

Chinese Pottery Traditions

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ABSTRACT

My research was to conduct oral histories of Chinese potters in order to gain a better understanding of their role in the ceramics profession and their importance on my own artwork. The objective of my research of Chinese potters was multi-fold. Primarily, I was interested in anthropological data as it pertained to the present day to day life for Chinese potters, the role and function of ceramics in China, and especially the role that gender plays in the ceramic profession there. In addition, I was interested in the impact of traditional pottery techniques, forms, and glazes on Chinese potters and potters elsewhere in the world. I hoped to discover how those techniques are incorporated into modern ceramic work. Workspaces and studios were also an important research component as they are set up so differently than those in the United States. China has been quickly changing since the country opened up its doors to foreign travelers in 1976. Potters though out the world have greatly benefited by interactions with Chinese ceramicists. An unexpected result of the cultural exchange is that Chinese pottery is starting to break away from tradition. I was greatly interested in researching modern potters as they begin a new ceramic dynasty in China.

INTRODUCTION

Ceramics have played an integral role in the lives of humans throughout history and continue to enrich the human experience. China has a long and leading role in the evolution of ceramics and its cultural impact on the world. China has been the forerunner in the ceramics world for thousands of years. It is the birthplace of porcelain, glazes, and high-fire ceramics, as well as many form styles and technique much of what we know about Chinese culture can be traced though the dynasties and evidence found in archeological sites throughout the country.

Porcelain slowly emerged in China over a 200 year period starting about three thousand years ago and was much sought after for use by potters and consumers, eventually evolving to a standard in the ceramic industry. Chinese potters fired the first porcelain prototype, a smooth, white clay body to 1200 degrees centigrade. By the third century C.E., Yue ware, closely resembled porcelain as we know it today (Whyman 9). The British coined the phrase china in reference to fine porcelain dinnerware because of porcelains origins in China (Mc Bride 2000).

Although Chinese potters have been influence by other cultures through trade of ceramics, more often it has been other cultures that have benefited from the interaction. For example, the blue and white wares produced by the British, Japanese, and Europeans during the 1600's mimic earlier Chinese pots. Not only was the surface decoration copied, but potters in Britain also tried to make their pots look like porcelain by glazing them with white under glaze slip (Morley-Fletcher, et al., 69-93).

Chinese potters have extensively researched and painstakingly formulated glazes. It is believed that the first glaze originated in China when ash fell onto pots accidentally during a firing. Ceramicists began experimenting with glazes using simple recipes comprised of just two ingredients: feldspar and calcined limestone. Chinese potters are responsible for creating many of the glazes used by modern potters, including temmoku, celadon, and chun. Modern potters and collectors alike consider the pottery from the Northern and Southern Song Dynasty to be some of the finest monochromatic wares in the world (Morley-Fletcher 159).

Ceramics in China have had a large cultural impact not only within the country, but also in countries as well. Many pots were created for ceremonial use such as burial urns, tea ceremony vessels, and altar pots. Ceramics had and have a religious element as well. A widespread belief in Buddhism helped to spread Chinese forms and styles to other countries. Chinese Buddhist monks drank tea to prevent drowsiness when meditating, with the hope of achieving enlightenment. Ch'an sect Buddhist monks developed the formal practice of gathering to drink tea out of a single bowl before ceremonies. This practice was borrowed and greatly expanded on by the Japanese and is considered an art form there (Morley-Fletcher 163). Beliefs in Buddhism have greatly influenced Chinese potters in relation to the way that pots were used and decorated. Many modern potters still use decorations and inspirations that arise from their religious beliefs.

Ceramics were also used to guard burial grounds. There are many sites in China which contain images depicted warriors, animals, and concubines, the most noted and researched being the Terra Cotta Army found outside of Xi'an, China. Peasant farmers, who were digging a well, found the entrance to a pit containing 8,000 clay warriors. After much research by archeologists, it was concluded that Emperor Qin Shi Huang had ordered the construction of the warriors. Thousands of these figures were put around the emperors burial pits to protect his body and aid him in the after life. He believed that he would carry his worldly possessions and warriors with him into the next life. Research on the terra cotta warriors is still being conducted as thousands of clay warriors and the emperor's tombs have yet to be excavated.

METHODS

Research was conducted in a variety of ways. Ethnographic data was gathered through extensive interviews with Chinese potters. An attempt was made to include both professors of ceramics and professional potters as well male and female potters. Their age, sex, availability, and willingness to participate in the interviews made selection of informants relatively straightforward. Photographs and slides were also taken to record specific styles of pottery, techniques, and studios. Also, information was gathered by visits to kiln sites and studios.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ceramics studios in China vary greatly regionally and compared to those in the United States. Many studios in China are set up with the same traditional wheels and kilns that have been used for centuries. Throwing wheels tend to be made of wood and many are non-motorized. These wheels are set upon a plank over a pit and the potters, sitting aligned to the wheel head, use a long stick to spin the wheel head. Of the wheels that are powered by electricity, many are old and rigged together with a series of belts. There are an increasing number of modern wheels that have been brought to China from the United States, but many of the older potters prefer traditional wheels.

Kilns in China tend to vary greatly. In Jingdezhen there are wood-fired dragon kilns, coal-fired kilns, and electric kilns. In smaller communities, such as Chen Lu, all kilns are fired using an age-old method of putting pots into saggers and firing them in a reducing atmosphere with coal. In larger cities like Xi'an, there are gas kilns similar to those used by many ceramicists in the United States. All of the studios that I visited high-fired to at least cone nine and most in a reduction state, with the exception of the electric kilns. On a positive note, the types of kilns used to fire wares are very quickly changing as a result of the extreme pollution caused by the traditional firing method of burning coal. Many potters and institutions are shifting to electric and gas fired kilns because of pollution and a major depletion of resources like coal and wood. This is, however, a slow process as the equipment is very expensive.

Tools found in most studios vary greatly from those found in the United States. Most of the potters that I met did not use tools that were common in the United States, such as ribs, sponges, calipers, and wire cutters. This was true primarily with potters that used a wheel to throw or make pottery. Many of the tools were hand made by the artist for use in his or her particular style or specialty. In certain areas, such as Yixing, special tools are used that meet the needs of the pottery created there. Since most of the teapots are made by using hand-building methods, different tools are required than those needed for thrown work.

Factories in China are not representation of factories, as we know them in the United States. Most are comprised of a series of rooms and buildings that house potters who work on specific technical aspects of pottery making. In the U.S., most potters create every part of a piece by themselves. In China, one person is assigned the job of throwing the form. Another person trims the foot and another person carves in details or paints the piece with under-glaze. The piece is then glazed again by a different person and then fired by yet another person. This is an age-old method of making ceramics that has its origins in early dynasties.

Ancient pots were made in this co-operative method for the imperial government and for the general population. Only certain factories, such as the imperial pottery factory located in Jingdezhen, were allowed to use specific designs for imperial ware. Many of the imperial designs were comprised of flowers, scenes depicting royalty, and nature scenes. The images were painted with cobalt under-glaze or carved and were very detailed. Prohibitions issued in the Zheng Tong period placed serious restrictions on who could paint what decorations on pots. The government forbids local potteries from decorating wares with any imperial designs onto pottery made for the general population. Ceramicists who made pottery for the general population were allowed to add vague decorations to their wares based on imperial wares. The designs on folk pottery were much less detailed, made of lesser quality, and reflected life for the common person. If potters were caught copying imperial designs or if their designs were too detailed, they were brutally put to death (Qin 2000).

Experts in the field of ceramic dating have a difficult time determining the actual age of pieces for several reasons. First, excavated pots bear no signatures of the makers, or any type of dating sign. As most excavations unearth pottery that is region specific, there is little reference to assist in the dating process. For many reasons, including the destruction of many records during the Cultural Revolution, there is a lack of historical documents. Early excavations were not scientifically carried out. In many cases, local citizens unearthed shards or pots and failed to recognize the historical and cultural value of such finds. Making the situation worse, is the fact that ceramics are continuously made to resemble ancient styles.

Collectors of ancient pottery have created a huge market for antique Chinese pottery and Chinese potters have responded with high quality reproductions. There are methods that could be used to date pottery, such as thermoessence, but it is an extremely expensive process and its use is not widespread (Qin 2000).

Institutional settings also follow these guidelines for production. Each prospective student must pass a series of rigid tests to get into to college. The tests are comprised of questions that pertain to basic studies as well as an intensive English test. Students who do well on the tests, particularly English are admitted to the best universities. Depending on their scores, students are admitted into certain fields of study within an art major. Most aspects of pottery have specific majors and graduate schools. There are graduate schools for kiln firing, glazing, and trimming, as well as throwing and decorating/painting. The highest honor for a prospective ceramic student is to be admitted as a painting student. Painters (of pottery) occupy the most prestigious positions and are compensated the most for their work. Throwing pieces is much lower on the totem, however students consider it a great honor to be able to make the "canvas" or pot for the painter. When pieces are thrown for another person to decorate, it is the painter whose name is signed to the pot, not the maker. This is very different from schools and studios in the United States, where all aspects of pottery making are assigned to each student.

Some potters in China are beginning to design and create work on an individual basis. Most of these people are older professionals who were once, or are currently, employed as professors. The few potters who do have their own studios have attained a certain degree of wealth and prestige prior to branching out on their own. Potters with their own studios often take on apprentices and hire help. Students are now beginning to be taught all areas of ceramics so that they are better equipped to work professionally and teach.

Major Production Sites

Chen Lu

Chen Lu Pottery and Porcelain Plant is a large series of factories located atop a mountain above the city of Tong chuan in Shaanxi province. Yaozhou porcelain was produced at this site during the Sung dynasty. Chen Lu is known for its highly detailed carved celadon wares, which were historically sent to the emperor as tribute. Yaozhou porcelain has four specific characteristics.

1. Bowls, in particular, were massed produced which means it was probably not a government run factory.
2. Carving on the pieces is wide, deep, and smooth, and of intricate designs.
3. Wares are glazed with olive or amber celadon.
4. Yaozhou porcelain is thought to represent pottery characteristic of the Northern Sung dynasty.

Chen Lu is the only kiln site of the Northern Sung region that survived the war between the Jin and Yuan dynasties. Today, the site has 1,300 workers and staff members and produces more than fifteen million pieces annually. Because of high demand for wares, the factory has almost completely irradiated wheel thrown pottery. Most pots are made using slip cast methods and molds. Designs are imprinted on pots during the mold process and carved out when the pieces are leather-hard. Of the 1,200 potters and craftsmen, only four work in their own studios and only two of those potters make their work on the wheel. This is of particular interest to those who feel that Chen Lu potters are abandoning traditional methods for mass production. The art of throwing will be lost forever in this region if the trend continues.

The studios are mostly buildings built into the side of the mountain. The source of light for most is one light bulb and the one doorway. There are few, if any windows. Pottery is put into saggars to keep the glaze pure and free of ash. All kilns are fired with coal and pollution at the factories is immense.

Yixing

Yixing is located in the Anhui province, in eastern China. This region contains the only natural deposit of a certain type of red clay, similar in quality to porcelain that is used primarily to make teapots and cups. The teapots are known throughout the world because of several characteristics.

1. Traditionally the teapots were hand-formed or built without the use of a throwing wheel or molds.
2. The exact recipes for the clay bodies used are generally kept a secret and the main ingredient found only in the Yixing area.
3. The shape of the teapot and the decoration on it has equal value.
4. Yixing teapots are all stamped with a seal bearing the maker's name.
5. Most are left unglazed. Many clay bodies are colored and teapots are made in red, yellow, black, green, brown and orange clay bodies.

The first Yixing teapot is believed to have been made by Gong Chun in the early Ming dynasty. It is widely believed that with continued use of a teapot made from red-purple clay that the flavor of the tea is actually enhanced. As with the Chen Lu potters, Yixing teapot makers have begun to abandon their time-honored techniques and to instead make use of molds and slip-cast methods.

Another similarity between the two cities is that there is also a major depletion of resources in Yixing. The clay used to make the Yixing teapots is only found in this area of the world, although it is speculated that the mountains near Chen Lu may also contain a similar clay deposit.

Jingdezhen

Jingdezhen is a rural city (population 800,000) located in southern China in the Jiangsu Province. The city is known in particular for the Imperial Porcelain Factory and its blue and white wares. The blue and white ware of Jingdezhen is decorated primarily with flowers, scrolls, mountains, children, and some Buddhist emblems. The first identified use of cobalt blue on ceramics is the Tang dynasty earthenware that was introduced in the early eighth century. This style disappeared when the Tang dynasty fell, and was later reintroduced during the fourteenth century. Blue and white ware is probably one of the most recognizable Chinese contributions to the world. Dutch, Italian, Persian, and Turkish potters made many attempts, but it was not until the late eighteenth century that similar works were produced (Morley-Fletcher 71). The early origins of blue and white ware in this area are remarkable because the porcellaneous clay body required very controlled high temperature firings to reach vitrification. In addition the cobalt paste used to paint designs on the porcelain required high temperature firings to turn it from a black colored pigment to blue. Cobalt blue and copper oxide were the only two pigments known to early ceramic painters that could withstand the high firing temperatures and still maintain color (Morley-Fletcher 77). Jingdezhen blue and white ware became extremely popular during the Ming dynasty.

The Potters

Yu Jun

Mr. Yu Jun was born August 1st, 1962 in WuYeng, Jiangxi province, but raised in Jingdezhen. He is known for his blue and white decorations and for creating red and green wares, a notable contribution considering the different firing atmospheres required for both colors to mature. He chose to study ceramics because of childhood influences. While playing by the Changher River as a small child, he found many ceramic shards and was greatly influenced by them. In his middle school years he began to study western and modern paintings and made painting his concentration. In early 1980, Yu Jun was assigned to work in the WuYang ceramic factory, which specialized in manufacturing household ceramics. While there, his painting skills helped him to be promoted to the job of designing shapes and paintings for the pottery. In 1981 he was admitted to the university. After his graduation, Yu Jun was assigned to The Jiangsu Ceramic Research Institute, where he specialized in blue and white decoration and traditional Chinese patterns of children. He eventually gave his name to the government and requested to study under Qing Xiling, whom he studied with for eight years. During this time, he helped to create many styles, and continued to specialize in paintings of children and the elderly that depicted all kinds of emotions. Currently, Mr. Yu Jun maintains a position at the Jiangsu Research Institute, but has been on leave for the last three years in order to do his own work. He must continue to take part in activities at the Institute, but most of the time is left to create work in his own studio. For the last three years he has been teaching special painting seminars at the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute for foreign students and is a consultation professor there.

Yu Jun's particular situation is very unusual for most potters in China. In his own words, he has served the Chinese government loyally as a potter his entire life and because of this enjoys many liberties not available to most. He has traveled extensively to Japan and Korea to study ceramics on trips paid for by the government. The government also recently gave Yu Jun a grant to build his own studio and living quarters. He patterned his studio after those he saw in Japan and the Japanese aesthetic is evident in all of his work. The location of Yu Jun's studio was chosen because of the nature surrounding it. He feels that the mountains and streams around his studio greatly affect his work. He throws, decorates, and fires all of his own work. He has fired kaolin based clay body in a gas reduction kiln, similar to those used in the United States. He usually maintains five or six students who live and work with him for one or two years. Yu Jun also has had a few international students and is really excited about the exchange of ideas between different cultures. He sells his work in local shops, at his studio, and at various gallery shows in China as well as Japan and Korea.

Besides his national recognition for his blue and white decoration patterns, Yu Jun is widely thought of as a pioneer in the modern ceramic art movement in China. The shards he found playing in the river as a child heavily influence his work. He incorporates old shards into new pieces and has inspired a new style of ceramics. Many potters in the area try to mimic his work. In addition to this series, Yu Jun also creates large vases that reflect his adoration for nature and his respect for Japanese pottery. When he is designing a new piece he takes into account his emotions, the weather, and his surroundings.

Mr. Yu Jun is very happy with the "modernization" of the ceramic industry in China although, he thinks that Chinese potters need to revere traditional art in order to be inspired to create modern works. He believes that beginning potters need to learn the basics of traditional ceramics before they can make modern art. He is enthusiastic about the new modern

movement in ceramics and is happy to be at the forefront of it. He is very concerned with the environmental degradation as a result of the ceramic industry and thinks that potters need to be mindful of the earth and learn to respect nature. He hopes in the next decade that Chinese potters learn new firing methods and new ways to obtain clay so that they can cut down on the severe pollution. He is looking forward to a new era of many new styles and ideas.

Luo Xiatao

Mrs. Luo Xiatao is a retired Associate Professor of Ceramics at the Jingdezhen Ceramics Institute, specializing in blue and white under glaze decoration. She was born on March 19, 1941 in Zhangshu, central Jiangsu province.

Her first memorable experience with ceramics occurred while she was visiting her grandparents who did not live in Jingdezhen. She was playing and broke a vase that was made in Jingdezhen. Her grandmother was extremely angry with her and screamed at her for breaking such a precious piece. Since she was always very spoiled by her grandmother, she was very surprised by her reaction. Luo Xiatao had cut her finger when the pot had broken and her grandmother was screaming at her instead of comforting her. She started to wonder why Jingdezhen pottery was so important that her grandmother didn't care about her injury. A few years later, when her father was stationed in Jindezhen, she saw many porcelain pots made there and decided that she would study ceramics. She was admitted to and received her Master of Fine Arts at the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute in Jingdezhen, China.

Luo Xiatao began college in 1957 at the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute and stayed there to teach after graduation. Her life abruptly changed during the Cultural Revolution. Because her father was a high-ranking government official and because she was a teacher, the Chinese government reassigned her to work in a Yixing teapot factory. She suffered through many hardships while working in the factory, most notably the fact that she had to leave most of her family. Both of her sons were born while she worked in the factory and she had to raise them primarily on her own. She spoke in great detail about her hardships during this time, however the translator would not translate the entirety of what she was saying. After three years, she was transferred to work in a government factory in Jingdezhen and later was allowed to resume teaching at the Ceramic Institute. Although Luo Xiatao suffered much abuse while working in the factories she is grateful for the learning experience. If she had not been forced to work in the factories, she would never have learned how to do all aspects of pottery. She feels that the experience allowed her to be a better teacher because she has knowledge that professors who only specialized in one area do not have.

Her experience varies greatly from that of Yu Jun because of her age and also because she is female. Women are paid essentially the same amount as men in China, but fail to be promoted and recognized at the same rate. Various reasons factor into this situation. A woman in China is expected to be a good wife above all other responsibilities and it is especially hard to juggle a demanding career and a family. Luo Xiaotao said that when men put many hours into their work and succeed he is praised. When a woman does the same she is not considered to be a full woman or an obedient wife. For many professional Chinese women, their work comes last and when they have time. Although there is officially no sex discrimination because of the communist government, few women achieve the same status as men and this is especially true in the ceramic industry. Of the eight full professors at the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, none are women and there is no record of a woman ever attaining a position higher than as an associate professor and most women are employed as lecturers or

assistants. Partially this may be a result of the fact that all women in China must retire at age fifty-five, ten years earlier than their male counterparts. Also, many women take years out of their careers to raise a child and as a result forgo many advancement opportunities. In addition, when advancement opportunities come up at other universities it is near impossible to transfer. People are allowed to make the first choice as to where they will work and after that it is up to their place of employment or the government. Many times, paperwork is “lost” or university officials refuse to send records or recommendations elsewhere. Luo Xiaotao said that she never wanted to advance her career, only to make work and be a good mother and wife. Currently she is writing a book about blue and white decoration and painting pottery in her spare time.

She still lives in the apartment that was provided to her by the Institute during the week and on the weekends maintains a home in Jingdezhen with her husband. She was the first person in her family to study ceramics and has influenced her sons, who are both studying ceramics in Jingdezhen. It was her choice to study ceramics and she could not change her mind once she had made her decision. When she worked she shared a studio with several other professors, but now has a small space set aside in her apartment for a studio. Her work is very traditional and she has achieved recognition for her pursuit of this style. Mainly she designs paintings based on traditional patterns of birds, flowers, and scrolls. She designs pot shapes and then pays someone to throw and bisque fire them for her. She paints on bisque ware and then pays someone to glaze fire the pieces. She sells her work in shops, galleries, and to private collectors.

Luo Xiaotao is somewhat upset at the changes in Chinese ceramics because she feels that the younger generation of potters is breaking away too much from tradition. She said, “Modern ceramics are like a hungry man who has eaten so much that he can’t digest it all”. An increasing number of potters are being influenced by foreigners and have begun to abandon their roots, which she feels is dangerous to the strong pottery traditions by which she is inspired. She feels that now younger ceramists are starting to realize the importance of studying both modern and traditional art and is hopeful that potters will continue to use both points of reference.

I asked Luo Xiaotao if she could change her career or life at all if she would do so. She replied that she would never change any aspects of her life, including the Cultural Revolution. If she could do it all over again she would and would live and teach in the same place.

Zhang Jingjing

Ms. Zhang Jingjing is an Associate Professor at the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute. She was born in Gutian, in the Fujian Province, on April 19th, 1975. She studied ceramics at Jingdezhen and has a 5-year teaching contract with the university.

As a teenager she had wanted to be a painter and spent her high school years studying painting, especially modern works. Her parents really pushed her to enter the university and she took many exams to get into college. Since she was very good at the English language, she received high marks on her exams and was admitted to her choice of three universities. The ceramics field is one of the harder and more prestigious areas of specialization in college and Jingjing feels that it is because of her high scores that she was offered admission to ceramics schools. She chose Jingdezhen because it has a very good reputation. It wasn’t until she entered graduate school that she became interested in ceramics. She wanted to be an interior designer or a graphic artist as an undergrad, but was good at making ceramics and decided to pursue that avenue.

Jingjing creates all aspects of her work. She throws, decorates, and fires her work. She is part of the emerging modern ceramic arts movement. She gets ideas for her pottery from the culture and history in Jingdezhen and abstract paintings. Her focus during graduate school was mixing traditional folk blue and white styles and ideas with contemporary influences and non-traditional forms.

Jingjing feels that the modern art movement is very important in China to bring them up to par with the rest of the world. She thinks that there should not be two separate styles based on pots that are traditional or modern. She would like to see aspects taken from both and a new history written.

On a typical day, she teaches from 8:00 am until 12:00 p.m. and then does her own work in the afternoon and on the weekends. She shares a studio space with other faculty. She sells her work in department stores and hotels in Shanghai and Beijing and at galleries in both cities. She feels that her career is demanding because she is responsible for all aspects of pottery making. It is hard for her because she is single and has to do everything on her own but she doesn't want to get married because marriage responsibilities would hinder her career advancement.

I asked her what else she would do if she could and she said that she really would like to work for Sotheby's in a position where she could sell modern art. She really wants to visit and study in the United States but has been repeatedly denied a visa by the U.S. government. She is considered to be a risk because she is single and does not have a high enough salary to make her want to return to China.

Jingjing feels restricted because she is under contract with the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute for the next five years. She has been offered many job opportunities but if she leaves Jingdezhen she would have to pay the university for her education and she lacks the funds to do so.

Potters in China vary greatly from region to region, and there is an enormous generational gap emerging. There is a clashing of traditional and modern throughout the country that promises to disrupt the profession, in a way that I believe will be beneficial if they continue to respect their history. As other influences infiltrate Chinese potters they are quickly learning to adapt. Studios, much like those in the United States are cropping up all over China. Attention is being paid to alleviating pollution destruction and cleaner firing methods are starting to emerge. Ancient kiln sites are being excavated scientifically and preserved. Many cultures are sharing ideas and learning much from each other. Exciting, new work is being produced and the country is on the brink of a modern art movement.

With so many changes also comes a downside. Pottery factories, such as the one in Chen Lu, are giving up traditional throwing methods in exchange for slip cast and mold made ceramics. Depletion of resources due to high consumer demand will eventually destroy all deposits of certain types of clay, such as indigenous Yixing red clay. Exploitation of ancient pottery because of collector demand may greatly deplete China's national treasures. The demand for these ancient pots may perpetuate the looting of kiln and burial sites.

At the moment, the new modern art movement may be inundating the country, but I believe that China will always maintain a strong relationship to its history and traditions. I find it very interesting to research because I look at my own work as something that is reflective of many cultures, but primarily of the Chinese culture. At the time that I am looking to China for inspiration and form, many Chinese potters are looking towards westernizing and, in their own words, modernizing their work.

LIMITATIONS

There were limitations to my research that I would like to address at this point. First, because of the language barrier, most interviews were conducted with the assistance of an interpreter and some things may have been translated differently than had been intended by the interviewee/ informant. In cases where there was a question because of translation problems, the information was disregarded. I noticed that during some interviews, the informants tended to say things that I did not necessarily find true based on information that I had witnessed firsthand. A good example of this happening is in regards to women working in the field and the notion that they have the same equal opportunities, which may be true idealistically, but not always in practice. In addition, ceramic history in China is vast and impossible to discuss in its entirety within the scope of this paper. The country, itself, is geographically large and my research does not reflect all Chinese potters, only those in specific areas that I visited: including Xi'an, Yixing, Jingdezhen, and Chen Lu. Finally, my research represents only a very small percentage of potters and other Chinese potters may have circumstances that I have not covered in my research.

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