

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM

VIETNAM NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CULTURE AND ARTS STUDIES

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**VIETNAMESE GRAPHIC DESIGN IN RELATION TO
TRADITIONAL FINE ART**

Major: Theory and History of Fine Arts

Code: 62 21 01 01

SUMMARY OF PHD DISSERTATION IN ART

Hanoi – 2016

The study has been completed at
VIETNAM NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CULTURE AND ARTS STUDIES
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND TOURISM

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At 2016

The dissertation could be looked up at:

- *Vietnam National Library*

- *Library of Vietnam National Institute of Culture and Arts Studies*

**LIST OF PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO THE
DISSERTATION WRITTEN BY THE DOCTORAL CANDIDATE**

1. Nguyen Hong Ngoc (2012), “Vietnamese Graphic Design in the Integration – Globalization trend”, Speech published in *Yearbook of the 4th International Vietnam Study Conference*, p.80-81
2. Nguyen Hong Ngoc (2013), “Vietnamese Graphic Design in the Integration trend”, *Journal of Culture and Art*, Vol. 353, p.83-87
3. Nguyen Hong Ngoc (2013), “Japanese Design – traditional power and creativeness” , *Journal of Fine Art*, Vol. 04, p. 63-71
4. Nguyen Hong Ngoc (2014), “Traditional Fine Art at the end of monarchy period and conclusions”, *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, Vol. 04, p.25-28
5. Nguyen Hong Ngoc (2015), “Vietnamese traditional fine art – a fundament for modern creative activities”, *Journal of Culture*, Vol 03 (19), p.75-80

INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

Graphic design (GD) is one branch of design, which has developed in the past few decades in Vietnam. As a form of visual media, the role and influence of GD over many aspects of life is becoming more and more significant.

National elements are not compulsory in a GD product. However, with the integration and globalization trend, which makes the world become “flattened”, national elements and distinguished characteristics play a very important role in maintaining cultural diversity and identifying cultural specifics. Obviously, the connection between traditional and modern elements is always indispensable to a country’s present and future; and modern Vietnamese graphic design’s (VGD) cultural source comes from Traditional fine art (TFA). The specifics of fine art which should be selected and exploited, the role and the extent to which these specifics should be used in modern GD products are still the questions that needs to be answered. However, there has been no insight study that gives a general view on this issue.

I choose “**Vietnamese Graphic Design in Relation to Traditional Fine Art**” as the topic for my dissertation because I would like to discover the string that connects the creation process of VGD from the past to present. From this point, I am going to formulate a theory that deals with the selective use of TFA as an element in GD products, which meets the requirements and undertake the responsibilities of design, along with maintaining cultural and contemporary aesthetic values.

2. Purpose of the study

General purpose: Identifying the relationships between VGD and TFA within the recent trend of integration and globalization to develop a national style and brand in this field.

Particular purpose:

- Summarizing and systemizing fundamental theories about VGD at present in relation to the use of TFA as an element in design
- Identifying the role and the extent to which TFA is employed in VGD at present
- Proposing some suggestions for the creative application of TFA as an element in contemporary VGD

3. Scope of the study

The dissertation studies VGD from 1986 to present and investigates some prominent graphic designs (with national and contemporary themes).

4. Methods of the study

The VGD from 1986 to present mainly with interdisciplinary method, basing on the multi-disciplinary theoretical fundamental of Fine Arts, Design, Philosophy, Aesthetics, Visual Psychology, Ethnographic Arts, Cultural study, Semiotics, Anthropology, Language and Literature and History etc. to analyze and develop arguments for clarifying the research object.

5. Research questions and science assumptions

Research questions

The connection between VGD and TFA, in the trend of current integration, globalization? How could Vietnamese graphic designers apply the TFA in their works now?

Basic assumptions of science

- In the integration and globalization trend nowadays, the succession and application of TFA in GD is necessary, which helps to develop national style and national brand.
- In the Subsidy period, TFA and GD is closely related, the designs had chances to reflect national spirit as the contents and forms of the designs were controlled by the government. In the market economy period, GD with FTA

element is an option but not a compulsory one. However, this kind of GD still has its values: the country's productions will be more attractive in the market when applying national elements. The designs with strong traditional and national elements, whether can create a national style or not, depends on the economic factors as well as the development level of the country's manufacturing sector.

- The application of TFA into recent GD products is applying not only the traditional forms but also traditional spirit (traditional elements promote creativity, but not appear in the products in its original forms). National spirit helps to create distinguished features of the products. The traditional and modern elements can combine together to create special traits for contemporary VGD.

6. Significance of the study

- Using an inter-disciplinary method to study and generalize a theoretical system about the relationships between TFA and VGD and the roles of TFA in VGD for the first time.

- Investigating, analyzing and evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of VGD at present; proposing some solutions to the application of TFA.

- Contributing more contents in a theoretical level to the teaching and studying of graphic design among the Applied Fine art schools; being the reference for such activities as studying and educating GD for specific purposes.

7. Structure of the study

Besides Introduction (12 pages), Conclusion (7 pages), Category (8 pages), Appendix (50 pages), the thesis consists of 3 chapters:

Chapter 1: An overview of the issues in the dissertation (41 pages)

Chapter 2: The application of Traditional Fine Art in recent Vietnamese Graphic Design (44 pages).

Chapter 3: Research findings and discussion (32 pages)

Chapter 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUES IN THE DISSERTATION

1.1. Graphic Design Theoretical Background

1.1.1. Graphic Design”and some related terms

“Graphic Design” is not a term with fixed meaning; it is always changing in accordance with mole of production, ways of consumption and imagination of the future. GD at present is understood as making plan for a process which generates ideas, methods and creative solutions to visual communication by using texts, space organization, images, colors, including the whole designing process. After this process, designs and communicating information are created. Design includes three main sub-branches: Printing, Packaging and Advertising. The design elements are: Images, other graphic elements (point, line, shape, color, material, etc.) and Letter (stylized, creative, type-face selection, letter arrangement, text, page etc.).

1.1.2. Language of Graphic Design

The language of GD is basically similar to that of graphic art. However, the difference lies in the purpose of the creation process: GD always focuses on specific goals with specific functions to provide solutions to certain practical problems. Nowadays, GD employs not only graphic language but a multi-disciplinary one, including photography, cinematography, optical elements, electronics and sound etc.

1.1.3. The role of Graphic Design in Contemporary Society

GD is not an artistic interpretation of symbols, but a form of material process, which serves human’s demand and makes life more meaningful.

1.1.3.1. Fostering the development of commodity economy

In the modern society, as firms are producing more and more goods with every passing day and the demand of people for products with better quality, more beautiful and unique design increases, GD plays a very important role in creating competitive advantages for firms, which contributes to foster the development of commodity and market economy. In many countries, the visual media language of GD is used in a large scale in the country's economic development campaigns.

1.1.3.2. Creating an environment for culture, aesthetic environment and social perception

Designers, with their creativeness and design thinking, play a very important mission as the agent of the changes in the world through the way they express their social perceptions. GD connects the community and individuals, cherishes the values of cultural identity, organizes the society and economy, fosters cultural values and the environment.

1.1.3.3. Creating national identity and brand

Aesthetic values and the uniqueness of GD reflecting cultural identity and national brand is one of the important elements that create “cultural countenance”, the images and position of an individual, and in a broader perspective, a community or a nation.\

1.1.4. An overview of the formation and development of Vietnamese graphic design

In over 120 years of development, VGD experiences many phases in its development process, (1865 – 1930, 1930 -1954, 1954 - 1986, 1986 to present) with numerous ups and downs. However, its flow is ceaseless. From hand-drawn graphic to hand-made and machine print, and to modern mass communication, this process started from the last 10 year of the 19th century and continues till present days.

1.2. Traditional Fine Art Theoretical Background

1.2.1. The Term “Traditional Fine Art”

Traditional fine art is a broad term. It essentially refers to Vietnamese art in the old days, from the past to the end of feudal period, in which TFA succeeds the styles and national cultural characteristics and bequeaths them to the following generations. The dissertation refers to TFA mainly in terms of spiritual aspect, traditional sense of art, which are reflected in the sculptures in village communal houses, temple, pagoda, the motif structure, arrangement, color scheme in architecture, sculpture, costume, folk painting etc. Some products in French colonial and Subsidy Period have also become cultural capital and fine art in the past, which contributes to the study of VGD at present.

The term “cultural identity” in TFA and modern Fine art: Cultural identity, also called national identity or traditional identity, is a term which refers to the distinguished characteristics which hold the spiritual values that exists in a nation. Nation, Tradition, Identity are three sides of culture within a country (Nation includes the people and the country’s territory; Tradition includes the customs and living styles that are passed from generation to generation; Identity refers to the fundamental spiritual features). Cultural identity, or traditional identity, is not fixed; it changes in accordance with the development of a nation; its form may change but the spiritual essences remain the same. In addition, national identity is neither fixed nor conservative. It also follows the changes and alterations in an era. Therefore, the application of TFA values and characteristics should be accompanied by contemporaneity and internationality.

1.2.2. The language of Vietnamese Traditional Fine Art

1.2.2.1. An overview of Vietnamese spiritual and aesthetic fundament

1.2.2.2. Traditional color psychology and custom

1.2.2.3. Technological and technical foundation

1.2.2.4. Conclusions about Vietnamese traditional fine art

Spiritually, Vietnamese sense of art and folk style appears to be the most important elements pertaining to national psychology, which serves as a reference for designers. The spiritual expressions are represented in the wishes and desires of wet rice agricultural residents such as yin yang theory, lingaism, praying for rain, praying for a successful harvest, praying for prosperity activities etc.

- Color: preferring dark colors or contrasting colors within wu xing theory, natural color system (folk painting);
- Line: preferring softness and flexibility, repetitiveness, suggestiveness, symbolic, non-descriptiveness;
- Layout: Using Bird's-eye view and Horse-running side view;
- Symbol: stylized and symbolic, not focusing on visual rightness but on visual perception; yin-yang symbol serves as symbol of symmetry;
- "Harmony" and "introvert" – maintaining natural and human reconciliation; focusing on the inside rather than the exterior differences;
- Technique: prefer exterior simplicity and interior complexity and sophistication;
- Structure: coherent, succinct, sometimes complex and multi-lateral;

These are the lessons for GD with national elements.

1.3. Theoretical background for the relationship between contemporary VGD and TFA

- The dissertation bases itself on the government's motto: "Building an advanced culture deeply imbued with its national identity" to study the topic: the essences of TFA, the way current GD products employ and exploit traditional elements, things that have been done and development orientation.

- Theories about culture, ethnicity, race and nation in the book *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* [17, p.314-387] is the fundament basing on which the dissertation exploits the spirit of TFA and what creates the boundary between Vietnamese cultures and other cultures in the world.

- In the connection between tradition and modern in the creation of GD (in term of form), I agree and apply Kenzo Tange's theory: Metabolism and Counter-culture theory (which disagrees with the opinion of homogenizing tradition and nationality in architecture – a field that closely related to GD in terms of creativity). According to this theory, tradition participates in the creation process like a catalyst in a chemical reaction. It suggests and fosters creativity, yet does not exist in its original form in a work, but as “the images of cultural spirit”. Nationality is determined by the accurate reflection of social conditions and contemporary cultural context. This theory leads to the interpretation that: the study and employment of TFA in recent GD is mainly in term of spiritual aspect and in certain situations, with particular requirements in designing, it can not be applied mechanically.

- The dissertation employs the arguments: “The lost past, The changing past and the progressive past” from the book “Vietnamese material civilization”. These arguments draw a distinction among national values in different period of time and point out the extent to employs these arguments.

- About the sources to study contemporary GD: the dissertation uses these following books as references: *Design 20th Century (Thiết kế thế kỷ XX)* ; *Graphic Design for the 21st Century (Thiết kế đồ họa cho thế kỷ XXI)*; and *Design*. These books propose the most fundamental issues of GD in the 19th and 20th century.

So far there has no theory serves as the bridge to connect TFA and contemporary VGD. The dissertation divides the theories into two sides, and through studying, it draws the connection between them. To study TFA, the dissertation uses the historical – social approach; to study contemporary VGD,

the dissertation analyzes the role and language of modern GD with four approaches: personal, national, corporate and global, basing on the practical issues and current Vietnamese GD products.

Summary of Chapter 1

Graphic design is a new branch in Vietnamese manufacturing sector and applied fine art. In reality, the issues that relate to it has already existed in the manufacturing sector in the past. Since the early 20th century, people have had the tendency to use TFA elements in GD products, although this element is not compulsory in GD as depends on given requirements and the actual market. It can only be employed effectively in those periods in which the government holds a monopoly over manufacture and distribution; the period of developing national economy and brand; especially when there are clashes with other cultures. In this part, we introduce all the key concepts that relate to GD and their significance as well as the fundamental TFA specifics that can be applied.

The two fundamentals in contemporary GD coming from TFA are the popular system and motif which can be found on carved works and traditional paintings (especially the motifs and decorative combinations in temples and pagodas) and the color system according to yin-yang and wu-xing theory and traditional color scheme. These factors accumulate to create the language of TFA, which absolutely can be analyzed and employed in contemporary GD. Obviously, traditional fine art is used for the issues of the old days, so it consists of both exploitable and out-dated elements. However, the way such visual forms are created is usable as it results from visual and symbolic perception of Vietnamese peasants.

Chapter 2

THE APPLICATION OF TRADITIONAL FINE ART IN RECENT VIETNAMESE GRAPHIC DESIGN

2.1. Successful cases of TFA application in contemporary VGD

2.1.1. *Successful graphic designs from early 20th century to 1986*

2.1.1.1. *Designs and newspaper illustrations of Nguyen Gia Tri and To Ngoc Van*

In the designs and newspaper illustration of Nguyen Gia Tri and To Ngoc Van (in the early years of the 20th century), no traditional patterns and symbols could be found but the Vietnamese spirit is clearly expressed. However, the traditional spirit is shown in the clear simple and natural uses of shapes and colors accompanied by the hilarious and hidden contents.

2.1.1.2. *Posters and propagandizing printed matter during Anti-French Resistance war period*

The Anti-French Resistance war period (1945 – 1954) witnesses a remarkable development of GD with many propagandizing forms to bring the government's policy to the public. The simple traditional printing technique (together with simple and natural plastic style and color which similar to Dong Ho traditional paintings and straightforward, funny messages etc.) appears to match with the simple and natural aesthetic concept of the peasants who participated in the revolution.

2.3.1.3. *Package and trademark in the Subsidy period*

Packaging and trademark in the Subsidy period appears to be simple in form with concrete thinking and plain, straightforward and easy to remember figures and color scheme. Simple images are used but the essence of Vietnamese TFA is still preserved (Dien Bien, Tam Dao, Ba Dinh, cigarette pack, Mut Tet pack).

Specifics that relates to TFA can be seen in GD products throughout the period from early 20th century to post-1986 (these specifics, obviously, do not appear simultaneously but reflected in many different aspects in a product).

2.1.2. Successful graphic designs from 1986 to present

2.1.2.1. Current VGD in some trademarks

The two companies, Trung Nguyen coffee and Vinataba tobacco, are two examples of successful trademark with traditional elements. A trademark is the accumulation of cultural essences in each product. Trademark embraces culture and culture, on the other hand, embraces trademark. These companies succeed not only because they are able to satisfy customer's demands but partly also because of the "Vietnamese" graphic design on their trademark.

2.1.2.2. Light industry packaging and design

- The package of the products from domestic firms in many supermarket suggests diversity and abundance in terms of design, genre, material, color and printing technique.

- It is not difficult to identify the national spirit in the package of recent light industry products with features which have already appeared in TFA during feudal time and in graphic design the previous periods: using eye-catching, stable, non-meticulous and non-subtle images. Sometimes, "commonness and simplicity" is expressed through images and ideas; the language used is usually pertaining to concrete thinking (with narrative style), no complicated associations. The typeface is often used in large scale which makes it easier to read; the images is usually funny and humorous, often uses the traditional images and motif; the layout is often two-dimensional with few layers and slightly suggestive of shapes. These are the on-going and successive characteristics that exist in the art of advertising of the Vietnamese in the old days.

- Studies show that there have been certain changes in psychology and aesthetic taste. For example, Chinese goods have greatly influenced the use of color (red and yellow); outline, shape, design and typeface become more powerful and “shown-off” than those in the previous periods (anti-French, subsidy). These changes also indicate that the typical feature of national spirit, of “agricultural thinking” still exists in modern Vietnamese society, although it disguises itself in a different form. In this case, Phan Cam Thuong, a Vietnamese scholar, has described the peasants’ “landowner dream” and “vulgarian aesthetic” as: “Every peasant wishes that they would become landowner one day; therefore, if this comes true, they will immediately arrange their house in a way that vulgarrians do, which seems to be inevitable...” [78, p.614]. In economic hardship, agricultural thinking is expressed in frugality, simplicity, mundanity; however, is it true that, with the development of the economy, such thinking turns out to be a flaunty, swanky way to show off their wealthy? On the other hand, it indicates the natural influences of our neighbor, China, on our culture within the context of cultural exchange and alculturation among countries in the region.

- In reality, GD products that designers and most Vietnamese people prefers have the following feature: 1. Having simple and refined color, which is not too flaunty and swanky; 2. Having delicate patterns; 3. Having soft, rhythmic and flexible outline which is expressed in an austere, expressive and implicative way; 4. Using non-elaborative typeface with reasonable spacing, which makes it easy to read; 5. Having succinct and generalized outline and content organization, which is effective, non-disfusive and non-confusing (unlike Chinese designs), optimizing the beauty of blank spaces and the rhythm of patterns in two-dimensional spaces, avoiding abusing technology and digital effects; 6. Being able to exploit the value of symbol, the hidden meaning of traditional values, finding creative and unique ways to combine traditional symbols, contents, values and materials with new and modern ones.

2.1.2.3. Graphic design in books, newspaper, cultural press

I mention three designers and their designs whose style and aspiration come from TFA: Ngo Manh Lan (1934), Ngo Xuan Khoi (1961), Ta Huy Long (1974). Their designs are appreciated by the public and their colleagues. They represent three generations of contemporary VGD. They are prominent examples that successfully combine TFA and modern GD. Ngo Manh Lan exploits thoroughly the language of figure and space on two-dimensional plane, optimizing the use of the surrounding blank to emphasize the rhythm of patterns; he uses colors that are simple, pure, cheerful, natural and do not arouse tight feeling. Nguyen Xuan Khoi makes use of the source of traditional patterns, symbol, material etc. Simple, natural and refined color are used with delicate typeface and embellished with digital graphic. Ta Huy Long seems to have a spirit imbued with tradition, and traditional elements unpreventably emerges in his designs.

2.2. Some issues in Vietnamese graphic design (from 1986 to present)

2.2.1. The dwindling effect of traditional fine art on the creation of modern graphic design product

Numerous methods and technologies have been applied in the creation of modern GD but few products succeed in representing Vietnamese cultural spirit. The dissertation analyzes the reasons that causes such drawbacks in VGD, namely, copying and plagiarizing; cultural limitations; imitation of form, style and design to attract customers who are very fond of foreign imports etc.

2.2.2. The disruption of traditional fine art concept in the creation of Vietnamese graphic design

The dissertation give a general view of the changes in the TFA concept from the early 20th century to present from two main components of GD: book and newspaper and press design. From this point, the dissertation points out the historical and cultural reasons.

Summary of Chapter 2

Stemming from TFA, simple and natural aesthetic elements which substitute words had been applied in press and newspaper since the late 19th, early 20th century. The application continued until the Subsidy period in the 1970s. Woodcut printing is not a mere technique, but it represents Vietnamese aesthetic spirit. However, with the development of the market economy, the role of TFA gradually diminishes, and it is applied in only some circumstances with the designer's intention. Designers themselves are governed by the demand of the market. State goods and graphic designs are no longer monopoly.

The search for the harmonious voice imbued with Vietnamese tradition still continues. Designs successfully combining with TFA elements mentioned previously is not popular when comparing with Japanese and Chinese designs. Japanese and Chinese design reflect their domination of national design in the world, which displays a successful design strategy both culturally and economically. Examples such as Phat Diem Stone Church, ao dai, To Ngoc Van and Nguyen Gia Tri's designs and newspaper illustrations etc. reveal the soft and smooth combination of the contemporal purpose and traditional elements without mechanically mixing them.

The expansion of GD has fundamentally changes the language of expression in comparison with traditional hand-made designs. TFA elements are, thus, applied in many different forms. Graphic design is not a part of the general material structure and designs of a thing. It serves as a tool for advertising and communicating with the society. But that is also the reason why it is important in recognizing the image of a society or a nation.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The relationship between TFA and contemporary VGD

- Culture, TFA is a ceaseless stream flowing from the past to present. Blocking this flow means losing the identity.

- In Vietnam, TFA is closely related to contemporary GD, as in the past, TFA also had to fulfill given requirements.

- A new GD product can absolutely apply traditional elements. Exploiting traditional symbols is probably the most realistic solution to contemporary GD.

- The relationship between TFA and GD in the development of contemporary culture and arts is bilateral.

3.2. The role and the extent to which TFA influences contemporary GD

This section deals with the evaluation of the position of TFA in particular designs and design styles. Accordingly, the criteria to evaluate the success or failure of a graphic design in applying national elements are: 1. A good design raises the selling volume of goods (a design with traditional and cultural elements but unable to fulfill such role is considered a failure); 2. There should be a context to evaluate the national elements of a design. If the message is intended for a particular ethnicity, culture or country, a design may contain national or peculiar elements. If it is intended for people in all cultures, all countries, the design, then, has to contain international elements.

3.3. Experience learned from the application of TFA in GD in Japan, China and some Vietnamese designs with traditional elements

3.4. Discussions about the application of Traditional Fine Art to contemporary Vietnamese Graphic Design

- The characteristics of TFA and national sense of art is one of the issues in traditional life. Among those issues, some needs maintaining, some needs changing and some need a new approach. Many Vietnamese people who uses GD products have already got a more modern and practical thinking about them; however, traditional elements still have its position in the consumption of people. The sense of art has also changed. Many people like colorful things more those with simple and natural color (brown, earth yellow etc.). Rhythmic flexibility exists only in some designs as many Vietnamese nowadays prefer unexpected and unusual shapes. One traditional feature that exists in recent VGD products is concrete thinking, which leads to the lengthy and wordy expression. This is one drawback products that contemporary VGD has to overcome. However, expressive is a good elements that should be fostered.

- GD has experienced three phases in its development process: Graphic design, Visual Communication design, Communication design. Graphic design and communication design can easily reflect traditional motif without losing its originality. This is also suitable comparing with the recent trend in the world: protect the originality of an image.

- Pattern, symbol and color themselves are the accumulation of symbolic meaning that is inveterate in the Vietnamese's subconscious mind. When applying these elements in modern graphic designs, people can easily grasp their meaning. They are a part of the traditional "spirit" that needs changing before applying in GD, together with modern requirements and the help of new technologies, techniques and materials. Designers always have to try to combine "beauty" and "utility" with their creativity, technology skills and spiritual sublimation basing on the spiritual fundament of TFA.

- The nature of GD can be described as "continuous replacement" – "creative destruction" according to the Western people. GD appreciates traditional succession, but always tries to cross traditional boundary instead of

sticking to things that is “out-dated”. In designing, the following issues needs to be studied and evaluated:

- + Identifying the level of national elements in the design;
- + Studying the historical background of the traditional values that relate to the design;
- + Choosing the elements that are suitable with the purposes and contents of the design basing on the profound understanding of the meaning and symbolic significance of them;
- + Paying attention to the communication features of the design;
- Practically, the unifying – contrasting method is one of the effective tools for combining tradition and modern.
- Four levels of applying TFA into modern GD are:
 - Level 1: Motif – Directly apply traditional elements in modern GD;
 - Level 2: Structure – Analyze and evaluate traditional principles or frameworks to apply in modern GD;
 - Level 3: Symbolic value – Exploit symbolic meaning in traditional decoration
 - Level 4: Employing new “elements” (new elements basing on national – traditional spirit)
- By and large, traditional spirit and sense of art can absolutely be combined with contemporary graphic design elements as a form of visual communication design.

3.5. Some suggestions for contemporary Vietnamese graphic design with national elements

As mentioned previously, the term “Communication design” is gradually replacing the term “Graphic Design” as the products of GD nowadays are not restricted to package, illustration or advertisement on (static) plane. Digital information (on electronic billboards, large scale screens, websites, advertising video clip etc.) can combine real images, paintings, photos, movies (documentary) with variation of light and the amount of information. In this case, the application of national and TFA elements is also flexible in accordance with this change. It even can do better than the period where designs appeared on planes only. People can place only one shape and one content on a sheet of paper but they can display many shapes and content on an electronic billboard, ranging from “the most traditional” to “the modernest” content. That is the power of recent GD in applying TFA elements, using modern communication technology.

Unlike other forms of art creation, an inflexible policy on national culture cannot be applied to GD as GD depends on a firm’s decision. National and traditional elements in GD can fulfill its role only when domestic firms develop and customers give priority to domestic goods. Obviously, these elements can be applied in the graphic design for traditional arts and crafts villages and products.

The term “graphic design” now refers to designs on two dimensional plane and a part of general communication design. Therefore, I suggest that the term “communication design” should be used instead of “graphic design”. Communication design refers to not only drawings, colors and typeface on two-dimensional plane but also the use of all means such as art, graphic, film, sound, light, etc. With this the use, cultural elements have better chance to develop and be reflected on designs. For example, a billboard can display hundreds of traditional pictures and paintings at the same time or in some minutes, together with folk music. This is much more than a single images on a single plane.

To do the things mentioned previously, there should be books about the TFA elements and softwares, programs and collections of traditional patterns, images and symbols etc. There should be discussions about the advantages or disadvantages before applying certain traditional elements in a GD product. The discussion also helps to identify other elements that may be applicable.

To develop a national design style, professional and specialized artist training courses should be established. There should be coordination with craftsmen, experts and engineers in the technology and technique field. In addition, these courses also needs the participation of firms so as to learners can get accustomed to their practical demands, requirements. Policies should also be established to maintain traditional fine art and traditional arts and craft.

Summary of Chapter 3

GD in late 19th early 20th century is valuable experience for traditional and new issues in commerce. GD originated from the city and post-capitalism trading as life in the village does not need GD. In this early period of VGD, ideas coming from traditional spirit and sense of art was of great importance. The preference of symbols, simple colors and direct messages is the traditional aesthetic elements that are reused in contemporary GD.

Designs by hand and computer make it easier for designers to choose and handle images but contain few traditional elements. That is the thing that needs improving in the future.

In visual media designs and communication design in general, traditional elements mainly exist in form of films, three-dimensional space and folk music. However, they can easily become unselective copy.

Newspaper and press in the 20th century can absolutely be the reference for GD on two-dimensional plane, together with the use of contemporary shapes, color and typeface. It is necessary to build a database about tradition and culture from visual images to intangible spiritual values, publish books and create digital tools, create traditional design specimen in all field to use as reference for designers.

CONCLUSION

1. The definition of GD: GD is one main branch of Design art, it is understood as making plan for a process which generates ideas, methods and creative solutions to visual media by using texts, space organization, images, colors, including the whole design process. Graphic design differs from graphic art in the aim of creation process which always focuses on specific goals with specific functions to provide solutions to certain practical problems. Today, GD expands its roles, uses all means and languages of modern art to create social communication surface. Therefore, using the term “communication design” is more suitable for modern design.

2. The relationship between TFA and GD: TFA and contemporary GD is closely related. In the direct relationship between TFA and contemporary GD, the following issues should be noted: Learn from tradition is one cultural policy; Studying from tradition is one way to generate ideas for modern GD; Studying from tradition is one way to develop the internal power of domestic production and build national brand in the global market. In the reverse relationship, from present to tradition: contemporary GD is a way to come back to the source from two directions; it is the bridge which connects history and culture, special traditional characteristics and modern market; It creates “new traditions” – contemporary modern designs with traditional element is an evidence which proves that tradition is always “moving”, not a fixed element.

3. Special features of Vietnamese TFA: In feudal time, ideology and philosophy was restricted to three religions: Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and other folk “wisdom”. These ideologies dominated arts and were reflected in symbols, psychological state and space structure. The spirit of TFA in such ideologies lies in three categories: the True, the Good and the Beauty. It is also reflected in the harmonious relationship between human and nature, human and human, the recognition of natural and social order, appreciating appearance more than form.

In the spiritual aspect, Vietnamese sense of art and tradition is an important factor with psychological elements which designers can employ. This characteristic conveys hidden meaning and delicate feelings, which can be found in the furniture of the old Vietnamese people. Size, decorations, etc. all represented mundanity, delicacy and utility. TFA forms show both unity and peculiarity, which suited the stature and agricultural economy of the Vietnamese. Those are the characteristics of Vietnamese TFA whose center is the fine art of Northern villages in feudal time.

4. The role of TFA toward contemporary GD

In many developed countries, the market belongs to large firms and corporations whose products are sold in many countries in the world and with global characteristics; therefore, GD with global characteristics is the popular trend.

In the Subsidy period in Vietnam, the government set up plans for the producing and distribution of products and controlled advertising and design; therefore, design obviously had traditional elements. Today, traditional style is one trend in GD. It will be easily accepted by Vietnamese customers if employed, which fosters the consumption of domestic goods and contributes to creation of product brand and national design in the recent trend of integration and globalization.

Among the four dominant trends in recent GD (personal, national, company/corporational, global), personal trend focusing on hand-craft products comes national from TFA.

National and TFA elements is a wide application in GD, which may contains spiritual or formal application. Above all, there should be profound understanding about psychophysiology of people, pertaining to the taste in consumption and specific requirements in supply – demand of the society. From the cultural point of view, “the best design bases itself on tradition”, but from the socioeconomical point of view, a good design helps improve the sale of

goods. Therefore, a GD product is not necessarily contain observable national elements if it cannot be sold. However, employing traditional element is a good way to promote the consumption of domestic goods.

Creating a national branch is usually accompanied by enhancing product quality. In this situation, the product with national elements will be welcomed by the customers. Designers cannot control over this issue but may have certain contributions in this case. That is the gradual application of cultural and TFA elements in modern GD product.

5. The application of TFA in contemporary GD

Any GD product has its origin, which is limited by factors such as sense of art, technique and market habit. However, design always demands changes without losing the consistent image of the brand. Therefore, a graphic design has to represent an old image in a new form.

Simplicity, naturality, attractiveness, suggestiveness etc. and the familiar symbols are TFA elements. If any of these can be applied in a design, the design will naturally possess nationality in certain degree. Therefore, current GD should apply spiritual elements rather than formal ones.

Traditional and modern elements can combine to create unique features for contemporary VGD. In today's design (which is considered "communication design"), people can embed images, from traditional to modern, easily; the language of digital screen is now completely different from that of traditional graphic. To apply traditional elements in designs, Vietnamese people have to digitalize and categorize traditional elements and develop softwares for GD. This should be the development project in a national level, not the responsibility of designers only.

In the creation of modern design, the harmonious and skillful combination of traditional and modern elements is achieved when the level of knowledge in TFA and the use of modern GD reach an advanced certain level; designers can

creatively and skillfully uses graphic design softwares and digital effects. GD products, then, have a fixed and long-lasting position in the mind of consumers. They are the accumulations of the traditional, artistic and aesthetic essences in a national and international level.

The exploitation of national spirit in the creation of designs is necessary in forming a national style in GD and asserting national brands. In the future, this issue needs more discussions as design is having a global impact on all sectors of the world's economy. Vietnamese firms are still in a weaker position in comparing with foreign firms; therefore, fostering the use GD with traditional elements is a good way to enhance the competitiveness of domestic firms. Traditional elements create competitive advantage as technologies have already covered all aspects of the manufacturing sector./