

Glossary

Ancestors

A dead family member from whom a person has descended, either through the paternal or maternal side of the family

Ancestor worship

Ritual honouring of ancestors with ceremonies and gifts in order to please the ancestor and gain their protection during one's lifetime.

British East India Company

A company of merchants established in 1600 AD for trading with India and neighbouring regions (known as the East Indies). In 1711, it established a trading post in Guangzhou, China, and it ceased operating in 1858.

Banners

Religious paintings on silk or woven textiles, hung in temples or carried in procession. Buddhist banners are well illustrated by those from Dunhuang in the British Museum's collection

Buddhism

The religious system founded by Buddha (born c. 563 BC in northern India). It ranks with Confucianism and Taoism as one of the three main religions of China.

Calligraphy

The production of beautiful handwriting; often seen as an art form in its own right.

Confucianism

A belief system which follows the thoughts of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC). It ranks with Taoism and Buddhism as one of the three main religions of China.

doucai

Literally “joined colours”, a reference to the type of decorated porcelain which is outlined in underglaze blue and coloured over the glaze with enamel colours within the blue lines.

Doucai wares are typically small and thin-bodied porcelain.

Dynasty

A succession of related rulers. Sometimes power can pass to a person outside the direct family and in this sense dynasty refers to a line of rulers with a common powerbase.

Emperor

A title of sovereignty considered superior to a king and usually referring to a ruler of a wide area of land beyond their initial powerbase.

Factory

In a trade context a factory is an establishment for traders carrying on business in a foreign country. In a manufacturing context a factory is a building used for the mass production of goods.

famille rose, verte

Overglazed enamel decorated porcelains made in the Kangxi period (1662-1722) and later, in which the dominant colour of the decoration is either pink or green. The pink in *famille rose* is colloidal gold, in a high-lead enamel base. This results in the rose pink of *famille rose*, the technique of which is believed to derive from the West.

Immortal

Not liable or subject to death. Thus the Immortals are beings who will never die.

Mass production

The manufacture of goods in large quantities by a division of the labour process to speed up production.

Philosophy

Thoughts and ideas which reflect on human behaviour.

Ritual object

An object used during the performance of specific actions carried out on a special or religious occasion.

sancai

Literally “three colours”. This term refers to the green, amber and cream glazes used on the burial ceramics of the Tang dynasty and is the name by which such wares are known.

Taoism (Daoism)

A religion based on the thoughts of the Chinese philosopher Laozi (老子 born 604 BC) as recorded in the work *Daodejing* (道德經, The Classics of *Dao* (way) and *De* (virtue)). It ranks with Confucianism and Buddhism as one of the three main religions of China.

The Silk Road

A trade route running over 5000 miles through the Asian continent from China to the Mediterranean Sea. The route enabled people to transport trade goods, especially luxuries such as silk, satins, musk, rubies, diamonds, pearls and rhubarb, from various parts of China, India and Asia Minor to the Mediterranean.