

Application of Xizang Kite Element in Visual Communication Design

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Abstract: More than two thousand years ago, the working people in ancient China invented kites with their wisdom. They are also the first people in the world to invent kites, which reflects the curiosity and exploration of the ancient people for the sky. As a region with plateau geographical characteristics in southwest China, Tibet has gradually given birth to its unique kite culture in the long history of development. However, in the rapid development of modern process, Xizang kite traditional culture is also facing unprecedented inheritance and development predicament. This paper attempts to apply Xizang kite elements to visual communication design, such as illustration, cultural and creative products, packaging and poster design. It is of great significance to explore the living inheritance and protection of Xizang kite, and also enrich the cultural connotation of visual communication design works.

1. Introduction

As early as in the Spring and Autumn period, there is a kite record in China, the ancient book “Mozi Lu Wen” cloud: “Gong Lozi cutting bamboo thought magpie, into the flight, three days”. Since its invention, the primitive wood kite has been used to convey information in military wars. There are records about kites used in military reconnaissance in the Southern and Northern Dynasties. ^[1] The Qing Dynasty poet Gao Ding sings in “Village House”, “the grass is long and the spring sky is full of joy, and the spring smoke is drunk. Children come back early, busy while the east wind put kites.” With the development of The Times, especially the invention of paper making in the Eastern Han Dynasty, the practical function of kites was transformed from war communication to folk entertainment ^[2]. Therefore, the material of kite making changed from wood to paper, and the patterns and styles of kites became more and more abundant. Kite flying gradually became one of the important ways of entertainment for people.

2. Overview of Xizang kites

Xizang kite, called “chiapi” or “Xiucha” in Tibetan, means “flying paper bird”. According to legend, as early as 1,000 years ago, with the appearance of Tibetan paper, kite flying gradually

formed the custom. The unique style of Xizang kites is mainly popular in Lhasa, Xigaze, Zetang and other places, and spread to neighboring Nepal, Bhutan, the Qing Dynasty prevailed in the upper Tibetan.^[3] The production forms of Xizang kites are relatively simple, mainly consisting of kites flying in the sky, strings and spool.^[4] The biggest difference between Xizang kites and mainland kites is that the shapes of kites are mostly diamond and “kite fighting”. The 2007 movie “The Kite Runner” featured a traditional kite fighting competition that was spectacular. The kite string is called “Na”, which is made in a unique way because it is needed for “kite fighting”. First of all, the cotton or wool from which it is made is very strong. Secondly, the practice of glass line is also very particular, it is best to choose warm bottle glass, ground into powder, a gentle blow can raise ash for qualified products. Then use a small pot, add “ice” (including cow gum), Wang (palm ginseng, strong viscosity), flour (to carry glass powder), and ground into not glass powder, slowly boil in a small fire, to be all mutually integrated after the pot, must not be too thick, otherwise the line is easy to break, not too thin, not sharp^[3]. Finally, apply the puree to the line and let it dry and sharp.

Xizang kites have a relatively simple shape, most of which are diamond shaped with long left and right sides and short upper and lower sides. They are painted with very exotic colored patterns, such as “Gavo” (big beard), “Guma or guma” (red head or black head), “Milo” (googly eyes), “Qigwa” (Bongdian), “flower waist”^[3]. The colors of the kites are strong and unique in the Tibetan style, mainly in high purity colors such as red, yellow, blue, green and black. In Tibet, flying kites is regarded as a good act of praying for good luck, and the time of flying kites is also very special. In August of the Tibetan calendar every year, which is the kite flying season, kites flying in the sky are just like happy children playing.

3. Xizang kite elements in the visual communication design of the application of significance

3.1 Inheritance and protection of Xizang kites

The Intangible Cultural Heritage Law of the People’s Republic of China, adopted on February 25, 2011 and effective on June 1, 2011, clearly stipulates: “The state shall preserve the intangible cultural heritage by identifying, recording and filing it, and protect the intangible cultural heritage that embodies the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation and has historical, literary, artistic and scientific value by inheriting and disseminating it” (Article 3)^[5]. Kite-making skills in Lhasa, Xizang Province, on May 20, 2006, officially approved to be included in the first batch of national intangible cultural heritage list. Like other intangible cultural heritage projects, they also face great challenges of survival and development. Tibet has been a tourist mecca over the years, and integrating Xizang kite elements into the visual communication design can not only make more people understand Xizang kites, pay attention to the beauty of kites, feel Tibetan culture, and like kite sports, but also encourage tourists to make purchases, so that they can obtain greater economic benefits, which is not only the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage. It is also an effective measure to innovate the dynamic inheritance of culture.

3.2 Highlight the cultural connotation of visual communication design works

Chinese traditional culture has been inherited and accumulated for thousands of years, and its hidden cultural value and artistic value are beyond description. In the 1930s, Mr. Lu Xun once said: “Only the nation is the world.” The 19th National Congress was held in Beijing in October 2007, and the report clearly pointed out that “culture is the soul of a country and a nation. A prosperous culture will bring prosperity to the country, and a strong culture will bring strength to the nation.” Xizang kites are the excellent culture of the Chinese nation, which has been continuously deposited in the long history after hundreds of years of baptism. The integration of Xizang kite elements into

visual communication design is not only the living inheritance of Xizang kite culture, but also the enhancement of the cultural connotation of visual communication design works. It is the innovation of traditional culture and the embodiment of the confidence of Chinese national culture. Let the traditional culture in the baptism of time constantly radiate new vitality.

4. The application strategy of Xizang Kite element in visual communication design

The application of Chinese traditional cultural elements in visual communication design needs to start from the culture itself to explore its visual design process of “form”, “color” and “meaning”, which is a problem for every designer to think about.

4.1 The design of the “form”

“Form” refers to “graphics, image and shape”, which is the most basic and important element in visual communication design. The application of Xizang kite pattern elements in visual communication design should not be simply “appropriated”, but under the premise of fully respecting the cultural connotation of Xizang kite, it can be the dismantling, deconstruction and reconstruction of Xizang kite pattern, or the redesign of kite shape and structure. In short, it is an effective integration and innovation of traditional culture and modern design. Only in order to make deeply rooted design works, this is every designer should think about the problem. As shown in Figure 1, the paper cup design takes cartoon girls as the main body of the picture. The pattern, shape and structure of Xizang kite are cleverly integrated into the hairpins, earrings and hats of cartoon characters. Hand-painted method is adopted to make the picture harmonious and vivid.



Figure 1: Paper cup design, Student author: Shaoyu Lu, Advisor: Ju Song

4.2 Extraction of “color”

“Color” refers to “color, color”. In visual communication design, color is one of the most expressive elements. We often say that “color has character”, different colors can convey different characters, a color using different brightness and purity, can be delicate expression of different feelings. Color must be attached to the figure. Xizang kites are basically painted patterns, using high purity color, which has a great relationship with the regional characteristics of Tibet and religious culture. The main colors are red, yellow, blue, green and black, the whole color with strong regional

and ethnic characteristics. In Figure 1, the red, blue and black colors of the kite are extracted to form a strong visual impact with the large area of black color of the cartoon characters.

4.3 The symbol of “meaning”

“Meaning” mainly refers to the meaning of “artistic conception, meaning”, and “meaning” is based on “form”, that is, “form to express the spirit”. In ancient times, people’s productivity and cognitive power were relatively low. In the face of natural disasters and other things that could not be solved, they often prayed to God for protection. However, kite flying in Tibet is not only an entertainment activity, but also a beautiful moral behavior with good luck, praying for good weather and a bumper harvest in the coming year. Architect Liang Sicheng once said, “No nation in the West or East has ever been so fond of and faithful to the central axis of symmetry.” The pattern on the kite basically adopts symmetrical structure, produces balanced visual effect, reflects the traditional aesthetic thought of our country. As the old saying goes, “A man who is beautiful is harmless up and down, inside and outside, big and small, near and far. Therefore, he is called beautiful.” This is the beauty of symmetry.

5. Conclusion

In today’s global cultural convergence, if the visual communication design only focuses on the application of advanced technology while ignoring the application of traditional Chinese cultural elements, it will ultimately fail to pass the test of the market. We should strive to explore the diversity of traditional Chinese culture and apply it in modern design creation, which can not only carry forward the traditional culture, but also enhance the cultural connotation and artistic value of the works, and push the Chinese design industry to a new journey.

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