

# The External Communication Effect and Strategies of Traditional Chinese Plastic Arts

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**Abstract:** During the Tang, Ming, and Qing Dynasties, the external communication of traditional Chinese plastic arts achieved good results and had positive impact on the culture and economy of countries all over the world. For instance, the plastic arts of Han and Tang Dynasties had positive impact on the cultural circle of East Asia, while those of Ming and Qing Dynasties influenced the European artistic style. However, with time, there are various problems in the dissemination of traditional Chinese plastic arts. Foreign countries have a one-sided cognition and tend to misinterpret traditional Chinese plastic arts. Therefore, this paper analyzes from the perspective of the external communication effect and strategy of traditional Chinese plastic arts.

**Keywords:** Traditional art; Chinese plastic arts; External communication; Communication effect; Communication strategy

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## 1. Introduction

Chinese plastic arts have an impact on the culture, politics, and economy of all countries around the world. With the advancement of economic globalization, cultures spread rapidly under the action of information technology, promoting the advent of a cultural era<sup>[1]</sup>. In this cultural era, Chinese writers and artists need to understand the plastic arts in China, truly become the disseminators of Chinese plastic arts, promote the deep and intuitive understanding of plastic arts, and improve China's cultural influence. Therefore, it is of great significance to explore the practical significance of traditional plastic arts.

## 2. The external communication effect of Chinese traditional plastic arts

### 2.1. Benign effect

#### 2.1.1. The art in Central Asia is characterized by the "Tang" culture

One of the heydays of art, culture, economy, and politics in China is the Tang Dynasty. The Tang Dynasty in the seventh century stood at the peak of the political system of the world. It was the richest and most powerful country in the world then. The Tang Dynasty became the core of the East Asian cultural circle and played an important role in the development of East Asian culture, economy, and art. Blatantly, there was an overall "Tang" situation in East Asia. The most prominent representative was the Japanese during that period. Japan studied the Tang Dynasty in all aspects, including its literature, art, academia, music, Buddhist architecture, painting, and so on.

In order to learn the advanced culture of the Tang Dynasty, Japan relentlessly sent out envoys to the Tang Dynasty. From A.D. 630 to A.D. 894, Japan sent more than 5,000 envoys to the Tang Dynasty and organized 19 envoys in total. Most of these envoys were craftsmen, scholars, painters, and so on. According to Kim De's statistics, a South Korean scholar, there were hundreds of Xinluo monks, and most of these

outsiders were young intellectuals, who studied Chinese literature, calligraphy, painting, handicrafts, and architecture in the Tang Dynasty for a long time. They truly became the adopters of the Chinese modeling culture and introduced the Chinese culture into their own country <sup>[2]</sup>. While learning the traditional Chinese modeling culture, the monks in Xinluo understood, sorted, and summarized the culture of Tang Dynasty, so as to build a cultural model in line with their own characteristics. Among them, the most prominent was the envoy of the Tang Dynasty. In addition, the Korean Peninsula set off a wave of learning from the Tang Dynasty. During that period, Silla was the country closest to the founding of China, and the country that studied Chinese culture most thoroughly, creating a strong wave of learning. One of the most renowned activities was the studying period of students from Xinluo in China.

In terms of the artistic modeling of the Tang Dynasty, East Asian countries mirrored the style of the Tang Dynasty. Taking Buddha statues and sculptures as examples, the famous scholar Inoue Shangqing once said that Chinese Buddhist art has become a famous school of plastic arts in Japan, with remarkable characteristics of the Tang Dynasty, especially the temples and their buildings in the Nara period. The workmanship of Buddha statues, murals, and sculptures in this era is superb. These plastic arts intuitively show that Japan had fully and thoroughly absorbed the Chinese culture and skills. These plastic arts were popular decades after the Tang Dynasty and became an exotic art in the country. Most of the creators of these arts were monks or intellectuals who learned from the Tang Dynasty. These people passed on the new skills learned in the Tang Dynasty to their local craftsmen. The most prominent crafts include Buddha statues and paintings.

### **2.1.2. Promote the formation of Rococo art style**

As known to all, there are significant differences between Asian culture and European culture. From the perspective of communication, culture is more communicable in the same region. When a culture is transferred from one region to another, it often means that the subject of cultural communication needs to carry out corresponding force. However, in the communication process of traditional Chinese plastic arts, there has been an obvious “specialization,” which is known as cross-cultural communication. The essence of cross-cultural communication is based on the differences between two cultures <sup>[3]</sup>. In order to satisfy curiosity, individuals with different cultures have to expand their cognitive territories and learn different regional cultures. The most representative is the European culture; that is, the formation of the European Rococo art style.

Between the 17th and 18th centuries, Europe set off an upsurge of “learning the Chinese culture.” Architecture, lacquerware, ceramics, and wallpapers in Chinese plastic arts have become the objects of imitation by European artists. The reason for this phenomenon lies in the dual role of business and writing. In terms of commerce, various modeling works of art in this period were introduced into Europe, such as silk fabrics, ceramics, and lacquerware, which aroused curiosity among the Europeans. In terms of writing, Europeans began to tout these works of art under the influence of curiosity, which eventually formed a trend of “learning the Chinese culture” in Europe. This art communication formed the Rococo art style, which has gone through three stages.

The first stage is the cognitive formation stage. In the 15th century, with the development of East-West trade, various Chinese modeling works of art poured into China, such as silk, porcelain, and so on. At the same time, businessmen, missionaries, and travelers praised these art works wantonly, which made Europeans acquire a strong curiosity about Chinese art works and aroused the attention of the upper class of all countries to these art works, thus promoting the spread and influence of Chinese cultural art works. The second stage is the attitude formation stage. On the one hand, the pursuit of “early followers” has gained the attention of the upper classes in various countries, resulting in the whole Europe advocating Chinese cultural art works and competing to pursue these works. This set forth certain preconditions for the

later imitation of the Chinese art style. The third stage is the action formation stage. In the pursuit of all levels of society, European craftsmen, gardeners, and painters imitated various Chinese works of art, such as pagodas, pavilions, porcelain, and architecture, while learning the Chinese artistic style (curved painting and decoration). They began to cater to the preferences of European royal families and formed the European Rococo art style on this basis.

## **2.2. Negative effect**

### **2.2.1. Superficial art cognition**

Cultural communication is divided into three levels: surface level communication, middle level communication, and deep level communication. Surface level communication is the direct introduction of art works; middle level communication is the processing of art works; deep communication is the cultural communication with art as the carrier. Through a survey by Newsweek, it is known that the Chinese culture is second only to the American culture, and it has the power of cultural communication. Chinese cultural communication symbols include porcelain, silk, Tang Empire, Beijing Forbidden City, the Great Wall, Suzhou gardens, and so on <sup>[4]</sup>. These cultural symbols have strong recognition abroad. However, most foreigners do not understand the ideas behind these cultural symbols. For instance, taking the most representative ceramics in traditional Chinese art as an example, during the dissemination of this art in the Tang Dynasty, there was no dissemination of the porcelain culture or Tang culture, which led to a failure among foreigners to gain deep understanding of the Chinese art, indicating that foreigners had a shallow understanding of the Chinese culture.

### **2.2.2. Deconstruction of artistic cognition**

The main reasons why foreigners misunderstand Chinese art are as follows: first, foreigners do not have a Chinese cultural system; second, foreigners often use their personal knowledge reserves, which involve their analogical thinking to interpret a certain culture. Taking Chinese calligraphy as an example, foreigners need to find an art form that corresponds to calligraphy in the process of understanding Chinese calligraphy, but this art form does not exist in foreign countries. At the same time, some foreigners do not have the ability to understand the font structure and writing order of Chinese characters. The above two problems lead to their misinterpretation of the Chinese culture.

## **3. External communication strategies of traditional Chinese plastic arts**

### **3.1. Establish the image of disseminators and enhance the influence of art communication**

At the present stage, in the process of art communication, China mainly assumes government agencies as the main body of communication, crowning them with traditional Chinese plastic arts. This is a clear-cut stand to show the characteristics of the Chinese culture, but it easily leads to cultural misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Therefore, relevant departments should carry the image of cultural communicators by looking for inheritors of handicrafts, encouraging these inheritors to become art communicators, spreading China's traditional plastic arts, and enhancing the influence of art communication.

### **3.2. Promote the principle of “from shallow to deep” and enhance the profundity of artistic cognition**

Art information is a bridge between the communicators and the audience. There are various communication forms. In the actual dissemination process of art information, art practitioners should follow the principle of “from shallow to deep”; that is, while disseminating the inherent information of traditional works of art, they should pay more attention to the aesthetic needs of foreigners, truly and continuously deepen the

dissemination of art information, as well as improve the profundity of foreigners' art awareness.

### **3.3. Emphasize on overseas trade communication and consider the economic and social benefits**

In the external communication process of Chinese plastic arts, relevant personnel should take advantage of foreign trade by making full use of various rules under the market economy, integrating Chinese traditional art into commerce, creating Chinese brands with Chinese elements, as well as assisting foreigners in understanding the Chinese culture in the process of purchasing Chinese goods. For instance, Chinese elements can be integrated into Gree Electric Appliances to share with foreigners the Chinese culture through Chinese goods, so as to achieve both economic and social benefits.

### **3.4. Carry out differentiated communication to reduce the contradictions in art communication**

As known to all, the “giver” is a pressure factor affecting the dissemination of art and culture. In art communication, relevant personnel should combine the local cultural background, religious beliefs, and psychological characteristics of the giver. For the East Asian cultural circle, Japan and South Korea have strong foundations in Chinese culture. Therefore, relevant personnel can easily spread the Chinese culture, such as calligraphy, tea art, and so on. For non-Asian cultural circles, relevant personnel need to carry out targeted communication in line with the actual cultural background of each region, avoid unnecessary contradictions, and improve the effectiveness of foreign cultural communication.

## **4. Conclusion**

In short, in the external communication process of traditional Chinese plastic arts, the principle of “internal cultivation and external communication” needs to be emphasized. In terms of internal cultivation, relevant personnel should deepen their understanding about traditional Chinese plastic arts and create a variety of traditional art forms with the help of various information technological advantages. In terms of external communication, relevant personnel should deepen their understanding of the outside, carry out external communication with the assistance of various groups, achieve internal response and external cooperation, as well as promote the influence of the Chinese culture.

## **Disclosure statement**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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