

A Process-oriented Study on the Spread of Chinese Porcelain Culture to the Outside World in Yuan Dynasty

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Abstract

China has been universally acknowledged its position as a country of Porcelain. As early as 10,000 years ago, during the transition from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic period, ancient Chinese had already mastered the techniques to make and utilize pottery. In the Eastern Han Dynasty, more than 1800 years ago, the Chinese people invented porcelain, one of the most marvelous Chinese inventions. It was in the Tang Dynasty that porcelain stood out as the emerging commodity in the international market, ranging from Japan, India, Persia and even Egypt and Europe. Throughout the ages, porcelain, as an important Chinese export product, has earned its reputation in the international market through economic and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries. Simultaneously, it has made considerable contributions not only to China, but also its import countries both economically and culturally.

Keywords: Porcelain, Cultural Exchange, Influence

Introduction

Since the Tang Dynasty, with the exchange and trade between China and foreign countries, Chinese porcelain flowed out overseas in large quantities. The Yuan government paid special attention to foreign trade and set up a municipal port department to deal with foreign trade affairs. According to the volume twenty-six of the *Continuing Literature General Review*: " In the 14th year of the First Emperor's reign, the first city-porting department was established in Quanzhou, headed by Meng Gudai, and three city-porting departments were established in Qingyuan, Shanghai, and Yopu. " (Marco,1999). What can be seen is that overseas trade was on the high in the Yuan Dynasty. And recent decades of domestic and international excavations confirm that the porcelain exported during the Yuan dynasty was mainly the product of coastal porcelain kilns, especially the celadon of Longquan kilns, the blue and white porcelain produced by Jingdezhen kilns, Shufu porcelain, blue and white porcelain and imitation Longquan porcelain fired by many porcelain kilns in Zhejiang and Fujian areas. (Zhou,1981)

It can be said that the porcelain overseas trade was very robust and thriving. Marco Polo returned from Quanzhou to Italy in 1296 and brought back a number of white porcelain and color glaze small

bowls. He praised Quanzhou for the manufacturing bowls and porcelain both for their techniques and low prices in his Marco Polo travels. Yuan Zhizheng two years to China's famous Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta, in the travelogue he wrote "Chinese porcelain in the assassination (Quanzhou) and Qinlan (Guangzhou) manufacturing, porcelain prices in China like our ceramic prices, or cheaper. This porcelain is exported to India and other countries, as far as our Morocco, is the best porcelain" (Chen,2000). Ibn Battuta, a famous Moroccan traveler, came to China and then wrote in his travelogue: " Chinese porcelain in Citong (Quanzhou) and Qinlan (Guangzhou) manufacturing, prices in China as low as our ceramic prices, or even lower. This kind of porcelain exported to India and other countries, as far as our Morocco, is the best-seller."(Battuta, 1985) In 1341, Wang Dayuan completed his *Daoyizhilue* after his travels overseas, which is the most detailed records of Yuan Dynasty porcelain exported to overseas countries. According to this book, the sales of China's porcelain at that time has expanded to around 58 countries and regions, in which the general usage of porcelain is as follows: in Liuqiu (Taiwan): "The goods traded were in rough bowls ". In the three islands (the Philippine Islands): "the goods traded with

blue and white bowls of the genus". In Marilu (Manila): "The goods traded were made of porcelain, plates, porcelain from Sanshu, water jars and large urns". In Sulu: "The goods traded were made of green beads (i.e., green burnished beads), and the genus of the local ware". In Muzhamba (southern India): "The goods traded were green and white porcelain and tiles". In Chamchung (southern Vietnam): "the goods were made of celadon, flower bowls, and burnt beads". In Jiri (Indonesia): "the goods traded were made of celadon and rough bowls". In Yalai (Singapore): "the goods traded with celadon and rough bowls of the genus"(Wang, 1999). Bajanama (near Surabaya, Indonesia): "The goods traded were made of greenware". *Ying Ya Sheng Yuan (The Journey to the End of the World)* by Ma Huan also records that the Chinese loved Chinese blue and white porcelain the most. In the "Western Countries" (Li, 1979), it is recorded that the people who loved Chinese blue and white porcelain and blue and white porcelain plates were from Champa, Java, and Ceylon. It can be seen at that time China's porcelain exported in large quantities, and deeply welcomed by people at home and abroad, which promotes the culture exchanges in between.

The exchange of Porcelain

According to records, the major destinations of Yuan Dynasty China's ceramics are Japan, Korean, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan, etc. In Japan, the ruins of Kasai Castle in Tokyo, the ruins of Kopuya Castle in Nakano City, Nagano Prefecture, the ruins of Fukui City in Fukui Prefecture, the ruins of Hwazoin Temple in Maruoka Town, Sakai County, Fukui Prefecture, the ruins of Hwazoin Temple in Kyoto(Norichika,1999).

Yuan celadon fragments have been recovered from the ruins of Hakata Kami-Koji Castle in Fukuoka City, the ruins of Hakata Tsunaba-cho in Fukuoka City, the ruins of Hamakan in Yabe-cho in Kumamoto Prefecture, the ruins of Katsurenjo Castle in Okinawa, the ruins of Okinawa Imajiren Castle in Okinawa, and the ruins of Shuri Castle in Naha City in Okinawa. There are many different types of wares, including jars with animal-ringed ears, vases, small jars, large plates, bowls, and small plates, and many high-quality wares with lotus and phoenix motifs. There are many high-quality wares with dragon, lotus, and phoenix motifs painted on their bodies. The shipwreck was found and recovered in 1976-1977. The objects recovered from the shipwreck. There were 400 boxes of porcelain (3,466 pieces of celadon, 2,281 pieces of white porcelain, and 770 pieces of other ceramics), all of which were made in China. Porcelain form and decoration are mostly products of Yuan dynasty (Norichika,1999).

In the Philippines, the most porcelain excavated throughout Southeast Asia, about 40,000 pieces of porcelain unearthed over the past decade, including celadon of the Yueyao kiln system, the Longquan kiln system works, there are engraved five-tube vase, plum vase, porcelain in Fujian region with engraved blue and white porcelain, Jingdezhen blue and white glaze with brown spots porcelain, blue and white porcelain, and established Santos, Locsin and Robert, Villanova, and several other collectors'

collections(Ai,1989). Especially in the Philo Islands, Cebu, and Mindanao, as well as some other places unearthed a lot of Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain, both to Zheng type of large boutique, but also Chinese style medium-sized 8 regular items and small ritual objects, and much more small and medium-sized wares, especially small bottles, jars, water bottles and the like in surprisingly large quantities.

In Malaysia, the richest ceramic specimens have been excavated, and the Sarawak Museum has collected and excavated more than one million pieces of ceramic specimens. Among them are blue and white porcelain, white porcelain, celadon low-temperature glazed pottery from kilns in Fujian, Dehua, Anxi, and Magzao, with a predominance of emerald green and dark green. In Thailand, many porcelain pieces were unearthed underwater at the mouth of the Chao Phraya River and nearby waters. There are products from Dehua, Yongchun, Tongan, and other places (Ma, 1982). In addition, there are two pieces with the characteristics of the fourteenth-century products of blue and white lidded jars, one found in Chiang Mai Province, near the ruined customs of the city of Rai Tewantakan (i.e., ancient Wang Takan), and the collection of the Halidichai Heritage Station in the province of Milan Tsang.

In India, from the southern suburbs of Delhi Tuglak dynasty (1320-1413) palace site and garden, what were excavated were 44 pieces of celadon plate, 23 pieces of celadon bowl, and celadon 5 pieces, a total of 72 pieces of porcelain Yuan Dynasty. Unfortunately, none of them are complete, and all of them were recovered after excavation after the recovery. In addition, there is a wooden box full of porcelain pieces that have not been sorted. In addition, in recent years, Japanese scholars in the southern tip of India, the excavation of a Bay confirmed about a thousand pieces of 13-14th century Longquan kiln celadon, Yuan celadon, and glazed red Chinese porcelain(Chen, 2000).

In Indonesia, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Sumatra, Java, and other islands, a large number of Yuan dynasty celadon porcelain has been found. Among them, there are both exquisite large wares and small ritual objects excavated in large quantities in Southeast Asia (Zhu, 1984). Such small wares, although excavated in large numbers, were relatively less excavated in the Philippine Islands.

In Iran, among the Yuan dynasty porcelain collected in the Ardebil Spiritual Temple, there are 32 pieces of Yuan celadon, one piece of blue-glazed porcelain, and several pieces of celadon. Among the Yuan celadon, there are 19 plates, 2 large bodies, 5 plum vases, 3 wide-mouth jars, 1 gourd vase, and 2 flat pots. And a large number of Yuan celadon and celadon porcelains have been found on the island of Hormuz, which is located on the northern coast of the Persian Gulf. Led by the important port city of Aden at the entrance to the Red Sea, many port sites on the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula have found celadon. For example, Habir, located northeast of Lahj, has found Longquan porcelain, with fragments of large plates and deep-bellied bowls, as well as Yew porcelain bowls and porcelain jars, and 14th-century celadon fragments, painted with pool algae swimming ducks. Broken fragments of celadon plates and Yuan celadon plates have also been found at Zahran in northern Yemen (Medley, 1987).

In Egypt, a large number of Chinese porcelain fragments have been excavated, including celadon from the Yaozhou kiln, celadon from the Fujian Jian kiln, white porcelain from the Fujian Dehua and Guangdong kilns, and porcelain from the Magzhou kiln, most notably 205 pieces of Yuan celadon in the Zhizheng style (Zhou, 1981). Among them can be found fragments of a vase with entwined peony and lotus petals, a lotus flower with mandarin ducks, the fragment of a bowl with a lotus flower motif, as well as pieces of a large plate with white flowers on a blue ground and a small pot with a blue and white peony motif, and even a blue and white porcelain piece with a carved white dragon.

According to Dr. Popper (2003), there are 16 large plates, 4 large bowls, 1 flat pot, 4 plum vases, 2 large jars, 1 wide mouth jar, 3 gourd vases, a total of 31 pieces of Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain in Sudan. But the number should be more than that, probably as many as 40 pieces. 20 Celadon and celadon wares from the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries have been found at many sites in countries such as Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Tanzania in East Africa. At the Kilwa site in Tanzania, fragments of a late Yuan celadon and celadon peony plum vase and a celadon cloud and dragon plum vase were unearthed.

Also discovered was a blue and white glazed jade pot spring vase. The foreign dissemination of Chinese ceramics in the Yuan Dynasty was very extensive and popular. It can be said that Yuan dynasty porcelain was massively produced in large commercial quantities, mainly for export to the huge overseas markets. Taking the blue and white porcelain of Jingdezhen as an example, although it was not appreciated and accepted by the Mongolian ruling class at home and the Han Chinese ruled class at large, the huge demand for overseas trade still stimulated the maturation and continuous development of blue and white porcelain in the short Yuan Dynasty, so much so that it later became the mainstream of Chinese ceramic production. Celadon porcelain produced at the time was mainly supplied to the Islamic market in large pieces and to Southeast Asia in small pieces (Wang, 1999). This reflects the differences in culture, customs, and aesthetic interests of each region, as well as the different levels of socio-economic development of each region. The economic development level of Southeast Asia was low, so most of the pieces excavated were small and medium-sized pieces made of domestic blue material, while the few large and exquisite pieces were probably used by a few rich people: the Middle East, West Asia, and Egypt were economically developed and richer, so the Yuan blue and white porcelain excavated was typical of the imported blue and white porcelain.

Since the Yuan dynasty blue and white porcelain was a product of cultural and technological exchanges between the East and the West, the Yuan Qing Hua was introduced with a strong exotic flavor and a deep imprint of Islamic culture, which was widely welcomed in the Islamic market (Medley, 1987). From the decorative style of Yuan Qing Hua, that multi-layered, dense but not chaotic, extremely narrow space composition method and decorative style, also has the strong characteristics of Islamic pattern decoration. For example, the use of concentric rings on the plate for multi-layered decoration is typical of the Islamic style,

which can be found in the original form on Islamic metalware and pottery of the early fourteenth century. The lotus motif on the rim of the plate, for example, is associated with the border decoration of Islamic pottery or carpets. The most extensive collection of Yuan blue and white pottery exists in Turkey, with the largest number of large plates produced to accommodate their custom of sitting on the ground and gathering around to eat their meals.

Another example is the military holder, originally used by Indian Buddhists to store water for drinking and purify the hands of the water bottle, as early as the 4th century AD into China and the South Pacific Islands, to the Yuan Dynasty, Southeast Asia and other places Muslims widely used the military holder (Wang, 1997). In order to meet this need, Jinjiang Magzao and Dehua mass production of military holdings for export, reflecting the exchange of Islamic culture between China and Southeast Asia during the Yuan Dynasty. The ceramics at that time in foreign trade occupied a very important position, as extremely important bulk export commodities, many of which are the result of cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries.

The Influence of Porcelain

The Chinese porcelain exports also gradually change the eating habits of some countries. Such as some countries in Southeast Asia, before the introduction of Chinese porcelain, plant leaves serve as a food vessel. With the import of Chinese porcelain, this function is taken over by the new incomer.

Another evidence is that in 1996, Zhou Daguan (1999), who had been to Zhenla (Dongpu Zhai), wrote a book called "Zhenla's Customs and Land", pointing out that local people used tile kettle for cooking and making soup, tile basin for serving rice, tile vessel for holding water next to the hand to perform, and tile bowl for drinking wine. The noble family has begun to use the Chinese import of gold and silver or porcelain, such as the Quanzhou celadon ware. The import of Chinese porcelain bowls not only played a role in the improvement of food utensils in Southeast Asia but also gradually contributed to the food hygiene and even health and longevity of its people. Later in the Ming and Qing dynasties with a large number of Chinese immigrants to Southeast Asia and the mass production of porcelain, the use of porcelain in daily life has become more and more common.

In addition, with the export of Chinese porcelain to Southeast Asia, advanced Chinese porcelain technology has also been transmitted to Southeast Asia. It is said that Siam Sukhothai era, King Rama Kan Heng in 1294 and 1300 years twice to Beijing, China into the thirst of the Yuan Dynasty Emperor Shizu Kublai and Chengzong Timur. During his second visit, he recruited a group of ceramists from the Magzhou kiln to bring their families to Siam and set up the famous Sungarot porcelain industry (Zhao, 1996). The porcelain produced in Sukhothai at the beginning of the fourteenth century had the same shape as the porcelain fired at the Magzhou kiln in Hebei, China. Its firing techniques, such as dishes and other porcelain into the bowl body firing, the bottom of the vessel to support a tray with three cones or four cones (branch Ding): or into a stack of porcelain firing, between the vessel and the vessel, between the upper and lower, there is a cone to bear up, so that

each vessel does not adhere to each other, after firing the support cone interrupted, so the bottom of the vessel and the vessel left in the spot, which is the firing method of the Magzhou kiln(Ye, 1987).

In the middle of the fourth century, Longquan celadon was introduced into Japan, and the people of Yaluo liked it. In consequence, the workers were invited to Japan to develop the Porcelain industry, which was mainly the production of new porcelain similar to that fired at the Magzhou kiln in Hebei and celadon imitating the Longquan kiln in Zhejiang, whose products were sold in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, at that time, Persian ceramics not only resembled China's northern Ding kiln in the glaze color but also the decorations, i.e., the adoption of lotus petals, waves, clouds, dark flowers, and other decorations, as well as the rim of the vessel less glaze and other firing techniques(Chen,2000). All of this reflects the cultural influence of Porcelain exchanges between China and foreign countries.

Conclusion

In summary, the Yuan Dynasty porcelain ware has a number of new features that reflect the traditional Chinese culture on the basis of eclectic, absorbing other nationalities, religions, and foreign cultural characteristics. It has made significant progress for the further development of porcelain in the Ming and Qing dynasties and promotes the two-way integration of Chinese and Western cultures. Therefore, porcelain serves as one of the important elements of Chinese and foreign economic and cultural exchanges in Yuan dynasty.

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