

Research on Traditional Printing Art and Modern Packaging Design Based on Cultural Translation Taking Traditional Printing New Year Wood-block Prints as an Example

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ABSTRACT

With the development of economic and cultural globalization, art and culture exchange frequently in the international community. In China's packaging art design, some designs have lost themselves and lost their local cultural connotations in the search for international forms, while many traditional printing arts are in danger. New Year wood-block prints, as an important component of traditional printing arts, urgently need to be utilized, transformed, and recreated. This article explores the application path of New Year wood-block prints and modern packaging design from three aspects: material layer, behavioral layer, and spiritual layer, guided by cultural translation theory. The aim is to integrate traditional culture and modern aesthetic needs, provide localized design ideas for modern packaging, and create new vitality for traditional printing art.

Keywords: *Packaging design, New Year wood-block prints, Cultural translation, Traditional printing.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, against the background of cultural inheritance and innovation, the innovative development and creative transformation of excellent traditional culture in China have become a topic of concern for all sectors. In modern packaging design, the representation of Chinese national characteristics is still insufficient. The influence of foreign cultures also poses challenges to Chinese own national culture. In packaging design, although some packaging with local national characteristics have emerged, the most popular ones in the market are still packaging designed in Western styles. At present, how to integrate traditional printing art with modern packaging design to form specific design methods and theoretical guidance is an urgent problem to be solved. The prevalence of Japanese Ukiyoe design and minimalism also reflects the Japanese nation's reverence for nature.

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2. OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL TRANSLATION

“Translation” is a linguistic term that refers to the special act of translating one language into another through a medium.¹ In this article, cultural translation refers to the analysis, translation, and reconstruction of culture, which is integrated into modern packaging design. It is necessary to reconstruct the connection between traditional printing art and modern design to explore more possibilities for the expression and dissemination of New Year wood-block prints in modern packaging design, ultimately promoting the nationalization and prosperity of the packaging market.

1. Lu Peng, Zhou Ruoqi, Liu Yanhui, “Translation” by “Archetype”: Analysis of the Influence of Architectural Energy Saving Techniques on the Shaping of Architectural Form [J]. *Architectural Journal*, 2007(3): 72-74.

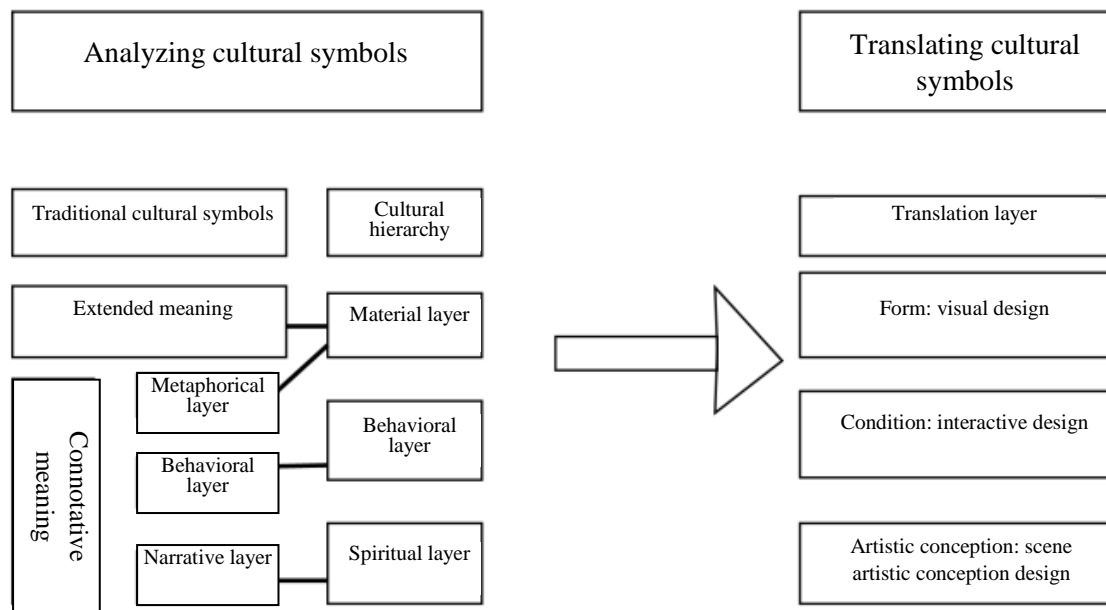


Figure 1 Translation and deduction of modern packaging design culture.

Cultural translation can closely follow the themes of traditional Chinese culture, regional culture, and local nationalization, using modern packaging design as a carrier. Driven by both extensional and connotative meanings, this originates from the concept of semiotics. This paper analyzes the visual content, behavioral habits, and narrative expression of cultural connotations of New Year wood-block prints. This paper also analyzes from shallow to deep, excavate cultural depth, and corresponds it with the three layers of material, behavioral, and spiritual in the theory of cultural hierarchy.² The author summarizes the culture in New Year wood-block prints, analyzes them around "form, condition, and artistic conception", and links them with modern packaging design content to form a creative path for the transformation of traditional printing art. (See "Figure 1")

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW YEAR WOOD-BLOCK PRINTS IN CULTURAL TRANSLATION

In Roland Barthes' view, the concept of symbols is divided into connotative meaning and extensional meaning. The extended meaning refers to the external meaning that is revealed, which is the

2. Liu Yuanxia, Yin Jun, Digital Cultural Creative Design of Taohuawu New Year Woodblock Printings Based on Cultural Translation [J]. Packaging Engineering, 2022.43(10): 326- 334.

external visual factors that can be directly felt in life, corresponding to the material layer in the cultural hierarchy. The connotation meaning is implicit and can be divided into narrative layer, metaphorical layer, and behavioral layer.

3.1 Material Layer

The external meaning of New Year wood-block prints is the material layer, which explains their content, that is to say, styling, composition, color, craftsmanship, etc. New Year wood-block prints are a vast system that has been difficult to inherit in China's millennium long development history, creating batches of New Year wood-block prints with rich folk characteristics and unique charm. At the same time, different artistic systems and regional characteristic schools have also been formed. In places such as Yangjiabu in Weifang, Shandong, Yangliuqing in Tianjin, Taohuawu in Jiangsu, Shaoyang in Hunan, Linfen in Shanxi, Zhangzhou in Fujian, etc., New Year wood-block prints have their own characteristics and reached their peak in the Ming and Qing dynasties, reflecting different regional features. But as a traditional folk art, New Year wood-block prints share common characteristics.

In terms of theme, the subject matter and content of New Year wood-block prints are closely related to the social development of the time, and can reflect the colorful life in secular customs. The prints can praise the virtues in traditional culture

and also reflect the vividness in folk culture, mostly expressing the people's pursuit of stability, longing for a happy life, and emotional attachment. Taking the New Year wood-block prints in southern Fujian as an example, the themes can be roughly divided into several aspects: the first is the expression of folk customs and real life, such as temple fair pictures, fishing pictures, etc.; The second is the door gods who guard against evil spirits, such as Yuchi Gong, Qin Shubao, the lion who guards against evil spirits, the tiger who guards against evil spirits, and the gods who attract wealth, fortune, longevity, and happiness; The third is decorative images used for posting during Chinese New Year holidays, such as common New Year painting doll images, sticker lights, etc.; The fourth is legendary folk mythology stories, local opera characters, such as Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai, the Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea, and the Empty City Plan; The fifth is the common New Year paintings used in religious activities or sacrifices, such as Baosheng Emperor.

In terms of color, it can be roughly divided into two methods, both of which use ink lines on the motherboard wireframe, with some areas of 600, and apply color matching and flat coating. One is more delicate and beautiful, elegant and highly decorative, such as peach red, red orange, pink green and other color schemes (as shown in "Figure 2").



Figure 2 Taohuawu New Year wood-block print.

The other type is simple and crude, with a strong urban habitat, such as bright red, dark green,

deep purple and other color schemes. (As shown in "Figure 3")



Figure 3 New Year wood-block prints of Zhuxian Town.

3.2 Behavioral Layer

The metaphorical layer corresponds to the material layer, which is an external factor, a reflection of current life, and a portrayal of humanistic spirit. The behavioral layer in the connotation meaning, also known as the cultural behavioral layer, can reflect current living habits, emotional appeals, and folk characteristics. The behavioral layer can reflect the purposefulness of New Year wood-block prints for current behavior, such as people posting anti evil and wealth seeking New Year paintings, which are appeals for "auspicious behavior".

3.3 Spiritual Layer

The narrative layer corresponds to the spiritual layer in the cultural hierarchy, which is secretly manifested as a natural, historical, and cultural memory context.³ New Year wood-block prints can reflect their philosophical connotations, humanistic ideas, and aesthetic tendencies. By integrating them into the painting itself and presenting them through visual storytelling, people interpret the connotations of New Year wood-block prints through different life experiences, cultural perceptions, and

3. Zhang Linghao, Building of Narrative Product Language in the Contemporary View [J]. Hundred Schools In Arts, 2008.

educational levels, reflecting their emotional and cultural tendencies.

4. APPLICATION PATH OF NEW YEAR WOOD-BLOCK PRINTS AND MODERN PACKAGING DESIGN IN CULTURAL TRANSLATION

4.1 Translation of the "Form" of New Year Wood-block Prints in the Material Layer

The translation of "form" in New Year wood-block prints is a visual translation of the material layer in the cultural hierarchy. It is necessary to determine the visual design of packaging based on the aesthetic needs of the target users and the content of the desired product. Present cultural symbols such as shapes, colors, and compositions in New Year wood-block prints with appropriate visual presentation. The designers can redesign the tone and style for different user needs.

"Is This Matter Feasible? Mazu Cake" is the packaging design of the traditional food Mazu cake on Meizhou Island by the author (as shown in "Figure 4"), which visually adopts the printing style of New Year wood-block prints. This packaging design is aimed at a wide range of young audiences, so the traditional woodblock carving techniques have been simplified and rounded on the lines. More vibrant and youthful shades of orange, blue, and purple have been used in color to increase modernity and design sense. However, at the same time, in order to strengthen the traditional style of New Year wood-block prints, the author has applied the technique of printing misalignment in the prints to the visual packaging, processing the lines and colors in a misaligned manner, which can increase the design sense and enrich the picture. The visual theme adopts the Mazu statue, and the innovative woodblock printing method reduces the seriousness of the Mazu statue. At the same time, the Mazu statue is changed to a blink expression, adding fun to its packaging design, which is in line with the aesthetic of young people today. It can also inherit and innovate the New Year wood-block prints and Mazu intangible cultural heritage.



Figure 4 Packaging display of "Is This Matter Feasible? Mazu Cake".

a Self-made by the author.

As a traditional printing art, New Year wood-block prints not only meet the aesthetic preferences of young people and create visually impactful works, but also conform to traditional tones and create noble, elegant, and luxurious packaging designs. The packaging design of "Dragon Song: Multi-functional Aromatherapy Humidifier" is created by the author using the traditional Chinese element of "dragon" to call the wind and rain, soaring through the clouds and mist (as shown in "Figure 5"). The target users of this product are different from Mazu cake. This product is expected to be packaged as a business gift box and may be used in office desks or cozy homes. Therefore, it is not suitable to use colors with strong impact, but should use softer and more elegant graphics. In the packaging design of "Dragon Song", the author has presented elements such as dragons and auspicious clouds in the form of woodblock printing. However, unlike traditional woodblock printing, the author has controlled the color to a low saturation warm brown and distinguished the graphics through different color tendencies (as shown in "Figure 6"). The ink lines of traditional woodblock printing were removed, making the overall visual softer and in line with the tone of the product.

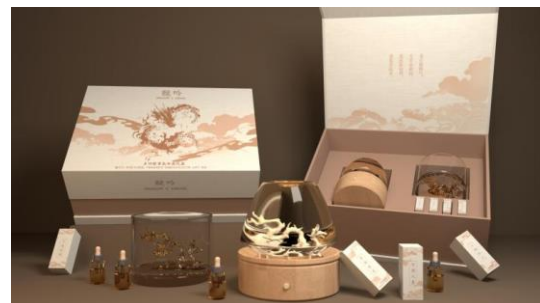


Figure 5 Packaging design of "Dragon Song".

a Self-made by the author.



Figure 6 Visual details of the packaging for "Dragon Song".

a Self-made by the author.



Figure 8 "Is this matter feasible? Mazu Cake" Holy Grail and some answers.

a Self-made by the author.

4.2 Translation of the "Condition" of New Year Wood-block Prints in the Behavioral Layer

The translation of "condition" in New Year wood-block prints is to organically integrate the interactivity in packaging design with the actual operation of New Year wood-block prints, in line with the user's behavior. For example, people use New Year wood-block prints to express emotions, worship, and other attributes, which corresponds to the packaging interaction behavior in "Is This Matter Feasible? Mazu Cake" (see "Figure 7" and "Figure 8"). In this packaging design, the concept of Mazu's "Holy Grail" is integrated. Mazu's "Holy Grail" is a tool for people to ask for Mazu's opinions. This packaging design gamified Mazu's "Holy Grail", where users can recite their questions silently and then throw the Mazu Holy Grail. The Holy Grail throwing has three results: one yin and one yang, two yin, and two yang. Users can obtain answers by flipping through the corresponding packaging based on different results. This interactive behavior replicates the "worship" attribute of Mazu culture and deepens the "auspicious behavior" of woodblock New Year paintings visually.

The packaging design of "Dragon Song" also has the same attribute (see "Figure 9"). "Dragon" is a traditional Chinese image, which itself has the meaning of auspicious behavior. Combining this image with the visual of New Year wood-block prints deepen users' "auspicious behavior". The expression of local connotations and cultural attributes in packaging design adds another layer of meaning. Under the trend of modern aesthetics, the special charm of traditional printing art is well demonstrated.



Figure 9 Packaging design of "Dragon Song".

a Self-made by the author.



Figure 7 Packaging display of "Is This Matter Feasible? Mazu Cake".

a Self-made by the author.

4.3 Translation of the "Artistic Conception" of New Year Wood-block Prints in the Spiritual Layer

The translation of "artistic conception" in New Year wood-block prints can be understood as the inheritance of cultural spirit and the continuation of cultural context. Users have different feelings and thoughts about different visual images based on their own life background and service experience. This is a comprehensive translation of the material and behavioral layers, and is a more emotional support for packaging design under the joint efforts of the two.

The combination of New Year wood-block prints and packaging design aims to reflect

traditional cultural charm through modern design techniques. New Year wood-block prints have their unique material texture, which brings a feeling that cannot be compared to other electronic means. New Year wood-block prints, a traditional printing art form, can achieve elegance, vulgarity, commerce, harmony, and beauty. They perfectly combine the poetic and free elements in their visual perception, effectively reproducing cultural narratives and guiding users to experience the scene. As shown in "Is This Matter Feasible? Mazu Cake", the scenes of Mazu, waves, and Mazu Temple are presented in the form of New Year wood-block prints (as shown in "Figure 10"). Opening the gift box cover reveals different levels of visual perception, which can guide users to recall Mazu's acts of kindness on the sea, reflect Mazu's spirit of morality, good deeds, and great love, and thus trigger emotional resonance among users. In the packaging design of Singing of Dragon, the scene of dragon and auspicious clouds (as shown in "Figure 11") can also awaken the Chinese people's concept of "dragon" flying on the clouds. It is a unique cultural heritage and scene reproduction of Chinese people, a unique Chinese traditional image, which guides users to have emotional sustenance for products and packaging.



Figure 10 Packaging display of "Is This Matter Feasible? Mazu Cake".

a Self-made by the author.

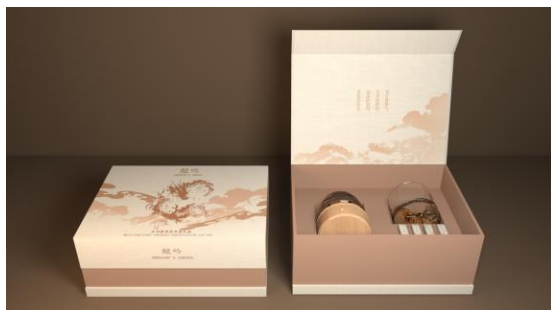


Figure 11 Packaging design of "Dragon Song".

a Self-made by the author.

5. CONCLUSION

The application of New Year wood-block print art in modern packaging design has verified that the "cultural translation" method can effectively extract the imagery of traditional printing art, and translate and innovate it. Through the three levels of "form", "condition", and "artistic conception", the structural integrity of traditional culture in the process of modern packaging design is ensured, and the connotation of traditional culture is effectively inherited and innovated, thus improving the lack of local connotation in modern packaging design. Culture is a place that requires continuous inheritance and innovation, and design can put it into practice. Designers need to adhere to the concept of cultural inheritance, sort out excellent traditional cultural resources, and also learn new theories and methods to innovate traditional culture. In the international market, they cannot lose the cultural connotation of their own nation due to foreign cultures. Enabling the modern packaging design market to achieve an organic combination of modern aesthetics and traditional cultural connotations will help to achieve a win-win situation between cultural inheritance and commercial quality.

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