

Enlightenment and Influence of Chinese Taoism on Home Decoration

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Abstract: Taoism is the most influential native religion in China. There is a close relationship between Chinese traditional home decoration and Taoism. Through the summary of Taoist culture, the enlightenment and influence of Taoist culture on room space structure and display art, this article aims to express the important guiding significance of Taoism for the development of home decoration in China, and the traditional cultural role of Taoist culture in the field of decoration design.

1. Introduction

With the development of economy and technology, culture is becoming more and more diversified. The influx of foreign culture has an imperceptible impact on the development of Chinese home decoration. Blindly using for reference and imitation will inevitably lead to the lack of cultural characteristics, so a clear cognition of cultural origin is important. As a native religion in China, Taoism is closely related to the development of China. The influence of Taoism ranges from Chinese living habits and character formation to academic and technological development. Therefore, linking Taoist culture with the living space reflecting people's living conditions is conducive to the development of the cultural characteristics of our country's living room decoration, and also conducive to the living space becoming a good carrier of inheriting Chinese traditional culture.

2. An Overview of Taoist Culture

Xun Lu once said "China is rooted in Taoism" [1], which shows that Taoism is the most influential religion to Chinese people. The quietism of Taoism was once the idea of governing the country in the Western Han Dynasty; the thought of health preserving in Taoism has promoted the academic development of physiology, psychology and pharmacology; the introverted and experiential way of thinking in Taoism has created the implicit psychological character of the Chinese people; Taoism advocates nature, harmony between human and nature and balance between yin and yang, which determines the formation of Chinese dialectical thinking; the geomantic omen of Taoism has been influencing the location, layout and construction of buildings from ancient times to the present; Taoist polytheism not only enriches literary themes and promotes the development of literature and art, but also influences people's living customs, such as welcoming the god of wealth, affixing couplets, setting off firecrackers, etc; the Taoist thought that "Genuine music is hardly audible and true image is nearly

invisible" has created freehand Chinese art style; the Taoist principle that "Understanding the regulation of nature will enable us to understand everything and to tolerate everything" has formed an inclusive national character, as well as promoted the perennial development of Chinese civilization.

3. The Enlightenment and Influence of Taoism on Living Space

The influence of Taoism on Chinese home decoration is mainly manifested in two aspects: on the one hand, the influence is attached to the philosophy of Taoist culture. On the other hand, it is a geomantic omen theory based on Taoist Five Elements Theory.

3.1. The Segmentation of Living Space Influenced by Taoist Philosophy

3.1.1. The Segmentation of Living Space Affected by Implicit Aesthetics of Taoism

The Implicit Aesthetics of Taoism is reflected by "Wanting to Expose and Hide First". "Hiding before revealing" is expressed by comparing the size of space area, which often uses Chinese screen, antique-and-curio shelves and other furniture to partition the space. This partition form is semi-concealed and has the charm of "hiding" (table 1). Taoists believe that the vestibule is a space for gathering wealth. If it is exposed, the wealth will easily flow out of the room. In addition, Taoists also believe that such a small space before entering the living room can not only protect the privacy of the house owner, but also leave more imagination space for visitors. For example, Fig.1 shows the vestibule design of the new Chinese style. Designers use wooden grille screens to separate the entrance space and living room space. Plants are used in front of the screen to increase indoor vitality. The semi-concealment of wooden grille screens makes space separate but continuous. Under the guidance of the implicit aesthetic, the spatial level of the interior is rich and layered.

Table 1: Spatial Segmentation Objects
(Source: Author painted)







Spatial Segmentation Objects	picture
1.Wooden screen	
2.A Traditional Building Component under Interior Beam	
3.A woodcarving building component from the ground to the beam	
4.Partition board	
5. antique-and-curio shelves	
6.Curtain	



Figure 1: New Chinese-style vestibule.
(Source: The internet)

3.1.2. Living Space Partition Influenced by Taoism's Concept of "Mutualism of Blankness"

Applying the Taoist idea of "mutualism of blankness" to space design makes the interior space more flexible and changeable. The integration of void and real space not only has wide horizon, but also breaks the partition mode of rigid solid wall in the traditional living room, and creates a unique space according to the characteristics of different house owners. Light and shadow are void spaces; the area decorated by different materials is void space; the space enclosed by translucent materials is a void space; the convex and concave changes of horizontal direction indoors, as well as lifting or lowering changes of vertical direction, are void spaces. In recent years, Chinese people have gradually preferred open space with the influence of foreign culture. As shown in Fig.2, it is an integrated design of living room and dining room. First of all, the brown wooden floor of the dining room corresponds to the dark wooden decoration of the background wall of the dining room, which encloses the dining space. Secondly, the light carpet in the living room and dining room floor present a contrast of color and material, while light floor and the background wall of light sofa enclose the void space of living room. Finally, the formation of the living room and dining room seems to be a whole, actually the visual effect of the individual. This is the mutualism of blankness in space.

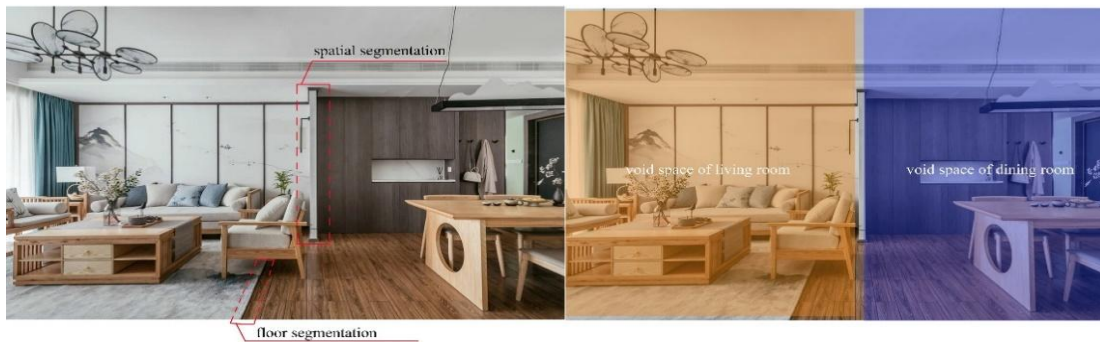


Figure 2: Integrated Design of Living Room and Dining Room.
(Source: The internet)

3.2. The layout of Living Space Influenced by Taoist Geomantic Omen Theory

The application of Taoist geomantic omen in interior spatial distribution benefits the construction of a comfortable living space. Some scholars believe that the cosmology of "the union of heaven and human" in geomantic omen follows the natural regulation and pays attention to the harmony of layout, position and natural environment, which is similar to the essence of harmony of human, architecture and environment in interior design [2].

In Taoist geomantic omen, vestibule should be set up as a barrier. The entrance hall has the function of gathering air and beautifying space. The entrance is supposed to be as concise as possible, and the ornaments should not be prominent and sharp.

Living room is the main space for family activities and reflects the owners' tastes. It should be in front of the entire space and have enough sunshine. When it comes to the layout of furniture in the living room, there is a saying of "leaning" on the geomantic omen. Therefore, the back of the sofa should be a solid wall, a bookcase or a screen. In kind, it is not advisable to leave an aisle, otherwise it will cause psychological insecurity (Fig.3).

The layout of the master bedroom affects the owner's fortune and career. The master bedroom in the southeast direction represents positive, and in the northwest direction represents mature. In addition, the bedroom area is supposed to be as square as possible while the narrow space is easy to make people

depressed. In the layout of furniture, we need to pay attention to the following points: first of all, the bedroom mirror can not directly face the bed, because the mirror is prone to visual illusion, which will affect people's rest. Secondly, bedroom ceiling should not be placed big lamps, which is easy to cause psychological pressure. Besides, bedside should not be close to windows and toilets, especially not directly facing the door, which will affect the quality of sleep. In the bedroom layout of Baoyu Jia's grandmother in Dream of the Red Chamber, the bed is put at the end of the room, while the dressing table and wardrobe are positioned along the wall to avoid the mirror of the dressing table facing the bed. Moreover, with the curtains of the bed, the light in the sleeping area is softer and more beneficial to sleep (Fig.4).

Kitchen geomantic omen affects the health of family members. Kitchens are usually set in the east and southeast directions, which represents wood and fire elements [3]. The combination of kitchen space and dining space has good effects on the harmony of Yin and Yang in space, which has the meaning of family prosperity. In the layout of kitchen utensils, it is not advisable to have a beam above the stove, which is unlucky in geomantic omen and can be improved by ceiling covering.

The layout of the bathroom is very important, which is unclean in geomantic omen. The position of the bathroom is usually concealed and away from the center of the house. Besides, the bathroom is supposed to have good lighting and ventilation.

Taoist geomantic omen is not an old superstition, but regulation summarized by the ancients in their long practice. Therefore, we should combine the living habits with beliefs of contemporary people to make rational use of them. When encountering difficult geomantic problems in practice, modern technologies can be used to deal with them, such as fresh air system is used to solve air problems.



Figure 3: The sofa board in the living room.
(Source: The internet)

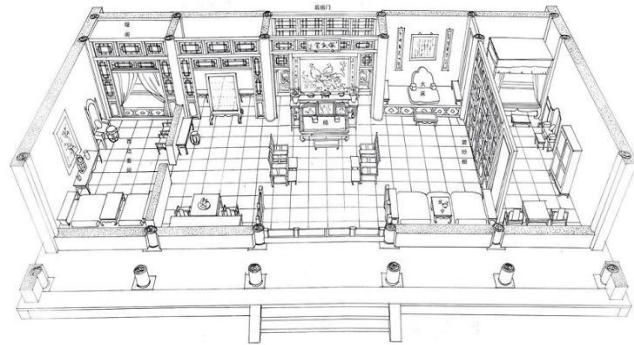


Figure 4: The bedroom layout of Baoyu Jia's grandmother in Dream of the Red Chamber.
(Source: The internet)

4. The Enlightenment and Influence of Taoism on the Art of Residential Display

4.1. The Influence of Taoist Thoughts of "Learning from Nature" and "Tranquility and Indifference" on the Furnishings

Taoist ideas of "learning from nature" and "tranquility and indifference" are mainly embodied in interior furnishings, which convey tranquility and long-lasting charm through concrete things, creating a

quiet and natural artistic conception.

Choosing plants from nature as interior decoration can create a "Void-quietness" atmosphere. For example, bamboo is hollow and knotty, which has been defined as elegant, quiet beauty and gentleman's virtue since ancient times. Shi Su, a writer of the Northern Song Dynasty, said, "Better eat without meat than live without bamboo." He expressed his view on the importance of bamboo in living environment. The artistic conception created by bamboo paintings, potted plants and bamboo handicrafts can only be understood, and it is difficult to express by words.

Peace of mind can be grown from daily self-cultivation. Taoist health concept believes that drinking tea can refresh, dispel evil thoughts and calm down [4]. Therefore, tea sets are often placed on the tea table in the living room. They are not only decoration, but also a reflection of the tea culture of "making friends through tea" in the living room space. Apart from this, drinking tea is also a way for contemporary people to relieve pressure, cultivate themselves and return to inner peace (Fig.5).

The idea of "tranquility and indifference" embodies simplicity, practicality, generosity and symmetry in furniture modeling, especially in the furniture of Ming Dynasty. The round-backed armchair of Ming Dynasty is round on top and square below. Roundness symbolizes happiness, while squareness symbolizes stability and tranquility. The armrest of the round-backed armchair is connected with the backrest, which goes down from high level to low level creating beautiful lines. The "S" curve of the backrest conforms to ergonomics. The overall shape is proportionate and concise without losing details (Fig.6).



Figure 5: Tea set.
(Source: The internet)



Figure 6: The round-backed armchair of Ming Dynasty.
(Source: The internet)

In the selection of furnishing materials for the living space, influenced by Taoism's advocacy of nature, they are often based on nature. Wood, bamboo, rattan, water, stone and other "feminine" materials are made into various craft furnishings and furniture to show an idyllic living space. In conclusion, the selection of natural elements and the combination of qin, chess, calligraphy and painting are beneficial to the creation of oriental aesthetic living space.

4.2. The Influence of Taoist Thought of "Giving the Meaning of Virtue to Things" on the Furnishing Patterns

Influenced by the thought of "Giving the Meaning of Virtue to Things", the choice of furnishings is mostly with auspicious implications such as longevity and wealth. For example, jade handicraft can convey people's ideal of worship, concentration, preciousness and mysterious "unity of heaven and man", which is consistent with Taoist thought [5]. Therefore, exquisitely carved jades are often displayed in such spaces as vestibule or living rooms to show the elegant taste of the owners. Blue and white porcelain also

symbolizes many beautiful implications. The patterns on blue and white porcelains often reflect the Taoist thought of "polytheism" and longing for longevity in terms of characters, animals, themes and auspicious words (Table 2) [6]. This kind of furnishings are placed in the living space, which endows the space more cultural connotations. Fig.7 is a beauty portrait of Qing Dynasty. It shows a beauty sitting in a bamboo chair and thinking, surrounded by antique-and-curio shelves. Antique-and-curio shelves display a variety of porcelain and jades, showing the Royal wealth and elegance.



Figure 7: Beauty portrait of the Qing Dynasty Palace. (Source: The internet)

Table 2: Porcelain Patterns of Blue and White. (Source: Author painted)

the Patterns of Blue and White Porcelain	picture	the Patterns of Blue and White Porcelain	picture
The pattern of celestial congratulations for birthday		the patterns of miscellaneous treasure	
the pattern of eight immortal		the patterns of eight diagrams and lotus with branches	
Crane pattern		the four pattern of longevity	
deer pattern		the pattern of Coiled four	

4.3. The Influence of Taoist Concept of "Five Elements and Five Colors" on Furnishing Color

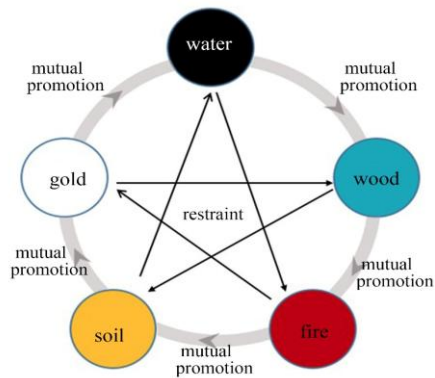


Figure 8: the relationships of generation and restriction in five elements and five colors. (Source: Author painted)

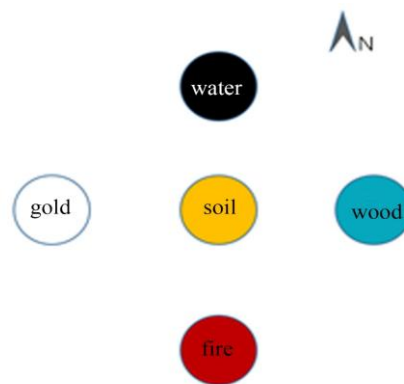


Figure 9: the directional chart of the five elements and five colors. (Source: Author painted)

The five elements in "five elements and five colors" refer to gold, wood, water, fire and soil. Gold

corresponds to white, wood to blue, water to black, fire to red, soil to yellow. Five elements and five colors have the relationships of generation and restriction (Fig.8). The application of five elements and five colors in traditional ancient architecture is much prominent. For instance, yellow is the exclusive color of the ancient supreme ruler. The emperor's position is in the center, which corresponds to the position of soil in the five elements. As a result, yellow is a noble color (Fig.9). The application of five elements and five colors in interior design pays attention to the relationship between color and space in order to build a comfortable environment. For example, red is not suitable to use for large area in bedroom, because red represents fire in the five elements, and also represents the South and high temperature. In addition, penetration of red is strong, and it is easy to associate with passion, fire, the sun and other powerful emotions or objects, so it is not conducive to the bedroom for rest. Considering the overall colors and harmony of the living space, the color of Chinese furniture is generally deep. Therefore, the overall space tone should be mostly light color, and then with green plants, yellow cushions and so on to embellish the space, so as to make the space color balance, while better showing the connotation of classical furniture.

In summary, in aspect of choosing color for room furnishings, it is necessary to select the appropriate color according to the functional characteristics of space, and to ensure a harmonious spatial tone. This is the same as the invariance and change in the *Book of Changes*.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the influence of Taoist culture in home decoration is deep-rooted. During the development of home decoration in the future, making full use of Taoism will not only be helpful for building home space with Chinese characteristics, but also making Taoist culture keeps pace with the times in the process of development and taking root in the ordinary life of Chinese people. It is noteworthy that the Taoist thought is not a rigid copy, but a reasonable choice combined with contemporary needs, conforming to the natural regulation and giving full play to its unique advantages in space division, layout and soft decoration.

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