

An investigation into the symbolic connotations and cultural value of Chaoshan guo molds

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Abstract

The traditional Chaoshan guo molds, intricately carved tools used for shaping regional delicacies, hold significant cultural symbolism that extends from the Chaoshan community to neighboring regions like Fujian, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. These molds transcend their role as culinary tools, embodying the artistic, cultural, and social values of the Chaoshan people through designs that convey wishes for prosperity, longevity, and unity. As globalization and modernization progress, preserving these traditional crafts has become increasingly crucial, underscoring a need to protect and reinterpret cultural heritage in ways that resonate with contemporary society.

This study employs qualitative research methods, including detailed literature reviews and extensive field surveys, aiming to explore the integration of traditional guo molds into modern cultural practices and products. By examining the historical development, symbolic language, and graphic functions of the guo molds, the research identifies how these artifacts serve as both cultural preservation and innovative enrichment in modern festivals and products. Findings indicate that while guo molds continue to play a significant role in contemporary festivities, they also offer potential for innovation in local cultural industries, thereby contributing to the sustainability of Chaoshan's intangible cultural heritage. This study underscores the importance of these cultural symbols in maintaining community identity and enhancing the local economy through tourism and cultural products, reinforcing a sense of belonging and cultural pride among the Chaoshan diaspora.

Keywords: Chaoshan Guo Molds; Graphic Symbols; Cultural Value

Introduction

The Chaoshan region, known for its rich cultural traditions, is home to a unique rice-based delicacy shaped using intricately carved wooden molds called “Guo molds”. These molds are not only tools for making traditional snacks (Figure 1) but also represent a deeper cultural symbol within Chaoshan, Fujian, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia communities (Wang,2022). The molds combine ancient engraved printing techniques and folk woodcutting methods, deeply carving auspicious symbols into the wood. These symbolic patterns, created by the Chaoshan people, express their desires for longevity, fortune, and reunion. More than just a festive tool, these molds have become an emblem of the region's collective identity.



Figure 1 Guo, a Chaoshan rice-based food (Source: Photographed by researcher, 2022)

Amid the forces of globalization and modernization, the importance of preserving and revitalizing these traditional crafts has become paramount. Modern Chaoshan communities, faced with the challenges of sustaining their cultural heritage, have begun to explore ways to integrate traditional practices into contemporary contexts (Du & Wang, 2015). This study examines the significance and applicability of Guo molds in modern-day festivals and cultural products, aiming to evoke emotional responses and a sense of belonging among both local and overseas Chaoshan populations. The study also seeks to contribute to the promotion of local cultural products and ensure the sustainability of the Chaoshan region's cultural industries.

In the context of cultural preservation, the Chaoshan Guo molds are more than just functional objects; they embody the region's folklore, artistic expression, and communal values. As the molds continue to play a role in contemporary festivities, they help maintain the region's cultural diversity and enrich its intangible heritage. Furthermore, the molds have potential beyond their traditional uses, offering opportunities for innovation in local cultural industries (Yao, 2018). By revitalizing these practices,

this research underscores the significance of sustaining the cultural legacy of Chaoshan in a way that resonates with contemporary markets and communities.

The molds, with their deep cultural and symbolic value, also have the potential to foster cultural pride among the Chaoshan diaspora, thus reinforcing a connection to their roots. With this in mind, this research addresses how Chaoshan Guo molds can be adapted to modern cultural and commercial needs while preserving their traditional significance. By doing so, it aims to foster a deeper understanding of the importance of maintaining cultural identity amid rapid global changes.

Research objectives

1. To study the historical development and cultural value of Chaoshan guo molds.
2. To analyze the symbolic language and graphic functions of Chaoshan guo molds
3. To optimize the digital representation and dissemination of Chaoshan guo molds symbols

Research Methodology

1. Data Collection

This study employs a qualitative research methodology. The questionnaire survey was distributed to a variety of demographic groups with differing educational backgrounds in order to gain insight into the public's fundamental understanding of Chaoshan guo molds culture through the application of scientific methodology. A total of 218 valid questionnaires were recovered, and the mean values corresponding to all research items were higher than 0.4, indicating that the information of the research items could be effectively extracted. Furthermore, the KMO value is 0.781, which is greater than 0.6, indicating that the data can be effectively extracted and analysed. Furthermore, the variance explained values of the two factors are 54.207% and 31.423%, respectively, with the cumulative variance explained after rotation reaching 85.630%. This indicates that the data pertaining to the research items can be extracted effectively.

2. A review of the literature was conducted to identify the identity and connotation of Chaoshan guo molds culture. This study brings together the analyses of Chinese and foreign scholars on the development background and artistic characteristics of the art of guo molds.

3. Design Work Creation

The design products are to be reconstructed by means of an exploration and analysis of the contemporary design language.

Research Results

1. Overview of Chaoshan guo molds

1.1 Historical Development of Chaoshan guo molds

During the Northern Wei Dynasty, Jia Si Fo mentioned in "The Essentials of Qi Min" that dough was shaped using molds engraved with animals and flowers, indicating that guo molds existed at that time. By the Tang Dynasty, with political and economic growth, cakes and kuey teow shapes became more diverse. Specialized molds for cake-making emerged to save time and standardize sizes, which led to the rise of cake shops. These developments also spread to Japan, where they gained imperial favor. By the Ming Dynasty, cakes were deeply embedded in popular rituals, driving the further evolution of guo molds. In the Qing Dynasty, during the reign of Qianlong, the cake industry prospered, and guo molds reached their peak in production and cultural significance. Workshops in Chaozhou even exported guo molds to places like Singapore (Wang, 2022).

In 1956, as part of the co-operative movement, artisans from Cotton Lake formed the Cotton Lake Engraving Society, focusing on guo molds. Production soared, with over 8,600 pieces sold that year. By 1965, with the increased demand for exports, more workers were trained, expanding the range to 124 different specifications and producing 46,570 pieces (Zhu & Wang, 2016).

Since the 21st century, guo molds production has returned to family workshops, such as Qiaodong Quanji and Fengshou Brand Wooden guo molds. These brands maintain some visibility on platforms like Jieyin and Xiaohongshu but face challenges due to a lack of professional management, resulting in scattered distribution and low output. Today, while plastic molds are common for everyday use, handmade wooden molds are mostly supplied to commercial establishments and promoted as cultural products in tourist venues and museums (Figure 2).



Figure 2 Chaoshan guo molds making workshop (Source: Photographed by researcher)

1.2 The production process of guo molds

The production process of guo molds is typically accomplished through hand-carving and mould-turning techniques. In Chaoshan, the majority of wooden traditional guo molds are hand-carved, whereas ceramic and porcelain varieties are either handmade or moulded. One of the most significant characteristics of guo molds is its utilisation as a mould, predominantly employed through reverse-engraving, shadow-engraving, or concave engraving techniques. The surface of the guo molds, when crafted from guo molds, will exhibit a 'sunburst' or 'convex' effect.

The traditional handmade wooden guo molds is comprised of five processes: the selection of materials, the creation of blanks, the hollowing out of eyes, the drawing and carving. The final carving is the process that most clearly reflects the craftsmanship of the guo molds master. In the case of porcelain guo molds, the production process includes the creation of blanks, the design, the repair of the carving, and the baking, among other steps. Each process is crucial to the overall production of the guo molds.

1.3 Cultural Symbols and Cultural Values of Chaoshan guo molds

Chaoshan guo molds moulds are quite distinctive and more elaborate than those in other parts of the country. It is famous for its variety of themes and exquisite carvings, especially the mooncakes made during the Mid-Autumn Festival, which are the most exquisite and have the most variety of styles. From the perspective of artistic and aesthetic value: due to the influence of the famous Chaoshan woodcarving, Chaoshan guo molds skills have a high degree of artistry, the knife method is clean and

sharp, usually in the mould deep carving the concave pattern of auspicious motifs, printed in shallow relief with three-dimensional and clear Yang, beautiful and exquisite (Du, Zhu & Wang, 2016).

Most of the Chaoshan guo molds are carved from longan wood, and the inner wall is coated with red lacquer for protection, which is both festive and auspicious, and convenient for demoulding, and there are also some retained for the original wood. Mooncake prints most of the model system, there are round, bagua-shaped, shaped, etc., round is the most common. The bagua-shaped seal is engraved in the centre with the characters 'Shou' or 'Double Happiness' in ancient seal script, written in an elegant and varied style, surrounded by a meandering pattern, symbolising happiness and longevity. The more representative is the round cake seal, the theme: flowers bloom rich, durian blossom hundred children, dragon and phoenix double happiness, the unicorn to send children and so on. Alien shape is mostly small seal, carving more three-dimensional, such as fruits and melons have Buddha's hand, pomegranate, longevity peach, lychee, etc.; animals have tortoise, fish, butterflies, etc.; figures have the Eight Immortals, Maitreya Buddha, etc. This kind of small print is mostly a collection of carvings in a long strip of wood, all kinds and even sets, the whole body is complete, the pattern is beautifully decorated, the idea can be said to be very clever, highlighting the folk meaning of good luck, and praying for the "blessing of life and happiness" of the traditional theme. These beautifully shaped seals are most often used to print small white cakes to give to children.

2. Analysis of the symbolic language of Chaoshan guo molds

2.1 Graphic Symbolic Functions of Chaoshan guo molds

Chaoshan guo molds moulds are generally made from carved longan wood and come in single, continuous, single-sided and double-sided forms. Each guo molds mould is made of wood, then carved into a concave shape, the hand-operated knife is carefully carved with auspicious characters and floral patterns, the inner wall is coated with red lacquer for protection, which is not only festive and auspicious, but also convenient to take off the mould, and some of them are retained as the original wood. This is a pictorial transmission of the good wishes of the Chaoshan people. Kuey teow prints are colourful, with traditional designs of peaches, pomegranates, lychees, Buddha's hands, persimmons, chickens, geese, crabs, shrimps, fish and other 'five fruits' and 'five offerings', as well as designs of rabbits, turtles and dragons, which are not often seen in everyday life. They are also engraved with the words 'good luck', 'longevity', 'peace every year' and 'happiness' (Figure 3).



Figure 3 Classic graphics of Chaoshan guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

These Chaoshan guo molds have a rich variety of motifs, which can be divided into five categories according to subject matter: plants and fruits, animals, artefacts, people, characters and geometric patterns. These motifs are presented individually or in combinations, and different motifs have their own specific symbols that express people's wishes and prayers.

2.1.1 Plant motifs

Chaoshan guo molds frequently feature plant and melon patterns such as peach, pomegranate, chrysanthemum, plum blossom, lotus, peony, gourd, lychee, banana leaf, and bamboo. These motifs carry symbolic meanings rooted in traditional Chinese decorative elements (Figure 4). By simplifying and carving the shapes of plants and fruits into the molds, artisans showcase their mastery of smooth lines, vivid realism, and harmonious designs, reflecting their deep appreciation for natural aesthetics. The composition of these plant motifs emphasizes coordination between the whole and its parts. Artisans carefully arrange the motifs according to the size and shape of the mold, ensuring that the design is displayed optimally within the limited space. Patterns often echo each other, creating a harmonious and unified effect. For instance, the peach symbolizes longevity and happiness, the pomegranate flower represents fertility and prosperity, and the peony signifies elegance and nobility.



Figure 4 Botanical graphics of Chaoshan guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

2.1.2 Animal motifs

Chaoshan guo molds designs contain various animal elements such as turtles, fish, chickens, pigs, goats, geese, as well as butterflies, magpies, mandarin ducks, shrimps, crabs and so on (Figure 5). These animal motifs are used in guo molds yin to convey different auspicious meanings by highlighting their characteristics. For example, in the case of turtle prints, the shape of a turtle or the back of a turtle is usually depicted to signify longevity. Fish is a homonym of 'yu', which symbolises good fortune in successive years (Chang & Gao, 2009). Fish, chicken, pig, goose and goat motifs are commonly used in ceremonial guo molds and may appear either individually in the guo molds or in a combination of several eyes in the guo molds. Butterflies, magpies and mandarin ducks symbolise the beauty and good fortune of life.



Figure 5 Animal figures in Chaoshan guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

2.1.3 Artefacts

Artifacts in Chaoshan seals are rich and varied in motifs, mainly including vases, lanterns, coins, and banana fans, etc (Figure 6). These motifs are refined and simple in expression. These motifs are refined and simple in expression, and they are mainly depicted by highlighting the characteristics of the artefacts. The vase, a common element in Chaoshan prints, signifies peace and good fortune and is often combined with floral elements to create a harmonious and beautiful image. Lanterns, on the other hand, represent the atmosphere of prosperity and reunion, and are the Chaoshan people's vision of a prosperous family. The coins in the Chaoshan seal are given the symbolism of wealth, signifying abundance and prosperity. In addition, the banana fan in the Chaoshan seal also has a unique symbolism.



Figure 6 Artifact Graphics of Chaoshan guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

2.1.4 Figures

Alien form is mostly small seal, carving more three-dimensional, figures have eight immortals, Maitreya Buddha and so on (Figure 7). This kind of small seal is mostly a collection of carvings in a long strip of wood, all kinds of parallel, and even complete sets, the whole body, the pattern is beautifully decorated, the idea can be said to be very clever, emphasizing the folk meaning of good luck, praying for the "blessing of happiness and longevity" of the traditional theme. These beautifully shaped seals are most often used to print small white cakes given to children.



Figure 7 Figures from Chaoshan guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

2.1.5 Characters

The character "longevity" is one of the most common motifs in Chaoshan guo molds, symbolizing the wish for a long and healthy life, which has been a cherished desire since ancient times. In traditional Chinese culture, the character "longevity" is often associated with blessings for a full and prosperous life. The character is usually written in ancient seal script, known for its simplicity and beauty, with smooth lines and varied shapes. This style not only gives the guo molds an elegant artistic appearance but also reflects the respect and inheritance of traditional Chaoshan culture. The "longevity" character has various forms due to different artisans' styles and regional influences, enhancing the variety and visual appeal of the molds.

In addition to the "longevity" character, the guo molds often feature other motifs such as chrysanthemums and geometric patterns, which are integrated to create a more layered and meaningful design. The character is often placed in the center of the mold, surrounded by auspicious designs to form a harmonious composition. Other characters like "fortune," "prosperity," and "happiness" are also frequently found on guo molds. These characters, often carved in different script styles such as regular, clerical, running, and seal script, are combined to convey deeper symbolic meanings. For instance, the combination of "fortune" and "longevity" expresses the desire for happiness, prosperity, and longevity.

Together, these characters and motifs enhance the cultural significance and aesthetic beauty of Chaoshan guo molds, making them not only functional but also culturally rich artifacts (Figure 8).



Figure 8 Character graphics of Chaoshan guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

2.2 The symbolic function of Chaoshan guo molds

In Chaoshan, guo molds is closely associated with traditional Chaoshan culture and has become an indispensable part of Chaoshan culture, as it is basically inseparable from kuey teow in the folk culture of New Year celebrations and religious beliefs. Guo molds contain a wealth of symbols through which the Chaoshan people express their good wishes in this folk art, and each symbol has both an aesthetic function and a rich regional cultural connotation. In this article, representative samples of classical symbols in Chaoshan guo molds are selected for analysis.

2.2.1 Peach design

The peach-shaped guo molds in the Chaoshan area feature an abstract peach outline, with a large peach frame enclosing a smaller peach. This design often incorporates traditional symbols of good luck, such as the return pattern, cloud-thunder pattern, triangular pattern, and diagonal pattern. At the center of the design, the ancient seal script for "longevity" is often paired with motifs like safflower and cactus, both revered for their auspicious meanings in Chaoshan culture. The peach design carries three significant symbolic meanings:

Warding off evil spirits: In traditional Chinese culture, the peach is believed to have the power to ward off evil due to its association with immortality. According to myth and folklore, peach wood was seen as having protective qualities, and its presence was thought to bring safety and protection from harm.

Fertility: The peach's plump and vibrant appearance symbolizes fertility and the prosperity of life. In ancient times, the peach was worshipped as a symbol of reproduction and vitality, embodying the hopes and prayers of the people for abundance and the continuation of life.

Longevity: The concept of longevity as a blessing in Chinese culture can be traced back to the Shang Dynasty, with the peach becoming a prominent symbol of this desire. The peach is not only associated with long life but also with the broader wish for a prosperous and healthy existence. Its association with the "five blessings," including longevity, further emphasizes its deep-rooted significance in traditional Chinese symbolism (Figure 9).



Figure 9 Peach shaped guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

2.2.2 Pomegranate

The traditional pomegranate design is popular with the public because it is endowed with rich meanings of auspicious symbols. People have extracted unique symbolic meanings from the perfect shape of the pomegranate. The most prominent of these is 'many children', derived from the abundance of the pomegranate's seeds (Figure 10). In traditional Chinese thought, the prolongation of the heir is a matter of great importance, and inheritance and the continuation of life are an important and indispensable part of the traditional concept. The pomegranate fruit is full and round, and when the pomegranate is split open, the full belly of the fruit is revealed, which is seen by the public as a symbol of 'many children'. The pomegranate is therefore associated with good and auspicious wishes. In some regions, the pomegranate also represents love. At a wedding, it is customary to plant two pomegranates, symbolising the couple's wish to be 'married forever'. At the same time, the pomegranate also represents longevity, and during the Chongyang Festival, it is a local custom to offer pomegranates to the elderly to express a deep wish for longevity.



Figure 10 Pomegranate shaped guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

3.2.3 Fish shape

In ancient times, due to low human fertility and the strong reproductive ability of fish, fish were symbolically linked to female fertility. Without knowledge of reproduction, ancient people worshipped fish reproduction, using fish patterns on vessels in rituals to pray for food, hunting success, and peace. This veneration has had a lasting impact, manifesting in various folk cultures. Auspiciousness and Good Fortune: Since the Tang Dynasty, fish motifs have been widely used in folklore, becoming a core part of traditional Chinese culture (Lee, 2023). These motifs, often combined with others, represent happiness, wealth, and harmony. Folk crafts like paper-cutting and New Year's paintings frequently feature lively fish, symbolizing the people's hopes for avoiding misfortune and gaining good fortune. The phonetic similarity between "fish" and "Yu" (surplus) reinforces the fish's metaphor for abundance and luck, seen in examples like "Lucky Celebration" and "Fish Leap Dragon Gate" (Figure 11)



Figure 11 Fish-shaped guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

3.2.4 Tortoise

The history of Chinese tortoise culture is characterised by a long tradition of tortoise divination beliefs and tortoise worship. As the tortoise divination belief culture evolved, it gave rise to the tortoise worship culture of tortoise-shaped artefacts. Conversely, the turtle as the divine spirit of the king's divination gradually became a commoner phenomenon and evolved into turtle worship (Du, Zhu & Wang, 2016). This subsequently gave rise to a plethora of turtle-shaped artefacts, which became a cultural phenomenon. The tortoise is a creature with a long history of being associated with longevity. The longevity of the tortoise led to the belief that it could understand heaven and earth and divine the future, representing an evolution of the tortoise's perceived abilities. The turtle is regarded as an auspicious symbol due to its association with longevity, foresight, wealth and invincibility. Consequently, it is viewed as a positive omen in social contexts, signifying good fortune and success. It can therefore be argued that the auspicious imagery of the tortoise is a derivative and generalisation of the tortoise's beautiful imagery of longevity, foresight and wealth (Figure 12). A culinary tradition observed among the Taiwanese and Fujianese peoples is the preparation of red turtle guo molds.



Figure 12 Turtle-shaped guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

2.3 Forms and patterns of composition of visual symbols in guo molds

With regard to decorative textures, the abstract form of geometric patterns is more frequently observed in peach guo molds. This type of pattern is believed to have originated with the ancient Yue ethnic group. The ancient Vietnamese inhabited the southern region, which was characterised by high temperatures and humidity, as well as a prevalence of snake infestation. In order to ensure their own safety, the ancient Yue people would inscribe geometric patterns on their pottery that resembled the shape and pattern of snakes, with the hope that the snakes would have compassion for their own kind and thus protect them. Furthermore, peach guo molds are frequently embellished with patterns

symbolising longevity and the back. The Shou Zi pattern, as the term implies, is associated with the concept of longevity. The hui-shaped pattern represents the earliest traditional pattern to be employed in the decorative field. The hui-shaped pattern has its origins in the thunder pattern, which was derived from ancient ceramics and bronzes. This is a square or rounded circular pattern consisting of short horizontal and vertical lines folded around each other in the shape of the Chinese character 'hu', which is the basis of its name. The Hui pattern is characterised by a series of continuous lines and patterns, which are believed to symbolise long-lasting good fortune and unceasing wealth. This unending pattern also symbolises the concept of life as an endless cycle and the continuous development of things. The distinctive structure of the pattern allows for indefinite extension, thereby conveying a sense of vigorous vitality. This infinite extension symbolises the multiplicity of children and grandchildren and the prosperity of the family unit. The objective of the information transformation and dissemination of Chaoshan guo molds symbols is to eliminate the overly complex symbols currently in use and provide a more straightforward method of conveying the information associated with Chaoshan guo molds symbols (Figure 13).



Figure 13 Geometric pattern of Chaoshan Guo molds (Source: Photographed by researcher)

3. Optimizing the Symbolic Representation and Digital Preservation of Chaoshan Guo Molds Culture

The objective of the information transformation and dissemination of Chaoshan guo molds symbols is to eliminate the overly complex symbols currently in use and provide a more straightforward method of conveying the information associated with Chaoshan guo molds symbols.

Firstly, the development of Chaoshan guo molds can be mapped with the help of a design using Chaoshan guo molds culture as a timeline and combining the symbolic features of guo molds culture to facilitate the public's rapid comprehension of the evolution of Chaoshan guo molds.

Secondly, the mould data are collected, categorised, measured and mapped on a large scale in order to extract and summarise the guo molds symbols. This approach is conducive to the collection and preservation of guo molds information. Furthermore, the digitally based graphic information provides a research basis for the development and application of guo molds information in the future. The graphics are created using vector software and presented in a plan view, which facilitates the audience's accurate perception of the mould's appearance and scale. Concurrently, vector graphics facilitate subsequent reproduction and preservation, allowing relevant personnel to devise innovative designs based on the original moulds to meet their specific requirements.

The graphic representation of guo molds is primarily conveyed through a figurative design approach, encompassing the identification of the core elements of guo molds culture and the visual representation of its transformation, the extraction of representative features, and the graphic reconstruction of these elements to enhance the efficiency of information comprehension and facilitate deeper memory retention. Additionally, the intuitive presentation of the information map, imbued with decorative nuances, enhances the visual appeal and coherence of the representation. The classification of guo molds decorations allows for a more nuanced understanding of the characteristics of different decorations, which can then be refined and designed in a directional manner. The refinement of the decorations employs a combination of figurative and abstract methods to express the orderly visual elements with the same stylistic features. In the visualisation of the process characteristics of Chaoshan guo molds, the guo molds moulds, guo molds production process and guo molds raw materials are listed as the unit elements, which are also presented in a hand-drawn illustration style. This reflects the strong and simple cultural and social atmosphere that is in line with the guo molds itself.

Discussion

The Chaoshan guo molds culture plays an integral role in the regional Chaoshan culture, encompassing a rich and robust array of folk culture and traditional handicrafts. It represents a synthesis of the historical memory and life aesthetics of the Chaoshan people. The construction of a systematic

theoretical study of Chaoshan guo molds culture and the application of its transformative and integrative design concepts to other design practices of guo molds products not only provide a theoretical foundation and a practical basis for the application of guo molds information visualisation as a carrier, but also facilitate the development of a comprehensive understanding of Chaoshan guo molds culture. Furthermore, this approach offers a novel perspective on the inheritance and promotion of Chaoshan guo molds culture, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of this cultural phenomenon among a broader audience. This, in turn, paves the way for innovative developments in Chaoshan guo molds culture and the guo molds craftsmanship tradition. This approach can facilitate the innovative development and revitalisation of Chaoshan guo molds culture and guo molds craftsmanship. This paper begins with an examination of the connotative aspects of Chaoshan guo molds symbols, exploring their practical applications, analyses and research within the context of Chaoshan guo molds culture at three levels: symbolic, functional and connotative. It then proceeds to present a synthesis of the four major information boards, which may be characterised by stylistic, decorative, functional and cultural elements. The paper goes on to discuss the use of rhythm and rhyme, contrast and unity, and other artistic expressions in the construction of information visualisation designs, before presenting the results of this analysis in the context of design practice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the preceding discussion has demonstrated that the cultural traditions associated with Chaoshan guo molds are shaped by both traditional cultural memory and aesthetic considerations pertaining to the production process. The utilisation of Chaoshan guo molds is a ubiquitous feature of the daily lives of the local populace. Consequently, an investigation into the characterisation of Chaoshan culture and its mode of transmission can elucidate the relationship between the source and flow of guo molds and its relationship with the history of the nation. Furthermore, it can explore the similarities and differences in the craft production and artistic characteristics of Chaoshan guo molds and other regions' cake prints. Furthermore, additional discussion is warranted regarding its cultural structure and aesthetic approach.

It is essential to express the memory and inheritance of traditional Chinese folklore symbols artistically at a new level of communication. The visual translation of these symbols can enhance the

visual experience and memory of the data information of Chaoshan guo molds, creating a positive impact and constituting a memory of the festival and a psychological expectation for the public.

Suggestions

1. General suggestions.

Enhance Public Engagement with Chaoshan Guo Molds: To ensure the continued relevance of Chaoshan guo molds, it is essential to incorporate modern design techniques and digital tools into educational campaigns, museum exhibitions, and cultural events. This will help foster a stronger connection between the public and these traditional crafts.

Promote Cultural Products Based on Chaoshan Guo Molds: Incorporating the symbolic motifs of guo molds into various cultural products such as souvenirs, packaging, and apparel can create new avenues for promoting Chaoshan's cultural identity. These products can attract tourists and enhance the cultural economy of the region.

Strengthen Cross-Industry Collaborations: Collaborating with design professionals, artisans, and technology experts will enhance the production, marketing, and preservation of guo molds. This interdisciplinary approach will enable innovative designs while preserving the traditional craftsmanship of Chaoshan guo molds.

2. Further Research suggestions.

Explore the Role of Digital Technologies in Craft Preservation: Future research should explore how advanced technologies, such as 3D modeling, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR), can be used to digitize and preserve guo molds for educational and commercial purposes.

Investigate the Diaspora's Connection to Chaoshan Guo Molds: Further studies should focus on how Chaoshan communities overseas maintain and evolve their cultural practices around guo molds, as well as how these practices can be revitalized to strengthen connections with their heritage.

Examine the Environmental Impact of Guo Molds Production: Research on the sustainability and environmental implications of guo molds production, particularly the sourcing of materials like longan wood, is essential for developing more eco-friendly production methods without compromising traditional craftsmanship.

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