

Chinese Economic Innovations Crafts and Skills 传统工艺

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Bronze Ware and Jade

China has a long history and glorious history in traditional crafts. The most representative are Bronze Vessels, Jade, Silk, Embroidery, Porcelain, Pottery, Cloisonné, Lacquer Ware, Kites, Paper-Cuttings, Seals, and Folk Toys.

The earliest stoneware in China was found in 3000 B.C. The Shang and Zhou dynasties ushered China into the height of the Bronze Age. During this period the making of bronze ware reached its zenith.

Ancient Chinese bronze wares fall into three types: ritual vessels, weapons, and miscellaneous objects.

In ancient China the making of bronze ware was dominated by the imperial families and aristocrats. And the possession of such wares was regarded as a status symbol.

Jade-loving is special in Chinese culture, as the Chinese saying goes "Gold has a value; jade is invaluable." The Chinese loves jade because of not only its beauty, but also more importantly its culture, meaning and humanity.

Questions

1. In comparison with counterparts in other parts of the world, the Chinese bronze wares stand out. What are the reasons?
2. "Galloping Horse Overtaking a Flying Swallow" 马踏飞燕 is a bronze artwork of the Eastern Han Dynasty. It was chosen as a symbol of Chinese tourism. Why?
3. What does jade symbolize in Chinese culture?

Silk and Embroidery

It is well known that silk is discovered in China as one of the best materials for clothing. Silk dates back to the 30th Century BC when Huang Di (Yellow Emperor) came into power. In the Han dynasty, Chinese silk spread to Europe by the Silk Road. Romans became crazy for Chinese silk. It was a symbol of wealth and high social status for them to wear silk clothes.

Like silk, porcelain has also been one of the earliest artworks introduced to the western world through the Silk Road. The most prominent porcelain is blue and white porcelain.

Questions

1. According to the legend, how did the method of raising silkworms spread to western countries?
2. "A silkworm spins all its silk till its death and a candle won't stop its tears until it is fully burnt." This Tang poem accurately describes the property of the silkworm. Do you know how long the life span of a silkworm is? How many meters of silk can be produced from one cocoon and how many cocoons are used for a man's tie and a woman's blouse?
3. Chinese embroidery has four famous traditional styles. What are they?

Porcelain --- Calling Card of Chinese Culture

Like silk, porcelain has also been one of the earliest artworks introduced to the western world through the Silk Road. The development of porcelain in the Han Dynasty began to accelerate and before long the artworks were introduced westward. The most prominent porcelain is blue and white porcelain developed in the Yuan Dynasty and the Ming Dynasty.

Questions

1. In English china means porcelain and later it was used to refer to the country, China. Do you know why is porcelain called china (It was originally a name of a town)?

Readings

Dingmin Wu, *A Panoramic View of Chinese Culture*, Nanjing: Yilin Publishing House, 2010

Lang Ye & Zhu Liangzhi, *Insights into Chinese Culture*, Foreign Language Teaching and Research press, Beijing, 2008

Ebrey Patricia Buckley, *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, 2nd Ed, 1993