

Plate 4.18. Minton Fig Tree Chinoiserie pattern, printed from an early line engraving on the reverse of the Hermit copper plate illustrated in Plate 4.2. This is the only engraving of the pattern found at the factory. Areas of damage incurred during reworking of the copper plate can be clearly seen. Found on jugs and bowls, this is probably one of the first patterns produced by the factory at the end of the eighteenth century. This engraving was probably intended for use inside the centre of a bowl. Engraving diameter 151 mm.



Fig Tree Chinoiserie

It had been hoped that some evidence of early patterns would be found on the back of reworked copper plates. A significant find was on the reverse of the Hermit pattern engraving, shown in Plate 4.2, where there is the rather damaged but very interesting early line-engraved chinoiserie scene illustrated in Plate 4.18. The pattern takes its name from the distinctive tree in the foreground. To date the pattern has only been noted on jugs and bowls, although examples are rarely found so it is possible that other items such as mugs were also produced. Typical early Minton wares decorated in this pattern are shown in Plates 4.19 and 4.20. Both pieces are of fine quality with extensive use of line engraving. A barrel-shaped jug of Minton form decorated in this pattern is illustrated by Henrywood,⁵ where it is wrongly identified as the 'Chinaman with Rocket pattern' as shown at the end of this chapter.

The border used by Minton with the Fig Tree Chinoiserie pattern is clearly illustrated in Plates 4.19 and 4.21. A very similar border was used on a bowl decorated with a different chinoiserie pattern,⁶ but close inspection of original photographs of that bowl reveal a number of differences of detail, sufficient to make it probable that the bowl was made by another manufacturer. In addition to an almost identical border being used elsewhere, a similar Fig Tree pattern was used by Stevenson,² although in this case there are sufficient differences to easily distinguish the two designs in addition to the border being different.

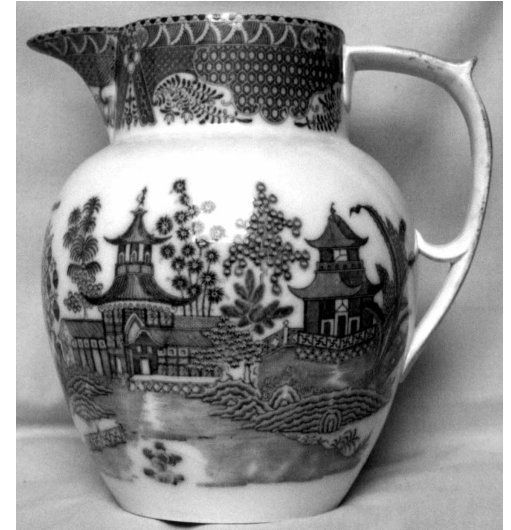
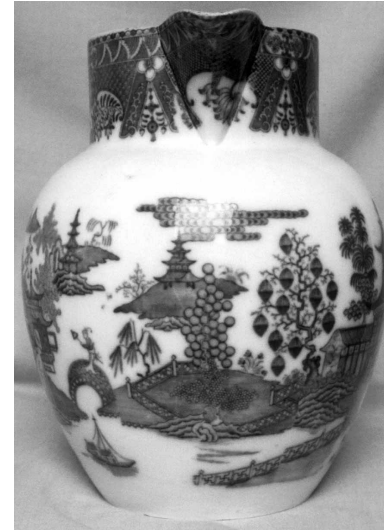


Plate 4.19. Two views of a fine Minton pearlware jug decorated with the Fig Tree Chinoiserie pattern, c.1800. Although the overall layout of the pattern has been adapted to fit the jug, the main features correspond closely to the engraving found at the factory and shown in Plate 4.18. Note the characteristic Minton handle shape. Height 217 mm.

One Man Chinoiserie

The Fig Tree Chinoiserie pattern bowl shown in Plate 4.20 is particularly interesting in that a completely different pattern has been used inside at its centre, as shown in Plates 4.21 and 4.22. The pattern is traditionally called One Man Chinoiserie, referring to the single person crossing the bridge, and is based on an original Chinese design, as shown in Plate 4.23. The attribution of the pattern to Minton is currently based solely on its use in conjunction with the Fig Tree Chinoiserie pattern on the illustrated bowl and the coffee can illustrated in Plate 4.24, which has a typical Minton handle and workman's mark. Hopefully further examples can be found to confirm the attribution.

The pattern was used on tea wares by several manufacturers, notably by Shorthouse and Co. for whom marked examples are known.⁷ Earthenware



Plate 4.20. Early Minton Fig Tree Chinoiserie bowl, c.1800. As with the jug in Plate 4.19, the piece is well potted in a fine compact pearlware body and the print shows extensive use of line engraving. A different print is used on the other side of the bowl, as shown in Plate 9.106. The border inside the bowl can be seen in Plate 4.21 to correspond to that on the jug. Diameter 233 mm.