

The “Craftsman Spirit” of Jingdezhen Ceramic Handicraft in the New Normal

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Abstract—Craftsman spirit has been missing increasingly in the development of ceramic handicraft in contemporary Jingdezhen along with various problems. “Craftsman spirit” of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft has a rich connotation, which ushered in an important opportunity of development after our country entered the period of the new normal, and it is of great practical significance to reshape the “craftsman spirit” of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft in the new EL3105normal.

Keywords—new normal; Jingdezhen ceramics; handicraft; craftsman spirit

I. INTRODUCTION

After Premier Li Keqiang put forward “craftsman spirit” in the government work report in 2016, the “craftsman spirit” of the traditional craftsmanship regained public eye and became the new goals of all walks of life. In recent years, as the speed of the economic development slowed down, China has entered a new normal period, and economic transition and industrial restructuring have become an irresistible trend. In the context of this era, the timely presentation of “craftsman spirit” shows the keen judgment and sense of direction of Chinese government policy makers. Jingdezhen is a famous millennium porcelain capital, the ceramic handicraft of which has developed for a thousand years and still stays prosperous, in which the traditional “craftsman spirit” plays an important and positive role, especially in the 1990s, the development was extremely rapid, however, with the arrival of the new normal in recent years, its development has encountered great difficulties. The new normal provides an important reflection opportunity for the development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft, which shows that Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft has entered a critical period of transition from “quantity” to “quality”, and how to inherit and carry forward the “craftsman spirit” and revive the Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft has become the most important subject in the ceramic handicraft industry in Jingdezhen.

II. CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS OF “CRAFTSMAN SPIRIT” OF JINGDEZHEN CERAMIC HANDICRAFT AND ITS CONNOTATION

Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft “craftsman spirit” has a long history, before the founding of new China, Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft was almost entirely mastered by craftsmen,

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“craftsman spirit” was born into the veins of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft. “Craftsman spirit” refers to the quality appeal of the Craftsmen to strive for perfection of the products, which shows the creative spirit and professional spirit that will never rest and constantly surpass. Ancient Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft craftsmen created countless quality ceramic products by relying on the persistent and excelsior “craftsman spirit”, Jingdezhen ceramics were vastly used across the country up to the emperor and down to the civilians, and travelled across the oceans and obtained extreme admiration from the people around the world, which earned great honor for Jingdezhen.

After the founding of new China, with the rise of modern ceramic industry system in Jingdezhen, ceramic handicraft once fell into a decline in Jingdezhen, and the “craftsman spirit” also gradually lost. Although after the 1990s, with the decline of modern ceramic industry system, Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft reemerged, but behind the prosperity, we must see that there have been many widespread acts against the “craftsman spirit” in the great development of ceramic handicraft in contemporary Jingdezhen such as manufacturing substandard products and forging counterfeits, which seriously damaged the reputation of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft. Contemporary Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft has not been due attention for a long time, of which the main reasons are as follows: firstly, the ancient craftsmen had low social status and were discriminated and rejected by others, and influenced by traditional ideas, the general workers engaged in ceramic handicraft still have lower social status than that of the intellectual class and the artistic creation class, which leads to the despise to the “craftsman spirit”; secondly, under the influence of commercialization and marketization, many ceramic craftsmen seek quick success and instant benefits, blindly pursue output and profits and neglect the “craftsman spirit”; thirdly, the doctrine of the education attainment leads to the pursuit of high-degree education and the neglecting to the vocational education by the ceramic craftsmen in Jingdezhen, many practitioners lack learning and training in vocational skills, and the talent training mode of valuing theory and neglecting skills has made more and more practitioners unable to strictly enforce and carry out the “craftsman spirit”. Thus it can be seen that Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft industry has many problems in treating the “craftsman spirit”, and it is urgent to restore the “craftsman spirit”.

The connotation of the “craftsman spirit” of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft of feudal times is admittedly different from that of the present, but their spirit essences are interlinked, therefore, although experts and scholars interpret it from different angles, the basic contents of it is nothing more than the spirit of teacher’s ethics, creativity, innovation, manufacturing and practice. Specifically, the “craftsman spirit” of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft contains three levels of contents: the first of which is exquisite ceramic handicraft professional skills, which is the basis and core of the “craftsman spirit” of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft, only the craftsmen who master some or certain kinds of ceramic handicraft skills have the basic quality of the “craftsman spirit”, for those craftsmen whose skills are poor or those who even don’t have the skills, “craftsman spirit” is out of the question; the second level of the content is excelsior working attitude and firm professional integrity. Jingdezhen ceramic craftsmen must love ceramic handicraft and pursue it as a lifelong career, and strive for perfection in their works, and they shouldn’t manufacture substandard products and forge counterfeits; the third level of the content is noble character. The craftsmanship is as the craftsman, a craftsman who has a vulgar taste and poor morality is unable to create outstanding works, Jingdezhen ceramic craftsmen must strengthen cultural and moral cultivation, and cultivate noble personality, so as to achieve the ideal realm of “craftsman spirit”.

III. THE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES OF “CRAFTSMAN SPIRIT” OF JINGDEZHEN CERAMIC HANDICRAFT IN THE NEW NORMAL

From the end of last century until 2012, Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft maintained a good momentum of sustained and rapid growth, and the excessive expansion of marketization and commercialization made many people unable to settle down so as to focus on and shape the “craftsman spirit”. However, after our country’s economy entered the new normal in 2012, the development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft slowed down, making most craftsmen unable to win by “quantity”, and at the same time, there were a lot of new trends of development in our country in the new normal, all of these provided great opportunities for the reshaping and strengthening of “craftsman spirit” of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft at the right time.

In recent years, with the formation of a new normal economy, the development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft also entered the new normal situation, and the collapse in demand has forced the high-speed development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft into the slow lane, therefore, structural adjustment is imperative, which forces the ceramic handicraft companies and individuals in Jingdezhen to pursue the development goals of transition, upgrading and quality improvement. This kind of transition and improvement is inseparable from the shaping of “craftsman spirit”, and only those craftsmen who have “craftsman spirit” can sustain development in the new normal, and under the circumstance of the survival of the fittest, those who don’t have “craftsman spirit” will be naturally eliminated, which forces the craftsmen to pursue “craftsman spirit” actively.

In recent years, in order to seek the open development in the new normal, our country has put forward the “One Belt And One Road” development strategy, which provides a great development opportunity for Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft. In the ancient times, Jingdezhen ceramics were exported to all around the world through the Land Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road, and became the symbol of “craftsman spirit”, nowadays, under the new “One Belt And One Road” policy, Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft products will be able to go global again with the help of it. However, the quality of the present Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft doesn’t hold advantage in the world, so the basic solution that makes the development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft fall in line with the “One Belt And One Road” policy is regaining “craftsman spirit”, therefore, the “One Belt And One Road” strategy has also produced important impetus and promotion for the development of “craftsman spirit” of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft.

In 2015, Premier Li Keqiang put forward the “internet +” action plan in the government report, which became the new direction of our country’s economic development in the new normal. In the “internet +” mode, artificial intelligence can’t replace handicraft, and also doesn’t prevent the shaping of “craftsman spirit”, on the contrary, it provides a new path of development for the shaping of “craftsman spirit” of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft. Jingdezhen ceramic craftsmen can use the internet to obtain more knowledge, broaden their horizon, gain new inspirations, learn new skills and grasp the development direction of new materials and new technology, thus making the internet provide service for the shaping of “craftsman spirit”. In the “internet +” mode, Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft compete on the network platform, as a result, it puts forward a higher requirement for the quality of the products and motivates the craftsmen’s pursuit for “craftsman spirit”.

In the new normal, the consumer groups of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft are undergoing great changes, in the past, the high-end products of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft were often used as the artwork of “elegant bribe”, which was mainly focused on the craftsmen’s master title and status rather than the craft and artistic value of the porcelain handicraft itself, however, in the new normal, the “elegant bribe” behaviors are greatly resisted, the consumption enters the rational age, and consumers are more concerned with the craft and artistic value of the works, this makes Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft artisans pay more attention to the quality of the works, thus providing an important driving force for the reshaping of “craftsman spirit”.

IV. THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF RESHAPING JINGDEZHEN CERAMIC HANDICRAFT “CRAFTSMAN SPIRIT” IN THE NEW NORMAL

In the new normal, the development of ceramic handicraft industry in Jingdezhen is slowing down, objectively causing difficulties in the development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft, but in the long run, it is an important opportunity for the development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft, time is calling for the return of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft

“craftsman spirit”, and reshaping it is very urgent and has very important practical significance.

Reshaping “craftsman spirit” is the basic way to seek development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft in the new normal. “Craftsman spirit” is the soul of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft, which supports the development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft in the past millennium, however, during the great development of marketization from the end of last century until 2012, there were many behaviors which were against “craftsman spirit”, and the damage and neglect of “craftsman spirit” are the underlying causes for the slowing down of the development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft in the new normal. Therefore, in order to adapt Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft to the new normal and get out of the development dilemma, it is necessary to reshape “craftsman spirit” and change passive waiting into positive promotion. Many ceramic craftsmen in Jingdezhen attach importance to the shaping of “craftsman spirit”, and they get out of the development dilemma and obtain good achievements, which is the demonstration of the value of “craftsman spirit”.

Reshaping “craftsman spirit” is the power source for ceramic craftsmen in Jingdezhen to achieve self-worth in the new normal. During the great development of marketization from the end of last century until 2012, there was a great disconnection between the actual value and the price of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft products, some expensive products didn’t have real artistic and craft value, but succeeded with the help of the craftsmen’s master title and their social statuses and crazy speculation, this made many ceramic craftsmen in Jingdezhen eager to seek various titles and ignore the improvement of skill level and artistic cultivation. In the new normal, Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft enters the stage of selection and elimination, and the great time for the ceramic craftsmen in Jingdezhen to achieve self-worth truly comes, and through continuous and excelsior inheritance and creation, the ceramic craftsmen in Jingdezhen can gain market recognition by creating excellent works.

Reshaping Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft “craftsman spirit” is the development demand of the ceramic handicraft education in the new normal. In the new normal, the higher education of our country is undergoing fundamental change, and it has become an irresistible trend to train the applied talents of innovation and entrepreneurship. Reshaping Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft “craftsman spirit” is not only reflected in the Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft industry, but also in Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft education, especially the higher education. Only when the shaping and cultivation of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft “craftsman spirit” is introduced into the education of ceramic handicraft in Jingdezhen colleges and universities, can Jingdezhen higher ceramic handicraft education truly achieve its education target of cultivating the applied talents. Therefore, reshaping Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft “craftsman spirit” is the important force that promotes the development of the education of ceramic handicraft in Jingdezhen in the new normal, thus to provide more excellent talents that have “craftsman spirit” for Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft industry.

V. CONCLUSION

Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft is an important part of Chinese traditional cultural essence, of which the “craftsman spirit” is the decisive force that propels it to the peak of ceramic handicraft in the world. Nowadays, our country’s economy has entered a new normal, and Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft industry also entered a new normal period, to fully understand, adapt and lead the new normal has become the new historical mission and responsibility of the development of Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft, and the “craftsman spirit” must be reshaped to accomplish this mission. Of course, fully reshaping of the Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft “craftsman spirit” can’t be accomplished overnight; it also requires long-term optimization and cultivation and comprehensive deepening and promotion. Only when Jingdezhen ceramic handicraft returns to rationality, keeps a foothold on the tradition and faces the future, can it again stand on the top of the ceramic handicraft in the world in the near future.

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