

Cultural Derivative Product Design Based on the Shao Huo Lao Folk Custom

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Abstract. Objective: Based on the traditional wedding custom, Shao Huo Lao, we extracted the available elements from traditional folk custom and represented the folk culture through the product design. Methods: We made a comprehensive analysis on the characteristics of Shao Huo Lao and its significance. We also investigated on the southern Sichuan. Combined with the time background, we designed some folk cultural derivatives. Conclusions: Folk custom can make the derivative product cultural. Meanwhile, the derivative products can also protect the folk custom, and meet the spiritual needs of people's life. Chinese Library Classification: TB472, Document Code: A.

Introduction

In the southern part of Sichuan, some traditional folk customs remain today. As a controversial wedding custom, Shao Huo Lao experienced continuous transformation and evolution in the history. Its original meaning was fornication. But now, the custom has become a kind of folk culture of relieving some tension and enhancing joyful atmosphere at weddings. With the development of times, Shao Huo Lao develops and adjusts itself accordingly. People's attitude towards it also changes from disgusting to tolerance and acceptance. Through in-depth researches and field investigations of this custom, three series of derivatives are created to re-define the connotation of Shao Huo Lao. In this way, people can learn this controversial custom from a more intuitive and tridimensional perspective. These derivatives aim to preserve the highlights of Shao Huo Lao custom, and bring charm to it again.

The modern reconstruction of traditional folk culture refers to the process of cultural changes in modern society. Under the circumstances of modern culture and modern life, folk customs need to inherit past traditions on one hand, and constantly adjust and change themselves to meet the various needs of modern people on the other hand. [1] Through the interpretation, we find that Shao Huo Lao wedding custom is not only a kind of ideology or traditional folk custom. It expresses the meaning of life and the truth of human's livelihood from more intuitive and affluent aspects. Discarding these exaggerated drama performances and improper rhetoric expressions, and tracing back to the origin of Shao Huo Lao with a positive attitude, it can be found that this controversial custom expresses our ancestors' reverence for life. Folk customs are pretty attractive. Relying on the wisdom and experiences of ancients, customs hand down from generation to generation. But nowadays, with the development of material economy and the changes of times, corresponding connotations of some customs are gradually alienating from modern society. We need to explore the spirits and meanings of these customs, and combine them with modern ideas to reshape their positive images. The inheritance of folklore ensures the continuity and long-lasting prosperity of national culture. [2] Combining Shao Huo Lao custom with modern product design can help people to remember this folk culture in this modern society, which is continuously getting rid of the stale and bringing forth the fresh. At the same time, using daily necessities as the carries of cultural derivatives also helps us to affect, inherit and protect these customs.

Shao Huo Lao Folk Custom

The word of Shao Huo Lao firstly appeared in Suyuan ancestral temples in the early period of the Republic of China. At that time, it was ridicule especially refers to the incest between fathers and

daughters-in-law. In the middle and late of last century, the word was disgusting, since it was used to discredit or slander the others. But now with the development of social civilization, it has gradually accepted by people and become a phenomenon of local folk custom.

In the book *Voice of Great Soul-Spiritual Secret History of Ba Nationality*, Yuan-heng Cai defines the word of Shao Huo Lao. "Shao Huo Lao refers to male individuals who are forced into the scene of the Creation. They want to get rid of cultural confusion of no offspring. Thus, under the implication of religious doctrine, they join in the dislocated sexual relationship with family members without blood relations, like wives of brothers, daughters-in-law and aunts". [3] Folk customs refer to cultural phenomena created and transmitted through oral, conventional and behavioral forms. They are closely linked to our social life, and reflect our behavior norms, moral and ethical ideas, as well as cognition and thinking modes in daily life. For the word of Shao Huo Lao, different people have different interpretations, and there is no clear, determined definition. Most interpretations adopt the meaning of incestuous relationship. At the same time, with the continuous progress of social civilization, more and more explorations and researches pay attention to its connotation about religious ethics and life extension. [4] Many people spoof on Shao Huo Lao wedding custom, or treat it with teasing attitudes. They hold that Shao Huo Lao is only a lively, funny wedding form, and do not understand the deep cultural connotation of this custom. Combing Shao Huo Lao with product design, we can transmit the spirit of this custom, and re-define Shao Huo Lao through our interpretation of its connotation. When people are using these products, they can better accept this traditional culture. Thus, the traditional folk cultural heritage can be protected. As Mr. Hara once said, it is necessary to re-create mature cultures. [5]

Design Thoughts of Cultural Derivative Products under the Background of Shao Huo Lao Folk Custom

Cultural derivative products are integrations of cultural industry and manufacturing industry, and they are the economic basis of the existence and development of cultural industry. Cultural derivatives are expressions of culture. They are new materialized form cultural products which are produced after the deconstruction of different cultural characteristics. [6]

Design is a kind of conscious and intuitive effort in order to achieve meaningful order. [7] Folk cultural products are created after explorations of a single or a number of folk cultural resources. They reflect the combination of products, services, and related experience with folk custom characteristics. [8] Design thoughts of Shao Huo Lao products mainly cover the following aspects. Through the combination of modern concise style and the extraction of Shao Huo Lao character features, Season Series is created after integrating the simple concept of "one day, two people, three meals and four seasons" into the warm family life. Drawing inspirations from the traditional wedding ceremony, then combining them with contemporary aesthetics and value orientation, the Wedding Series with both exquisite charm of classical beauty and utility function of modern life is created to offer people a novel sensory experience. The cultural connotations of Shao Huo Lao are the blessings of bride and groom, and the hopes of enjoying a happy family. Thus, these graphic symbols are engraved in products of Family Series to convey the most sincere blessing. Products design of the three series starts from the basic image of Shao Huo Lao, then gradually deepens into the wedding expression of Shao Huo Lao, and finally extends to its folk custom. The cumulative progression interprets the highly controversial Shao Huo Lao custom from various perspectives.

Extracting elements from the manifestation and culture connotation of Shao Huo Lao, designers design cultural derivative products correspondingly. Some usage of these elements is representation, which means directly applying cultural elements, such as shapes, colors and patterns in products from realistic approach. Others are expressions, which mean extracting symbols first, and then combining them with products elements like lines, shapes and colors to create a new image. [9] From these representation and expressions, products of Season Series, Wedding Series and Family Series can reflect and enrich the cultural connotation of Shao Huo Lao wedding custom, and meet the requirements of utility and beauty at the same time.

Seasons Series. The appearance of Shao Huo Lao is a man wearing peaked hat, carrying a red board on his front and a red bamboo tube on his back. Season series emphasizes the most characteristic symbol, the peaked hat, and extracts the symbol of triangle from these hats. Outlines of characters remain to obtain a cartoon image. Negative information from the original character is replaced by a lovely image, which can satisfy different consumer preferences. Colors are extracted from the four seasons. The four seasons form a cycle, and can be regarded as the process of giving and receiving between family members. Love is the key to a harmonious, happy family. In all kinds of family relations, the only constant is the selfless love of parents. Season series intends to express love, and uses images and colors of plants with season features into characters to create products which can meet the aesthetic needs of people today. Most of these products are accessories like stationery, key chains and dolls (figure 1). Product material can be selected according to customers' needs.



Fig.1 Seasons Series

Wedding Series. Traditional Chinese wedding elements embody auspicious meanings; they reflect people's blessings to the newly married couple and their pursuit of happiness. These elements carry the unique Chinese cultural connotation and historical accumulation, and can be seen as the crystallization of national spirit and wisdom. [10] Shao Huo Lao activity at the wedding day aims to continue the traditional lively wedding scene, and to express blessings from relatives. It indicates the days after marriage is booming. The Wedding Series is designed accordingly. The auspicious "Chinese red" is selected as a symbol of good luck. The color of "Glaze Yellow" is extracted from the golden color of dowry furniture. The color of "Great Wall Grey" is extracted from silverware in the dowry. Combining them with the traditional wedding symbols like the character of happiness, magpie, phoenix coronet, official hat, firecracker, ornamented candle, head cover, bridal sedan chair and other plane figures, as well as related utensils used in wedding activities such as crossing brazier, opening red umbrella and offering tea, the lively atmosphere of wedding can develop to the extreme. After deconstruction and reorganization of images and characters, the images are redesigned and can be used in traditional wedding supplies like invitation cards, envelopes, candy boxes, tea sets and fruit bowls. These images are not only artistic, but also useful (figure 2).



Fig.2 Wedding Series

Family Series. Generally speaking, Shao Huo Lao custom goes as follows. On the wedding day, groom's parents are named as Shao Huo Lao. They need to wear red peaky hats which are nearly three feet high. The hats bear ridicule words like "the god of fire". Their faces are covered with a variety of colors. Square red boards hang in front of their chests, saying "I want to make a fire." The parents also need to carry one meter long red bamboo tubes on their backs; the bamboo tubes are named as "blow tube". Then friends and relatives lead them through the streets, with someone beating the drums before them. The wedding atmosphere culminates in that activity. This wedding custom intends to deliver a humorous and optimistic attitude towards life, and to relax the nervous wedding atmosphere. Parents' happiness are transferred through these exaggerated image features, as well as humorous words and actions. They are quite happy since their son is getting married, and will have his offspring soon. Their hearts are full of accomplishment and happiness. At the same time, the bride is a little nervous at the wedding. This custom can effectively narrow the distance between the older generation and younger. Through Shao Huo Lao, family members will not feel embarrassed or unfamiliar in later life. Wishes from relatives are also expressed in this process. Shao Huo Lao brings pleasure to the whole family. The concept of this series is extracted from the folk culture. The images of family members are used as design elements. Circles in products are extracted from red faces; triangles are obtained from peaked hats. These symbols can emphasize the features of different characters. Then, these images are repeated and changed, and combining with daily supplies. Family Series with the connotation of Shao Huo Lao aims to combine folklore with daily life together (figure 3). This series of products can be used as feedback to guests. They can be produced according to the specific requirements of customers.



Fig.3 Family Series

Conclusions

The product design original from Shao Huo Lao wedding folk make us rethink of this custom, which is of great significance. Folk culture is capable of supporting its derivative products and makes them unique and charming with time. Derivative product design can also contribute to the study and in-depth understanding of the folk custom, making it more intuitive to be understood. Many kinds of folk culture are left behind because of its outdated concepts and absurd inherit methods and gradually disappear. We should think about whether it is possible to protect the folk customs and inherit from them, namely through the extraction of folk culture and the design of products which are contrast to the contemporary environment, we can encourage people to look back on and think about those obsolete folk customs and make them charming again.

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