

# Study on the Transmission of Chinese Traditional Decorative Patterns Along the Silk Road

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## ABSTRACT

**This paper studies the Chinese traditional decorative patterns attached to them were spread through the Silk Road. Starting from the significance of the spread of Chinese traditional decorative patterns along the Silk Road, this paper expounds the influence of Chinese traditional decorative patterns on the Silk Road, including the history of communication and the formation of European Chinese style. It is believed that the overseas spread of Chinese traditional decorative patterns not only affects the development of Asian and European design culture, but also benefits the development of Chinese culture through exchanges.**

**Keywords:** Chinese traditional decorative patterns, spread along the Silk Road, transmission

## I. INTRODUCTION

Decorative patterns, also known as patterns or patterns, are used to decorate the surface of utensils and clothing. Chinese traditional decorative pattern is one of the representatives of Chinese traditional culture and an important part of China's arts and crafts. As an advanced culture, the decorative patterns attached to the Silk Road were introduced and absorbed by other countries, which affected the design culture of Asia and Europe and triggered a new trend of aesthetic art. At the same time, it also benefits the development of Chinese culture through exchanges.

## II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPREADING CHINESE TRADITIONAL DECORATIVE PATTERNS ALONG THE SILK ROAD

The acceptance of art is an important part of the integrity of art activities. It includes the consumption, appreciation and criticism of art. It is the end of art activities and the fundamental way to achieve the intrinsic value of artists and works of art. Art acceptance is not only the aesthetic cognition, interpretation and creation of artistic works, but also the spiritual exchange and dialogue between the receiver and the artist. Art acceptance can also give spiritual feedback to artists and even the object world, so as to realize the connection between art activities and social activities. It is the only way for art to return to social life, and make art activities integrate into the grand system of human social activities and play an active role in it. The acceptance and acceptance of this kind of art are accomplished through communication. On this

silk road, communication is a bridge connecting the eastern and Western cultures. Through communication, Chinese traditional culture and art are transported overseas. At the same time, communication also contributes to the development of Chinese culture. As early as ancient Rome, Europe had commercial contacts with China. During the period of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, the silk road began to open up. In the long years, the silk road has already linked the two civilizations of the East and the West. This trade channel connecting Central Asia, West Asia and Europe not only sells Chinese silk to the west, but also imports Chinese patterns into Europe and Asia. The great "Silk Road" is not only an important economic artery across Eurasia in history, but also a communication channel connecting the eastern and Western Ethnic civilizations. The caravans and freighters are the messengers of culture, making the East and the West Cross thousands of mountains and rivers, meet and intersect, leaving traces of mutual exchange. The opening of new air routes and the breaking of geographical isolation have made it possible for the East and the west to have direct contact and communication. With the development of politics and economy, China's overseas trade became more frequent in the Ming and Qing Dynasties, which strengthened the communication of foreign culture, especially with European countries. Thousands of years of frequent exchanges, together to create dazzling artistic and cultural crystallization.

### **III. THE INFLUENCE OF CHINESE TRADITIONAL DECORATIVE PATTERNS ON THE SPREAD OF THE SILK ROAD**

#### *A. The spreading history of Chinese traditional decorative patterns in Asia and Europe*

China's external communication started from the physical export. With the continuous export of silk and other handicraft products and calligraphy, painting and carving works, China's sericulture technology, textile technology, ceramic firing technology and other advanced handicraft production technology and decorative pattern technology were directly or indirectly brought abroad.

Limited by the media, transportation technology and geographical conditions, the scope of ancient Chinese civilization initially spread to East Asia and Southeast Asia, such as neighboring Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Mongolia and Qinghai Tibet Plateau, and formed a "Chinese culture circle" with China as the center. In ancient times, Chinese culture has always maintained an independent development system, and the level of development is significantly higher than the surrounding areas. Most of the time, China's international dissemination activities of painting and calligraphy, silk, ceramics, lacquerware and other modeling art objects and related information to Korea, Japan, Vietnam and other East Asian Han cultural circle countries is a one-way flow to foreign countries. Even some countries accept the creative techniques and production techniques of Chinese traditional plastic arts, and digest, absorb and develop their own plastic arts on this basis. At the same time, China's cultural exchange and dissemination behavior is generally active, especially since the 2nd century BC when Zhang Qian sent an envoy to the western regions via the northwest land Silk Road in Central Asia, West Asia, Indian peninsula, Eastern Europe and North Africa, China has been broadcasting Chinese traditional culture. China has also been in a dominant position in foreign trade. In particular, silk, porcelain and other export works of art have had an important impact on the development of art, culture and economy of many countries in East Asia and Southeast Asia.

From the 7th to the 9th century, the development of the land Silk Road reached a climax. The Tang Dynasty had close contacts with East Asia, Central Asia, South Asia, West Asia and European countries through the silk road. Whether official or non-governmental, the convenience of transportation makes a continuous stream of Chinese and foreign business travelers, envoys and immigrants on the silk road. In the Tang Dynasty, silk was the largest family, followed by bronze mirrors, lacquerware, pottery, jade and other arts and crafts that were easy to carry. Chinese traditional decorative patterns also spread abroad, making an

important contribution to the development of decorative patterns in the world. On the basis of the main transportation routes along the Silk Road, the Tang Dynasty continued to open up new branch lines of commercial routes, and gradually formed a developed network transportation system. The powerful Tang Dynasty shaped the image of a great power through the silk road. Silk, paper and tea from the East travel between countries on camels and horses. On the one hand, Chinese handicrafts are constantly sold to various countries through sea land trade. On the other hand, Chinese immigrants are also constantly moving to neighboring countries, which makes Chinese handicraft production technology popularized in some countries. These countries began to learn Chinese calligraphy and painting, carving techniques, and even all kinds of decorative patterns and themes of Chinese plastic arts. Buddhism spread from the western regions to the Central Plains in the Han Dynasty. The Buddhist culture prevailed in the Tang Dynasty, and Buddhism got great development. The strong Buddhist atmosphere made great changes in the decorative art of the Central Plains. Buddhism related decorative themes and local art fusion, in the decoration has been widely used. Figures flying in the sky, plant patterns of Baoxiang flowers, rolling grass patterns, honeysuckle patterns are presented in the decorative art. Curling grass pattern was very popular in the decoration culture of Tang Dynasty. The silk road extended eastward to Japan, and the curled grass pattern also spread to Japan, known as "Tang Cao".

In the Song and Yuan Dynasties, porcelain decoration technology developed to a high level of achievement. The economic development of Song and Yuan Dynasties, the progress of science and technology, and the convenience of maritime transportation became the favorable factors to expand the export of foreign commodities, and porcelain became an important carrier to promote the economic and cultural exchanges between China and other neighboring countries. Through the export of foreign commodities, the Song Dynasty promoted the economic and cultural exchanges with Korea, Japan, Vietnam and other countries, and then spread decorative patterns to these countries. The Yuan Dynasty not only followed the Song Dynasty, but also sold porcelain to Turkey and other countries, which made the Chinese traditional decorative patterns widely spread. Therefore, there are many cultural exchanges in the Song and Yuan Dynasties. But generally speaking, the economic and cultural exchanges between Song and Yuan Dynasties were dominant, especially the influence of decorative patterns in Song and Yuan dynasties can be observed in the whole East Asian cultural circle. In Song and Yuan Dynasties, economic and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries were frequent, reaching a peak in history. Decorative patterns become a unique

perspective to interpret the achievements and causes of economic and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries in the Song and Yuan Dynasties. Although there are not many documents and objects directly recording the spread of decorative patterns, the excavation of real objects and the words between the lines of the documents prove that the decorative patterns of Song and Yuan dynasties had an impact on many overseas countries and regions.

Zheng He's voyages to the West in the Ming Dynasty strengthened the cultural exchanges between China and the West. In order to have a more extensive market, there are a lot of decorative patterns in export porcelain fused with religious culture, mainly blue and white porcelain decorative patterns. Since the Ming Dynasty, there have been some Arabic decorative patterns in Jingdezhen ceramics, thus promoting Islamic doctrines, such as blue and white Arabic Zun. In addition, in the Xuande period of Ming Dynasty, there were many Buddhist Sanskrit patterns, mainly as an additional decorative pattern. In the Jiajing and Wanli years, decorative patterns with flowers appeared and surrounded by Sanskrit, which constituted a decorative pattern with religious implications. The Ming Dynasty porcelain influenced by Christianity has also been found. For example, the blue and white letter jar of the Savior of the Ming Dynasty, which is now kept in the British Museum, has six lights on its belly. Two of the pots are the cross symbolizing Christianity and three letters. His is surrounded by little angels. The whole decoration pattern is full of flowers. The style of letters and patterns is very harmonious and unified. It is the Jesuit of Sao Paulo Cathedral in Macao Customized by the college.

In the Qing Dynasty, the social productivity has made great progress, the level of handicraft industry has been greatly improved, the social commodity and economic development is very rapid in this period, the porcelain industry is an important part of it, the Qing Dynasty is also its peak development stage. At this time, the variety of ceramic ware was very rich, and the technology of porcelain making was also very high, which promoted the rapid increase of the quantity and output of official porcelain, and then appeared many new decorative varieties of porcelain, and some new decorative patterns were gradually enriched, and achieved good decorative effect. With the frequent occurrence of trade with overseas countries, cultural exchanges with foreign countries have been strengthened, especially with some countries in Europe. A large number of export porcelain, lacquerware, silk and other decorative patterns show a phenomenon of cultural integration.

#### *B. European Chinese style design under the influence of the spread of Chinese traditional decorative patterns*

Since the end of the 15th century, mankind has entered the "era of great navigation", and the maritime Silk Road has begun to expand the global ocean. In the 16th century, Portugal and Spain became the busiest countries in the Eurasian maritime trade circle, followed by the Netherlands, the British and France. After entering the era of maritime navigation, the "maritime Silk Road" has brought unprecedented level of product exchange and cultural integration.

After the era of great navigation, China began its first direct trade with Europe from the 16th century. From the 16th to the 18th century, 300 million pieces of porcelain flowed into Europe. Porcelain is a cultural symbol of the world's understanding of China. From the beginning of European contact with Chinese ceramics, it was highly appreciated and admired. From the middle and late Ming Dynasty, with the improvement of shipbuilding level and the development of navigation technology, hundreds of millions of Chinese porcelain were transported to the west by the sails of Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands.

The reason why the Portuguese and Dutch were keen on purchasing Chinese porcelain for sale to Europe was mainly for commercial considerations rather than personal needs. They saw that Chinese porcelain began to have a wider market in Europe at that time. Trading companies are not afraid of maritime risks, and try their best to transport porcelain and other goods to Europe, from which they can obtain huge profits. Most European historians believe that it was the influx of Chinese Art (including porcelain) that led to the emergence of a Chinese fashion, the so-called Chinese style, in the European art field in the middle and lower 17th century.

In Europe in the 17th century, a new artistic style of farewell to the Renaissance style began to appear. Because of the influx of Chinese goods, the elegant and beautiful Chinese decorative patterns on the articles attracted their attention. In particular, the royal nobles collected a large number of porcelain from China, and a series of famous Chinese porcelain exhibition rooms appeared. The large export of Chinese porcelain also stimulated the continuous experiment and imitation in Europe and the Middle East, which virtually improved the level of porcelain industry in these regions. And the practice of imitation is also spreading throughout Europe. Portugal was the first country to import and sell Chinese porcelain on a large scale, and imitation was also the first time for Portuguese. From 1619 to 1639, glazed pottery in Lisbon can be seen in blue and white paintings of Chinese artifacts and oriental images. In the 17th century, several imitation workshops appeared in Delft, the Netherlands. The method of secondary

glaze was used to imitate Chinese porcelain. For the first time, colorless glaze was used, and for the second time, blue and white were mainly imitated. In order to meet the new market demand of the whole European society, it began to imitate Chinese porcelain on pottery pots by glazing. In the last 25 years of the 17th century, Delft's imitations reached a high degree of simulation, and even won the reputation of "porcelain producer" in Europe. Flower and bird pattern ornaments are blue color tin glaze porcelain produced by delph special agent factory in the Netherlands. Every section of the polyhedron has Chinese style flower decorative patterns, which skillfully combines European modeling with Chinese style patterns. In 1661, Grafen Friedrich Casimir von Hanau recruited two Dutch to set up the first Glazed Pottery Workshop in German speaking areas, producing various kinds of Chinese style cups and jars.

The unique Oriental decorative patterns on Chinese porcelains have influenced the western aesthetic view. Chinese porcelain not only has the soft color, but also has the natural soft and fresh curvilinear beauty, which breaks the rigid geometric symmetry of Europeans, and coincides with the gorgeous, delicate, changeable and complicated aesthetic taste pursued by the French court aristocrats in the 18th century, which led to Europe's "The Rococo art trend of 'China France style'", for a time, the decorations and patterns of French clothing, food, housing and transportation imitated Chinese style, and then radiated from France to other European countries. The 18th century was also the golden age of Sino British ceramic cultural exchange. During this period, Britain not only imported a large number of porcelain from China, but also used the figures, flowers and birds, landscape pavilions and other patterns on Chinese porcelain to design a large number of "Chinese style" products. Among them, the most famous, most popular and far-reaching influence is the blue and white porcelain named "willow pattern". As soon as the willow pattern porcelain came out, it was widely sought after by the middle and lower classes in Britain. The Bauer porcelain factory in London, England, produces plastic porcelain such as plum blossom pattern soup pot, Chinese plum blossom pattern and European girl head portrait, which are full of exotic sentiment. There are also the imitation of Chinese multicolored porcelain. The Kirin phoenix pattern plate was imitated by Worcester porcelain factory in England. The similar and fantastic decorative patterns of flowers and birds reflect the westerners' love for Chinese culture. The Medici family in Florence, Italy, took the lead in developing a kind of soft porcelain, such as the blue and white "Medici porcelain" plate. Its decorative pattern imitates the traditional flower decorative pattern of Chinese blue and white porcelain. It can be seen that it is a flat, western aesthetic chrysanthemum pattern.

The Chinese style rose from the middle and lower leaves of the 17th century to its heyday in the 18th century. In almost every field, there were two stages of characteristics. In the 17th century, the production of Chinese style porcelain still had the basic respect for the original work, but in the 18th century, it had obvious play and misappropriation. While Chinese traditional decorative patterns were deeply rooted in European daily life, European crafts, architecture, painting and so on at that time also added cultural elements of Chinese traditional decorative patterns. This style lasted for about 300 years.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Chinese traditional decorative patterns are an important medium for inheriting the history and culture of the Chinese nation. Through the Silk Road, Chinese traditional decorative patterns have been spread overseas, which has an important impact on the design culture of eastern and Western countries. Throughout the history, Chinese traditional decorative patterns were spread overseas with export products, and the development of decorative patterns also changed with the market demand. Therefore, Chinese traditional decorative patterns were also influenced by overseas countries when they were spread. These overseas elements were integrated into the traditional Chinese aesthetic concepts, constantly enriching the connotation of Chinese traditional decorative patterns, making traditional culture and foreign countries Culture has been a comprehensive exchange and extensive communication. Chinese traditional decorative patterns have been handed down to this day. They have been changing with each passing day through the changes of the times. They have always stood at the top of the world's decorative history with gorgeous colors and gorgeous posture. They are worthy of being a bridge for cultural exchanges between China and the West.

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