

**BOOK COVER ILLUSTRATION DESIGN:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY
BETWEEN SELECTED CHINESE AND
MALAYSIAN HISTORY BOOKS
(1990-2004)**



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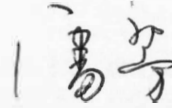
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DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that I have stated the source of each extraction, summary and reference in this study. This thesis is the result of my own work with the exception of quotations, excerpts, equations, summaries and references, the sources of which have been duly acknowledged.

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A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Dr. Sim Chee Bahang, is written over a large, faint 'UMS' watermark.

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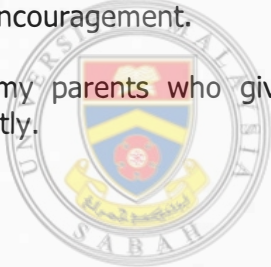
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ABSTRACT

BOOK COVER DESIGN ILLUSTRATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN SELECTED CHINESE AND MALAYSIAN HISTORY BOOKS (1990-2004)

This research is focused on a comparative study of selected book cover design illustration of Chinese and Malaysian history books. The main aim of this research is to identify the criteria of a good cover design illustration for history books. Each of the 40 history books selected is scrutinized under the criteria of analysis that include color impact, quality, layout and relevance to content on a scale instrument of 1-5. Aside from discovering the best and the weakest criteria, the research is also designed to uncover the best and weakest types of design illustration for history books from Malaysia and China. The research shows that the best criteria of book cover illustration used in Malaysian history books is the cover design illustration's relevance to content while the color impact and layout are the best criteria used in Chinese history books. Overall the best types of book cover design illustration for Malaysian history books is the photograph while drawing and painting is the best type found in Chinese history book covers. This research has highlighted the importance of a good cover design illustration in the publishing industry and its link to the art world.



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ABSTRAK

Fokus kajian ini adalah pada suatu perbandingan rekabentuk hadapan buku sejarah yang terpilih daripada negara China dan Malaysia. Sasaran kajian ini adalah untuk menentukan kriteria terbaik rekabentuk kulit hadapan buku sejarah. Setiap kulit hadapan buku sejarah daripada 40 yang terpilih, ditelitikan di bawah kriteria impak warna, kualiti, reka letak dan hubungan dengan perisian buku. Analisis ini diukur berasaskan instrument berskala dari 1 hingga 5, selain daripada penemuan kriteria yang paling kuat dan rekaan kulit hadapan buku, kajian ini juga mendedahkan jenis rekabentuk yang terbaik dan terlemah dalam senarai buku-buku terpilih. Kajian ini berakhir dengan kesimpulan kriteria terbaik dalam reka bentuk kulit hadapan buku sejarah negara Malaysia iaitu kriteria hubungan dengan perisian buku manakala kriteria impak warna dan reka letak lebih tonjol dalam buku sejarah negara China. Secara keseluruhan, jenis rekabentuk kulit hadapan buku yang paling baik untuk buku sejarah negara Malaysia ialah jenis yang menggunakan foto sedangkan untuk buku sejarah negara China ialah jenis lukisan. Kajian ini telah menekan kepentingan rekabentuk kulit hadapan buku kepada industri penerbitan dan pertalianya dengan dunia seni lukisan.



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KEY WORDS

History book cover illustration, comparative study, Malaysia and China.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A book is the symbol of human civilization. Thousands of years ago, a book was the patent of nobles, church people and people who hold power. It was a luxury item for people. Nowadays, a book is a friend of the people in their daily life, especially in education (Lv Jingren, 1998: 60).

A book is a carrier of texts and graphics. The book cover is the first thing a person sees when he evaluates a book. For this reason, a good book cover is very important for publishers, editors and readers. The cover is the first impression of a book just like the face of a person. Sometimes it is the book cover which sells the book.

There are many influences for a book cover design illustration. Publishers, such as Mr. Cao Gang, said "A cover design influences the sales of a book." (Cao Gang, 1998: 133) Readers also play an important role in determining the land of book cover that is produced (Zhang Sen, 2004:27).

The publishing industry in China and Malaysia is still being developed. From the macroscopic point of view, the cover design of a book has profound effects on the development of the economy and on cultural dissemination. The publishing business is flourishing because of an increase in international cooperation and communication. Because of this, the researcher has chosen to study the impact of a book cover on both the Malaysian and Chinese publishing industry with the focus on history books published in Malaysia and China.

Both Malaysia and China produce book covers with their own signatures. The researcher is familiar with the similarities and differences of book cover designs between Malaysia and China.

By comparing the covers of the books from these two countries, this research hopes to determine what makes a book cover attractive to potential readers in both Malaysia and China.

1.1 DEVELOPMENT OF BOOK

In China where paper was first invented, the book has a long history (Lu Jingren, 2002: 33). The form of a book has changed many times in Chinese history, because of the different way of binding and types of material used through the centuries.

1.1.1 The Early Classic Book

Based on the difference in binding and material used, ancient history books are classified into three types. They are carving and bamboo slip, scroll, volume and page. Reading and writing of early classic book is from right to left vertically unlike today.

a. Carving and Bamboo Slip Book

In early ancient China, people carved words or patterns on stones, bones, and metal. The function of a book was only for recording important events.

Figure 1.1: Cattle's bone carving



Figure 1.2: Stone carving

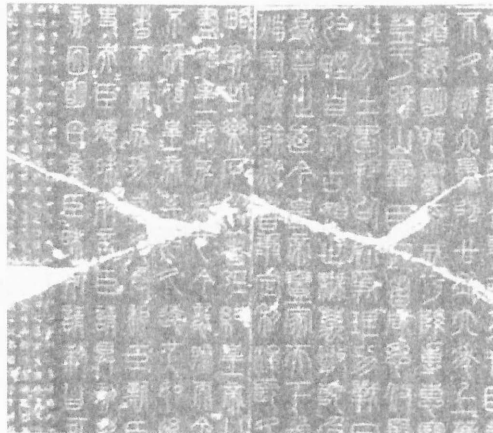
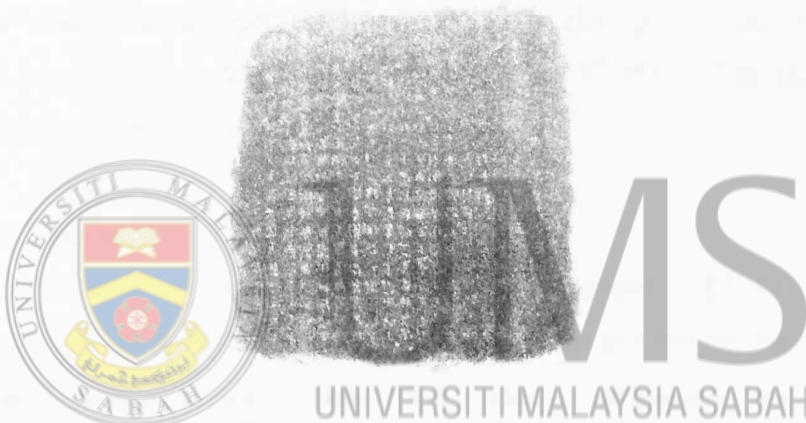


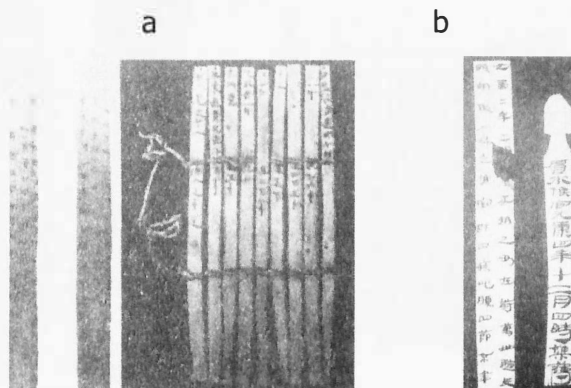
Figure 1.3: Green Copper carving



Source: *The year book of Chinese book cover design illustration* (2005: 2)

Carving on bone, stone and metal for recording is the most ancient form of Chinese book. Carving of books started in the Zhou Dynasty (11th B.C).

Figure 1.4: Bamboo slips book



Source: *The year book of Chinese book cover design illustration* (2005: 2)

Bamboo books were made of many pieces of bamboo slips that were tightly woven together. Although they were attractive, it was not easy to read and write as it was heavy.

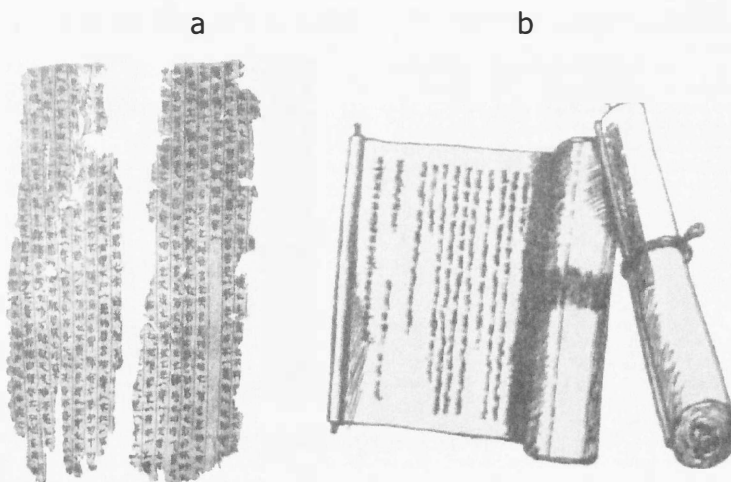
The bamboo slip books did not have a front or a back cover, but the beginning and the ending were always decorated more intricately compared to the middle part of the book. In this way, readers knew where the story began and ended. The beginning and the ending of the bamboo slips were the “covers” of ancient writings.

People usually called these “carving and bamboo slip books” of this period “Qin Carving Han Slip”, which proves carving was a popular form of book making in the Qin dynasty and bamboo slip books were popular during the Han dynasty. The first Chinese book cover design illustration began in 3rd B.C. (*The year book of Chinese book cover design illustration*, 2005: 77).

b. Scroll Book

Papermaking technology was invented in the Han Dynasty (3rd B.C.). Cai Lun invented paper which was made of bark, hemp, rag cloth and old fishnet. The “scroll book” was hand written or drawn. After that, printing technology and paper was invented to record writings in the Sui dynasty (868 B.C). “Scroll Binding” book is lighter and easier to keep compared to “carving and bamboo slip” book.

Figure 1.5: Scroll binding



Source: *The year book of Chinese book cover design illustration*, 2005: 2

"Scroll Binding" (Figure 1.5a, Figure 1.5b) is when a manuscript is rolled to make it smaller. It is easier to keep and carry than an open paper. The material used was silk. After papermaking was invented, paper instead of silk was used. This is because silk became too expensive.

"Scroll Binding" book was used from the Liuchao Dynasty (4th A.D) to the Sui and Tang Dynasties (10th A.D).

1.1.2 The Modern Book

In the early 20th century, the technology of printing and binding from the West was developed, which caused changes to book making. Chinese books inherited the technology of classic books and adopted Western technology too.

The 4th May Movement in 1919, a new cultural movement arose and book cover design illustration broke away from the old tradition methods and went into a new phase. The technology and the form of arts became to be more advanced in this new phase.

Mr. Lu Xun (1881.9.25—1936.10.19) was an ideologist and an explorer of modern book cover design illustrations. He designed the book covers for "*Shout*", "*Yinyu Ji*", "*Huagai Ji*". The cover design of "*Shout*" uses contrasts of white and red, red and black. It expressed the soul of the book very well.

Figure 1.6: Hand drawing illustration on cover design

a. Oriental Magazine, 1992 b. Current Luxun, 1914



Source: Lv Jingren (2006: 46)

Through the influence of Mr. Lu Xun, Chinese artists who were highly educated overseas such as Feng Zikai, Tao Yuanqing, Situ Qiao, Qian Juntao, Chen Zhifu, Ye Lingfeng threw themselves into book cover design illustrations. These artists had the advantage of having both Western and Eastern education and thus were able to express their creativity very well. Their work on book cover design illustration represents the influence of the Western culture in the early 20th century.

At the same time, writers Wen Yiduo, Shao Xunmei, Chen Congwen, Hu Feng, Ba Jin and Xiao Hong also took up book cover designing. These writers combined Western design ideas with Chinese culture to develop Chinese book cover designs, creating a phenomenon at that time.

In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded. From then, every publishing house and press had their own art editor. The University of Technology and Art of China in Beijing offered a major design course on book cover design illustration which was taught by the educationalist and artist, Professor Mr. Qiu Ling. A lot of professional book cover design illustrators come from this university.

Many famous artists joined book cover design illustrations too, such as Liu Haisu, Fu Baoshi, Gu Yuan, Wu Zuoren, Li Ye, Huang Hou, Huang Yongyu, Yan Han, and Yang Yongqing. To date, some of the highest quality in book cover design illustrations in China are the works of these artists which have now become models for book illustrations. Examples can be found in the book cover *A Shi Ma* designed and illustrated by Huang Yongyu, *Lin Hai Xue Yuan* by Wu Zuoren, *The Colorful Way* designed by Yang Yongqing.

Another group of book cover design illustration innovators are Qiu Ling, Ren Yi, Zou Ya, Fan Yixin, Zhang Cizhong, Wei Shuishan, Yuan Yunpu, Wang Zhuoqian, Guo Zhenhua, Wu Shousong, Yu Bingnan, and Zhang Shouyi. They are the founders of the present day book cover design illustration.

In the 1980s, China introduced an open economic and cultural policy that led to a good political and cultural environment for cultural development, including book cover design illustration. An Association of Chinese Publishers and an Association of Chinese Artists were founded. *Book cover design illustration Arts of*

Chao Xinzhi and the History of Book cover design illustration edited by Qiu Ling were published. They filled up a gap in the history of book cover design illustration.

Drawing of book cover design illustration was well-developed before 1990, but the technique of designing book covers and drawing illustrations was still by hand.

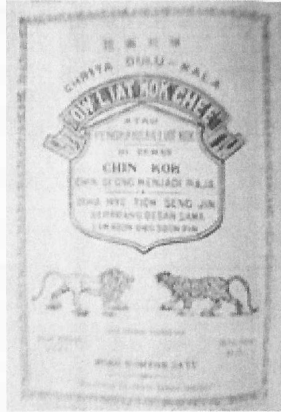
1.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOOK INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA

The book industry is always associated with printing and publishing. Nowadays, books are put in the library, but in the past they were put in the palace. People had to go to the palace to copy by hand the books they wanted to read or research on. That is the beginning of the printing in Malaysia. Publishing began in Malaysia when Islam came to Malaysia, Indonesia, and Philippines in 13th A.D. The printing technology was hand lithography during that time. Printing started in Malaysia in 1806 when Andrew Burchet Bone who had experience in printing newspapers in Madras, India came to Malaysia. The first book he published was called *The Prince of Wales Island Directory* and *The Calender for 1807* in English. In the same year, a book titled *The Malay Language* was printed in the Malay language. At that time, the focus of the book was on Christianity and almost all the potential readers were from the colonial government officers. (Md.Sidin Ahmad Ishak, 1998: 188)

A very important writer named Abdullah Bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi who was called "Bapa Percetakan Melayu" was established in publishing in Malaysia and India. He was the first Malaysian involved in publishing from 1830-1840. In 1860, the technology of printing was hand lithography. The lithography technology produced in Germany was brought back by an Indian who went for the haj to Mecca by ship. (Md.Sidin Ahmad Ishak, 1998: 234)

A few private publishers appeared in the early 20th, such as Syarikat Percetakan Annies, the Chinese publisher Peranakan Buku Coy, the European publishers Malaysia Publishing House, Printers Limited and Fraser & Neave. Government education ministry publishers such as Jabatan Pendidikan Pula, Jabatan Penerangan, Jabatan Agama were also the pioneers in publishing in Malaysia. Four color printers were used in printing and the books published were mainly text books, trade title books and novels. (Md.Sidin Ahmad Ishak, 1998: 287)

Figure 1.7: Book cover in Chinese and English at early 20th



Source: Md.Sidin Ahmad Ishak (1998: 232)

Figure 1.8: Book cover in Malay at early 20th



Source: Md.Sidin Ahmad Ishak (1998: 286)

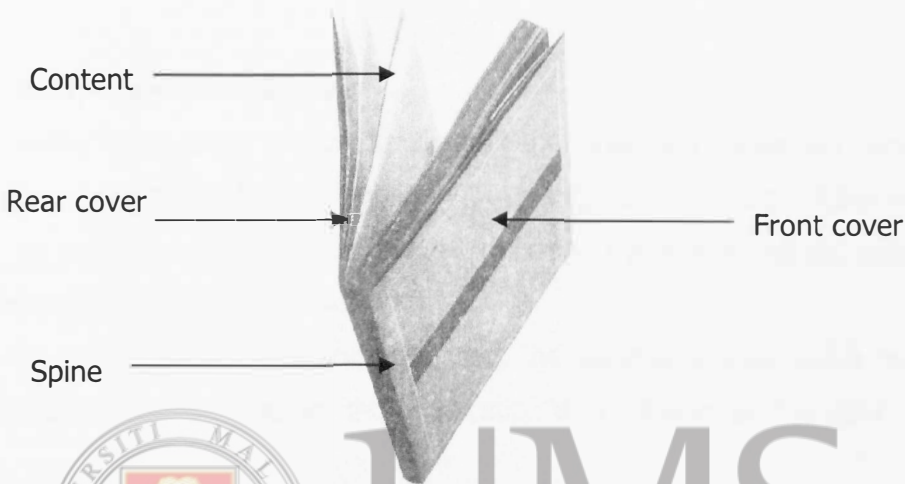
The book industry in Malaysia has grown positively in the last 40 years, as evidenced by the increase in average daily output of new titles in 1996 of less than 2 to the current daily output of nearly 20. Participation in international trade fairs such as the Frankfurt Book Fair has grown from less than 4 sq. m. in the mid-1980s to 50 sq. m. in 1995.

Malaysia's book publishing industry is mainly directed at the domestic market, with nearly 70% of the published material comprising of school textbooks, revision guides and model answers books. General trade titles, with lower print runs and cost more to produce and result in higher retail prices which lead to lower sales (Mansoor, 1998: 95).

1.3 BOOK STRUCTURE

The common order of the structural parts of a book include a front cover, a front end paper, a flyleaf, a half title page, a full title page, copyrights, dedication, table of contents, foreword, acknowledgements, a preface, an introduction, contents, postscript, back endpaper and rear cover.

Figure 1.9: Book structure



Source: Lv Jingren (2002: 29)

Some books do not have all the components according to the above book structure. The book structure is usually determined by the publishers.

1.4 COVER

A book cover normally includes the first page and the last page of the book, in other words, the front cover and the rear cover. The focus of this research is on the front cover of a book.

The front cover is the front of the book, and is marked appropriately by text and graphics as the very beginning of the book. The front cover usually contains at least the title and name of the author, with possibly an appropriate illustration and the publisher's name or logo. Cover design combines characters, pictures and colors together to express the content of the book and the intentions of the author.

The cover is the most prominent part of a book. It is also the first thing that attracts a potential reader.

1.4.1 Function of Cover

The book cover is important because of physical and metaphysical reasons. Firstly, a cover protects the book. Secondly, a book cover is an advertisement for the book's content.

1.4.2 Development of Cover

Design idea, technology and materials used cause the cover design to change.

a. Early classic book cover

In "scroll books" there were always drawings at the beginning. Since the introduction of "folding binding", "whirlwind binding", "butterfly binding" and "back-wrapped binding", an individual page was used as a cover and there was nothing else on the cover except the name of the book.

On the covers of "sew binding" books, the name of a book and a red stamp would normally be present. Before this, illustration was not used on the book.

b. Modern book cover

In the early 20th century, pictures and portraits began as an illustration on a book cover. For example in Figure 1.9, a portrait of a beautiful woman was used on the book cover as a book cover design illustration.

Figure1.10: Portrait of beauty used as cover illustration



Source: *History of book cover design illustration*, 1990: 34

Figure1.11: Drawing used as cover illustration



Source: *History of book cover design illustration*, 1990: 34

By the end of the last century, digital technology was used for art design and editing of book cover design illustration. Software such as Photoshop, CorelDraw, PageMaker, 3Dmax are used for cover design. Cover designs have become more beautiful and detailed.

c. 1990-2004

The technology of book cover design illustration has changed a lot. In the early 1990s book cover design illustration was still hand drawn. By the mid-1990s, computer was introduced to the publishing industry of Malaysia and China. Since the early 20th century, computers have been widely used in designing, bringing on the beginning of the electronic era. Computer as a tool of design was used in office work and design work. With software such as Photoshop, CorelDraw, PageMaker, Freehand, 3Dmax, etc, the improved technology by a computer made publishing very fast and efficient.

In addition, in the 1990s, the publishing industry has developed very fast making intercultural exchange and communication more efficient between countries. In the autumn of 1990, an exhibition of Chinese and Japanese book cover design and dissertation of Japanese artists San Pu Kang Ping and Ju Di Xin Yi and Chinese Artist Qiu Ling was held in Beijing China Arts Museum. *Ju Di Xin Yi's Arts and Japanese Modern Book cover design illustration* was published in 1993. *Zhao Xing de Dan Sheng* and *Design of Life* edited by San Pu Kang Ping were published in 1996. After this, many publishers introduced a lot of foreign books to China. Activities of international communication attracted artists from Japan, Korea, Malaysia, India and Singapore who have influenced the book design industry of Malaysian and Chinese.

1.4.3 Types of Book Cover

Book covers may be categorized by their binding. The form of binding is determined by the materials used and the size of a book. The materials used and the size of a book are determined by a publisher's budget. (<http://www.doodlebooks.com/book.338-c.asp?uid=8928132308>, 23 July 2006)

The binding of a book is a determining factor in its pricing and market, and therefore, its sales. There are basically two types of book covers. Hardcover have a stiff binding (hardbound) and soft covers (paperbacks) have cheaper, flexible covers which tend to be less durable. Spiral and comb binding, saddle-stitching, and velobinding also used in book binding. (<http://www.clc-online.co.uk/spir.htm>, 23rd July 2006)

a. Paperback (Soft cover)

Paperbacks are books made of cheaper paper with soft paper covers and bound by glue. This kind of binding gives a more flexible book. It also lowers the costs of production, thus making it more popular and affordable compared to hardcover.

Figure 1.12: Soft cover book



Source: UMS publishing unit

b. Hardbound (Hardcover)

Hardcovers are books with cardboard covers covered either with cloth or leather and bound by sewn spines. These books are durable but cost more than paperbacks. Libraries and collectors prefer hardcovers for their quality and durability. ([http://a-z-dictionaries.com/articles/hardback vs paperback.html](http://a-z-dictionaries.com/articles/hardback_vs_paperback.html), 13 May 2006)