

Application of “Taotie Design” in the Graphic Design of Spice Packaging

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Abstract—As a source of inspiration for designers, traditional decorative pattern is a great design treasure for the modern packaging design. This paper studies and recreates the Taotie Design on the bronze wares of Xia and Shang Dynasties. Through visual conveyance and manifestation based on shape transformation and color extraction of the decoration of spice products, traditional patterns and natural specific shapes are extracted and summarized so as to create a new graphic vision design.

Keywords—Taotie design; graphic design; decorative pattern

I. INTRODUCTION

Spice has been endowed with mystery since ancient times when people thought that incense vegetation has magic power with the function of blessing and pleasing god, warding off disease and eliminating evil. People use spice to make herbal

cuisine, cure disease and nurse their bodies in accordance with different characters of spices. This paper focuses on the creative graphic design of spices packaging to express the cultural concept and heritage of brand packaging. In ancient mythology, “Taotie” is the fifth son of the legendary dragon and is a ferocious beast with the most gluttonous appetite. “Taotie Design” is mostly seen on the bronze wares of Shang and Zhou Dynasties, which is standing on the lid of the Ding, an ancient cooking vessel because of its gluttony. The overall image of its face is shown in "Fig. 1". As we can see, it has big eyes, nose, two horns and no bottom lip in general, which is symmetric based on the center line. This type of animal patterns in Shang and Zhou Dynasties often create a mysterious and powerful atmosphere otherworldly, which is called by Li Zehou as “beauty of violence and ferocity”. This kind of symbol has mysterious power which is formidable.

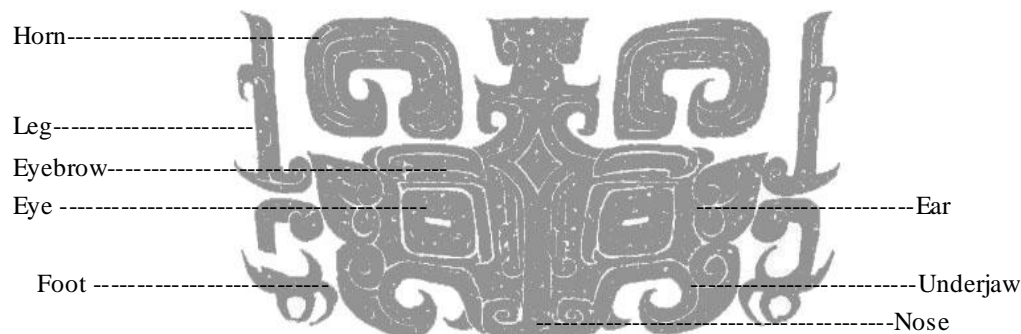


Fig. 1. Composition diagram of the face pattern of a Taotie

How to integrate the elements of patterns on traditional bronze wares into modern design of packaging is the study theme of this paper. Besides, aiming to design different graphic elements that can stand for its own characters of each spice respectively, this paper summarizes the shape characteristics of various spices through simplified generalization or abstract expression. As a saying goes, “recognize all flavors as Taotie and eat around the world!” To present the distinct and unique characters of each spice, this paper designs patterns specially for A momum cardamomum, myrcia, chili, Chinese prickly ash, Flos Magnolia, galangal, anise, clove, cassia, etc..

II. MANIFESTATION OF TAOTIE DESIGN IN GRAPHIC CREATIVITY

As a design language, graph can convey its internal and external elements to viewers in the form of visual image. When watching a design work, people do not simply accept it visually but they generate some psychological activities. Such activities depend on the manifestation of the design, which are the basis of the application of the association method and the media image it depends on is more flexible than metaphorical image, because it can be a concrete object and also can be a contract concept. In study, association method is applied to disperse thinking so that characteristics and shapes of various spices can be summarized and integrated with the abstraction of “Taotie

Design” to express a new concept of graphic creativity wholly and vividly.

First, during the generalization and extraction of graph, profiles of spices are personified and endowed with their own personalities in accordance with their distinct characters. Such personality is integrated with typical elements of Taotie design such as eyes, nose, mouth, jaw and foot. In this way, decorative mask patterns in folk fine arts are conveyed by the composition mode of symmetry, deconstruction and recombination. As shown in "Fig. 2", basic images of spices are expressed through the top-set horns which are distributed axisymmetrically and at

the same time, concrete profiles of spices are separated, deconstructed and then recombined into new abstract graphs to present the vivid visual images of legs and feet of Taotie, and besides, concrete forms of spices at the bottom are used to show the figure of Taotie with mouth widely open, conveying the spiritual connotation of “Taotie recognizes all flavors”. As a brand-new creative image, the figure gives people a sense of mystery and culture. Such expression by virtue of practical graphic creativity makes a full combination of concrete and abstract, further integration of the overall decoration effects of Taotie Design into the design.

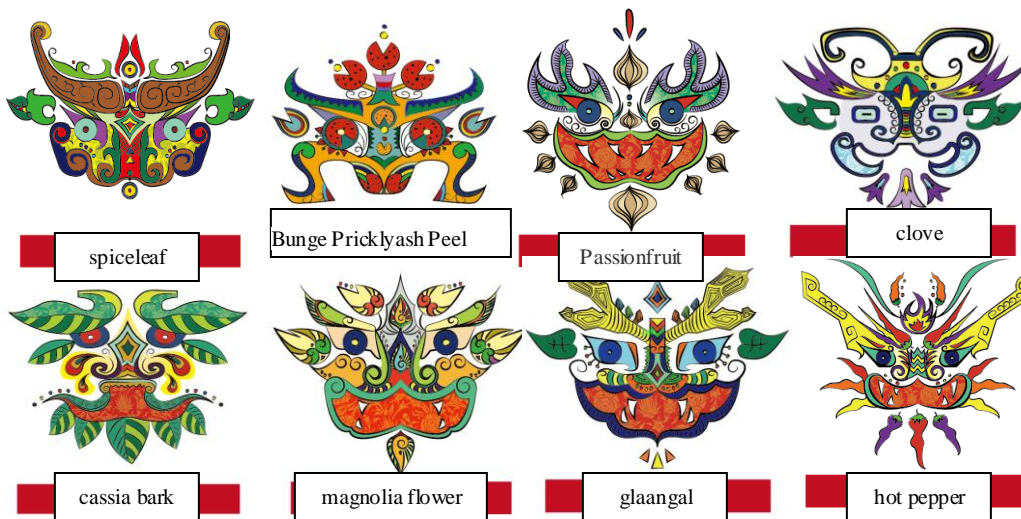


Fig. 2. Creative design of Taotie patterns of spices

Second, based on the color principle, the design is expected to determine the main style and position of the commodity and convey the story and connotation of the brand and the commodity. The generalization and combination of graph profile are followed by the application of color in decoration. Thereinto, as the most typical traditional Chinese color, Red is the one that can give people the strongest sensory stimulus apart from the sense of intensity, rejoicing and auspiciousness. In addition, the typical color “Chinese red” fully demonstrates a cultural concept of Chinese nation and this makes it the most suitable color for packaging decoration of spice products. White gives a sense of cleanliness and purity, also conveying the concept of food sanitation and safety. Colors in green series exhibit the vitality of plants, together with the freshness and comfort of nature. Revealing the typical characteristics of color combination used in food packaging, alternate use of warm colors such as yellow, orange, and chocolate can arouse people’s interest in cooking and their appetite, showing the spiritual connotation of “Taotie loves eat” all the time. For the creative expression of Taotie patterns, each independent pattern is evolved from the actual profile of the spice itself and partial colors adopt the original color of the spice to make the pattern more representative and easier to identify. In the meanwhile, colors used in traditional patterns and folk fine art are also applied in Taotie pattern, making contrasting colors and complementary colors integrate organically to enrich colors of

the pattern to reveal the fact that spice can bring people strong and exciting gastronomic experience.

Abstract expression of patterns can be achieved by changing their creative profiles and colors to catch people’s eyes, and the essence of a pattern is the organic combination of points, lines and planes. This kind of creative pattern is characterized by freedom expression method and various shapes, which can activate the imagination of people apart from conveying thoughts and emotions of the spice through patterns. At the same time, abstract patterns are used to express their unique characteristics and nature that as a reaction can enrich the artistic visual tension of the patterns. As a visual design language, patterns by means of different types realize the conveyance of information to people. Besides, as a communication way, patterns can turn abstract ideology into visible plane and three-dimensional space to show people the visualized graphic language. Manifestation ways of patterns are dominated by creative thinking to produce new and ingenious language and visual images to catch attentions.

III. APPLICATION OF TAOTIE GRAPHIC CREATIVITY IN PACKAGING DESIGN

After the determining of the graphic creativity of each spice, start plane design of visual conveyance and arrangement of visual process based on the design and concept of format

design and structural arrangement of the packaging at each process. The graphic creativity can also be integrated into serialized packaging such as gift box design, bottles for large particles, powder cans, hand bags and other collective packing to make the format and arrangement of the packing more entirely and serialized. As shown in "Fig. 3", by adding visual communication elements including words, logo and signs, patterns and auxiliary patterns of the brand to the subject images of the product packaging including labels, seals, hand bags, it further shows the unique creativity and presentation of the patterns in modern packaging. To highlight the packaging design based on patterns, new images of Taotie patterns of various spices are expressed to deepen the connotation of the product in the packaging. In addition, by focusing on the original characteristics of spice products, the images, patterns, visual signs, etc. can accurately reflect the information of the products. By using skillfully the elements of the packaging such as style characteristics, hue and patterns, it is likely to make an overall arrangement and design so as to create an integral and complete visual image to meet the requirements of serialized packaging with uniform style. In practical design, elements of spice products involving specification, quantity, style, components, hue, price and packaging design elements including three-dimensional shape, hue, Taotie creative pattern, words are combined to perfect the design.



Fig. 3. Application of Taotie graphic creativity in packaging design

In modern packaging design, it is required that patterns designed not only have complete visual meaning and spiritual connotation but also can accurately express the attribution of the products in addition to conforming to the principle of formal beauty so that these creative patterns can be well arranged to create a new style and inject a fresh breath; at the same time, the designed patterns shall be filled with national culture so as to convey a certain cultural concept to people. Besides, graphic design shall pay attention to major characteristics and details of key positions of the pattern. Apart from creating distinct and unique visual effects, patterns are

expected to be concise but flexible, complicated but not cumbersome; simple and vivid, complicated but pure and perfect. By studying Taotie patterns on traditional bronze wares, new manifestation ways and application in packaging are worked out by intensively analyzing the practice and application of creative pattern languages in packaging design. Moreover, the reasonable application of modern decorative patterns in packaging design is initially explored in this paper. Aiming at the status quo of spice packaging in the market, this paper puts forward the concept and connotation of modern brands of seasoning and makes innovation on visual expression ways.

IV. CONCLUSION

Patterns are playing important roles in conveying consumption image, demonstrating merchandise categories apart from expressing and generalizing the function of visual graphic language. As a major design language and one of significant elements in visual design, graphic language distinguishes itself among all artistic styles by means of its creativity and cultural charm shown in the design work. Through exaggeration, transformation, decoration, beautification and extraction, realistic patterns are designed as decorative patterns, and these treatment methods are also the mostly used methods in graphic design and creativity. Based on the creativity performance, this paper studies the several graphic languages and their concrete application. In addition, by employing the plane design language involving decoration deformation, color extraction of the packaging of various spices, traditional patterns and concrete images are applied in new design work of packaging in the form of abstraction and association. Such methods reflect the product packaging design with Chinese traditional culture which lifts the spiritual connotation of the product, creating emotional resonance and ideology identification of consumers. The application of decorative patterns with Chinese traditional culture in spices makes them more attracting than other similar products apart from endowing them with interesting and profound cultural deposits.

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