



CHINESE CERAMICS FROM
NEOLITHIC POTTERY TO
MODERN STYLE

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NEOLITHIC POTTERY

The earliest pottery was fired in the open air, either directly on a bonfire or in a pit, and thus the firing temperature was no more than 800° Celsius. As a result of oxidation and smoking, the finished products often turned red with black spots. It was after the invention of an enclosed kiln that they became gray in color.



WHITE POTTERY GUI (ANCIENT COOKING VESSEL WITH THREE HOLLOW LEGS) OF THE LONGSHAN CULTURE (C. 2500-2000 BC).



POTTERY STORYTELLING AND BAL-LADSING FIGURINE OF THE EASTERN HAN DYNASTY (25-220).

HAN DYNASTY: A LEAP FROM POTTERY TO PORCELAIN

The workmen of this period built the so-called "dragon kiln" along the mountain with a temperature of over 1,200°C, from which the celadon ware noted for its solid roughcast and smooth glaze had been baked. Since then China began the first chapter in its long history of porcelain making.





YELLOW GLAZED PORCELAIN POT
OF THE NORTHERN QI DYNASTY.
(550-577).



TRI-COLOR POTTERY HORSE OF THE
TANG DYNASTY (618-907).

POTTERY AND PORCELAIN OF THE SUI AND TANG DYNASTIES

This was a period that witnessed rapid development of the Chinese ceramic industry. A number of kilns began to establish their own brand names, of which the most celebrated were the tri-colored glazed porcelain by the Yaozhou kiln and the transparent white porcelain by the Xing and Dingzhou kilns.



COLOR GLAZED PORCELAIN AVALOKITESVARA PRODUCED BY THE JINGDEZHEN KILN OF THE SONG DYNASTY (960-1279).

POTTERY AND PORCELAIN OF THE SONG DYNASTY

This was a period noted for the “five famous kilns” as well as many other splendid kilns such as Longquan, Jingdezhen, etc. Particularly, porcelain objects made in Junzhou and Longquan kilns, though very different in style, are equally rare treasures. The flambe chinaware of Junzhou had enjoyed great renown in history, while Longquan, for making tribute chinaware in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), had ever since replaced Yue to become the No.1 porcelain kiln of the south.



BLUE-AND-WHITE PORCELAIN DOU-EARED JAR DECORATED WITH KYLIN DESIGNS, YUAN DYNASTY (1279-1368)

POTTERY AND PORCELAIN OF THE YUAN AND QING DYNASTIES

Both blue-and-white and underglaze red chinaware had represented the highest level of porcelain making during the Yuan Dynasty. Simply using blue and white -- two colors worshiped by the ruling nomadic Mongols -- to create a rich aesthetic feeling, this is where the charm of blue-and-white porcelain lies. On the other hand, reducing ferric oxide to produce the underglaze color of bright red by manually controlling the duration and degree of heating, this reflects the superb workmanship of the Yuan potters. In general, the pre-Yuan chinaware is quietly elegant; however, the potters of the Ming Dynasty did a U-turn by firing multi-colored glaze. Thus the porcelain of the Ming is a riot of color.





POTTERY AND PORCELAIN OF THE QING DYNASTY

With the technology of baking chinaware tending to reach the pinnacle, the potters of the Qing Dynasty stopped at nothing to make porcelain objects of all shapes and colors, while introducing enamel to produce a three-dimensional effect in decoration.

PORCELAIN VASE DECORATED WITH PEONY DESIGNS, QING DYNASTY (1644-1911)

MODERN CERAMICS

Chinaware continues to be people's necessary articles for everyday use in today's society. Meanwhile, modern artists have also used pottery and porcelain as raw materials to make very charming and colorful works of art.

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