



# The Application of Chinese Traditional Cultural Elements in Modern Graphic Design

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**Abstract.** This paper discusses the application of traditional Chinese cultural elements in modern graphic design, analyzes its specific application in the field of modern graphic design in detail, and emphasizes the importance of the innovation and application of traditional Chinese elements in modern graphic design, as well as the necessity of continuing to enrich and carry forward traditional elements. Take Chinese graphic design to a new peak by organically integrating traditional elements with modern design.

**Keywords:** traditional cultural elements; Modern graphic design; innovate.

## 1 Introduction

In modern graphic design, many designers will integrate Chinese traditional cultural elements into it, which can not only meet people's growing aesthetic needs, but also improve people's cognition of China's traditional culture. Chinese traditional cultural elements have a profound heritage, which not only contains the cultural heritage of our country for thousands of years, but also contains a lot of rich and colorful historical knowledge. Integrating Chinese traditional cultural elements into modern graphic design can improve the expression and influence of the work. With the continuous improvement of people's living standards, the modern graphic design has also put forward higher requirements. In order to meet people's needs, many designers will integrate traditional Chinese cultural elements into their works, so that people can feel the charm of traditional Chinese culture. The elements of Chinese traditional culture are the precious wealth accumulated by the working people in ancient China in the long life, which contains rich humanistic knowledge and historical knowledge. Integrating Chinese traditional cultural elements into modern graphic design can better show the wisdom of China's ancient working people, thus improving the expressive force and influence of design works.

## 2 The Understanding of Traditional Cultural Elements

"Traditional cultural elements" refers to the unique cultural characteristics of the Chinese nation, developed through the accumulation and development of more than 5,000 years of history, including a variety of ideological systems (such as Confucianism, Taoism, legalism, yin-yang, etc.), which are fully expressed in writing and graphics[2]. The elements of Chinese traditional culture are formed in the process of inheriting Chinese traditional elements, and it emphasizes the elements of Chinese cultural tradition. We call the things with typical characteristics extracted from Chinese traditional elements as traditional elements of Chinese culture. Our Chinese nation has a long history of more than 5,000 years. What are the outstanding traditional cultures?

The Chinese civilization has a long history of more than 5,000 years and has formed a rich and diverse system of traditional elements. These include patterns, totems, Chinese characters and calligraphy, Chinese porcelain, Chinese knots, Peking Opera facial makeup, shadow play, martial arts, terracotta warriors, red lanterns, woodblock watermarks, inscriptions on bone inscriptions, bells and pillars, bamboo scripts, tea, traditional Chinese medicine, the Four treasures of the Study of the Han Dynasty (ink, paper and inkstone), the Four Great inventions (compass, gunpowder, papermaking and printing), Musical Instruments (flute, erhu, drum, Guqin, pipa, etc.), painted pottery, Purple clay pot, Chinese porcelain, ancient weapons (armor, swords, etc.), Dunhuang murals, Taiji picture, couplets, New Year pictures, firecrackers, lion dance, etc.

In the field of contemporary graphic design, we need to use traditional elements to carry out innovative conception and design, and pass the information to the audience through the perfect integration of text and image, so that the audience can deeply understand the creative thinking and creation goals of the work through text and image[5]. This is the true meaning of graphic design.

## 3 The Application of Traditional Cultural Elements In Modern Graphic Design

China is a country with a long history of more than 5,000 years, and its traditional cultural elements have been fully developed and rich in connotation, which is the crystallization of thousands of years of wisdom and is also a valuable traditional cultural heritage of China. Therefore, we must constantly strengthen the cognition and understanding of traditional cultural elements, and adapt to the development needs of modern society, so as to further promote the prosperity and development of traditional cultural elements in our country. In the field of contemporary graphic design, the integration of traditional cultural elements is not only the evolution of traditional culture, but also a new path for the development of Chinese culture. It is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

### **3.1 The Application of Traditional Chinese Painting Art In Modern Graphic Design.**

Chinese traditional painting art has experienced thousands of years of development, one of its core lies in the expression of artistic conception[4]. When we look at traditional Chinese paintings, we can deeply feel the artistic conception contained in them, which can infect us, broaden our minds, so that we can appreciate and experience the magnificent landscape of the motherland, and feel the charm of traditional Chinese culture. Ink painting and fine brushwork are important components of traditional Chinese painting art. Traditional Chinese painting pays attention to "combining form and spirit" and "writing spirit in form", both of which demonstrate Chinese people's deep thinking about their inner world and unique understanding of art form in artistic expression. The organic combination of traditional Chinese painting art and modern graphic design is to apply the skills of traditional painting art to the current commercial graphic design needs, so as to enhance the artistry and tension of modern graphic design works. For example, in the weightlifting competition poster held in the 2008 Olympic Games, the designer used the skills of traditional Chinese ink art such as hook, point and cun to outline the image of weightlifters in a simple way. This work is full of sports power and beauty, but also fully demonstrates the charm of traditional Chinese elements, showing the spirit of traditional culture. In addition, the work also realizes the perfect combination of traditional painting art and modern graphic design, so that it not only retains the characteristics of traditional elements, but also shows the style of modern art. This innovative design also reflects the uniqueness of modern graphic design works.

### **3.2 The Application of Chinese Characters in Modern Graphic Design.**

The evolution of Chinese characters can be traced back to the forms of oracle bone inscriptions, big seal characters, small seal characters and so on thousands of years ago, until today's typefaces such as black font and Song typeface, the evolution process can be said to span thousands of years[1]. Some ancient Chinese characters have endured the baptism of thousands of years, and still radiate strong vitality and amazing artistic charm in today's society. Chinese characters are square characters developed from hieroglyphics through a long process of evolution. It uses six construction methods, such as pictograph, pointing, understanding, shape and sound, transferring and hypothetically, to convey the specific meaning. At the same time, Chinese characters also have the characteristics of graphics and symbols, which can be said to be the earliest sign form. The visual elements of graphic design have become richer and more diverse due to the modernization of various fonts. Especially the calligraphy style, modern people are very easy to accept and like the traditional calligraphy style, whether it is old people or young children are full of strong interest and love. In some classic works, we can often find some traces of calligraphy art, which undoubtedly makes people have a deeper love for calligraphy art. In modern graphic design, calligraphy has become an important traditional element, which is widely used in various fields, especially in some historical and cultural atmosphere of food, such as tea, moon cakes, wine and so on.[6] With the progress of The Times, we can use more advanced technology and tools to

examine the problem, text, as a concise and generalized expression, has become an indispensable element in modern visual design, which will inevitably create a dynamic and innovative space. In our daily life, this situation is very common. The Bank of China's logo takes the shape of an ancient copper coin, symbolizing traditional wealth and prosperity while incorporating the spirit of modern banking.

### **3.3 The Application of Chinese Pattern Elements in Modern Graphic Design.**

Graphic design is an indispensable part of graphic design, which can show the designer's ideas in an intuitive and efficient way[3]. In the era before the birth of writing, our ancestors had already begun to use patterns and graphics to convey information and communicate emotions. China's graphic art not only originated in ancient times, but also continued to flourish. Although sometimes fast and sometimes slow, it never stops, just like the Taotie patterns on the bronzes of the Shang Dynasty. The tadpole script in the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period is one kind of writing style of ancient Chinese characters, while the plum blossom script is another kind of writing style of Chinese characters. Although they have similar meanings, their expressions are completely different. Chinese traditional graphics resources are very rich, they show the national tradition and national spirit in a variety of different and unified style unique, profound and charming. These patterns are the precious heritage of the Chinese traditional art system, which has experienced the baptism of time and the evolution of history, and has been continuously precipitated, extended and evolved. These patterns not only condense the wisdom and essence of the Chinese nation for thousands of years, but also show the unique artistic spirit of the Chinese nation. Chinese traditional elements contain many patterns, and skillfully applying these traditional pattern elements in modern graphic design has become the consensus of modern designers. When traditional elements are integrated into graphic design, it can not only improve the quality of the work, but also fully inherit and display the charm of traditional Chinese culture. The emblem design of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games draws inspiration from the traditional Chinese elements of seal cutting, which brings people a feeling full of vitality and solemn, and embodies the connotation of traditional Chinese culture[7].

Chinese traditional auspicious pattern elements have been cleverly integrated into modern graphic design, presenting a luxurious and elegant atmosphere, designers through the injection of their own creativity and imagination, so that the traditional elements in the form of more suitable for modern aesthetic needs. The Chinese knot is one of the traditional Chinese pattern elements, and the emotion and wisdom it presents is an expression of the ancient civilization of the Chinese nation. The Chinese knot is a cultural symbol with a long history, which embodies the traditional decorative style and aesthetic concept of the Chinese people. For example, China Unicom's app icon uses a simplified and flat treatment of the Chinese knot, while also incorporating text and other information typesetting, thus forming the current logo.

## **4 The Significance of Traditional Cultural Elements Applied in Modern Graphic Design**

Traditional cultural elements are our precious spiritual wealth, which has a profound impact on the development of modern graphic design field, so we should continue to learn the spiritual connotation of traditional culture, integrate it into all aspects of our life and work, and provide rich spiritual and cultural connotation for the development of China's art field. In the field of contemporary graphic design, the integration of traditional cultural elements has extremely important significance, mainly reflected in the following aspects:

### **4.1 The Connotation of Traditional Culture Is Very Rich and Diverse, Which Lays a Solid Foundation for the Modern Graphic Design Cultural System.**

In the traditional Chinese culture, contains the wisdom crystallization of each nation, so its form and content are very rich and diverse. In the reform and development of the new era, traditional elements have also become the necessary guarantee for cultural exchanges between countries and regions. Therefore, the inheritance and development of traditional cultural elements has a huge impact on the development of modern graphic design, and has also become an indispensable part of the cultural system of art design activities.

### **4.2 The Strength of The National People Condenses in The Traditional Culture, Which Enhances People's Sense Of Identity For Modern Graphic Design Works.**

Under the influence of traditional culture, people have a deep feeling of spiritual identity and cultural identity. Although they live in different regions, they share the roots of traditional culture, which enables the Chinese nation to show strong national strength. The concrete expression of this power is reflected in the ways of inheriting traditional culture of different nationalities, such as national costumes, customs, works of art and dramas. Therefore, the integration of traditional cultural elements into modern graphic design activities can inject more cultural connotations into the works, thus enhancing the national identity of the works.

### **4.3 National Culture Is the Source of Creative Inspiration in The Field of Contemporary Graphic Design.**

Traditional culture contains many activities and ideas related to art design, which will undoubtedly bring more guidance and inspiration to contemporary graphic designers. The development of graphic design activities needs to meet the needs of users and show the characteristics of the nation, so modern graphic design should pay attention to Chinese culture, and adhere to the correct values, which is the fundamental guarantee for the sustainable development of modern graphic design art.

## 5 Conclusion

With the development of modern graphic design, the integration of Chinese traditional cultural elements with modern graphic design can make China's graphic design more vitality and appeal, improve the artistic charm and influence of China's graphic design works, which is also an important embodiment of China's cultural confidence. Integrating Chinese traditional cultural elements into modern graphic design requires designers to continue to study and research, find the meeting point between Chinese traditional cultural elements and modern graphic design, and continue to explore, innovate and progress in practice. By learning traditional cultural elements, designers can better understand the connotation of traditional Chinese culture and improve their thinking ability of design works. In addition, designers also need to learn and study traditional cultural elements to understand China's history, culture and humanistic feelings. Only in this way can the design better reflect the connotation of our traditional culture.

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