

Exhibition at Ningbo Museum Shines the Spotlight on Cultural Relics from Silk Road Countries



A red-painted earthenware wine jug in the form of a bull's head

An exhibition featuring nearly 200 cultural relics from various civilizations along the ancient Silk Road kicked off on April 1 and will last until May 28.

The relics on display are from the personal collection of the late Japanese artist Ikuo Hirayama, who spent 40 years researching and exploring the Silk Road. Also on display are several of Mr. Hirayama's paintings in Dunhuang, Gansu. "Visitors can

get a glimpse of the painter's life spent on the Silk Road expedition and his genuine passion for Dunhuang and civilizations along the ancient Silk Road," said Xu Qin, curator of the exhibition at Ningbo Museum.

The exhibition hosts a total of 192 pieces, whose places of origin range from the Mediterranean, Mesopotamia and Iran in West Asia, Afghanistan in Central Asia, to Pakistan and India in South Asia.

Over thousands of years of history, civilizations of Eurasia have shone like stars along the ancient Silk Road. As well as spanning a wide range of regions and time periods, the exhibit also showcases a large variety of cultural relics, such as ancient Greek pottery, Roman and Persian glassware, silver and gold plated ware, Buddhist carvings from Gandhara, gold and silver coins found along the Silk Road, tapestries from Central Asia and Buddhist statues from India.

The red-painted earthenware wine jugs in the form of a bull's head from the 4th century BC in southern Italy, made their way east through the Silk Road to the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), where they emerged as the quintessential artefact of the Chinese aristocracy in pursuit of exoticism.

The most exquisite objects in the exhibition are glassware, and gold and silver ware. These luxury goods were circulated as merchandise along the Silk Road in the 1st century BC and were then introduced to China and other countries in East Asia.

"This haul of Buddhist carvings is from the ancient civilization of

Gandhara. Visitors can get a closer look at the Greek-style hair decoration of Maitreya bodhisattva and the solid bulging muscles of Atlas, a Titan condemned to hold up the celestial heavens for eternity in Greek mythology. Gandhara Buddhist art shows the essence of cultural integration along the Silk Road." Xu Qin introduced.

According to Xu Qin, Ningbo, as an important node of the Maritime Silk Road, has been an open city since ancient times. Ningbo Museum has been dedicated to launching exhibitions themed on the "Silk Road" over the past several years, not only to restore and disseminate the history of the origin areas, but also to explore and demonstrate the contemporary value of the Belt and Road Initiative. It is a call for different nations and cultures to foster mutual understanding and inclusive development.

Jointly held by Ningbo Museum and Japan's Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, the exhibition runs from April 1 to May 28, free to the public. Citizens can book online via the WeChat Official Account of Ningbo Museum or its official website.

By Shi Daiwei



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