

Classification and Process Characteristics of Glass Snuff Bottles Made by the Royal Workshop Management Office of Qing Dynasty

ZHANG RONG

Researcher, Forbidden City Museum

Snuff bottle is a special variety of Chinese cultural relics. It first appeared in Kangxi period of Qing Dynasty and was manufactured in a large quantity by the royal work shop of Qing Dynasty and the folk. In fact, the manufacturing of snuff bottles was not only closely related to the popularity of smelling snuff but also to the advocating of emperors of Qing Dynasty. Although snuff bottle appeared comparatively late, it was popular soon, making an epitome of the development of arts and crafts of Qing Dynasty.

There are over 2,000 snuff bottles of different materials collected in The Palace Museum (Beijing) , including porcelain, jade, enamel, glass, bamboo, lacquer, elephant tooth, gourd, coral, etc., among which over 900 are glass snuff bottles. The manufacturers of snuff bottles of Qing Dynasty include official manufacturer and the folk manufacturers. The snuff bottles made by the official manufacturer refer to those of different materials made according to edicts of emperors. The snuff bottles made by the folk people refer to those made by common people of different places according to different interests. To be frank, official snuff bottles are the symbol of the highest process level of Qing Dynasty. In this paper, the author will summarize and analyze the classification and process characteristics of official glass snuff bottles manufactured by the glass factories under the royal workshop management office of Qing Dynasty according to historical records, archives and collections of precious glass snuff bottle.

I. Glass factory of the royal workshop management office under the Imperial Household Department

The Imperial Household Department, as an institution managing the royal palace and the forbidden Chambers of Qing Dynasty, was mainly composed of seven departments (like storage department, account department, etc.) and three divisions (like defense preparation division, penalty division, etc.) The royal workshop management office was one of the subordinate bodies of the Imperial Household Department.

As to the year when the royal workshop management office was set up, the official historical records vary slightly, mainly including two kinds: the 19th year of Kangxi period (1680)[1] and the 30th year of Kangxi period(1691A.D.) [2].

According to many historical records, the royal workshop was set at the Hall of Mental Cultivation and later was moved to the Palace of Compassion and Tranquility. Traditionally, the royal workshop management office was still called “the royal workshop management office of the Hall of Mental Cultivation”. “In the very beginning, the royal workshop management office was set up at the Hall of Mental Cultivation. The number of officials managing the royal workshop management office was not definite. In the 30th year of Kangxi period, the painting decoration department at the Dongnuan Room was moved to the Nuanbiao House, the Manchu workers making bows and arrows also stayed there. All the other workers moved out of the Palace of Compassion and Tranquility, and the former food and drinks house there was reformed as the royal workshop management office.” [3]

“The workshop was responsible for making all kinds of wares. In the 30th year of Kangxi period, 151 rooms of the food and drinks house of the Palace of Compassion and Tranquility were used as the royal workshop management office. In the 48th year (1709 A.D.), 100 rooms behind the Baihu Palace were added to the royal workshop management office.” [4]

The royal workshop was an institution responsible for manufacturing, repairing and storing all kinds of wares demanded by the emperor, his concubines and the whole royal palace. In order to undertake the tasks of manufacturing or repairing articles of daily use, the workshop management office was divided into three departments like “workshop, mill and factory.”

The glass factory was set up in the 35th year of Kangxi period (1696A.D.). “In the 35th year of Kangxi period, a glass factory was set up according to the edict of the emperor. It was subordinated to the royal workshop management office of the Palace of the Hall of Mental Cultivation. An official was appointed to supervise it... In the 49th year (1710 A.D.), two supervising engineers were appointed to be responsible for the glass factory”. [5] The glass factory was one of the departments of the royal workshop management office, especially responsible for manufacturing glass for the emperor. It was located at the Canchikou of Xi'an. In order to meet demands of the royal family for more glassware, in Yongzheng period, a new glass factory was established at the 6th institution of the Old Summer Palace. In the summer of Beijing, it was too hot for craftsmen to work at the furnace, so the glass factory “started production in August and stopped in May every year”.

According to the researches of Emily B. Curtis, an American scholar, Kilian Stumpf, a German missionary, took charge of the building of the royal glass factory. Due to the lack of craftsmen, he required France to dispatch more glass makers to China [6]. At the beginning of the royal glass factory of Qing Dynasty, apart from foreign missionaries, a lot of glass makers from Guangdong and Shandong also worked in the glass factory.

II. Initial stage of glass snuff bottles: Kangxi period

The File of All Handicrafts Produced by the Royal Workshop of Qing Dynasty (hereafter referred to as Qing File) kept by the First Historical Archives of China recorded detailed information about all kinds of jobs undertaken by the royal workshop management office under the Imperial Household Department from the first year of Yongzheng period (1732 A.D.) to the 3rd year of Xuantong period (1911 A.D.).

In Qing File, the matters about making and repairing articles required by the emperor by Gold and Jade department, Enamel department, etc. were carefully recorded, including date, title and name of the person in charge, the contents of the edicts by the emperor, the person receiving the finished products, the process of presenting them as tributes to the emperor, etc. Qing File also recorded the glass manufacturing situations about the glass factory from the first year of Yongzheng period (1732 A.D.) to the 3rd year of Xuantong period (1911A.D.), so it is an important historical material for us to know the quantity, varieties, classification of glass made during the Qing Dynasty.

However, it is a pity that Qing File contains no Chinese records about Kangxi period. However, we can have a glimpse of the general situation of the glass making during Kangxi period by investigating the other literature and precious glassware handed down from that period. According to incomplete statistics, during Kangxi Period, there was single color glass, painted enamel glass, flashed glass, etched glass, gold spotted glass, gold inlaid glass etc. When it came to Yongzheng period, based on the development of the former generation, a new kind of glass, gold-painted glass, was created.

Today, we know that only 6 glassware of Kangxi period were handed down to today. The Imperial Palace of Beijing collects one transparent glass waterpot; The Imperial Palace of Taipei collects a glass body painted enamel bottle; Mr Li, a collector of Hong Kong collects a “watermelon color” glass waterpot and a glass body painted enamel four-season flower pattern cup [7]; Hsggs Gemeente museum collects a glass body painted enamel peony pattern box, Bristol Museum collects a bean green glass waterpot. As we know, there is only one glass snuff bottle handed down from Kangxi period, namely, the private collection of sapphire glass gold inlaid peony and

phoenix pattern snuff bottle [8]. All these collections show that the royal glass snuff bottles were first manufactured in Kangxi period.

III. Thriving stage of glass snuff bottles-Yongzheng period

According to the files of the royal workshop management office, the records about glass snuff bottles manufactured in Yongzheng period are as follows:

The 1st year of Yongzheng period, the general job workshop:

On the 9th day of January, Prince Yi handed over one red glass enamel oil basket type snuff bottle to the workshop. On January 9th, Prince Yi handed over two gold star multi-colored snuff bottles. He ordered the workshop to make several snuff bottles by taking those snuff bottles handed over as examples. So it did. On February, 19th, four gold plated caps and four glass snuff bottles with elephant tooth spoons were manufactured. On March 4th, four gold plated caps and four patterned glass snuff bottles with elephant tooth spoons were manufactured. On March 10th, four gold plated caps and four opaque glass snuff bottles with elephant tooth spoons were manufactured.

On February, 21st, the second year of Yongzheng period, twelve gold plated caps and twelve color glass snuff bottles with elephant tooth spoons were manufactured.

On February, 23rd, the second year of Yongzheng period, twenty gold plated caps and color snuff bottles with elephant tooth spoons were manufactured.

In the 3rd year, Yontgzheng period, the jade workshop:

On November 28th, eunuch Zhang Jinxi turned over one grape color octagonal glass snuff bottle. The emperor ordered the royal workshop to make some by following the style in different colors. Hereby the workshop did so. On February, 9th, the 4th year of Yongzheng period, ten grape color glass snuff bottles were manufactured. On February, 10th, the 4th year of Yongzheng period, a couple of blue dragon pattern snuff bottles. On February, 20th, the 4th year of Yongzheng period, twenty shining sky-after-rain color snuff bottles were manufactured. On March 30th, the 4th year of Yongzheng period, six grape color glass snuff bottles were manufactured. On April 16th, the 4th year of Yongzheng period, ten bright red glass snuff bottles were manufactured. On December, 29th, the 4th year of Yongzheng period, four yellow glass snuff bottles were manufactured.

The enamel workshop: On September 10th, Hai Wang, ministry councilor, turned over a green glass snuff bottle. The emperor ordered the workshop to make red glass snuff bottle by following

the style and add enamel or inlay gold to the both ends of the snuff bottle. In addition, the cock-form cap shall made vivid and the mouth big. On March 13th, the 4th year of Yongzheng period, one red glass cock-form waterpot and one cock-form enamel waterpot were manufactured.

On March 13th, the glass factory: Eunuch heads Li Jiuming and Samuha turned over one colored wire wrapping glass snuff bottle, one opaque yellow with red glass inlaid glass pot and two opaque yellow glass snuff bottles.

On intercalary March 16th, eunuch Liu Xiwen forwarded a decree to require the glass factory to manufacture a number of bright red snuff bottles and grape-color snuff bottles. On August 14th, ten colored glass snuff bottles were manufactured.

The 5th year of Yongzheng period, the enamel workshop:
Sixteen glass enamel snuff bottles were manufactured.

In the 6th year of Yongzheng period, the enamel workshop:

On April 2nd, Mu Sen, head of the Imperial Household Department, turned over ten glass snuff bottles from Ertai, a rewarding governor, and required to match gold plated elephant tooth spoons for them so as to reward those making contributions. So it is recorded.

On July 12th, one glass body enamel knot Shuangxi snuff bottle was manufactured.

On July 15th, Hai Wang, ministry councilor, followed the decree of Prince Yi to require the royal workshop to make two gold snuff bottle semi-finished products by following the style of the emperor's daily used snuff bottles. So it did. On July 19th, grape-colored snuff bottles were manufactured.

The 7th year of Yongzheng period, the glass workshop:

On April 11th, Hai Wang, turned over one bluish white dragon and heart-shaped snuff bottle and forwarded a decree of the emperor that as the style of that snuff bottle was elegant but the glass quality was poor, the workshop shall remake two similar ones. Hereby it was ordered [9]

According to the records in the file, a lot of snuff bottles in different colors of different processes were made during Yongzheng period. There are clear records about single color glass, gold star colored glass, colored wire wrapping glass, patterned glass, flashed glass, enamel glass, etc. The shapes of snuff bottles include octagon, cock, oil basket, etc.

Single color glass snuff bottles were most frequently manufactured. The number of single color glass made during Yongzheng period was the largest and it was the mainstream product of that period. The single color glass was divided into “opaque glass” and “transparent glass”.

There were over 30 varieties of single color glass recorded in files of Yongzheng period. It is regrettable that very few snuff bottles of Yongzheng period were handed down. The glass body painted enamel bamboo joint snuff bottle collected in Taipei National Palace Museum is a rare one seen today [10]. In the 9th drawing of Yinzhen’s happy concubine, a red glass snuff bottle was laid on the table. (Fig.1)

Glass body painted enamel was a glass decoration process first created in Kangxi period of Qing Dynasty. It was developed from copper body painted enamel. According to Files on Enamel Glass Yixing Porcelain Decoration (set on July 11th, the 15th year of Daoguang period) collected by The library of The Palace Museum, the record about Kangxi style glass body enamel peony blue bottle is the earliest official literature about painted enamel in Kangxi period.

The Yongzheng style painted enamel bamboo joint shape snuff bottle collected by Taipei National Palace Museum was made into the form of three bamboo joints in light green. The bottle was painted with two bamboos, decorated with grown patterns and two spiders and a lucid ganoderma. At the bottom of the bottle was printed with “Made in Yongzheng period”. For Chinese, the bamboo and spiders have the implication of happiness. This snuff bottle was the same one that was manufactured in the 6th year of Yongzheng period (1728A.D.) recorded in Qing File.



FIG.1

IV. Flourishing stage of glass snuff bottle: Qianlong period

During Qianlong period, the stable political situation, strong material foundation, and Emperor Qianlong's love and advocating for culture and art, all made it that period of Qing Dynasty the golden age of the development of arts and crafts. According to the "Qing Files", the period from the 1st year (1736 A.D.) to the 30th year (1765 A.D.) of Emperor Qianlong was a mass production period of glass factories and also the peak period of glass production of Qing dynasty.

In terms of glass variety, Qianlong period was a period when the glass varieties were the most abundant and complete. Apart from the existing glass varieties of Qianlong and Kangxi periods, there were some new glass varieties invented by glass factories.

According to the manufacturing processes, the glass snuff bottles of Qianlong and Kangxi period include single color glass, flashed glass, painted enamel glass, gold star glass, etched glass, mixing type glass, gold painted glass, wire wrapping glass, etc. In terms of quantity, half of the glassware of Qing Dynasty was made during the periods of Emperor Qianlong and Emperor Kangxi. Today, the number of existing glassware of the two periods is the largest. All of these fully show that the production of glass snuff bottles during Qianlong period entered its peak stage of great prosperity.

The quantity of single color glassware was the largest among the varieties of glassware produced in Qianlong period. There were over 30 color varieties recorded but now the colors of existing glass snuff bottles are much fewer than those in records. These colors include white, sapphire blue, peacock blue, chicken oil yellow, pink, cowpea red, purple, etc. The transparent pink gourd-shape snuff bottle (Fig.2) and the red glass snuff bottle (Fig.3) are representative products.

Most single color glass snuff bottles have no patterns but their colors are pure and bright like colors of gems and take on the artistic effect that other art ware does not have.

Flashed glass was the main variety of snuff bottles manufactured during Qianlong period and was a glass product made in more than two colors.

There were two production methods. One of the methods was to coat a different color glass onto a glass body and then carve patterns on the exterior glass; the other method was to paint patterns directly onto the glass body with half-melted color sticks.



FIG.2



FIG.3



FIG.4



FIG.5

Flashed glass was a product of glass shaping process combined with carving process and was an important invention in the history of glass production.

The glassware made with the two methods all has the effects of rilievo, which not only reflects the quality and color beauty of glass but also the three-dimensional beauty of patterns. During Qianlong period, the color matching of flashed glass snuff bottles includes white coated with red, white coated with blue, white coated with green, blue coated with red, green coated with blue, red coated with blue, yellow coated with green, transparent glass coated with purple, sky blue coated with sapphire blue, etc.

Flashed glass can be classified into two types: those coated with one color and those coated with several colors. Flashed glass process was invented in Kangxi period but today no actual flashed glass ware of that period has been found. The files of the royal workshop Yongzheng period recorded the production of flashed glass at the time but no actual glass ware handed down either. According to Qing Files, the glass factory began to produce flashed glass snuff bottle from the 1st year of Qianlong period (1753A.D.)

The 6th year of Qianlong period, the box workshop:

On May 29th, eunuch Gao Yu turned over six foreign style painted boxes, in which there were eight gold star black snuff bottles made in Qianlong period, two blue flashed glass snuff bottles, One green flashed glass snuff bottle, two yellow glass snuff bottles, one colored star glass snuff bottle, five red flashed glass snuff bottles, one light yellow snuff bottle, six enamel glass snuff bottles, one red flashed glass snuff bottle carved with Chinese characters of “福 (fu) ” and “寿 (shou) ”, two green gold star snuff bottles, two aventurine like snuff bottles, one wine yellow snuff bottle, one black glass gold painted snuff bottle, green gold star glass snuff bottle, one black gold star glass snuff bottle and one bright blue glass gold pattern snuff bottle.[11]

During Qianlong period, flashed glass ware was basically manufactured in this way: first coat a kind of color glass onto the glass body in another color and then carve it according to drawings. However, due to the small size of snuff bottle, unevenness may appear on the body. The glass ware coated with two colors, three colors or even eight colors were popular among the folk but the glass factory of the royal workshop management office never manufactured such glass ware but mainly produced single color glassware coated with a single color glass, which is the main difference between royal glass ware and folk glassware.

Qianlong flashed glass snuff bottle has three features as follows. First, the manufacturing technology is mature. The glassware of that period has beautiful shape, balanced proportions,

small and exquisite size, smooth and elegant contour, like red body blue glass coated narcissus pattern snuff bottle (Fig.4). Second, the production process is perfect. Flashed glass ware is crystallization of glass manufacturing technology and carving crafts. The carving process is similar to that of lacquer, jade, tooth, horn and other carved craftworks at that time. A representative product is the yellow body green coated glass snuff bottle (Fig.5). A leafy bean encircles the bottle, a grasshopper lands on it slightly. This snuff bottle is the best one of flashed glass snuff bottles. Its colors are very bright but in harmony. The yellow part is like chicken oil, the green part is like grass. It is really a perfect work. Third, the colors are harmonious. The colors of flashed glass ware are in strong contrast, such as white coated with blue, white coated with red, etc. However, some glassware was in colors of one color scheme. For example, the colors of the sky blue body sapphire blue coated gourd shape snuff bottle (Fig.6) are elegant and depart from convention.

The glass body painted enamel first created in Kangxi period developed to its peak stage in Qianlong period. The quantity of such products increased gradually and most of them were snuff bottles. Glass body painted enamel ware was mainly manufactured by the enamel department of the royal workshop management office. There are many records in Qing Files, for example:

The 1st year of Qianlong period, the enamel workshop:

On May 17th, eunuch Mao Tuan forwarded a decree of the emperor to require the workshop to manufacture enamel glass ware for the emperor. On May 20th of the same year, the workshop submitted two finished bright blue glass soft enamel snuff bottles as tributes to the emperor. The emperor commented that the flowers on the bottle were too few and required the workshop to draw thicker flowers next time and inscribe authors on them. Hereby the emperor ordered so.

The 4th year of Qianlong period, the box workshop:

On February 1st, eunuch Mao Tuan turned over ten glass enamel snuff bottles to the workshop and forwarded a decree of the emperor to make good boxes to match with them.

The enamel workshop:

On January 30th, general supervisor Deng Bage informed that eunuch Mao Tuan forwarded a decree of the emperor to require the workshop to manufacture forty colored glass snuff bottles with enamel. On March 3rd, Wu Shu, head of the workshop, turned over one light white glass gold apricot spring swallow snuff bottle, one gold painted body autumn picture snuff bottle and one gold painted body peony snuff bottle to eunuch Mao Tuan. The emperor kept the gold painted peony snuff bottle and returned the other two to add inscriptions. [12]

Beijing Palace Museum collects about 20 glass body enamel painted ware. Apart from two glass bottles, the other are all exquisite snuff bottles, such as glass body enamel painted snuff bottle with a girl image (Fig.7), glass body enamel painted dragon pattern snuff bottle (Fig.8), glass body gold background enamel flower snuff bottle (Fig.9), glass body enamel painted snuff bottle with a western girl image (Fig.10), etc. These snuff bottles, made with excellent process in elegant colors, are symbols of the highest level of glass snuff bottles of Qing Dynasty.

Taipei National Palace Museum collects more glass body enamel painted snuff bottles than Beijing Palace Museum, but the number of existing glass enamel painted ware is not consistent with the records of Qing Files. The process of making glass body enamel painted ware is the most difficult among all glassware of Qing Dynasty, for its artistry is comparatively high and it is considered as a combination of glass, enamel and painting art.

Glass body painted enamel requires high production technology. As the melting points of glass and enamel are similar, if the fire temperature is low, the enamel color is poor, but if the fire temperature is high, the glass will transform. The only existing glass body enamel painted products show that the art masters of the royal workshop management office were able to demonstrate their magic skills by painting mountains, rivers, figures, flowers and birds on the small bottles of several inches in length and width. As glass body enamel painted ware has the unique charm, there was a mysterious legend about “Guyuexian workshop” in the folk during the late years of Qing Dynasty. Of course, this legend needs further investigation.

Gold star glass, also called aventurine stone, was a glass variety first created and only manufactured in Qianlong period. It was named after the sparkling golden stars within it.

In the 6th year of Qianlong (1741 A.D.), with the participation and guidance of Gabriel-Leonard de Brossard, S.J. (1703-1758) and Pierre d'Incarville, S.J. (1706-1758), two western missionaries, the glass factory of the royal workshop management office successfully manufactured gold star glass [13].

Gold star glass was a very precious variety among glassware of Qing Dynasty and only small amount of gold star glass ware were manufactured. Beijing Palace Museum collects forty gold star glass wares, only five of which are snuff bottles.

Gold star glassware was manufactured by the jade workshop of the royal workshop management office. It was processed like the way of grinding jade. The small quantity of gold star glass snuff



FIG.6



FIG.7



FIG.8



FIG.9



FIG.10



FIG.11

bottles was closely related to the decree of Emperor Qianlong, which can be seen, for example, in the following records:

The 4th year of Qianlong period, the jade workshop:

On February 16th, Samuha, an official of level seven, and general supervisor Bai Shixiu informed that eunuch Mao Tuan forwarded a decree to require the workshop to smelt some remained broken aventurine glass. On February 17th, general supervisor Bai Shixiu smelted twelve liang (unit of weight) of broken aventurine glass and tried to make them into three snuff bottles. Then, these snuff bottles were turned over to eunuch Mao Tuan and Mao presented them as tributes to the emperor. The emperor required the workshop to match caps for them and ordered it not to make them again. Hereby the workshop did so.

In the 8th year of Qianlong period, the enamel workshop:

On February 19th, eunuch Hu Shijie turned over one red coated glass snuff bottle and forwarded a decree of the emperor to require the workshop to make two gold star snuff glass bottles without patterns, and two long waist glass wares without patterns. On January 16th, the required glass wares were manufactured [14].

Similarly, there was gold star spotted glass, that is, irregular gold stars dot in the glass body. In Qing Files, there are records about “green gold star snuff bottles and green gold star round

waterpot”. The green gold star glass snuff bottle(Fig.11) and black gold star snuff bottle are the only existing gold star spotted glassware of Qianlong style.

Gold painted glass was first seen in Yongzheng period. In Qing Files of Qianlong period, there are records about “blue glass gold painted vase and black glass gold painted snuff bottle”. Today, only one gold painted glass ware of Qianlong period exists and is collected by Beijing Palace Museum, namely, gold painted snuff bottle with landscape and figure (Fig. 12-1 and 12-2). Although most part of the gold painted patterns has dropped off the snuff bottle, it is still an important witness of the gold painted glass process.

The effects of mixed glass and wire wrapped glass are ver similar. The appearances of them are spiral patterns from top to bottom, which looks like moving clouds or running water. The example of this variety is mixed glass gourd shape snuff bottle (Fig. 13).

Carved glass is a kind of glass engraved with patterns on glass surface like the way of carving jade. There are two processing methods, one of which is to carve concave patterns and the other of which is to carve convex patterns. For example, the pink glass cameo dragon pattern snuff bottle (Fig. 14) belongs to the latter type.

Wire wrapped glass was first seen in Qing Files of Yongzheng period but there was no record about manufacturing such glass. The records about manufacturing wire wrapped glass in Qing Files are as follows:

In the 1st year of Qianlong period, the glass factory:

On June 3rd, eunuch Mao Tuan forwarded a decree of the emperor to require the factory to manufacture several glass wares by following the style of foreign wire wrapped glass goblet in the jewelry box. On the 25th day of the same month, such glass wares were finished. On November 12th, eunuch Mao Tuan forwarded a decree of the emperor again to require the factory to manufacture more glass wares. On May 21st of the Qianlong period, a wire wrapped glass snuff bottle and a bottle for containing spoons and chopsticks were manufactured and turned over to eunuch Mao Tuan to present them as tributes to the emperor. The emperor returned them to the glass factory [15].

The process of wire wrapping glass was rooted in Europe, and the glass factory of the royal workshop management office started manufacturing wire wrapping glass in Qianlong period, which shall be related to the western missionaries working in the factory. The wire wrapping glass wares

handed down from Qianlong period only include glass bottles, bowls and a few other wares but no snuff bottle.

The glass snuff bottles of Qianlong period were mainly used in two ways. First, snuff bottles were presented as tributes to the royal family. The glass factory was not only required by the emperor to manufacture snuff bottles regularly but also present them as tributes to the royal family on important festivals. For example, there are records in Qing Files as follows: the factory glass presented sixty glass snuff bottles in different colors on the birthday of the Emperor and sixty glass snuff bottles on Dragon Boat Festival, and all of them were matched with gold plated copper flower cap and wood handle elephant tooth spoons. On the New Year's Day, the glass factory presented sixty glass snuff bottles as tributes.

The snuff bottle quantity above was regulated every year. Second, the snuff bottles were to meet demands of the emperor to use and appreciate. In Qing Files, there are a lot of records about the emperor's requirements about making glass snuff bottles for use and appreciation, as shown below:

In addition, the gifts for Dalai and Panchen Lama included glass bottles, bowls, snuff bottles, etc. Emperor Qianlong favored to use snuff bottles to reward his subordinates.

Especially, artistic snuff bottles accounted for the largest percentage of the glassware manufactured by the glass factory of Qianlong period. According to roughly statistics, the number of glass snuff bottles manufactured during Qianlong period is over several tens of thousands.

Snuff bottles were not only presented as tributes to the emperor on Dragon Boat Festival, the birthday of the Emperor, the New Year's Day. In addition, Emperor Qianlong frequently ordered the glass factory to manufacture snuff bottles as rewards. In the 20th year of Qianlong period, the glass factory prepared the largest number of glassware as rewards in Chengde Imperial Summer Resort. On April 7th, the emperor ordered the royal workshop management office to manufacture five hundred snuff bottles and three thousand glass wares.

On January 30th, the 19th year of Qianlong period, the emperor ordered the workshop to "manufacture one hundred glass snuff bottles in different colors as rewards...for use in the hunting process." [17]. On April 28th, the 26th year of Qianlong period, the workshop was required to manufacture "two thousand glass wares and five hundred glass snuff bottles as rewards" [18].



FIG.12-1



FIG.12-2



FIG.14



FIG.13

Most of the snuff bottles collected by Beijing Palace Museum, museums around the world, and private collectors are made of glass, which is closely related to the fact that the emperors of Qing Dynasty advocated, loved glass snuff bottles and ordered the royal workshops to manufacture a large amount of such snuff bottles.

V. Declining stage of glass snuff bottles: from Jiaqing period to Xuantong period

During the hundreds of years from Jiaqing period to Xuantong period, the glass factory manufactured glassware according to some regulations, namely, eighty one sets of dishes eighty one bowls, bottles and stoves, sixty snuff bottles, one hundred sets of dishes, bowls, bottles and stoves and 60 snuff bottles for festivals. In total, the glass factory manufactured three hundred and one sets of glassware [19]. Generally, the glass factory would present them as tributes to the emperor in April and December.

The existing glass wares show that the glass wares of Jiaqing period and Xuantong period have a common feature, namely, the glass wares manufactured during a hundred year were almost made of single color glass, and the flashed glass, gold star glass and other processes which flourished in Qianlong period disappeared completely.

Jiaqing period was an important turning point, when the glass workmanship went into the declining stage and the manufacturing of snuff bottle was not an exception.

From Jiaqing period to Xuantong period, there was only one glass snuff bottle, namely, single color glass, which includes transparent glass, translucent glass and opaque glass.

The glass colors include sky blue, light blue, sapphire blue, bean green, amber, lotus pink, etc. However, the glass body was heavy, the shape of glass ware was clumsy, and the inscriptions were made carelessly and short of artistic charm.

Emperor Xianfeng was not satisfied with these glass wares and ordered the glass factory in the 8th year of Xianfeng period (1858 A.D.) to “ make all glass wares purer, do not add patterns to them and inscribe them carefully. ” [20]

It is a pity that the emperor's orders could not stop the gradually declining tendency of glass manufacturing process.

Even so, during the years from Jiaqing period to Xuantong period, the rewards for Dalai and Panchen Lama still included glass wares. For example, On June 28th, the 12th year of Jiaqing period (1807 A.D.), the glass ware rewarded for Panchen included a couple of bright blue glass bottles, a couple of amber glass dishes, a couple of bright green glass bottles and four glass snuff bottles [21]. The emperors of Qing Dynasty still considered glass ware rewards as symbols of social status and hierarchy.

The official glass snuff bottle manufacturing of Qing Dynasty was started and based in Kangxi period. Among art ware of Qing Dynasty, the small and exquisite snuff bottles became the emperors' new favorites and important rewards for their subordinates.

During Yongzheng period, there were six varieties of snuff bottles, which was a highlight of glass manufacturing process of Yongzheng period. When it came to Qianlong period, the glass manufacturing entered its full swing and the manufacturing of snuff bottle was regulated in terms of quantity.

Glass manufacturing came to its turning point in Jiaqing period. From then on, glass manufacturing level of the royal workshop management office gradually declined and the workmanship of snuff bottles declined too. The vicissitudes of official glass snuff bottles were closely affected by the glass manufacturing process of Qing Dynasty, so the development law of snuff bottles conforms to that of glass manufacturing process of Qing Dynasty.

Annotations:

[1] Emperor Authorized Ritual Cases of Qing Dynasty, volume 1173, clause "Book Printing Office of Hall of Martial Valor".

[2] Emperor Authorized Investigation on Anecdotes Volume 71, Page 2292, the Government Office.

[3] Emperor Authorized Ritual Cases of Qing Dynasty, volume 1173, clause "The Royal Workshop Management Office of the the Hall of Mental Cultivation"

[4] Ditto [2]

[5] Ditto [3]

[6] Lin Yejiang: Investigation on Glass Factories of the Royal Workshop Management Office under Imperial Household Department of Qing Dynasty, Elegance and Radiance, Art Museum of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2000.

[7] Elegance and Radiance, page 84, Fig. 2, Art Museum of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2000.

[8] Purity Brightness Shines Everywhere-The Glass of China.

- [9] Files on Wares Made by the Royal Workshop Management Office, films No. 60, 64 and 65, The First Historical Archives of China
- [10] Zheng Linsheng: Snuff bottles of the Imperial Palace: Taipei National Palace Museum, 1991.
- [11][12][14][15][16] Zhang Rong: Condensed Lights in Autumn Water: Glassware of the Royal Workshop of Qing Dynasty, The Forbidden City Press, 2005.
- [13] Files on Wares Made by the Royal Workshop Management Office, films No. 80, The First Historical Archives of China
- [17]Zhang Weiyong: Binghualou Poem Collections, Yuan fang Press, 1998.
- [18]Files on Wares Made by the Royal Workshop Management Office, films No. 109, The First Historical Archives of China
- [19] Refer to the frequent records in Qing Files from Jiaqing period to Xuantong period.
- [20] Files on Wares Made by the Royal Workshop Management Office, films No. 3078, The First Historical Archives of China
- [21] Files on Wares Made by the Royal Workshop Management Office, films No. 2, The First Historical Archives of China