

Visual Translation Design of the Folklore Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Grand Canal in Tianjin

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Abstract: In the context of the integration of the intangible cultural heritage dissemination of China's Grand Canal in the context of cultural power and the living inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage of the Grand Canal from the perspective of cultural creativity, this paper takes the folklore intangible cultural heritage of the Tianjin section of the Grand Canal as the research object, deeply explores the cultural connotation and symbols of the canal, and studies the way of visual image translation and design of intangible cultural heritage. Based on the perspective of cultural inheritance and development, this paper analyzes the relationship between Tianjin Canal folklore and visual design, combines modern design visual thinking, and uses the means of element extraction, reconstruction and recreation to carry out the modern visual image expression of intangible cultural heritage. Taking the traditional intangible cultural heritage of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine" in the Tianjin section of the Grand Canal as an example, the visual communication performance is carried out through the establishment of a symbolic image, which is of great significance to the dissemination of Tianjin's food intangible cultural heritage and its rebirth in the era of visual culture.

Keywords: Grand Canal; Intangible Cultural Heritage; Symbol; Folklore; Visual Translation Design.

1. Introduction

As the native carrier of Tianjin's transport culture and the mother body of urban regional culture, the Grand Canal has not only witnessed the urban evolution of Tianjin for more than 600 years, but also accumulated rich historical and cultural heritage resources. These cultural genes of the Grand Canal, which are deeply rooted in the regional texture, highlight the diverse connotations and unique character of Tianjin's regional cultural symbols. From the perspective of cultural interaction, Caoyun culture has driven the integration of Chinese food culture and promoted the paradigm construction of Tianjin's traditional food culture through the circulation of materials from the north and south. Folklore, on the other hand, is in the form of a narrative carrier, and gives Tianjin food culture a spiritual meaning beyond the material level. As an important part of intangible cultural heritage [1], folklore is not only a key medium for activating historical and cultural memory, but also an important source of inspiration for driving design innovation. The regional cultural genes of Tianjin carried by it not only shape the people's value cognition system, but also play an irreplaceable role in maintaining national cohesion and enhancing cultural leadership. Therefore, the protection and inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage of folklore is a need for cultural rejuvenation, and it is also a mission and responsibility. With the development of the times and the changes in the human environment, human society has entered the "era of world images" with vision as the core in the philosophical discourse of the German philosopher Heidegger [2], and our human cognition and experience mode has shifted from traditional language and writing to visual image-dominant. As the British critic Berg said: "In the course of human history, there has never been such a strong concentration of visual information" [3]. In this context, how to rely on the cultural meaning of folklore to creatively translate Tianjin's food intangible cultural heritage in modern vision and regain its cultural value in the contemporary context [4] is not only a key path to enhance the added value of Tianjin's intangible cultural

heritage, but also an important measure to promote the dissemination of Tianjin's regional culture and promote the coordinated development of regional economy.

2. The Folklore and Dissemination Status of the Intangible Cultural Heritage "Da Fu Lai Guo Ba Cuisine"

The creation of Tianjin Dafulai Guoba cuisine can be traced back to the 22nd year of Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty (1757 AD), and its folk narrative records show that the founder Zhang Lan was the thirteenth generation descendant of Zhang Qing and Sun Erniang, Liangshan figures in the Northern Song Dynasty. During the Qing Dynasty, Zhang Lan operated the "Zhang Ji Pancake Shop" in the northwest corner of Tianjin, which was the initial format of this food category. According to records, when the Qianlong Emperor passed through the Sancha River Estuary in Tianjin for the second time on his second southern tour, he went to this pancake shop to taste the "pancake roll green onion", and choked due to the urgency of eating, so he asked the store for soup. Since the pancake shop did not have a tradition of selling soup, Zhang Lan's wife Guo Ba was in a hurry and put the broken pancakes with coriander, oil and salt and other ingredients into a bowl, mixed with boiling water and presented to Qianlong. After Qianlong ate it, he appreciated it and gave it the name "Guoba Dish", and rewarded him with silver taels and said, "Your great fortune is coming". Since then, Zhang Lan has changed the store name to "Dafulai", and transformed the business format from a pancake shop to a store specializing in pot and rice dishes, and improved the taste of the initial pancake soup to suit the taste preferences of Tianjin's regional food. Finally, it forms a "Tianjin Guoba dish" that is different from traditional pancake soup. Until the Guangxu period of the Qing Dynasty, after the process was improved again, its production process system was also finalized and continued in the family inheritance model. In 1956, Zhang Fengxiang, the last inheritor of the Zhang family of Dafulai, responded to

the call of national policies and participated in the reform of public-private partnerships, and the nature of the operation of his store changed from a private enterprise to a state-owned enterprise. Although the inheritance is interrupted in the middle, its core formula and standardized operating procedures still maintain the traditional form. Among them, in 1963, during his inspection of Tianjin, former President Liu Shaoqi tasted Dafu Lai Guoba cuisine and spoke highly of it, further establishing its status as a landmark category of Tianjin's local specialty food and becoming a unique food culture symbol within Tianjin's region [5].

With the development of the times and changes in social structure, Tianjin Guoba vegetable market has gradually shown a trend of brand diversification, and various emerging brands have emerged one after another, resulting in the gradual weakening of Dafulai's brand recognition and market influence. Its brand image has evolved from "household name" to "little known", and even some consumers are completely unaware of its legendary origin and historical context, which reflects the practical dilemma of the dissemination of food intangible cultural heritage. From the perspective of communication mechanism, the core reason for this problem is that the existence form and transmission path of folklore related to Dafulai Guoba cuisine are still limited to the two traditional modes of "oral inheritance" and "text presentation", and these two models are significantly disconnected from the current public's cognitive habits and ways of thinking based on "visualization, interactivity, and multi-dimensional space", which ultimately leads to the gradual marginalization of relevant cultural memories due to lack of attention. In the contemporary context dominated by visual culture, the living inheritance of folklore needs to be combined with the development characteristics of the times, and the sustainable continuation of cultural context can be achieved through continuous innovation and adjustment of its own communication form to adapt to external social changes. Therefore, the visual translation of the folklore of Dafulai Guoba cuisine in line with the needs of the times has become a key path to promote the regeneration of its cultural memory and realize the living inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

3. Visual Translation Design Based on Cultural Inheritance and Development

In the prehistoric period before writing was created, humans were in the primitive stage of "auditory acceptance of narrative". As an important carrier of early human culture, folklore mainly relies on the language communication method of oral narration to achieve inheritance, and has not yet formed a fixed text record form, and its content dissemination has strong fluidity and uncertainty. With the birth and popularization of writing, human society has entered the stage of "text reading narrative", which has a structural impact on the inheritance system of folklore, that is, text narrative with text as the communication medium has gradually replaced a single oral communication mode. The intervention of written media not only fixes the content of folklore, but also significantly expands its dissemination scope, promoting the spread of folklore from a regional cultural phenomenon to a wider cultural space. In modern society, with the rapid development of science and technology and the profound changes in social structure, human cognitive

patterns and thinking logic have fundamentally shifted to the visual dimension. From the traditional cultural form with language and writing as the core carrier, it has gradually transformed to a modern cultural form with visual images as the core carrier, and then "visual images" have gradually replaced "language and words" and become an important medium for cultural transmission. In this context, the communication form of folklore has gradually entered a stage of development with "visual acceptance narrative" as the core, and its presentation method has evolved in a more attractive, intuitive and vivid visual direction, becoming a new carrier form for the inheritance and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage (hereinafter referred to as "intangible cultural heritage").

Visual translation design is a systematic process of transforming abstract cultural elements into perceptible visual language [6]. The core of this translation process is the use of the visual language of modern design to visually express cultural concepts, cultural connotations, and spiritual cores. Specifically, visual translation design uses visual elements such as graphics, colors, text, and modeling as the basic carrier, and uses creative design techniques to visually reconstruct cultural content or thoughts and emotions in line with the modern communication context, and then generates concrete visual image symbols, so as to realize the effective dissemination of cultural information and cross-group communication. Visual translation design is essentially a process of emotional translation and symbol isomorphism. This process requires the systematic extraction and rationalization of the original symbols, modeling symbols, cultural symbols and spiritual connotations in intangible cultural heritage, and transform them into visual carriers that meet modern aesthetic needs. This transformation can not only help the audience quickly and accurately recognize and understand the intangible cultural heritage, but also make them have deep memories and emotional impressions, especially for young people to understand and accept the connotation of intangible cultural heritage, and better enhance the sense of identity and belonging of the whole society to Chinese culture.

4. Visual Design and Development Approach

The folklore of Tianjin intangible cultural heritage "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine" has a certain lack of information in the practice of external communication, that is, there is a lack of reasonable and accurate visual images to reflect historical memory, and its communication mode still relies on the traditional oral narrative and text recording mode, which cannot be better and effectively connected with the communication context and cognitive needs of modern society. In the era of visual culture, all kinds of cultural forms are filled with infectious visual presentations, and the folklore in the form of text cannot be effectively paid attention to by the public due to the lack of visual appeal, and it is even more difficult to achieve dissemination and communication, and cannot be inherited and developed. The inheritance of folklore is not solidified and becomes a relic, but activates its inner cultural vitality through continuous dissemination and communication, so that it can achieve a living continuation in the contemporary context. This is enough for many designers to urgently carry out modern visual design of the intangible cultural heritage of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine", that is, by

constructing a visual image that is in line with the aesthetic concept of the current audience and is easy to accept and recognize, the cultural connotation can be truly inherited and developed from the symbolic image.

As a carrier of traditional culture passed down from generation to generation, folklore is actually to enable modern people to accept traditional culture, which requires its communication path and presentation method to be combined with modern visual culture, and to be consistent with the cognitive orientation and thinking mode of contemporary people in terms of visualization and intuitiveness. It can be seen that it is crucial to explore an effective modern visual translation design path for innovative expression of the folklore of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine", which is not only conducive to attracting the attention of modern audiences, but also enhancing the emotional connection between audiences and culture. Combining the narrative characteristics of the folklore itself and the modern visual expression of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine", the brand image of Dafulai Guoba cuisine can be visually translated and designed through the way of "symbolic image".

From the perspective of academic definition, cultural symbols refer to a kind of cultural memory transmitted from generation to generation and between groups [7], which is not only an iconic element for conveying cultural information and values, but also an external form of presentation of the connotation of intangible cultural heritage, and a key medium for the visual expression of traditional culture. According to semiotic theory, symbols are composed of "signifiers" and "signified": "signifiers" point to the figurative form of the symbol itself, which has the explicit artistic attributes of visual expressiveness, specifically covering perceptible visual elements such as modeling, color, clothing, and patterns; "Referencing" is the abstract concept carried by the corresponding symbol, with intellectual and metaphorical deep meaning, including symbolic connotation, psychological cognition, values, cultural beliefs and other spiritual content. As an important branch of the symbolic system, visual symbols are symbolic images perceived through visual senses, which are essentially the unity of emotional translation and symbol isomorphism. This allows it to help audiences quickly establish a cognitive framework for cultural content and form deep memories and emotional impressions. The core of the visual translation design of folklore intangible cultural heritage with symbolic images as the carrier is to use a clear, condensed, systematic and standardized modern visual language to visually convey the core narrative content and spiritual core of folklore. Specifically, it presents the cultural core of legends through vivid and vivid modern graphic symbols, transforms them into intuitive and visual forms, and relies on the audience's visual consensus on graphic symbols to achieve cultural interaction and value recognition, providing an effective path for cultural dissemination and exchange [8].

The application of modern symbolic images to the visual translation design of the folklore of "Da Fu Lai Guo Ba Cai" can first help the audience break the stereotype of "old" and "outdated" folklore from the cognitive level, and reconstruct the cultural positioning. Secondly, it can stimulate the audience's cultural pride and sense of identity for the legend and story, create a good social and cultural atmosphere for the inheritance and development of the intangible cultural heritage of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine" [9], further enhance the public's awareness of respect for intangible cultural heritage,

promote the formation of conscious inheritance behavior, and finally realize the living inheritance and sustainable development of intangible cultural heritage. It should be emphasized that in the process of symbolizing and visualizing the folklore of "Da Fu Lai", it is necessary to fully consider the diversity of communication objects, that is, to build a communication dialogue mechanism for audience groups with different cultural literacy, professional backgrounds, and life experiences. Based on this, the creation of the symbolic image of "Dafulai Guoba Dish" needs to grasp the connotation and authenticity of the legend culture, and in the appropriate context, the core image in the legend is graphically refined and summarized, and the authenticity and essence of the legend are correctly expressed in the most optimal way. This requires excavating and selecting the content of the text, finding out a typical image that can make the recipient and the designer have a certain tacit understanding, so as to carry out artistic processing and creative expression, and finally create a visual image that is fully understandable and can realize the emotional docking between people and the intangible cultural heritage of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine".

4.1. Creative Conception of Symbolic Images

The legend and story of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine" carries multiple information such as historical context, cultural connotation and social memory, and how to convey the rich meaning of its name with concise and condensed graphic symbols, and make consumers have a sense of dignity and emotional identity with this Tianjin breakfast category, is the core proposition of this visual design. First of all, it is necessary to carry out systematic preliminary research: carry out in-depth investigation around the social background, historical and cultural context, humanistic and folklore characteristics and other dimensions of the folklore, explore the core materials that can be used for creative conception and visual expression, and lay the preliminary foundation for establishing a brand image that is both rational and unique. Secondly, it is necessary to systematically sort out, summarize and identify and analyze the information materials obtained through research, and accurately locate the design entry point. Specifically, the design entry point can be selected from multiple dimensions: it can not only focus on the narrative content of the legend of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine", but also based on its spiritual temperament; It can not only draw inspiration from the text form of "Da Fu Lai Guo Ba Cuisine", but also explore the typical elements of regional culture and historical background, and also combine the image elements of the founder to create it. No matter what kind of entry point is chosen, it is necessary to highlight the brand value as the core criterion, and the visual image built needs to meet the three principles of authenticity, readability and era, and highlight the unique personality and competitive advantage of the intangible cultural heritage of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine". After creative positioning demonstration, the "narrative content" of the legend of Dafulai Guoba cuisine will be taken as the core entry point to carry out specific creative conception and design practice.

4.2. Symbolic Image Design Practice

In terms of graphic design, the creation of legendary "story content" as the core entry point can make the brand image form highly recognizable IP attributes, create a unique and distinctive visual image, and strengthen the depth of brand

memory. From the legendary narrative plot of "Dafu Lai Guoba Dish", we can see the origin of its name, which can not only highlight the emperor's recognition of the food, but also give it the cultural connotation of "imperial grace". Choosing the image of the emperor as the core element for creative design can not only metaphorically represent the authoritative recognition of the flavor quality of Guoba cuisine, indirectly convey the product attributes of "deliciousness", but also highlight the noble characteristics and enhance the identity attributes of consumers. Therefore, the final symbolic image is based on the image of the Qianlong Emperor for artistic reconstruction and creative expression, and the portrait is extracted and expressed in an appropriate amount of words, shaping the visual form of "holding a big bowl of pot and vegetables", vividly presenting the core plot of the legend, realizing the visual condensation of the narrative content, transcending language and words and fully demonstrating the cultural authenticity and spiritual connotation of the intangible cultural heritage itself. The symbolic image of the legend of "Dafulai Guoba Dish" is detailed in Figure 1.

In terms of font design, in addition to the reading function, the font in the symbolic image is second only to the graphic, and the two together constitute the core elements of the symbolic image, which are indispensable. The style and temperament of font design directly affect the entire tonality of the symbolic image, and the adaptability of its design is the key to determining the unity of the overall visual image. From the perspective of information transmission, font visual design is a visual medium that directly carries cultural information, with the accuracy and efficiency of information transmission, which can not only supplement the connotation interpretation of graphic symbols, avoid cognitive biases caused by a single figure, but also strengthen the audience's memory depth of symbolic images through audio-visual synchronous movement. In order to achieve cultural adaptation with the legend narrative, the font design practice of this time is to extract the line characteristics of traditional emperor-related visual symbols, and carry out reasonable stroke deformation and structural optimization of the six Chinese characters of "Da Fu Lai Guo Ba Cai". Specifically, these six glyphs adopt the commercial catering font style that is in line with the trend of contemporary visual communication, and form a visual echo with the graphic symbols of Qianlong's image, which can not only convey the full and simple traditional cultural atmosphere, but also have the modern trend and fashion temperament, create a serious and solemn visual atmosphere, and make the font itself have cultural appeal. This design strengthens the cultural image of the legend of "Dafulai", realizes the semantic synergy with graphic symbols, and finally presents a complete and peaceful cultural atmosphere, which is in line with the historical heritage and intangible cultural heritage attributes of the brand. The font design image of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine" is detailed in Figure 2 and 3.

In terms of color planning, the colors in the symbolic image design system have the core functions of strengthening visual stimulation, transmitting psychological suggestions, and shaping emotional cognition. It can significantly improve the audience's cognitive depth and memory strength of symbolic images. As Rodin said: "Color is thought", through the psychological response and visual stimulation of color, it can highlight the connotation and spirit of symbolic images. In the visual construction of the entire symbolic image, color has the strongest visual recognition effect and is the key design

element to highlight cultural characteristics.



Figure 1. The symbolic image of the Dafulai Guoba cuisine brand Image
source: Design by the research group



Figure 2. Dafulai Guoba cuisine font design image Image
source: Design by the research group

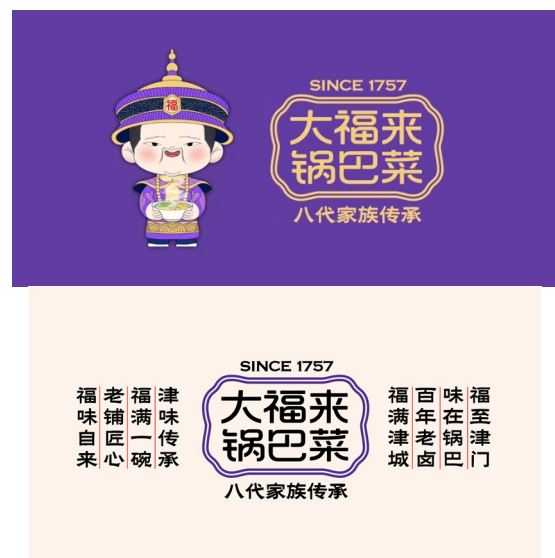


Figure 3. Combination display

The traditional image of "purple qi coming from the east" in ancient Chinese culture gives purple a cultural connotation of "auspiciousness" and "nobility", and its symbolic meaning is highly consistent with the cultural background of "imperial grace" in the legend of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine", reflecting the emotional meaning of auspiciousness. At the same time, in order to distinguish the brand homogenization problem caused by the commonly used red color in the catering industry, purple was determined as the standard color of the brand, which represents the high-end and luxury of the brand

and is in line with the historical and cultural heritage of the brand. In order to make up for the lack of visual tension of standard colors in specific communication scenes, beige was

further selected as an auxiliary color to enhance the overall visual effect. The color design specification of "Dafulai Guoba Dish" is detailed in Figure 4.



Figure 4. "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine" color specification

The whole symbolic image clearly conveys the cultural characteristics, values and cultural connotations of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine", effectively expresses the core content and concept of the intangible cultural heritage, which not only maintains the simple traditional cultural atmosphere, but also does not show the trend temperament of the current industry brand, is full of visual affinity, and shows a strong personality, which is conducive to the dissemination, exchange and inheritance and development of this intangible cultural heritage.

5. Summary

In the current era of map reading, countries around the world are gradually forming a general trend of visual translation and design of their traditional intangible cultural heritage, which is also a challenge. Accelerating the visual translation design of intangible cultural heritage is the core path to solve the contemporary survival dilemma of intangible cultural heritage and promote its sustainable development. Through the rational visual translation design of the intangible cultural heritage project of "Dafulai Guoba Cuisine", giving it an accurate expression in line with the characteristics of the times, and disseminating its brand historical narrative and cultural connotation through visual language, it is not only a practical exploration of the modern and creative transformation and value sublimation of intangible cultural heritage, but also an important way to promote the living inheritance and international dissemination of Tianjin's regional intangible cultural heritage. This practice provides concrete carrier support for the construction and manifestation of Chinese cultural self-confidence.

Acknowledgments

Foundation: 2022 Tianjin Municipal Education Commission Scientific Research Program Project Achievements (2022SK122) "Research on the Modern Translation Path of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Tianjin Section of the Grand Canal from the Perspective of Cultural Creativity".

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