

The Story-Telling Grand Courtroom

In early January 2019, the Supreme Court designed the renovation of the Courtroom and the Deliberation Room for the establishment of the Grand Court. The interior design of the Courtroom not only presents the exquisiteness and magnificence of the software and hardware devices but also combines the local cultural characteristics of Taiwan and the arts that feature cultural traditions. The renovation particularly introduced much humanity and meanings of the judicature into the Courtroom, which conveys the ideas of judicial transparency, listening to the voice of the people, and realizing fairness and justice. Through which, the Courtroom fully presents the modern combination image of humanity, technology, judicature, and art.

The system of the Grand Court was adopted on July 4th of the same year, which is not only a monumental step in the judicial system but also an important project of realizing the judicial reform that the public desires. To promote the concept of the Grand Court and the spirit of an open, fair and impartial adjudication, the “Opening Ceremony for the Grand Court of the Supreme Court” was held by the court at 2 p.m. on the same day. This marks the official beginning of the Grand Court’s operation, which opens up a new chapter of the Supreme Court’s function of uniting legal interpretation and a new era of judicial architecture.

Humanity and Technology: Humanitarian Care

The Courtroom is bright and spacious. Despite the lack of extravagant palatial design, it is presented with a brand-new look that incorporates modern technology with humanitarian care. There is a LED monitor at the entrance of Courtroom, displaying the progress of every

case; the E-Court electronic documents/evidence system is located at both sides of the activity area of the Courtroom, presenting the corresponding legal issues; the seats for both parties and experts are installed with multifunctional media panels that offer ports for USB and HDMI, as well as Internet and power supply. Besides, there are some lounges for the prosecutors and attorneys to rest before the start of a court session. Moreover, there are live broadcasting system, video conference devices, and extended court system to broadcast the session on the Internet or to connect with every national court and prison for remote interrogation. When the seats in the Courtroom are insufficient, the audience can be seated in the extended court. These user-friendly designs are based on the judiciary's principle of serving the society and of bringing the judicature closer to the daily lives of the people.

What is worth noticing is the new paintings and 3-D artworks that have been added to the exterior and interior areas of the Courtroom. Among them are the massive impressionist painting that implies veracity within the clouds, the installation art that symbolizes fairness and justice, the sun-shaped lights that aspires the transparency of adjudication for future legal disputes, the “Wood ear” decoration that represents the idea of listening to the people, and the “Bringing order to Chaos” that affirms the principle of enthusiastic assessment with rational judgement. These artworks and designs featuring the judicature provide us with various perspectives and widen our imagination, which carries the profound meaning of the high expectations for the judicature.

The Great Impressionist Painting: Veracity within the Clouds; Truth within Right and Wrong

First, look at the wall on the left side of the Courtroom. There hangs a painting by the Impressionist painter Yu, Chuan-Chi, whose work won the first prize in a competition in France, and was presented the award personally by the French President. The meaning that the painting conveys is “brushing the clouds aside to see the truth”. At the center of the painting, is the crystal-clear truth, while the turbulent clouds on the sides represent the science of dialectic. The sea and fire infer analyzing the clouds of ambiguity with rational principles back and forth, and at last, behold, the light within the truth.

Public Art: Fairness and Justice

Next, enter the Courtroom. On the opposite wall across the Courtroom hangs an installation art known as “Fairness and Justice”. On both of its sides are the poem “Gan Tang, Odes of Shao & South”, from chapter *Guo Feng* of the famous Chinese classic *Shijing (Book of Poetry)*, as well as the record of its origin from the chapter “House of Yan Shaogong” of the *Records of the Grand Historian*. The poem is written in both Semi-cursive and Clerical script by the 75th generation descendant of Confucius, the renowned calligrapher Mr. Kung, Yi-Ping.

The Poem of “Gan Tang”

**Luxuriant Birchleaf pear tree,
do not clip or chop,
under it, the Duke of Shao once resided.**

**Luxuriant Birchleaf pear tree,
do not clip or harm,
under it, the Duke of Shao once rested**

**Luxuriant Birchleaf pear tree,
Do not clip or bend,
under it, the Duke of Shao once halted**

When translated into contemporary Chinese, it means: “Oh, that lush shady Birchleaf pear tree! Do not clip its leaves or chop it down, nor damage or bend it, for it was where the Duke of Shao had rested and worked back then.”

The Earl of Shao (later the Duke of Shao), is born as the son of a concubine of King Wen of Zhou. When King Wu of Zhou established the Zhou Dynasty, the Earl of Shao was granted land and title at Shaanxi province. His posthumous name is “Kang”; thus, he is also known as the Duke of Kang.

According to the *Records of the Grand Historian*, when the Duke of Shao ruled over the region of Shaanxi, he was greatly loved by the people. He went on inspection tours across the land, and due to his compassion towards the people’s hardship, he did not occupy any civilian houses during his tours. Instead, he heard the cases under a Birchleaf pear tree. There, he listened to the people’s pleads, righted the wrongs, and brought justice to the people. As a result of his kindness and impartiality, the people and local officials of all levels followed his example and fulfilled their respective roles and duties without negligence. When the Duke of Shao passed away, the people honored his legacy of benevolent rule by carefully preserving the relics he left behind; even extending the preservation to the Birchleaf pear tree that he listened to the lawsuits under which. Thus, the people prevented outsiders from cutting the tree down and composed the poem “Gan Tang” to eulogize the Duke of Shao.

Although the poem contains merely 9 short sentences, it fully expresses the people's gratitude towards the Duke of Shao, through the reminiscence of the person, the perception of his virtue, the cherish of his relics, and the respect towards the tree. The Duke of Shao is one of the most upright and admired judges in Chinese history, and later on, the idiom "the love of Birchleaf pear" that derived from his behavior became a praise to virtuous officials.

Aside from adding branches and patterns that symbolize the Birchleaf pear tree on the walls and pillars around the Courtroom, the molding at the front of the ceiling are also covered with leaves and flowers of the Birchleaf pear tree, thoroughly conveying the imagery of "The love of Birchleaf pear".



Next, take a look at the stunning installation art "Fairness and Justice" at the center of the wall. It depicts the dawning sun shining on the earth, symbolizing the openness and transparency of the Court. The light showers across all beings, symbolizing the impartiality of the law, meaning that all are equal before the law, regardless of gender, wealth, social status or religion; on the other hand, the moon and the stars imply the uprightness of the judiciary, symbolizing the benign and noble characters of it. The towering mountains display the steadiness and righteousness of the judicature: unyielding towards authorities, unchanging before poverty, nor indulging in wealth, which conveys the message that the law is what the people can depend on and is the cornerstone of social order. The flowing lines in front of the mountain represents a metaphor of people living freely and happily under the law; as for the imagery of the forest, it is an allusion of the poem "Gan Tang, Odes of Shao & South" mentioned above, which represents the Birchleaf

pear tree. By adopting the tale of the Duke of Shao adjudicating under a Birchleaf pear tree, whose impartiality and fairness won the trust of the people, it is hoped that the judiciary will remain selfless and impartial, and will enforce the law with fairness and justice.

The artwork uses porcelain as its base, while the three-dimensional part adopts the texture of colored steel or wood, which echoes the spirit and the characteristic of the work, giving it a richer visual effect. The porcelain of Yingge is chosen as the base, for Yingge's pottery is one of the most iconic features that represent Taiwan's cultural characteristic and is a unique brand of Taiwan. By using it in the work, we hope that Taiwan's pottery culture can shine prominently on the world stage.

The Character 【灋】 (*Fǎ*) and Wood Ear Designed Decoration

On both sides of the Courtroom, the image of “Wood Ear” design is used as a reminder to the judiciary members to set aside their professional arrogance and to listen to the voices of the people and empathize with their feelings, in order to reflect the judicial spirits of serving the people. Thus, the content of judgment will not be against common sense or in violation of the rule of thumb.

Additionally, the character “法(*Fǎ*)” at the center of the wall beside the Wood Ear comes from the seal of Judicial Yuan. The original character is  【灋】 (*Fǎ*), which is the character inscribed on the unearthed Western Zhou bronze vessels. According to *Shuowen Jiezi*, the character is composed of three parts  【鴈】 (*Zhì*)

is a legendary one-horned beast in Chinese mythology, who can instinctively tell the innocent from the guilty, and ram the latter with its horn. 𧈧【去】(*Qù*), is the removal of the unlawful, which is also shaped like a scale, representing fairness, justice, etc. 氺【水】(*Shuǐ*), which is the character of the word “water”, represents equity, thus is known as the standard of Law. The enforcement of the Law is the adherence to justice, impartiality towards hierarchy, distinction between right and wrong, and the pursuit of truth. We expect the judges to have noble characteristics like water and be selfless and fair. A judge’s duty is to settled dispute fairly by the law, thus the character 灋【灋】(*Fǎ*) (i.e. law) is inscribed on both sides of the public gallery as a reminder to the judicatory.

The character 灋【灋】(*Fǎ*) is enveloped within a design of circle and square as a reminder that law enforcers should be “rounded on the outside” and “squared on the inside”. “Squared on the inside” refers to having principles, which encourages the judicatory to be fair and square, upright and incorruptible; “rounded on the outside” refers to being mellow and well-rounded when socializing with others, be communicative and cooperative, and to avoiding willfulness.

Sun-shaped Ceiling and Lights

Step into the Courtroom’s activity area and look up at the lights that illuminate the Courtroom. The lampshade is shaped like the sun, representing the radiance of its light shining on every corner of the earth. The 6-segment design symbolizes the Six Codes, with the center representing the Constitution. This signifies all disputes of the law or the Constitution are adjudicated openly and fairly under the light, with

nothing hidden under the table.

The Back Wall of the Bench (Serpentine)

Next, facing the Bench, what one can see is an awe-inspiring 11-seat-grand-judicial Bench with a back wall made from “Serpentine”. Serpentine is a landscape stone that can be found in Taiwan, mostly produced in Hualien. Its verdant color paired with its white streak is unadorned and elegant. Serpentine is specifically chosen as the wall for the Bench of the Courtroom in order to incorporate with local characteristics of Taiwanese culture. Through which, we hope to promote Taiwanese products and culture to the world.

Bringing Order to Chaos

The picture “Bringing Order to Chaos” located at the Deliberation Room is actually a giant piece of landscape stone. The pattern at the bottom of the stone slate is like swirling clouds, which symbolizes the 11 judges who participate in the review engaging in their arguments on legal disputes honestly and enthusiastically, thinking calmly and rationally when adjudging, and finally, under sufficient communications and brainstorm, reaching a unified legal interpretation.

The Reflection of Law and Art

“All are equal before the law; All are free within the law”, this is the core principle of a democratic Rule of Law, as well as the standard of a functioning society. Its purpose is to unveil the true essence of freedom and equality, and the principle of law in defending the rights and obligations of the people. By hanging this in the Deliberation Room, in addition to displaying the essence of the judiciary concisely, it also

stimulates aesthetic taste in the members of the judiciary, cultivating the warmth of humanity expressed through the font of the writing. This couplet comes from the artist, professor Cheng, Shan-Hsi, written in calligraphy and decorated onto the wall with the stone-rubbing technique. Professor Cheng is an exceptional painter and calligrapher, who won the first National Award for Arts and the honor of the Executive Yuan's Cultural Award. Under his calligraphy, the law and art, rationality and sensibility, reflect upon each other.

Bringing the Judicature Closer to the People

A court is a place where fairness and justice are realized. In addition to focusing on the functionality of litigation, it is more essential to inject moral values to create a society that is free of litigation. Architecture is the medium for culture. Different interior designs can create a vivid tactile quality for the structure, allowing the soul of the building to be more fulfilling.

The design of the Courtroom and Deliberation Room in the Supreme Court integrates many implications of humanity and the judicature. The skillful architectural design of the Courtroom and the exhibition of artwork with its embedded meanings allow the litigants or visitors to stop by and appreciate these designs, which convey the ideas of the bright transparency of the judicature, listening to the voice of the people, and the realization of fairness and justice. Moreover, it fully presents the spirits of humanity, technology, and the judicature which serves the people, and brings the judicature closer to the people, embedding deep into their daily lives.