during the Joseon period. It intends to find the relationships between these texts and to explore their implications in the study of ceramic history. Also, it will revisit important documents which associated Goryeo celadon with the concept of *bisaek* from Goryeo times until the modern period.

## Descriptions of Goryeo Celadon in Historical Records of the Late Joseon Period

During the Song and Yuan periods (from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries), Goryeo celadons were recognized as celebrated artworks or mentioned as commodities that were collected and valued in China and Japan. Glosses such as “the *mise* (greenish color) celadon of Goryeo” (*Gaoli mise*, 高麗秘色), “Goryeo kiln” (*Gaoliyao* 高麗窯), “greenish vessels” (*qingqi* 青器), and “greenish celadon” (*lüci* 綠瓷) as well as object names such as incense burner (*xianglu* 香爐), ceramic incense burner (*taolu* 陶爐), and wine jar (*zun* 樽) demonstrate that Goryeo celadon was establishing itself as a distinctive art (Jang 2016). An account given by Xu Jing (1091-1153), a Song dynasty envoy, testifies to this. In his account of the diplomatic mission titled *Xuanhe fengshi Gaoli tujing* (*Illustrated Account of the Xuanhe Embassy to Goryeo*, hereafter *Gaoli tujing*), he wrote, “Goryeo people

\* This paper is based on Jang 2009a, and has been revised for the publication in the *Review of Korean Studies*.

call the color of greenish porcelain *feise*” (K. *bisaek* 翡色).<sup>1</sup> However, these terms, “*bisaek* celadon” and “*bisaek*,” have not been found in the contemporary Goryeo documents.

*Goryeosa* (*History of Goryeo* 高麗史), the official history of Goryeo, was compiled during the Joseon dynasty from relevant contemporary texts. It mentions celadon only once and this is in relation to roof tiles. The account of the eleventh year of King Uijong’s reign partly reads:

A detached palace was built east of the palace. It was called Sudeok Palace. The main hall was named Cheonnyeong...The homes of more than fifty people were demolished to build Taepyeong Pavilion. [The King] commanded the crown prince to write the sign boards...To the south they dug a pond and built a pavilion called Gwallan Pavilion. To the north they built Yangi Pavilion and roofed it with celadon tiles (*cheongja* 靑瓷).<sup>2</sup>

The compilation of *Goryeosa* was initiated with the intention to denigrate Goryeo and to legitimize the Joseon dynasty. As this undertaking accompanied debates and reconciliations between different opinions over a long period of time, the history was not published until 1454, more than sixty years after the founding of the new dynasty. Even then, it could not be circulated immediately. Only in the sixteenth century and afterwards did it begin to be accepted and circulated among scholar officials as the official history of Goryeo, nearly a century after the dynastic change (Shin 2008). In this regard, it is highly likely that if the term “celadon” (*cheongja*) had been used in the Goryeo dynasty, it would have resurfaced in the historical record after a long hiatus. However, it is difficult to find the term used anywhere except by Yi Gyubo 李奎報 (1168-1241). Yi, a renowned literatus of the middle Goryeo period, wrote a poem in which he described a celadon inkstone in the shape of a child as a “greenish ceramic” (*nokja* 綠瓷);<sup>3</sup> and in an essay referred to a celadon pillow as a “greenish ceramic pillow” (*nokjachim* 綠瓷枕).<sup>4</sup> He also mentioned a celadon cup, calling

it a “greenish ceramic cup” (*nokjabae* 綠瓷盃) or a “greenish ceramic” (*nokja*) because of its green hue.<sup>5</sup> These expressions may be Yi’s personal choices. However, the fact that he does not use “*bisaek*” 翡色 as described in *Gaoli tujing* or “*bisaek*” (C. *mise* 秘色), mentioned in the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) book *Xiu zhongjin* (*Brocade in the Sleeve* 袖中錦), greatly suggests the possibility that a generic term referring to celadon was not fixed during the Goryeo dynasty.

Indeed, except in geological treatises or books such as *Dongguk yeoji seungnam* (*Geographical Survey of the Territory of the Eastern Kingdom* 東國輿地勝覽), it is very difficult to find Goryeo-related accounts in literary collections and other documents produced in the early part of the Joseon dynasty. The notion of celadon written as “*cheongja*”<sup>6</sup> or “*cheongsa*” 靑砂,<sup>7</sup> distinguished from pottery, “*wagi*” 瓦器,<sup>8</sup> is found in *Goryeosa*. However, it is uncertain whether these terms were coined in the Joseon period or had been passed down from the Goryeo. For this reason, it is assumed that these expressions are used on a case-by-case basis to explain a particular fact, rather than a generic term of Goryeo celadon carrying a symbolic meaning.

In fact, it seems that Goryeo was only accepted as a distinct historical period in the late Joseon. Han Chiyun 韓致彞 (1765-1814) and his nephew Han Jinseo 韓鎭書 (b. 1777) compiled *Haedong yeoksa* (*History of Korea* 海東釋史) in the form of annals and biographies. It is believed that after visiting Beijing as part of delegation of envoys, Han Chiyun thought that the existing historical records were not objective and decided to improve them. The history he and his nephew produced had a total of eighty-five chapters (seventy in the original and fifteen in its sequel) and was published in 1823 (the twenty-third year of King Sunjo’s reign). Albeit in the annal and biography form, it contains a wide spectrum of information including local products, arts, and literature which were not usually dealt with in the existing histories. In particular, the part in this book that dealt with Goryeo is based on such historical texts published

1. *Gaoli tujing* 高麗圖經, Chapter 32 “Qimin” 器皿 3, “Taozun” 陶尊: “陶器色之青者, 麗人謂之翡色.”

2. *Goryeosa* 高麗史, Chapter 18, sega 世家 18, King Uijong 毅宗, Year 11, Month 4: “丙申朔, 闕東離宮成, 宮曰壽德, 殿曰天寧, 又以侍中王冲第, 爲安昌宮...作觀瀾亭, 其北, 構養怡亭, 蓋以靑瓷.”

3. Yi Gyubo, *Dongguk isang gukji* 東國李相國集: “綠瓷硯適子, ...么麼一靑童, 綴玉作肌理, 曲膝貌甚恭, 分明眉目鼻, 競日無倦容, 提瓶供滴水...自汝在傍邊, 使我硯日濕, 何以報爾恩, 慎持無碎棄.”

4. Yi Gyubo, *Dongguk isang gukji*, Chapter 16, *Goyulsi* 古律詩, “Nokjachim” 綠瓷枕: “綠瓷琢枕澄於水,

入手如捫玉肌膩, 跳身慎勿入其裏, 擾擾黃梁夢中事, 邯鄲青駒何必恥.”

5. Yi Gyubo, *Dongguk isang gukji*, Chapter 16, “Goyulsi, Geumgun geolbu socumn okjabae, Yongbaekgong si un dongbu” 金君乞賦所飲綠瓷盃, 用白公詩韻同賦: “落木童南山 放火烟蔽日 陶出綠瓷盃 揀選十取一 瑩然璧玉光 幾被靑煤沒 玲瓏肖水精 堅硬敵山骨 迺知埏埴功 似借天工術 微微點花紋 妙逼丹靑筆.”

6. *Goryeosa*, sega 18, King Uijong Year 11, Month 4.

7. *Goryeosa*, sega 30, King Chungyeol 忠烈, Year 15, Month 8.

8. *Goryeosa*, sega 39, King Gongmin 恭愍, Year 6, Intercalary Month 9.

in the Song dynasty as *Cefu yuangui* (*Outstanding Models from the Storehouse of Literature* 冊府元龜) and *Jilin zhi* (Monograph on Jilin 鷄林志); other texts, such as the Ming dynasty *Chaoxian fu* (*Rhapsody on Joseon* 朝鮮賦) were also used. In particular, the descriptions of Goryeo celadon and craftwork, with a focus on vessels, are given in the section “Qiyong” (Usage of Vessels 器用), an addendum to chapter twenty-nine, “Gongshi zhi” (Monograph on Palace Halls 宮室志). But this section is quoted from the accounts of “Ceramic Jar” (Taozun 陶尊) in part three of “Vessels” (Qimin 器皿) from chapter 32 of the *Gaoli tujing* as well as the accounts of “lion-shaped incense burner” (*suanni chuxiang* 狻猊出香) from the “Ceramic Incense Burner” (Taolu 陶爐) section in the same book.

The accounts of Gaegyeong in *Goryeo godojing* (*Evidence of the Old Capital of Goryeo* 高麗古都徵) written by the Joseon literatus Han Jaeryeom 韓在廉 (1775-1818) and *Chaoxian fu* written by the Ming envoy Dong Yue 董越 (fl. 1488) also contain many quotations from the *Gaoli tujing*. Additionally, *Liaodai nianbiao* (*Chronology of the Liao Dynasty* 遼代年表) compiled by Huang Renheng 黃任恒 (1876-1953) of Qing China also provides accounts of the Song and Goryeo dynasties. In particular, the part regarding the Goryeo dynasty requotes *Gaoli tujing*. In conclusion, while the records produced by the Goryeo dynasty rarely mention “*bisaek*” celadon, the *Gaoli tujing* served as the source text for this term and was repeatedly quoted during the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods. In the process, its account of “*bisaek*” celadon was reproduced as a keyword regarding Goryeo celadon.

## Perception of Goryeo Celadon and “*Bisaek*” in Literary Works

### *Bisaek Celadon*

The collections of literary works compiled during the Joseon period, unlike the literary works written in the Goryeo dynasty, have no small number of accounts of Goryeo celadons, in particular, *bisaek* celadons. In the entry “*Bisaek jagi*” (*Bisaek* Porcelains 秘色磁器) of the section “Manmul” (Various Objects 萬物) in chapter four of *Seongho seonsaeng jeonjip* (*Complete Collection of Yi Ik's Writings* 星湖先生全集), Yi Ik 李穡 (1681-1763) refers to an account in *Xiu zhongjin* written by the Song dynasty writer Taiping Laoren 太平老人 and an account in

*Goryeosa* during King Chungnyeol's reign (1274-1308). He says:

The *bisaek* celadons of Goryeo are the best in the world. We are good at making fine, white bodied [vessels] but not good at incising decorations. The white porcelains produced in Joseon are clean, and white. Now, the porcelains offered to the court by the Royal Cuisine Office (Saongwon 司饗院) are also exquisite, so the Qing envoy lauded these porcelains when he visited our country last year. But in the fifteenth year of King Chungnyeol's reign, the Imperial Secretariat (Zhongshu sheng 中書省) of the Yuan court sent a diplomatic note to Goryeo [asking] to obtain large and small celadon jars and bottles. Does this mean that there used to be skilled potters at that time [the Goryeo dynasty] and we no longer have such artisans? Or is this because of the trade with Japan? I do not understand.

Yi notes that Goryeo celadon was prized by Song China and was requested by the Yuan imperial court. He compares this with the present situation of Joseon ceramic craftsmanship. Also, He composed a poem on a celadon cup and saucer set produced in the Goryeo period; presumably, he understood the origins and meanings of *bisaek* celadon of Goryeo and of China.<sup>9</sup>

### *Celadon Jar*

Seong Haeung 成海應 (1760-1839) wrote an essay on a celadon jar with a capacity of one *mal* (approximately eighteen liters), which is included in the *Yeongyeongjae jeonjip* (*Collected Literary Works of Seong Haeung* 研經齋全集). He obtained the jar in Gaeseong at the former site of the house of Ahn Hyang 安珦 (1243-1306). Describing the use and size of the jar, he states that the vessel fits the definition of a ritual vessel and thus the use of this jar for performing a rite accords with principle and protocols. The jar mentioned above refers to a wine jar, which was presumably a vessel such as a *maebyeong* (a tall vase with rounded shoulders, a short neck, and a rolled lip). The mention of its usage as a

9. Yi Ik, *Seongho seonsaeng jeonjip*, Chapter 4, Poems, “Sanam seongsi hahaeung hyebisaek horo janban” 謝南聖時 夏行 惠秘色胡盧蓋盤: “高麗秘色天下知, 越客取制形貌奇, 歲時旅人供禁廚, 白堊飾光陸離, 故人得之輒懷人, 絲繁胡盧蓋盤隨, 出壑冰清烟左右, 潑灑黃流來睽眉, 一酌再傾先飽德, 馨香入口偏旺脾, 野翁衰心死久, 甜酸嗜好無所爲, 自從今後小崇飲, 蘭陵鬱金恒醺肌, 憑仗瓊瑤憶中坻, 不啻歸夷形管胎, 音微百里鎮相對, 夢魂去繞天東陲。”



ritual vessel is perhaps attributable to the fact that this jar was found at the site where Ahn Hyang, who introduced Neo-Confucianism to Korea during the late Goryeo dynasty, lived. What is interesting is that he stated, “This is what Chinese called a *bisaek* celadon of Goryeo.”<sup>10</sup>

Seong was appointed as an editor-compiler (*geomseogwan* 檢書官) in the palace library (Gyujanggak) in 1788 by King Jeongjo (r. 1776-1800). Starting from that time, he engaged in various compilation projects while also associating with scholars of the School of Northern Learning (*bukhak* 北學) such as Yi Deokmu 李德懋 (1741-1793), Yu Deukgong 柳得恭 (1748-1807), Bak Jega 朴齊家 (1750-1805), and Yi Seogu 李書九 (1754-1825). After retiring from office, he continued studying and writing in Pocheon (in Gyeonggi province) and published books under orders from King Jeongjo (1776-1800). Under these circumstances, it could be assumed that he adopted the term “*bisaek* celadon of Goryeo” from the Chinese sources that he studied. Therefore, it could be that in this case his knowledge, built on studying texts, was validated through the celadon jar unearthed at the former site of the house of the great scholar of the late Goryeo period. This would prompt a strong emotional response motivating him to pen a memo of this experience.

### *Bisaek Celadon of Goryeo*

Yi Gyugyeong 李圭景 (b.1788) offers a similar case as Seong Haeung's (Jang 1998). Having served as an editor-compiler in the palace library, he compiled an encyclopedic book titled *Oju yeonmun jangjeon sango* (*Collected Works of Yi Gyugyeong* 五洲衍文長箋散稿), in which he explained in Part “Gogum jayo byeonjeung seol” (Discussion on Philological Study on Old and New Porcelain Kilns 古今瓷窯辨證說) the history of *bisaek* celadon from the Tang dynasty (618-907) onward, including a brief mention of Goryeo celadon.<sup>11</sup> He quoted a phrase from the *Xiu zhongjin* to describe “*bisaek* celadon of Goryeo,” just as Yi Yik did in *Seongho saseol*. It is uncertain which source he cited from. However, it

is highly likely that his understanding of that term was based on texts.

### *Mise Celadon from the Song Dynasty*

Bak Jiwon 朴趾源 (1737-1805) wrote a travelogue titled *Yeolha ilgi* (*Travel Essay to Qing* 熱河日記) based on his visit to China. In the book, he describes his encounter with a merchant named Tian Shike 田仕可 in Shenyang. Bak asks the merchant how to obtain rare antiques and “four treasures of the scholar's studio (paper, brush, ink, and ink stone).” The merchant answers by saying that one could find *mise* (*bisaek*) celadon and old bronze vessels in Liulichang in Beijing but not in Shenyang.<sup>12</sup> Here, “*mise* celadon” could refer to the old *mise* celadon of China, rather than those pieces made in Goryeo. However, considering the conversation that follows in which there are no further questions, Bak seems to have an overall knowledge of *mise* celadon made in China. Given the fact that Bak planned on purchasing antiques or stationery items while accompanying a delegation of envoys, it is highly likely that he had a taste for antiques based on experiences with real objects and assorted knowledge.

### *The Old Method of Manufacturing Porcelain*

Nineteenth century literatus and politician, Yi Yuwon 李裕元 (1814-1888) wrote several accounts of Goryeo celadons. In the section “Jagi goje” (Old Method of Manufacturing Porcelain 瓷器古製) in *Chunmyeong ilsa* 春明逸史 in the twenty-ninth chapter of his anthology *Imha pilgi* (*Jottings in Retirement* 林下筆記), he states, “The porcelains produced during the Goryeo period was renowned even in China. When food is stored inside them, it never decays; this is the so-called “*mise*” 祕色. The best artifacts in the world include... silk produced in Shu (Sichuan 蜀), inkstones from Duanxi 端溪, and Goryeo celadon” Also, he stated, “Previously, Kim Heunggeun showed me an old vessel with a cloud and lightning design that looked as if it was made recently with a mesmerizing color. It was about one *ja* in height. This must have been made in antiquity; it could not be created these days. It was unearthed when the

10. Seong, Haeung, *Yeongyeongjae jeonjip*, Chapter 9, *munil* 文一, *gi* 記, “Anmunseong dojun'gi” 安文成尊記: “松嶽人耕文成之故基, 得一瓷尊, 其高可一尺, 其色微青而黑, 容可一斗, 今歸于紫霞之室, 蓋華人所稱高麗祕色瓷也。周禮五尊, 今未詳其制, 考之菑崇義三禮圖, 獨言太尊山尊壺尊, 皆受五斗, 古今器量既殊, 其容亦不可同, 然古者以其器輕重大小, 有節而合於禮, 故必用之祀饗。”

11. Yi Gyugyeong, *Oju yeonmun jangjeon sango*, “Gogum jayo byeonjeung seol”: “李翼僊說祕色瓷器袖中錦云高麗祕色爲天下第一。”

12. Bak Jiwon, *Yeonamjip* 燕巖集, Chapter 11, *byeoljip* 別集, “Yeolha ilgi,” Sokjae pildam 粟齋筆談: “田生曰, 此中雖稱行都, 中國一隅, 實買只仰蒙古寧古塔船廠等地。番俗椎魯, 不喜雅賞, 諸祕色古瓷, 亦罕到此, 何況殷敦周彝乎。”

groundwork was undertaken during the repair of a local Confucian school in Pyeongyang.”<sup>13</sup> When he mentions the renown of Goryeo celadon in China and that it was the best in the world and called *bisaek*, it is certain that he is borrowing from Taiping Laoren’s previously mentioned comment. But the line “when food is stored inside, it will not decay” is taken from *Gaoli tujing* which explains the characteristics of pottery, not celadon. This means that the information on Goryeo ceramics is taken from different sources and is jumbled.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the line that food will not decay when stored inside the vessel is not relevant to celadon. This is probably attributable to the lack of texts on Goryeo celadon that he could access.

### **Goryeo Vessels: Cloud and Crane Designs, Greyish-green Color (*buncheong* 粉青)**

According to his own accounts, Yi Yuwon had experience not only with texts but also with real objects, both his and the collections of other people. He states:

Shim Sanggyu 沈象奎 (1766-1838) keeps a *bisaek* celadon jar made during the Goryeo period. It deserves to be cherished as a treasure because it was discovered at the site of Ahn Hyang’s house. Shin Wi borrowed and used the celadon for eight years before he returned it to Shim. Master Ahn Hyang worshipped Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) for a long time by hanging his portrait on the wall. His penname was Hoecheon 晦軒 (made by borrowing the character hoe 晦 from Zhu Xi’s penname)... This piece of Goyeo celadon is just an old object of Master Ahn’s. It is patterned with six flying cranes and eighteen swirling clouds, all of which are colored in greyish green (*buncheong* 粉青). The color of my porcelain is also greyish green with a lightning pattern. This demonstrates that people of Goryeo made greyish green colored porcelains.<sup>15</sup>

13. One *ja* is the same measuring unit as one *cheok*. The value of one *cheok* slightly varies by standard but it equals approximately 30-40 centimeters during the Joseon period.

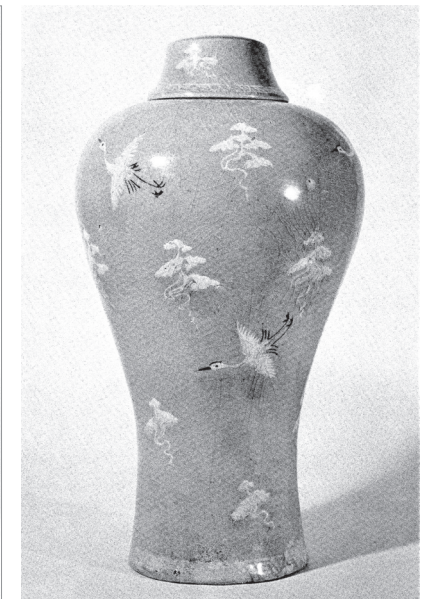
14. *Gaoli tujing*, Chapter 23 “Zasu 雜俗 2,” Entry “Tuchan” 土產: “其果實, 栗大如桃...乃盛陶器埋土中, 故經歲不損”

15. Yi Yuwon, *Imha pilgi*, Chapter 34, “Hwadong Oksam” 華東玉糝, Entry “Goryeogi” 高麗器. The same Goryeo celadon jar obtained from Ahn Hyang’s house is mentioned again in the entry “Dongbang gogi” 東方古器 of the same book. Here, “*buncheong*” does not refer to *buncheong* ceramics of the Joseon period. It is a Chinese expression referring to beautiful greyish-green celadon.

This account is connected with the aforementioned record in *Yeongyeongjae jeonjip*. The celadon jar discovered at the site of Ahn Hyang’s house at the end of the Goryeo period was later kept by Shim Sanggyu. Shin Wi borrowed and used it for eight years before returning it, which Yi Yuwon happened to see. Presumably, it was a *maebyeong* with a cloud and crane design on the basis that it was decorated with a pattern of six cranes and eighteen clouds. He also emphasizes that the same technique was employed on that jar as the one used for his celadon with a lightning pattern. Among extant artifacts, the work most similar to the celadon described in this account would be the ones with the same description “Celadon Vase, *maebyeong* decorated with cranes and clouds” at Ewha Womans University Museum (Figure 2), the Museum of Oriental Ceramics, Osaka, and the National Museum of Korea (Figure 3). All of these vases feature the *sanggam* (inlay) technique. Since most large *maebyeong*-type vases are inlaid with cloud and crane patterns, the celadon in the above records is likely to have been decorated with inlaid crane and clouds.



**Figure 2.** “Celadon Vase, Maebyeong Decorated with Cranes and Clouds,” Goryeo Dynasty, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, H 37.2cm, Ewha Womans University Museum



**Figure 3.** “Celadon Vase, Maebyeong Decorated with Cranes and Clouds,” Goryeo Dynasty, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, H 39.0cm, National Museum of Korea

### Greyish Green Color (*buncheong* 粉青)

Shin Wi also describes the jar mentioned in Yi Yuwon's account above. "Earlier I had a Goryeo *bisaek* jar...each flower revealed itself in a greyish-green color [the phrase *buncheong hwadu* occurs in old documents]. A flying bird amid clouds looks like an immortal..."<sup>16</sup> The possibility of this jar being a vessel inlaid with clouds and cranes was explained in the preceding paragraph. Here, what is notable is that Shin Wi also uses the expression "greyish green" (*buncheong*) and gives an in-sentence note stating that the expression occurs in old writings. One well-known example of the term "greyish-green" used to describe Goryeo celadon is found in *Gegu yaolun* (*Essential Criteria of Antiquities* 格古要論) published in 1388 by Cao Zhao 曹昭 (n.d.) during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). In the entry "Gaoliyao" (Goryeo Kilns 高麗窯) in the section "Guyao qilun" (Discourse on Ancient Kilns and Vessels 古窯器論), it says, "The color of Goryeo celadon is greyish green. It is similar to Longquan porcelains. The value of the one decorated with a white flower design cannot be appraised. [Alternatively, it can be interpreted as meaning 'they are less valued than celebrated Chinese porcelains']..."<sup>17</sup> Following this example, this notion recurs in *Jingdezhen taolu* (*Record of Jingdezhen Pottery* 景德鎮陶錄) written by Lan Pu 藍浦 (fl. 1815) and published during the Qing period.

Greyish-green porcelains are similar to Longquan vessels. Those with delicate floral design are as good as Dingyao 定窯 vessels from the Northern Song period. Vessels with white floral design cannot be evaluated in those countries. Overall they are similar to Yueyao 越窯, Miseyao 秘色窯, or Ruyao 汝窯 vessels. But melon-shaped jars (*guazun* 瓜尊) and lion-shaped incense burners (*suannilu* 狻猊爐) are quite different [from Chinese porcelains].<sup>18</sup>

This shows that the term "greyish green" has been repeatedly used as a gloss to describe Goryeo celadon in China for a long period. Based on the quotations above, therefore, "greyish green" which appears in Shin Wi's and Yi Yuwon's writings does not refer to a technique but to the color of the celadon. Even today it is used as a term to indicate thick greyish base colors like the glaze color of Longquan celadon of the Song and Yuan periods. Among porcelains with white designs on a greenish base, the description above evokes the image of a *sanggam* celadon.

### *Bisaek Vessels of Goryeo*

Yi Yuwon was the first to introduce the Borim Temple tea-brewing method, which he learned from Jeong Yakyong 丁若鏞 (1762-1836), to the world. He visited the Qing court as a document officer of the 1845 winter solstice mission. He served as the chief state counselor when King Gojong (r. 1863-1907) personally administered state affairs after the Grand Prince (Daeweon-gun, Gojong's father) was deposed. He also visited the Qing court to receive the emperor's approval of the Crown Prince, who later became King Sunjong (r. 1907-1910). He had quite a wide range of knowledge and experiences about Chinese and Japanese culture and artifacts. When he was forty-six, preparing for his retirement, he built a tea house and a pavilion for archives named "Four-season Fragrance." Exhibited in the pavilion were a variety of objects of a scholar's study, paintings, and ceramics along with an incense burner. Yi said, "There is a painting on farming, an ancient ink stick made during Kangxi's reign. There is also a brush made with authentic lamb fur, which can be employed easily to write characters both large and small...A celadon dish with two ears is for washing brushes. There is a large white porcelain ink jar, a pair of Goryeo *bisaek* jars, and others."<sup>19</sup> Both the celadon dish for washing brushes and the Goryeo *bisaek* jars are presumed to be celadon. But the use of expression "Goryeo *bisaek*" raises a possibility that the celadon dish for washing brushes could be Chinese or that he intended to emphasize the beauty of *bisaek* as seen on the celadon jars. The expression "a pair of *bisaek* jars" implies that the vessels were of the same shape and were displayed as a pair. A reference to celadon also

16. Shin Wi, *Gyeongsudang jeon'go* 警修堂全藁, Chaek 4 冊四, "Muinrok" 戊寅錄: "余舊蓄高麗秘色瓷尊, 爲安文成公珣宅遺墟所得, 久借斗室, 八年乃還, 用前韻記之...花朵粉青微著錄, 粉青花朵, 出於古論, 飛禽雲氣像靈仙, 此尊繪畫鸞鶴六朵雲十八, 皆用粉青."

17. Cao Zhao, *Gegu yaolun*, "Guyao qilun": "高麗窯, 古高麗窯器皿, 色粉青, 與龍泉窯相類, 上有白花朵兒者, 不甚直錢"; 朱琰, 『陶說』卷2, 說古, 高麗窯, "注格古論, 古高麗器, 粉青似龍天, 有白花朵者, 不甚直錢."

18. Lan Pu, *Jingdezhen taolu*, Entry "Gaoliyao" 高麗窯: "高麗窯, 則高麗國燒造者, 不知起於何代, 質頗細薄, 釉色與景德鎮微類. 有粉青瓷, 似龍泉器, 有細畫者, 髣髴北定器, 若上有百花朵兒者, 彼國不甚直錢, 大約與越窯·秘色窯·汝窯諸式相類, 有瓜尊狻猊爐頗著異."

19. Yi Yuwon, *Imha pilgi*, Chapter 34, "Hwadong Oksam" 華東玉穆, Entry "Sasi hyanggwan sojeo gogi" 四時香館所貯古器.



appears in Yi Yuwon's "*Bisaekja* Song" (Ode to *Bisaek* Porcelain 秘色瓷頌) in his other anthology entitled *Gao goryak* 嘉梧藁略.<sup>20</sup> These accounts are revealing and interesting because until recently little had been known about Joseon literati and their appreciation of Goryeo celadon, its use as gifts, and as inspiration for poems.

### *Bisaek*

The contemporary understanding of *bisaek* celadon can also be found among the writings of the great painter and literatus Kim Jeonghui 金正喜 (1786-1856). Replying to a poem composed by his close associate Gwon Donin 權敦仁 (1783-1859). Kim compared the vigor, shine, and authority of Gwon's writing to *bisaek* celadon.<sup>21</sup> At another time, while looking at a painting of flowers in a celadon vase, Kim composed a poem entitled "Flower in a Vase," (Byeonghwa 瓶花) which says that the flower was able to last so long without losing its fragrance and shine because it was in a five-hundred-year old *biseak* celadon vase and so even a storm could not damage the flower.<sup>22</sup>

### *Ancient Vessels from Goryeo*

In fact, Kim Jeonghui owned and appreciated Goryeo celadon himself. The anthology of Jeong Yakyong 丁若鏞 (1762-1836) includes an account which says, "Kim Jeonghui sent me a potted daffodil on a late autumn day; the pot was an ancient vessel from Goryeo." Kim Jeonghui had sent Jeong, whom he admired, a potted daffodil that his father Kim Yugyeong, then governor of Pyeongan province, had received from an envoy returning from China. At that time, Jeong was living in Songpa after returning from his eighteen-year exile in Gangjin. Kim Jeonghui planted the daffodil in a Goryeo vessel (presumably Goryeo celadon) and sent it to Jeong. As mentioned earlier, Kim had a deep appreciation for the true value and refinement of celadon, so it would be natural

for him to have potted the daffodil in a celadon vessel before giving it to Jeong whom he admired (Figure 4).<sup>23</sup>



Figure 4. Shard of Flower Vase, Inlaid Celadon, Excavated at the kiln site in Yucheon-ri, Buan, Ewha Womans University Museum

### Dissemination of Texts on Goryeo and How They Were Interpreted

It is true that in the modern period, archeological discoveries and the collecting processes of museums have played a large role in officially defining the aesthetic value of Goryeo celadon and firmly establishing it as "fine art" in the Korean "tradition" (Bak 2004). But as shown in the preceding section, the experience of physical objects and the affection for Goryeo celadon that have passed down from the Joseon period also contributed to the creation of such a tradition. The dissemination of various texts seems to have played a major role by drawing the Joseon people's attention to the Goryeo period. A prime example is *Gaoli tujing*, among others, which had been distributed widely during the late Joseon period as a text for understanding Goryeo society.

Scholar officials frequently traveled to many sites in Gaegyeong during the early Joseon period. However, they visited the city in an official capacity out

20. Yi Yuwon, *Gao goryak*, *Chaek* 13 冊十三.

21. Kim Jeonghui, *Wandang jeonjip*, Chapter 3, "Seodok" 書讀, Entry "Yeo Gwonijae donin" 與權彝齋敦仁.

22. Kim Jeonghui, *Wandang jeonjip*, Chapter 10 "Poetry," Entry "Flower in a Vase" 瓶花: "安排畫意盡名花, 五百年瓷秘色誇, 香澤不教容易改, 世間風雨詎相加."

23. Jeong Yakyong, *Yeoyudang jeonjip* 與猶堂全書, *jip* 1 輯, *Simunjab* 詩文集 6, "Songpa sujak" 松坡酬酢, "Chuman Gimwuhui hyanggak gisuseonhwa ilbon gibun goryeo gogiya" 秋晚金友喜香閣寄水仙花一本其盆高麗古器也; Yu 2002, 228-29.



of pride and for pleasure and were critical of Goryeo culture. They maintained their critical view of Goryeo culture as they visited Gaegyeong. But as Neo-Confucianism penetrated the minds of Joseon officials, the city was gradually recognized as a place sacred to Confucianism. This perceptual change became palpable when Joseon literati began to write travelogues or record conversations about Seonjuk Bridge and other tourist sites where traces of Jeong Mongju 鄭夢周 (1337-1392) and Seo Gyeongdeok 徐敬德 (1489-1546) could be seen. Since 1573, when the Sungyang Confucian Academy was founded in Gaegyeong to enshrine the tablet of Jeong Mongju, visits to the city increased (Jeon 2008). Well into the late Joseon period, this trend could have motivated the literati to take an interest in the natural environment as well as historical sites in Gaegyeong and contributed to their coming to perceive Goryeo as a legitimate dynasty. This explains the increase in the interest expressed and the mentions about Goryeo in anthologies, letters, and historical records of the time. In particular, instances where *Gaoli tujing* is mentioned in these writings are worth noting as the work contains more information on celadons than any of the other texts. The following is a list of some of those instances (Jang 2009a).

Yi Deokmu (1741-1793) wrote about Xu Jing and the background to the publication of *Gaoli tujing*. He noted that the book had yet to be published in Joseon.<sup>24</sup> However, the fact that Nam Geukwan 南克寬 (1689-c. 1714) quotes *Gaoli tujing*<sup>25</sup> leads us to assume that the book was circulating in Joseon between the end of the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century, at least.<sup>26</sup> Starting from the second half of the eighteenth century, mention of *Gaoli tujing* increased. Gang Pilhyo 姜必孝 (1764-1848) wrote a review of *Gaoli tujing*; the table of contents for Shin Wi's *Gyeongsudang jeongo* includes an entry titled "Je Xu Jing's *Gaoli tujing*" 題徐兢高麗圖經. An anthology written by Yu Su 柳誥 (1779-1821), *Baegyeongdang Shimungo* 拜經堂詩文稿, also raises the possibility that Yu possessed *Gaoli tujing*. Also, Hong Seokju 洪奭周 (1774-1842), whose family reading tradition was famous during the late Joseon period, included *Gaoli tujing* on the list of recommended books in his *Hongssi dokseorok* (*Hong*

*Family's Book Reviews* 洪氏讀書錄) (Yi 1994, 2006).

There were many other records from the late Joseon period literati that confirm the dissemination and reading of *Gaoli tujing*. For this reason, it is suggested that this travelogue served as an important text that introduced not just Goryeo celadon but the Goryeo society in general. The existing versions copied by hand attest to its dissemination. Exemplars include those held at the Ewha Womans University Library, the Korea University Library, and the Seoul National University Gyujanggak. The circulation of *Gaoli tujing* among Joseon literati served as the medium by which Goryeo culture and celadon in particular could be recollected.

Furthermore, these three editions are all different in terms of size, history of custody, character styles, and the number of volumes. All of this implies the popularity of these hand-copied manuscripts of *Gaoli tujing* in the late Joseon period. The edition at the Ewha Womans University Library was donated by Min Gwangsik in 1956. It has the imprints of about twenty stamps from the previous owners; among these stamps is one belonging to Shin Gapgyun (n.d.) who lived during King Gojong's reign (Figure 5). The edition in the Korea University Library was included in the collection of the books donated by Kim Yakseul 金約瑟 (1913-1971), which was previously owned by Yi Haeng (n.d.) of the Hansan clan (Figure 6). The edition belonging to Seoul National University Gyujanggak is a complete version in four volumes. While the first two exemplars had been privately owned, this edition was from the collection of the Japanese Governor General office of Joseon (Figure 7). The existence of different hand-copied exemplars of *Gaoli tujing* strongly suggests the nature of Joseon contemporary readership and knowledge of Goryeo in the late Joseon period.

Then, why was *Gaoli tujing* chosen? Perhaps, it is due to the paucity of texts that provided accounts of Goryeo culture. *Ikjae nango* (*Random Jottings of Yi Jehyeon* 益齋亂藁), an anthology by Yi Jehyeon from the late Goryeo period mentions place names around Gaegyeong and the location of temples by quoting Xu Jing. Yi Deokmu discusses Xu Jing and the background of his writing *Gaoli tujing* in chapter fifty-eight of the *Cheongjanggwon jeonseo* (*Complete Works of Yi Deokmu* 靑莊館全書). Several more anthologies mention or cite *Gaoli tujing*. From the late eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, it became a recommended book for literati or was included in lists of their book reviews as it was circulated through a wider network of channels (Jang 2009c). The book

24. Yi Deokmu, *Cheongjanggwon jeonseo* 靑莊館全書, *Gwon* 卷 58, "Ang'yeopgi" 5 盎葉記[五], Entry "Gaoli tujing" 高麗圖經.

25. Nam Geukwan, *Mongyejip* 夢巖集, *Gon* 坤, "Sashija" 謝施子.

26. Haeun seonsaeng yugo 海隱先生遺稿 (1894), "Sayurok" 四遊錄 (1785-818), Entry "Seo seonhwa bongsa" (C. Gaoli Tujing hu) 書宣和奉使高麗圖經後.

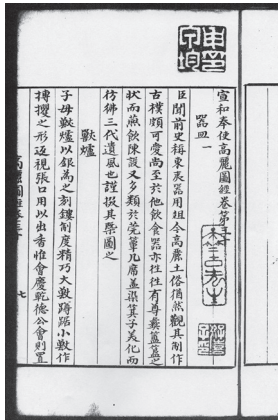


Figure 5. *Xuanhe fengshi gaoli tujing* at Ewha Womans University Library, 19.0×11.5 cm, Ewha Womans University Library

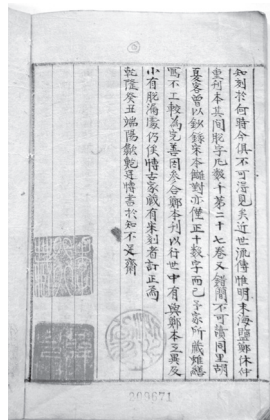


Figure 6. *Xuanhe fengshi gaoli tujing* at the Korea University Library Shinam Collection, 14.0×22.0 cm

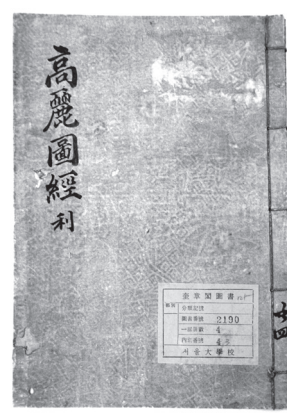


Figure 7. *Xuanhe fengshi gaoli tujing* at the Seoul National University Gyujeonggak, 18.5×26.8 cm

reviews, lists of books in libraries, and the transcription and dissemination of manuscripts could have offered a window into Goryeo for the Joseon people. In this process, Goryeo celadon or *bisaek* celadon was naturally perceived as a tangible symbol of Goryeo.

### Foreigners' Interest in Goryeo Celadon and Their Collections

There is a dearth of studies on how Koreans perceived Goryeo celadon between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. With the establishment of the Gyeongseong Art Club, an art auction company in 1922, Goryeo celadon became an important artifact for trade. Still, it is unknown how contemporary Koreans saw them. As the collecting and trading of Korean antiques rose in popularity under Japanese colonial rule, the antique community in the 1910s began to indulge in celadon.<sup>27</sup> Antiques had grown so popular that some people turned their hands to robbing tombs. Cemeteries were poorly guarded and as the antiques trade boomed so did grave robbery (Kim 2006; Bak 2006). The interest in Goryeo celadon also created an industry making replicas

of Goryeo celadon and souvenirs. Modern factories such as Samhwa Goryeoso 三和高麗燒 founded in Jinnampo, Pyeongan province with Japanese capital launched the production of Goryeo celadon replicas in earnest. In modern Japan, because antique connoisseurship as a hobby expanded into the cultural community, more people began to indulge in reproduction and collection of antiques (Eom 2004). People engaged in these activities played a central role in collecting and exporting artifacts of the Goryeo dynasty and deciding upon the design of replicas. Goryeo celadon started to be established as a signifier of Korean objects.

Therefore, information on celadon written by foreigners is rather extensive and can be found in documents produced around the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910. The writings reveal their interest in Goryeo celadon by collecting and purchasing Goryeo relics. In particular, the Japanese displayed a great zeal in purchasing and collecting archeological items looted from graves. Starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, Westerners documented their travels in Korea, China, and other countries between the time of the Sino-Japanese war and the Russo-Japanese war. These documents show that starting from 1900, they also collected Goryeo celadons robbed from ancient burial mounds. Western collecting activities increased beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, while Japanese interest and purchasing of celadons can be traced back even further to the first half of the century.

### Nineteenth-century Japan and Goryeo Celadon

Yi Yuwon in “Byeongnyeo sinji” 薛荔新志, a section in his *Imha pilgi*, gives the following interesting account:

Japanese people love Goryeo celadon and do not mind paying exorbitant prices [for it]. In the *gapsin* year, a man from Gaeseong dug up an ancient royal tomb. He found a jade waist band along with a set of porcelain dishware with a cloud and crane pattern, the price of which was as high as seven hundred *geum* (gold 金). The craftsmanship of these artifacts was different because they were made when there were exchanges with Yuan dynasty artisans. Collectors loved to keep these robbed objects around them, unaware that these items were contaminated by the filthy energy in the tombs. Many accounts in existing Chinese records criticized this

27. Kim Sangyeop defines the 1910s to 1920s as “the era of Goryeo celadon craze.”

practice.<sup>28</sup>

Yi Yuwon finished drafting *Imha pilgi* in 1872, and the “Byeokryeo sinji” section quoted above was a later addition. The final version was published in 1884. Between 1814 when Yi was born and 1884, the *gapsin* year, the other *gapsin* year mentioned above should be 1824 (Jang 2009a). That is when Yi was ten years old, so it is likely that what he wrote was heard from others. In the early nineteenth century, Japanese were buying Goryeo celadons excavated from ancient tombs. Yi understood the difference in design between the Goryeo celadons found earlier and the cloud-and-crane pattern dishware attributable to Yuan craftsmen visiting Goryeo. If the cloud-and-crane patterned dishware were Goryeo celadon made in the thirteenth century or later, the pattern would have been inlaid (Jang 2009b). Meanwhile, it is uncertain how much seven hundred *geum* was worth because *geum* was not an official currency unit. However, records show that the price of a Gyeongseonggung 慶壽宮 house in Seoul in 1816 was 660 *nyang* of *hwangeun* (subpar silver 黃銀), which can be converted into coin currency worth 1,782 *nyang*. Another source, Bak Jiwon’s “Regarding a Brush Washer” provides anecdotal information that a brush washer was traded for 8,000 pun (80 *nyang*), which would have been worth about sixteen sacks of rice (Bak 2008). We do not know whether the price of that inlaid celadon with cloud-and-pattern was seven hundred *nyang* of coin or seven hundred *nyang* of gold, but it can be surmised that the dishware did not cost a small amount of money.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Japanese came to Korea to purchase inlaid celadons that were robbed from ancient Goryeo tombs at high prices. The amount of items purchased and collected was quite enormous. Recent studies have found that Yamayoshi Moriyoshi 山吉盛義 (1859-1912) first held an exhibition of Goryeo celadon in Japan in 1899. A catalogue of the exhibition was published in 1900 (Figure 8). At the exhibition, Yamayoshi disseminated booklets and catalogues which categorized the works by decorative technique and included chronological information as well (Katayama 2016). This exhibition was made possible due to the steady collecting and trading which had gone on since the first half of the nineteenth century.



Figure 8. Yamayoshi, Moriyoshi. 1900. *Trace of the Beauty of Goguryeo*. Tokyo, Hwabosa. [https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/849502\(2021,4\)](https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/849502(2021,4))

Another record evidenced the use of Goryeo celadon as an official gift to a foreign government in the late Joseon period. The Soldiers’ Rebellion of 1882 occurred in June of the nineteenth year of King Gojong’s reign and damaged the Japanese consulate and was responsible for the deaths of Japanese instructors. Japan demanded that the Joseon government pay an indemnity. As a result, Joseon signed the Jemulpo Treaty with Japan at Incheon on July 17, 1882. The treaty required the Joseon court to pay Japan five-hundred thousand won over five years, have guards stationed at the Japanese legation, and dispatch a delegation to Japan to make a formal apology. On August 8<sup>th</sup>, 1882, Bak Yeonghyo 朴泳孝 (1861-1939), Kim Okgyun 金玉均 (1851-1894), Seo Gwangbeom 徐光範 (1859-1897), Min Yeongik 閔泳翊 (1860-1914), and others were sent to Japan as part of a diplomatic delegation. The diary of Bak Yeonghyo, *Sahwa giryak* 使和記略, describes the situation as follows:

On the seventh day of September, it rained...a letter was sent in reply to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An official letter and gifts were delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs...“There were four kinds of gifts: A set of *Yeosa jegang* (*Outline of Goryeo History* 麗史提綱) in twenty-three volumes, a piece of Goryeo ceramic, a set of nineteen silver utensils, and ten rush mats with floral patterns...We cordially ask you to accept these humble gifts.”

A Goryeo ceramic was included among the gifts along with an official letter presented by the Joseon delegation to the Japanese authorities. It is intriguing that an article of celadon and a book of Goryeo history were the items presented

28. Yi Yuwon, *Imha pilgi*, Chapter 35 “Byeongnyeo sinji” 薛荔新志: “倭人好高麗磁器...甲申之間松人掘古塚...價直七白金.”



as an official apology to Japan. Given the uncomfortable situation between the two countries, these items would have been chosen with the taste of the Japanese in mind. In other words, it implies that the Japanese were not only aware of Goryeo ceramics but favored them and thus a Goryeo ceramic was among the formal diplomatic gifts. And if it was a Goryeo ceramic, it was certainly celadon.

### *Foreigners' Collections of Goryeo Celadon*

Westerners' interest in Goryeo celadon in the nineteenth century coincides with an increase in their visits to Joseon between 1883, when the first minister of the United States entered Joseon, and 1910. Studies and travelogues written by Western diplomats and missionaries encouraged increased interest in Goryeo celadon. Their understanding of other Asian cultures was defined by their own aesthetic view of Chinese art, including ceramics, which would eventually be reflected in their perception and collection of Korean ceramics. William Richard Carles (1848-1929), who served as British vice-consul to Joseon from 1884 to 1885 and later also served in various missions throughout China, including Shanghai, Chongqing, Fuzhou and Tianjin, wrote *Life in Korea* (1888), which gives the following account:

In the winter after my return to S[e]oul [in 1884-85], I succeeded in purchasing a few pieces of celadon, part of a set of twenty-six, which were said to have been taken out of some large grave near Song-do [Gaegyeong]....the main patterns appear to be engraved on the clay, and the subsequently applied glaze is put on repeatedly to produce a smooth surface. They are made of an opaque clay of a light reddish colour, and appear, as usual with Oriental fictile ware, to have been supported in the kiln on three supports, and the supports used, in several instances at least, have been small fragments of opaque quartz, portions of which still adhere to some of them. In one of the smaller pieces is a radiate ornament at the center, which appears to have been made up of a series of irregular white fragments of quartz or porcelain. Embedded in the clay before the baking, they would project above the surface even though thickly covered under the glaze.

This paragraph gives a detailed description of three quartz supports used for baking celadon during the Goryeo period. Although Carles partly

misunderstood the process of celadon production, he provides illustrations of the celadon he saw (Figure 9).

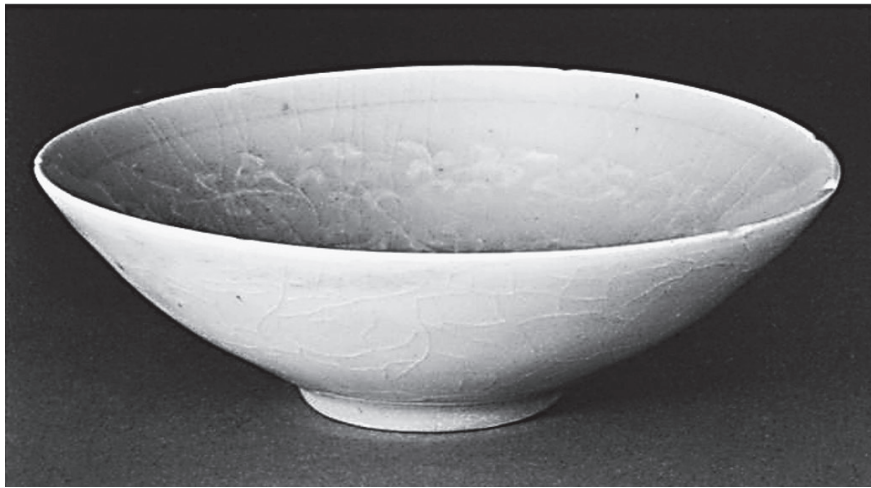


Figure 9. Carles 1894, 140

British ministers William G. Aston (1841-1911) and Thomas Watters (1840-1901) also collected Korean ceramics with anthropologist interests. Meanwhile, Aubrey Le Blond (1869-1973) and his wife Elizabeth Le Blond (1861-1934) collected more than one hundred pieces of Korean ceramics during their travels to different areas of Korea. They held an exhibition dedicated to Korean ceramics in 1914 (Choi 2020). Interest in and the collecting of Goryeo celadon in Europe and the United States continued to grow further during the twentieth century.

On the other hand, the Korean Empire (1897-1910) had a rather formal relationship with France concerning celadon. In 1886, when Joseon established diplomatic relations with France, Victor Collin de Plancy (1863-1922) was appointed as the first minister and came to Joseon two years later. In an effort to mediate between Emperor Gojong and French President Sadi Carnot, he arranged an exchange of ceramics produced in both countries as a gift, to





**Figure 10.** Celadon Bowl with Peony Design in Relief, late 12<sup>th</sup> century, H 7.0 cm, D 19.3 cm, The Sèvres National Ceramics Museum

commemorate the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries. France sent a ceramic vase made by the Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres and Emperor Gojong sent two Goryeo celadons—"Celadon Bowl with Incised Parrot Design" and "Celadon Bowl with Peony Design in Relief" (Figure 10)—in return (Eom 2015). We can see that Goryeo celadons were chosen as not only official but also signature Korean gifts.

## Closing

This paper questions the validity of the general theory which argued that the interest in Goryeo celadon—as the epitome of the Goryeo culture—rose only in the Korean modern period, as the Japanese valued the Goryeo culture to be relatively superior to that of the Joseon period, which they propagated as a decline from the former. Hence, examined here is the Joseon contemporary views and perceptual changes towards Goryeo celadon, by reviewing historical records, collections of literary works, diaries, and other materials written by Joseon literati who would play a role in linking their Goryeo predecessors—their own successors—with the modern world.

*Goryeosa*, compiled by the Joseon court, was established as the official history of Goryeo in the sixteenth century, but it was only since the eighteenth

century that the Joseon people began to quote or acknowledge Goryeo history. Apart from *Goryeosa* and other history books, *Gaoli tujing* written by a Chinese envoy, was heavily quoted in historical records and collections of literary works as it provided detailed accounts of Goryeo culture and relics. Contemporary interest in and understanding of Goryeo celadon that grew in the late Joseon period was based on either *Gaoli tujing*, a work of the Northern Song period, or on *Xiu zhongjin*, a Southern Song work, as both of them were repeatedly quoted.

Meanwhile, literati texts written in the late Joseon period describe the Goryeo celadons as physical objects, that were either owned by the authors or seen by them and remembered with specific images. In the late nineteenth century, Goryeo celadons were even selected as royal gifts for the Japanese court. Unlike previous studies which have emphasized the process of modernized Japan and Western powers indulging in Goryeo celadon out of cultural interest and taste since 1900s, Goryeo celadon was actually collected and appreciated starting in the eighteenth century. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Goryeo celadons were continuously stolen from graves and bought by the Japanese.

The expressions "ancient vessels of Goryeo" or "Goryeo *bisaek*" were often used by people in the late Joseon period while the term "*cheongja*" was rarely used for celadon. Instead, "*bisaek*" was widely used as a gloss to indicate celadon in general. In particular, the accounts which show the collecting, the interest, and the appreciation of Goryeo celadon are concentrated in historical records and literary collections produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Through those writings, it is understood that Goryeo celadon was thought of as something exquisite or elegant, profound, and authentic that could hardly be mimicked. Starting from the eighteenth century, information on Goryeo became increasingly common as books and artworks from China was introduced and rapidly disseminated. Various historical books including *Gaoli tujing* and collected literary works were copied, kept, and read. In particular, the *Gaoli tujing* was found to have survived in various manuscript exemplars produced in Korea; this has implications for other important texts. Various pieces of information on Goryeo continuously and repeatedly contributed to the formation of how Goryeo was viewed, and this viewpoint was reconstructed and established as the present image of the dynasty. In conclusion, the interest and perception of Goryeo celadon did not spring from nowhere. The memories

and experiences gleaned from texts and physical objects overlapped with each other, and were interwoven during the Joseon period to imbue Goryeo celadon with symbolic meanings.

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## Abstract

This study looks at the following questions: how did Goryeo celadon; which flourished during the Goryeo dynasty and was known to contemporary China and Japan, suddenly drew interest from Korean and Japanese scholars in the modern period when it started to be collected and reproduced, and even exhibited around the world; and how was it perceived during the Joseon dynasty. It examines the contemporary views and perceptual changes towards Goryeo celadon by reviewing historical records, collections of literary works, diaries, and other materials written by Joseon literati who would play a role in linking their Goryeo predecessors and their own successors in the modern world. The accounts which show the interest, the appreciation, and the collecting of Goryeo celadon are concentrated in historical records and literary collections produced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Through those writings, it is understood that Goryeo celadon was thought of as something exquisite or elegant, profound, and authentic that could hardly be mimicked. Meanwhile, literati texts written in the late Joseon period describe the Goryeo celadons as physical objects, that were either owned by the authors or seen by them and remembered with specific images. In the late nineteenth century, Goryeo celadons were even selected as royal gifts for diplomacy. This study finds that unlike previous studies which have emphasized the process of modernized Japan and Western powers indulging in Goryeo celadon out of cultural interest and taste since 1900s, Goryeo celadon was actually collected and appreciated starting in the eighteenth century. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Goryeo celadons were continuously stolen from graves and bought by the Japanese. Starting from the eighteenth century, information on Goryeo became increasingly common as books and artwork from China was introduced and rapidly disseminated. Various historical books including *Gaoli tujing* and collected literary works were copied, kept, and read. In particular, the *Gaoli tujing* was found to have survived in various manuscript exemplars produced in Korea; this has implications for other important texts. Various pieces of information on Goryeo continuously and repeatedly contributed to the formation of how Goryeo was viewed; this viewpoint was reconstructed and established as the present image of the dynasty. The memories and experiences gleaned from texts and physical objects overlapped and interwove in the Joseon period to imbue Goryeo celadon with symbolic meanings.

**Keywords:** Goyeo celadon, *bisaek*, greenish celadon, *Gaoli tujing*, *Xiu zhongjin*, celadon