

Contemporary Exploration in Ancient Bookbinding Design Practice: A Case Study on the Compilation of Guangyuan Local Chronicles

Chuyue HUANG, Xiaodong WANG

Sichuan Normal University

Abstract

This paper delves into the exploration and application of ancient Chinese bookbinding art in contemporary design, focusing on the binding practices of Guangyuan local chronicles. Through an analysis of traditional bookbinding styles, materials, layout, and hand-drawn illustrations, the study highlights the cultural, historical, and aesthetic value of ancient bookbinding techniques. The research aims to bridge the gap between ancient craftsmanship and modern design by blending historical elements with contemporary aesthetics. Employing literature review, data analysis, social surveys, and physical inspections, the study offers insights into the preservation and innovation of cultural heritage through design, providing valuable references for future studies.

Keywords Ancient Bookbinding Design, Cultural Significance, Guangyuan Local Chronicles, Aesthetic Value, Ceremonial Sense

Article History Received: June 25, 2024 Accepted: June 29, 2024 Published: September 30, 2024

To Cite This Article Chuyue HUANG, Xiaodong WANG. (2024). Contemporary Exploration in Ancient Bookbinding Design Practice: A Case Study on the Compilation of Guangyuan Local Chronicles. *Costume and Culture Studies*, 2(3), 29–33. <https://doi.org/10.6914/ccs.020305>

1 Design Background

Books unlock the door to civilization and serve as bridges to the future. Throughout history, books have reflected the historical essence of their respective eras through their unique forms and content. The binding of books is akin to tree rings, revealing the cultural and historical layers they carry. Ancient Chinese bookbinding art has profound cultural significance, influencing modern bookbinding practices and contributing to the revival of handmade books. This revival reflects a growing appreciation for craftsmanship and tradition in today's fast-paced, technology-driven world.

The binding design of Guangyuan local chronicles provides an ideal case study for exploring how ancient bookbinding practices can be adapted and integrated into modern design. By examining these ancient practices, we can better understand how cultural heritage is preserved through design while also allowing it to evolve and resonate with contemporary audiences.

2 Design Elements

2.1 Color and Materials

The binding design adopts rustic cyan and gold as the primary tones. These colors were chosen to create a visual effect that harmoniously blends tradition with modernity. The cyan evokes a sense of serenity and timelessness, while the gold adds a sense of prestige and richness. The paper used for the binding is specially selected to imitate ancient manuscripts, which not only enhances the historical richness of the book but also provides a tactile connection to the past. The materials, thus, serve as a bridge between the ancient and the modern, allowing readers to experience the depth of history while engaging with a contemporary design aesthetic.



Figure 1: Collection of Chronicles of Guangyuan

2.2 Image Elements

The design is inspired by Wang Meng's "Jianmen Pass Painting" from the Yuan Dynasty, with detailed vector drawings of Jianmen Pass to highlight the local cultural characteristics of Guangyuan. These drawings are meticulously crafted to provide a sense of place and historical continuity. Additionally, symbols from the "Astronomical Chart" drawn by Song Dynasty Prime Minister Huang Shang are incorporated using symmetrical techniques. These symbols not only add formality to the design but also infuse the work with a deeper intellectual and philosophical dimension, reflecting the ancient Chinese view of the cosmos.

2.3 Font

The design primarily employs brush calligraphy and seal script formats. These fonts achieve color unity while reflecting the interaction between tradition and modernity. The brush calligraphy brings a dynamic and personal touch, while the seal script provides a sense of formality and historical gravitas. The title and spine of the book are enhanced with gold processing and subtle shading transitions, creating a layered, historical imagery. This combination of fonts and visual effects evokes a feeling of historical depth and craftsmanship while maintaining relevance for modern readers.

3 Design Features

3.1 Historical Weight

The design emphasizes the historical weight and cultural significance of Guangyuan's local chronicles. By incorporating elements that highlight the region's cultural heritage, the design underscores the unique historical narrative embedded within the chronicles. This sense of historical depth is further enhanced by the deliberate choice of materials, colors, and imagery that connect the design to its ancient roots.

3.2 Regional Cultural Characteristics

The design seamlessly integrates regional elements from Jianmen Pass and Yuan Dynasty paintings, offering an authentic reflection of Guangyuan's cultural identity. The incorporation of these historical and cultural motifs serves not only to connect the book to its geographical origin but also to provide readers with a visual and intellectual journey through time. The design's regional focus enhances its cultural authenticity and deepens the reader's engagement with the content.

3.3 Era Specificity

While the design retains classic elements of ancient bookbinding, such as the use of traditional fonts and imagery, it also incorporates modern design techniques and innovations. This combi-

nation allows the book to appeal to contemporary readers while maintaining a timeless artistic charm. The balance between the old and the new creates a design that is both rooted in tradition and forward-looking, making it suitable for a modern audience.

4 Cultural Significance

The art of ancient bookbinding is not just a craft but a reflection of the broader cultural spirit of China. It embodies both philosophical and aesthetic ideals that have shaped Chinese culture for centuries. As society continues to evolve, there is a growing appreciation for the sense of ritual and ceremony in daily life, which has found new expression in the practice of book reading and book design.

By merging ancient bookbinding techniques with modern design concepts, this project creates a work that is not only visually impactful but also spiritually resonant. The design conveys a sense of cultural confidence, allowing readers to connect with their heritage while appreciating the innovations of modern design. This combination fosters a renewed consciousness of cultural values and traditions, offering both intellectual and emotional fulfillment.

5 Conclusion

This paper reveals the significant role of ancient Chinese bookbinding art in modern design through a comprehensive analysis of the practices involved in the compilation of Guangyuan historical annals. The design serves as both an aesthetic expression and a means of cultural inheritance and innovation. It connects the ancient with the modern, targeting contemporary readers while offering valuable insights and references for future design practices.

Overall, this research contributes significantly to the promotion and dissemination of Guangyuan's local culture and the innovation of ancient bookbinding design. From the perspective of design studies and in adherence to traditional Chinese cultural values, this paper explores the balance and resonance between form and content, between the classic and the modern.

Future research should explore the binding designs of other historical annals and various types of ancient books. Such exploration would enrich and enhance the theoretical and practical understanding of bookbinding design, contributing to the broader field of cultural heritage preservation and innovation.

Fund

Ministry of Education's Supply and Demand Employment Education Project: Research on Reshaping the Aesthetic Awareness of Rural Inhabitants among Contemporary University Graduates, sponsored by Creative Education Technology (Shenzhen) Co., Ltd., Number: 20230113331; Major Project in Philosophy and Social Sciences of Sichuan Province: Study on the Compilation of Folk Customs along Shu Road, Project Number: SCJJ24ZD70.

Author Biography

Chuyue HUANG, born in 2000, is a native of Yibin County, Sichuan Province. She is currently a master's student (Class of 2023) at the College of Fine Arts, Sichuan Normal University. Her research focuses on the residential landscapes of the Shu Dao region and the aesthetics of rural habitation. <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-8888-7086>.

Xiaodong WANG (Corresponding Author), born in 1982 in Jiangyou, Sichuan, is a professor at the School of Fine Arts, Sichuan Normal University. He holds a Ph.D. and is a master's supervisor and doctoral supervisor at Krirk University, Thailand. His research areas include human settlement landscapes along the Shu Dao, rural residential aesthetics, and the study of art aesthetic culture. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7882-7364>.

Costume and Culture Studies, ISSN 3005-7809 (print), ISSN 3005-7817 (online), DOI 10.6914/ccs, a bimonthly, founded on 2023, Indexed by CNKI, Google Scholar, AIRITI, Scilit, CrossRef, Elsevier PlumX, etc., published by Creative Publishing Co., Limited on Hong Kong, CHINA. Email: wtocom@gmail.com, <https://cpcccs.com>, <https://cpcl.hk>.