Research on Chinese Color Art--Taking Tang Tri-Colored Pottery in the Prosperous Tang Dynasty as an Example

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Abstract: Tang tri-colored pottery plays an important role in the history of Chinese traditional art, and is also one of the main representatives of Tang civilization, which has a far-reaching impact on the development of Chinese culture and art. This article mainly focuses on the color artistic characteristics and aesthetic characteristics of the Tang tri-colored pottery in the prosperous Tang Dynasty to further study and discuss, so as to understand the colorful Tang Dynasty culture via the Tang tri-colored pottery, for the enhancement in understanding of Tang tri-colored pottery and promotion in inheritance and development of China's excellent traditional culture.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Prosperous Tang Dynasty and Tang Tri-Colored Pottery

The Tang Dynasty flourished in politics, economy, culture and other aspects during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty, namely the Prosperous Tang Dynasty. The prosperous Tang Dynasty is the heyday of the development of Tang tri-colored pottery, which is characterized by various types and rich shapes, and is unique in glaze color and shape. Varieties presented during this period. In China, there has been a major breakthrough in the firing of ceramics, resulting in a treasure of craft-Tang tri-colored pottery. Tang tri-colored pottery is also called Tang Tri-colored glazed pottery. White clay is the main material of Tang tri-colored pottery. Colorants are various minerals, such as copper, iron, cobalt, manganese, etc. The colors are various, such as dark green, light green, white, brown, yellow, etc. Among them, the overall glaze color is mainly yellow, brown and green, so it is called tricolor. With the evolution of the times, glaze color changes in a variety of ways. In Chinese, “three” generally refers to many meanings, so the word “three colors” has been used up to now.

According to records, the main places where Tang tri-colored pottery was unearthed were Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China and Luoyang, Henan Province, and some of them were unearthed in countries along the Silk Road. The development process of Tang tri-colored pottery is closely related to the development of the country. First of all, there were almost no specific historical records of Tang tri-colored pottery during the period of Emperor Taizong. Furthermore, the overall social development has increased significantly during the period from Gaozong to Zhongzong, and the social atmosphere is also changing, gradually from simplicity to luxury. However, Tang tri-colored pottery adapted to the social atmosphere at that time and appeared in the public view as a
funerary ware. In the period of Zhongzong and Xuanzong, the development of Tang Dynasty reached its peak, namely “the prosperous age of Kaiyuan” in history. Tang tri-colored pottery shows the “prosperous Tang Dynasty atmosphere”, and Tang tri-colored pottery has reached its peak in terms of production technology and quantity and types. For example, the spirit of the times and social atmosphere of the Tang Dynasty are reflected in walking camels, plump women and endless pedestrians. In this spirit, all kinds of arts embody the aesthetic meaning of the times and show the positive spirit of the times. As a product of the prosperous Tang Dynasty, Tang tri-colored pottery showed the confidence and tolerance of the Tang Dynasty. We can realize not only the warm and open attitude, but also the pioneering spirit of an era via the development of Tang tri-colored pottery.

2. Color Artistic Characteristics of Tang Tri-Colored Pottery

2.1 Natural Glaze Color

Throughout the prosperous Tang Dynasty, the artistic features of Tang tri-colored pottery are mainly unique advantages in glaze color. Its glaze color shows colorful and gorgeous effects. The advantage of glaze color is mainly to make a breakthrough from the craftsmanship of craftsmen. Craftsmen transformed and innovated the monochromatic glaze of the previous generation, changing glaze from monochrome to multicolor and color from simple to complex. Judging from the configuration of glaze color, the glaze color of Tang tri-colored pottery has not only several basic colors such as green, yellow, blue and white, but also craftsmen have explored new colors, such as light yellow, deep yellow, dark green and light green. There are also new colors produced through the complementation of warm and cold colors, such as dark green and light yellow. The overall glaze color has made a new breakthrough in technology. The gorgeous, colorful, natural and smooth glaze charm of the tri-colored Tang Dynasty is fully reflected in the confluence of various glaze colors in the same ware in the firing process. The innovation of glaze color promotes the development process of ancient ceramic art in China.

2.2 Exquisite Glazing Method

In the prosperous Tang Dynasty, there was obvious progress in glaze making compared with the previous generation. Figures and animal figurines are more complex in shape, and the glaze color of decoration is more lively and brighter. The figures have ink-colored hair and vermilion faces. In addition to the figurines, there are tomb animals that embody the main colors. The overall colors are vermilion, dark green, etc., with strong contrast and bright colors.

The glaze color in this period is characterized by bright colors, mainly harmonious colors and reasonable color matching. The overall color tone of Tang tri-colored pottery was deeply influenced by the social development in the prosperous Tang Dynasty, which was mainly gorgeous and rich. But there were also some simple and elegant colors. It can be seen from the glazing method and color tone of the figurines, that the overall glazing method is changed by the shape and status of the characters.

For example, the figurines of ladies with the characteristics of the times are mainly bright and gorgeous in overall clothing tone. The maid figurines are relatively simple and elegant, mainly monochrome. The flexibility of glazing method makes the works have rich decorative effects. Some animal figurines are decorated with colored glaze, which has great overall fluidity and rich colors. The colors are rich and bright, reflecting their fluidity. To a certain extent, the use of these colors reflects the open, majestic and passionate atmosphere of the Tang Dynasty.
3. Analysis of Aesthetic Characteristics of Tang Tri-Colored Pottery

3.1 Unique Dyeing and Weaving Skills

Tang tri-colored pottery borrowed the spotted flower pattern in dyeing and weaving process from the pottery blank pattern, making it a typical decorative pattern. Tang tri-colored pottery innovated the dyeing and weaving process on the pottery blank and developed it into batik process, which was more optimized than the previous generation. The main method is to dip a brush in wax liquid for coloring and glazing. Although coloring is inconvenient, Chinese writing brush, with its flexibility, can present a special visual experience on utensils.

3.2 Different Shapes

The creation of Tang tri-colored pottery in the prosperous Tang Dynasty mainly started with characters and animals, with various forms and rich shapes. The theme of creation covers all aspects of society. The creative technique of modeling mainly starts with the character characteristics of the characters, and is good at capturing the instantaneous dynamics and expressions of characters. Such as a lady with the characteristics of the times, the aesthetics was mainly the beauty of abundance at that time. Then it can be seen from the figurines that the face shape is too large and round, and the colors are mainly vermilion, yellow and white, showing a good complexion through bright colors. In the aspect of the five senses, the facial features are relatively small, forming a contrast due to the rounder face, such as thin triangular eyes, willow eyebrows, slightly picked eyes, cherry mouth, etc. The rich depiction and sense of characteristics reflect the plump beauty characteristic of the beauty as well as the aesthetic characteristics in Tang Dynasty.

The aesthetics of the Tang Dynasty can also reveal the prosperous national strength and prosperity, which fully reflects the pursuit of luxury and magnificence by the people of the Tang Dynasty. To a certain extent, Tang tri-colored pottery echoed the style of the times at that time and reflected the real social life of Tang Dynasty.

The development of color and shape of Tang tri-colored pottery has a great influence on future generations. Chinese traditional plastic arts reached a new height in the prosperous Tang Dynasty in the view of Chinese culture development. In the angle of art appreciation, Tri-colored glazed pottery of the Tang Dynasty shows the charm of times with its own unique artistic expression, and also expands the new understanding of beauty and infinite imagination of later generations, which has a profound influence on the subsequent color research.


The gorgeous and romantic colors of Tang tri-colored pottery reflect the life interest of Tang people. Tang tri-colored pottery’s plastic arts show that the Tang Dynasty absorbed a large number of diverse and fresh aesthetic tastes and expressions of foreign cultures with sufficient confidence and tolerance. Therefore, the Tang tri-colored pottery shows the prosperous Tang Dynasty atmosphere. Tricolor pottery is a record of life, social culture and artistic level in Tang Dynasty. The spirit of the times and social atmosphere in Tang Dynasty are reflected by walking camels, tall and straight flattery and plump women. The Tang Dynasty forged a new aesthetic ideal: handsome, bodybuilding, tall and straight, elegant. In this spirit, various arts embody the aesthetic taste with the significance of the times, and show the positive and vigorous spirit of the times.

During the prosperous Tang Dynasty, politics, economy and culture all showed a prosperous trend, including the prevailing style of burial at that time. At that time, the prevailing style of thick burial also reflected the prosperity of the country and the extravagance of the Tang people. At this
time, Tang tri-colored pottery came into being with an unprecedented opportunity. Research on the color of Tang tri-colored pottery and the artistic characteristics of modeling glaze color vividly shows the atmosphere of the prosperous Tang Dynasty, and is conducive to enriching the study of Tang tri-colored pottery and reflecting the current social situation at that time.

Studying the color artistic characteristics of Tang tri-colored pottery is of practical significance for understanding the social lifestyle of Tang Dynasty. Tang tri-colored pottery is a witness to the history and culture of Tang Dynasty. The exploration of the color art of Tang tri-colored pottery helps us to have a richer understanding of the social features of Tang Dynasty.

5. Conclusion

Tang tri-colored pottery is an artistic culture born of the times with the mark of time. With uniqueness in shape and glaze color, the glaze color of Tang tri-colored pottery is mainly characterized by gorgeous beauty. The craftsman's wonderful craftsmanship perfectly combines glazing methods with decorative skills to create colorful art treasures. As the crystallization of science and art, Tang tri-colored pottery reflects the ancestors' superb skills and love for life. At the same time, the study of the color art of Tang tri-colored pottery in the prosperous Tang Dynasty reflects the social status quo at that time, reproduces the magnificent scenery of the prosperous Tang Dynasty, and accurately understands the artistic value of Tang tri-colored pottery in the prosperous Tang Dynasty. The combination of Tang tri-colored pottery with contemporary aesthetic taste can create more art treasures on this basis. In today's era, we need to inherit and carry forward our own national artistic and cultural characteristics, for the shining of traditional art treasures in today's civilization.

References