

Research on the Impact of Ancient Coin Culture on Aesthetic Education for Contemporary College Students

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Keywords: Ancient coin culture; College students; Aesthetic education

Abstract: Ancient coins, as important carriers of historical culture, are imbued with abundant resources for aesthetic education. This paper aims to explore the impact of ancient coin culture on aesthetic education for contemporary college students. By analyzing aspects such as calligraphy learning and historical and cultural studies, the paper reveals the significance of ancient coin culture in enhancing college students' aesthetic literacy and inheriting excellent traditional culture, and proposes corresponding educational strategies.

1. Introduction

In the context of China's rapid economic development, the collection of ancient coins has become a highly regarded cultural phenomenon. Ancient coins, as important carriers of historical culture, bear the memory of thousands of years of civilization and the essence of artistic achievements. With the continuous rise in the popularity of collecting, ancient coin culture has gradually emerged from the realm of collectors to showcase its unique charm and profound connotations. Ancient coins are treasures of China's historical culture, witnessing the changes in the economy, politics, and culture of different historical periods and carrying rich historical information and cultural connotations. In today's society, aesthetic education plays a significant role in the comprehensive quality cultivation of college students. It not only enhances their aesthetic taste and cultural literacy but also helps to cultivate their innovative thinking and humanistic spirit. As a rich and diverse cultural and artistic resource, ancient coin culture contains many elements of aesthetic education, such as exquisite casting techniques, unique calligraphic art, and profound historical and cultural backgrounds. These elements provide rich materials and a unique perspective for the aesthetic education of college students.

However, research on the relationship between ancient coin culture and aesthetic education for college students is still insufficient. Therefore, an in-depth exploration of the impact of ancient coin culture on contemporary college students' aesthetic education is of great practical significance for enriching the theory of aesthetic education, expanding aesthetic education resources, and enhancing college students' aesthetic levels.

2. Ancient Coins and Ancient Coin Culture

2.1 Definition and Origin of Ancient Coins

Ancient coins refer to the form of currency used as a medium of commodity exchange in ancient societies. Since they were produced in ancient times, they are called "ancient coins." China's earliest ancient coins date back to the Xia Dynasty, primarily in the form of shell money. With the increasing maturity of bronze casting techniques, by the mid-Western Zhou Dynasty, the main form of currency shifted to cast coins. After the unification of China by the Qin Dynasty, the coin culture was effectively standardized, clarifying the issuance norms and specifications of ancient coins. From the metal spade coins of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods to the "round with a square hole" style of currency after Emperor Qin Shi Huang unified the coinage system, this design remained the primary circulating currency in ancient China until the late Qing Dynasty. In

the late Qing period, machine-made copper coins gradually emerged; although they were round in shape, they no longer featured a square hole in the center.

2.2 Definition and Connotation of Ancient Coin Culture

Ancient coin culture refers to the cultural phenomena and connotations that have developed around ancient coins. It encompasses not only the design, casting, and circulation of the coins themselves but also involves multiple fields related to ancient coins, including politics, economy, and culture. In terms of historical role, ancient coins were not only a medium of commodity exchange that promoted economic prosperity and development but also carried the political messages and cultural traditions of the state, witnessing historical changes and social progress. Through the study of ancient coin culture, we can gain insights into the economic development, cultural exchanges, and lifestyles of ancient societies.

The culture of ancient coins reflects the human spirit, ideology and consciousness through the casting of coins. It is the product of a comprehensive reflection of a country's social economy, history and culture. Exploring its historical role is conducive to the development of China's social economy[1].

2.3 Cultural and Artistic Value of Ancient Coins

2.3.1 Calligraphic Beauty of Ancient Coins

The inscriptions on ancient coins embody the beauty of Chinese calligraphy. The presentation of different calligraphic styles (such as seal script and regular script) on coins not only highlights an elegant and free-flowing aesthetic but also enhances their value for appreciation and collection.

2.3.2 Craftsmanship Beauty of Ancient Coins

The casting techniques of ancient coins reflect the superb skills and unique wisdom of ancient Chinese craftsmen. Whether it was the casting technology of bronze or the later machine manufacturing processes, both left profound marks on ancient coins.

2.3.3 Reflection of Chinese Traditional Cultural Elements

Rich elements of traditional Chinese culture are integrated into ancient coins, such as auspicious and propitious items, folk customs and cultural relics, and artistic treasures. These elements not only reflect the aesthetic tastes and cultural pursuits of the ancient people but also serve as important carriers for inheriting and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture. Ancient coins possess characteristics such as diversity, integration, and inheritance, and they are a manifestation of the development of a country's historical culture and the social and economic situation[2].

3. The Calligraphic Beauty in Ancient Coin Culture and College Students' Calligraphy Learning

3.1 The Calligraphic Beauty in Ancient Coin Culture

The calligraphic beauty of ancient coin culture is a gem in the treasure trove of ancient Chinese culture. It not only showcases the charm of calligraphic art but also carries rich historical and cultural connotations. The inscriptions on ancient coins contain profound philosophical thoughts, such as Confucianism's "Doctrine of the Mean," Taoism's "Wu Wei" (non-action), and Legalism's "rule of law." These philosophies are reflected in the writing of the inscriptions, demonstrating the wisdom and values of the ancients and providing important physical materials for the study of ancient philosophy. For example, the "Doctrine of the Mean" emphasizes the principles of moderation and balance, which are also reflected in the calligraphy of ancient coin inscriptions. The thickness of the strokes and the layout of the characters follow

certain rules, avoiding both exaggeration and rigidity, thus embodying a harmonious and balanced beauty.

3.2 Characteristics of Ancient Coin Calligraphy Art

3.2.1 Rich and Diverse Scripts

China is one of the earliest countries in the world to manufacture and use currency. According to ancient records and archaeological evidence, its history spans approximately 4,000 years. Ancient Chinese coins represent a culmination of ancient scripts and calligraphic art, with a variety of scripts and exquisite calligraphy that are rare in the world. Chinese calligraphy is generally divided into five major styles: seal script, clerical script, regular script, running script, and cursive script. Due to the innovation of calligraphers, each style often has many sub-varieties. The inscriptions on Chinese coins cover almost all the scripts that have appeared in Chinese history, including ancient seal script, large seal script, small seal script, and its variants such as suspended needle seal script, leek leaf seal script, jade chopstick seal script, and nine-fold seal script; there are also clerical script, regular script, running script, cursive script, thin gold script, and minority scripts such as Kharosthi, Kuchean, Sogdian, Uighur, Western Xia, Khitan, Jurchen, Mongolian, Manchu, and Uyghur scripts. Moreover, most of the inscriptions are the works of famous calligraphers, with many masterpieces of high artistic achievement. Appreciating these calligraphic masterpieces is an artistic nurture and aesthetic training, akin to a rare spiritual journey. Throughout the long history of Chinese coinage, various materials have been used in the monetary system, including stone shells, shells, iron shells, copper coins, silver coins, gold coins, and paper money. These coins record the evolution of scripts such as oracle bone script, large seal script, small seal script, bronze inscriptions, regular script, running script, and cursive script, showcasing the artistic charm of Chinese calligraphy. Over the course of historical development, Chinese coin culture and calligraphy culture have achieved a high degree of integration. The calligraphy on ancient coins includes a variety of scripts such as seal script, clerical script, regular script, and running script. For example, the seal script on the Qin Ban Liang coins is simple and elegant, with a neat and symmetrical structure and uniform thickness of strokes, reflecting the unique charm of seal script. The thin gold script on Song Dynasty coins has delicate and strong lines, with sharp and graceful strokes, possessing great artistic beauty. These different calligraphic styles provide college students with rich examples for calligraphy learning, presenting a unique beauty of calligraphy culture and reflecting the calligraphic aesthetic orientations of different eras[3]. They enable students to appreciate the stylistic characteristics and writing techniques of various fonts.

3.2.2 Unique Calligraphic Styles

Chinese calligraphy art is a wonderful flower in the splendid culture of the Chinese nation. The calligraphy on coin inscriptions is closely related to the development of Chinese calligraphy art[4]. The calligraphy on ancient Chinese coins is meticulously composed, emphasizing symmetry and balance. Whether it is seal script, clerical script, or regular script, all strive to achieve overall harmony and unity. The calligraphy on ancient coins is not only diverse in script but also unique in style. Some coin inscriptions are solemn and dignified, such as the Kaiyuan Tongbao coins from the Tang Dynasty, which feature elegant and majestic characters, reflecting the political stability and social prosperity of the time. Others are lively and free-spirited, full of artistic charm, such as the inscriptions on some privately minted coins, which display the freedom and exuberance of folk calligraphy. Influenced by different historical periods, regions, and cultural backgrounds, the calligraphic styles on ancient Chinese coins vary widely. Some are simple and elegant, others are bold and unrestrained, and still others are delicate and graceful. These diverse calligraphic works together form a treasure trove of ancient Chinese coin calligraphy. This diversity in calligraphic styles can broaden college students' horizons in calligraphy and inspire their creativity.

3.3 The Influence of Ancient Coins on College Students' Calligraphy Learning

3.3.1 Providing Rich Calligraphy Learning Resources

College students can broaden their calligraphic horizons and enrich their expressive techniques by observing and copying different scripts on ancient coins, which often include authentic works by famous calligraphers. Many coin inscriptions are the works of renowned calligraphers, such as Li Si from the Qin Dynasty, Ouyang Xun from the Tang Dynasty, and Su Shi from the Song Dynasty. These works hold high artistic value and educational significance. College students can closely appreciate and learn from the calligraphic skills of these masters, experiencing their brushwork, structure, and artistic charm, thereby improving their own calligraphy skills.

For example, the coin inscriptions by Li Si, Ouyang Xun, and Emperor Huizong of Song (Zhao Ji) are classic examples of ancient Chinese calligraphy. The Qin Ban Liang coins, reportedly inscribed by Li Si, the Prime Minister of the Qin Dynasty, feature slender and rounded characters with a compact structure and uniform stroke thickness, representing a classic example of small seal script that has profoundly influenced the development of calligraphy. The Kaiyuan Tongbao coins from the early Tang Dynasty, inscribed by the calligrapher Ouyang Xun, have a vigorous and elegant style, with strokes that are dignified and stable. The characters are well-proportioned and balanced, with the first stroke of the character "yuan" being a short horizontal line and the second stroke being a longer horizontal line with a leftward extension. The character "tong" has three disconnected strokes in the radical "讠," forming a three-brush shape, and the character "bao" is inscribed with solemn strokes, with two short horizontal lines inside the "bei" component that are not connected to the vertical strokes on either side. The coins also have a plain back without any inscriptions. The Da Guan Tong Bao and Chong Ning Tong Bao coins from the Northern Song Dynasty were inscribed by Emperor Huizong of Song in his unique thin gold script, which is strong and graceful, with extended character forms. This script has become a distinctive style in Chinese calligraphy, adding a beautiful touch to the calligraphy art of Song Dynasty coins. Another example is the Huang Song Tong Bao with nine-fold seal script, which was cast during the reign of Emperor Renzong of Song, from the second year of the Bao Yuan era to the end of the Huang You era. This is not a year-name coin. The coin features seal script and regular script inscriptions, with a plain back. The nine-fold seal script version is extremely rare and considered a great treasure among ancient coins. The nine-fold seal script was originally a font used for "official seals" during the Song Dynasty, mainly for engraving seals. Its strokes are folded and stacked symmetrically, with unique cultural and artistic value.

3.3.2 Cultivating Aesthetic Sensibility and Artistic Cultivation

Enhancing aesthetic perception and improving aesthetic abilities. The calligraphic works on ancient coins not only have practical value but also possess high aesthetic value. By appreciating the calligraphy on ancient coins, college students can develop their ability to perceive beauty and learn to appreciate the beauty of lines, structure, and artistic conception in calligraphic works. This not only improves students' aesthetic levels but also enhances their artistic cultivation. As an important carrier of calligraphic art, ancient coin culture contains profound cultural connotations and artistic significance.

4. The Historical and Cultural Beauty in Ancient Coin Culture and College Students' Historical and Cultural Studies

4.1 The Connotation of Ancient Coin Historical Culture

Ancient Chinese coins are not only a medium for economic transactions but also carriers of historical and cultural significance, bearing rich historical information and cultural connotations.

They have witnessed the changes in the economy, politics, and culture of different historical periods and reflect the wisdom and creativity of the Chinese nation.

4.1.1 Reflecting the Characteristics of the Times

Ancient coins, as products of specific historical periods, reflect the social conditions, political systems, economic status, and cultural features of their times through their shapes, inscriptions, and designs. For example, the "Ban Liang" coins of the Qin Dynasty, with their regular shape and concise inscriptions, embodied the centralized political system and the policy of unified currency of the Qin Dynasty. The "Wu Zhu" coins of the Han Dynasty, with their neat shape and clear inscriptions, reflected the centralized political system and highly developed monetary economy of the Han Dynasty. The "year-name coins" of the Song Dynasty, such as the "Tai Ping Tong Bao" and "Chong Ning Tong Bao," demonstrated the autocratic political system and the prosperity of culture and art during the Song Dynasty. Through the study of ancient coins, college students can gain an intuitive understanding of the characteristics of different historical periods and deepen their knowledge of Chinese history.

4.1.2 Reflecting Cultural Integration

Circulating currency is the most important component of the cultural system of ancient Chinese coins. The coinage techniques mainly include three types: casting, printing, and machine manufacturing. The mainstream materials are divided into two major categories: non-metallic and metallic. Among them, copper coins in the sub-category of non-precious metals are particularly numerous[5].

Throughout history, the cultural exchanges and integration among various ethnic groups have left profound marks on ancient coins. For example, coins minted by ethnic minority regimes, such as the Khitan script coins of the Liao Dynasty and the Western Xia script coins of the Western Xia Dynasty, absorbed the currency culture of the Central Plains while retaining their own ethnic characteristics. These coins serve as evidence of cultural integration and mutual influence among different ethnic groups, providing college students with a window to understand diverse cultures and helping to cultivate their cultural inclusiveness and cross-cultural communication skills.

4.2 The Impact on College Students' Historical and Cultural Studies

4.2.1 Enhancing Historical Understanding

As physical historical materials, ancient coins provide college students with tangible evidence and references for their studies of history and culture. By observing and studying ancient coins, students can combine abstract historical knowledge with concrete objects, leading to a deeper understanding and memory of historical events, figures, and cultural phenomena. This process enhances their ability to understand and interpret history.

4.2.2 Cultivating Cultural Awareness

Ancient coin culture is an important part of traditional Chinese culture. In-depth study of ancient coin culture allows college students to appreciate the profoundness and long history of Chinese culture, fostering their cultural awareness and national spirit. This encourages them to actively inherit and promote excellent traditional Chinese culture, enhancing cultural confidence and contributing to the innovative development of Chinese culture.

4.3.3 Expanding Historical Thinking

The study of ancient coins requires analysis and contemplation from multiple perspectives, including historical background, cultural origins, and social impact. This process helps develop college students' historical and innovative thinking skills, enabling them to view historical issues from different angles and apply historical methods to analyze and solve real-life problems.

5. Practical Strategies for Integrating Ancient Coin Culture into Aesthetic Education for College Students

5.1 Offering Relevant Courses and Lectures

Universities can offer elective courses or host lectures specifically on ancient coin culture, systematically introducing students to the origins, development, cultural connotations, and artistic values of ancient coins. Inviting experts and scholars to teach and present, combined with real-life case studies and visual aids, can help students gain a deep understanding of ancient coin culture and improve their cultural literacy and aesthetic standards.

5.2 Organizing Practical Activities

5.2.1 Organizing Museum Visits

Students can be organized to visit ancient coin exhibitions in museums to see the physical coins and experience their unique charm. Professional guides can be arranged to explain the details of the coins' shapes, inscriptions, and designs, helping students understand and appreciate their artistic value.

5.2.2 Conducting Club Activities

Encouraging students to form ancient coin culture clubs and organize various related activities, such as calligraphy competitions, ancient coin collections, and cultural discussions, can foster their interests and teamwork skills. These activities provide a platform for exchange and learning, allowing students to improve their aesthetic and cultural literacy through practice.

5.2.3 Diversified On- and Off-Campus Practices

Expanding on- and off-campus practice opportunities, promoting exhibitions of calligraphy and ancient coin art, and encouraging participation in competitions can enhance the promotion of traditional culture. Combining these activities with irregular cultural broadcasts from campus radio stations can strengthen the inheritance and development of ancient coin culture, promote the development of Chinese calligraphy, and reinforce the diversified development of culture.

5.3 Integrating into Campus Culture

Ancient coin culture can be integrated into university campus culture by enhancing environmental arrangements and cultural atmosphere. Suitable areas on campus, such as corridors in teaching buildings, library entrances, or rest areas, can be designated to create ancient coin culture walls that showcase historical stories and calligraphic art related to coins. Various forms of decoration, sculpture, and landscape design can be used to effectively display the development of ancient coins, the characteristics of different dynasties' currencies, and the works of famous coin calligraphers. With visually engaging presentations, students can experience the charm of ancient coin culture in their spare time. This approach can encourage more students to participate in the inheritance and development of ancient coin culture, inspire patriotism and artistic creativity, enhance national confidence, and better preserve Chinese calligraphy.

6. Conclusion

As an important part of the excellent traditional Chinese culture, ancient coin culture is rich in aesthetic education resources. It has a profound and positive impact on the aesthetic education of contemporary college students. Ancient coin culture not only allows students to appreciate the profoundness of traditional Chinese culture but also enables them to experience the unique manifestation of calligraphic beauty on ancient coins. From the exquisite inscriptions to the diverse styles of calligraphy, every aspect reflects the wisdom and aesthetic sensibilities of the ancients.

Through the exploration of ancient coin culture, college students seem to travel through time, gaining an in-depth understanding of the trajectory of historical development. This process enhances their sense of identity and pride in their national history, thereby boosting national confidence. This cultural heritage nourishes their aesthetic consciousness, teaching them to draw inspiration from the ancient coin culture and cultivate their ability to appreciate traditional aesthetics. While pursuing modern beauty, students are reminded of their cultural roots, integrating the beauty of traditional culture into their personal cultivation and aesthetic concepts. They become a new force in inheriting and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture, injecting continuous vitality into aesthetic education. Ancient coin culture, as an ancient treasure, shines even brighter in the field of modern education, helping college students develop a more comprehensive and profound aesthetic literacy and spiritual world.

The analysis of the calligraphic and historical beauty of ancient coin culture not only enhances college students' ability to appreciate calligraphy and understand history but also stimulates their interest in learning, fosters cultural awareness, and cultivates innovative thinking. Therefore, universities should fully recognize the aesthetic education value of ancient coin culture, adopt effective practical strategies, and integrate ancient coin culture into the aesthetic education of college students. This will contribute positively to the cultivation of well-rounded socialist builders and successors who develop morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and through labor.

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