

Patterns and Cultural Identity of "Chang'an Prevailing Features" from the Perspective of Concept History

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Abstract

"Chang'an Prevailing Features" is the inner spirit that integrates the temperament of the times, the national spirit, the ideology and the aesthetic concept reflected in ancient Chang'an. This article takes "Chang'an Prevailing Features" as the exposition content, uses the "unit concept" of the history of ideas, takes the popular pattern cases in Chang'an area as the research object, studies its existence and operation methods under different cultural field concepts, in order to broaden the design implication of the clothing pattern and the research horizon of "Chang'an Prevailing Features".

Keywords: "Chang'an Prevailing Features", Ideengeschichte, Linked-Pearl Pattern, tree of life, cultural identity

Meteorology also refers to the scenery, phenology in nature and the general spiritual outlook and spirit of society in a certain period. Specific to the category of clothing, the style and spirit shown by the color compatibility, style features and patterns of clothing are its performance characteristics. Ancient Chang'an was not only the capital of the Central Plains cultural axis era, but also the center of ideological and cultural exchanges between the East and the West. This article takes "Chang'an Prevailing Features" as the exposition content, and uses the "unit concept" of the history of concepts to study the cases of popular patterns in Chang'an area. Its existence and operation methods under different cultural field concepts are expected to broaden the design meaning of clothing patterns and the research horizon of "Chang'an Prevailing Features".

1. The Cultural Geographical Connotation of "Chang'an Prevailing Features"

There are many clothing research results based on the time axis, but the research based on region and space can still be excavated. Chang'an is located in the middle of the Guanzhong Plain, bordering the Weihe River in the north and the Qinling Mountains in the south, with four distinct seasons. Shi Nianhai believes that the term "Chang'an" originated in the Qin Dynasty. Ma Zhenglin believes that the origin of the name "Chang'an" is very early (Ma, 1978), "it was originally the name of a village near Xianyang". From the perspective of cultural geography, the "protective response mechanism" of the geographical environment is fully reflected here. It starts from the Yellow River Tong Pass in the east, reaches Liupan Mountain in the west, with Qinling Mountains in the south, Beishan Mountain in the north, and is located in the Guanzhong Plain. That's why Chang'an is called "a place blocking mountains, connecting rivers and with enclosed area all around". The relatively closed geographical environment makes it fully manifest its ability to assimilate and integrate foreign cultures in the face of external cultural invasion. This ability ensures the transformation and design upgrades of Chang'an culture in the face of foreign cultures.

2. Visual Presentation of Patterns

Relying on its geographical location, the exchanges along the Silk Road make Chang'an an information center, and its strong political background and open management attitude make it strong while absorbing foreign cultures. During this period, a lot of pattern products that blended Chinese and Western appeared. Due to the different situations, they were often labeled with the symbol of "Hu Hua". In fact, analyzed from the context of

their formation, they can be used as a research path to interpret the "Chang'an Prevailing Features". The patterns of "joint beads pattern" and "the tree of life" patterns are selected as research cases.

2.1 Linked-Pearl Pattern

The linked pattern is a pattern in which a number of small circles are arranged according to a certain rule, and it is a form of arrangement of patterns. It is named because the small circle forms a trajectory like a bead. This is the basic pattern of the bead pattern. On the basis of the basic pattern, there will be a deformation of the compound bead pattern. The pattern design of multiple circles is carried out outside the central area, as in Figure 1. The "Chinese Pattern Dictionary" has the following description of the couplet beads: "One of the ancient patterns is decorated with dots and beads on the edge of the round wheel, which is named after the combination of beads..." (Guo, 1998). This pattern is often seen in the buildings and brocades of Chang'an.

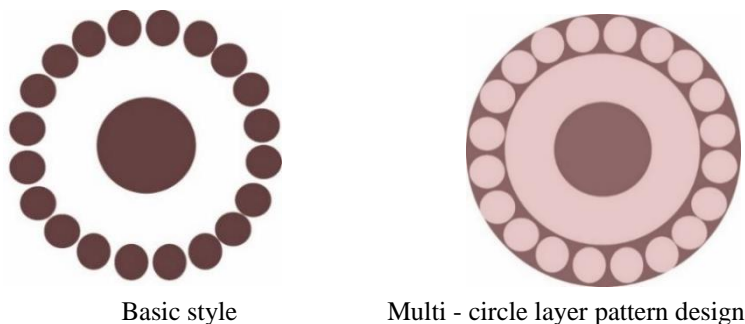


Figure 1. Bead pattern (painted by the author)

2.2 Tree of Life

The common auxiliary pattern in the popular brocade in the Tang Dynasty was the tree of life pattern. This element is located in the middle of the pattern, so that the branches, fruits and deer patterns on both sides form a suitable pattern to be distributed within the group. With the tree of life pattern, its branch form is mostly a three-branch structure with the main trunk as the center and mirror images on both sides. The tree-like structure constitutes a pattern support suitable for the group. Most of the species of the tree of life are mango leaf clusters, which are composed of seven leaves. The clumps are neatly arranged, and the tops are raised like the fruit patterns of grapes or pomegranates, forming a plump and intricate decorative image.



Figure 2. The pattern of the tree of life in the deer pattern brocade

3. Chinese and Western Origin of Image Patterns

Because the bead pattern and the tree of life appearing clothing carriers mostly show obvious foreign characteristics, they were characterized as foreign patterns in previous studies, which limited the research field of such patterns.

3.1 Linked-Pearl Pattern

In the past research, it is believed that the Lianzhu pattern is the representative pattern of the Sassanid Dynasty in Persia, which was absorbed and developed in China during the Wei and Tang Dynasties. In terms of its origin in the West, religious culture was an important way for the dissemination and exchange of brocade skills and shapes in the Sui and Tang Dynasties (Stein, 2009). From the decorative fragments of the ruined Buddhist temple at the Dandan Uric site, we can see the decorative arrangement of several small circles. The decorative

arrangement is similar to the bead pattern, as an art form carrying religious teachings.



Figure 3. The ruins of Dandan Urik destroyed the decorative fragments of the Temple



Figure 4. Pottery shards unearthed in Jotekan

Lianzhu pattern as an artistic pattern was unearthed in the Central Plains earlier than in the West. Lianzhu patterns have appeared as decorative patterns on people's daily utensils in the Xia and Shang dynasties. In the late Xia Dynasty, there are clear and coherent Lianzhu patterns on the lotus, and the outer edges of the leaf vein bronze mirrors in the late Shang Dynasty are also decorated with Lianzhu patterns. In the Tang Dynasty, Chang'an, as an economic and trade center and cultural center, had a large number of decorative patterns of beads on the lotus pattern tiles. This combination of lotus and beads is full of strong religious meaning, and is also a proof that the Sassanid culture and the Central Plains culture exchange has been recognized.

3.2 Tree of Life

The form of the main body of the tree of life is actually the shape of the tree of life. In the process of transition from the hunting era to the agricultural economic era, material materials such as sunlight, plants and animals are the guarantee for the continuation of human life. The worship of plants and the deification of animal totems begin as for the labor form of the patrilineal clan society, its artistic symbols always run through the slave society to the agricultural society (Jin, 2002).

Most of the tree of life are mango clumps, and later generations believed that their fruits were pomegranate patterns, which took the meaning of the more sons, the more happiness (In Chinese, the pronunciation of “子” (son) is the same as “籽” (seed)). The shape of the leaves of the tree of life and the motif patterns supplemented by the tree of life can be used as the basis for judging the fruit of the horse chestnut tree. Although similar in appearance, their referential semantics are very different. Pomegranate and grape, as multi-sub-patterns in plant patterns, have more obvious secular meanings, while the patterns of the horse chestnut tree must carry religious meanings.

4. Interpretation of "Chang'an Prevailing Features" from the Perspective of Concept History

Lovejoy objected to the idea that historians divide their research objects according to time period. He believed that the difference of ideas in time is greater than the difference in area or space. The differences shown in the time period are greater than the differences shown in different countries, ethnic groups and cultures in the same period (Zhang, 2017).

As the pattern semantics of sun worship, the pattern of the beaded beads coexisted in different regions and different ethnic groups in China and the West at the same period. However, with the passage of time, under the interpretation of foreign religions, the pattern of the beaded beads has a religious meaning different from that in the Central Plains. Although the combined elements and the context of its existence have changed, but its original design semantics should come from the same source. The evolution form conforms to the aesthetic view of justice and harmony in Chinese culture, which is one of the reasons why the brocade pattern with the bead pattern as the auxiliary pattern was able to evolve in the Central Plains.

The worship of Tree of life is a universal culture. In Chinese culture, the "Fusang tree" represented by the giant bronze tree in Sanxingdui, Sichuan Province, and the "money tree" culture represented by the bronze cash tree made of pottery in the Han Dynasty, including the tree shape in the Han Dynasty Daimiao stone rubbings "Da Yi Shoots the Sun", the Moon palace osmanthus tree and so on, all have the divine case of heaven. In ancient Egyptian culture, trees with SAP as white as emulsion, such as palm and FIG trees, were regarded as a symbol of the mother of the earth and a form of worship of life tree brought by trees.

The pattern of tree of life, whether it is the deformation of the tree of life in China or the mango bushes in the

outer world, as an art form, carries the meaning of "reaching the sky", "connecting the spirits" and religious significance. After entering the Middle Earth, the pattern of the horse chestnut tree is interpreted as the pomegranate pattern which is also the result of the weakening of its religious semantics and the enhancement of its secular meaning in the process of development. Its origin and development reflect the common outlook on life and nature in different regions and under different cultural backgrounds. This art form carrier is a basic component that can be analyzed from the perspective of concept history, and the combination and evolution process of its pattern units is also the development process of the cognitive system, regional temperament and design language of the Middle Earth region.

Any political, social and cultural phenomenon has its profound belief, knowledge and ideological background. An important feature that distinguishes Chang'an from other ancient cities in terms of "Prevailing Features" is the multi-religious belief system. This tolerant religious attitude comes from the political self-confidence of the ruling class. Under the strong political self-confidence, religion has become a medium for cultural transmission, which has added products from the fusion of cultural factors from Central Asia and foreign regions to the cultural blood of Chinese civilization.

5. Summary

"Chang'an Prevailing Features" contains a variety of systems and viewpoints. Philosopher Lovejoy believes that "the entire system of theories of any philosopher or school is almost a complex and diverse synthesis". From any system of thought or doctrine, then, various "unit concepts" can be decomposed. Explore the evolution process of "Middle Earth" from the artistic form to the explicit social function of ornamentation. The selection, acceptance, integration and even innovation of foreign cultures reflect the cultural identity of Chang'an. For art forms containing complex religious meanings, the combination of its narrative expression and the formation of new artistic patterns reflect Chang'an's strong political confidence, and the later changes of the patterns reflect the "Chang'an Prevailing Features" that has a myriad of aesthetic styles.

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