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# Packaging Design of “Good Cup” Based on Visual Elements of Yao Ethnic Group

Ming Xu<sup>1</sup>, Yijing Wang<sup>2</sup> and Xinyi Zeng<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> School of Architecture and Art, Central South University, Changsha, Hunan, 410083, China

<sup>2</sup> School of Architecture and Art, Central South University, Changsha, Hunan, 410083, China

\*Corresponding author's e-mail: 595975181@qq.com

**Abstract.** With the rapid development of globalization and technology, the inheritance and protection of intangible culture are attracting more and more attention, however, there are fault phenomena existing in the culture of Yao ethnic group. In order to further protect the excellent traditional culture of Yao minority and deeply excavate the Yao's characteristics, supported by long cultural environment of Yao minority in Jianghua, based on the theory of semiotics and chromatic, this paper aims to make extraction and design of Yao's long drum design, extracting Yao's long drum cultural elements and clothing elements then applying in the packaging design of “GOOD CUP”. The development trend of product packaging design on the creative cultural products of Yao minority is analyzed rationally and discussed deeply, so as to boost the innovation of the Yao minority's traditional creative design and cultural connotation of expression, popularizing Yao's long drum culture, establishing cultural confidence, and contributing to the local economic development.

## 1. Introduction

The packaging of cultural and creative product belongs to a kind of special type, with the application of new materials and new invention of technology, it should not only meet the demand of the function of the general packaging, but also have the different geographical and ethnic culture idea. Only through the appropriate use of outstanding culture resources with rich connotation and a wide variety of topics, well revealing regional ethnic culture, the unique effect of product packaging can be obtained, and the chic experience and enjoy can be brought to the consumer. The author excavates the visual elements of long drum culture of the Yao minority in Jianghua, redesigns them from the perspectives of semiotics and color psychology with scientific and effective modern design methods, and applies them to the packaging design of cultural and creative product “GOOD CUP”. This is not only an ingenious combination of technology and art, but also the collision between traditional cultural connotation and modern design thought. It is the best interpretation of carrying forward and reproducing the history and regional culture of the Yao minority in Jianghua.

## 2. Extraction of visual elements of Yao minority in Jianghua

The research on the extraction of Yao's dress patterns in Jianghua should start from different perspectives. According to the Signifier and Signified of Saussure's semiotics theory, Signifier mainly points to the modeling, composition, color and other aspects of decorative patterns, and the Signified



mainly points to the cultural background, spiritual sustenance, symbolic significance and other sustenance and expression of decorative patterns. The unique cultural, regional and national characteristics of Yao minority in Jianghua are reflected in the design of cultural and creative product packaging patterns.

### *2.1. Historic elements of Yao minority*

The first one is the long drum, which is recorded in Twelve Yao people crossing the mountain, “in front of the temple of the son of heaven, the king wore long sleeves; Yao people wore spotted clothes with red collar, carrying long wooden drum around the waist, dancing and singing with the music of Pipa<sup>1</sup>.” Yao’s long drum is used for two purposes: one is ritual vessel, offering sacrifices to heaven and earth ghosts and gods, the other is instrument, singing and dancing to liven things up. The long drum culture, no matter from the perspective of ritual procedure, generation or the origin of using, has the cultural relics of ancient totem worship, the cultural significance of entertaining people and gods, the creativity of the Yao people and the artistic expression of self-entertainment.

The second one is the twelve surnames of Yao, according to The Emperor of Ping’s Document<sup>2</sup>, Emperor of Ping used to fight with King of Gao. The emperor repeatedly failed in the war, but finally won the fight with the help of Panhu, the ancestor of Yao people. In order to reward Panhu, the emperor betroth his third daughter to him. Panhu and the princess gave birth to six sons and six daughters after their marriage. The emperor awarded 12 different surnames to the twelve children, respectively are Shen, Bao, Huang, Li, Deng, Zhou, Zhao, Hu, Tang, Lei, Feng, which is the origin of twelve surnames of Yao people. Due to the frequent historical migration, the Yao minority failed to unify their own writing system, and later they formed their own unique language under the influence of the Chinese language.

### *2.2. Dressing elements of Yao minority in Jianghua*

Known as the “capital of Yao minority in China”, Jianghua’s Yao minority has formed its unique dress patterns in the process of historical changes and cultural development.

Yao’s costume patterns are composed of simple basic patterns in a simple way. They choose simple, unadorned, exquisite and natural material in life as the basic pattern. The basic pattern can be roughly divided into theme of figure, plant, animal and geometric pattern. These basic patterns follow the beauty of form and the aesthetic law of inner beauty to form point or line or plane patterns through arrangement and combination. Adopting the method of symmetrical composition, the clothes are made more orderly, neat and pleasing to appreciate, which is a kind of primitive and simple aesthetic doctrine. Book of Diverse Crafts records that the sky has times, the earth has the air, the work has the skill, the material has the beauty, and then the four for good, which is a good overview of the Yao’s handicraft clothing external appearance and connotation characteristics.

## **3. Application of visual elements in design practice**

Based on the data collected in the early stage, the author extracted the historical elements, dressing elements and colour elements of the Yao minority. the author unified the traditional aesthetics with the modern aesthetics and designed the brand LOGO and series of cultural and creative packaging.

### *3.1. Design of brand logo*

Taking the calligraphy script to highlight the theme, the logo strengthens the the characteristic of parataxis in Chinese. “GOOD CUP” means good cup in English, which is also homophonic with “cup of drum” in Chinese, producing the effect of 1+1>2 conveyed by brand cultural information. Design techniques such as modeling exaggeration and reduction of strokes are used to discretely reconstruct the glyph, and the beauty of strokes, structure and intention is reflected in the body of the text to express the meaning of the form. The left side shows the English explanation and the right side is

<sup>1</sup> Pipa: a traditional Chinese string instrument

<sup>2</sup> The Emperor of Ping’s Document: The historic documents that record the history of Yao ethnic group

stamped by the Yao minority in Jianghua, which conforms to the international trend and balances the atmosphere as a whole. Figure 1 is the LOGO of GOOD CUP.



Figure 1. Logo of GOOD CUP

### 3.2. Application of visual elements in packaging graphic

The first one is the packaging graphics with plant theme. Yao women use flowers, fruits, roots and leaves in nature as the creative source to extract the most representative features, so that people can clearly identify different varieties of plants, which is simple and natural, and convenient for weaving and embroidery. The author extracted and redesigned the octagonal flower pattern, gardenia flower pattern, plane tree pattern and rice grain pattern. Octagonal flower is the most common pattern of Yao minority. Its symmetrical shape has a strong sense of form. And because of its pungent flavour can expel parasite and snakes, it has the implied meaning of the sun and luminosity. Gardenias grow in pairs, which means purity and beauty. As the rice is planted in pieces, Yao people abstract and simplify it to form a zigzag pattern, which symbolizes the full harvest of rice and embodies the Yao people's wish to have a good harvest and live in peace and contentment.

According to the principle of plane composition, as shown in Figure 2, a new unit shape is formed by redesigning individual patterns of plant patterns, and then combined with two consecutive and four consecutive forms of expression, giving people a sense of balance, harmony, symmetry and joy. Using simple and vivid life material, following the aesthetic rules of formal beauty and inner beauty, Yao's clothing pattern is designed through different style and basic symbols combined point, line and plane. It refine the art of the material and the induction, having a strong sense of form and aesthetic.

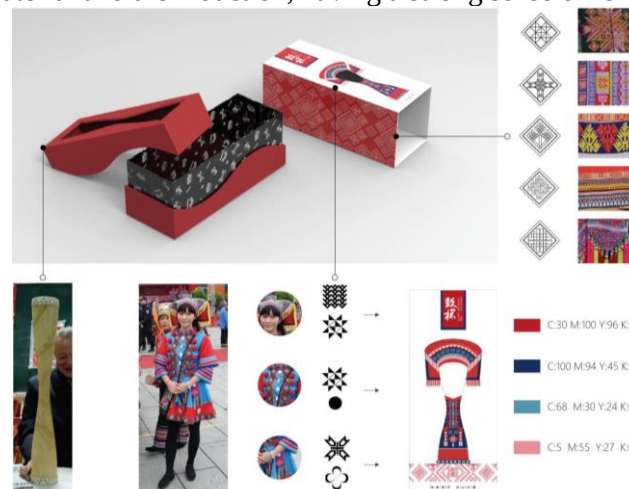


Figure 2. Packaging design of plant theme

The second one is the packaging graphics of animal themes. The animal patterns in Yao's costumes are mostly from poultry in daily life, mythical animals and animals in the mountains. Yao women are skillful and have a strong sense of national culture. With their unique aesthetic taste, they symbolize these seemingly ordinary animal elements and endow them with theme connotation, which is simple and unadorned, national but individual. The dragon dog is the ancestor of the Yao people in Yao's mythology. In Yao costumes, the spider pattern can be expressed in two forms, namely square and circle because Yao people always remember the spider's kindness to them. Bird patterns include a

single great hawk spreading wings and pairs of birds mutually looking at each other. Yao minority in Jianghua holds a “Song bird festival” every year to commemorate the Yao men and women who pursue pure love. The butterfly has a wide varieties, symbolizing happiness and love.

As shown in Figure 3, the animal pattern is redesigned to form a new unit shape, and then combined with the expression of two consecutive and four consecutive forms. Then, by extracting the Yao men's clothing elements and combining with the Yao animal patterns, the flat figure is designed by using the drum shape and applied to the packaging design.



Figure 3. Packaging design of animal theme

The third is the figure theme packaging graphics. People is one of the most common forms with its action form also kaleidoscopic. Basic humanoid pattern is generally arranged and distributed in line, forming a unique form of beauty. Men's and women's patterns are simplified and refined by Yao people. Men's clothes are simple and elegant, and their heads are wrapped in headscarves. Yao women's clothes are relatively gorgeous and diverse, and Yao people only distinguish female patterns from male patterns in the head. In the process of historical migration, Yao people would work together for farming and hunting. At the same time, due to the frequent wars in ancient times, Yao people suffered a serious loss of personnel, so extending their descendants is the wish of Yao people. As a result, thread-bound or face-like humanoid pattern will be shown in clothing, trouser legs, headscarves, and so on. As shown in Figure 4, the figure patterns are applied to packaging design in two consecutive directions and four consecutive directions.

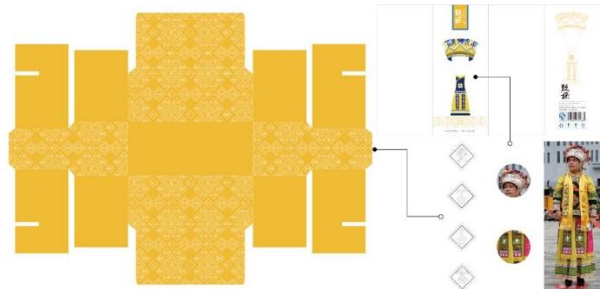


Figure 4. Packaging design of figure theme

The fourth is the packaging design of twelve Yao surnames. There are records about ancient Yao texts in the Study of Nvshu<sup>3</sup> Culture written by Li Qingfu. The twelve surnames are Pan, Shen, Bao, Huang, Li, Deng, Zhou, Zhao, Hu, Yang, Lei and Feng. The Yao language and the twelve surnames are combined to design a unique pattern. Figure 5 is the main graphic design of the twelve Yao surnames.

<sup>3</sup> Nvshu: the world's only gender-defined and now disappearing “women's language,” known as Nvshu, circulated exclusively in Jiangyong County of Hunan Province in south China



Figure 5. Packaging design of twelve Yao surnames theme

#### 4. Conclusion

Through two field investigations in Jianghua county, the author has a preliminary exploration and understanding of the local Yao culture. After a large number of data collection and creation practice, the extraction and design of long drum culture and dressing culture, which are the most characteristic part of Yao minority, the package of GOOD CUP was made. In the design process, the theory of semiotics and colour psychology theory are applied as the support to make the package have chic modelling, unique style and functional capabilities. It puts forward a feasible plan to improve the existing visual symbols of the Yao minority, enhance the level of cultural innovation design, and achieve the goal of promoting the Yao culture to the public. In the next stage, the long drum visual elements with GOOD CUP as the carrier will no longer meet the needs of cultural promotion. The expression forms of cultural connotation should be considered in multiple dimensions and aspects, and the packaging of cultural and creative products should also be deeply considered.

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The Key Project of Philosophy and Social Sciences Research in Hunan Province Research on the Ways to Realize the Higher-Quality and Fuller Employment

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the central government has paid great attention to the construction and enhancement of cultural confidence in contemporary China and the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed the basic principle of Xi Jinping's new era cultural construction to promote the development of public cultural undertakings and cultural industry. With the introduction of the concept of cultural creative industry, creative cultural products are gradually entering the Chinese market. As the most representative dance art form of Yao minority, Jianghua Yao minority's long drum dance is listed as the national intangible cultural heritage. As a necessary performance prop, the drum plays an important role in Yao's traditional history and culture. However, there is a fault in the inheritance of the Yao's long drum culture, which makes how to preserve and generalize long drum culture become a significant part of exploring and developing the culture of Yao minority.

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