

# Research on Tibetan-English Color Symbols "Signified" and Cross-culture Communication

—— Take Yellow and Purple as an Example

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**Abstract:** In order to improve the current situation of cross-culture communication, this paper, based on Saussure's semiotics, analyzes the relationship of symbols, colors, color symbols and cross-culture communication. It compares the similarities and differences between yellow and purple in Tibetan and British culture from the perspective of color symbols "signified". The paper also proposes the strategies of cultivating cross-culture communication ability.

## 1. Introduction

With economic development and social progress, the economic and cultural development of all ethnic groups has gradually become a global stage. International exchanges have become more frequent. Economic and cultural globalization has become the theme of the times. The field of China's foreign exchange has gradually penetrated from the economically advanced east to the relatively lagging western economic development. The Tibetan areas in China have also been involved in international exchanges. However, due to the long-standing habits, social customs, and modes of thinking of people in Tibetan areas that are far from Westerners, they often cause misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication and affect the smooth progress of cross-cultural communication. Therefore, how to effectively communicate with people in different cultural backgrounds is an urgent problem to be solved in cross-cultural communication. This article starts with yellow and purple, because yellow is a symbol of status in Tibetan culture; in English, purple is a symbol of status. By comparing the yellow and purple symbols in the Tibetan and English languages, the similarities and differences of yellow and purple in Tibetan culture are further discussed. Because the meanings of the "signified" in the yellow and purple symbols are different in Tibetan culture, which affects the smooth progress of cross-cultural communication between Tibetans and Westerners, a strategy to eliminate barriers to cross-cultural communication has been proposed. The development of Tibetan economy was promoted and the promotion of Tibetan culture was promoted.

## 2. Theoretical Basis

Saussure, the founder of semiotics, believes that symbols are composed of two parts: signified and signifier. These two are an integral part of the symbol system. Saussure compares the signifier and sign of the sign to the two sides of a piece of paper. Even if we cut off a part of a piece of paper, whether it is a part or the rest, the signifier and the referent still exist on a piece of paper. The same symbol system still exists. [1] He first studied semiotics from the field of linguistics, arguing that linguistics is part of semiology, and that linguistic problems are an integral part of semiotic problems. The formation of language is inseparable from the traditional customs and lifestyles of people in the area. Language reflects the social phenomenon of the nation and region, and is a symbolic system (ie, language symbol) that can be understood and perceived by others. As a means of communication, language has the function of inheriting human civilization and culture. Language is a mirror of culture, and culture influences and restricts language[2]. Language is composed of speech, vocabulary and grammar. Color words are an important part of vocabulary, which obviously

carries human cultural values and cultural information, and is also a symbolic system. However, there are differences in the cultures of different nationalities, so the color symbols may be completely different in different cultural fields.

### **3. The Color Symbols and Cross-cultural Communication**

The German philosopher Ernst Cassirer believes that symbols are the medium for connecting people and culture. He regards "human-symbol-culture" as a trinity, that is, people use symbols to create culture. Culture is the product of human symbolic activities. The result of human beings as symbolic activities is the master of culture. [3] The meaning of symbol can only be expressed and passed through language and language is the carrier of culture. According to Saussure's dualism, the color symbol consists of the color vocabulary's pronunciation system (ie, the signifier) and the color's meaning (ie, the signified).

"Cross-culture communication" refers to the communication between native speakers and non-native speakers, and refers to the communication between people who differ in their language and cultural background. [4] Cross-cultural communication is achieved through language. Color words are an important part of language and can be seen everywhere in daily life. For traffic lights that are common in the world, the red, yellow, and green colors are used to indicate prohibition, warning, and traffic. In addition to using color symbols to express the meaning of words, people also use color symbols to express the meaning of "Yan", and even use color symbols to express emotions, customs, thoughts, and values. Due to differences in customs, religions, and living environments among different ethnic groups and regions, the same color symbols have different meanings in their respective cultures, thus creating difficulties in cross-cultural communication. In order to reduce the conflicts caused by cross-cultural communication, we should also understand our culture when we learn a language. For example, "blue Monday", "blue" does not mean "blue," but it means that on the first day of the working day, people are unwilling to go to work. Yellow Hada symbolizes good fortune in Tibetan culture. People usually use symbols to convey information to communicate, so symbols are an important way of Cross-culture communication.

### **4. Reasons for Analyzing Cross-cultural Communication Barriers from the Yellow and Purple "Signified" in Tibetan and English Color Symbols**

#### **4.1 Comparison of the Yellow Symbol "Signified" in Tibetan and English Culture.**

Symbols can convey to us other meanings rather than their own, such as graphics, maps, lists, traffic lights, road signs, and words are symbols. The symbol includes the two parts of "signifier" and "signified", the signifier is the form of the sign, and the signified refers to the meaning of the sign. The connection between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, and there is no necessary connection between them. [1] The arbitrariness of the symbol makes the same signifier have different meanings in different cultures. The same color symbol can refer to the difference in the meaning of Tibetan and English. The primitive Bon religion believed by the Tibetans, five colors of white, yellow, red, blue, and green are the symbolic colors of the five origins of the Bon religion. Because the Tibetan people lived in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the living environment of the blue sky, white clouds and lush green grass made the Tibetans have a distinctive preference and love for color.

In the eyes of the Tibetans, yellow represents status, sacredness, and good fortune. In the five colors, it is "earth", which means the earth. According to legend, an emperor created human culture and its status is equal to God, so people respect him as the "Yellow Emperor." [5] The Tibetans believe in the original religion - Bon religion, believe in the five deities of the five parties, before the arrival of the Son of God (ie Gesar), when the master of the lotus head to the auspicious and solemn world, into the Baosheng (that is, the Buddha Buddha in the south of the Five Buddhas). From the above we can see that yellow has a high status in Tibetan culture and is a symbol of good fortune and nobleness.

In the fourth chapter of "The King of Gesar: The Heavenly Bounds", when the daughter of the King of the Dragon, Meidola, was in the dust, Mei Duolaze sang to his father, Baolong Wang:

"I, your daughter, have to sing,  
Nothing but the lyrics can express my feelings at this moment.  
The highest position of the golden throne,  
Top Treasure King, Father, You,  
It is my parents who are difficult to get in this life.  
....."[6]

From the lyrics of Dragon Lady Meidolaze, it can be seen that yellow is the color of the emperors in Tibetan culture and has a lofty status. The golden throne is a special seat of the king and a symbol of the status of the emperor. Yellow is also a special color in Tibetan culture. For example, large and small prayer wheels in temples are yellow. Temples of magnificent temples and statues of Buddha are all yellow. High temples in temples often have yellow ripples. Normally, monks and ordinary people do not wear yellow clothes. Yellow is also a symbol of good luck in Tibetan culture and is a favorite color for the Tibetan people. For example, in the important festivals or the yellow Hadas that are given to each other at various ceremonies, the patterns carved on Tibetan furniture are also often decorated with yellow.

In Western culture, yellow is the color of people who are betrayed and rejected. Hans Sachs's poem contains this sentence:

"You are a traitor, a yellow person,  
Let yourself swallow your poison apple. "[5]

From the verses we can see that in the eyes of the Westerners, yellow is the traitor's proprietary color; in the Bible story, Judas, the 13th disciple of Jesus, was wearing such ambiguous yellow when he sold Jesus. Yellow is also the color of the excluded people. The prisoner's clothes will be sewed with yellow cloth. The pagans will be executed on the yellow cross. Those women who have children due to extramarital affairs must also wear yellow clothes.

#### **4.2 Comparison of the Purple Symbol "Signified" in Tibetan and English Culture.**

Culture is the accumulation of a nation's life. Although different peoples have different cultures, they also have their own interchangeable aspects. For example, purple has a similar aspect in Tibetan English, and has the same meaning, which symbolizes noble status.

Purple is a symbol of status and power in Western culture. Such as be born to the purple was born noble or royalty; marry into the purple married into the royal aristocracy; Another example is in the Homer Epic Odyssey fourth volume wrote:

....  
Odysseus's feet are like this one, and his hands,  
Eyes, head shape and hairpins above.  
Just now, I am reminiscing about the past of Odysseus.  
Talk - yes, for me - the sorrow he suffered,  
Enduring pains, this person shed tears of water and poured wet cheeks.  
Pick up the purple poncho and keep it in front of your eyes.

This was what Monetius had done when Monetius, the leader of the people, recognized Odysseus's son, Le Marcus. In this war, many people were displaced or killed. Odysseus was one of them. He recalled these past events and the leader inks. Nelaus was full of tears and concealed his face with a purple cloak. In Western traditional culture, only national leaders and elites can wear purple dress. Purple is a symbol of the royal family and nobles.

"Iowa State University professor Mary Jo Meadow once mentioned in his article: When God created mankind, he created two kinds of people--purple and green people, which are completely similar in their appearance. However, green people can multiply and purple people are much taller and more burly than green people, and in the era when the winner is king, purple people have absolute advantages and dominate the weak green people. When God also wants to become human, he Unconceived thinking turned into a purple person." [8] From the famous material, purple has a

considerable position in the minds of Westerners. Not all people can wear purple, and only powerful people can wear purple. Purple is a symbol of status and power in Western traditional culture.

In Tibetan culture, purple also symbolizes the status of noble, the birth of the royal family. In the 21st battle of Menling: the leader of the squadron returned to the country, when Huahubazhum took over the wind, Wang Hao Sun Jiangzhu made a song:

".....  
Auspicious large copper pot  
Keep chilling water,  
Uncooked A Yaqing's uncle,  
Two boiled ducks  
Three boiled princess purple cicada,  
..."[9]

From the lyrics of Wang Qi Sun Jiangzhu's boiled wine, we know that purple symbolizes the noble status in Tibetan culture and is the representative color of the princesses born in the palace. Purple also means good and serene in Tibetan culture. For example, in the battle of the gates of King Gesar, there is such a sentence: "..., the earth purple gas rises to the sky, the purple cloud drops the golden silk rain, the grain is rich and the people are happy." [9] Purple gas is seen being a fairy means that you have to make good luck, and good things will happen. The purple cloud is the purple cloud, which is the symbol of auspiciousness. Since ancient times, purple has a high status in Tibetan culture and is a symbol of good fortune and nobleness.

## **5. Strategy of Cross-cultural Communication Ability Training**

With the continuous deepening of the "Belt and Road" economic belt, China's trade with other countries has become more and more common, and cultural conflicts have occurred from time to time. In order to reduce misunderstandings in Cross-culture communication and promote the smooth progress of communication, each of us should take the initiative. Learn and understand foreign cultures. Although Tibet is a relatively backward area of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, cultural exchanges and trade exchanges with Western countries also occur from time to time. In order to successfully Cross-culture exchanges with Westerners, Tibetans must not only be familiar with their own ethnic culture, but also Western culture should also understand. Therefore, how to cultivate the cross-cultural communication strategy of the Tibetan people is a problem that we urgently need to solve.

First, cultivate the Tibetan people's tolerance for exotic cultures. The difference in Tibetan culture is reflected in all aspects of life. Westerners are relatively straightforward in terms of dining and eating habits, while Tibetans are more comfortable and modest. Westerners enjoy politely saying "absolutely delicious" after enjoying delicious food prepared by their owners. Tibetans, however, humbly replied that Rough meal, not good, please understand. Westerners will not understand, and will doubt whether their own judgment is wrong. Such a dialogue makes the two sides feel extremely embarrassed and confused. Therefore, while learning the Western culture, the Tibetan people must also understand the Western people's way of thinking, and gradually cultivate the Tibetan people's tolerance for Western cultural differences. When interacting with Westerners, Tibetans are required to perceive the difference between Tibetan and English cultures, and then communicate according to Westerners' thinking patterns.

Second, cultivate the sensitivity of Tibetan people to exotic cultures. In Tibetan culture, asking about the other's age is considered as a concern for others. However, in the West, asking others about their age is considered impolite. Westerners think that age is a private matter. The older people are more reluctant to ask her age. In their eyes, old age is related to incompetence and decline. In the Tibetan culture, it is very common for people to talk about their age. People especially like to compliment the age of the elderly. In the Tibetan culture, the seat for the elderly is the traditional virtue of China. It has also been passed down in the Tibetan area. It is a cultural tradition strongly promoted and promoted. The old people are also happy to accept the seats given by young people. However, in the West, if you make a seat for others, it will also cause the other

party's unpleasantness. In the eyes of Westerners, the need to accept the concessions of others means that they are symbols of aging and incompetence. Therefore, when communicating with Westerners, Tibetans should be fully aware of the similarities and differences between Tibetan and English culture and have certain sensitivity to Western culture.

The improvement of cross-cultural communicative competence does not happen overnight. It requires us to understand and compare the similarities and differences between exotic cultures and their own cultures, and gradually cultivate inclusiveness and sensitivity to differences in foreign cultures. Only by understanding and mastering the similarities and differences between exotic cultures and their own cultures, can cross-cultural awareness be cultivated in a subtle manner and cross-cultural communication can be conducted effectively.

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