

# Study on the Application of Elements of Chinese Traditional Culture in Visual Communication Design

Xu Qi

Wuchang Shouyi University, Wuchang, 430064, China

**Keywords:** visual communication, traditional culture, design, application

**Abstract:** Nowadays, it is widely used by many designers to incorporate some elements of traditional Chinese culture into visual communication design. Our country has a long history with extremely rich and far-reaching cultural elements, which provide inspiration and high aesthetic value for design works. Based on the understanding of visual communication, this paper takes some typical elements of traditional culture as an example, analyzes their relationship and puts forward methods to apply elements of Chinese traditional culture in the art design of visual communication.

## 1. Introduction

Elements of Chinese traditional culture have unique charm, which embody the connotation of our spiritual culture and traditional culture. In visual communication design, many elements of traditional culture have been widely used. A lot of design works are blended with some cultural elements, so as to enhance the image of goods. The unique charm of traditional culture also provides rich inspiration for designers. The application of Chinese traditional cultural elements in artistic communication design is an organic combination of commercial and artistic practices. Although we have a lot of experience to learn from in this field, in the process of applying traditional cultural elements, designers should still pay attention to how to correctly interpret and use cultural elements.

## 2. Meaning of Visual Communication

Visual communication mainly or partly relies on visual sense and is presented with two-dimensional image, including: marking, typography, painting, graphic design, insertion, color, and electronic equipment. In addition, image is more influential to convey, teach, and persuade the audience accompanied by words. Visual communication is changed from a single medium to a multi-media, and from a two-dimensional plane to a three-dimensional stereo. Advertisement in daily life is an important form of visual communication.

Visual communication includes two basic concepts of “visual symbol” and “transmission”. The so-called “visual symbol”, as the name implies, refers to signs that eyes, the visual organ of human, can see, such as photography, television, film, type of art, building, various designs, city buildings and all kinds of science and text, as well as stage design, music, heraldry, ancient money, etc. They all belong to visual symbols.

The so-called “transmission” refers to the process that the sender of information uses the symbol to transmit information to the recipient. It may be communication between individuals, for instance, the communication among all organisms, between man and nature, between man and environment, and within human body. It includes four programs of “who”, “transmit what”, “transmit to whom”, and “effects and results”.

## 3. Some Representative Elements of Chinese Traditional Culture

The history of our country is long enough to produce a great number of excellent cultural achievements in the period of development. Classic traditional culture is an important part of the national spirit connotation of our country and for a long time, it has played an enduring charm and

has brought great inspiration to many designs in the field of art design. Among the far-reaching and rich traditional culture, some representative elements are very active in design.

Calligraphy art is an important representative in the traditional culture of our country, among running script, regular script, official script, wild grass and other fonts give Chinese characters an aesthetic feeling of great artistic value. Different types of visual effects or even emotional effects can be reflected by different writing technique and font structures. For example, regular script conveys dignified and rigorous effect and is used widely in the design of teaching materials. While, cursive script has a natural and unrestrained feeling and is widely used in many advertisements that need to reflect visual impact.

The Chinese painting of our country is very different from the western oil painting. The former ignores to follow the perspective principle and the style is more realistic. This also provides a great inspiration for art design. The packaging of many products often takes ink painting as the background, which adds an elegant charm to products. Many posters of film and television works are also always integrated into the elements of ink painting. For example, in the poster of “Golden Age”, the use of ink-splashing elements to the maximum extent highlights the film subject and shows the sense of the era and the tone of literature and art.

Chinese architecture and cultural relics are mostly used in Logo design. Many enterprises like to select the silhouette or the image of Chinese architecture to create enterprises’ Logo, especially for the real estate industry. Similarly, a lot of enterprises prefer the image and the moral of “Ding”, so as to reflect enterprises’ heavy and strong strength.

Different cultures have their own unique definition of color and it is also the same in our traditional culture. For example, red stands for festive and auspicious meaning, purple represents the noble and royal demeanor while gold means wealth, beauty, and so on. Many art designs also draw on the implication of color in the traditional culture, and packaging of many gifts boxes and active site layout will take into account this.

In our traditional culture, there are many images and elements applied to the design field of visual communication, such as paper-cutting, silk, embroidery, jade and animal and plant, etc. Several images presented in previous text are merely representative of the role of Chinese traditional culture in the visual communication of art design, as well as the method to reflect and apply these elements in design works.

#### **4. Relationship between Visual Communication and Traditional Culture**

There is a close relationship between visual communication and traditional culture. As mentioned above, the representative and intention of traditional culture can provide rich inspiration and material for the art design. While, the traditional culture can also rely on art design works to make promotion and propaganda, so as to make more people realize the beauty of traditional culture.

Modern social art design is an important way to promote and display lots of commodities. They add art value to the commodity while showing the commodity itself. At the same time, the keynote as well as texture of commodity are effectively highlighted and lifted, which is an organic combination of artistic and commercial quality. Many elements in our traditional culture provide rich inspiration for art design. In many art design works, traditional culture is the expression of expressive force and vitality, which undoubtedly plays a great role in the promotion of traditional culture and the promotion of cultural beauty. In this way, people are able to enjoy the style of traditional culture, and then have an interest in the traditional culture. With the development of economic globalization, many goods are sold globally. Art design works with Chinese traditional cultural elements can present Chinese culture in front of more people, and play a certain role in the establishment of external image of our country.

#### **5. Application of Elements of Chinese Traditional Culture in Visual Communication Design**

Chinese traditional cultural elements have been widely used in the design of visual

communication, and many design works contain these elements. In this respect, there are a lot of experience worth our learning. On the basis of full reference and absorption of these experiences, this paper puts forward methods to use the traditional culture of our country to carry on art design of visual communication

Firstly, it is required to apply the image and elements of traditional culture, and correctly understand and interpret the connotation of traditional culture. Many cultural images and elements are of special meaning and symbol. For example, in the traditional culture of our country, “Kylin” is a kind of auspicious animal, representing peace, prosperity and national luck. If it is considered as a fierce animal, it deviates from the true cultural connotation, misleads the audience and becomes laughingstock. It not only fails to reflect the tone and emotion of design works, but also the real intention and connotation of designers. This misuse of traditional culture is an injury to both designs and cultural elements.

Secondly, the application of traditional culture should keep pace with the times and meet the requirements of the times. Any culture needs to be constantly being studied and understood, and is being given new meanings in this process. Advanced culture that meets the needs of the times will be better inherited and developed, while stale and backward cultural dross will be discarded by the times. In art design, it is also supposed to pay attention to keep pace with the times, to understand repeatedly elements of traditional culture, and avoid to be conservative. For example, since ancient times, “wine culture” is a part of our traditional culture. However, with the development of the times, it has made continuous progress, and pays more attention to health and the quality. If art design still emphasizes the feeling of “flying to the sky” after being drunk, the idea of drinking to be drunk will not be accepted by modern people.

Thirdly, the application of Chinese traditional culture to art design is to combine commercial and artistic quality without mechanical application. To apply elements of Chinese traditional culture in art design works, it is necessary to choose correct cultural image representative. We should not be far-fetched for the sake of vassal elegance. On the premise of fully understanding the quality and core of commodities, it is advised to select appropriate cultural factors and through organic combination, achieve a balance between commercial and artistic values. In order to embody traditional culture, mechanical application will not only fail to carry forward the core of our cultural thought properly, but also ineffectively promote goods. In the process of artistic creation, designer must fully respect the characteristics of commodity itself. For example, in designing the packaging of a coffee product, if purple representing “noble royalty” is selected in order to reflect the high quality of coffee beans, it is not possible to adapt to the requirements of market, and the audience will not accept the package of this type. In this way, the commercial value and sales volume of goods will be greatly reduced. Nestle coffee chose purple as the main shade to improve product packaging. Although this work is of great aesthetic value, the audience expressed that this package was very strange for coffee-like products, and they could not adapt to it, so they gave up choosing their products.

Finally, when selecting Chinese traditional cultural elements, designers are required to pay attention to discarding cultural dross, and select advanced cultural representative. Since the image of our country’s traditional culture is very rich, not all elements are advanced and superior. Many had positive significance only in the historical background of the time, but with the development of the times, they have not been able to meet the demands of modern society and became one of the dross cultures. Therefore, designers should pay attention to the rejection of dross culture while selecting cultural elements. If it is no doubt that the dross culture in design works is a certain blow to the external image of our country, and people who do not understand Chinese culture will misunderstand the traditional culture of our country.

## **6. Conclusion**

The application of elements of Chinese traditional culture in art design of visual communication is a positive propaganda to the traditional culture, which can promote the development of culture, and at the same time, endow commodity with rich cultural connotations. It is a commercial and

artistic organic combination. However, in the process of artistic creation, we should pay attention to the selection and application of traditional cultural elements. First of all, we need to fully study and understand the connotation and significance of images and elements of traditional culture. If we misunderstand its representative meaning, it will be unfavorable to the propaganda of traditional culture and establishment of commodity image. Secondly, we are required to inherit and carry forward advanced culture and eliminate the dross in the traditional culture. However, not all elements of traditional culture have positive significance of the times. With the progress of the times, many cultures have lost the value of inheritance and promotion but only played a positive and advanced role in the historical environment at that time. Finally, designers must fully consider and respect the characteristics and attributes of goods when selecting cultural elements. We should be able to realize the organic combination of aesthetic value and commercial value in order to make use of cultural elements. This is not conducive not only to the establishment of commercial value of commodities, but also to the real embodiment of Chinese traditional culture and the establishment of China's external image.

## References

- [1] Zhu He. On the Application of Chinese Traditional Elements in Visual Communication Design [J]. *Chinese Character Culture*, 2018 (05): 111-112.
- [2] Wan Xu. Application of Chinese Traditional Culture Elements in Visual Communication Design of Tea Packaging [J]. *Fujian Tea*, 2017,39(10): 117.
- [3] Sun Yingfeng. Application of Chinese Traditional Elements in Visual Communication Design [J]. *Art Science and Technology*, 2015, 28 (07): 219.
- [4] Qiu Chen. Brief Discussion on the Combination of Visual Communication Design and Traditional Chinese Culture Elements [J]. *Journal of Xuzhou Institute of Education*, 2007 (04): 157-158+163.
- [5] Chen Xi. Symbolic Characteristics of Folk Culture Elements in Northern Gulf of Guangxi and the Application in Visual Design [J]. *Popular Literature and Art*, 2018 (20): 102-103.