

Tujia Ethnic Group Woodcarving Patterns and Their Application in Packaging

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Abstract: Taking the woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group as the subject of the study, this paper analyzes the characteristics and connotations of the woodcarving patterns and their symbolic meanings. This paper also discusses the spiritual connotations of the thematic patterns commonly used in packaging design and elaborates on the characteristics, artistry, and functionality of the symbolic meanings of the woodcarving patterns. Through the analysis of the application of woodcarving patterns in packaging design, the paper proposes the effective use of these patterns in packaging design to achieve visual effects, convey the cultural connotations of products, and enrich the cultural and artistic value of products. This study also expounds on the significance of spreading the woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group and the value of researching their integration into packaging design.

Keywords: Tujia ethnic group; Woodcarving patterns; Implications; Packaging application

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1. Introduction

The woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group originate from the ancient culture of the Tujia people, with a history dating back to the Tang Dynasty hundreds of years ago. During that period, the Tujia people began to carve wood to create various woodcarvings, such as furniture and architectural decorations. The Tujia people used a rich variety of patterns on these woodcarvings to express their understanding and pursuit of nature, life, and faith. Over time, the woodcarving art of the Tujia ethnic group gradually matured and formed a unique artistic style. The woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group are closely related to their national culture and traditional beliefs. In the tradition of the Tujia people, the dragon and phoenix are symbols of auspiciousness and happiness, hence, dragon and phoenix patterns are very common in Tujia woodcarvings. In addition, animal and plant patterns are also important elements in Tujia woodcarvings, such as plum blossoms, bamboo, and pine trees symbolizing resilience and vitality, while lotus and chrysanthemums represent purity and cleanliness. These unique implications of the woodcarvings, including their application in packaging design, are the main research subjects. These woodcarving designs can enrich the packaging art design, promote local tourism and economy, and also play a role in spreading and protecting the traditional woodcarving pattern culture of the

Tujia ethnic group.

2. Characteristics of the Tujia ethnic group woodcarving patterns

The woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group usually include both concrete and abstract shapes. These patterns are not only aesthetically pleasing but also incorporate symbolic expression methods in the design, enhancing the connotation of the shapes. For example, the dripping bed of the Tujia people is a piece of furniture with a unique structure and decoration, usually made without nails and glue, but instead with traditional mortise and tenon structures, showcasing the superb craftsmanship of the Tujia people. The decorative layout of the dripping bed is intricate and exquisite, with each carved flower pattern rich in deep cultural significance, often using homophonic implications for auspicious meanings. For instance, lotus implies the birth of noble children, golden melon implies continuous offspring, sunflower implies many children and grandchildren, and upside down bat implies the arrival of blessings.

2.1. Multi-level nature of Tujia ethnic group woodcarving patterns

Multi-level is often used to indicate that things or concepts have different levels or aspects. It implies complexity and diversity, which can be analyzed and understood from different angles or levels. The multi-level nature of the woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group is reflected in their rich connotations and diverse forms of expression.

The Tujia people have endowed the woodcarving patterns with various unique multi-level implications through different methods. They incorporate natural worship and totem culture, religious beliefs and mythological legends, cultural heritage and educational significance, as well as auspicious implications and blessings into the composition of the pattern symbols to express their multi-level nature. For example, they often integrate natural elements into the patterns, where certain plants may symbolize vitality and reproduction, and animals may represent strength and speed, while dragons, phoenixes, and deities reflect the Tujia people's reverence and belief in supernatural forces. The patterns on stationery items express the importance of education and the expectation of achievements for future generations. This showcases the uniqueness of beliefs and traditional customs, expanding the expression of the implications of the woodcarving patterns in multiple directions, and giving them a more tenacious vitality. This makes the woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group a representation of the traditional culture and the spiritual and ideological connotations of the Tujia people. The woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group also have unique manual arts and rich cultural connotations.

2.2. Multi-dimensional nature of Tujia ethnic group woodcarving patterns

The woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group have the artistic characteristics of line modeling. Lines in the woodcarving patterns not only serve the modeling but also have an abstract aesthetic beauty on music. The function of lines in woodcarvings is multi-level, such as by displaying a large group dance performance of textual themes via simplified symbols that reflect decorative effects. This shows the Tujia people's love for beautiful things and their yearning for a beautiful life. They integrate symbolic expression methods into the woodcarving patterns, which sublimates the connotation of the shape and also makes the woodcarving patterns an important carrier for their cultural heritage and emotional expression. The value concepts, life attitudes, and spiritual pursuits of the Tujia people give the woodcarving patterns a multi-dimensional nature by integrating multiple dimensions of cultural connotations. These cultural connotations include their important life philosophy and wisdom that represent their praise for agricultural life and the yearning for family harmony.

There is also its unique aesthetic concept and artistic style, which are usually expressed with simple, smooth lines and vivid color contrasts, showing the rich emotions and implications integrated into the woodcarving patterns. For example, the patterns of the sunbird flower and the forty-eight hook pattern are not only beautiful but also express the Tujia people's love for beautiful things and their yearning for a beautiful life.

3. Application of woodcarving patterns and their implications

From the perspective of visual communication, the woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group have their own uniqueness. Their patterns are a visual symbol that carries traditional culture, with the nature of typical cultural patterns. From a literary perspective, the woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group have their unique cultural connotations, and each pattern's implication is unique, which is a literary symbol that carries their traditional customs and folk culture. Applying the woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group to packaging design plays multiple functions of conveying information, showing cultural influence, and visual aesthetics.

3.1. Function

The woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group are a special symbol of emotion and culture. In packaging design, it is not only a visual element that constitutes the packaging design but also a part of its cultural value and artistic characteristics. Visual elements are the carriers of visual information, and the unique artistic style and exquisite craftsmanship of the woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group increase the visual appeal of the packaging and enhance the visual impact of the product. Additionally, the woodcarving patterns of the Tujia ethnic group contain a rich cultural and emotional expression, which not only helps to promote this traditional art but also achieves innovation by combining traditional culture with technology, thus enhancing the cultural value and artistry of the packaging.

Tujia woodcarving patterns reflect Tujia people's understanding of nature and life. They have a profound comprehension and emotional connection with natural elements, such as farming. These patterns are closely related to their living environment and traditional way of life, which are expressions of their family spirit and ethnic culture that possess rich aesthetic values. This multi-level aesthetic feeling is an artistic experience continuously refined by their ancestors ^[1]. In the end, they created woodcarving patterns with rich ethnic characteristics. From these implications, the ancestors' cultural thinking, spiritual aspirations, cultural inheritance and changes in the long history can be understood. Delicate woodcarving patterns combined with bold color matching create unique visual aesthetics, which not only enhances the strong visual effect of the product but also attracts consumer groups interested in ethnic culture.

3.2. Application

Packaging design refers to the creative process of designing the appearance and structure of product packaging, encompassing not only aesthetics and visual communication but also functionality, environmental friendliness, market positioning, user experience, and other aspects. Packaging design aims to ensure product safety, ease of transportation, and usability while employing artistic designs that align with the product's essence and emphasize its distinctiveness through text, graphics, materials, and other elements, thereby attracting consumers, enhancing brand image, and promoting product sales. Integrating the skillfully crafted and culturally rich symbolic motifs of Tujia woodcarvings into the intrinsic elements of packaging design imbues it with a distinctive cultural depth and natural beauty. The differing visual effects conveyed by these motifs transform when applied to theme-based packaging designs associated with Tujia woodcarvings, rendering the essence of the product more vivid and distinct, achieving a clearer conveyance of visual information. This thorough display

of the product's cultural core and unique artistic qualities employs Tujia woodcarving motifs to distinguish the expression of the product's inherent artistic value, further highlighting its cultural significance and emotional resonance, thereby adding value in terms of cultural content and emotional connection ^[2]. It establishes an emotional bond between consumers and the product. Moreover, the unique symbolism of Tujia woodcarvings is rooted in the ancient people's reverence for and comprehension of nature, life, and order, serving as an immediate reflection of the cultural history, religious beliefs, and aesthetic principles. Applying these concepts to the woodcarving motifs transforms otherwise ordinary patterns into ones that are no longer monotonous or flat, endowing them with a layer of cultural meaning and a more substantial form. This results in the creation of distinctive, handcrafted Tujia art products, significantly augmenting the appeal of the product packaging design.

4. Conclusion

Tujia woodcarvings, characterized by their distinctive carving techniques and rich motifs, embody the profound historical culture and ethnic distinctiveness of the Tujia people. As such, they are not only unique handcrafted artifacts of the Tujia but also carriers of their traditional ethnic culture. The multilayered and multidimensional nature of Tujia woodcarving motif symbolism contributes distinctive functions and characteristics to the visual impact of packaging design. The application of Tujia woodcarving motif symbolism in packaging design renders product connotations more explicit and pronounced, offering consumers a seamless blend of artistry and functionality alongside a distinct emotional resonance. In the context of a pluralistic cultural landscape where gift-giving remains a formal mode of social interaction, the visual experience of gift packaging assumes heightened importance ^[3]. With the progression of society and the increasing complexity of social activities, gifts have become increasingly diverse. Each type of gift, depending on the recipient and occasion, carries distinct connotations. In the rapidly evolving modern world, packaging design faces the challenges of new products, changing requirements, shifting environments, depleted meaning, and evolving cultures. Under these influences, packages with varying forms and symbolism are more likely to be favored by consumers due to their uniqueness and innovation, while also enabling them to showcase their distinct advantages across different market segments ^[1].

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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