

On the Aesthetic Evolution and Cultural Connotation of the ' Children-Playing Pattern ' of Blue and White Porcelain in the Ming Dynasty

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Abstract: Jingdezhen blue and white porcelain children-playing pattern in Ming Dynasty is an important type of Chinese ceramic decoration art. Its aesthetic style and cultural connotation have undergone significant dynamic evolution in the past three hundred years. From the perspective of art and art theory, this paper uses the research methods of literature research, image analysis and stage comparison to investigate the aesthetic evolution track and the rich process of auspicious meaning of the children-playing pattern of blue and white porcelain in the Ming Dynasty. In the early Ming Dynasty, the pattern composition of the children-playing pattern of blue and white porcelain was symmetrical, the line drawing was neat, and the image of the children was round and full. The core theme revolved around ' more children and more blessings ' and ' group babies ', which was in line with the national policy of family reproduction and population recovery. In the middle of the Ming Dynasty, the children-playing pattern of blue and white porcelain lines were flexible, the composition was sparse, the children were natural and lively, and the motifs related to the imperial fame, such as ' Dress up as an official ' and ' official belt circulation ', were integrated into the subject content, which corresponded to the expectation of the public class on social mobility after the maturity of the imperial examination system. In the late Ming Dynasty, the image of children in the children-playing pattern of blue and white porcelain was extremely simplified or even deformed, echoing the collective anxiety caused by social unrest and frequent wars in the late Ming Dynasty.

Keywords: Ming Dynasty Blue and White Porcelain; Children-playing Pattern; Aesthetic Evolution; Cultural Connotation.

1. Introduction

Children-playing pattern is one of the themes with great affinity and vitality in ancient Chinese ceramic decoration. The blue and white porcelain produced in Jingdezhen in the Ming Dynasty uses the most such patterns. This kind of decoration mainly focuses on the scene creation of children 's play, which not only conveys the simple wish of the folk people to have more children and more happiness, but also records the changes of social atmosphere, aesthetic pursuit and cultural psychology in different times.

2. The Historical Origin and Basic Form of the ' Children-Playing Pattern ' of Blue and White Porcelain in Ming Dynasty

2.1. Tracing The Origin of The Theme of Children-Playing Pattern

The emergence of baby play theme in Chinese art can be traced back to the Warring States period. At that time, there were already children 's images interspersed in the jade. Although it was not an independent theme, it first opened up an attempt to include children in image creation. From the Han Dynasty to the Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, there were more children 's images in the tomb murals, portrait bricks and portrait stones. Most of them were embellishments of social life game scenes, which also reflected that people at that time had a preliminary aesthetic cognition of children 's innocence. In the Tang Dynasty, the theme of infant drama has been further developed. For example, in the works of Zhang Xuan, a painter in the Tang

Dynasty, there are also vivid portrayals of children playing in the scene. The image of children in his works is childish and dynamic, but most of them are embellishment. At present, the earliest discovered ornamentation of infant drama on ceramics is the ' green glazed brown color infant drama pattern holding pot ' unearthed from the site of Tongguan kiln in the Tang Dynasty. The painting method of ornamentation is relatively simple. During this period, the image of children has not yet become an independent painting theme, but the expression has gradually matured. Two artifacts with children-playing pattern were unearthed from the Huangbao kiln site of the Five Dynasties. The first is the carved flower climbing doll peony pattern celadon pot, the belly engraved with the image of folding peony and climbing doll ; the second piece is a celadon cover, the cover is modeled on the lotus flower boy pattern, a naked boy lying in a half-masked lotus leaf. These baby play images integrate two tendencies of realism and romance, which are in line with the aesthetic concepts of Taoism 's emphasis on innocence, natural carving, and clear water out of hibiscus. The folk culture of the Song Dynasty flourished, folk customs were integrated into the creation, and children 's painting achieved a qualitative leap. At this time, there was a custom painting of ' baby play picture ' with the theme of children 's life. For example, in Su Hanchen 's ' Autumn Pavilion Play Baby Picture ', the scene of children playing ' pushing jujube mill ' was depicted, and the innocence of children was fully displayed. However, Su Hanchen 's baby play pictures are limited by the environment of ' courtyard body painting '. Most of them depict the children of aristocratic palaces and rich houses. The shape of the opening phase has stylized characteristics, most of which are ' graceful and beautiful ' and ' fresh and moist clothing '[1]. During the Song and Jin Dynasties, the theme of children-

playing pattern expanded from paper silk painting to ceramic decoration. The Cizhou kiln, Ding kiln, Yaozhou kiln and Jingdezhen porcelain kiln all completed a large number of baby drama themes on jars, bottles and porcelain pillows. For example, 'Cizhou Kiln White Glaze Black Flower Baby Play Picture Porcelain Pot', depicting children's play scene with concise strokes, simple and bold style, 'Ding Kiln Children's Pillow' presents children's image in the form of three-dimensional sculpture, combining practical utensils and aesthetic interest perfectly. During the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, the performance theme of children play painting was more auspicious. The secular desires such as praying for blessings, praying for peace, and getting rich gradually integrate into the image. The image of children gradually becomes the core of the picture, and the sense of existence of the background is weakened. The painters depicted the game scene of the daily life of the group children, and added a large number of auspicious symbols, so that the children play pattern changed from a simple expression of children's life to an auspicious image carrying multiple cultural prayers.

2.2. The Definition and Classification of 'Children-Playing Pattern' of Blue and White Porcelain in Ming Dynasty

The Ming Dynasty 'children-playing pattern' refers to the blue and white porcelain of Jingdezhen in the Ming Dynasty, with children as the core image, with courtyards, flowers, toys, animals, lanterns, kites and other elements, forming a narrative image unit. The core feature of this kind of decoration is that children are in the center of the picture, with a number from one to hundreds. Most of the actions are related to games, frolicking, learning and blessing, and most of the scenes are courtyard or outdoor daily activities. According to the spatial attributes of the activity scene, the children-playing pattern in the Ming Dynasty can be divided into two categories: 'garden play baby' and 'outdoor play baby'. Before the Xuande period of the Ming Dynasty, most of the children-playing patterns showed the content of the baby in the garden. Children moved between rockeries, railings, flowers and trees, and pots and stones. The posture was correct and the movement was moderate, which met the requirements of the court's interest for a sense of order. After the Xuande period, the activity scene slowly expanded to the outdoors, and the game scenes of kite flying, hide-and-seek, grass fighting, bamboo horse riding, swinging and other more folk life began to appear. In the late Ming Dynasty, the activity scene became more free, and there were even pictures of children interacting with birds and beasts. The scene boundary of the image was gradually blurred and the narrative was enhanced. According to the nature of the kiln mouth, the children-playing pattern in the Ming Dynasty can be divided into official kiln children-playing pattern and folk kiln children-playing pattern. The pattern of children-playing in Guanyao kiln is mostly completed by exquisite painting, with rigorous composition, fine line drawing and uniform color, which meets the needs of court aesthetics and ritual system. The style of folk kiln is rich and varied. In the early stage, it imitated the style of official kiln. After the middle stage, it gradually developed the personalized expression of freehand brushwork and even freehand brushwork. The interaction and tension between the two types of children play patterns is an important driving force for the aesthetic evolution of children play patterns in the Ming Dynasty. According to the image motif, the children-playing

pattern in the Ming Dynasty can also be subdivided into 'group child drama', 'double child drama', 'single child drama' and other types, as well as auspicious themes such as 'lotus son', 'dress up as an official', 'official band spread', 'kylin send son', 'hundred sons and thousands of grandsons'.

3. The Aesthetic Evolution of the Blue and White Porcelain Children-Playing Pattern in the Ming Dynasty

3.1. The Early Ming Dynasty (From Hongwu to Xuande Period): The Pattern of Work under the Cover of Official Samples

In the early days of the founding of the Ming Dynasty, due to the limited supply of blue and white materials, the number of ceramic objects with blue and white baby play figures was relatively small. In the Yongle and Xuande periods, such baby play figures began to appear on ceramic objects. During the period from Hongwu to Zhengtong, the relevant systems of official kilns in the Ming Dynasty were gradually established, and the design and production of blue and white children-playing patterns were greatly influenced by the official system. The "official style" here refers to the standardized pattern paradigm formulated and distributed by the palace painting academy or the imperial palace to the imperial kiln factory. This system makes the artifacts produced by the official kiln maintain a high degree of unity in shape, decoration and color, and also limits the personalized expression of decorative images. In this social field, the early blue and white children-playing patterns style is neat, symmetrical and delicate. The image of children is round and full, the head is large and the body is small, the forehead is particularly wide, and the round face quota is a few bangs. The style of many children playing together is called 'group baby play'. The facial expression is dignified, almost a fixed pattern, and there is no distinct individual difference. Most of the clothes are cross-collar long shirts with simple decoration. The movements are common 'group baby', 'double child play lotus', 'four child climbing', etc., and the composition is mostly symmetrical or homogeneous. For example, during the Yongle period, the 'blue and white children play lotus bowl', the bowl center draws four children around the lotus pond, with different postures but balanced overall layout, smooth lines and compliance with regulations. In the 'blue and white baby cricket jar' during the Xuande period, children held utensils, squatted and played, or waved fans, fighting crickets, playing insects and ants, chasing and playing in the summer courtyard, integrating the popular 'cricket play' and children play themes of the Ming court and the folk. The aesthetic logic of this period can be summarized as 'there is a law', that is, the shape has a fixed style, the composition has a unified standard, and the lines have a clear law. Its aesthetic focus is not to show children's personality or emotions, but to use orderly images to convey idealized 'heavenly pleasures'. The core of its auspicious meaning is 'more children and more blessings'. The appearance of children's groups symbolizes family reproduction and prosperity, which is consistent with the government's policy of encouraging fertility and restoring population in the early Ming Dynasty. During this period, there was no image motif related to the imperial fame. After Xuande, the baby play patterns began to change slightly. The image of children in a few folk kiln products is slightly lively, and the composition

becomes sparse, paving the way for the rise of the medium-term freehand style. In the early years of the Ming Dynasty, the pattern of children play was mainly official, with a unified style and rigorous law. It reflected the pursuit of order, standardization and auspicious meaning by the upper court in the early years of the Ming Dynasty, with stylized characteristics.

3.2. The mid-Ming Dynasty (from Zhengtong to Longqing Period): The Infiltration of Literati's Interest and The Shift of Freehand Style

In the periods of Zhengde, the social development of the Ming Dynasty was stable and the economy was relatively prosperous. The process of Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Factory is mature, and Chenghua's fighting color is the most famous in the official kiln. The style of its children's playing cups, bowls and boxes is lighter and more elegant than that of the previous dynasty. At the same time, paintings, prints and other carriers spread the style of literati paintings to the field of ceramic decoration, so that the children play patterns gradually tend to be freehand style. Taking the Mingchenghua 'Official Kiln Doucai Children Play Cup' collected by the Palace Museum in Beijing as an example, the cup is painted with three children playing in the courtyard. The children's shape is simple and vivid, the lines are soft and smooth, and the colors are light and elegant. Compared with the previous works, the proportion of children's body is more realistic, the expression is young and lively, and the action has a clear sense of rhythm. The layout of the picture no longer emphasizes absolute symmetry, but conveys the artistic conception of the picture by means of density matching and reasonable white space. In the folk kiln products from Chenghua to Zhengde years, the expansion of commodity economy and the rise of citizen culture made the creation of blue and white children-playing patterns more free. The image of children began to show the characteristics of exaggerated head proportion and diverse body movements, and the lines also changed from regular to flexible. During this period, the auspicious meaning of the children play pattern became more abundant, and there were themes such as 'acting as an official to ascend to the hall', 'official band spread' and imperial examinations and related topics. These themes directly show the public class's yearning for 'learning and being an official', and also show that the meaning of children play patterns extends from simple family blessings to social expectations. In the middle of the period, the pattern of children-playing completed the transformation from 'patterning' to 'freehand brushwork'. The concept of 'expressing ambition through objects' and 'painting to convey truth' was integrated into blue and white decoration. Children-playing patterns was no longer only used as an auspicious symbol, but also a medium to convey multiple meanings such as innocence, nature, seclusion and world situation. This transformation paved the way for the formation of freehand style in the late Ming Dynasty.

3.3. Late Ming Dynasty (from Wanli to Chongzhen period): Abstraction and 'Freehand' Style of Image Presentation

From the Wanli to the Chongzhen period, the society of the Ming Dynasty was in a state of turmoil. The emperors of the court were lax in governing, the eunuchs controlled the power,

and the courtiers fought in factions. Silver became the main currency in circulation, the land was concentrated in large quantities, and the people had to bear heavy taxes and corvée. In the field of ideology and culture, the spread of the mind, the rise of the pursuit of individual freedom, and the maturity of the culture for ordinary citizens. Jingdezhen folk kilns have developed rapidly in such an environment, and children-playing patterns have also formed a unique and expressive freehand form during this period. In the late Ming Dynasty, the philosophy of mind, Li Zhi's 'childlike innocence theory', 'humanism', Yuan Hongdao's 'spiritual theory', and Zen thought were widely spread in society, affecting the direction of artistic creation at that time. The idea of "seeing the heart, expressing the heart directly" and "returning to the original" is accepted by many people, so that artists can get rid of the inherent rules and restrictions, and are more willing to express their true feelings directly. The image of children in the children's play pattern no longer follows the fixed template, the expression is close to the daily state, the action is free, and the real emotion is emphasized. The expressionist creative style of Chen Hongshou and other figure painters also has a direct impact on the ceramic baby play pattern. In his baby play pattern, the expressionist modeling of children's 'big head and simple state' is widely used by folk kiln painters.

During the Chongzhen period, the Ming Dynasty was on the verge of collapse, but the blue and white children-playing patterns produced by folk kiln factories ushered in the last period of prosperity. This stage of the children play pattern in the abstract expression of a step further, such as the 'Chongzhen blue and white children play bowl' on the painting of the child, the head only left a circle, the body simplified into an arc, the hand of the lotus is only two strokes of arc. This design pushes the abstract style to the extreme, and also represents the peak of freehand art. In the face of the blue and white decorations on these objects, we can see the end of the three hundred years of evolution of the blue and white baby play patterns in the Ming Dynasty, and we can also see the concrete practice of the concept of 'writing God with form' in the theme of Chinese art characters.

4. Cultural Connotation of Blue and White Porcelain Children-Playing Pattern in Ming Dynasty

4.1. The Image Metaphor of the Blue and White Children Play Patterns in the Ming Dynasty

The image of children in the children-playing pattern of the Ming Dynasty is not simply an aesthetic symbol to reflect the sense of innocence, but a carrier that can reflect social psychology and the spirit of the times. By comparing the appearance characteristics of children's images at different stages, we can clearly see the political implication of the society at that time from the blue and white children play pattern decoration.

During the Yongle and Xuande periods of the early Ming Dynasty, the children in the early Ming Dynasty were short and fat, the head was too large, the front part of the brain was particularly prominent, the face was round, and several bangs were left in front of the forehead. The scene of multiple children playing together was called group infant play. The image of children at that time was healthy, full and lively, corresponding to the state of social stability and economic

recovery. In the early Ming Dynasty, the rulers implemented the measures of Tuntian and introduced policies to encourage fertility, so that the social order gradually returned to stability and the population continued to increase. Such positive characteristics of the times were visually presented in the pattern of baby play. The popularization of 'Fengying' shape is a direct embodiment of the social style in the field of decorative art at that time.

In the middle and late Ming Dynasty, during the years of Jiajing and Wanli, children were pictured wearing long gowns. The proportion of their heads was exaggerated, and the back brain bulged outwards. This kind of visual image can be seen that the social politics and economy of the Ming Dynasty at that time had shown signs of decline. For example, the children on the 'Blue and White Children Play Picture Bowl' in Wanli of the Ming Dynasty had a serious imbalance between the body and head, an abnormally enlarged head, a relatively thin body shape, and a clumsy and uncoordinated overall posture. This kind of image change is not the decline of the painter's modeling ability, but the unconscious 'form alienation', which corresponds to the current situation of social structure imbalance and political and economic recession. According to historical records, during the Jiajing period, the 'Southern Japanese and Northern Japanese' events occurred frequently, the financial situation continued to deteriorate, the Wanli periods was lax, and the popular uprisings broke out one after another. These realistic pressures were projected into the image of infant drama in a distorted way.

During the Tianqi and Chongzhen periods in the late Ming Dynasty, the society was turbulent, the wars were continuous, the national strength was weak, and the social reality was also reflected in the baby play picture. For example, the 'Blue and White Children-playing pattern bowl' in Chongzhen period, the shape of the children painted on the bowl is very abstract, the proportion is exaggerated and distorted, and the appearance is weird. The social state of frequent wars in the late Ming Dynasty is in full agreement with the characteristics of infant drama patterns at this stage. The 'distortion' of the child's image in the baby play picture is the product of the extreme freehand style, and it is also the subconscious revelation of people in the oppressive era. It not only corresponds to the real social situation, but also expresses the resistance to the real suffering in a symbolic way.

The image metaphor mechanism of "conveying truth by form" is the core functional logic in Chinese traditional decorative art, that is, decorative images should not only meet the aesthetic needs, but also carry social cognition and collective psychology. The image of children in the blue and white children play patterns of the Ming Dynasty can clearly show the social and historical features of the Ming Dynasty.

4.2. The Auspicious Meaning of the Blue and White Children-Playing Pattern in the Ming Dynasty

The auspicious connotation carried by the children play patterns in the Ming Dynasty is not fixed. It has gradually expanded in the development. First, it is a single point, and then it derives multiple meanings, covering family ethics, social fame and even the protection of troubled times. The change of social structure, the adjustment of cultural policy and the change of people's psychological needs in the Ming Dynasty are closely related to this evolution.

In the early Ming Dynasty, after the war at the end of the

Yuan Dynasty, the population dropped sharply and the social economy needed to be restored. Zhu Yuanzhang, Emperor Taizu of the Ming Dynasty, regarded population growth as the foundation of national stability, and carried out a series of policies such as land reclamation system, tax reduction and fertility encouragement. In terms of encouraging fertility, the early Ming government implemented a policy of encouraging and subsidizing multiple births and multiple births based on the current situation of the national population and drawing on the old system of the previous generation. The fertility policies of the Ming Dynasty are mainly summarized into two categories: one is to encourage "birth," such as rewarding the family of multiple births and ensuring the reproductive rights of pregnant women; the second is to encourage 'breeding', such as the support of multiple births, the encouragement of adoption of abandoned babies, the prohibition of infanticide and the severe punishment of infanticide. Among them, the reward and support for the family of multiple births such as 'one birth and three males' is the comprehensive embodiment of encouraging 'birth' and 'education' in the fertility policy of the Ming Dynasty [2]. In this social field, the auspicious meaning of the blue and white children play patterns in this period is relatively simple, mainly focusing on the theme of 'more children and more blessings', emphasizing fertility, reproduction and clan continuation. The blue and white patterns are mainly based on 'sixteen characters group babies' and 'twenty children group babies' as the visual core. The dense appearance of children's groups is an intuitive expression of the concept of 'more children'. For example, such as Ming Xuande's 'Blue and white sixteen babies play with pattern bowl' (Figure 1), the painting is a scene of sixteen children playing in the courtyard. The expression of auspicious meaning in this period is relatively simple, mainly relying on the 'number of children' to convey auspicious meaning. Lian Sheng Gui Zi (Lotus and 'Lian' homophonic) is a few auspicious symbols with homophonic characteristics in this period, but it has continued the traditional schema since the Song and Yuan Dynasties. The popularity of themes such as 'group baby play' and 'hundred-child map' in the blue and white baby play pattern is the concrete embodiment of the birth policy orientation in the decorative art at that time.

In the middle of the Ming Dynasty, the imperial examination system entered a highly mature stage. During the Chenghua period, the eight-part essay became a fixed examination style, and the standardization of the imperial examination was unprecedentedly improved. At the same time, the development of commodity economy has led to the gradual rise of the citizen class, and the demand for social mobility is greater. 'Learning and being an official' has become the main way for ordinary families to change their destiny. In this context, the auspicious meaning of blue and white children play patterns has undergone major changes. Motifs such as 'acting as an official to ascend to the hall' and 'official band spread' began to appear, reflecting the public's expectation of entering the imperial examination, and also indicating that the blessing scope of the baby play pattern extended from the family to the level of social fame. For example, the Capital Museum's collection of Ming Jiajing's 'blue and white children play picture cover jar' (Figure 2), the jar body is painted in counterclockwise direction in turn with four baby play pictures of crickets, bamboo horses, Jiuche play, and Shengtang. Its blue and white baby play patterns retain the theme of 'more children and more

blessings', while adding motifs related to imperial fame such as 'acting as an official to rise to the hall' and 'official belt circulation'. The auspicious symbol coverage of baby play patterns extends from family ethics to the field of social fame, and their continuous interpretation can be used as a metaphor for the reproduction of children and grandchildren, which represents the ancients' good yearning for children's high school. The change of these motifs directly reflects the social expectation of the citizen class for the imperial examination and the first place, and also shows that the blessing scope of the children play pattern extends from the family to the social level.

In the late Ming Dynasty, the Ming Dynasty fell into a comprehensive crisis. Economically, the situation of land annexation has increased, and the people have to bear more taxes and corvées. In addition, after the reform of "tax and corvée integration, silver levied per mu," silver has become the main currency, triggering economic fluctuations, and the lives of ordinary people have become increasingly difficult. On the social level, the 'Southern Japanese and Northern Japanese' in the Jiajing Dynasty, the eunuch party's rebellion in the Tianqi Dynasty, and the Li Zicheng uprising in the Chongzhen Dynasty and the entry of the Qing army made the whole late Ming society be shrouded in war and turmoil. At the same time, the abnormal prosperity of the commodity economy gave birth to the extravagant atmosphere, the social moral order was chaotic, and the people generally had anxiety. At that time, the social trend of thought was to break

the shackles of feudal thought and pursue the liberation of individual freedom. The social aesthetic fashion in the late Ming Dynasty also had the characteristics of 'valuing truth and interest' and 'expressing the spirit alone' [3]. Therefore, the focus of the auspicious meaning of the baby play pattern has changed from the pursuit of 'fame' to the expression of their inner feelings and the urgent need for 'peace' and 'avoiding disaster'. For example, the children play pattern image on the 'blue and white children play bowl' (Figure 3) in Chongzhen of Ming Dynasty has the characteristics of freehand simplification and abstract deformation. The pattern of children-playing pattern in the late Ming Dynasty was widely popular. First of all, it was an expression of the idea of family succession. The second is a kind of sustenance to the desire to avoid evil; finally, it is a continuation of the feudal concept of prosperity and son preference. The traditional ethical and moral thoughts that have been circulating for thousands of years have affected all aspects of the baby play patterns in the late Ming Dynasty and achieved the good wishes of praying for peace and happiness in the world [4]. The combination of these auspicious symbols forms a rich visual representation of meaning. An auspicious symbol system with multiple meanings is formed on a children play pattern in the late Ming Dynasty. Therefore, the children play pattern becomes a 'container of meaning', carrying multiple cultural demands such as fertility, education, fame, fortune, disaster avoidance and so on.



Figure 1. Ming Xuande 'Blue and white sixteen babies play with pattern bowl'



Figure 2. Ming Jiajing 'blue and white children play picture cover jar'



Figure 3. Ming Chongzhen 'blue and white children play pattern bowl'

5. Conclusion

Based on the theory of art and art, this paper combs the development of blue and white porcelain children play patterns in the Ming Dynasty, and clarifies the internal logic of its aesthetic evolution and the expression mechanism of cultural connotation. Based on the significant differences in the auspicious meaning and cultural function of the infant play patterns in the early, middle and late Ming Dynasty, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Firstly, the auspicious meaning of the blue and white porcelain children play patterns in the Ming Dynasty shows a gradual evolution track from 'family ethics' to 'social fame' to expressing emotions in order to 'protect the world in trouble'. This change shows that the auspicious symbol system of children play patterns is not fixed. It will be

endowed with new connotation with the change of social structure in the Ming Dynasty and become a cultural carrier that can reflect the spirit of the times. In the early Ming Dynasty, it took 'many children and many blessings' and 'one hundred children and one thousand grandchildren' as the core, served the policy of encouraging fertility and restoring population in the early Ming Dynasty, and its cultural function focused on family reproduction and clan continuation. In the middle of the Ming Dynasty, the contents related to the imperial examination were added, such as 'Dressing up as an official', 'official band spread', etc., which corresponded to the expectations of the citizen class for class mobility after the maturity of the imperial examination system. The cultural connotation extends from family blessing to the desire to face the society; in the late Ming Dynasty, the exaggerated deformation and personalized expression of the blue and white children-playing pattern images corresponded

to the group anxiety caused by the social unrest and war at that time, and the cultural function turned to the basic demands for peace and survival.

Secondly, there is an inherent relationship between the aesthetic style and auspicious meaning of the blue and white porcelain in the Ming Dynasty. The early work-oriented patterning style conforms to the simple prayer of "more sons and more blessings," and the modeling style directly serves to convey the meaning. The mid-term freehand style is initially matched with the imperial examination title motif, so that the children play pattern can not only express multiple meanings such as childlike innocence and nature, but also have independent aesthetic value. The more exaggerated and deformed abstract freehand style in the late period realized the deep integration of modeling language and spiritual expression.

Thirdly, there are periodic changes in the shape of children's images in the blue and white porcelain children play patterns of the Ming Dynasty. In the early Ming Dynasty, they were plump and mellow. In the middle of the Ming Dynasty, they became top-heavy and exaggerated. In the late Ming Dynasty, they turned to the abstract style of the body. The image transformation of this kind of visual presentation has a metaphorical correspondence with the political and economic conditions of the Ming Dynasty. This image metaphor mechanism that conveys connotation with image points out a core functional logic of traditional Chinese decorative art. Decorative images not only meet the aesthetic needs of the

time, but also carry social cognition and collective psychology.

Through the dual investigation of the aesthetic evolution and cultural connotation of the children play pattern, we can clearly see a seemingly simple decorative theme, how to be shaped by social changes in three hundred years, and how to respond to the anxiety and expectation of the times with its unique formal language. This is the deep charm of the blue and white porcelain in the Ming Dynasty as a treasure of Chinese ceramic art.

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