

# Research on the Application of Traditional Culture in Modern Commercial Advertising

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**Abstract:** Advertising is a means of publicity that openly and widely conveys information to the public through certain forms of media for a specific need. In the tide of advertising design and international integration, the lack of creativity and the lack of inspiration are the eternal pain points for advertising workers. The Chinese nation has a long history and has formed a unique national traditional culture during its long development process, which contains rich design elements. Based on this, this article studies the application of traditional culture in modern commercial advertising, with a view to enabling consumers to experience a cultural connotation in advertising.

## 1. Introduction

In the history of the Chinese nation, various ideas and cultural forms have evolved and blended, forming the characteristics and style of the Chinese nation. Chinese traditional culture is created by the Chinese nation and its ancestors living in China, and has been inherited and developed by the Chinese nation for generations. It has distinctive national characteristics, a long history, and broad and profound connotations. Traditional Chinese cultural elements include various forms such as graphics, characters, folk music, folk art, traditional Chinese painting, poetry, songs, and so on. The diversity of culture has led to the emergence of various forms of creation and expression in contemporary commercial advertising internationally, and the competition is also very fierce. With its unique and profound cultural charm, the Chinese nation stands tall among the world's ethnic groups, providing fertile soil for the development of contemporary commercial advertising.

## 2. The Application Significance of Chinese Traditional Cultural Elements in Contemporary Commercial Advertising

Applying traditional cultural elements in contemporary commercial advertising can not only generate social benefits of promoting excellent traditional culture, but also improve the promotional effect of commercial advertising. It has a good helping effect on both traditional Chinese advertising culture and commercial advertising.

### 2.1. Increasing the Connotation of Advertising Culture

Advertising and traditional culture promote and complement each other. Commercial advertising cannot be separated from the social environment. It not only plays a role in generating economic benefits for enterprises, but also has the function of promoting social culture to a certain extent, advocating civilized consumption concepts, and inheriting and promoting excellent traditional culture. Advertising provides new ways of thinking and consumption concepts for people's material lives, while strengthening citizens' social awareness, national awareness, and the spirit of the times. Chinese traditional virtue is the essence of Chinese traditional culture and a valuable resource that can be used more in advertising creation.

Only by absorbing the essence of Chinese traditional culture can contemporary commercial advertisements achieve their social benefits on the basis of economic benefits. Moreover, this approach also conforms to the cultural psychology of Chinese audiences and helps to form a distinctive brand personality, thereby conveying valuable cultural consumption concepts to the audience.

## **2.2. Combining the Development of the Times to Build a National Brand**

The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed a new goal of “deeply exploring the contemporary value of traditional Chinese culture”, reflecting the important significance of traditional culture for social development in the new era. China has vigorously promoted national brand building, putting forward new requirements and expectations for contemporary commercial advertising. From the perspective of marketing trend, the essence of traditional culture combined with brand planning will become the main theme of future commercial advertising. The popularity of *I Fix Cultural Relics in the Forbidden City* and *If National Treasures Can Speak* in disseminating the spirit of ingenuity in traditional Chinese culture reflects the recognition and demand of a new generation of young people for classic culture. Therefore, the ingenious combination of excellent traditional Chinese cultural elements and contemporary commercial advertising will be a new choice for young people, as well as a new idea for national brand marketing and construction.

The era is always advancing rapidly, and everything is undergoing rapid changes. Advertising professionals seek a balance between the external form and connotation of traditional national culture, achieve the unity of external beauty and internal beauty, and boldly make breakthroughs and innovations. This will definitely open a new door for national brand construction and promotion.

## **3. The Application of Chinese Traditional Cultural Elements in Modern Commercial Advertising**

### **3.1. Chinese Character Elements**

Chinese characters, as one of the oldest characters in the world, embody the wisdom of the Chinese nation from inscriptions on oracle bones and bronzes to modern simplified characters, and are the carrier of 5000 years of Chinese culture. In the process of graphic advertising design, the application of Chinese characters can often better display the oriental charm of works, and is more easily accepted by the audience. Calligraphy is a unique traditional Chinese visual art, and Chinese characters are the basic elements of its formation. With the continuous development of Chinese characters, the art of calligraphy has become increasingly mature. Nowadays, calligraphy has been widely used as a decorative symbol in print advertising design. For example, Kan Daiqiang uses a lot of calligraphy elements in his works, and he uses the trend of calligraphy to express the movement of the screen. His designs not only embody the essence of traditional national culture, but also incorporate modern Western design concepts. Through strong visual impact, they evoke the psychological resonance of the audience and arouse a strong sense of national pride. Applying Chinese characters to graphic advertising design can not only demonstrate the profound cultural heritage of the Chinese nation, but also facilitate the international promotion of modern Chinese design.

Chinese characters are a visual language form that has been developed by the Chinese people in the course of history and can bear the traditional culture of our country. At the beginning, Chinese characters appeared in the form of pictorial characters. Later, after a long process of development, they gradually developed into the well-known form of Chinese characters. It is precisely because Chinese characters are developed from graphical characters that they have a strong imagery. When applying Chinese characters to modern advertising design, designers can make full use of the imagery characteristics of Chinese characters, gradually returning them to their original form, returning to traditional pictorial text forms, and making certain modifications while retaining their original meaning. This can improve the artistic effect of Chinese characters in modern advertising design, and also preserve the original meaning of Chinese characters, allowing consumers to clarify the meaning of Chinese characters in advertisements at the first time after viewing. For example, the character “Jing” in the logo of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games uses traditional hieroglyphic forms, and on this basis, it is transformed and redesigned, making people think of it as a small person running at the first glance. This is a highly successful Chinese character design case (see

Figure 1).



Figure 1 Symbols for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

### 3.2. Traditional Material Object Elements

The so-called traditional material objects mainly refer to the physical contents that are often seen in our daily life, such as instrument symbols, architectural symbols, and other physical contents that contain the flavor of traditional culture. In China's traditional cultural elements, various kinds of objects with rich traditional cultural flavor are all over people's daily life, such as Paper Cuttings, traditional buildings, tableware, tea sets, etc. In the actual design process, designers can make full use of these contents to design modern advertising design works with the flavor of traditional Chinese culture. For example, when designing advertisements with the theme of unity, designers can take advantage of the traditional Chinese proverb "A chopstick is easy to be broken, while a bunch of chopsticks are not." Using a bunch of chopsticks as a design form can not only highlight the design theme of unity and cooperation, but also effectively combine traditional Chinese cultural elements with modern advertising design to improve the design effect.

### 3.3. Symbol Elements

Symbol elements are an extremely important component of traditional Chinese cultural elements, and the image content of many traditional symbols has been deeply rooted in the hearts of people. After seeing similar symbol images, people will immediately associate with relevant symbol elements and reflect the implied meaning of the symbol element in their minds. For example, the dragon has always been a symbol of kingship and monarchy, representing the supreme imperial power in our traditional culture. In modern advertising design, various dragon images can be seen everywhere. In practical applications, they not only express the designers' auspicious and happy wishes, but also meet people's aesthetic concepts. Taking the *Xi Long Tu* created by the Daily News as an example, it not only highlights the charm of traditional Chinese ink painting, but also combines its own corporate spirit and culture with the image of the dragon, thereby promoting a more three-dimensional and full corporate image.

### 3.4. Color Elements

Since ancient times, China has attached great importance to the symbolic meaning of color, and even different dynasties advocated different colors. Under the influence of this ideology, the meaning of color has taken root in people's hearts. Nowadays, many advertising designs make full use of this ideology to improve the effectiveness of advertising design. For example, during the Spring Festival, every household lights and decorations, and most of them use red as the keynote. Based on this concept and the design theme of "Authentic Chinese Liquor", Laotaimen Liquor has produced a graphic advertising design with a red background, greatly highlighting its image and status.

China has a long history and rich culture. As early as in ancient times, the five colors developed from the Five Elements Theory. The five colors with white, green, black, red, and yellow as the positive colors are associated with the five elements of gold, wood, water, fire, and earth. For example, in the facial makeup of Beijing Opera, red represents loyalty, yellow represents toughness, black represents straightness, white represents treachery, and cyan represents courage. In the ancient Tai Chi diagram, black and white symbolize "Yin" and "Yang", and emptiness and reality. In class

society, different colors represent different classes. During the Shang and Zhou dynasties, the five colors were exclusive to the imperial family, and after the Sui and Tang dynasties, except for yellow, they could be used by civilians. Among the folk colors, red is a festive color, while black and white blue mostly symbolizes death and desolation. However, with the development of history and the continuous integration of Chinese culture and Western culture, these five colors have formed a unique color system with national characteristics. In the posters for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, colors with national characteristics are everywhere, such as “Chinese red, ink black, blue and white, and glazed yellow”. Through these works, the world has a deeper understanding of China and Chinese culture.

### **3.5. Pattern Elements**

The patterns of a nation reflect its regional culture. In graphic advertising design, we can divide patterns into two categories: geometric patterns and auspicious patterns. Geometric patterns include frog patterns on pottery, fish patterns on human faces, and gluttonous patterns and echo patterns on bronze. For example, the logos of China Mobile and China Post use echo patterns as basic design elements. This classic pattern with a sense of rhythm and rhythm symbolizes the profound and long-lasting auspicious meaning of everything. In auspicious designs, the dragon and phoenix, as symbols of the Chinese nation, have always been symbols of imperial power. The auspicious cloud pattern is a symbol of good luck in the hearts of Chinese people, and is often used to express people’s expectations for a better life. With the integration and exchange of Han and Tibetan cultures, patterns of eight auspicious treasures have been widely used, with the most widely used being the Chinese knot. For example, the logo of China Unicom uses a Chinese knot pattern, symbolizing the smooth flow of communications and the success of everything. It can be seen that China has a wide variety of patterns and rich content, which has important reference significance for the innovation and development of modern advertising design.

## **4. Conclusion**

In short, the application of traditional Chinese cultural elements in modern commercial advertising is very extensive, and there are many things worth studying. In advertising design, we should base ourselves on tradition and face the world, combine the uniqueness of national art and the aesthetic psychology of the Chinese nation with modern international art concepts, strive to innovate, and create advertising works with Chinese characteristics that can be recognized by the international community.

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