

The Buddhist Cultural Functions Of Porcelain In The "Silk Road"

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Abstract: Since ancient times, Chinese products such as tea, silk, and porcelain on the "Silk Road" have been circulated and disseminated in various countries. In the vast Buddhist classics, it is also recorded that porcelain was widely used in Buddhist rituals and ceremonies. Since porcelain is regarded as an indispensable tool and offering for the four disciples of Buddhism to hold Buddhist activities or practice Buddhism, then in the spread of Buddhist thought and culture, these tools and offerings are inevitable. The "Silk Road" was widely spread, and it was also endowed with profound Buddhist cultural connotations.

Introduction

Tea, silk, and porcelain are all Chinese inventions and creations. Since ancient times, these exquisite oriental objects have spread along the "Silk Road" to the Western Regions, Korea, and Japan. Since my country proposed the "One Belt One Road" development strategy, how to revive, inherit, carry forward, and innovate our traditional tea, porcelain, silk and other cultures is of great significance to the revitalization of the country's economy and culture.

1. Naming of the "Silk Road"

The "Silk Road" was developed by the German geologist and geographer, Ferdinand von Lichhofen. (Richthofen, Ferdinand von, 1833-1905), the earliest proposed. He arrived in Shanghai in 1862. Due to the policy restrictions of the Qing government at that time, his actions were limited to Shanghai, and his results were limited. Until 1868, he received funding and support from the Bank of California and the Shanghai Foreign Chamber of Commerce, and conducted detailed and in-depth investigations on the geography, geology, society, and economy of 13 provinces in China.

Lichhofen wrote in his related works, "The Great Wall here is already in decline. It's best to look for the Great Wall along the ruins of a long line of towers. Although it is almost everywhere nowadays, I Everywhere you see it, you will feel deeply moved. It crosses the plain in the valley in a long and straight posture, and then moves up the hillside in a meandering posture. It was once a peace-loving, farming Han Chinese who resisted the plateau. A line of defense for fighting, barbaric nomads. There are small beacon towers on all the vantage points on both sides of the city wall. From there, a telegraph-like signal is sent out to the capital quickly. Today, people quietly pass by these buildings that quietly witnessed the fierce battles of the nation in ancient times. "[1] It can be seen that he gave a very detailed description of the current situation of Chinese geography and society at that time.

Lichhofen left China in 1872 and returned to Germany. The related reports he wrote during this period won the Kaiser Wilhelm II's commendation, and his brilliant academic achievements established his great reputation in the Western academic circles.

Lichhofen and his student Thyssen published a five-volume masterpiece "China: Results of Personal Travel and Research Based on It" in 35 years. In the book, he first used the German vocabulary: Die Seidenstrasse, The "Silk Road". The "Silk Road" that Lichhofen considered, from 114 BC to 127 AD, connected China to the Hezhong region, the vast area between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya in Central Asia, and between China and India. , The traffic route produced by the

trade of silk and silk as a medium, this traffic route is the famous "Silk Road".

Later, a German scholar Albert Herrmann made further elaboration in his book "The Ancient Silk Road between China and Syria" published in 1910, which was widely accepted by the international academic community and became an irreplaceable description. The ancient Eurasian continent was an extremely important key word for the exchanges between Eastern and Western civilizations. Today, the term "Silk Road", which is full of poetic and historical significance, is well-known and spread by people all over the world. The "Silk Road" has also become a road of political, economic and cultural exchanges.

2. "Porcelain" in Buddhist Thought and Culture

On this great "Silk Road", different countries, regions, different ethnic groups, and races have continuously generated collisions and exchanges between politics and economics and trade, religious art and culture. This exchange is two-way, both Output is also input. In particular, the Tang Dynasty said that the country was prosperous and the people were strong. Some Chinese Buddhist classics and temples appeared in the Western Regions. Buddhist scriptures such as the "Great Prajna Paramita" and other Buddhist classics that were very popular in the Central Plains at that time; temples such as: Wu Zhou Jianjian Dayun Temple, some official temples in the Western Regions, etc.

There are envoys from the Tang Dynasty holding silk in the Samarkand frescoes, and various products from China have been recorded in Arabic and other documents. Archaeological excavations have also found a large number of porcelain and silk fabrics from China. These are undoubtedly Both show the extensive results of the spread of Chinese culture to the west at that time. In addition, in the tombs of Sogdian leaders such as Anga and Shi Jun at the end of the Northern Dynasties, epitaphs and images were unearthed, showing the daily life scenes of Sogdian caravan leader Sabao, as well as the utensils used by them for singing, dancing, and banquets. Under the influence of the spread of these Buddhist cultures, these porcelain and other items from the Chinese civilization have also been endowed with the connotation of Buddhist culture and other religious cultures.

(1) Porcelain in Buddhist offering ceremony

"The reliable time when Buddhism was introduced into China was in the late Western Han Dynasty and the early Eastern Han Dynasty" [2]. In the vast Buddhist scriptures, there are records that porcelain was used in Buddhist offerings and rituals. Since porcelain is regarded as an indispensable tool and offering for the four disciples of Buddhism to hold Buddhist activities or practice Buddhism, then in the spread of Buddhist thought and culture, these porcelains and other tools and offerings will inevitably be found in It was widely spread on the "Silk Road". The different usages of porcelain utensils in Buddhist rituals are detailed in the "Survival Ceremony". They are mainly used for: 1 mandala 2 incense offering 3 burning lamp offering 4 omnivorous drink offering 5 bathing method 6 stigmatization method, etc. .

According to the "Survival Ceremony", if you follow the above rituals, you will get the "desired accomplishment" and the perfect fruit. That is: "Second and surplus offering equipment, those who should be dedicated, follow this law, and respect and nurture all the deities. The heart rejuvenation ceremony is pure and rigorous, and the offerings are full, equal as the realm of the law. , Universal in all interests. According to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, merit arises, the flags and the towers, the vast splendid pavilions, and the Tianbao tree king, there are all resources, all the fragrance and clouds, etc., the endless is still empty. Every rain Offerings, offerings to become Buddhas, contemplating everything, all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Use the void to hide the manifestation, ordinary offering seals, three transfers as blessings, all wishes are fulfilled"[2]. From this, we can also see that the vessels made of porcelain play an indispensable role in Buddhist rituals.

(2) Porcelain tiles, vases, bowls and other porcelains recorded in Buddhist classics

Many classics such as the Susit Dikarama also describe other forms of porcelain, such as

porcelain tiles, porcelain vases, porcelain bowls, etc., which play an important role in Buddhist daily offerings and mandala rituals. For example: "Further time, we should say that the three-class lamp method is used to make the heavens and immortals happy to achieve. The lamp is made of gold with silver, cooked copper, or ceramic tiles. Among the five types, use according to the law. , The God is happy to make" [3].

The second volume of the "Big Buddha Ding Guangju Dharani Sutra" contains a description of the use of porcelain to hold medicines for the Buddha, that is: "When the medicine is ripe, take gold, silver, copper, porcelain and other utensils that have not been used before, and the Sheng will place in front of the Buddha. Twenty times to seal its mouth. Curse, post it on the medicine bottle, take the medicine and combine the medicine, and tell the good time, in front of the stupa, to provide support day and night." [4]. Porcelain bowls are also used in Buddhist mage activities, such as: "Fangjia method uses pure water to take a small amount of incense, and it is good to clean the water. The water must also be filled with a new clean porcelain bowl. Put a bottle of perfume on the stove before sitting (holding the pestle in the left hand for fire offerings)" [5].

The fifth volume of the "One-character Buddha Dinglunwang Sutra" also records that porcelain is filled with perfume, which is used for Buddha's service in the mandala. Other scriptures, such as the first volume of "The Buddha's Ding Zunsheng Dharani recite the rituals", etc., also record in detail the similar functions of porcelain in Buddhist ritual activities.

(3) Porcelain given to Buddhist disciples by the royal family

The first volume of "Datang Zhenyuan Continued Kaiyuan Shijiaolu" and Volume 23 of "Yunqi Fahui (Selected Records)" record that the royal family gave Buddhist temples, monks, etc. and porcelain-related utensils. Such as:

"Emperor Wenwu of the Holy Spirit commented: Qing's cousin, early enlightenment of Mahayana. Traveling to the country from far from the west, proclaiming the mystery of the six roots, and acting out the microwords of the double tree. sent to the eight-foot bed in the Prajna courtyard of the national monk of Feng Bin Three sheets. a white porcelain bowl with ten pieces in a bottle, one futon,..." [6]

In addition to the utensils bestowed by the imperial family, black-glazed porcelain, porcelain bowls and other porcelain were used in various daily activities of Buddhism. In the second volume of "Bai Zhang Qing Regulations Zheng Yi Ji" there are black-glazed porcelain utensils containing water, such as: ".four vases, set in front of the four corners of the altar lantern lamp. The height of the bottle is one foot and five inches, and the diameter is one foot. Two inches, can hold three buckets of water, made of black glazed porcelain" [7].

From the records in many Buddhist scriptures, it can be seen that due to the profound and profound Buddhist ideas and culture endowed porcelain with new and heavy connotations, Chinese porcelain began to be widely distributed and spread to the world along the Silk Road, especially during the Sui and Tang Dynasties. It has been used, appreciated, and treasured by people all over the world, and has a wide impact. In English, the spelling of the two words "China" and "ceramics" is the same, and ceramics has undoubtedly become synonymous with China.

3. Promote cultural exchanges and dissemination

Influenced by Buddhism, porcelain has become more and more colorful in materials and creative themes. Whether it is a Buddha, a Bodhisattva, a Zen master, or an Arhat, the shapes and forms are ever-changing, and the expressions are natural and vivid, supplemented by flowers, landscapes, birds and insects of various colors, which make it profound Buddhism culture is interpreted on traditional ceramic prints, bottles, statues, furnaces, pots, cylinders, etc. The beautiful wheel of beauty moxibustion flashes everywhere with the beauty of Buddhist culture, expressing compassion, tolerance, harmony, and peace. Buddhist philosophy. Buddhist culture and ceramic culture directly or indirectly influence each other. As a form of social culture, Buddhism penetrates into people's lives with the help of ceramics, and ceramic culture is enriched by Buddhist culture.

"Buddhism culture is the first time that external culture has been imported into China on a large

scale. After it entered China, it was soon transformed and absorbed by China's inherent culture and became an important part of Chinese traditional culture." [8] The Silk Road is also After the introduction of Buddhism, the Chinese traveled westward to seek Dharma, which echoed and interacted with the eastward spread of Buddhist monks in the Western Regions.

There are also other religious and cultural exchanges and disseminations along the Sea and Land Silk Roads, such as Zoroastrianism, the state religion of Central Asia, especially the ancient Persian Sassanids. , Zoroastrianism, and Zoroastrianism", the highest good god Ahura Mazda is a symbol of light and goodness. Chen Yuan believes that "Zozhi originated in the late Sui Dynasty and the beginning of the Tang Dynasty", "Zozhi's meaning is to show that it is a foreign god, so it is shown from the sky. At the same time, there are also Zoroastrian characters in the Zhou script, and it is called the fire god; The connection of the two characters "HuoZuo" also begins here." [9]

The "Silk Road" is not only a political and economic road between various nations and ethnic groups, but also a road for the spread and exchange of culture and Buddhism and other religions, and related porcelain, tea, etc. will also have greater development worldwide. It is believed that in the near future, the porcelain culture and its carrying functions in Buddhism will once again shine with new vitality along the "Silk Road".

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