AMIR MOHTASHEMI

Chinese pot and cover for the Thai market 清青花盖盒

China, Qing Dynasty circa 1800

Porcelain decorated in underglaze cobalt blue

26 cm high and 20 cm diameter

外销**泰国市**场

中国，清朝，约1800**年**

高26**厘米，直径**20**厘米**

Stock no.: A5230

Made for the Thai market, this Qing dynasty porcelain pot and cover is painted in underglaze cobalt blue and has a dense floral pattern. It carries several motifs and symbols that are part of Thai nature and culture. Almost hidden amongst leaves and flower motifs, four figures are repeated around the lid: it is the *thep phanom* motif, a person or rather a god, in the *paryanka* or “lotus” position, with hands joined in the gesture of prayer and adoration, the *namaskara*.

Among the botanical decorations, it is possible to recognise the most important of all: the lotus flower, a symbol of the purity of the Buddha. The lid itself adopts the form of a *stupa* or pagoda, a sacred building found all over the Buddhist world and it represents the universe as conceived by Buddhist thinking. It is in fact formed like a dome, with a superstructure having a lotus form finial that represents the progression of the Buddhist *arhat* or saint, on the way to purity, simplicity and *nirvana*.[1]

During the time of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), China traded extensively in porcelain. The wares were mainly produced in Jingdezhen, where potters perfected a variety of forms alien to Chinese taste

but favoured by different foreign clients including the Thai royal court. When ceramics specifically destined for the Thai royal court were commissioned during the Qing period, the Jingdezhen decorators perfectly channelled Siamese styles and motifs to satisfy this new, aristocratic market.[2]

Footnotes:

1- Jens Braarvig, 2013. “Indian iconography on Bencharong”. In *Royal Porcelain from Siam*, edited by Anne Habu and Dawn F. Rooney. Oslo: Hermes Publishing. pp. 229-235.

2- Rose Kerr, 2013. “Bencharong and its place in the Qing Dynasty porcelain trade”. In *Royal Porcelain from Siam*, edited by Anne Habu and Dawn F. Rooney. Oslo: Hermes Publishing. p.69