

# The Influence of External Spread of Jingdezhen Ceramics in the Ming and Qing Dynasties

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**Abstract:** *During the Ming and Qing dynasties, due to the advanced Chinese ceramic craftsmanship, coupled with the opening of new shipping routes, there was a growing demand for Chinese porcelain in European countries, and the scale of Chinese porcelain export was gradually expanding, and it had a considerable impact on the international scene.*

**Keywords:** *Jingdezhen Ceramics; Export Porcelain; External Communication*

## 1. Introduction

The creation of ceramics is the crystallization of ancient people's wisdom, which plays an inescapable role in art and cultural exchange. Chinese ceramics blossomed, each local kiln production of porcelain has its own unique style, such as "southern blue and northern white" - the south produces more celadon, while the north produces more white porcelain, the biggest reason is that "according to local conditions". Jingdezhen ceramics are popular in the market for their unique style, even more so in the export market. Ming and Qing dynasties is the heyday of Jingdezhen porcelain export, its foreign dissemination and export market demand is also increasing[1-2].

## 2. Jingdezhen ceramics foreign communication history

Ancient Chinese ceramics exported to Southeast Asia in different periods, its impact on Southeast Asia also varies, the Tang and Fifth Dynasties is the period of Chinese porcelain exports to Southeast Asia the most. From the Tang Dynasty onwards, ceramics were exported in large quantities to Southeast Asia for the convenience of its people. During the Song and Yuan dynasties, Chinese porcelain exports to Southeast Asia reached a new high. Before the Ming Dynasty, the export of Chinese porcelain greatly contributed to the development of ceramics in Southeast Asia. In the early Ming Dynasty, due to China's implementation of the "sea ban" and "tribute" policy, the export of Chinese porcelain caused a great impact, Southeast Asian countries in order to make up for this gap, have developed their own ceramic industry. However, because their pottery-making process was relatively backward, they often copied Chinese porcelain or hired Chinese craftsmen to guide them in their techniques. Porcelain from Southeast Asia is very similar to Chinese ceramics, whether in form, decoration, glaze color, or kiln construction and method of loading and firing. The end of the Ming and early Qing Dynasty Chinese porcelain exports entered a golden age, the greater proportion is Jingdezhen ceramic products. Jingdezhen porcelain is one of the main products in the Southeast Asian market. Longqing open sea, Kangxi open ban and western merchants to the east, these are the Ming and Qing dynasty foreign policy on the important changes, but also Jingdezhen pottery export trade re-activation of important reasons. China's ceramics trade with Southeast Asia gave a great boost to the development of crude porcelain from ordinary folk kilns along the southeastern coast of China, making it a common folk ceramic.

In the sixteenth century, Portugal dominated the waters of the Far East and was the first European country to engage in the porcelain trade. In order to make Jingdezhen porcelain in Europe better sales, Portuguese merchants in the choice of porcelain shape, pattern, glaze color and decoration, have their own characteristics, in order to adapt to the life of Europeans and aesthetic habits. As a result, many of the porcelains exported from China to Portugal were characterized by distinctive European art. Driven by the strong demand from Europe and the United States, the pottery industry of the Ming and Qing dynasties has continued to innovate. In addition to representative traditional Chinese products, there are also customized products tailored to the living habits of Europeans and with strong regional cultural characteristics.

Jingdezhen porcelain industry in the Ming and Qing dynasties can achieve such results, not only because of the Jingdezhen porcelain industry in thousands of years in the export process, with a unique artistic style and elegance of the cultural charm, but also political factors such as Zheng He went to the West, coupled with the economic factors of the Ming and Qing dynasties, for the wide dissemination of porcelain art in Jingdezhen, to create a favorable conditions both inside and outside[3-4].

### 3. Jingdezhen ceramics foreign dissemination lines

As early as in the Han Dynasty there is information about the foreign circulation of Chinese ancient ceramics, to the Song Dynasty, Jingdezhen ceramics began to go global. Song Dynasty society up and down good tea, so also Shang porcelain into the wind, navigation technology flourished, coupled with government policy support, the establishment of specialized institutions in many places, including Jingdezhen, including the kilns around the export.

Once Jingdezhen porcelain was exported, it became a product that people from all over the world craved at that time. The Southeast Asian and European markets are the main targets. At that time, the porcelain export transportation is divided into land and waterways, because of the transportation of porcelain heavy and precious, fragile characteristics, mainly waterway output. The land route is the "Silk Road", which starts from Xi'an to the west and reaches Kashmir, Islamabad, Afghanistan, Iran, Baghdad, the capital of Iraq, Damascus, the capital of Syria, and even as far as Egypt in North Africa. If from the East China Sea to the South China Sea, through the major strait, the Gulf, can be met with the "Silk Road". After the opening of the "New Route", there were frequent trade exchanges with Europe and the Americas.

Jingdezhen export porcelain is not only excellent quality, has its own local characteristics, but also can cater to overseas market demand, according to the beliefs of different countries and nationalities, humanities and customs customized, in the overseas market can be said to be more than the price of gold, demand exceeds supply. In quite a long time, China's total exports even up to 80% are export porcelain, as shown in Figure 1.



(Source: Ye Wencheng. *Fujian ceramics exported ports, routes and regions [J]*. *Oriental Collection*, 2010(11):25-29.)

▲ for the export places

Figure 1: Chinese Ming and Qing Dynasties blue and white porcelain export figure

#### 4. Jingdezhen export porcelain molding and decoration

Jingdezhen export porcelain in the early Ming Dynasty with Zheng He to the West spread to Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Africa and other countries. The traditional style of porcelain includes various bottles, pots, jars, bowls, plates and cups. During the Kangxi period, the variety of exported porcelains was at its widest, and many of the products took on a new twist by drawing on Chinese traditions while incorporating elements favored by Westerners. Decoration of traditional patterns mainly include flowers, figures, animals, landscapes, etc., each period has its own unique pattern, the late Ming and early Qing Dynasty the rise of landscape pattern is not to be ignored in the decoration of export porcelain pattern. Ming dynasty folk kiln production of blue and white porcelain, mostly in the field of small scenes, mountains and rivers scenery, pavilions and pavilions. At the end of the Ming and early Qing dynasties, the subject matter of landscape paintings was more common, and mostly combined with figures and decorations. There are also many exported porcelains with floral themes, with traditional Chinese flowers and colors, while exported porcelains are mainly realistic, such as peonies, lotuses, seasonal flowers, pomegranates, pines, bamboo and plums, and other floral motifs, which are difficult to distinguish and can only be used as decorative designs. In the export porcelain, the image of animals is also very rich, they can fly to escape, but also in the water to swim. In general, animal pattern are often combined with other patterns, or form patterns with plants, landscapes, and people [5-6].

Figure motifs are also common in pottery decoration, and can be seen in celadon painted pots from the Three Kingdoms era, and later ceramic decorations have human figures. From the Chongzhen Dynasty to the Kangxi Dynasty, it can be seen that these characters are dressed in military attire, or riding horses, or holding swords, with the *Three Kingdoms* and *Water Margin* as the source material, showing distinctive national characteristics; Immortal and Taoist themes, commonly found in the Eight Immortals tattoos; The figure motifs were also influenced by the paintings and prints of the period, and some of the motifs were taken from paintings and prints. Portrait motifs made up a large portion of the porcelain exported to Europe. In terms of character modeling, there are both Chinese and Western styles. Chinese figure pattern is common Qing officials, the image of the Manchu adults, and ladies, baby play pattern pattern is also more common.

#### 5. Jingdezhen ceramics influence on foreign communication

Jingdezhen is located in Jiangxi province, and Fujian, Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangsu provinces border, since ancient times has been "four provinces thoroughfare". From the middle of the Ming Dynasty until the middle of the Qing Dynasty, Jingdezhen porcelain industry has been one of the most representative of the national porcelain industry. By the 18th century, Jingdezhen was already the world's largest ceramics production base, and its products not only sold well overseas, but also had a profound impact on the politics and culture of several countries, especially the enlightenment of the pottery industry.

Porcelain once imported into Europe, it caused the strong pursuit of the princes and nobles, which set off the whole European society "porcelain hot". As a luxury item for royalty, the status of Chinese porcelain in Europe can be seen in the oil paintings. In Giovanni Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*, there are three blue and white porcelain wares, which were produced during the Xuande and Chenghua periods of the Ming Dynasty, and in this painting, they appear in the feast of the gods as "divine vessels", which also maps out the fact that at that time, as a luxury product circulating only in the hands of upper-class aristocrats, porcelain wares were often displayed at banquets by the aristocrats in order to show off and flaunt their own wealth and status. Being able to serve as a synonym for power, the value of the porcelain trade is immeasurable, as shown in Figure 2.

Most European countries have a long history of glass production, so they basically achieved success in imitating the production of Chinese porcelain relatively quickly. For example, the Dutch craftsmen, they imported from China a large number of white glaze and blue pigment, to the blue and white porcelain as a facsimile of the Chinese blue and white porcelain, European pottery, enamel crafts and other mutual integration, to produce a unique white glaze and blue-colored ceramics, a refreshing. But most of the early countries to imitate the production of "porcelain" is still different from the Chinese porcelain, because the European craftsmen have not figured out, but also the lack of the core formula of Chinese porcelain raw materials ---- "kaolin", people have been using clay to imitate the production of Chinese porcelain, and therefore can not be imitated with the same quality as the Chinese porcelain, the real porcelain. Really the earliest production of porcelain is Germany, in 1711, Berthold accidentally found a blacksmith to send a test of white clay is kaolin, immediately replaced the original use of clay, finally succeeded in firing the first European hard porcelain.



Figure 2: *Feast of the Gods*, Giovanni Bellini, 1514

The different national beliefs and cultures also made the porcelain produced in each region in the departure from the imitation of China are each developed their own special porcelain, greatly contributing to the development of the world's ceramic history.

## 6. Summary

Overseas demand is the result of people's cognition and acceptance of Jingdezhen ceramics. The different requirements of people from different countries and regions for the shape of Jingdezhen ceramics reflect their practicality in daily life, while the requirements for the types and decorations reflect people's deeper value judgment of Jingdezhen ceramics as well as their recognition of culture. With the opening of the new air routes, the demand for overseas markets is also increasing, the aesthetic and cultural differences between countries, Jingdezhen ceramics in various countries and regions, but there is a great difference in demand, so the export of ceramics to foreign countries in the overall shape, artistic image and so on are very different. Overseas market for the large demand for Ming and Qing dynasty Jingdezhen porcelain, the world's countries and regions of its diverse and personalized requirements, not only expanded the scale of foreign trade in Jingdezhen ceramics, but also contributed to the diversification of Jingdezhen porcelain, diversification of the development of Jingdezhen ceramics art is an important part of the development of an important part of the Jingdezhen ceramic art.

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