

## THREE FRIENDS OF WINTER MOTIF ON CHINESE CERAMICS

The “three friends of winter” motif - pine, bamboo and prunus – was quite popular on blue and white ceramics during the Ming dynasty. The combination signifies the hardiness of the pine tree, the strength of the bamboo, and the regenerating life force in the early blooming prunus. The motif first appeared on blue and white porcelain during the Yuan Dynasty and continued to a limited extent to the Qing Dynasty, most notably on Kangxi Period porcelains emulating the Ming style.

The “three friends of winter” motif appears on the following 21 Ming porcelains from the Ceramics Catalogue (M-002 to M-501):

M-002 - central medallion of a bowl

M-027 - interior of a stemcup

M-057 - exterior of a bowl

M-074 - interior of a large Swatow polychrome plate

M-108 - interior and exterior of a pair of bowls

M-125 - interior and exterior of a bowl

M-147 - central medallion of a dish

M-205 - central medallion of a dish

M-223 - exterior of a bowl

M-244 - interior of a large blue and white plate

M-386 - exterior of a pair of bowls

M-415 - exterior of a small bowl

M-427 - exterior of a small bowl

M-432 - exterior of bowl No. 3

M-480 - sides of a pair of jarlets

M-501 - sides of jarlets (3)



**Detailed Descriptions** of each of the above 21 porcelains are included in the **Ceramics Catalogue** in the corresponding ceramic category (Ming). Details include the Catalogue Number, description, size, dating, provenance (origin, place and date of acquisition, cost), and any references to comparable examples. Similarly, additional photos are available in the corresponding **Ceramics Catalogue - Photos Folder** as well as in the accompanying Photos Folder for this Paper.



**M-074 - Large Swatow Polychrome Plate**

### **References (Partial Listing)**

Bartholomew, Terese Tse, 2006. *Hidden Meanings in Chinese Art*. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum.

Johnson, Kirk, 2001. "'The Three Friends of Winter,'" in *Garden Design*, January 5, 2001.

Pegg, Richard, A. ,2005. " Three Friends of Winter: Chinese Art from the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644)," in *Oriental Art*, Vol. LV No. 2, 2005.

Welch, Patricia Bjaaland, 2008. *Chinese Art: A Guide to Motifs and Visual Imagery*. North Clarendon, Vermont: Tuttle Publishing.

Williams, C. A. S., 1960. *Encyclopedia of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives*. New York: Julian Press.

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Underglaze-Blue Decorated | Kaikodo Asian Art, December 2, 2014.

