

Rochester Institute of Technology

RIT Digital Institutional Repository

Theses

12-1-2018

Chinese Ornaments of the Imperial Robe: A modern motif design interpretation

Xiaoya Shen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.rit.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Shen, Xiaoya, "Chinese Ornaments of the Imperial Robe: A modern motif design interpretation" (2018). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the RIT Libraries. For more information, please contact repository@rit.edu.

Chinese Ornaments of the Imperial Robe: A modern motif design interpretation

By Xiaoya Shen

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Fine Arts in
Visual Communication Design

College of Art and Design
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, NY

December 01, 2018

Committee Members

Chief Advisor

Nancy Ciolek, Associate Professor

School of Design, Visual Communication Design

Signature

Date

Associate Advisor

Joyce Hertzog, Professor

School of Design, Visual Communication Design

Signature

Date

Associate Advisor

Shaun Foster, Associate Professor

School of Design, 3D Digital Design

Signature

Date

Abstract

“Twelve Ornaments” are a group of ancient Chinese symbols and designs that are considered highly auspicious. In ancient China, because they signified authority and power, they were employed in the decoration of textile fabrics, and were embroidered on vestments of state, such as the Imperial Robe. They are the patterns that could represent the essence of Chinese traditional national dress.

This thesis project is based on the analysis, research and summarization of this design history as well as the establishment of effective visual design solutions intended to transform the twelve ornaments into modern motif designs. The design will retain the traditional cultural elements of the motifs and help people to learn the meaning represented by such ancient traditional patterns intuitively. More importantly, it also shows the possibility of using traditional patterns in the modern design fields, by providing inspirations to designers who are interested in Chinese traditional culture and patterns. This furthers and promotes the communication of Chinese and Western culture in the design field.

In this thesis, through research and conceptual experiment, an effective visual design study will be conducted to interpret and develop Chinese ornaments from a traditional Imperial Robe into modern designs. This will also help people to better understand and thus will increase interest in traditional Chinese culture. This project integrates research, informational poster design, a design set of 12 motifs and design of a poster series.

Keywords

Visual communication, graphic design, motif design, Chinese traditional culture, Imperial Robe

Introduction

The dress of different countries reflects various cultural characteristics and permeates the deep cultural heritage of a nation. Because of their rich connotations and beautiful designs, Chinese dress patterns have a great impact on the international design field. As a unique shape in the history of clothing, the Imperial Robe epitomizes the unique clothing culture phenomenon of the Chinese nation. The history of the development of Chinese clothing is complex. An Imperial Robe's production technology, exquisite materials, and high artistic value are unmatched by any other singular piece of clothing. These well-made, exquisite and unique patterns are based on the philosophies of Chinese culture and the unity of nature and man, and have profound implications. What is even more valuable is the replacement of the dynasty that has lasted for more than 2,000 years. Because of the ancient social classes and laws, these ornaments became the symbol of royal power; they were embroidered on an Imperial Robe and were worn only by the emperors of the feudal society. In ancient times, it was difficult for the general public to understand the rich meaning and context these ornament. With the development and changes of time, the rich color and patterns and long history of the Imperial Robe were became less important and less frequently passed down through the generations. In the hearts of modern people, there is a sense of awe and mystery to the Imperial Robe. Therefore, from current observations, it is still a challenge to pass on and propagate traditional cultural elements and successfully apply them to the field of modern design. At present, the successful use of Chinese traditional ornament design is rare. Although more and more designers realize the importance of traditional, auspicious patterns, in practical applications, there are few works that can correctly combine traditional ideas and modern conceptions.

Because the ornaments on an Imperial Robe are complicated, they are difficult to apply to the field of modern design. This raises the following questions:

How can we interpret traditional ornaments for the modern design field?

How can we use visual design to encourage people to use traditional cultural ornaments?

The purpose of this project is to find answers for these questions. Through research and conceptual experiment, an effective visual design will be conducted to interpret and develop Chinese ornaments from Imperial Robes into modern motif designs. This will also help people to better understand the history and will increase interest in traditional Chinese culture. This project integrates research, informational poster design, a design set of 12 motifs and design of a poster series.

Research & Analysis

Visual communication design has existed throughout the evolution of modern mankind, changing as time passed until we reached today's society, which is filled with information. With the expansion of information carriers, visual communication design is even more indispensable. It works and expresses to the audience through visual media as a combination of art, culture, and sci-tech. In the visual communication design field, pattern design is the most direct, silent, and common visual expressive language, and is available around the world. We express our creation and transmit information via patterns, making information transmission more direct, more effective, and faster. Pattern creation forms a crucial link in visual communication design, with its own organization of "pattern" and "shape" and laws of creation. In the field of creation and design, finding and developing inspiration forms the top concern and is an issue for every designer.

For centuries, the spread and the development of patterns have formed abundant pattern systems. With the evolution of the current era and the changes in people's aesthetic standards, modern design lays more and more stress on the inheritance and innovations of traditional cultures. Proper adoption of traditional patterns in modern design works can reflect not only inheritance of traditional culture, but also the beauty of creating design with connecting traditional and modern styles. Among these, traditional Chinese patterns are widely adopted in modern design field with its wide range of styles, enriched meaning, and various forms. They not only offer much inspiration to the designers. Patterns outputs culture to people directly and effectively, educating people about the traditions, history and culture behind the patterns.

Clothing patterns derived from people's lives and came into shape in people's conception, so these clothing patterns would naturally evolve along with continuous evolution of human being and ceaseless upgrading of their conception. As China is an ancient country with a 5,000-year-old culture and history, clothing patterns with Chinese characteristics have been enriched by a deep traditional culture, and reflect its condensed traditional culture and national spirit, which is crucial part of the Chinese heritage. Records of clothing patterns were in go back to the Shang Dynasty. At that time, slaveholders wore clothing with stripes of thunder turtles. These patterns were mainly presented at the edges of collars and cuffs, on the front part of robes, on the lower hems and trousers legs, as well as on belts. These patterns included frets, diamond-type lattices, and cloud-style lattices, in the form of "fourth party" continuous designs. This so-called "fourth party" continuous design is still widely used in the graphic design field, indicating that traditional patterns in clothing have a profound influence on the modern design field.

Ancient clothing in China included various kinds of shapes and symbols, with the emperor's clothing having the most abundant ones. Each of them carried a particular meaning, and they had different symbolic meaning in different eras. Despite the different symbols and their different symbolic meaning, they were tightly related. With their symbolic meaning, most of them not only distinguished different social classes and statuses of people of ancient China, but also carried people's hopes and pursuits of more happiness and a better life. They also expressed people's views on the universe, the world, life, values, religion, marriage, and family. Person-to-person, individual-society, and human-nature relationships were conveyed through these symbols.

The Chinese Imperial Robe was a special costume worn by ancient emperors during festivals, banquets, military inspections and major sacrificial ceremonies. It is the most exquisite and gorgeous handicraft in Chinese traditional dress. Twelve Ornaments on an Imperial Robe are unique and exquisite, and have been used continuously since ancient times. The Twelve Ornaments were first used in the Western Zhou Dynasty. "Shangshu Yiji", an ancient Chinese book. According to the book, the Twelve Ornaments were referred to by Emperor Shun, one of the legendary Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors. the Emperor Shun said, "I wish to see the emblematic figures of the ancients: the moon, the stars, the mountain, the dragon, and the flowery fowl, which are depicted on the upper garment; the temple-cup, the aquatic grass, the flames, the grain of rice, the hatchet, and the symbol of distinction, which are embroidered on the lower garment; I wish to see all these displayed with the five colors, so as to form the official robes." Twelve Ornaments are tightly related to the sun, moon, stars, and time, mountains, waters, flowers, and birds, and primitive totems, reflecting China's unique cultural philosophy and aesthetic thoughts of "unity of heaven and man". They mean the emperors' authority and supremacy.

According to these historical materials, the system of clothing patterns was actually established in the Eastern Han Dynasty. It became exclusive for the emperor in the Eastern Han Dynasty. There are documents showing that the Twelve Ornaments were defined as major patterns of protocol in the Yongping Period(59 AC) of the Eastern Han Dynasty. That meant that people of different class and status could have different quantities of patterns. Since those earliest days, the Twelve Ornaments were adopted by emperors of several dynasties. In the Sui Dynasty, the Twelve Ornaments were completely reserved as the emperor's exclusive patterns. The Emperor of Yang Sui determined the system of garment of patterns, and defined the exact position of the Twelve Ornaments on Imperial Robe. The sun and moon must be one on each on the shoulders, and the stars on the back.

The Ming Dynasty maintained such a system. It can be seen from the Twelve Ornaments on Imperial Robe of Hongzhi Emperor of Ming.



Figure 1: Hongzhi Emperor of Ming's garment

From 1913 to 1928, the Twelve Ornaments were adopted on the national emblem of the Beiyang Government of Republic of China. The design of the national emblem combined the layout of western patterns and the traditional Twelve Ornaments.



Figure 2: Twelve Symbols national emblem, the state emblem of China from 1913-1928

Each one of Twelve Ornaments has its profound moral, which is the symbol of emperor power and represents the just rule of the emperor according to the universe. The Twelve Ornaments on an Imperial Robe are: the sun, the moon, the three stars, the mountains, the dragon, the pheasant, two cups, a spray of pondweed, fire, grains of rice, an axe, and the figure.

- The sun (日, rì) The Sun symbolizes the source of life. In the context of sovereignty, the Sun is the symbol of enlightenment. It has the three-legged crow in it.
- The moon (月, yuè) A symbol of heaven. It has the moon rabbit in it.
- The three stars (星辰, xīngchén) A symbol of the cosmic universe. As personified by the emperor, it is an unending source of pardon and love.
- The mountains (山, shān) A symbol of the emperor's ability to rule earth and water, which symbolizes stability and tranquility.
- The dragon (龍, lóng) A symbol of adaptability and strength.
- The pheasant (華蟲, huá chóng) A symbol of peace and refinement.
- Two cups (宗彝, zōng yí) A pair of sacrificial goblets the symbol of Imperial loyalty, it also symbolizes the virtue of filial piety.
- A spray of pondweed (藻, zǎo) A symbol of the emperor's leadership, represents brightness and purity.
- Fire (火, huǒ) A symbol that represents the emperors intellectual brilliance, and also symbolizes the summer solstice.
- Grains of rice (粉米, fěn mǐ) These symbolize nourishment and the country's agriculture, and also symbolizes that the emperor is the mainstay for the people.
- Axe (黼, fǔ) The Axe stands for "cut-off" and represents the emperor's power to act decisively.
- The figure 亞 (黻, fú) The bow-shaped sign represents collaboration and the power of the emperor to make a clear distinction between right and wrong.



Figure 3: Twelve Ornaments on Imperial Robe

	The sun (日, rì) The Sun symbolizes the source of life.		A spray of pondweed (藻, zǎo) A symbol of the emperor's leadership, represents brightness and purity.
	The moon (月, yuè) A symbol of heaven.		Fire (火, huǒ) A symbol that represents the emperor's intellectual brilliance, and also symbolizes the summer solstice.
	The three stars (星辰, xīngchén) A symbol of the cosmic universe.		Grains of rice (粉米, fěn mǐ) These symbolize nourishment and the country's agriculture, and also symbolizes that the emperor is the mainstay for the people.
	The mountains (山, shān) A symbol of the emperor's ability to rule earth and water, which symbolizes stability and tranquility.		Axe (黼, fǔ) The Axe stands for "cut-off" and represents the emperor's power to act decisively.
	The dragon (龍, lóng) A symbol of adaptability and strength.		The figure 亞 (黻, fú) The bow-shaped sign represents collaboration and the power of the emperor to make a clear distinction between right and wrong.
	The pheasant (華蟲, huá chóng) A symbol of peace and refinement.		
	Two cups (宗彝, zōng yí) A pair of sacrificial goblets the symbol of Imperial loyalty, it also symbolizes the virtue of filial piety.		

Figure 4: Each one of Twelve Ornaments symbolized

Design Process

The Twelve Ornaments consisted of twelve different patterns, each with a particular meaning. As a classic series of patterns, the Twelve Ornaments, which were once thriving cultural symbols, later declined as Imperial China moved out of people's sight. Today, if we want to know more about them, displays in museums like the Forbidden City Museum are the only approaches. Before redesigning the Twelve Ornaments, meaning, shape, and historical evolution must be studied and analyzed.

Brainstorming and Ideation

The sun (日, rì)

The sun includes a pattern of a three-legged crow on the Chinese Imperial Robe. The three-legged crow was the elf of sun in ancient Chinese mythology, and also regarded as the envoy who operated the sun. In the mythology, the crow lived in the sun. People worshiped the sun, so the crow was also worshiped as a symbol of happiness and comfort.

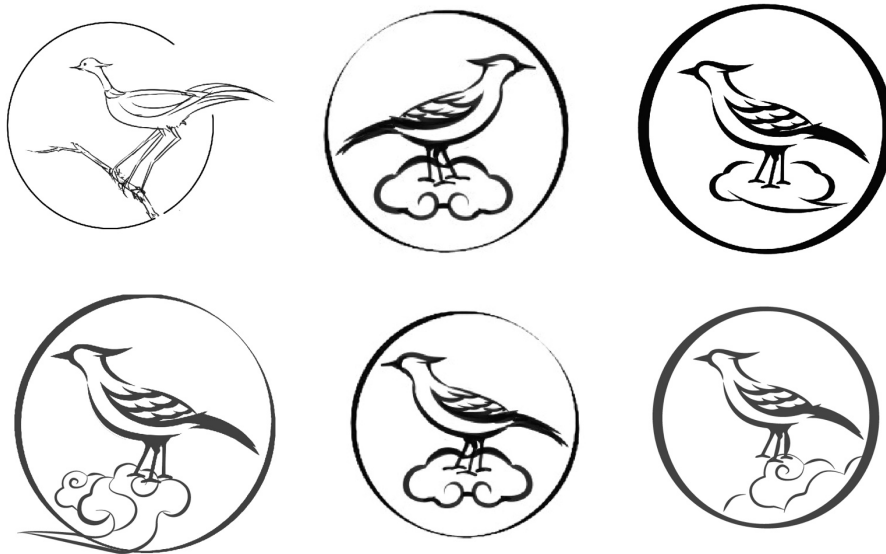


Figure 5: Sketches of the three-legged crow

The moon (月, yuè)

Moon was presented as rabbits on the Chinese Imperial Robe, as rabbit was the symbol of the moon in China. The ancient mythology said that the rabbits lived on the moon. The rabbit carried people's beautiful hopes, and triggered people's imagination, with meanings of kindness, beauty, and harmony.



Figure 6: Sketches of the moon

The three stars (星辰, xīngchén)

The three stars were the symbol of the universe. The three stars, was presented as several small circles. Several stars connected by lines formed a constellation. The number "three" represents many meanings in ancient China. Laozi, a philosopher in ancient China said that the universe made the original substances of the Earth. The substances were divided as Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang substances produced new things. "Three" made everything in the world and formed the beginning of things. So the three stars represented the indefinite universe.

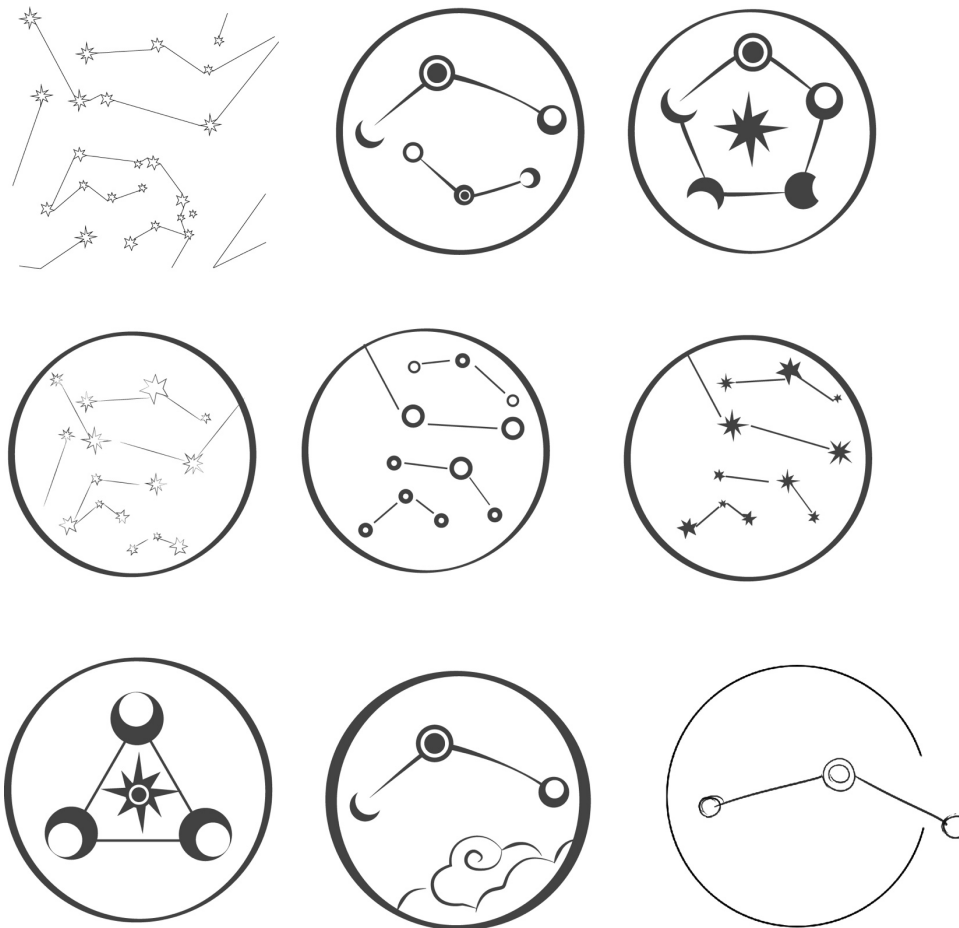


Figure 7: Sketches of the stars

The mountains (山, shān)

"Mountain" was adopted in many Chinese idioms. It symbolized stability, greatness, and stable governance. If the emperors could govern the water and the soil, stabilize people's minds, and ensure people's livelihood, they would be worshiped.

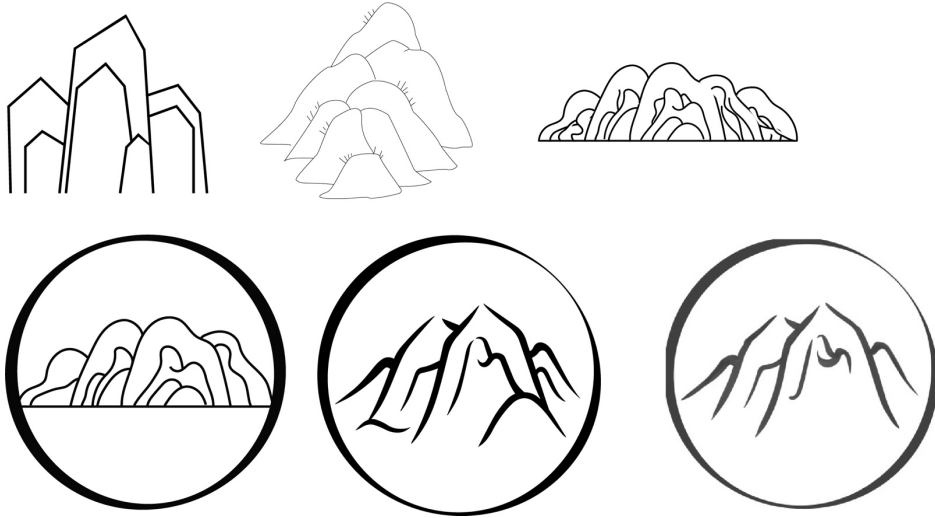


Figure 8: Sketches of the mountains

The dragon (龍, lóng)

Dragon is a crucial part of an Imperial Robe. As a god animal in Chinese mythology, the dragon was super-powerful and changeable as it could fly in the sky, dig into the ground, and summon wind and rain. Dragon symbolized a kind of spirit, and formed the Chinese national totem, which was the most mysterious and majestic symbol. Patterns of dragon were seen only on Imperial Robes, which presented supreme Imperial authority and served as a symbol of authority, nobleness, honor, and the mark of luck and success. The dragon pattern on Imperial Robes symbolized the emperor's prudent measures on state issues.



Figure 9: Sketches of the dragon

The pheasant (華蟲, huá chóng)

Male pheasants were full of fresh colorful feathers. The pheasant's colorful appearance symbolized beauty and glory, which represented the emperor's abundant knowledge, peace, and elegance.

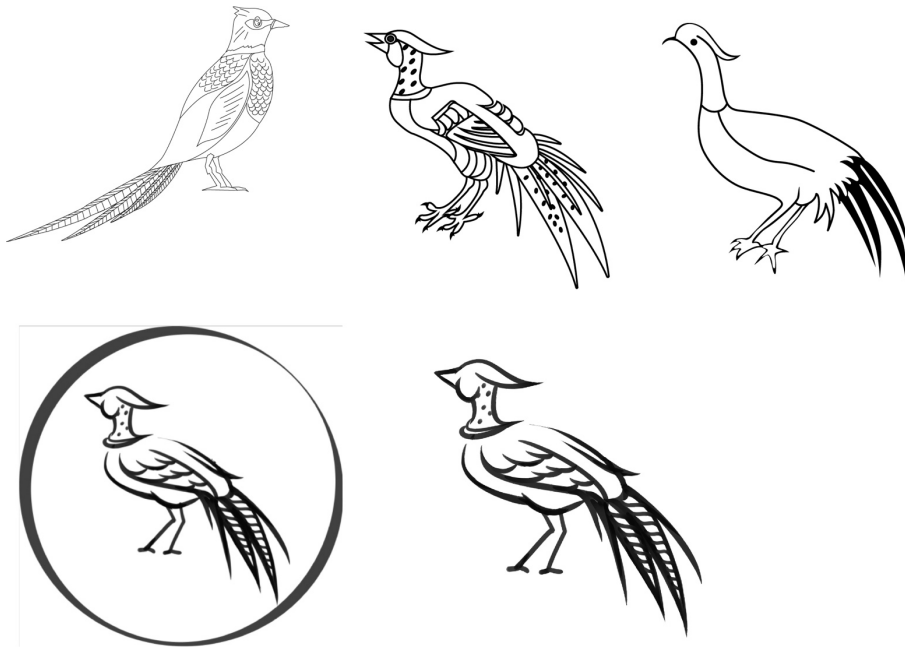


Figure 10: Sketches of the pheasant

Two cups (宗彝, zōng yí)

These cups were the containers of wine in ancient sacrifice. One of the two cups was decorated with a tiger pattern and another with a monkey pattern. The tiger presented authority and courage and a bold spirit, and the monkey symbolized wisdom and cleverness, and it could make people free of disasters. The two cups presented the emperor's courage, wisdom, and virtues of loyalty, courage, and filial obedience.



Figure 11: Sketches of two cups

A spray of pondweed (藻, zǎo)

This ornaments was in the shape of water plants. The pondweed lived in the water, and its clean image represented the emperor's noble and pure conduct. A spray of pondweed symbolized a thriving life. The emperor also adopted its pattern on the colorful rope of crown to symbolize beautiful and dignity.



Figure 12: Sketches of pondweed

Fire (火, huǒ)

The pattern of fire represented brightness, which indicated the emperor's attitude toward on state issues. The upward pattern of fire symbolized that the emperor led its people in making positive efforts.

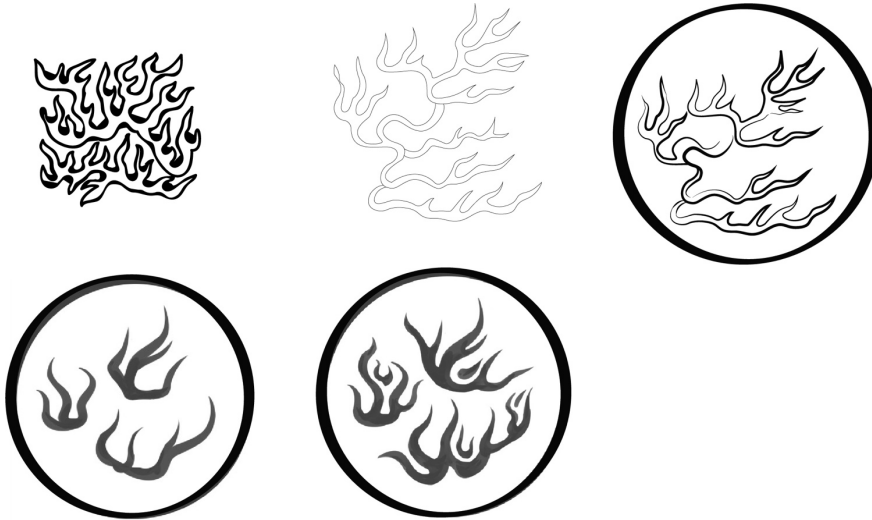


Figure 13: Sketches of fire

Grains of rice (粉米, fěn mǐ)

Farming culture dominated ancient China. Grains of rice symbolized that the emperor fed its people and laid stress on agriculture, which represented national prosperity and people's comfort on clothing and food.

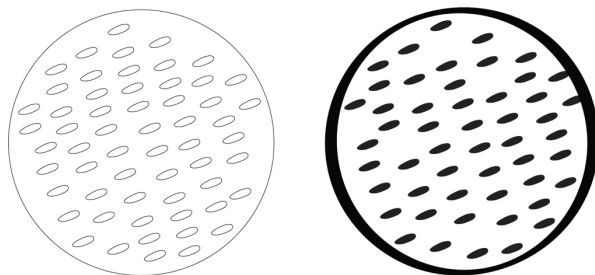


Figure 14: Sketches of grains

Axe (黼, fǔ)

Another of these patterns which represented power was the axe. The stuff which seemed plain was enriched with the meaning that has exceed its own practical value by people. It had been symbolizing authority from primitive society even to pre-Qin period. The axe which could cut stuffs symbolized the emperor's decisiveness and capability and experience.

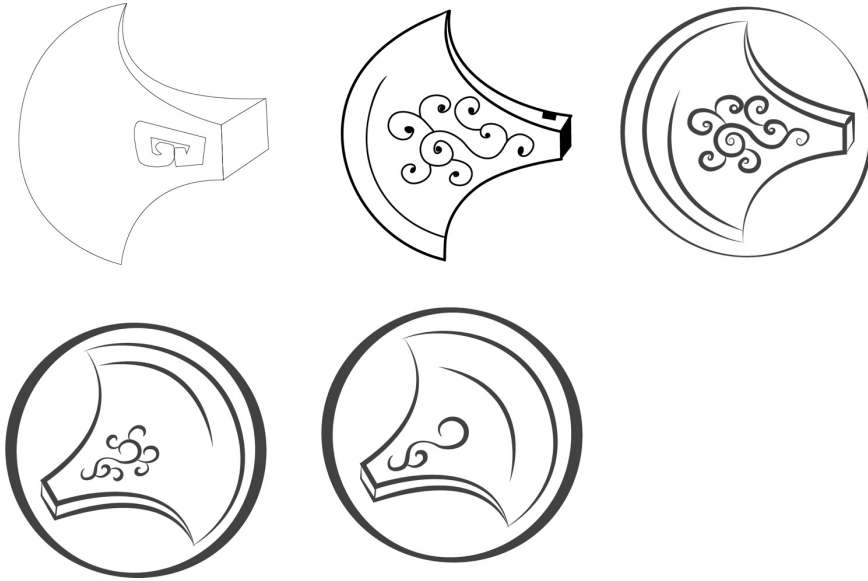


Figure 15: Sketches of axe

The figure 亞 (黻, fú)

It was a particular pattern on Imperial Robe. It was complete symmetry as it looked like twin Chinese character “弓” back to back. Which symbolized many emperor's virtue including clear judge on the correct and the incorrect, and the awareness of correcting mistakes.

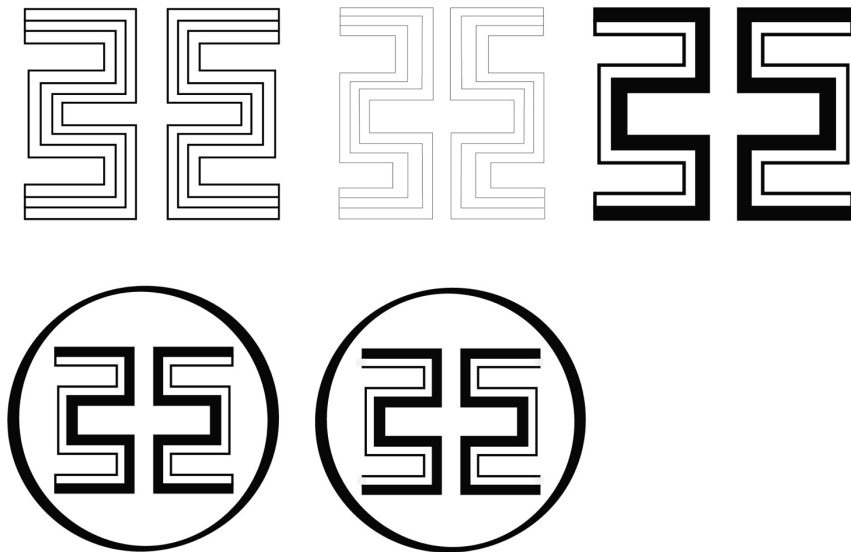


Figure 16: Sketches of the figure

Final Design Solution

After finishing all the comprehensive study and analysis on twelve ornaments, I turned to design project and began from 12 motifs design. As some of these ornaments were complex and others simple, It was very hard to make visual harmony and unification of motifs of the series. The cloud-type pattern and Chinese Seal pattern were adopted in the design to help unify overall design. There were many other difficulties in the design process, reduction and simplification of lines made the patterns increased consistency and improved overall look.

Final Motif Set



Figure 17: motifs design

Typefaces

Helvetica Bold

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

01234567890

Helvetica Regular

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

01234567890

Helvetica Light

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

01234567890

报隶-繁 常规体

日月星辰山龍華蟲宗彝藻火粉米黼亞黻

Color



BA2C36



234191



000000



F4EFE9

Information Poster Design

Thesis for the Visual Communication Design MFA Program

Rochester Institute of Technology
College of Art and Design

Xiaoya Shen

Chinese Ornaments of the Imperial Robe

A modern motif design interpretation

Thesis Committee

Chief Advisor
Nancy Ciolek Associate Professor
Visual Communication Design

Associate Advisor
Joyce Hertzson Professor
Visual Communication Design

Associate Advisor
Shaun Foster Associate Professor
3D Digital Design

Twelve Ornaments on Imperial Robe



Introduction

"Twelve Ornaments" are a group of ancient Chinese symbols and designs that are considered highly auspicious. In ancient China, because they signified authority and power, they were employed in the decoration of textile fabrics, and were embroidered on vestments of state, such as the Imperial Robe. They are the patterns that could represent the essence of Chinese traditional national dress.

This thesis project is based on the analysis, research and summarization of this design history as well as the establishment of effective visual design solutions intended to transform the twelve ornaments into modern motif designs. The design will retain the traditional cultural elements of the motifs and help people to learn the meaning represented by such ancient traditional patterns intuitively. More importantly, it also shows the possibility of using traditional patterns in the modern design fields, by providing inspirations to designers who are interested in Chinese traditional culture and patterns. This furthers and promotes the communication of Chinese and Western culture in the design field.

Twelve Ornaments

Each one of Twelve Ornaments has its profound moral, which is the symbol of emperor power and represents the just rule of the emperor according to the universe.

Thesis Definition

Because the ornaments on an Imperial Robe are complicated, they are difficult to apply to the field of modern design. This raises the following questions:
How can we interpret traditional ornaments for the modern design field?
How can we use visual design to encourage people to use traditional cultural ornaments?

The purpose of this project is to find answers for these questions. Through research and conceptual experiment, an effective visual design will be conducted to interpret and develop Chinese ornaments from Imperial Robes into modern motif designs. This will also help people to better understand the history and will increase interest in traditional Chinese culture.

This project integrates research, informational poster design, a design set of 12 motifs and design of a poster series.

	The sun (日, rì) The Sun symbolizes the source of life.
	The moon (月, yuè) A symbol of heaven.
	The three stars (星辰, xīngchén) A symbol of the cosmic universe.
	The mountains (山, shān) A symbol of the emperor's ability to rule earth and water, which symbolizes stability and tranquility.
	The dragon (龍, lóng) A symbol of adaptability and strength.
	The pheasant (華蟲, huá chóng) A symbol of peace and refinement.
	Two cups (宗彝, zōng yí) A pair of sacrificial goblets the symbol of Imperial loyalty, it also symbolizes the virtue of filial piety.
	A spray of pondweed (藻, zǎo) A symbol of the emperor's leadership, represents brightness and purity.
	Fire (火, huǒ) A symbol that represents the emperors intellectual brilliance, and also symbolizes the summer solstice.
	Grains of rice (粉米, fěn mǐ) These symbolize nourishment and the country's agriculture, and also symbolizes that the emperor is the mainstay for the people.
	Axe (黼, fǔ) The Axe stands for "cut-off" and represents the emperor's power to act decisively.
	The figure (黻, fú) The bow-shaped sign represents collaboration and the power of the emperor to make a clear distinction between right and wrong.

Targeted Audience

People who are interested in traditional Chinese culture.

Figure 18.

Thesis for the Visual Communication Design MFA Program


Rochester Institute of Technology College of Art and Design

Xiaoya Shen

Chinese Ornaments of the Imperial Robe

A modern motif design interpretation

The Sun (日, rì)



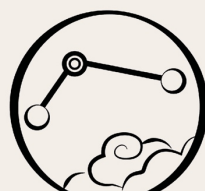
The sun includes a pattern of a three-legged crow on the Chinese Imperial Robe. The three-legged crow was the elf of sun in ancient Chinese mythology, and also regarded as the envoy who operated the sun. In the mythology, the crow lived in the sun. People worshiped the sun, so the crow was also worshiped as a symbol of happiness and comfort.

The moon (月, yuè)




Moon was presented as rabbits on the Chinese Imperial Robe, as rabbit was the symbol of the moon in China. The ancient mythology said that the rabbits lived on the moon. The rabbit carried people's beautiful hopes, and triggered people's imagination, with meanings of kindness, beauty, and harmony.

The three stars (星辰, xīngchén)




The three stars were the symbol of the universe. The three stars, was presented as several small circles. Several stars connected by lines formed a constellation. The number "three" represents many meanings in ancient China. Laozi, a philosopher in ancient China said that the universe made the original substances of the Earth. The substances were divided as Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang substances produced new things. "Three" made everything in the world and formed the beginning of things. So the three stars represented the indefinite universe.

The mountains (山, shān)



"Mountain" was adopted in many Chinese idioms. It symbolized stability, greatness, and stable governance. If the emperors could govern the water and the soil, stabilize people's minds, and ensure people's livelihood, they would be worshiped.

The dragon (龍, lóng)



Dragon is a crucial part of an Imperial Robe. As a god animal in Chinese mythology, the dragon was super-powerful and changeable as it could fly in the sky, dig into the ground, and summon wind and rain. Dragon symbolized a kind of spirit, and formed the Chinese national totem, which was the most mysterious and majestic symbol. Patterns of dragon were seen only on Imperial Robes, which presented supreme Imperial authority and served as a symbol of authority, nobleness, honor, and the mark of luck and success. The dragon pattern on Imperial Robes symbolized the emperor's prudent measures on state issues.

The pheasant (華蟲, huá chóng)



Male pheasants were full of fresh colorful feathers. The pheasant's colorful appearance symbolized beauty and glory, which represented the emperor's abundant knowledge, peace, and elegance.

Figure 19.

Thesis for the
Visual Communication Design
MFA Program

Rochester Institute of Technology
College of Art and Design

Xiaoya Shen

Chinese Ornaments of the Imperial Robe A modern motif design interpretation

Two cups (琮彝, zōng yí)



They were the container of wine in ancient sacrifice, which shape was cup. One of the two cups was decorated with tiger pattern and another guenon pattern. The tiger presented authority and courageous and bold spirit, and the guenon symbolizes wisdom and cleverness, and it could make people free of disasters. The two cups presented the emperor's courage, wisdom, and virtues of loyalty, courage, and filial obedience.

A spray of pondweed (藻, zǎo)



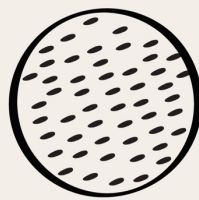
It was in shape of water plants. The pondweed lived in the water, and its clean image represented the emperor's noble and pure conducts. A spray of pondweed symbolized a thriving life. The emperor also adopted its pattern on the colorful rope of crown to symbolize beautiful and dignity.

Fire (火, huǒ)



The pattern of fire presented brightness, which presented the emperor's fair and square cope on state issues. The upward pattern of fire symbolizes that the emperor led its people make positive efforts.

Grains of rice (粉米, fěn mǐ)



Farming culture dominated ancient China. People relied on food to live, grains of rice symbolizes that the emperor fed its people and laid stress on agriculture, which represented national prosperity and people's comfort on clothing and food.

Axe (斨, fú)



Another of these patterns which represented power was axe. The stuff which seemed plain was enriched with the meaning that has exceed its own practical value by people. It had been symbolizing authority from primitive society even to pre-Qin period. The axe which could cut stuffs symbolized the emperor's decisiveness and capability and experience.

The figure (黼, fú)



It was a particular pattern on imperial robe. It was complete symmetry as it looked like twin Chinese character "冂" back to back. Which symbolizes many emperor's virtue including clear judge on the correct and the incorrect, and the awareness of correcting mistakes.

Figure 20.

Poster Series



Figure 21.



Figure 22.



Figure 23.



Figure 24.

Results

Applications



Figure 25: t-shirt design



Figure 26: t-shirt design



Figure 27: invitation card design



Figure 28: shopping bag design



Figure 29: package design



Figure 30: package design



Figure 31: package design



Figure 32: package design



Figure 33: package design



Figure 34: notebook design



Figure 35: notebook design

Conclusions

This goal of this thesis project is try to show the possibility of using traditional patterns in the modern design fields. And help people better to understand and increase interest in traditional Chinese culture through design works. This thesis project is constructed by traditional cultural information and visual communication. With the deepening of research, I learned much more than the Twelve Ornaments on the Imperial Robe. It has become a challenge for my research of how to integrate the enormous amount of information and classify systematically as well as redesign the classical patterns. In order to obtain more accurate and effective information of the Imperial Robe, I went back to China twice to conduct research in the Palace Museum. I also learned how to better communicate traditional culture with graphic design.

Finishing this thesis project is not the end of my design concern. I will continue my pursuit of using design skills to better communicate the traditional culture. Lots of traditional patterns have a long history and profound aesthetic cultural connotation, which should be inherited and developed in the modern design field. I will continue to study traditional culture and patterns, combine tradition with modernity.

References

Books

Shen, Congwen. Zhongguo Gu Dai Fu Shi Yan Jiu. Reprint, Shang hai: Shanghai bookstore publishing, 2005.

Bao, Zhou Xi. Chung Kwang Ku Duai Fou Siek Shih =. Reprint, Chung Kwang: [Chinese Drama Pub. Society], 1986.

Cui gui shun. Zhong Guo Li Dai Di Wang Mian Fu Yan Jiu. Reprint, Shang hai: Dong hua ta xue chu ban she, 2007.

Zong feng ying. Zhong Guo Zhi Xiu Shou Cang Jian Shang Quan Ji. Reprint, Chang sha: Hu nan mei zhu chu ban she, 2012.

Wan, Yi, Shuqing Wang, Yanzhen Lu, Rosemary E Scott, and Erica Shipley. Daily Life In The Forbidden City. Reprint, New York, NY: Viking, 1988.

Jones, Owen, Michael Snodin, and Paul Vater. The Grammar Of Chinese Ornament. Reprint, [London]: Parkgate Books, 1997.

Websites

"故宫博物院". Dpm.Org.Cn, 2018. <http://www.dpm.org.cn/Home.html>.

Metmuseum.Org, 2018. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/69066>.

Metmuseum.Org, 2018. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/60506>.

"国宝档案 《国宝档案》 20111226 明万历缂丝袈服". Youtube, 2018.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WkfWytgtWJI&t=5s>.

"Twelve Symbols National Emblem". En.Wikipedia.Org, 2018. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twelve_Symbols_national_emblem.