

Synopsis

This lavishly illustrated catalogue is a comprehensive historical review of Chinese ceramics covering newly excavated discoveries from the Paleolithic era thousands of years ago to the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911. Throughout China's history there has been an ongoing practice of invention and innovation in the forms, materials, decorations, and functions of ceramics made in China, both for the domestic market and for its ever-growing trade with foreign markets. The creation of ceramic ware holds a special and very important place among the many arts and inventions that characterize Chinese culture, society, and civilization. The product of a ten-year collaboration among eminent American, Chinese, and Japanese scholars, *Chinese Ceramics* offers a new perspective in interpreting the oldest and one of the most admired Chinese art forms, from its technological aspects to its aesthetic value. The volume includes a chapter on Chinese export ceramics that delves into Chinese trade activities and ceramic wares made for export as well as a chapter about the authenticity of Chinese ceramics, discussing issues related to connoisseurship of this Chinese art. As author He Li writes, "Despite the rich variety of Chinese ceramics around the world, no fully illustrated, photographed survey of a complete history has been attempted in English. [This volume] will convey the excitement of encountering these specially chosen examples for the first time."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This volume is the latest in the Culture and Civilization of China Series - a collaboration between Yale University Press and Beijing Foreign Languages Press. For those who are familiar with this series it is quite free ranging in its subject matter, ranging from the classic "Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting" which has become a fixture of Chinese art courses, "Chinese Sculpture", "Chinese Calligraphy", "Chinese Architecture" and a couple of books on Chinese Philosophy. Most of these (excepting the books on philosophy) are all lavishly illustrated coffee table books and aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the subject matter that can be accessible to both the lay reader as well as the expert. Indeed this book does not disappoint, and I believe that it ranks with the best in the series (with the bar set high by Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting.) It provides a series of strong introductory essays on the various dynastic periods, setting out the historical background and their representative styles in a multifaceted analysis - subject matter, composition, technical breakthroughs in glazing and firing methods. The essays on the Song and Qing Periods are especially good. After reading this one should have a good idea of the characteristics of ceramics of each period, what celadon and blue and white ware are and the characteristics of true porcelain. This book also has the benefit of showing the best and most representative pieces without being confined to a particular collection, having compiled photos from the collections of the British Museum, the Musee Guimet in Paris, Museum of Asian Art in SF, the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul as well as many University Collections and the latest findings from many provincial museums in China.

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