



УДК 655.2:008(510)(084.1)

THE INFLUENCE OF CHINESE ETHNIC CULTURE ON THE DESIGN OF THE BOOK

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This research aims to explore the impact of cultural elements on book design across various dimensions, including the selection of layouts, application of patterns, layout techniques, binding methods, and material selection. It examines how these elements mirror the values, traditions, aesthetics, and technological progress of a particular society. Furthermore, the study seeks to understand how modern book design can more effectively express and disseminate the characteristics of different cultures. The goal is to contribute to the preservation and inheritance of traditional cultures and to foster greater exchange and understanding among diverse cultures.

Key words: Chinese cultural; ethnic cultural; Book Design; Design Elements; Cultural Exchange; tradition.

INTRODUCTION

As Benedict said, "Due to the unique fusion of cultural factors, there exist significant differences in the essential characteristics of cultures in different regions. The formation of various ethnic cultures results from the long-term evolution of psychological, emotional, and character traits in social consciousness and material production practices, each possessing its distinctive customs, cultural background, historical orientation, and aesthetic orientation" [1]. Chinese ethnic culture profoundly influences the process of book design. Different cultural backgrounds shape the ways in which designers conceptualize, create, and how audiences perceive their designs. Through an analysis of book design techniques, a deeper understanding of the content of books and the cultural essence they embody can be attained, and exploration can be undertaken on how to more effectively disseminate and preserve traditional culture, and enhance intercultural exchange in modern book design by integrating cultural factors.

PURPOSE

This paper, taking a selection of modern Chinese book designs as examples, analyzes the design techniques employed in these books to explore how cultural factors influence book design and how these elements can be effectively utilized in modern book design to convey and represent the cultural characteristics and aesthetic orientations of the books.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the context of globalization, contemporary Chinese designers, while absorbing and learning foreign design concepts and techniques, place an increasing emphasis on incorporating traditional cultural elements into their designs. Traditional Chinese artworks place a significant value on the expression of "artistic conception" which in book design is often manifested through balanced and harmonious layout arrangements and the strategic use of white space. In book design, whitespace is not simply about leaving areas devoid of graphics and text; rather, designers utilize it as a design element. Through meticulous planning, whitespace is skillfully employed to enhance the presentation of content. This approach creates a dynamic contrast between presence and absence, fostering a tranquil ambiance while accentuating focal points. Consequently, it provides readers with a soothing and relaxing reading experience. For instance, the designer Zhu Yinchun opted not to place any text on the cover, instead adorning a largely blank cover with a few tiny ant illustrations (Fig. 1, a). This extensive use of white space affords readers ample room for imagination and interpretation, successfully creating a serene mood [2].



Fig.1. Examples of Book Design: a - "ANT", b - "The Kingdom of Chinese Characters for Children".

Furthermore, China has many traditional patterns that can be used as elements in book design. Choosing appropriate traditional pattern elements based on the content can more effectively convey the cultural background of the book to readers. For example, in the book "The Kingdom of Chinese Characters for Children," which narrates the origins and characteristics of Chinese writing to children, the designer has utilized typical stencil symbols from Neiqiu paper horses in the cover and inner page designs [3]. This approach not only reflects the rustic charm of the text but also adds a touch of whimsy suitable for young readers.



Ancient Chinese books are made of bamboo slips and wooden slips; the production and typesetting of ancient books follow the traditional norms of Chinese calligraphy, so the text is arranged vertically from top to bottom and from right to left (Figure 2, a). This arrangement has been preserved to this day and has become one of the distinctive features of Chinese book design. The vertical text layout reflects the traditional aesthetics and aesthetic concepts of Chinese calligraphy, showing a dignified and orderly beauty. Therefore, vertical text in Chinese book design carries a profound cultural significance and boasts a long-standing historical legacy. It serves not only as a layout technique but also as a vehicle for the inheritance and expression of traditional Chinese culture. The utilization of vertical text in contemporary Chinese book design reflects a harmonious fusion of cultural heritage and modern aesthetic principles. Depending on the content, designers often use this method to evoke a sense of tradition and antiquity. For instance, the book "Artistic Conception Writing" employs this layout technique. On the other hand, the book uses traditional Chinese hand-bound stitching methods in its binding, imbuing it with a strong traditional Chinese cultural atmosphere (Fig. 2, b).

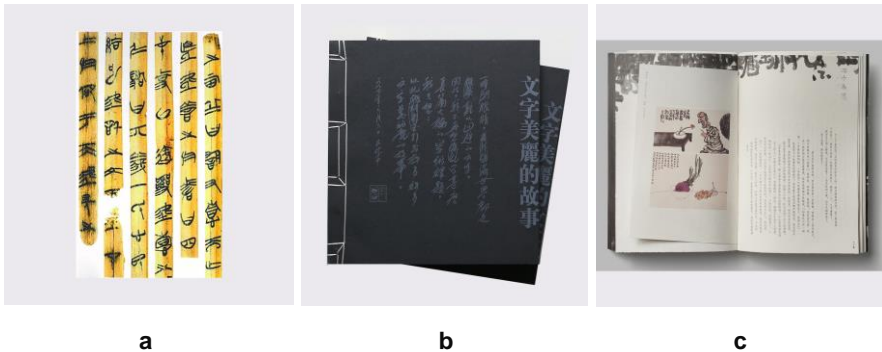


Fig. 2. a – The image of bamboo slips, b – The Book "Artistic Conception Writing", c – The Book "Pleasure of Learning"

The choice of materials is also a crucial means to highlight the cultural attributes of a book. A book about Chinese traditional calligraphy and painting, the designer has opted for materials such as felt and rice paper, which are special paper materials used for Chinese calligraphy and traditional painting (Fig. 2, c) [4]. These two materials have a long history and profound cultural connotations. Xuan paper, appearing as early as the Han Dynasty (206 BC to 220 AD), has been continuously used as a traditional medium for Chinese painting. Its unique ink-absorbing properties and texture allow for the creation of distinctive blending effects during the painting process. By using paper with a unique texture and specific application range, readers can fully appreciate the traditional Chinese cultural essence underlying the book through touch and reading.



CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of contemporary Chinese book design practices highlights the pivotal role that ethnic cultural elements hold within the field of book design. Scrutiny of various design elements discloses that books transcend their function as mere vessels for text, emerging as powerful conduits for cultural expression and conservation. Skillfully weaving ethnic factors into aspects such as layouts, patterns, techniques, binding methods, and material selections in modern book design not only encourages a discourse between the traditional and the contemporary but also deepens the reader's engagement with the cultural core contained within the books. Consequently, this document underscores the necessity for book design to both honor traditional cultural legacies and captivate today's readers, positioning book design as both a preserver of traditional cultural heritage and a facilitator of cultural exchange and comprehension.

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ВПЛИВ КИТАЙСЬКОЇ ЕТНІЧНОЇ КУЛЬТУРИ НА ОФОРМЛЕННЯ КНИГИ

Це дослідження спрямоване на аналіз впливу етнічних культурних елементів на дизайн книги у різних аспектах, включаючи вибір композицій, застосування орнаментів, техніки оформлення, методи переплетення та вибір матеріалів. Воно досліджує, як ці елементи відображають цінності, традиції, естетику та технологічний прогрес певного суспільства. Крім того, дослідження спрямоване на розуміння того, як сучасний дизайн книги може більш ефективно виражати та поширювати характеристики різних культур. Мета полягає у сприянні збереженню та спадщині традиційних культур та сприянні більш широкому обміну та розумінню між різними культурами.

Ключові слова: китайська культура; етнічна культура; дизайн книги; елементи дизайну; культурний обмін; традиція.