

Research On the Connotation of Burning Pagoda in Ji'an, Jiangxi Province and Its Integration with Modern Lamps

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Abstract: This paper takes the Mid-Autumn Burning Pagoda Culture in Ji'an, Jiangxi Province as the research object, explores the core cultural connotations of "spirit of harmony" and "spirit of optimism", and explores the integration path between its traditional folk elements and modern lamp design. By analyzing the visual characteristics of the Burning Pagoda Culture, such as its tower shape, grain symbols and red and yellow colors, and combining them with the aesthetic principles and material technology of modern lighting design, we propose an innovative design scheme based on modular structure, dynamic light effect and interactive experience. The study shows that the symbolic extraction and reconstruction of Burning Pagoda Cultural elements can effectively enhance the cultural narrative function of lamps products, and realize the two-way empowerment of the living inheritance of traditional folklore and contemporary living aesthetics. The study provides a practical model for the modern transformation of intangible cultural heritage, and at the same time opens up new perspectives for cultural innovation in the field of modern product design.

Keywords: Burning Pagoda Culture; Modern Lamp Design; Intangible Cultural Heritage; Cultural Symbols; Interactive Experience

The Burning Pagoda Culture in Ji'an, Jiangxi Province is a long-standing folk tradition with distinctive regional characteristics, dating back to the Southern Song Dynasty. Every year, on the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival, the people of Ji'an organize a grand pagoda-burning ceremony. During this event, pagodas are constructed, fuels are piled up, and flames are lit to express hopes for a better life and to honor ancestors. Rich in folk beliefs,

historical traditions, and regional customs, this cultural practice is an integral part of the intangible cultural heritage in Jiangxi Province.

The Burning Pagoda is a festive activity with a strong sense of elegance, aesthetic value is extremely rich, is an important human resources to be developed and utilized. The traditional cultural connotation of Burning Pagoda mainly contains two categories. One is the spirit of harmony. As the spiritual and cultural kernel of Burning Pagoda, it contains the harmony among people themselves, society and nature. The second is the spirit of optimism. During the whole process of Burning Pagoda, people not only show their optimistic state of mind, but also share the experience of the material and spiritual fun with the surrounding people.

1. The Connotation and Value of Burning Pagoda Culture

1.1 Historical Origins

There are profound cultural and historical reasons for choosing the Mid-Autumn Festival as the time for the Burning Pagoda. The Mid-Autumn Festival symbolizes reunion and a good harvest in the Chinese tradition. During the festival, when the fall harvest is over, farmers hold a series of celebrations to thank nature for its bounty, and the burning of pagodas is one of them. The Mid-Autumn Festival is closely associated with the moon also, and the light of the fire on the burning pagodas mirrors the light of the moon, creating a unique festive landscape. In ancient times, firelight was believed to have the function of driving away evil spirits and avoiding disasters, and the burning of pagodas at the Mid-Autumn Festival is a way of worshipping the moon as well as praying for the peace of the family and the village through the light of the fire. The night of the Mid-Autumn Festival is bright with moonlight, making it suitable for outdoor

activities.

1.2 Regional Characteristics of the Burning Pagoda Culture

Burning Pagoda Culture has distinctive regional characteristics, mainly reflected in the following three aspects. First of all, the architectural style of the pagoda usually built with local unique building materials and crafts, reflecting the architectural aesthetics of the Ji'an area. Second, the organizational form of the Burning Pagoda is collectively held by the villagers in a spirit of unity and cooperation. Third, the ritual content of the Burning Pagoda custom, including the construction of the pagoda, the selection of fuel and the fire ceremony, all have a strong local color.

Mid-Autumn Festival Burning Pagoda custom of Ji'an has a long history. Every Mid-Autumn Festival when the moon is full, families would have a reunion dinner, enjoy the Mid-Autumn Festival moon. Men, women and children are gathered in the village of an open space to burn the pagoda. Pagodas are built with tiles or bricks in different sizes, heights and shapes. The burning of pagodas has its own unique cultural connotations compared to general Mid-Autumn Festival activities, and it is a symbol of celebrating a good harvest, family reunion and prosperity, and peace for family members. It has sent people's unique symbolism for thousands of years.

1.3 Cultural Value and Significance of Burning Pagoda

Burning Pagoda is an ancient folk custom in the Ji'an area of Jiangxi Province that carries profound cultural significance and historical meaning. This traditional celebration, observed annually, serves not only as a vibrant festival but also as a critical means of cultural transmission and historical remembrance. Typically constructed from bricks and tiles and adorned with intricate patterns symbolizing harvest and prosperity, these pagodas represent both tradition and aspiration.

In a modern society where many traditional customs are fading away, the annual Burning Pagoda plays a pivotal role in preserving intangible cultural heritage. It offers the younger generation a valuable opportunity to engage with and appreciate their community's longstanding traditions. This ritual not only honors the legacy of the past but also envisions

a hopeful future—serving as a vital bridge between history and the present and fostering both cultural diversity and social harmony.

1.4 Reflecting the Past and Understanding the Value for Present

The Burning Pagoda Culture is not only a review of history, but also an exploration of the value of modern society. To reflect the significance of it, we have to deeply understand the historical origin and regional characteristics of the Burning Pagodas, and dig into its cultural connotation. To combine its value and the present, we need to see the vitality of the Burning Pagoda Culture in modern society and its significance for contemporary people. Through the inheritance and innovation of the burnt pagoda culture, it is hoped that it can be revitalized in the modern society, adding cultural colors to contemporary life, and at the same time providing a new way for the protection and promotion of traditional culture. In this process, the Burning Pagoda Culture is not only a historical memory, but also a living cultural practice. Its application in modern lamp design is the embodiment of this value.

The Burning Pagoda has evolved over the centuries. Nowadays, this activity has not disappeared due to geographical restrictions, but has evolved into a festive carnival for all people after satisfying the material base. The form of "pagoda" is also expanding, and the original simple pagoda built with earth bricks and green tiles in the countryside has also changed into a brand-new pagoda-type building. Meanwhile, people participating are no longer clans bound together by blood relations, but more people are included in this festive activity.

2. Aesthetics, Materials and Styling Considerations in Modern Lamp Design

2.1 Aesthetic Principles

The aesthetic principles of modern lamp design are the basic rules followed in the creative process, which ensure that the lamps are both practical and artistic. They include the unity of form and function, minimalism, proportion and scale, color and texture. In the process of lamp design, it is necessary to comprehensively consider the shape, color, structure, and the use of materials and

functional positioning, etc. If you want to achieve cultural innovation, you can explore the various types of traditional Chinese lamps, with an in-depth study of its development history. The modeling development of traditional Chinese lamps mainly includes image modeling with clear cultural significance and specific modeling developed to achieve certain practical functions.

2.2 Material Selection and Application of Lamp Design

From the original bronze, ceramic, iron, jade, to today's glass, wood, plastic, and even more new materials in the future, these materials are not only show strong characteristics of the times, but also reflects the cultural connotations of different times. Today, the lamps in the original lighting function have combined with more possibilities, with the development of new materials and new technologies, the future may be able to achieve to "see the light without seeing the lamp". The selection of these materials should not only take into account their physical characteristics, such as heat resistance, light transmission and durability, but also consider their emotional expression and cultural significance, in order to realize the uniqueness of the lamps design and market competitiveness. By skillfully using the texture, color and touch of different materials, designers are able to create products that are both aesthetically pleasing and of practical value. For example, in today's lighting market, LED intelligent dimming spotlight stands out with its flexible and versatile lighting and intelligent operation. It can adjust the brightness, direction and color of the light according to the need to create a different lighting atmosphere, bringing a more colorful experience for people's life.

2.3 Modeling Innovation of Lamp Design

In the design of lamps, it is necessary to balance practicality and artistry, taking the user's needs as the starting point, ensuring the basic lighting function. Through the simple design and detailed innovation, we would incorporate a sense of art, such as unique switches and lampshade texture. At the same time, specific cultural symbols or design concepts could be conveyed through the styling of the lamps, such as the elements of

Jiangxi Ji'an Burning Pagoda, in order to show the local cultural characteristics. In terms of structural innovation, modern design concepts and engineering technology can be used to create novel structural forms, such as foldable, retractable or modular lamp structure, increasing the functionality and interest of the lamps. As for the interactive design, modern lamp design is focusing more and more on the interaction with users. A series of intelligent lamps that can automatically adjust the brightness and color temperature according to the user's needs and environmental changes have been developed.

With times going, the lamp products are adapting to the diversified environment and people's needs. With the improvement of the overall standard of living, people's demand for lamps is not satisfied with its lighting function only, the storytelling and emotional expression of the product has become more important. How to design lamps combining the connotation and functionality has become a trend, which means that the lamps appearance and function have become more diversified. The market is no longer a light bulb can be bright to meet, but how bright colorful and impress people has become more critical.

2.4 Technological Innovation and Intelligentization Trend in Modern Lamp Design

Modern lamp design has transformed from a traditional lighting tool to an intelligent and interactive life product. For example, intelligent LED technology not only supports dynamic adjustment of color temperature and brightness, but also enables remote control through mobile APPs or voice assistant. In the integration of the Burning Pagoda Culture, it can be used to simulate the flame dynamic effect of layered gradient from red to orange, through which it achieves the "burning" and "extinguished" visual cycle. In addition, the Internet of Things (IoT) technology can provide the lamps with more interactivity. For example, through the sensor device to trigger lighting changes, when the user is close to it, the lamp will automatically light up and present the flame flow effect, to enhance the sense of participation.

In terms of material technology, 3D printing technology offers the possibility of complex modeling. For example, drawing on the brick

and tile stacking structure of the Burning Pagoda, the design process can make use of the modular components of 3D printing to realize the removable and reorganization of the lamps, which not only echoes the traditional way of construction, but also meets the modern personalized needs. At the same time, the application of flexible light-emitting materials (e.g. OLED) can simulate the soft texture of the flame, avoiding the glare problem of traditional lamps, and achieve a better user experience.

3. Burning Pagoda Culture and Modern Lamps Design Integration

3.1 Extraction and Application of Burning Pagoda Cultural Elements in Modern Lamp Design

(1) Use of color

Red, yellow and other colors symbolizing auspiciousness and enthusiasm are commonly used in pagoda burning activities, and the strategy of using these colors in design can be explored in modern lamp design. Discussing how to transform the color characteristics of Burning Pagoda Culture into the color language of lamp design, in order to convey specific cultural symbolism and emotion would be meaningful.

In Jiangxi, the pagoda to be burnt is built with bricks, stones and tiles, and then filled with fuel. However, in northern China, people use the fuel such as charcoal, firewood and grass to directly build the pagoda, which indicate the regional differences.

(2) Patterns and Symbols

By extracting the symbolic elements of Burning Pagoda culture—such as grain patterns that signify a good harvest, the character for good fortune, and other auspicious motifs—and exploring their decorative applications in the design of lamps and lanterns, we can create a unique fusion of tradition and modernity. Through innovative pattern design and the integration of contemporary aesthetics, these cultural symbols can be transformed into visual elements that not only preserve traditional meaning but also resonate with modern sensibilities. In this way, lamps become a visual bridge that connects the rich heritage of Burning Pagoda culture with the aesthetics of the present day.

(3) Modeling

The layered structure and tower-like silhouette of the Burning Pagoda serve as an intuitive source of inspiration for lamp modeling. In design practice, the tower's three-dimensional form can be reimagined through modular stacking—dividing the lamp into multiple rotatable or interlocking ring units that can be freely adjusted in height and angle to create a dynamic “reduced shadow” of the pagoda. For instance, by translating the layered and volumetric qualities of the Burning Pagoda into the unique shape of the lamp, the design not only enhances the cultural connotation and visual impact of the product but also reinterprets the traditional “narrow at the top and wide at the bottom” feature into a streamlined, stable base that encapsulates modern minimalist aesthetics. Through this thoughtful recombination of form and mood, the lamp preserves the symbolic essence of the Burning Pagoda while inviting users to deepen their cultural connection through an engaging, interactive assembly mechanism.

3.2 Emotional Expression

When designing lamps that evoke the cultural emotion and interactive experience of the Burning Pagoda, one must consider how to recreate the festive atmosphere characteristic of the Burning Pagoda activities. This can be achieved by incorporating warm color tones and dynamic light effects that serve as emotional carriers during festivals or celebrations, ultimately enhancing the cultural experience. Exploring how to create interactive lamps that allow users to immerse themselves in the vibrant spirit of Burning Pagoda culture is significant. Additionally, the adaptability of these designs across various settings must be taken into account, ensuring that the interactivity and participatory essence of the tradition is effectively conveyed.

At the heart of the Burning Pagoda Culture lies a rich tapestry of collective memory and spiritual support, expressed through a layered emotional hierarchy. First is “empathy”: the Burning Pagoda instills a strong sense of community through collaborative construction and the shared spectacle of burning flames. This communal ritual can be mirrored in the design through modular assembly or multi-user interactive features, such as the splicing of light components and synchronized light

changes, that allow participants to feel the cohesive spirit of traditional festivals.

The second emotional layer is "healing". In traditional culture, the leaping flame symbolizes the dispelling of gloom and the soothing of the soul. By employing dynamic light effects that mimic the breathing rhythm of a flame, the lamp design can offer a therapeutic experience that caters to modern needs for stress reduction and emotional rejuvenation.

Finally, "inheritance" represents the transmission of cultural memories across generations. As everyday objects, lamps can foster an emotional connection through "symbolic narrative". For example, engravings of Burning Pagoda ballads or family blessings on the inner layers of a lampshade can, when illuminated, project poetic inscriptions onto surrounding surfaces. This interplay of light and symbolism creates a dual resonance of visual and emotional impact, bridging the past and the present through a shared cultural narrative.

3.3 Cultural Values with Daily Life

Incorporating elements of Burning Pagoda Culture into lamp design can significantly enhance the quality of daily life, blending aesthetic appeal with deep cultural meaning. By designing auspicious lamps that elevate the ambiance of a home while meeting the functional requirements of modern life, designers can simultaneously convey the life philosophies and values rooted in Burning Pagoda traditions. This approach goes beyond mere decoration. Through innovative reinterpretations of traditional motifs, such as valley patterns or other auspicious design elements, these lamps become cultural symbols that radiate beauty and positive energy.

The core value of non-heritage cultural and creative products lies in its unique cultural connotation, these intangible cultural heritages carry the history and culture of the nation. With the enhancement of the heat of intangible cultural heritage, a large number of intangible-cultural-heritage related and creative products appear on the market. However, most of the design and innovation of the transformation has failed to tap the deep cultural connotation of intangible cultural heritage, but simply copy and paste the

elements, resulting in a lack of soul of the product.

4. Findings

The integration and innovation of Burning Pagoda Culture in modern lamp design is not only a modern interpretation of traditional customs, but also an extension of it. This integration can be mainly reflected in the following aspects. In the functional integration, modern lamp design not only meets the basic needs of lighting, but also integrates the interactivity and experience of the Burning Pagoda Culture. For example, some lamps can be designed to be disassembled or reconfigurable through modularization, allowing users to experience the fun of in the process of assembly and use. In terms of cultural inheritance, through the design of modern lamps, the connotations of the Burning Pagoda Culture can be disseminated and preserved in a new form to gain wider dissemination and recognition.

At the same time, combining local bamboo resources of Ji'an with the Burning Pagoda Culture not only reflects the characteristics of regional resources, but also realizes the idea of low-carbon production. Bamboo can be treated with high-temperature carbonization to enhance moisture resistance and durability. Utilizing traditional bamboo weaving techniques, the design creates the structural skeleton of lamps that echoes the cascading tiered formation of the Burning Pagoda. A bamboo fiber composite is pressed into a translucent panel, onto which laser engraving reveals intricate cultural motifs—from grain patterns signifying abundance to dynamic flame designs—resulting in a captivating interplay of virtual imagery and tangible materiality. This approach preserves the natural texture of bamboo while endowing the lamps with a distinctly "local" narrative, resonant with the culture's ethos of "harmonious coexistence between human and nature."

This innovative integration not only amplifies the cultural value and market appeal of the lamps but also paves a new avenue for safeguarding and transmitting intangible cultural heritage. Moreover, the study suggests several promising directions for modern design: advancing design research to uncover deeper synergies between intangible cultural heritage

and contemporary aesthetics; incorporating a broader array of traditional cultural elements into everyday products, from home decor and daily necessities to public art; and leveraging international design platforms to showcase the charm of China's intangible cultural heritage, thereby enhancing the global influence of Chinese design.

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