

Research on Bamboo Gift Design Based on Hakka Culture

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Abstract: *Based on Hakka culture, the design of comb and mirror gifts is studied in this paper. Through the utilization of knowledge from materials science and design psychology, and by using the method that combines theory with practice, Hakka culture can be understood from various perspectives, and the available Hakka characteristic elements can be excavated and refined. As a result, a set of comb and mirror gifts infused with Hakka culture is designed. By imparting the characteristics of Hakka culture to bamboo combs and mirrors, consumers' impression of Hakka culture can be deepened, and the spread and promotion of Hakka culture can be facilitated to some extent.*

Keywords: *Hakka culture; Cultural and Creative Design; Comb; Gifts*

1. Introduction

The rapid development of the world has led to continuous advancements in product design, resulting in a saturated market offering a wide array of choices for consumers. However, as well as this rapid development of material world, the enrichment of cultural values seems to be lagging behind. In an era of increasing global cultural integration, it is crucial for Chinese culture to accelerate its global presence and foster a deeper understanding of its essence. The profound and extensive traditional Chinese culture requires us to continuously promote and pass it on, especially for cultures on the verge of disappearing, such as Hakka culture. This calls for concerted efforts in exploration and inheritance. In this context, the design of comb and mirror gifts infused with Hakka culture holds significant importance for the preservation and promotion of Chinese Hakka culture. By utilizing products as carriers, cultural dissemination can reach a broader audience, triggering profound contemplation and appreciation. Therefore, the integration of Hakka culture into the design of comb and mirror gifts presents substantial research value. Combining Hakka culture with the design of comb and mirror gifts serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it serves as a means to promote and raise awareness about Hakka culture, which may not be widely known or understood outside of the Hakka community. By incorporating Hakka cultural elements into the design, these products become ambassadors, representing the distinctive artistic style and design consciousness of Hakka people. They have the potential to captivate the attention and curiosity of individuals from different cultural backgrounds, fostering cross-cultural communication and understanding. Furthermore, the design of comb and mirror gifts infused with Hakka culture helps to preserve and transmit Hakka cultural heritage. As traditional customs and practices face the risk of fading away, incorporating cultural elements into contemporary designs ensures the continuation of these traditions in a relevant and meaningful manner. It allows for the reinterpretation of Hakka culture in a modern context, making it more accessible and relatable to younger generations. Through the utilization of comb and mirror gifts, individuals can engage with Hakka culture on a personal level, fostering a sense of pride and connection to their cultural roots. Moreover, the design of comb and mirror gifts presents an opportunity for cultural innovation and creativity. By blending traditional Hakka elements with contemporary design principles, new aesthetics can be created, reflecting the dynamism and adaptability of Hakka culture. This infusion of traditional and modern elements can generate unique and captivating designs that appeal to a broader consumer base, both domestically and internationally.

2. Research and Analysis of Hakka Culture

Hakka culture is extensive and rich, but due to various reasons, the development of "Hakka studies" is still a work in progress. The design of combs and mirrors that integrate Hakka culture requires

exploration and analysis of Hakka culture, extracting and simplifying elements that can be applied to design. This article focuses on the analysis of architectural culture, clothing culture, bamboo culture, and Hakka Tung Blossom Festival within Hakka culture.

2.1. Hakka Architectural Culture

Hakka architecture refers to Hakka dwellings, which were formed through continuous southward migrations and the conflicts and assimilation with local residents and indigenous cultures. Due to the continuous development and changes of Hakka culture throughout history, it has formed its unique characteristics. Researching the geographical locations, main types, and spiritual connotations of Hakka architecture can help understand certain features and historical development of Hakka culture.

2.1.1. Geographical Locations of Hakka Architecture

Hakka people originated from the Central Plains and gradually migrated southward. The ancestral home of Hakka people is in the Central Plains region, and during the Eastern Jin and Southern Song periods, they gradually migrated to the border areas of Jiangxi, Fujian, and Guangdong due to various reasons. Due to their geographical locations, Hakka people had limited contact with the outside world, and through long-term interaction and assimilation with local residents and indigenous cultures, they developed their unique style over hundreds of years. Hakka people are currently mainly distributed in regions such as southern Jiangxi, western Fujian, eastern Guangdong, and northern Guangdong. In Guangdong province, Hakka people are almost spread throughout the province, but they are mainly concentrated in eastern and northern Guangdong. In Fujian province, they are mainly concentrated in western, northern, and southern Fujian. In Jiangxi province, they are mainly concentrated in southern, central, and northwestern Jiangxi. Additionally, there are Hakka communities in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Sichuan province, Hunan province, and other regions.

2.1.2. Main Types of Hakka Architecture

The main types of Hakka architecture include Hakka Round Houses, Hakka row houses, and Hakka earthen buildings.

Hakka Round Houses (*Figure 1*), also known as Hakka fortified houses or Hakka enclosures, are one of the three main types of Hakka architecture and the most common and well-preserved. Hakka Round Houses combine the rustic style of the Hakka people with the characteristics of Lingnan culture. They originated during the Tang and Song dynasties and flourished during the Ming and Qing dynasties. They are mainly distributed in Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi, and the New Territories of Hong Kong. It is worth mentioning that Hakka Round Houses can be further categorized into different types, such as square walled buildings, round walled buildings, crescent-shaped walled buildings, and elliptical walled buildings. Among them, the most distinctive ones are the round walled buildings, castle-like walled buildings, and four-cornered buildings.



Figure 1: Hakka Round Houses



Figure 2: Hakka townhouses

Hakka row houses (*Figure 2*) combine watchtowers (Diaolou) and row houses^[1]. In the Zhou Dynasty, our country adopted the "kinship system." By the Wei and Jin Dynasties, Hakka people who migrated from the Central Plains to the south organized themselves based on family clans. Almost every row house represents a surname, starting from the ancestors who established the family's foundation and passed it down through generations. Even today, in many places, each row house represents a single surname.



Figure 3: Hakka Tulou



Figure 4: Hakka blue shirt

Hakka earthen buildings (Figure 3), also known as Hakka earth roundhouses or circular enclosed houses, are unique architectural forms of Hakka dwellings. Earthen buildings are essentially a type of Hakka walled house. The most famous Hakka earthen buildings are found in Yongding County, Longyan City, Fujian Province. As the name suggests, earthen buildings are constructed using soil as the main building material, with various shapes such as circular, semi-circular, and square, with the circular shape being the most characteristic. Earthen buildings are collective architecture, designed for ethnic security and defense, exhibiting a self-defense style^[2]. Hakka earthen buildings have certain economic advantages, as the main building materials, yellow soil and fir soil, are abundant in the border areas of Jiangxi, Fujian, and Guangdong. After the demolition of old buildings, the soil can be reused or used as fertilizer for crops. In the climatic conditions of sudden sunshine and rainfall and significant humidity changes in the border areas of Jiangxi, Fujian, and Guangdong, the thick earth walls of Hakka earthen buildings can maintain a suitable humidity for people, providing warmth in winter and coolness in summer.

2.1.3. Cultural Connotations of Hakka Architecture

In traditional Chinese culture, Feng Shui plays a crucial role, and Hakka architecture follows its principles. Feng Shui emphasizes harmony between humans and nature^[1], considering the selection and planning of buildings based on the "Heavenly Way." Hakka architecture reflects a blend of Confucianism and Taoism, seen in the symmetrical layout of Hakka walled houses and their integration with the natural world. Agricultural culture is also inherent in Hakka architecture, showcasing the cultural significance of education. Understanding Hakka culture, including architecture, clothing, bamboo, and festivals, helps preserve this unique heritage and appreciate its historical development.

2.2. Hakka costume culture

Clothing serves as a reflection of culture, conveying its profound connotation and cultural value. In the case of Hakka culture, the study of Hakka costumes unveils the unique artistic style and design consciousness of the Hakka people^[3]. Hakka costumes possess distinct characteristics such as coarse materials, simple shapes, straightforward structures, adaptability, and monochromatic colors. They can be categorized into men's costumes, women's costumes, children's costumes, and common costumes. Let's explore the color, shape, and patterns of Hakka costumes in more details.

Color holds significant meaning in Hakka costumes. Derived from nature, Hakka clothing favors natural primary colors that emphasize authenticity. Black, white, gray, blue, and dark red are commonly used^[3], with blue being the most prevalent color in Hakka costumes. The "blue shirt"(Figure 4) holds symbolic value in Hakka culture, representing the cultural heritage of the Hakka people.

The shape of Hakka costumes emphasizes flatness, reflecting inclusiveness and adaptability. Loose-fitting clothing allows for freedom of movement and facilitates work, aligning with the Hakka philosophy of "harmony between man and nature." Hats play an integral role in Hakka costumes, with distinct styles for different seasons. The "Dai Li" hat is worn in summer, while the "Dong Toupa" is worn in autumn and winter by Hakka women. Notably, the "Liyan" hat, known as the cool hat, is made of bamboo and features a hollow middle and cloth rim.

Patterns in Hakka costumes are generally minimal in everyday and home attire. Even on women's blouses, only a few rings are sewn on the cuffs, or some piping is made on the edge of the skirt^[3]. However, specific occasions may call for appropriate patterns. Common motifs include animals and plants, employing techniques such as filling, continuity, inversion, and repetition. Bright contrasting colors against a dark background create a vibrant yet organized aesthetic^[4]. Symbolically, the patterns express auspiciousness and family harmony, representing the Hakka people's aspiration for a better life.

In addition to costumes, bamboo holds immense significance in Hakka culture. Due to their migration

from the Central Plains to the border regions of Jiangxi, Fujian, and Guangdong, Hakka people have a deep connection with the local environment, including the abundant bamboo resources. Bamboo plays a vital role in various aspects of Hakka life, from production and transportation to craftsmanship. Bamboo weaving is particularly prominent in creating agricultural tools, household items, and furniture. Hakka bamboo weaving products exhibit natural textures, elegant patterns, and a lightweight yet durable nature. They not only preserve the traditional features of the Central Plains but also incorporate cultural elements from the local indigenous peoples.

Moreover, the Hakka Tung Blossom Festival, established in Taiwan Province in 2002, is a modern celebration that holds special significance for the Hakka community. The festival revolves around the beauty of tung flowers, which bloom in April and May. The mountains transform into stunning "Tung Flower Forests," covered in pristine white blooms. This breathtaking sight is often referred to as the "Five Snows" by the Hakka people, symbolizing their deep respect for the natural forests and the historical importance of tung trees as cash crops.

In conclusion, the study of Hakka costumes and the appreciation of bamboo culture provide valuable insights into the distinct features and historical development of Hakka culture. The color, shape, and patterns of Hakka costumes reflect the unique artistic style and design consciousness of the Hakka people. Meanwhile, bamboo represents a vital resource that has shaped various aspects of Hakka life and craftsmanship. Understanding these cultural elements contributes to the preservation and promotion of Hakka culture as a cherished heritage.

3. The Investigation and Analysis of Comb and Mirror Gifts

3.1. The history of combs and mirrors

Combs have a long history in ancient Chinese civilization, originating from the discovery by Princess of Xuanyuan Huangdi that fishbones could be used as hair combs. This discovery sparked the development of wooden combs. Throughout the ages, combs have undergone various transformations, resulting in different types of combs with diverse purposes. Today, there are practical combs, decorative combs, travel combs and so on.

Modern combs come in a wide range of types and materials. Magnetic scalp combs, angle combs, sandalwood combs, peach wood combs, hair carving combs, nine-row combs, aluminum combs, and massage combs are the commonly used combs. Each type serves a specific function and caters to different hair types and styling preferences.

Mirrors, on the other hand, have been used since the Bronze Age in China. They are objects that reflect light and have played a significant role in personal grooming and self-reflection. Throughout history, advancements in technology and craftsmanship have led to the production of innovative and intricately designed mirrors. Each dynasty in China showcased its unique style of mirrors, characterized by distinct patterns, shapes, and materials.

In modern times, mirrors are categorized based on their functionality and purpose. There are bathroom mirrors, cosmetic mirrors, dressing mirrors, and decorative mirrors. Bathroom mirrors are designed for practical use and are often found in bathrooms for daily grooming tasks. Cosmetic mirrors are typically smaller in size and are specifically designed for makeup application and close-up facial examinations. Dressing mirrors are larger and provide a full-length view, allowing individuals to assess their appearance and outfit. Decorative mirrors serve as aesthetic additions to interior design, enhancing the visual appeal of a space.

The production of mirrors today incorporates advanced techniques and materials. With the development of technology, mirrors can now feature built-in lighting, anti-fog properties, and even smart functions. They have become essential items in our daily lives, serving both functional and decorative purposes.

In summary, combs and mirrors have a rich history in Chinese culture. Combs have evolved over time, offering a wide variety of types to cater to different hair needs. Mirrors, on the other hand, have been refined and adapted to serve various functions, from practical grooming to enhancing interior design. Both combs and mirrors continue to play important roles in our daily lives, reflecting the evolution of grooming practices and our pursuit of beauty and self-expression.

3.2. The usage and function of combs and mirrors

When using a comb, people hold it differently based on its shape and the length of their hair. For handle-less combs, individuals grasp the back of the comb and comb downwards from the top of their heads. This type is particularly convenient for women styling their hair, as it allows for easier operation. Handle-equipped combs, on the other hand, are held by the handle, and the combing motion starts from the top of the head. Such combs are suitable for those who do not require hair curling.

Mirror components in comb and mirror gift sets are generally small and handheld. These mirrors can be categorized into those with handles and those without, with slight variations in their usage. Mirrors with handles only require holding the handle, while handle-less mirrors are typically held in the palm of the hand or between the fingers.

3.3. Shapes and materials of combs and mirrors

Combs and mirrors come in various shapes, such as figures, flowers, birds, and moon shapes, with different sizes and forms. Additionally, the shapes of combs and mirrors are different according to different times and occasions. Regarding materials, plastic combs encompass a wide range as there are various types of plastics like nylon and resin. Nylon combs are affordable, water-resistant, but prone to static electricity. Resin combs are generally synthetic resins, and offer a softer surface and better feel but are also prone to generating static electricity. Metal combs are characterized by high hardness and lightness, but excessive force may cause scalp scratches. Horny combs, crafted from natural horn, do not generate static electricity when used but are not resistant to high temperatures and water. Improper storage may lead to bending and deformation, affecting their appearance. Wooden combs, made from different wood types, possess similar basic characteristics and excellent natural properties. Wooden combs are scalp-friendly but susceptible to deformation when exposed to water or high temperatures.

3.4. The situation of similar products in the market

Combs and mirrors are commonly exchanged as gifts. In China, notable brands like "Tan Carpenter" and "White Elephant Brand" produce these items. "Tan Carpenter" is a professional collective company, which mainly produces wooden carding supplies and accessories. "Tan Carpenter" specializes in wooden combs, combining modern and traditional techniques to satisfy both modern tastes and the preservation of traditional culture. Their handmade combs have exquisite craftsmanship, do not generate static electricity, and are gentle on the scalp. The reason why carpenter Tan is so famous is that it endows the comb with traditional classical culture. "White Elephant Brand" is a comb brand from Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, known for its natural materials and meticulous craftsmanship. Changzhou comb has a long history, and "White Elephant Brand" comb is one of the representatives of Changzhou comb. The study of these combs carries practical and cultural significance, preserving China's comb culture and enhancing the value of these products^[5].

4. The Application Design of Hakka Elements in the Design of Comb and Mirror Gifts

At present, the research on Hakka culture is more successful in Hakka architecture-Hakka Round Houses, while the research on other aspects of Hakka culture is not deep enough. Therefore, to carry forward Hakka culture, we can start from multiple angles and combine comb and mirror gifts with Hakka culture for design.

4.1. Product scheme sketch and scheme selection

Scheme I (Figure 5) mainly starts from Hakka architectural culture and bamboo culture, simplifies the appearance of the enclosure, and combines comb and mirror products. The comb is made of bamboo material. This scheme is suitable for placing on the desktop, with the comb and mirror stored in the "enclosure", and taking out the mirror and comb when using. The mirror is placed on the top of the "Hakka Round Houses" with grooves. The placement angle of the mirror can be adjusted as needed.

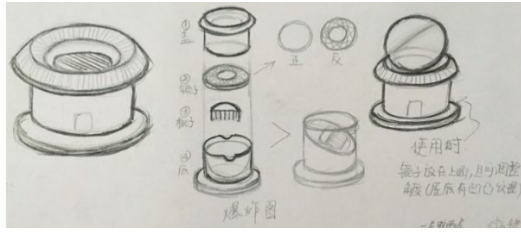


Figure 5: Sketch of Scheme I

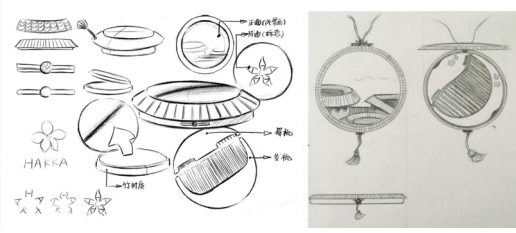


Figure 6: Sketch of Scheme II

Scheme II (Figure 6) comprehensively designs Hakka architecture, costumes, bamboo culture and the shape of tung flowers. The appearance of the whole product is a simplification of the appearance of Hakka enclosed houses. At the top is a raised hand-drawn drawing of Hakka culture. The joint of the upper cover and the bottom cover is in the shape of tung flowers. When the lid is opened, there is a mirror and two combs (one is an eyebrow comb and the other is a small comb for combing hair). The dividing line between two combs is the embodiment of Hakka costumes. Both sides of the eyebrow comb can be used, with hard teeth on one side and soft bristles on the other. This scheme can be equipped with a lanyard, which is suitable for hanging on a carry-on bag or being put in a bag.

Considering the above two schemes comprehensively, the second scheme is finally selected. The first scheme can't be carried around, and the placement of mirrors needs to pay attention to Feng Shui culture, so it has certain limitations. The second scheme combines Hakka culture in many places, which is suitable for carrying around and is the best choice.

4.2. Scheme refinement and landscape drawing

In the process of perfecting the scheme, it is found that the boundary between the two combs is radian, which is not suitable for combing, so the boundary is changed into a straight line; At the same time, the two tung flowers on the back of the two combs are in the form of inscriptions, which can also play a decorative role; Because the shape of the tung flower at the joint of the upper cover and the lower cover can't be kept stable well, it is also removed and changed into the shape of the button of Hakka clothing; Brand logo is added at the bottom of the product.

Draw up a brand, which is dedicated to the excavation of Hakka culture, so as to design a variety of Hakka gifts. The design scheme derivation diagram of the logo is shown in Figure 7. Combine HAKKA's English Hakka with tung flower for morphological symbiosis. The whole logo is the shape of tung flower, and each petal is an English letter, which is H, A, K, K and A respectively. No matter when reading clockwise or counter clockwise, you can read the five English letters HAKKA.

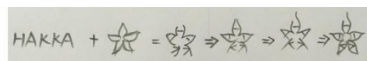


Figure 7: Logo derivation diagram



Figure 8: Brand logo design

The effect diagram of the logo is made by software (Figure 8).

The circular landscape map on the top of the upper cover is drawn in the form of watercolour painting. Figures 9 to 11 (drawn by the author) show Hakka architecture and its surrounding natural environment. The main colours are black, white and grey, showing the feeling of elegance and tranquillity. There are blank parts in the composition, which makes the whole picture more exquisite and harmonious, leaving room for imagination. Achieve the goal of "nothing here is better than something".



Figure 9: Circle and Square



Figure 10: Mountains and Flowers



Figure 11: Water and Building (painted by the author)

These three pictures can express a sense of series of Hakka architectural scenery, and the colour matching is similar and harmonious. Black and white, thick and light, sparse and dense can all express the charm of Hakka folk houses. Consumers can choose to buy series or single products.

4.3. Packaging design and renderings

Packaging design refers to the selection of suitable packaging materials, the use of ingenious technological means, for packaging goods container structure modelling and packaging beautification and decoration design^[6]. The packaging design of the comb and mirror gift adopts the blue linen cloth of Hakka blue shirt, and the opening and closing place adopts the way of button knot, which can better reflect the charm of Hakka costume culture^[7].

After determining the shape, internal structure, material, texture, pattern and packaging of the product, the software is used for three-dimensional modelling and rendering, and finally the effect diagram is obtained (Figure 12). The joint between the upper cover and the lower cover of the product (Figure 13) is realized by clamping. It contains two combs (Figure 14), an eyebrow comb and a comb for combing hair. The eyebrow comb has two sides that can be used for combing, one side is hard teeth, and the other side is soft brush^[8]. The logo on the bottom of the product is in the form of a script (Figure 15). The explosion diagram of the product is shown in Figure 16.



Figure 12: Product renderings



Figure 13: Fastening mode of upper cover and lower cover

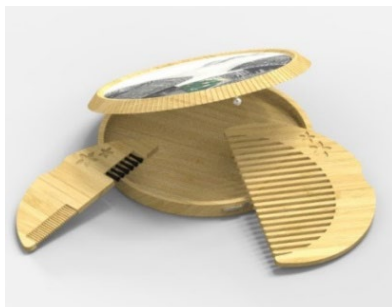


Figure 14: Two combs



Figure 15: The brand logo in the bottom of the bottom cover.

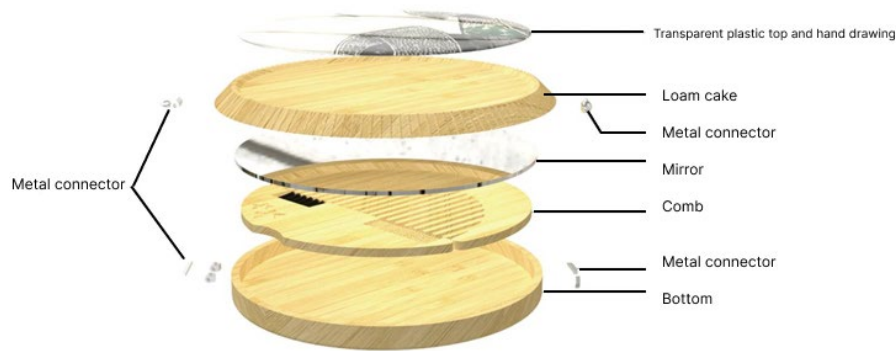


Figure 16: Explosion diagram of the product

5. Conclusions

Drawing upon extensive research on Hakka culture, this study seeks to identify the common ground between Hakka culture and the design of comb and mirror gifts. It delves into the realms of architectural culture, costume culture, bamboo culture, and the Hakka Tung Flower Festival, extracting elements that can be seamlessly incorporated into the design of comb and mirror gifts. By employing theoretical design methodologies, a comprehensive set of comb and mirror gifts embodying the essence of Hakka culture is meticulously crafted. These practical designs serve as tangible vessels through which consumers can deepen their appreciation and understanding of Hakka culture, thus playing a significant role in promoting its dissemination. The insights gained from this research hold not only reference value but also practical implications for the integration of Hakka culture and other traditional cultures into product design.

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