

Jar

Korea, Gaya region (Geumgwan Gaya), late 4th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1985

(5406.1)

This jar is arguably the finest early Gaya work in the Academy's collection, and one of the best examples of its type outside Korea. Great care was taken in the arrangement of the decorative design, which consists of carefully placed vertical cord markings balanced by horizontal incised lines made with the help of a potter's wheel. While such designs were common in the Geumgwan Gaya region, as can be seen by a number of other examples in this section, the balance of the vertical and horizontal elements with the beautifully rounded shape of the body mark this vessel as a high point in the production of early Gaya ceramics.

Jar

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 4th century

Earthenware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5544.2)

This jar shows many of the new technologies for ceramic production introduced from China during the early Common Era. The rounded form indicates that the shape was refined on a potter's wheel, and paddle marks prove that it was strengthened by pounding the body before firing. At the same time, the clay is relatively coarser than most of the other ceramics in this section, and the body is softer, resulting from a lower firing temperature.

In addition, the difference in color with the other ceramics in this section suggests that the reductive atmosphere in which improved chamber kilns introduced from China were fired was not yet perfected. In this regard, the jar serves as an example of the transition from lower fired earthenware and "tile" ware to harder, less absorbent stoneware that happened during the third and fourth centuries.

Jar With Three Lugs

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1985

(5405.1)

The markings on this jar show that the body was strengthened by pounding with a paddle before firing. However, unlike most of the other examples in this section, no attempt was made to refine the paddle markings into a more even decorative pattern. The fact that less care was taken in its production implies that vessels of varying quality were made, possibly for different purposes, during the Gaya period.

The three lugs on the shoulder would have been used to secure a cover, perhaps made from fabric, around the mouth of the vessel. This indicates that it would have been used for storage.

Jar

Korea, Gaya region (Geumgwan Gaya), late 3rd-4th century

Stoneware

Gift of Harold Wagner by Exchange, 1967

(3459.1)

This superb jar is of a type known as *tanalmun* or “pounded pattern” pottery common during the early Gaya period. Most of the body was strengthened by pounding with a paddle covered in cord, after which vertical cord marking was applied evenly over the upper surface, and horizontal lines were incised using a potter’s wheel to create a decorative design.

The original paddle marking on the lower half was left as is, suggesting that the jar may have been intended to be placed in a stand or buried partially in the ground, so that the lower half would not normally have been visible. Although fired in a reductive atmosphere in a chamber kiln, and at a higher temperature than earlier earthenware, the body of this jar is thicker and softer than the stoneware that would become common in Gaya during the fifth through the sixth centuries, and is closer to somewhat lower fired “tile ware,” so-called because it resembles traditional roof tiles in hardness.

Jar with Three Handles

Korea, Gaya region (Geumgwan Gaya), 4th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5535.1)

This impressively scaled jar has handles placed low on the body, which would have facilitated easier tipping. After pounding most of the surface, decorative vertical cord markings were made around the body, and evenly placed horizontal lines were incised using a potter's wheel. In addition, the area around the neck and a horizontal band around the middle were smoothed; cord markings visible underneath the smoothed areas indicate that this was done towards the end of the construction process. The resulting linear variations, although technically simple, create a rhythmic visual pattern across the surface, transforming an otherwise mundane vessel into an object of aesthetic interest.

Jar

Korea, Gaya region (Geumgwan Gaya), 4th-5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986
(5536.1)

Jar

Korea, Gaya region (Geumgwan Gaya), 4th-5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986
(5537.1)

Jar with Three Lugs

Korea, Gaya region (Geumgwan Gaya), early 5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5533.1)

The three lugs around the shoulder of this jar would have been used to secure a cover. However, unlike the other lugged jars in this section, the shaping of the lip on this vessel indicates that the cover probably would have been made from stoneware, and shaped to fit tightly over the mouth. Rather than a design improvement, this may indicate that the jars were intended to store different kinds of goods; some required porous fabric covers, but in this case it would have been preferable to have a more impermeable ceramic top.

Jar

Korea, Gaya region, early 5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5548.1)

By the fifth century, the use of glazes, which not only offered a wider variety of aesthetic options, but also improved the absorption coefficient, hardness, and durability of a ceramic vessel, was already widespread in China. However, while glazed ceramic vessels from China were imported into Korea, glaze technology did not become widespread in the Korean peninsula until much later, with the exception of infrequent Goguryeo vessels that used a yellow glaze. At the same time, ash in the kiln during firing sometimes adhered to the body of a vessel, resulting in a natural, “accidental” glaze such as can be seen on the upper surface of this jar.

The occurrence of such glazing is sometimes seen in Korean stoneware fired in a reductive atmosphere in Chinese-inspired chamber kilns. It remains unclear whether the presence of ash was ever encouraged in the kiln to produce natural glazing, but the survival of many examples shows that vessels with “accidental” glaze on their surface were accepted, and the aesthetic effect may even have been admired. On the other hand, very few if any examples exist that would suggest ash was intentionally applied in a regular manner.

The three rings and shaped mouth of this vessel indicate that it originally had a ceramic cover. Markings under the glaze show that the body was strengthened by the paddling (*tanal*) technique.

Jar

China, Warring States period (476-221 BC)

Stoneware

Gift of the Honorable Edgar Bromberger, 1952

(1622.1)

This jar is typical of storage vessels made in China during the Warring States period. It is of a type known as “grey body” (*huitao*) ware, so-called because of its distinctive color, which resulted from firing in a reductive atmosphere in a tightly sealed kiln. By the Warring States period China had already developed sophisticated kilns allowing for high firing temperatures that produced harder, less absorbent stoneware. This technology would not be introduced into Korea until centuries later, under the influence of Chinese colonies in the northwestern part of the peninsula.

The jar was built by coiling, after which the shape was refined using a potter’s wheel. The body was then strengthened by pounding with a paddle, resulting in an impressed design over the entire surface, which also had a decorative effect. Like chamber kilns, the potter’s wheel and paddling were introduced from China to Korea early in the Common Era, revolutionizing ceramic production. Most intriguing is the combed wave design around the lip of this vessel. While a direct link has not been established, nearly identical combed wave designs appear as a favored decorative motif on Korean stoneware hundreds of years later.

Chimera Oil Lamp

China, Jin dynasty (265-420)

Glazed stoneware

Gift of the Honorable Edgar Bromberger, 1953

(1900.1)

By the third to the fourth centuries, China was already producing high quality glazed stoneware such as this lamp. Characteristic of the ancient Yue region (modern Zhejiang), wares with this type of lead green glaze are often called “proto-celadon,” since they are antecedents to the celadon glaze for which Zhejiang would become famous centuries later, which in turn had an influence on development of Korean celadons of the Goryeo period (918-1392).

By the fourth century, not only had China lost its commanderies in northwestern Korea, but much of north China had fallen under the control of a series of short-lived foreign kingdoms. However, cultural exchange with Korea still continued through sea routes, with Gaya and Baekje benefitting particularly from their advantageous locations along the south and southwestern coast of the peninsula. Vessels very similar to this have been found in Korean tombs, suggesting that they were important luxury goods for the ruling class. Chinese ceramics would have been precious in Korea during the Three Kingdoms, since glaze technology did not become widespread for domestically produced wares until more than six hundred years later.

Mirror

China, Eastern Han dynasty (25-220), late 2nd-early 3rd century

Bronze

Gift of Donald H. Graham, Jr., 1993

(7466.1)

Mirrors like this are often called “TLV” mirrors, due to the distinctive T, L, and V-shaped patterning dividing the design on the back (the front, which would originally have been polished for reflection, does not bear a design). Mirrors in China were functional objects, but they also had a spiritual significance, and they featured prominently among burial goods placed in the tomb for the protection and aid of the deceased. It was believed that mirrors guarded against negative energies, and in particular that they revealed the true form of whatever they reflected. The backs of mirrors such as this one were decorated with cosmological maps that may have been intended to guide the deceased in their journey through the afterlife. For example, in addition to the TLV markings that divide the symbolic “map” on this mirror into regions, some of the animals interspersed among them (dragon, bird, tiger, and tortoise, respectively) represent spatially the eastern, southern, western, and northern quadrants of the sky, and temporally the seasons of the year. The inner square shape symbolizes the earth, while the round shape of both the mirror as a whole and the central knob symbolizes the heavens.

TLV mirrors very similar to this one have been excavated in tombs from the capital region of the early Geumgwan Gaya city-state on the southern coast (modern Gimhae), and also in Japan. Their use as burial goods in Gaya suggests not only the importation of Chinese mirrors as luxury objects, but also the adoption of their spiritual significance as talismans for the deceased.

Mirror

China, Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD)

Bronze

Gift of Donald H. Graham, Jr., 1993

(8534.1)

Unlike the other Chinese mirror in this case, this example shows an abbreviated version of the classic “TLV” pattern on its back. Consequently, some of the symbolic meaning of the design elements has been lost. For example, rather than the “four animals” representing the four spatial quadrants of the sky and the temporal divisions of the seasons, this mirror has more generic paired birds, antelope-like and feline creatures that serve only as decorative elements without a specific cosmological significance.

Mirror

Japan, Kofun period (ca. 250-552), 5th-6th century

Bronze

Gift of Donald H. Graham, Jr., 1996

(8488.1)

By the third century, Chinese mirrors had already been introduced to Japan as gifts marking political alliances with the Chinese court. As they became an important part of funerary rites in Japan and Korea, more readily available locally-produced versions began to be made. These Japanese and Korean mirrors can often be identified by their poorer casting and imperfect understanding of Chinese symbolism. For example, instead of the four symbolic animals representing the spatial quadrants of the sky and temporal divisions of the seasons found on Chinese mirrors, this Japanese mirror has five vaguely defined animals prancing around the back of the mirror. It also lacks the TLV pattern and other elements that would serve to provide the deceased with a cosmological “map” guiding them through the afterlife.

Although this mirror was made in Japan based on an original Chinese pattern, Chinese mirrors were also copied in Korea during this time period, and Korean-made Chinese-style mirrors have been discovered in excavations from the Gaya region.

Box with Cover

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1985

(5421.1a-b)

Covered boxes like this have been found in different parts of the Korean peninsula and Japan. However, subtle differences often make it possible to identify them with a particular region. This especially good example, probably from the Gaya area, is refined by a knob on the cover to facilitate lifting, and a decorative incised line around the cover's edge.

Box with Cover

Korea, Baekje region, 4th-5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Mrs. E Won Sik You, 1960

(2741.1a-b)

This box was first identified with the Gaya or Silla region when it came into the Academy nearly fifty years ago. However, the distinctive tripod shape, derived from Chinese precedents, is characteristic of boxes found in the area of the first Baekje capital of Hanseong (modern Seoul), which was abandoned in 475 AD due to Goguryeo expansion south of the Han River. At the same time, the tripod boxes found around the Baekje capital differ somewhat from this vessel in shape, and this is the only known example of its type.

Although its origin remains to be definitively determined, this box is of special significance not only because it is one of the only ceramics associated with the Baekje region in the Academy's collection, but also because it is a possibly unique example of a ceramic form known only from the early capital of this important kingdom.

Box with Cover

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 6th-7th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5561.1a-b)

This simply shaped box has a subtle raised edge encircling the cover to facilitate lifting. Since Gaya and Silla developed on either side of the Nakdong River, their ceramics traditions are quite similar, and it is often difficult to distinguish between them. The box may date to late in the Gaya period before it was absorbed by Silla.

Box with Cover

Japan, Kofun period (ca. 250-552), 5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Mrs. Theodore A. Cooke, 1958

(2544.1)

Techniques for advanced ceramic production like the potter's wheel, paddling, and chamber kilns that had been introduced to the Korean peninsula from China were transmitted to Japan primarily through the Gaya Confederacy. Although trade and diplomatic interaction probably played a role in the transfer of technology, it is now thought that the first Gaya-style stoneware in Japan was made by Korean immigrants, possibly refugees from Goguryeo invasions in the early fifth century.

Consequently, Japanese ceramics from the Kofun period, often called *sueki*, closely resemble their Gaya precedents, as can be seen by comparing this Japanese covered box with the Korean examples nearby. In some cases, particularly for early examples, *sueki* are less technically sophisticated than their Korean counterparts. Not only is the clay of this box less refined, with many visible impurities, but the body is softer, indicating that it was fired at a lower temperature.

Bottle

Japan, Kofun period (ca. 250-552), 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Mrs. Theodore A. Cooke, 1958

(2545.1)

This vessel reveals many of the key technological innovations that were introduced from Gaya into Japan during the Kofun period. For example, the evenly rounded shape and circular striations over the entire surface indicate that it was refined using a potter's wheel before firing. Evidence of the potter's wheel first appears in Japan in the early fifth century, and the technique was probably introduced by Korean immigrants. In addition, the dark gray color and relative hardness prove that it was fired in a reductive atmosphere in a chamber kiln. On the other hand, its body is comparatively thick and heavy, indicating less skill in its construction than the Gaya ceramics from the same period in this exhibition.

This shape is unusual (perhaps unknown) in Gaya-period ceramics, and the vessel's function is unclear. However, the form closely resembles a chamber pot, and it may have been made for this purpose.

Covered Jar

Japan, Kofun period (ca. 250-552), late 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Mr. George H. Kerr in Honor of Sir George Sansom, 1958
(2423.1)

This well-formed small jar was given to the Academy as a Neolithic Japanese vessel. However, its rounded shape (finished with a potter's wheel), use of refined clay, and hard, thin body resulting from a high firing temperature in a reductive atmosphere are all indicative of technological innovations first introduced to Japan from the Gaya region in the fifth century during the Kofun period. While the bulbous silhouette and tightly fitting cover show the influence of Gaya wares, this vessel also shows a gradual move away from standard Gaya vessel types in response to domestic demands that happened in the century after stoneware was first introduced to Japan. Together with its technical sophistication, this suggests a slightly later date for this jar than the other *sueki* vessels in the exhibition.

Pedestal Jar

Japan or Korea (Gaya region), 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of H. Drewry Baker, 1949

(849.1)

Since Japanese stoneware of the Kofun period derived from and closely paralleled the Gaya ceramic tradition, it is often difficult to distinguish between Gaya wares and Japanese vessels modeled after them. This high-footed jar is typical in many ways of vessels made in the Gaya and Silla regions during the fifth to sixth centuries, as even a cursory examination of the many ceramics from these areas in the exhibition reveals. However, the spacing of the perforations in the foot, the diagonal incised decorations on the body, and the proportions of the work as a whole are unusual for Gaya ceramics, suggesting that this jar rather may be a Japanese work copying a typical Gaya form.

Jar

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1984

(5294.1)

Vessels of this impressive scale rarely survive from the Three Kingdoms period intact. Consequently, it is remarkable that the Academy has three such jars in its collection, all of which were donated by the Paldi family. While this jar has a lower neck than the other two examples, it is the only large jar in the museum that preserves lugs on the shoulders, which would have been used to fasten a cover over the mouth. The shape is common to both the Gaya and the Silla regions; since Gaya and Silla developed on either side of the Nakdong River, their ceramics traditions are closely related, and it is often difficult to tell them apart.

Jar

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1984

(5295.1)

Although this jar is undecorated, its massive scale and elegantly curved long neck make it one of the most dramatic early Korean ceramics in the Academy's collection. It unquestionably would have been used for storage, but it is unclear whether large jars like this were restricted to funerary ceremonies, or had more practical functions, as well. Regardless, technologically sophisticated stoneware of such large size would have been difficult to produce, and probably would have been limited to the highest levels of society. At the same time, it is a distant ancestor of the renowned Korean *onggi* storage jar tradition, which has been internationally heralded in modern times as an important "folk craft" for its simplicity and lack of pretention.

Roof Tile

Korea, Silla region, 7th century

Stoneware

Gift of Damon Giffard, 1947

(522.1)

This charming tile would have been used to cover the roof of an important structure, either an official building or a Buddhist temple. The lotus motif with which it is decorated, derived from Chinese prototypes, shows the influence of Buddhism, which was introduced into Korea in the fourth century. In Buddhism, the lotus, which grows from the mud to form into a beautiful flower, is a symbol of spiritual growth, wherein the practitioner rises from ignorance to enlightenment.

Roof Tile

Korea, Baekje region, 6th-7th century

Stoneware

Gift of Damon Giffard, 1947

(524.1)

This and the other roof tile in this exhibition came into the museum in 1947 as part of a collection of early Korean roof tiles. One of the most fascinating aspects of early Korean ceramics, roof tiles with distinct designs developed in different parts of the Korean peninsula, and it is often possible to associate even fragments with a particular region. In addition, the evolution of roof tile patterns can be used to trace the spread of decorative motifs from China through the Korean peninsula into the Japanese archipelago.

The presence of roof tiles in the Korean peninsula provides evidence of advances in architecture originating in China. Together with other technologies such as stoneware, Chinese wood-frame architecture that allowed support of heavy ceramic tiled roofs entered Korea during the Three Kingdoms period. Roof tiles like this would have been limited to official buildings and Buddhist temples, and their production was sponsored by the government. In fact, the office in charge of ceramic production in the Goguryeo Kingdom was called *chowaso*, or “tile production office,” while ceramic artisans in Baekje were known as *wabaksa* or “tile specialists.”

Pedestal Cup with Handle and Jar

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5546.1-2)

Although this jar and stand came into the museum as a pair, they are unlikely to belong with each other. At the same time, the high-footed stand would have been intended for a jar similar to this one, although perhaps of a somewhat different size.

Pedestal Cup with Handle

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5545.2)

This is one of three pedestal cups that came into the Academy together. However, the other two were in poor condition, as is often the case for ceramics from this early period, and only this one was intact. Like the example on display nearby, it would have been intended as a stand for a jar, which probably would have had a rounded bottom, based on the shape of the cup.

Mug

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5552.1)

This elegantly shaped mug, with an ergonomically concave lip, has two bands of combed “wave” designs separated by a horizontal stripe around the body. While a clear connection has not been established, this combed wave design can be found on Chinese storage vessels from centuries earlier (like the one on display in this exhibition), offering an intriguing similarity across a substantial separation of time and space.

Mug

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5553.1)

This strikingly modern shape, with subtle raised designs across its surface, is reminiscent of a contemporary mug for tea or coffee. However, the first historical mention of tea in Korea dates to 661, in which interestingly it was used as an offering to the founder of the defunct Geumgwan Gaya city-state, King Suro. Rather, this vessel was probably used for warmed liquor, broth, or another liquid. Also unlike modern mugs, stoneware such as this was a luxury product, and may very well have been used for ritual purposes.

Mug

Gaya or Silla region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5554.1)

The finest of the Academy's early Korean mugs, this large vessel is decorated with two bands of diagonal lines separated by incised horizontal marks across the surface. It is particularly distinguished by its carefully shaped flat handle, which stands in stark contrast to the crude handle on another of the mugs (5553.1) nearby.

The mug shape was transmitted into Japan from Gaya in the fifth century, and mugs similar to this, either imported from Gaya or possibly made by refugees from the Korean peninsula, have been found in Japanese archeological excavations.

Pedestal Jar

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Anonymous Gift in Honor of Richard M. Fairservice, 1982

(5014.1)

This type of pedestal jar, with a high, perforated foot, is among the most classic of shapes from the Three Kingdoms period. The distortions in the surface resulted from imperfectly prepared clay, in which trapped air pockets would have expanded during firing. The fact that this jar was preserved intact indicates that even imperfect stoneware vessels were valued, although it may have been limited to funerary purposes.

Pedestal Jar

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1984

(5300.1)

This jar has an “accidental” glaze that resulted from ash in the kiln adhering to the surface during firing. Although chamber kilns, in which the fire was located in a separate chamber from the vessels to produce a higher and more controlled firing temperature, were used for stoneware during the Three Kingdoms period, ash often spread through the kiln, as is evidenced by the numerous vessels with natural ash glazing that have survived.

Pedestal Jars

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5550.1-2)

These two miniature jars were probably a pair, and may have been part of a larger grouping. The high perforated feet and the fact that they were made in multiples as a set suggests that these would not have been vessels for ordinary use, but rather for funerary ceremonies and other ritual purposes.

Jar

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5534.1)

The form of this vessel closely resembles that of 5533.1, also in this exhibition, which has been identified with the Gimhae region occupied by Geumgwan Gaya. In fact, the two jars were given to the museum together, and have consecutive accession numbers. At the same time, Gimhae is near the Nakdong River, which served as a natural border between Gaya and Silla, and similar jars have also been associated with the early Silla period.

Pedestal Jar

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5538.1)

While the high feet of fifth and sixth century Korean wares commonly have perforations, which reduced their weight and had a decorative effect, unperforated feet such as this are also known. The heavy upper body caused the jar to lean to one side on its foot, probably during the stress of firing. However, even imperfect stoneware vessels were used during the Three Kingdoms period, although this jar may have been reserved for burial.

Jar

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1984
(5298.1)

Pedestal

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Mrs. Theodore A. Cooke in Memory of Robert Allerton, 1967
(3498.1)

One of the most characteristic ceramic forms of the Three Kingdoms period, pedestals like this would have been used as stands for jars during important ceremonies, including funerary rituals (as surmised from their presence in tombs). In turn, the jars would have been used to hold various offerings.

The fifth and sixth centuries mark the high point in the production of early Korean ceramics, when the use of chamber kilns had been mastered, allowing for high firing temperatures in a tightly sealed reductive atmosphere that resulted in impermeable stoneware of superior durability.

Korean ceramics from this period often have a strong sculptural quality, which would have given an air of authority and sumptuousness to ceremonial performances. The variety of circular, rectangular, and triangular perforations are repeated in the rounded base, cylindrical body, and flaring top of the vessel as a whole, with the strong vertical thrust relieved by horizontal banding and cross-hatching. This indicates that the pedestal was carefully composed with a sophisticated understanding of aesthetic principles.

Pedestal

Korea, Gaya or Silla region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1984
(5301.1)

Jar

Korea, Gaya period, 6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5549.1)

This exquisite jar is one of the best early Korean ceramics in the Academy's collection. It has a noticeably thinner body than the earlier vessels in this exhibition, the effect of which is heightened by tapering the thickness of the neck to a nearly paper-thin edge. It is only minimally decorated, with a raised horizontal line separating the neck into two sections, the lower of which rises straight, with the upper flaring to a perfectly rounded mouth. The flare of the upper neck is balanced by an outward swelling shoulder, which then gradually curves inward to a rounded bottom. The shoulder is further emphasized by natural ash glazing that resulted from particles of wood ash accumulating on the surface during firing.

This jar would have been placed on a pedestal such as those on display nearby, where a sense of lightness would have been imparted to its solid, stable form by raising it on a perforated, strongly vertical stand.

Cup and Stand

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Purchase, 1932

(3449a-b)

This cup and stand perfectly match each other, and they may have been made as a set. They are a miniature version of the jars (like 5549.1) raised on pedestals (like 3498.1 or 5301.1) in this exhibition. Their shape suggests that they would not have been utilitarian objects, but rather would have played a ceremonial role as vessels to hold offerings. Since stoneware was a relatively new technology symbolizing the ability of the ruling class to support specially trained artisans, these vessels would have imparted an air of authority to any ritual, which would have been augmented by their severe, sparsely decorated forms.

Although this cup and stand came into the museum with two other cup and stand sets (3450a-b and 3451a-b) dating to the same period of the Gaya Confederacy, subtle differences in design indicate that they would not all have originally been part of a single group of ceremonial vessels. However, it is likely that such miniature cups and stands would have occurred as multiples in ritual performances.

Cup and Stand

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Purchase, 1932

(3450a-b)

Cup and Stand

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Purchase, 1932

(3451a-b)

Cup and Stand

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1985

(5418.1a-b)

Although this cup and stand came into the museum as a set, they probably were not originally intended to go together. At the same time, the stand would have been intended for a similar cup, although perhaps of a slightly larger size, while the rounded bottom of the cup indicates that it would have had a matching stand. Since ceramics of this antiquity often survive in a fragmentary state, it is common to find pieces from different, but similar, sets mismatched in modern times.

Cup and Stand

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5558.1-2)

Although this cup and stand came into the museum as a set, they probably do not belong together. The flat bottom of the cup suggests that it may have stood on its own without a stand, while the larger size of the stand indicates that its cup would have been larger, as well. The small perforations low on the stand are unusual; typically Gaya pedestals and high feet either have long rectangular perforations, or multiple perforations stacked vertically.

Cup and Stand

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5547.1-2)

The flat bottom of this cup and curved receptacle of the stand indicate that they do not belong together, although they came into the museum as a set.

Cup and Pedestal Bowl with Handle

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1985

(5409.1)

A number of varieties of cup and stand combinations survive from the Gaya region during the fifth and sixth centuries. The differences in shape may indicate different ceremonial functions; for example, the offerings held by this bowl-shaped pedestal and its accompanying jar may have been lifted during the performance of a ritual (perhaps as the offerings were presented to their recipient), which would account for its handle. On the other hand, most of the stands and cups in the Academy's collection are without handles, suggesting that they would not have been moved.

Although this cup and pedestal came into the museum as a set, the flat bottom of the cup and rounded shape of the pedestal indicate that they were not intended to be used together.

Pedestal Bowl with Handle

Korea Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1985

(5410.1)

Like the similar bowl-shaped pedestal nearby, this vessel probably would have been intended as a stand for a cup, which is now lost.

Cup with Handle

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Mr. Damon Giffard, 1952

(1744.1)

The coiled handle of this rare vessel is characteristic of ceramics from the Gaya region. While the other miniature cups from Gaya in the Academy's collection could have been lifted by their flaring mouths, the straight neck of this vessel would have made a handle necessary, suggesting that it served a practical, as well as a decorative, function. The flattened bottom indicates that this cup may not have had a matching stand, although it is possible that a stand would have been used to raise it, due to its small size.

Pedestal Bowl

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Purchase, 1932

(3447)

This finely crafted bowl-shaped pedestal probably would have served as a stand for a large cup or jar. Its shape is unusual, as Gaya pedestals tend to have a higher foot with numerous perforations.

Pedestal Jar

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1986

(5557.1)

This shape of this pedestal jar closely resembles that of the two smaller pedestal jars (5550.1-2) in the Three Kingdoms section of this exhibition. However, it is larger, indicating that it would have come from a different set. The fifth and sixth centuries saw a surprising degree of standardization of shapes in the Gaya and Silla regions, despite the fact that these regions were controlled by a number of different polities. This suggests the adoption of similar ritual practices throughout the area around the Nakdong River.

Pedestal Bowl and Jar

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Dr. Jack H. Paldi, Jill Paldi, and Camille Paldi, 1984

(5292.1-2)

Although this jar and pedestal do not match, they originally would have been paired with similar vessels. Both shapes are typical of the Gaya region during the fifth and sixth centuries. The long, slightly flaring neck of the jar, with natural ash glaze accumulated on the shoulder, resembles the form of the two high-footed jars from Gaya or Silla (5014.1, 5300.1) elsewhere on display in this exhibition. The shape of the pedestal, on the other hand, resembles that of the pedestal bowl nearby (3447), but it is more typical in the proportions of its high foot and its perforations.

Pedestal Vessel with Cover

Korea, Gaya region, 5th-6th century

Stoneware

Gift of Riki Saito, 1998

(8816.1)

This vessel has one of the most typical shapes of ceramics excavated from the Gaya region. The cover is decorated with an incised geometric design that reflects the perforations and banding on the high foot. When turned over, the perforated finial of the cover would have served as a foot, so that the shape of the cover mimics that of the base. These features give the vessel a sophisticated “classical” sense of balance.