

Analysis of aesthetic value of ancient books in Song dynasty——Board design and font illustration system based on Song Dynasty books

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Abstract. The cultural industry and commodity economy of the Song Dynasty in China were very developed, which gave rise to a very complete book publishing industry. In addition to having high cultural value, the aesthetic value of books in the Song Dynasty cannot be ignored. The books of the Song Dynasty, as a model of ancient Chinese books, had very beautiful board designs and font illustrations, which had a huge impact on the design of later books. Therefore, analyzing the book design system based on the Song Dynasty can fully explore its aesthetic value, which is of great significance for the study of art history and modern book design.

Keywords: Art History, Song Dynasty Books, Book Design, Book Illustration.

1. Historical Background of the Development of Book Publishing Industry in the Song Dynasty

The book publishing industry in the Song Dynasty was highly developed, and its panel design became a model for later generations, inevitably with its socio-economic and cultural background. These prerequisite factors have laid a certain foundation for its realization of artistic value.

1.1 Economic Background of the Development of Book Publishing Industry in the Song Dynasty

The peak economic output of the Song Dynasty accounted for about one-fifth of the world's total, and its fiscal year's total revenue had reached 60 million yuan, of which 70% was commercial tax. The fiscal revenue of the Ming Dynasty was only one fortieth of this amount. In response to the booming commercial transactions, paper currency Jiaozi and Huizi were successively produced and circulated in different regions. The boundaries of the neighborhood have been broken, and shops can be opened at will, while the curfew system has been lifted. The highly developed commodity economy undoubtedly promoted the development of the book publishing industry to a large extent, and also laid the economic foundation for the aesthetic and artistic progress of books in the Song Dynasty.

1.2 Cultural Background of the Development of Book Publishing Industry in the Song Dynasty

The Song Dynasty was the most prosperous period of ancient Chinese culture, and due to the adoption of the national policy of "valuing literature over martial arts" by the Song court, the social status of literati and scholars was extremely elevated. In the Song Dynasty, the imperial examination system continued to improve and became the main way for ordinary people to enter politics. In order to cultivate talents for the imperial examination, the number of various types of academies among the people continued to increase, and academies often issued a large number of high-quality books. In addition, folk bookstores began to emerge as concentrated places for selling books in cities.

1.3 A comprehensive copyright protection system

The copyright protection measures of the Song Dynasty increased the enthusiasm of literati to write and argue. Literati and scholars not only gain academic reputation but also considerable

income through writing and publishing books. Copyright owners can obtain copyright protection from the government by applying for protection, which to some extent curbs the emergence of other pirated books. [1]

2. An Analysis of the Aesthetic Value of Books in the Song Dynasty

The aesthetic value of books in the Song Dynasty exists in multiple aspects. This article will mainly analyze their aesthetic and artistic value based on their board design and font illustration system, as well as referencing their production materials and proofreading system.

2.1 Artistic Paper and Ink Raw Materials

In the production of books in the Song Dynasty, the production of paper and ink was relatively popular and of high quality, coupled with the mature woodblock engraving, which formed a sharp contrast between Song Dynasty books and contemporary European books. The books of the Song Dynasty generally presented a simple and refreshing form, which was easy for merchants to layout and readers to read. At this time, the books in Europe only existed in the upper class, and they could only be written on parchment, which belonged to the noble culture. This was in sharp contrast to the current situation of the widespread distribution of books in China at this time and the simple style design.

From the perspective of raw materials, the paper and ink materials used in Song Dynasty books were very meticulous. The ink color of the Song Dynasty achieved purity and uniformity, and made significant progress in various aspects such as raw material processing and quality assurance, laying a certain material foundation for the development of books.

The papermaking technology of the Song Dynasty was very complete, and the paper had a very beautiful color, excellent quality, white and thick. Realized the unity of flexibility and convenience, and achieved mold and moth resistance, which can be retained for a long time. From the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period to the Song Dynasty, a series of famous high-quality papers were produced, among which Chengxin Hall was the most famous. The Chengxin Tang paper is smooth and smooth, with an elegant color without losing its light beauty. It is thin and glossy, and has exquisite flower and bird patterns in the paper, making it particularly elegant. It is the pinnacle of ancient paper design. Cai Xiang's "Chengxin Tang Paper Sticker" of the Song Dynasty is a model of artistic works created using this paper. This type of paper was used by the imperial family during the Southern Tang Dynasty, but its craftsmanship has been passed down among the people. Even the Chengxin Tang paper, which was imitated by the people, is of much higher quality than ordinary paper. This shows the development of paper technology in the Song Dynasty.

2.2 Unique layout and design

The layout of books in the Song Dynasty includes the scroll system and the warp folding system, which were inherited and developed from the Tang Dynasty. In addition, there are also spiral wind costumes, namely dragon scale costumes, and mainstream butterfly costumes. According to the book "Shulin Qinghua", "Butterfly binding is a form of binding that does not require the use of thread to bind books. Instead, you simply need to stick the back of the book together and clamp it with a hard protective cover. It has a plate facing inward, a single mouth facing outward, and opens like a butterfly's wing." [2] This binding method is called "Butterfly binding" because the book page unfolds like a butterfly spreading its wings.

Butterfly binding is about folding the pages printed on each carving board, with the left and right book centers folded in half along the center line of the board. Each page of the folding opening is wrapped with wrapping paper according to the page number, and pressed together with the spine of the book. Then, thick paper is used as the book cover or the cover is protected with paper mounted silk. Finally, cut the "Heavenly Head", "Foot", and "Book Mouth" of the page together, and a butterfly bound book is completed. The butterfly mounted version has an inward facing and an

outer blank, which can be freely cut and made easy to flip through books and search for page numbers when reading.

This butterfly binding adapted to woodblock printing books, with its unique style, later became the source of many national printed books and has been influential to this day. In the Southern Song Dynasty, the back pack system was developed through transformation on the basis of the butterfly pack system, which later became the basic form of books in the Yuan Dynasty. This form is simple and practical, making it more convenient for folk imitation. The books of the Song Dynasty demonstrated a highly organic unity of standardization and flexibility, creating a new reference foundation for the development of book forms after the Song Dynasty and laying the foundation for the paradigm of Chinese woodblock printing books. It is also the earliest paperback model in the history of Chinese books.

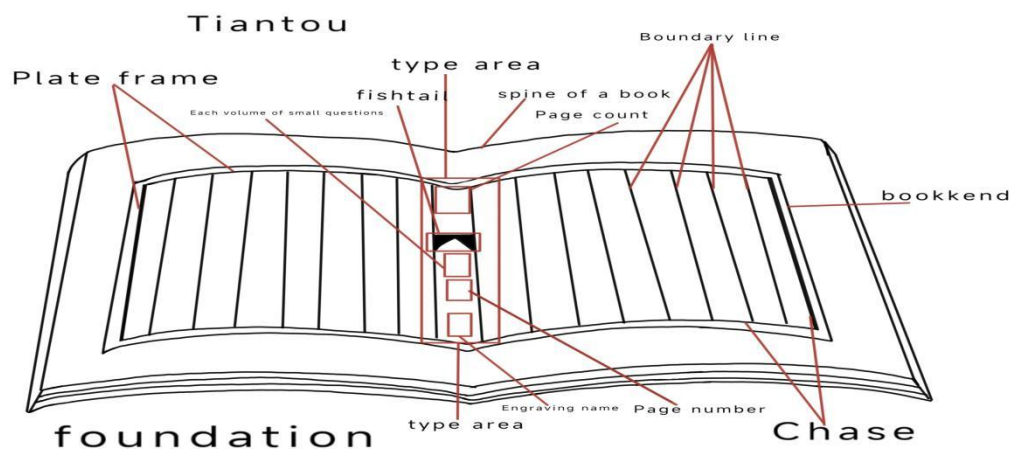


Fig. 1 Butterfly binding Schematic diagram

After the Song Dynasty books, they were often accompanied by publication slogans or signs after the catalog or preface. These cards will also have some decorative designs with aesthetic value. For example, in the "Mr. Changli Collection", there are short lines in the corners of the wireframe with roughly the same thickness, square, curved, and arc-shaped shapes. Due to the use of seal script as the font in the publication, the design of this appearance undoubtedly perfectly integrates with the shape of the seal script, making it more aesthetically pleasing for readers and increasing the willingness of citizens in bookstores and bookstores who come to purchase books to purchase books. [3] The "Book of the Han Dynasty" published by Wang Shubian features symmetrical black cloud patterns on the top and bottom of the characters in the card record, and adds circular breast nail symbols, highlighting the content of the card record while also increasing the agility of the book page.

The decoration and layout of royal books in the Song Dynasty were highly luxurious and had high aesthetic value. The "Continued Records of the Southern Song Dynasty Pavilion" records that royal books should be written on a golden paper border, with yellow silk on the back, blue stickers, yellow silk hanging stickers, and yellow luo clips used to replicate the sandalwood brand name. For example, "Wenyuan Yinghua" adopts a yellow silk book jacket, bookmarks with blue silk ink, and is stamped with seals such as "Imperial Library". The "Emperor Taizu's Yuzhi" is signed in gold with the name of Mei Hongluo. The title page illustrations at the beginning of the Southern Song Dynasty's "Qi Sha Cang" depict over a hundred characters of all sizes. From the composition, the characters are round and full of spirit; From the perspective of image, the posture is solemn, and from the perspective of technology, its lines are smooth. Overall, the entire picture reflects a spectacular scene.

2.3 Highly artistic fonts

In terms of font usage, when printing books, merchants often use exquisite fonts for engraving to increase the smoothness of reading and enhance the aesthetics of the books. When engraving, the fonts often refer to the fonts of famous masters, such as Liu Gongquan, Yan Zhenqing, Ouyang Xun, and others. During the Southern Song Dynasty, Su Shi's fonts also became popular, and some people imitated the thin gold body of Zhao Ji, Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty, for engraving. There are also Xingkai script, handwritten script, ancient script, etc. Most of the Song edition books use the fonts of Yan and Liu as printing templates, which later became known as the Old Song style. The Song Dynasty woodblock printing industry was highly developed, laying the foundation for the basic font of woodblock printing in later generations, namely the Song typeface. It formed in the middle and late Southern Song Dynasty and gradually became the standard and standardized font for various types of printed books and official document writing, which has continued to this day. During printing, different fonts or lettering methods are also used to create visual contrast and facilitate readers' differentiation of book content.

The book formats of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties basically continued the system of "Song edition books". Books all have a certain legacy of the Song version. The Ming and Qing dynasties used a type of square script that imitated the style of the Song Dynasty script, called "Song script" or "imitation Song script". The culture of the Song Dynasty was at its peak, and Song engravings were exquisite and atmospheric, with high collection value. Ming Dynasty literati, especially book collectors, highly praised the "Song engravings". The culture of the Song Dynasty flourished, and the printing industry had a huge development. From the Southern Song Dynasty, printing workshops in Lin'an and other places began to produce fonts similar to printed style, which later became known as imitation Song style. During the Ming Dynasty, literati pursued Song engraved books, so carvers boldly imitated the vertical lines and stroke endpoints of the Song typeface to resist plate wear and tear, but still referred to it as the "Song typeface".

2.4 Vivid and vivid book illustrations

During the Song Dynasty, books often included illustrations to enhance their aesthetic appeal, attract readers' interest, and facilitate their understanding of the book's content. The use of illustrations makes knowledge dissemination more vivid and vivid. The specific types of illustrations include: illustrations from sub collections of classics and history, some practical illustrations from science and technology books, illustrations from production and daily life, illustrations from medical drugs, illustrations from geographical maps, illustrations from religious books, etc. For example, during the reign of Emperor You, the imperial palace carved edition "Three Dynasties' Treasure Instructions" and during the reign of Yuan Feng, the "Bitter Pot Painting" were fully painted books. There are many weapon illustrations in "The General Essentials of the Martial Arts Classic", and a large number of architectural illustrations in "The Creation of the French Style". During the reign of Emperor Qiandao, there were 309 illustrations in the "Six Classics" and over 500 illustrations in the "New Three Rites" during the reign of Emperor Chunxi. The "Shangshu Tu" explains the "Shangshu" through a combination of graphics and text, with a total of 77 illustrations. [4] The literati of the Song Dynasty, whether in painting, calligraphy, or poetry, all had aesthetic characteristics of elegance and introspection. They pursue their own "rhyme" in aesthetics, connecting it with aesthetics, which is beautiful and elegant, profound in meaning, and plain and innocent. Due to the long-term stable development of the woodblock printing industry, a large number of excellent writers and engravers have been cultivated, and they have been passed down from generation to generation, forming their own unique fonts and printing styles.

2.5 fine and perfect proofreading system

The song edition of the book proofreading carefully, there are few mistakes. Song dynasty has a perfect proofreading system, proofreading books not only requires comprehensive knowledge and strict, proofreading personnel will also be strictly selected to ensure the fine proofreading. He Zhu, a famous poet, kept more than 10,000 books in his home. Every book was proofread by himself.

In Song dynasty, it was stipulated that three corrections should be made before engraving. It is then proofread and the names of those who have been proofread are not included in the volume to ensure the attribution of responsibility. The relevant regulations clearly defined a variety of different situations proofreading methods, each person's daily proofreading workload will be reported on time. This shows the rigorous proofreading work. There are few mistakes in Song dynasty's books, which makes us better appreciate the artistic sense

3. Historical Achievements in the Aesthetics and Artistic Value of Books in the Song Dynasty

There are records in ancient books that the books of the Song Dynasty were hard on paper, but the carved characters were very soft, as if they were handwritten. The ink used for carving the books was appropriate, and even if it was touched with water, it would not damage the handwriting. The books had a scholarly aroma when opened. Some book designers believe that the design of books in the Song Dynasty was very rigorous, with its layout and layout showing a characteristic of orderliness, achieving a high level of spatial layout, text density, and wireframe application. The aesthetics of the Song Dynasty advocated meaning, and every literary and artistic work is not only a form of expressing content, but also a manifestation of the inner cultivation of literati. The rulers of the Song Dynasty continued the national policy of valuing literature over military power for three hundred years, which became an important political factor in the development of book printing and distribution. The woodblock printing of ancient books in the Song Dynasty has reached an unprecedented level in terms of material selection, carving techniques, layout and layout. Some scholars believe that the admiration of Song Dynasty books by later generations is also a form of worship for the character of Song Dynasty literati, and many collectors view the collection of Song Dynasty books as a guardian of the Chinese spirit.

There is an old saying circulating in the streets, "A page of books from the Song Dynasty is worth one or two gold. The famous book collector Mao Jin of the Ming Dynasty claimed that if there were Song edition books to be sold to the owner, they would pay 200 yuan per page, and even old manuscripts would pay 40 yuan per page. At that time, various book vendors and collectors in society sold Song edition books to Mao Jin. At that time, people all said that engaging in other businesses was not as good as having a few pages of Song edition books to sell to Mao Jin.

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