

The Aesthetic Presentation of Traditional Chinese Patterns in Modern Visual Design

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Abstract: Visual communication design acts as a direct and effective means of conveying information, carrying messages and displaying visual harmony and beauty at the same time. At present, Chinese-style trend is flourishing, design with traditional cultural elements from China has become an indispensable part of designers. As an image heritage of traditional Chinese motifs with many variations which is widely acknowledged by the public but the deeper explorations of the diversity of categories, connotation and heritage value are required. This paper integrates the cultural elements and aesthetic features of traditional Chinese motifs, analyzes their application in current visual communication design, and puts forward three strategies---meticulous refinement and morphological transformation of pattern designs, rational use of traditional colors, and intensive exploration of "the beauty of artistic conception" to achieve cultural resonance. These will make it easier for traditional Chinese elements to fuse with modern style, help us to be better known for our cultural designs and speed up the renewal of traditional culture.

Keywords: China Traditional Patterns; Visual Design; Beauty of Design; Cultural Inheritance

1. Introduction

Cultural Confidence and Self-Strengthening in the context of globalized world makes the interconnects between cultures of different nations stronger and makes China's traditional cultural elements proactively integrated into the world cultural landscape. China's traditional pattern in modern visual design is not only the protection of cultural heritage, but also the exploration of the future development of culture. This is a reflection of China's cultural confidence after its rise. In addition to

it, using Chinese traditional patterns together with new designs bring people from all over the world a colorful experience with unique Chinese touch. It is a respect to China's traditional culture expression, as well as an addition to cultural confidence and self-strengthening, making advances in world cultural diversity development.

2. Overview of Visual Communication Design

In a simple sense, visual communication design is a form of communication that displays design ideas and concepts using visuals. It puts ideas on display and conveys info via the use of visuals. In the industry it can be simplified into 4 steps. "Who", "what to say", "to whom" and "result and effect" [1] forms a complete circle of information transmission process. As a form of communication through images centered on visual symbols including logo design, typography design, illustration design, font design, and sign design. It applies colors, lines, graphics, composition and cultural elements systematically for order information, but also considers its artistic and commercial value---; Adhere to the aesthetic principle, enhancing aesthetics according to the commercial requirements, making it attractive through advertisement and company identity design. In the end it is for the people to judge what the point of the design was.

3. The Origin of Traditional Chinese Patterns

The developmental path of traditional Chinese patterns is a living representation of the development of Chinese civilization. They emerged and were developed in a rather long and complicated process and have some distinctive features from different regions. In different time and space periods of different parts of the world, patterns and regions also have their own characteristics [2]:

3.1 The Initial Construction of the "Divinity" and "Ritual System" of Patterns

During the Xia and Shang dynasties, due to the influence of the concepts of “worshiping heaven and serving the spirits” and the rudimentary state ritual system, the patterns of decorations became more “grand and awe-inspiring.” They signified reverence for nature and authority of the ruling class. In other words, it was the “hetu-luo shu” (River Chart and Luo Book) symbolizing the order of the universe, “twelve symbols” signifying noble status, and bronze-vessel patterns such as “beast face pattern”, “kui pattern” and “cloud thunder” motif. The beast face pattern was symmetrical and had thick lines that created a mysterious and frightening feeling, the clouds and thunder patterns were in the background to add more solemnity and the human figure, owl and Cicada patterns were commonly used for Ancestor worship.

In the Western Zhou, as the clan became mature, pattern design became an "orderly", "structured" design that paid attention to social hierarchy. Representative patterns were like the meandering dragon design representing ritual norms; layered rings reflecting hierarchical layering; hanging qilins copying fish scale stacking to represent nobility; phoenix, which originated from an "heavenly mandate bird" legend and became a visual symbol representing the legitimacy of the Zhou.

3.2 The Expansion of the "Magnificent" and "Secular" Patterns

Qin-Han political unification and “correspondence between Heaven and humanity” philosophy promoted the transformation of decorative patterns’ appearance from “divinity” to “humanity,” thus showing two different features: “simple but grand” and “elevated and lively.” Roof tiles and lacquerware were the main bearers of these patterns during the Qin Dynasty. dragon-patterned roof tile's vigorous lines illustrated imperial magnificence. The pattern themes developed quickly during the Han era because of the influence of the Silk Road as well as popular immortality beliefs. The cloud and veils formed a “ascendancy effect”, with lines flowing and curved; generally it is composed of auspicious beasts and immortals, known as cloud-veil auspicious beast patterns. The dogwood pattern represented "warding off

evil and praying for blessings", and was mostly used on textiles and lacquerwares. Four-deity patterns connected with directions and the five elements system became symbols of spatial order. Some rule pattern based on astronomy said it was the “eternal law of heaven”, but secular themes – like chariots, kitchens, and theaters - made bright images of social life in the Han time

3.3 The "Elegance" and "Buddha Nature" of the Pattern are Integrated

Wei, Jin and Southern-Northern Dynasties had frequent regime changes, deeper ethnic unity and the introduction of Buddhism, which created an "diversified", "elegant" style of decorative patterns. religious themes appeared in these designs too, lots of lotus shapes could be seen on cave murals, ceramics and textiles, simple petal outlines carried notions of purity and going beyond. Divine imagery used smooth lines for Buddhist celestial beings' lively energy; on the Dunhuang ceiling, symmetrical geometric compositions and religious symbols created sacred spaces. Following the metaphysical philosophy of “treasuring nature over ritual conventions,” animals and protection motifs shifted towards realism and the zodiac had folk custom elements. This change moved from the strong colors of the Shang-Zhou dynasty and the bolder colors of the Qin-Han period to restrained and reserved beauty.

3.4 The "Prosperity" and "Openness" of the Pattern are in Full Bloom

During the Tang Dynasty China was very strong so they have many exchanges with other countries. This makes for a "magnificent and inclusive" culture. Patterns reached its pinnacle and its “prosperous and flourishing” aesthetic was on display. The imperial court adopted the “Lingyang Gong Pattern” In terms of flowers, the baoxiang (peony, lotus, honeysuckle) with "money and blessing" using the meaning of the flower, and the scroll patterns that came from the West were curved and had a continuous winding feeling. Exotic makara(mythical creatures),sea beast grape patterned design was cultural integration along the ancient Silk Roads. The realistic designs used were like pomegranate blossoms, parrots, horse and camel patterns, the lyrical content was like birds perching on branches, butterflies hugging

flowers, and mandarin duck. They conveyed some kind of beauty. Symbols such as intertwined branches, paired birds, and concentric knots became symbols for love and reunions.

3.5 The Differentiation Between the "Elegance" and the "Marketplace" of Patterns

Song Dynasty's policy of giving literary people priority than military people, and booming commodity economy together formed a dual separation of decoration, scholar's elegant taste, common man's secular grace, Liao and Jin were located in areas where ethnic minorities stayed, they took Han Chinese culture as source while keeping their own culture, thus audiences had different preferences toward decorations. scholars preferred beautiful patterns in Song era, ice crack was considered as beauty in imperfection reflecting "follow nature's way" and folk traditions preferred universal joy motif with playful children and agriculture element reflecting "vibrant rhythm of urban life" As opposed to this, Liao and Jin decorative styles took on Song scroll-patternesque designs and combined them with Jin dynasty entwined-branch lines (a line that looks Song like in form but keeps those nomadic bold and strong strokes).

3.6 The "Fusion" of Patterns and the Ultimate "Good Luck"

During the Yuan Dynasty, the Mongol regime was established, and this promoted cultural exchanges between the East and the West. Its decorative patterns adopted eastern feelings and western appearances, narrative designs, mythological subjects, and Mongolian script parts with ethnic features can be observed. Maintaining the symbolism of Han Chinese patterns, but with heavy nomadic influence, these were distinctly traditional elegance and frontier spirit.

When the Ming dynasty imperial autocratic power became more intense, these symbolic patterns then became representations of specific social hierarchy levels. royal family had exclusive use of cloud and dragon designs, dragon patterns, phoenix design and sea-water spring pattern to create a visual system that symbolized imperial authority. The official-ceremony outfits had special animal-themed clothes for making distinction

between the official ranks. The popular entwined branches pattern with endlessly circling plants were a symbol of "eternal life and constant renewal". These were combined with ancient artefacts and flowers to add auspicious value as well as cultural values of "revering antiquity and honouring literature". In the Qing Dynasty, auspicious culture reached its peak. Patterns focused on "homophonic symbolism" formed a complete system of good luck motifs. representative patterns were the fish representing "abundance year by year", double happiness character pattern representing "double joy arriving", magpie and plum blossom representing "joy on the brow", bat with coins representing "good luck in hand to be grasped", cat and butterfly representing "centenarian prosperity" by homophony, horse with coins representing "wealth on horseback", three lychees, longans and walnuts representing "three consecutive successes", three stuns representing "three promotions in succession", door god and martial wealth deity pattern. These things, which are commonly used in new year images because they often have folk beliefs, combined complicated designs with very simple symbolism, and became important carriers for the folk.

4.The Presentation of Design Aesthetics in Traditional Chinese Patterns

As a visual beautification of the Chinese aesthetics, Chinese traditional patterns are not just aesthetically decorative but also creates a visual system in tune with nature, culture and philosophy by means of "beauty of form", "beauty of color" and "beauty of artistic conception". Most old Chinese decorations patterns are full of auspicious meanings. Auspicious patterns mainly consist of figures, flowers, birds, beasts, things, and characters. They revolve around auspicious phrases, myths, and popular sayings. In the process through artistic techniques like homophonic play, metaphoric play, analogic play, punning, symbolic and so on, these patterns are full of both visual and auspicious words [4].

4.1 Formal Beauty

The traditional patterns of pattern aesthetics set "symmetry balance" as its basis and contains the contrast of emptiness and reality, creates a visual feeling that is "ordered but not rigid,

lively but not chaotic.” Geometric motifs like meander patterns and swastika designs employ continuous repetitive lines to convey a sense of rhythm. The meander's cyclical pattern of "one positive and one negative" metaphorically symbolizes the concept of "endless vitality", while the symmetrical swastika shape of swastika patterns communicates stability and harmony. Nature motifs like vine entwines, clouds, breaks with the regular by curves. Vines use coiling trajectories of foliage to capture rhythms, clouds are made by the interaction of "rolling clouds" and "flowing clouds" in order to mimic natural transformations, so they achieve a good tension between strength and suppleness. This design philosophy is natural law respect with humans created order, it holds beauty of “harmony with heaven and man”.

4.2 The Beauty of Color

The traditional color for patterns is based on color aesthetics. Its core is "the 5 Elements of Colors theory" Combining present requirements and desires to express certain emotions so as to create a color system of both structured rules and perceptible emotions. philosophically, the 5 elements colors complement with the natural essence. blue represents the vital and dynamic energy of nature from the east, red expresses the heat and burning energy of nature from south, yellow highlights the precious status of “Central Earth Virtue”. This color coordination isn’t just about visual picking; it’s a direct reflection of cosmic order. Choose corresponding emotional colors for different contexts. like in wedding patterns they will use the “red_gold” which symbolizes joy when it comes to marriage while gold stands for richness. Scholarship articles often use “pale white” and “light blue” with the concept of “elegance and distance”, while religion uses “indigo” and “ochre” to achieve seriousness. These application of colors keep the heritage safe, as well as convey the proper emotion and matching them, it gives a aesthetic feel of form and colors present together.

4.3 The Beauty of the Scene

Traditional pattern aesthetics moves beyond mere “shape + color” through the symbolic metaphor for cultural connotations and turns the patterns into culture symbol. Direct Symbolism uses concrete images with concrete

meanings, pomegranates are used for fertility because of the large number of seeds, Pine tree for longevity, Bamboo for integrity and Plum for resilience. Homophones create good fortune: bat patterns resemble the word for “blessing” thus they symbolize luck; gourd patterns include “hu” (plum) and “fu” (blessing) or “lu” (official rank) and “lu” (prosperity) for double blessings. Composite symbol uses component to show multiple definition. The “sea-water and river cliff” depicts imperial authority with a grand and solid appearance. It turns patterns into “visible culture”, realizing the principle of "using form to convey ideas, using emotion to express form".

5. The Application of Traditional Chinese Patterns in Modern Visual Design

Chinese Traditional Pattern contains the beauty of Chinese aesthetics. In terms of practical applications of modern visual design, it’s important to break down the “disorderly accumulation” and incorporate the fusion of tradition and modernity by means of the three aspects of “form conversion”, “color change” and “resonance of aesthetics”. This way maintains the cultural distinctiveness of the patterns while also fulfilling the requirements of function and beauty in modern design and gives brand visuals, digital media, package designs, and the like a special Eastern cultural allure.

5.1 Morphological Translation

By focusing on unique features of traditional patterns and removing unimportant elements to keep culture’s identity, we did morphological processing of Shang-Zhou bronze artifacts taotie motifs. Those complicated decorative textures were simplified into the form of geometric line symbols that keep only the “symmetrical beast face” outline as well as “prominent eyes”. Applying this to high end apparel brand logos, it doesn’t just convey the inherent grandeur of the traditional patterns but also stays away from the redundancy of having too complex forms, which is also in line with the current branding trend for “simplicity and memorability”. Additionally transformed the "vine entwining" of traditional coiling patterns into circular curves of single lines and used these as decorative edges on cultural and creative product packaging. It carries on the cultural essence of “endless vitality,” while also

taking account of current minimalist aesthetic preferences.

5.2 Color Matching

The Five Element colors and imperial colors are based on traditional methods. Modern color psychology is used to adjust the brightness and saturation levels according to different circumstances. In commercial brand design, the traditional method of using China Red in conjunction with low-saturation gray tones can also substitute for high-saturation scarlet. Just like the packaging of the cosmetics brand Huaxizi, it is gray - red as the base color and gold embossing as the pattern. This way, it maintains red's festival and luxurious look, yet prevents being too garish, fulfilling modern consumers' aesthetic desire for "high-end". In the designing of public service posters, the cultural imagery of colors with "Qingbai" blue-and-white porcelain are extracted. White is directly replaced with light blue, traditional patterns outlined in dark gray lines represent the theme 'environmental protection is for purity' in line with traditional colors and modern philanthropic concept.

5.3 Resonance of the Artistic Conception

We used common motif symbols together with a design theme and users' emotional requirements to create stories. In today's festival gift box design, peonies and bats are used in conjunction with the "Blessing the New Year" slogan, paired with the foil stamping technique. The binding of symbol meanings with spring festival's "praying for blessings" context makes people feel the warmth of traditional culture when receiving the gifts. In intangible cultural heritages exhibition, Dunhuang caisson patterns are the main visuals. These patterns' "symmetrical quadrilateral structure and layering interlock" forms denote "sacred spaces", which is in line with the theme of the showing, "defending thousands-of-years-old craftsmanship", and makes it so that people can directly sense the solemnity and long-term nature of the intangible cultural heritage when looking at its patterns.

6. Conclusion

Chinese traditional patterns are treasures accumulated over thousands of years of Eastern aesthetics. It has its own unique and beautiful forms, it is full of artistic charm, blending retro style solemn with contemporary fashion trends; not only firmly establishes the theoretical foundation of traditional aesthetic studies, but also meets the various aesthetic needs of modern society, giving vitality and vitality to eastern aesthetics and modern visual aesthetics at the same time, it has ushered in a new symphony of integrating tradition and modernity aesthetically. As Chinese traditional patterns handed down through the long term feudal inheritance they still carry great weight in modern visual design. Designers can try to use graphics, colors, and artistic ideas to add some color to the design expression and convey the values of cultural and aesthetic tastes. Integrate these elements thoroughly into the evolution of modern visual form and we could safeguard traditional culture and multiply the renaissance of the designs' social worth.

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