

Research on the Dissemination of Chinese Ceramic Stories Based on Ceramic Poetry and Its Translation

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Keywords: Ceramic Stories, Ceramic Poetry, Dissemination, Translation

Abstract: As an important symbol of Chinese culture, ceramics not only embodies the wisdom of working people, but also carries profound historical and artistic value. With the long-standing development of ceramics, many literati have created poems to honor the potters, ceramic vessels, ceramic industry. Ceramic poetry reflects the porcelain making skills and aesthetic orientation of an era, making ceramics not only a material vessel, but also an expression of emotion and art. The Chinese ceramic story based on ceramic poetry has spread the colorful Chinese ceramic culture for thousands of years both home and abroad. Therefore, it is needed to construct communication modes based on ceramic poetry to make Chinese ceramic stories go global. This essay focuses on four modes to disseminate Chinese ceramic stories based on ceramic poetry, namely mode of emotional communication, mode of narrative communication, mode of digital communication, mode of ceramic poetry translation. Through those modes and based on ceramic poetry, the unique charm of Chinese ceramic culture and literature can be disseminated to the world, and Chinese cultural confidence can be elevated to some degree.

1. Introduction

As one of the typical representatives of China's intangible cultural heritage, ceramics is also a shining pearl in the field of cultural inheritance in China. Its development history runs through various historical periods of China. Ceramics are not only highly practical in China, but also well-made, with exquisite craftsmanship and high appreciation value. The earliest history of Chinese ceramics can be traced back to the Neolithic Age, after thousands of years of technological innovation, Chinese ceramics has gone through the development of Tang tri-color, white porcelain, celadon, blue and white porcelain, wucui and other kinds of ceramic technological improvement[1].

In the Qin and Han Dynasties, the production scale of pottery was constantly expanding and the technological level was also improved. The appearance of colored pottery and glazed pottery demonstrated the superb production techniques and rich decorative styles at that time. In the Sui and Tang dynasties, Chinese ceramics entered their heyday, and tri-colored pottery in the Tang Dynasty attracted much attention for its brilliant colors and vivid shapes. In the Song and Yuan dynasties, the five famous kilns in the Song Dynasty represented the peak level of Chinese ceramic technology,

and the rise of blue and white porcelain in the Yuan Dynasty became another classic variety of Chinese ceramics.

In the Ming and Qing dynasties, Chinese ceramics reached an extremely high level in craftsmanship and decoration, and Jingdezhen became the national ceramic center, with a wide variety of blue and white porcelain, colored porcelain and single-color glazed porcelain. Since modern times, Chinese ceramics have continuously innovated on the basis of tradition, absorbed the elements of modern art, and created many works with the characteristics of the times.

Ceramics are not only daily articles, but also an art form, carrying rich cultural connotation and historical value, reflecting the aesthetic and scientific and technological level of the society at that time. With the development of ceramic culture, there have been many ceramic poems written by literati to laud the beauty and grace of Chinese porcelain. These poems carry plenty of Chinese ceramic culture and history and stories, and they are a significant means to disseminate Chinese traditional culture.

2. Characteristics and forms of ceramic poetry

In the history of China, poetry culture is extensive and profound. The organic combination of poetry and ceramic art fully reflects the wisdom and cultural heritage of the Chinese people[2].

2.1 Beautiful pictures and profound meanings

Ceramic painting often emphasizes the artistic conception, emphasizing the depiction and rendering of natural scenery. And with the continuous appearance of poems in ceramic paintings, the artistic conception of the picture in the painting is more complete, emphasizing the charm and accomplishment between the pen and the ink and the text, and achieving a coincidence point in the meaning expressed by the poem and the painting, so that the artistic effect of the picture is beautiful and the meaning expressed in the poems is more far-reaching and meaningful.

2.2 Deep theme and intense lyricism

Poetry is a good way to express emotion and narrative. The factor of adding poetry to ceramic painting is to deeply reflect the emotion expressed by the painter in the painting and express the author's intention more clearly, so as to achieve the purpose of lyricism or expressing aspirations by borrowing scenery, because poetry is often the portrayal of the author's real feelings and ambitions[3]. For example, in the ceramic painting of the Rooster Picture, three different forms of chickens were drawn respectively, some graceful and some masculine, but the author felt that only the form could not fully express and express the author's emotions and thoughts, so there was a classic poem of "Life Dare Not Speak Lightly, a Thousand Doors Open", intended to express the grandeur of the rooster. And the roosters on the painting shine on each other, giving people a kind of magnificent and exciting feeling.

3. The narrative function of ceramic poetry in ceramic stories

In the long river of Chinese culture, ceramics and poetry are both shining pearls. When ceramics and poetry meet and merge, a unique narrative function comes into being. It is like a silent but shocking epic, telling the legendary story of Chinese ceramics.

3.1 The historical origin of ceramic poetry

Chinese ceramics has a long history. As early as the Neolithic Age, there were simple symbols on painted pottery. Although these symbols could not be called poems in a complete sense, they could be regarded as the prototype of ceramic poetry, which recorded people's life and beliefs in the simplest way. According to the history of Chinese ceramics, most of these original symbols were geometric figures and simple lines, and their distribution and combination were related to the production activities and totem worship of the tribes at that time, which revealed the mysterious corner of ancient civilization for us.

With the evolution of history, in the Tang Dynasty, Changsha Kiln opened a new fashion of ceramic inscriptions. On the porcelain of Changsha Kiln, poems and paintings complement each other. Those poems are bold, graceful, fresh or simple, such as “I am not born when you were born, and I am old when you were born.” “You hate me for being born late, I hate you for being born early.” (from Changsha Kiln porcelain[4]) With simple and affectionate lines, it depicts the sad beauty and helplessness of love, allowing us to glimpse the social landscape and people's emotional world in the Tang Dynasty. As scholar Xiao Xiang pointed out in the article “The Emotional Expression and Social Mapping of Tang Dynasty Ceramic Poetry”, the ceramics of these poems are not only practical instruments, but also emotional and cultural carriers, they integrate the narrative function of poetry into the ceramics, so that the ceramics have a soul and temperature.

3.2 Narrative theme of ceramic poetry

3.2.1 Describing the ceramic production process

Ceramic poetry records in detail the whole process of ceramic from raw material selection to finished firing. “The pottery house leans heavily against the bank, and the boat sails cover the river every day. If the workers do not sacrifice their talents, this can not stand as the country's honorable vessels.” (Ode to Jingdezhen Wuran Pavilion written by Miao Zongzhou of the Ming Dynasty[5]) This poem vividly not only depicts the prosperity of ceramic production at that time, with numerous kilns and busy transportation, but also emphasizes the exquisite and complex ceramic production process, which is the crystallization of the wisdom and skill of the craftsmen. From *Tiangong Kaiwu Pottery*, we can see that the making of ancient ceramics needs to go through multiple processes, from soil collection and mud refining to preform, glaze application and firing. Every step needs to be carefully handled and there is no room for errors. Ceramic poems illustrate these processes in a literary form. Through these poems, we can almost see artisans meticulously firing ceramics in front of a raging fire and feel their dedication and love for the art of ceramics.

3.2.2 Expressing the feelings and thoughts of the creators

Ceramic poetry is also the expression of the creator's feelings and thoughts. In the feudal period, some literati put their depression, openness, homesickness and other feelings into ceramic poetry because of their political career difficulties. “Plain porcelain with quiet night, Tea Fragrance full of leisure house.” (Lu Shixiu's “Sipping Tea on a Moonlight Night”) It conveys a quiet and leisurely mood, but behind this simple poem are perhaps the creator's yearning and pursuit of staying away from the hustle and bustle of the world. According to the book *Ancient Chinese Literati and Ceramic Art*, ancient literati often participated in the creation of ceramics, and they created poems by using porcelain, so that ceramics became the object of their hearts, so that future generations can touch the emotional vein of historical figures.

3.2.3 Recording historical events and social features

Ceramic poetry is like a mirror, truly reflecting the historical events and social features of the time. In the era of dynasties and wars, the poetry on ceramics also left the mark of the times. For example, during the confrontation between Song and Jin dynasties, some poems appeared on the ceramics of Cizhou Kiln to reflect the suffering of war and the people's prayer for peace. These verses provide precious materials for us to study the social history at that time. At the same time, there are also depictions of folk life in ceramic poetry, such as festival celebrations, weddings, funerals, etc., showing a rich and colorful folk culture. As Wang Juan, a folklorist, said in the *Folkloric Picture of Ceramic Poetry*, ceramic poetry reflects all aspects of folk life and is an important source of data for the study of folk culture.

3.3 Narrative techniques of ceramic poetry

3.3.1 Image narrative

Ceramic poetry often uses rich images to construct narrative system. Pine, bamboo, plum and other images represent the noble and tough quality, and are often used to express the creator's pursuit of personality, while dragon and phoenix, kirin and other images symbolize auspiciousness and authority, reflecting the cultural beliefs and social hierarchy at that time. For example, “The humble bamboo has bowed leaves, and the proud plum has no flowers on its back.” (written by Zheng Xie, whose poems are often used in ceramic decoration.) The use of these images gives the poems a subtle and far-reaching charm. Readers need to understand the narrative connotation behind the poems through the interpretation of the images, thus increasing the artistic appeal and cultural depth of the ceramic poems.

3.3.2 Allusion narrative

Allusions are also common in ceramic poetry. Creators resort to historical allusions to express their opinions, emotions, or evaluations of history. An allusion, such as “Boyi Shuqi was ashamed to eat Zhou food”, may have been used in ceramic poetry to express praise for loyalty and integrity or critique of a certain political phenomenon. In the book *Ceramics and Historical Allusions*, it is mentioned that the use of allusions enables ceramic poetry to transcend the limitations of time and space and connect with the long history and culture, so that readers can appreciate the broad and profound traditional Chinese culture while appreciating ceramic art.

3.4 Cultural significance of narrative function of ceramic poetry

3.4.1 Inheriting cultural genes

Ceramic poetry uses ceramics as a medium to pass down Chinese language, literature, art, history and culture from generation to generation. It is an important link of cultural inheritance, enabling future generations to learn and comprehend the wisdom and spirit of their ancestors while appreciating the beauty of ceramics. Whether it is Confucian “benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and faith”, Taoist “nature, inaction”, or Buddhist “compassion, cause and effect”, traces can be found in ceramic poetry. For example, “A piece of icy heart in a jade pot” (Wang Changling's poem entitled *Furong Tower Sending off Xin Jian* [6]) embodies the quality of jade and integrity, which is the reflection of Confucian culture in ceramic poetry. Through the narrative function of ceramic poetry, these cultural elements, like genes, are deeply imprinted in the cultural blood of the Chinese nation.

3.4.2 Promoting cultural exchanges

Chinese ceramics have been sold overseas since ancient times, and thus the poems on ceramics have also been introduced to the world. These ceramic poems, with their unique charm, showed the elegance of Chinese culture to the world and became ambassadors of cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries. In Europe, Chinese ceramics once triggered a “China fever”, and the Oriental artistic conception and philosophical thoughts in ceramic poems fascinated Westerners. According to the *International Dissemination of Chinese Ceramic Culture*, many European nobles were curious about the poems on Chinese ceramics [7]. Through the translation and study of these poems, they gradually understood Chinese culture. The poems on porcelain promoted the mutual understanding and learning of Eastern and Western cultures, and promoted the diversified development of world culture.

3.4.3 Enriching the artistic connotation of ceramics

Ceramic poetry adds literary and cultural dimension to ceramic art, making its connotation more abundant and diversified. Ceramics is no longer just a visual art, but also a comprehensive art that integrates hearing (the rhythmic beauty of poetry), touch (the texture of ceramics) and thought and emotion. The narrative function of ceramic poetry makes ceramics story-like and melodramatic, so that the audience can have more associations and resonance when appreciating ceramics, thus enhancing the aesthetic value and cultural taste of ceramic art.

In the long history of Chinese ceramic culture, ceramic poetry, with its unique narrative function, weaves a gorgeous chapter of history, culture, emotion and art. It is a treasure for Chinese national culture, which is worth in-depth study, inheritance and development.

4. The role of ceramic poetry in domestic and foreign communication

4.1 Domestic communication

As an important carrier of spreading ceramic culture, ceramic poetry broadens our public's view of understanding ceramic culture. In China, when people understand ceramic culture, they often use ceramic poetry to describe it. It is also through this kind of poetry that people make up for the monotonous display of objects. For example, when talking about the celadon of Yue Kiln, the public may not have a distinct experience just by looking at the photos. At this time, ceramic poetry comes into play. People can use Tang Dynasty poet Lu Qiumeng's verses “In autumn Yue kiln was opened, its green color shaded a thousand peaks”.

In addition, people can also understand and restore the process and steps of firing porcelain in ancient times through ceramic poetry. As we all know, there were 72 processes in the firing of porcelain in Jingdezhen. How were these 72 processes recorded? This is closely related to ceramic poetry. There are many poems that record the porcelain making process in Jingdezhen, among which the typical one is Gong Shi's *Jingdezhen Pottery Song*. Among these poems, the ones about Jingdezhen's porcelain making process account for more than 60 percent. For example, in the process of “panning”, *Jingdezhen Pottery Song* has a description of “a square cellar filtering mud”. In addition to the description of panning, *Jingdezhen Pottery Song* also has a special description of ramming stone, making bricks and other processes. It is a detailed interpretation of the ceramic making process in ancient times.

At present, ceramic poetry spreads in more diversified ways, most notably through new media platforms such as the Internet. With the help of these platforms, ceramic poetry can be revitalized, letting more people see and understand ceramic poetry, and then spread ceramic culture. In addition,

in various festivals, ceramic poetry is also used in cultural activities, such as poetry recitals and ceramic art exhibitions. In addition to enriching the cultural connotation of the festival, it also broadens the communication channels of ceramic culture and enhances the cultural influence.

4.2 International communication

In the international aspect, China has a very long history of foreign exchange and trade, among which ceramics is an important part of the trade, and it is precisely because of the circulation of ceramics around the world that the worldwide ceramic cultural exchange has been set off. As an indispensable part of the ceramic culture, ceramic poetry has also gone to the world. In the process of spreading ceramic poetry, the translation of various poetry collections has become one of its important means. In Japan, as early as the Meiji era, there were already scholars who translated ancient books such as *Tao Shuo* into Japanese. The appearance of these translations not only expanded the influence and spread of Chinese ceramic culture, but also witnessed the history of Sino-foreign ceramic exchanges. These translations have conveyed the charm of Chinese ceramic poetry to people all over the world with languages easy to understand, especially those countries that love to collect Chinese porcelain, such as Japan, Britain, France, Turkey and so on.

The spread of ceramic poetry to these countries will always cause strong repercussions and resonance. In addition to *Tao Shuo*, *Jingdezhen Pottery Record* was also introduced to the world through translation, which was translated by the French Ru Lian, and it was the first time that ancient Chinese ceramic books were directly introduced to Europe. And since then, *Tao Ya* and other ancient books have also been translated and introduced to the world. This is of great significance for us to spread ceramic poetry.

Chinese ceramic poetry and even other cultural classics play a pivotal role in the “going global” of Chinese culture. However, nowadays, we are short of relevant talents for the translation of ceramic poetry. Therefore, we should vigorously train relevant high-quality translators, so that the Chinese ceramic stories contained in ceramic poetry can be introduced to the world through translation. However, in order to translate Chinese ceramic poetry well, Chinese translators should not only master the necessary ceramic knowledge, but also have a good command of bi-lingual knowledge, so as to carry out better publicity and make Chinese ceramic culture more acceptable to foreign English readers[8].

5. Construction of ceramic stories communication mode based on ceramic poetry

5.1 Mode of emotional communication: deepening and constructing of emotional resonance

The emotional communication mode takes the emotional depth of ceramic poetry as the core, and establishes the emotional bond between the audience and ceramic culture through the artistic appeal of the poetic language and the visual beauty of the ceramic image. For example, on the Mid-Autumn Festival every year, Jingdezhen will hold a ceramic poetry recitation in conjunction with the festival activities. Under the bright moonlight, the readers will wear ancient costumes to accompany the elegant ceramic exhibits, chanting such lines as “Autumn shadow turns to gold wave, and the moon is repolished.” This kind of words with the moon and porcelain are related to strengthen the audience's emotional sense, and let the public feel the unique charm of ceramic poetry in the festival atmosphere.

5.2 Mode of narrative communication: constructing multi-dimensional narrative chain

The narrative communication mode emphasizes on refining the core story of ceramic culture

through the narrative characteristics of poetry, and on presenting it with a multi-dimensional narrative chain. For example, taking a certain category of ceramics (such as celadon of the Song Dynasty) as the theme, it systematically presents its production process, historical evolution and poetic expression, and builds a complete narrative system from material to spiritual. Longquan, Zhejiang Province, was an important celadon producing area in the Song Dynasty. The local museum has built an immersive exhibition hall, starting from the mining of porcelain clay, displaying the process of making and glazes in sequence. Along the way, the exhibition board of poems praising celadon such as “Dingzhou porcelain made like red Jade” by Su Shi tells the story of celadon's spread from civilian kilns to official kilns and from local to overseas. The narrative chain has both historical depth and cultural breadth, so as to attract multi-level audience participation.

5.3 Mode of digital communication: enabling and extending technological innovation

Digital communication mode uses virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies to break the limitation of time and space, providing a new possibility for the dissemination of ceramic poetry. For example, this study restores ancient ceramic production scenes through VR technology, accompanied by poems created at that time, so that the audience can feel the cultural charm of ceramics and poetry. In a ceramic culture experience museum in Jingdezhen, visitors put on VR equipment and instantly “travel” back to the imperial kiln of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The folk songs sung by craftsmen while working and the poems written by scholars are heard, and they witness the moment when porcelain is made. Through AI technology to generate personalized ceramic story recommendation to meet the needs of audiences with different cultural backgrounds, a ceramic culture APP with AI algorithm comes into being, according to the users' browsing history to present the ceramic poetry theme and ceramic category introduction that fit their preferences.

5.4 Mode of ceramic poetry translation

Translation is the significant means to spread a country's culture to the target readers [9]. Ceramic poetry is a unique form of literature to spread Chinese ceramic culture to the world.

5.4.1 Literal translation and free translation

For some cultural images and craftsmanship terms in ceramic poetry, if there is a direct corresponding expression in the target language, literal translation can be used. For example, “*qinghua ci*” can be directly translated as “blue and white porcelain,” which can retain the original cultural characteristics. For those with rich connotations and difficult to translate directly, free translation may be employed. For example, “The exquisitely translucent porcelain is wonderful, showing a vivid scene like green mountains emerging in stillness”. Free translation helps readers understand the meaning of the poem.

5.4.2 Cultural compensation strategy

To make up for the loss of information due to cultural differences, translators can use cultural compensation strategies. When translating ceramic poetry, annotations can be added after the text to explain the cultural allusions and historical backgrounds in the poem. For example, when translating “Tao Zhu and Duanmu,” it can first be translated as “Business like Tao Zhu and Duanmu,” and then be annotated that “Tao Zhu” is Fan Li, who was extremely successful in business, and “Duanmu” is Zigong, also a famous merchant. This helps Western readers better

understand the cultural connotations contained in the sentences.

5.4.3 Aesthetic reproduction strategy

In the translation process, translators should pay attention to the reproduction of the original poem's aesthetic value. This can be achieved by choosing words with rich connotations and constructing harmonious sentence structures. For example, “A white glaze blue patterns are formed in one firing, with the flowers clearly visible through the glaze”. Through the choice of words like “white glaze” and “blue patterns” and the organization of sentences, it fully displays the aesthetic conception of the original poem.

6. Conclusion

Ceramic poetry dissemination and its translation is a challenging but far-reaching task. Through in-depth understanding of the characteristics of ceramic poetry, constructing the modes of the stories in the poems, recognizing the challenges in the translation process, and applying appropriate translation strategies, translators can better convey the cultural connotations, artistic images, and aesthetic values of ceramic poetry on the stage of cross-cultural exchanges. This not only helps the dissemination and promotion of Chinese ceramic culture worldwide but also opens up a unique and rich research direction for translation research fields, promoting the further development and innovation of translation theory and practice. In future research and practice, more effective disseminating modes and translation methods and approaches need to be continuously explored to meet the growing demand for Chinese stories “Going Global” and to boost cross-cultural exchanges.

Acknowledgement

This paper is supported by 2024 Jingdezhen Ceramic University College Students Innovation Training Project entitled “Research on the Dissemination of Chinese Stories Based on Ceramic Poetry Translation” (State-Level, NO: 202410408011), by Jiangxi Provincial Social Science Fund Projects (24WT36), and by Annual Project of Jiangxi Provincial Higher Education Society (ZX4-C-021).

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