

# *An exploration of the design of traditional wire-bound books from the perspective of cultural confidence*

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**Abstract:** The binding of ancient Chinese books has undergone thousands of years of development and evolution, and wire binding is the last form of ancient binding, and it is also the most representative stage performance of ancient books <sup>[1]</sup>, with distinctive Chinese characteristics and the spirit of the times, it has become a symbol of cultural value with Chinese characteristics, containing the wisdom and aesthetic concepts of the ancients <sup>[2]</sup>. Therefore, through the understanding and refinement of the content of wire-bound books, the material, style, color analysis of wire-bound books, and the rich cultural heritage of wire-bound books, the design of wire-bound books has never stopped moving forward, and there have been changes and breakthroughs at each stage, so as to enrich the connotation and charm of the design, so that the design of wire-bound books has become a more powerful weapon for designers to express emotions and transmit important languages.

## **1. Introduction**

In the era of rapid development of network technology, people's lifestyles have undergone great changes due to the influence of technology. With the development of online media, many print media have been replaced by network information, and the high-pressure and fast-paced life has affected us, making many people unable to calm down to read, and then realize the importance of paper books, so that the paper book binding design has been promoted by this wave of forces. The face of contemporary books is rich and colorful, although its content is somewhat uneven, but the book binding design is a hundred flowers, among which the traditional wire-bound book binding design has also been re-emphasized, and it has gradually been mentioned on this stage again.

## **2. The Evolution of Book Binding in China**

The history of Chinese book binding is long and long, and the changes in the structure of Chinese book binding are also accompanied by the development of Chinese historical literature and binding art, and the design of book binding has become colorful and diverse with the gradual progress of craftsmanship and the long river of history.

The earliest book binding began during the Shang Dynasty, more than 3,000 years ago, when people carved words on tortoiseshell beast bones. In order to preserve the text of the tortoise shell by

weaving to avoid the scattering of the tortoise shell, the rope series became the earliest way of binding books. In the Spring and Autumn and Warring States eras, there was a rope made of silk, linen, skin, etc. to weave bamboo slips into long strips<sup>[3]</sup>-bamboo slips, bamboo slips were the most extensive and longest-standing book binding method before paper was developed. It arose in the Later Zhou Dynasty and was used until the fourth century AD. Bamboo Jane can freely set the number of Jane according to the specific length of the article, a Jane is counted as a line of words, connected by two knotted ropes up and down, and it is very convenient to preserve after binding, but Bamboo Jane itself is very heavy, so carrying and reading is the disadvantage of bamboo Jane. With the invention of papermaking in the Han Dynasty, the scroll replaced the bamboo and wood slips, so that the curtain and paper were used together, and the curtain was a slightly later binding method than bamboo slips, which was different from bamboo slips, the carrier of the text was on a silky fabric, and its binding form was very simple, and it could be rolled up and stored after cutting. However, due to the cost of production, it was not popular at that time, and it was mostly used by rulers to approve and play or paint. It was not until the Sui and Tang dynasties that booklets began to be bound with thread, and this binding method was the prototype of the later Chinese thread-bound books "sewing and binding".

The cultural prosperity and prosperity of the Tang Dynasty, as well as the frequent learning and exchange of scholars from various countries, sewing and binding decoration has been introduced to Europe, America, Japan, Central Asia and other countries in the world because of the mutual communication of Chinese and foreign cultural exchanges, and it is also an important book binding method that has influenced the world. The bag back packaging was produced in the late Southern Song Dynasty, and was named after the backpack covered with a book coat<sup>[3]</sup>. This is a very suitable method of book binding for collection, and it has also influenced the layout of later collections. In the three to four hundred years from the Wanli Dynasty of the Ming Dynasty to the end of the Qing Dynasty, wire-bound books were widely developed<sup>[3]</sup>. The binding method of thread-bound books has many similarities with the back of the bag, with the fold facing outward, the paper twisted in the right side of the album, then the front and back are added with a book jacket, and finally threaded and bound into the volume<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **3. The Embodiment of "Shape" in Traditional Wire-Bound Books**

#### **3.1. The Beauty of the Line in the Line Binding Book**

The name of the wire-bound book comes from the fact that the binding material is mainly thread-based, and the thread in the wire-bound book is both practical and aesthetic. The earliest ancients invented the long and thin fibers into silk twisted into satin, kneaded into ropes, knotted into bands, and bound into a book with a strong structure through the holes. Western-style books habitually wrap the inner binding thread with a skin, intended to show people the perfection of the book. However, the opposite is the Chinese binding design, the Chinese binding design does not regard the exposed line as a defect, the ancients adhered to the concept of natural beauty, and the binding line has become one of the links of the beauty of the appearance. Chinese books pay special attention to charm, from the paper used on the cover of the book to the page behind the cover, from the title page after the page to the copyright page at the back of the book that records the release time, place of distribution and producer, etc., to the preface, examples, table of contents, embroidery, text, illustrations, appendices, etc., all have a different design charm. For example, the upper and lower whites of the page, leaving less above and more below, because books have header and footer. When binding, it is necessary to leave two front and back covers the same size as the inner pages to bind, and they must be aligned with the inner pages, and the header and footer must be crop, fixed and then punched and threaded at the spine of the book.

### 3.2. The Beauty of Binding in a Wire-Bound Book

The binding process of traditional wire-bound books is also very rich in national characteristics. Thread stapling is divided into different binding methods because of its different perforations and threads. Among them, the "four-eyed binding" is the most common binding method in ancient wire-bound books, and they are commonly used in traditional paperback books. In addition to the "four-eye binding method", traditional books will have some deviations in the binding due to the size of the opening and the thickness of the pages, and there are also derived "six-eye binding method" and "eight-eye binding method".

The beauty of Chinese writing is a kind of composition, and the four-eye method is the most widely used, which is adjusted according to the change of the shape and proportion of the book at different times, and can be divided into "Tang Ben style binding" and "Song book style setting". The difference between the two methods is only in the position of the eye. Due to the Tang Dynasty's long and narrow book, the second and third eyes are very close, and the length of the first and third eyes is equal to the length of the second eye. On the basis of the "four-eye method", there are two types of methods: tortoiseshell type and hemp leaf type. The tortoiseshell style is named because of the shape of the tortoiseshell, and the hemp leaf style is named because of the veins shaped like leaves, and these two methods are also more common in the four-eyed method. It has been beautified by the binding design, and the binding effect has also been enhanced, and its traces have become more and more varied with the addition of twill and the addition of holes. The beauty of this art gives the artistic connotation of the wire-bound book, and at the same time, it has also become the main component of the transmission of beauty in the art of books, and is a beautiful landscape that constitutes the book.

### 3.3. The Beauty of Color Emotion in Wire-Bound Books

Line is the rhythm and rhythm of harmony in wire-bound books, and is the composition of beauty, bringing people peace, tranquility and serene enjoyment, containing the Chinese nation's pursuit of beauty. The color of the wire-bound book is the most direct emotional embodiment, ancient China is one of the peoples who have long known how to use color for abstract description, the use of color is related to religious belief, social status and the five elements of yin and yang, so there is a set of strict color rules. As early as the pre-Qin period, there was a discussion of the "five-color theory". The so-called "five colors" are actually white, green, black, red and yellow, corresponding to the five elements of the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire and earth, respectively, and are the most basic elements of all colors we recognize. Under the influence of ancient philosophy, we still use other colors brought by this color to this day, which shows the depth of the influence of these five colors on us.

In the Tang Dynasty, red and yellow became the highest and only colors of the emperor. In the Qing Dynasty, people began to pay more attention to the use of color in books. At that time, the color requirements for book covers were extremely strict. In the "Genealogy", "Benji" and other texts that record the deeds of the emperor, yellow, red, and blue are the majority, of which yellow must be bright yellow to show the majesty of imperial power. However, although the ancient colors had clear hierarchies and rules, there were also some decorative book color, such as the Siku Quanshu of the Qianlong period. Its cover uses four colors of green, red, blue and gray, symbolizing the four seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter, so it can be easily divided into four book categories in terms of function.

## 4. The Embodiment of "God" in Traditional Wire-Bound Books

Wire-bound books are a perfect integration of ancient Chinese traditional art design and printing

and binding technology, and are also closely related to ancient Chinese calligraphy, seal carving, paper-cutting art, etc., so wire-bound books, as the integrator of traditional Chinese art, have a comprehensive traditional Chinese art connotation and art form skills.

Holes and lines are the two most obvious elements and characteristics in a wire-bound book, and the number, density, position and arrangement of holes directly affect the overall design effect and visual presentation of the final wire-bound book. Through the matching between holes and lines, the unique inner temperament, ideological connotation and national zeitgeist of the book are formed. The final presentation path of the line in the wire-bound book also represents a cultural symbol, a spiritual communication, connected by holes, dots and lines, so that the wire-bound book binding conveys a new dynamic and full of vitality. Therefore, as a cultural and artistic style, wire-bound books continue to draw on and absorb the essence in the historical river of the ancient culture of the Chinese nation, which not only reflects the unique artistic connotation of a broad and profound culture of the Chinese nation, but also exudes a Confucian temperament rich in the characteristics of the Chinese nation, so that we can appreciate the beauty of the artistic conception brought by the art of wire-bound book binding while appreciating the works<sup>[5]</sup>.

Therefore, the binding design of the book carries the essence of the content of the book, and also bears the silent sales role of this book, which needs to have a strong publicity attraction and the ability to strongly infect consumers. Readers can not only feel the unique cultural connotation of the book from the content of the book itself, but also through the unique binding form. Wire-bound book design is mainly a kind of book binding design for the appearance of books, and the rich connotation of books is presented through this unique binding form. In the wire-bound book design, not only the text inside the book should be typeset and designed, but also the cultural connotation of the book should be reflected. Use covers, table of contents, and other places that you don't usually pay attention to show the rich cultural content of books. This requires designers to not only express the inner content of the book when designing the book binding, but also further describe the meaning of some deep contents of the book through design.

## 5. Conclusions

China is one of the four ancient civilizations in the world with ancient culture, and the excellent traditional culture has been passed down from generation to generation. Books play an important role in promoting China's future development and are an important force for revitalizing the national spirit. Wire-bound books are the culmination of China's traditional culture, with comprehensive Chinese traditional cultural accomplishment and artistic modeling ability<sup>[4]</sup>. Through the exploration of the external hole and line form and internal cultural connotation of traditional wire-bound books, contemporary designers need to pay more attention to the culture, nationality and modernity in design while constantly pursuing innovative design<sup>[6]</sup>, and integrate the cultural connotation of traditional wire-bound books into contemporary design<sup>[7]</sup>, becoming a unique cultural landscape, of course, such a diversified design also requires designers to constantly improve their literary literacy, design accomplishment and their own quality. Contemporary book binding design is not only the design of books, but also the design of art.

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