

Exploring the Path of Cultural Intermingling with the World in East Asia

-- Taking the international trade of Chinese ceramics as an example

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Abstract: Since the reform and opening up, the Chinese ceramic culture has entered a new period. As an important cultural symbol since ancient times, ceramics has begun its modern evolution. The cross-cultural communication of ceramic culture can be regarded as a diversified process of industry and art on the two sides of inheritance and innovation. Not only that, the ceramic culture is experiencing a process of internationalization and modernization, the international influence of the ceramic culture is deepening, and the cultural symbols of ceramics are also in urgent need of modern expression. The history of ceramic culture will be the profound foundation for the modernization of ceramic culture in the future, promoting the modernization of ceramic culture as the symbol of Chinese culture.

Keywords: Modernization of Ceramic Culture, Cross-cultural Communication, Inheritance and Innovation.

1. Background

1.1. The Situation of The Ceramic Industry

In the world, through the wide spread of ceramic culture, most of the more developed countries and regions have established ceramic production and processing factories, and the homomorphic competition for ceramic products is relatively fierce especially low-end ceramic products. Due to the characteristics of the domestic large market, the ceramic industry established in the early stage of reform and opening up is mainly a labor-intensive production, with high cost, high energy consumption, and low production efficiency. A large working population has created a large scale of China's ceramic industry, as well as the characteristics of low-end daily ceramic production [1]. Domestic ceramic imports are mainly middle and high-end ceramic products, which to some extent shows the absence of domestic ceramic industry in the middle and high-end market.

The exported ceramic products are mainly middle and low-end ceramics, which shows that the long historical and cultural foundation of China's ceramics in China is still underutilized. There are still deficiencies in the development and utilization of ceramic cultural resources at the present stage. At the same time, there are problems such as excess capacity and excessive pollution of ceramic production. China's ceramic industry is a supersedeable foundation for the international dissemination of ceramics, and its future internationalization and modernization still need clear and effective guidance.

1.2. Modern Chinese Pottery

The first occurrence of "modern pottery" in China can be traced back to the end of the 1980s. In the beginning, the direction of "modern" is not the category of modern art, but the design concept of ceramic productivity [2]. In the beginning, modern pottery does not belong to the category of pure art, but in the actual development, for the requirements of the international art circle practice. Due to the long-term contact and conforming to foreign art, ceramic art has

deficiencies in the cultivation of its own contemporary and local nature. The development idea of eating ceramics cannot provide support for the starting point of the concept, that is, to improve the productivity of ceramics.

With the deepening of the world's cognition of Chinese pottery, Chinese native ceramics have been received by the art world. Chinese modern pottery has begun to gain wide recognition in competitions and other fields. But it also reflects one of the quintessential propositions of cross-cultural communication, namely, social differences. Chinese pottery was born in the local culture, which differs sharply from the Western mainstream culture. The local aesthetic elements and spiritual images in China face the challenge of cultural gap. On the one hand, it is necessary to enhance the audience's understanding and acceptance of cultural content; on the other hand, beneficial modifications with retaining cultural content are all important propositions for cross-cultural ceramic communication.

As an independent art category, Chinese pottery will also burst out with the development of economy and society, and it needs to deal with the relationship between the development of world art and the construction of Chinese ceramic aesthetic discourse.

1.3. The Development of Traditional Ceramic Culture

In the history of Chinese cultural exchanges with foreign countries, ceramics played an important role. From the Silk Road to the era of brand navigation, ceramics were the staple goods. Ceramics have exerted a profound influence on European art and the aristocratic life of European countries. As a result, ceramics became an important anchor point for Chinese cultural symbols to take root in Europe. King Manuel I of Portugal gave an explicit order before da Gama set sail for India: Bring back Chinese porcelain [3].

Since the period of brand navigation, in the international dissemination of ceramic culture, Chinese traditional ceramics have been in the dominant export position for a long time. Chinese ceramics are not only regarded as a symbol of luxury goods and status in Europe but also represent China's

outstanding artistic achievements and aesthetic and cultural thoughts in the minds of Europeans. Even in the modern international society where China is at a disadvantage, the ceramic trade is still in excess status. Therefore, ceramics have gradually become a cultural symbol of China itself in Western society.

Since the ceramic culture entered modern times, it has suffered from severe challenges in China and the international community. With the modernization and urbanization of Chinese society, the living space of ceramic culture and technology has been seriously squeezed, and the commercialization and industrialization transformation of the ceramic culture industry is relatively slow, which leads to the slow start of the middle and high-end ceramic industry and the low market share. Internationally, countries with first-mover advantage occupy the ecological niche of the high-end ceramic industry by their technological and financial advantages. On the one hand, Chinese ceramic culture is insufficient in the middle and low-end ceramic products to support the high-quality development of ceramic culture; on the other hand, the high-end ceramics in the global market mainly come from European and American countries, and the cultural symbols of ceramics are at risk of dilution.

In recent years, the Chinese government attaches more and more importance to cultural protection and the development of cultural industry. The new development of ceramic culture is of great significance to enhance the influence of Chinese culture. In the new era, Chinese ceramic culture can better face globalization, so it is necessary to combine the supporting role of the industry in culture, explore the modern significance of traditional ceramic culture, and develop the ceramic culture from multiple perspectives.

2. Analysis of Characteristics

2.1. Current Situation of The Ceramic Industry

Presently, the ceramic industry and the ceramic culture with a long history, with two sides misplaced. According to the average export price of ceramic products in 2022-2023 announced by the Chinese Customs, the average price remained stable and negative, except for the average price increase of 18 million US dollars / 10,000 tons in March and April, which periodically increased the average export price of ceramic products. However, the price fell by \$12 million / 10,000 tons in ten months. It reflects that the current Chinese ceramic industry is mainly oriented to the middle and low-end ceramic products, and the middle and high-end market share continues to lose. The exploration and application of ceramic culture are not enough. The style of middle and low-end products is single, with low added value, which cannot reflect the depth of ceramic culture; the middle and high-end product market is mainly occupied by imported ceramics, which fully demonstrates the high production efficiency and stronger competitiveness in the external market.

According to the relevant report of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of China in 2022, the total flue gas produced by ceramic industry furnaces is about 11674 trillion m³. If the standard emission concentration, the total annual emissions of ceramic industry particulate matter, SO₂, and NO_x are about 35,000 tons, 5000 tons, 58,000 tons, and 210,000 tons, accounting for 0.44%, 0.66%, and 1.6%, showing the huge emissions caused by ceramic industry. Therefore, the ceramic industry is a key point of Chinese air pollution control. For

the development of the ceramic industry and the construction of international cultural brands of ceramics, the environmental protection and modernization of the ceramic industry is a necessary choice.

In today's economic globalization, the ceramic industry and cultural communication need to be highly combined, abandon the concept of separation of culture and industry, and drive the development of culture through the industry.

2.2. Ceramic Art

The development of modern pottery and even the world of ceramics all belong to the discourse field under the guidance of the current international art concept. The so-called internationalization and the artistry defined by modernity deviate from ceramic art and ceramic history in the Chinese context to a new extent. For the art form with profound national color, its modernization and globalization must be propelled based on local nature. The locality is not conservative and follows the old example, with the specific cultural content and cultural characteristics formed for a long time. Its national distinguishing feature will also become a vital part of cultural symbols. As for ceramic culture, there is no doubt that the national discourse of Chinese culture occupies a dominant position in it. Even for today's daily porcelain covering the whole world, the aesthetic elements such as glaze, shape, and color also come from Chinese ceramics. The practical experience experienced in the development of modern Chinese ceramic art is very significant, which not only shows that blindly conforming to the direction of international culture cannot give ceramic art a foothold in the world but also shows the importance of establishing the context of Chinese ceramic art in the world.

The ceramic art itself proposed by modern times serves the ceramic production, which is in line with the reality that most of the ceramic ownership in the world belongs to the daily applied porcelain [4], and also points out the direction for the far-reaching development of ceramic art. First of all, the development of art requires the return of the demand of the masses. The integration of aesthetic elements such as shape and texture with the traditional applied porcelain, which is more in line with the aesthetic habits of daily style and ceramic category, and can well integrate the cultural communication needs in different contexts. Secondly, ceramic art cannot become a conceptual art discipline, because of its long-term art history of daily utensils. The future artistic innovation must be related to its experience in the history of development, to achieve the aesthetic purpose of ceramic art.

2.3. Ceramic Culture and Cultural Context

In the process of cultural communication in Europe as an audience, it has been a long process to shape the design of ceramics and even Chinese cultural symbols. The success of the symbolization of the ceramic culture speaks for itself. From an object to a status symbol, and then to the nation-state, ceramics are deep in the hearts of Europe, which truly reflects the success and depth of the dissemination of ceramic culture [5]. Compared with the successful experience of cultural communication, Chinese ceramics have been influenced by international relations and other factors in modern times. Their potential energy and sound volume in cultural exchange have gradually faded from the perspective of international mainstream culture.

The international dissemination of modern ceramic culture

is bound to be based on the historical basis of the cross-border ceramic culture circle, making good use of the social reality of ceramics in most countries. It is not only inheriting the skills in the ceramic culture but also awakening the consciousness of all the audiences, to construct a new modern international ceramic cultural context.

3. Suggestions

3.1. Optimization of the Ceramic Industry

In the international dissemination of Chinese ceramic culture, the ceramic industry, as the foundation, whether the industrial actual effect or the industrial image, will have a profound impact on the communication process. Therefore, the ceramic industry should be optimized at various levels.

Given the overcapacity and energy consumption pollution problems in the ceramic industry in recent years,[6] it is an idealistic improvement direction for the ceramic production process upgrading and energy saving and emission reduction. It can not only avoid the public opinion risk of sensitive environmental issues in the world but also provide a guarantee for the development of the international market, following the new development concept of the Chinese government. The improvement can win more space for the development of the ceramic industry and ceramic culture. More fundamentally, through improving technology, optimizing product quality, deriving an international reputation, and promoting the dissemination of ceramic culture from the root.

To foster its reputation, the Chinese ceramic industry needs to pay enough attention to the market share of the middle and high-end products currently deficiencies, with cultural brands branding. To create higher value-added products, manufacturers can introduce more elements into the modern assembly line products, especially the historical and cultural color of Chinese traditional ceramics, to achieve a win-win situation of product value-added and communication.

3.2. Establish the Field of Ceramic Art Discourse

From the concept was established to today, ceramic art still has a great discourse belonging to controversy, such as Chinese society's perception of ceramic art. The "modern ceramics" perception of China's art and the international perception of ceramic artists are different. The modernization of ceramic art cannot be detached from the local color, cannot be completely transformed into a pure concept of art, and cannot be commercial as the first point. Ceramic art has a strong national cultural identity, to further establish its aesthetic paradigm, the essence of the national local art organic inheritance. The construction of theory and knowledge systems should be fully subdivided, and the latest achievements of ceramic art feedback to different fields, such as ceramic production, ceramic design, and ceramic research, etc., to promote ceramic art toward the stimulation of the basic goal of ceramic productivity is progress.

3.3. Make Full Use of Ceramic Cultural Resources

The history of ceramics can be traced back to the Neolithic age [7], in China, in which all stages of development and various types of ceramics were rich cultural resources. Compared with the current ceramic culture exported by China, the untapped part of China's historical ceramic culture is

monumental. Not only in China, China's export porcelain export in the process of ceramic culture, and even formed a stable ceramic culture circle in Europe and other areas where a large number of imported porcelains. Even though the international ceramic industry is more developed today, the unique aesthetic value of Chinese ceramics still has a strong influence, which is irreplaceable.

China's ceramic cultural resources are vast and makes full use of them not only to explore resources but also to evoke identity. For the domestic cultural resources for research, organization, and restoration, the systematic categorization of the content of ceramic culture, the essence of the craft, and other heritage, and ultimately applied to the modern development of ceramic culture. Internationally, we should give full play to the historical foundation and cultural advantages of Chinese ceramics exported to foreign countries, define the aesthetic field of Chinese ceramics, and at the same time, combine with the aesthetics and needs of different groups of people in the cross-cultural context of communication. The two are compatible, both Chinese ceramic culture content can be used in the construction of international ceramic culture; and also, can be ceramic in the international cultural circle for China's reference, better create internationalization of Chinese ceramics.

The premise for the full use of cultural resources is protection. Ceramic culture is a fascinating cultural treasure at both the material and non-material levels. Material ceramic resources should be protected, and their value should continue to be used through exhibition, research, and imitation. On the intangible level, we should give full play to its continuity, carry out the sustainable inheritance of ceramic stories and crafts, strengthen talent training and process optimization, and strengthen the brand construction of intangible cultural heritage. Ceramic culture has a strong regionality, and the ceramic culture in each region needs to give full play to its characteristics, build ceramic centers such as Foshan and Jingdezhen, and avoid low-quality homomorphism competition.

3.4. Build the Diversified Path of Ceramic Culture Dissemination

In the history of ceramics, there is no lack of two-way communication promoting the development of ceramics. For example, Persian merchants brought cobalt blue dye to China to collect blue and white porcelain; the custom business of the European royal family brought rich new materials to the Jingdezhen porcelain industry [8]. Take the past cases of Chinese ceramic communication as an example, caused by various environmental factors, the communication often takes place in a single channel and a local time and space and is often interrupted. In today's economic globalization, the construction of more sustainable and broader diversified forms of communication has become a strong demand under the international vision of ceramic culture. China's main porcelain export to the Western world is mainly blue and white porcelain, and the type of emerging porcelain in international exchanges is relatively single, which hinders the construction of the image of three-dimensional Chinese porcelain.

From the perspective of cultural communication, the format of ceramics should not only promote its industrialization and modernization but also see the potential of the porcelain handicraft industry. On the one hand, the industrialization and personalized development of batch

production, the entertainment experience value of the porcelain handicraft industry, and the comprehensive spread of ceramic culture. Improving the sense of experience and immersion is the ideal way to improve the communication effect, break the static aesthetic situation of ceramic culture in the world, construct a cultural experience context that combines the ceramic origin, craft, and communication process, and leads users into multiple cultural contexts.

The international cultural vision is moving towards the coexistence of multi-cultures. For the cultural subjects, it also needs to extend its cultural field and create attractive cultural symbols from multiple perspectives, to lay a foundation for the international dissemination of modern ceramic culture, which is also an important reference for its future development. The diversified cultural communication path is of profound significance for making use of traditional cultural brands and driving industrial upgrading.

4. Conclusion

The cultural exchange between Chinese ceramics and the world is three-dimensional and multi-faceted. Starting from the industry, in the face of problems such as overcapacity, high production consumption, and weak high-end market, Chinese ceramics should give full use to its advantages of profound history and profound aesthetic appreciation to lay a solid industrial foundation for international communication. Modern Chinese ceramic art needs to sum up the experience deeply, avoid being enthusiastically attached to international art, adhere to the cultural essence, create its localized theories and norms, and promote the modernization of ceramic art. In cultural globalization, Chinese ceramics have a successful precedent and a good audience base. In today's rapid changes in science and technology, Chinese ceramics should diversify

the path of integrating with the world. Provide support for Chinese ceramic culture to the world at all levels, promote the modernization and internationalization of ceramic culture, better establish China's cultural symbols, feedback to the whole of Chinese culture, and add color to the forest of world culture.

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