

Striving Towards a Modern Coastal Metropolis

Spotlight on Yue Kiln Celadon

By Dong Na

Recently, a lecture on the Yue kiln celadon was held at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China.

Shi Zhen, a craftsman, introduced to the audiences the history and processes of Yue kiln celadon, its firing techniques and artistic innovations, and took them on a journey of appreciation both on ancient celadon treasures and the contemporary renewal works.

Lecture to Promote Celadon Culture

Yue kilns around Shanglin Lake were the forerunners and the best-known kilns in the history of Chinese porcelain craft.

Yue kiln celadon is famous for its olive-green color, made with a secret mixture of materials. Poets have likened the color to forest-covered rolling hills, emerald jade, and moonlight-illuminated lakes. The secret of the clay mixture remained unsolved until 1987, when artists figured out the ingredients based on celadon-ware discovered in the underground crypt of Famen Temple, Xi'an. The unique color is the work of nature's power and craftsmen's ingenuity, captivating people with its elegance and mystery for centuries.

Shi has spent 30 years making the traditional artworks, and she continues to draw from traditional techniques while focusing on creative innovation. "Yue kiln celadon is my life pursuit. What I am doing is connecting traditional Yue kiln celadon with this new era, increasing its artistic value and promoting it to more," she said.

The lecture was also livestreamed online to attract audiences from around the world. Vincent Lemarchand, President of the Rouen-Ningbo Friendship Committee, who watched the lecture online, invited Shi to promote celadon culture in France. "There is a ceramics museum in Rouen. We hope she can bring celadon works and hold an exhibition here," said Lemarchand.



Shi Zhen, a craftsman, has been dedicated to reproducing mise celadon for many years.

[Photo provided by Yu Mengdi]

Hub of Yue Celadon Production

Yue kiln celadon is the most prized type of porcelain in ancient China. In the Eastern Han Dynasty (AD 25-220), the earliest Chinese porcelain was successfully fired in the dragon kiln of the land of Yue. Therefore, Yue kiln celadon is considered "the ancestor of all porcelain". In the late Northern Song (AD 960-1127) and early Southern Song Dynasties (AD 1127-1279), Yue kilns went into decline after more than 1,000 years of porcelain-making. Today, the Yue kilns are recognized as the most influential and long-lived kiln cluster in Chinese history.

Yue kilns were scattered across Cixi, Yuyao, Shangyu, and Shaoxing in Zhejiang province. "Yue" is short for "Yuezhou", because these places were under the jurisdiction of the Yue Prefecture (Yuezhou) in the Tang

Dynasty (AD 618-907). Historically, there were three Yue kiln clusters in eastern Zhejiang: the midstream area of the Cao'e River in Shangyu, the Shanglin Lake area in Cixi, and the Dongqian Lake area in Ningbo's Yinzhou District. Among the three, Shanglin Lake was the most active, with 179 historical kilns dating from the 1st to 13th century. They embody the entire history of the Yue kilns from their birth, rise, to eventual decline. Referred to as an "outdoor celadon museum", the Shanglin Lake kiln cluster is unique nationally and globally not only for the large number of historical kilns discovered, but also for the long historical period it spanned.

Cixi was a hub of Yue celadon production and also a departure port of the ancient Maritime Ceramic Road. Shanglin Lake and nearby ancient Yinding Lake, Du Lake, Baiyang Lake all had massive celadon-firing kilns in their vicinity. The area was the porcelain capital from the 7th to

the 13th century. Notably, "secret-color celadon", a classic, highly-valued variety of porcelain made for royal use, was produced in the Shanglin Lake area.

Expanding Influence in Modern Times

In the ancient times, Yue kiln celadon was exported not only across the Asia-Pacific region (including the Korean Peninsula, the Japanese islands, and Southeast Asia), but also to Europe, the Americas, and Africa. As a departure port of the ancient Maritime Silk Road, Mingzhou Port helped forge friendships between different cultures and peoples through active trade. Via commerce, Yue kiln celadon became known and highly-valued around the world.

Let us turn the clock back to modern times. There're also modern-day innovations in Yue kiln celadon craft, such as "The Shanglin Fantasy collection". It

was inspired by Shanglin Lake's natural environment and local culture to embody profound symbolism and encourage imaginative interpretation, in line with the traditions of Chinese art. Contradictions such as far and near, heavy and light, real and imagined, historical and modern, are integrated to convey a poetic, sublime beauty, and to serve as a gateway to understanding life and the cosmos.

In recent years, Ningbo have relied on the rich historical and cultural resources of the Yue Kiln site around Shanglin Lake to restore Yue celadon firing techniques and reconstruct the celadon industry, with increasing influence.

Local authorities are launching more events to promote traditional Chinese culture. A series of online and on-site lectures will be held to encourage people from around the world to learn about Ningbo through its intangible cultural heritage items.

開放

双语汇 Different Tongues

奉化博物馆：捧回博物馆界“奥斯卡”

By Gou Wen

The Fenghua Museum, on the premises of the 1986 Culture Square, is modern in style and comprehensive in exhibits. The Museum's main building was the power generation workshop of a retired thermopower plant. During renewal, the architect retained the original elements as much as possible. The museum includes the building, chimney, coal yard, conveying belt, and gallery.

奉化博物馆位于1986文化广场内，是一座现代化综合性博物馆，主体建筑由原发电厂的发电车间改造而来。建筑尽可能保留了原有要素，由原发电车间以及烟囱、堆煤场、输煤带和画廊共

同构成。

The Museum, winning national top 10 exhibits award by its "Harmony of Mountains and Seas — Fenghua History and Civilization", is the only county-level museum in the honor list this year. This exhibition illustrates the local history, cultural traditions, and folk customs.

今年，奉化博物馆“山海交响——奉化历史文明展”入选全国博物馆十大陈列展览精品，是今年全国唯一获此殊荣的区（县、市）级博物馆，展示了当地的历史沿革、文化特色和民俗风情。

Not only does the memory of the city be cherished at the Museum, but also it is



The Fenghua Museum./奉化博物馆。

[Photo by Fan Jianwei] 樊建威 摄

taken as a name card for the city's culture. It takes "industrial remains" as the inspiration for the museum layout to

demonstrate Fenghua's unique features, making the Museum one of its kind in the nation. 奉化博物馆不仅融合了城市的

记忆，更是城市文化的明信片。其以“工业遗存”角度切入布展，使得奉化博物馆在全国博物馆界有了辨识度。

SPOTLIGHT

Take Your First Bite of Sweet 'Red Beauty'

By Xu Zhuowei

Harvest season recently began for "Red Beauty", a premium variety of citrus, in Ningbo's Xiaotang Township, Xiangshan county.

Walking into Xiaotang, you will be surprised by how the golden "Red Beauty" fruits are hanging on the branches. It is in its best harvest time, making farmers busy picking.

"The quality of 'Red Beauty' this year is particularly good. The sugar content is high thanks to the climate this year," said Chen Qingzong, the citrus farmer. The hot and dry weather in the first half of the year and the middle of the year is very good for improving the sugar content of the pulp, and the taste is obviously better than that in previous years.

In Xinguo Agriculture, a fruit company, the huge sorting yard is full of baskets of "Red Beauty", and staff are busy packaging and carrying. The company also introduced a smart fruit picker, which greatly improved the efficiency of the assembly line operation.

"We started to sell goods five days ago, and now the daily output has reached 20,000 kilos," said Yang Haibo, the head of the company, "We grow our own plants and also purchase from farmers. Every batch of 'Red Beauty' will be tested for quality, and we found that the sugar content this year is particularly high, reaching 12-13 degrees, even 18 degrees, which is higher than the result of previous years."

Yang Haibo said that the market retail price fluctuates with the quality. At present, the price per kilo of premium fruits is about 44 yuan.

The output of "Red Beauty" this year is the same as that of previous years, and the price is generally the same, yet the premium becomes slightly more expensive. Thanks to the long picking period of "Red Beauty" in Xiangshan, even in December, we may also enjoy the freshness brought by the delicious fruits.

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