

The Olympics: A Symbol of World Peace and Harmony

Happiness and 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

In addition to athletic events, art competitions formed part of the modern Olympic Games from 1912 to 1952 with the founding of the International Olympic Committee in 1894 and the initiation by French Baron Pierre de Coubertin who promoted the education of mind and body. The art competitions subsequently evolved to include art and cultural events for promoting harmonious relations, mutual understanding and friendship among the participants and others attending the Olympic Games.⁹

In 2004, Lam was invited by the Beijing Olympic Committee to design a symbol for the Beijing Olympic Games. Lam has been in love with Chinese calligraphy since he was a child and even invented his own calligraphic style¹⁰ through his knowledge of the physiology and development of the eye and brain. One day, as he was looking at his favorite Chinese character (and favorite philosophy in life): “樂”, meaning happiness, Lam instinctively created an Olympic Happiness design (Figure 80) to symbolize his wish of “Peace for the World and Happiness for all People.”¹¹ For those who know Chinese, they will immediately recognize that this is a graphic pattern of the character “樂”. Lam’s design, which integrates the logo of the Olympic Games (5 rings) with Chinese calligraphy, helps further extend the message of global harmony, art and sports across cultures all over the world.

In a cover article entitled “At the Athens’ Olympic 2004” published by *Yazhou Zhoukan (Asiaweek)*, Harvard Professor Leo Ou-Fan Lee had this observation, “...Dominic Lam’s character ‘Happiness’ (樂) in his painting bears a deeper meaning. The five rings (usually regarded as the five continents of the world) are balanced on a symbolic platform of man (人) (in white acrylic) with his arms stretching out. Moreover, only the meticulous audience can realize that on top of the rings, there are little symbols of the gold, silver and bronze awards. When I saw this painting, the enchanted music of Beethoven’s *Ode to Joy* embraced me.”¹² This painting was used as the 2007-08 New Year greeting card and calendar by the Hong Kong Olympic Committee and sent to all 205 member nations.

