A study of fantasy animation application of Korea culture color. - About the Korean a folktale picture. -

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Abstract: Colors extracted from Korea’s traditional folk paintings are about to be applied to animations. Generally, when the topic or material itself has a traditional atmosphere, traditional colors are applied even in visual expressions. However, this study is suggesting the usage of traditional colors to animations which are produced with general topics and materials. The animation case presented is a short, 4-minute long 3D graphic fantasy animation about ‘abortion’ which is a social issue.

Keyword: Five traditional colors of Korea, Korea’s traditional folk painting, Animation

1. Introduction & Purpose
There are five traditional colors of Korea: yellow (黃), blue(靑), white(白), red(赤), and black(黒). The value of these colors is better displayed when used together than separately. People recognize these colors as traditional when used together also. Especially, many kinds of traditional color schemes are found in folk paintings of late Jeosun dynasty. These colors are applied to various areas in modern design, but the uses in animations were limited to expressions of especially traditional topics or materials. Animations presented in this study apply the traditional colors in expressing general materials and international topics in order to express the Korean impression.

2. Traditional colors of Korea
In Korea’s traditional paintings, colors differentiated from other cultural areas are used. They are called ‘five-way colors(五方色)’, meaning yellow(黃), blue(靑), white(白), red(赤), and black(黒). This is based on the five-element school which says that the dual forces of Yin (陰) and Yang (陽) were formed to become the sky and ground, and these two forces produced the five elements (wood (木)・fire(火)・earth (土)・metal (金)・water(水)). Generally, the five-way colors are called five based colors (五方正色), shows not only simple visual colors but also the traditional ideas. When examining traditional ideas in detail, there are five colors and directions in the ‘five-way’. With the notion of four directions and the center, yellow is in the center, blue for east, white for west, red for south, and black for north. As for more various applications, the expanded concepts of ‘five way’ includes the green color between blue and yellow, byeok (碧) between blue and white, crimson (紅) between red and white, purple (紫) between black and red, and sulfur (硫黄) between black and yellow (硫黄). These are called the ‘five between colors (五間色)’ or ‘five mixed colors(五方雜色)’. Yellow (黃) stands for the earth among the five elements, representing the center of the universe, and recognized as the most noble color. Kings wore clothes of this color. Blue(靑) stands for wood (木), and used for the color of spring, chasing ghosts, and praying for good fortune. White (白) stands for metal (金), and represents innocence, truth, life, purity, etc. Red (赤) stands for fire (火) and represents production, creation, passion, affection, positiveness, and is the most strong ByeokSa color. Black (黑) stands for water (水) and was considered to represent human knowledge. The five-way colors are deeply related to our life. Examples of applying the five-way colors in real life are the following: the bride rouging cheeks in order to chase out ghosts, children wearing saekdong jeogori (Korean style short coat) to prevent bad fortune and pray for healthy well-being, winding gold wire with red pepper around the soy sauce pot, five colored trimmings on top of noodles for parties, building houses with red mud or drawing a red amulet on new years, colors and designs of palaces and Buddhist temples, ancient tomb wall paintings or craft fragments of Goguryo, etc.

2-1. Extracting colors from folk paintings
Among paintings of late Joseon, JinKyeongSansu (眞景山水) paintings were developed by Jung Sun, and Kim HongDo and Shin YoonBok lead the fashion of genre paintings. Korean characteristics can be greatly found in these paintings. Also, new trends from the west were introduced and various colors were used. Genre paintings of Kim Hongdo and Kim DeukShin that humorously described life of common people, and paintings such as ‘Miindo’ of Shin YoonBok which expresses romance between idle youths and gisaengs (female entertainer), with overflowing characteristics and style of Korea. Folk paintings developed in late Joseon use various painting trends and colors without any limits to materials. The main character of the animation we are about to develop is a fish form intending gorgeous colors, so we extracted colorations centered in folk paintings expressed with dazzling colors.
4. Development of Animations

Extracted colors from folk paintings were applied to animations. This animation fundamentally deals with abortion which is a worldwide issue. With a story of a fetus (unborn child) that faced death by abortion reaching the sea which is the origin of life and is reborn as a fish, the background is set as the sea and the main character is expressed as the fish. Story organizations or materials are not exactly Korean, but colorations from folk paintings were applied to the animation colors and character designs. Especially the fish character was colored with only extracted colors and produced a special image differentiated from other characters.

The screening animation ‘Where are the fishes from?’ is dealing with a worldwide issue, abortion. The following is the scenario. ‘A suspicious organism is falling into the deep sea where is repeating the death and birth. Mysterious fishes who are living in this deep sea are beginning to decorate this suspicious organism as same as how they look. When they put pearl which contains blue sands, green flora and one drop of their own red tear on organism, it gets new life and swims away to the deep sea. A while later, another suspicious organism is falling into the deep sea again and when they swim up to look for it, they finally realized that these were thrown away babies and aborted embryos.’ This 4-minute long fantasy animation was created with Maya, a 3D graphic tool, and took about 4 months for production.

5. Limitation and future direction in the study

Animations that advance to the international market must find a way to show a worldwide sense of value, along with the specific culture characteristics of one’s own country. Animation audience desires for a story they can devote themselves into, and pay interest to new visual sights. Korea has a unique culture compared to other cultural regions, but cases of the traditional culture applied to animations are limited to only values of Korea, expression of traditional materials, and old stories. This study is suggesting the application of traditional five-way colors to animation by showing the cultural characteristics of Korea without being limited to a certain material or topic. More research conducted with various methods that can be applied to new sense of value of materials other than traditional color applications are required.

6. References

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