

A Study on the Evolution of Forms and Cultural Connotations of Traditional Chinese Patterns and Application in Modern Design

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Abstract: *In recent years, Chinese design trends have skilfully incorporated traditional patterns into contemporary design, making traditional patterns a traditional symbol and a driving force in fashion and consumption. However, the design of traditional Chinese patterns is not vague or arbitrary. It has undergone various changes throughout the long course of history, and the form changes and cultural connotations of these different elements have different inspirations for contemporary Chinese design. Therefore, this study focuses on the evolution of patterns' forms and cultural connotations in the main historical periods of China, taking typical patterns of different periods as the research objects and systematically sorting out their form characteristics, symbolic meanings, and development trajectories. Through the analysis of literature and image cases, this paper summarizes the main principles of change in the form and cultural connotation of patterns in various historical periods. It emphasizes the formal innovation and cultural expression of traditional patterns in modern design applications. At the same time, it provides designers with theoretical support and practical reference for traditional pattern design in future design, with a view to achieving the design goal of both inheriting traditional culture and meeting the aesthetic needs of modern consumption.*

Keywords: Chinese traditional pattern, Traditional cultural elements, Pattern design principles, Formal design, Cultural connotation

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a noticeable trend in Chinese design where more and more pieces, products, and packaging are choosing to incorporate traditional Chinese patterns (Yeh & Lin, 2011; Yuan Kun, 2019; Yu-Ming et al., 2023). Chinese traditional patterns originated in the primitive period of totem worship and have been passed down from generation to generation in a relatively stable form to the present day. These patterns have been inherited in a relatively stable form and possess the symbolic function of expressing meaning. They are symbols that record history, culture, and customs. They reflect the recognition of national culture and values and are also one of the codes for cultural inheritance (Chen Guo et al., 2024) (Cai Guangjie, 2010). In modern design, this visual symbol rooted in traditional culture is often given new forms and meanings, becoming a common and significant element in Chinese design trends (Huang et al., 2023; Shaochen et al., 2023).

However, when traditional patterns have been integrated into Chinese design trends, problems such as homogenization of the use of cultural elements, superficiality, and mismatch between the pattern theme and the product message have already appeared on the market (Zong Zupan & Liu Xinyu, 2022; Li Yan et al., 2020). At present, the academic perspective is mainly from a single traditional pattern redesign, artistic characteristics, and application practice to study (Xu Juanfang et al., 2013; Dai Yan, 2016; Sun Shengguo, 2019). For example, the formal characteristics, color tendencies, composition methods, and expression techniques of cloud patterns (Li Sha et al., 2022). Analysis of the aesthetic laws and principles of bao-xiang flower pattern (Li Xuanjiong et al., 2018). There is a lack of systematic research on providing a set of traditional pattern design principles for contemporary designers and analyzing various traditional patterns from the perspective of form and connotation. Therefore, it is especially necessary to systematically sort out the historical evolution trajectory of traditional pattern forms and cultural connotations, and explore its innovative application path in modern design.

This study explores the evolution principles of traditional Chinese patterns' forms and cultural connotations across significant historical periods, analyzes their application and development trends in contemporary design, and aims to reveal the evolutionary characteristics of traditional patterns and the expansion of their symbolic functions in modern design, thereby promoting the integration of traditional culture and contemporary design.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Analysis of the history and culture of traditional patterns

Traditional patterns are not purely visual styles. It profoundly reflects the changes in regional folklore, architecture, utensils, burials, and other areas in countries around the world through the dynasties and shows a prosperous historical and cultural outlook (Hangjian et al., 2005). Moreover, characterized by progressive and phased evolution (Tian Zi Bing et al., 2003). Therefore, the research on traditional patterns mainly focuses on their historical origin, development process, and cultural inheritance.

The origin and development of traditional patterns are fundamentally rooted in the beliefs, ideologies, and lifestyles of people from different periods. They represent the manifestations of the time's spiritual world and carry the functional intentions and practical purposes of those who created them.

Based on these characteristics, cultural heritage becomes intrinsically attached to these patterns, forming a closely interconnected relationship. For example, some scholars have explored rock art elements left behind in regions such as Australia, the United States, Western Sahara, and New Caledonia. Among them, Liam M. Brady et al. draws on ethnographies collected in the Arnhem Land and Kimberley regions of northern Australia to propose a multilevel interpretive framework for analyzing differences in the distribution of petroglyphs, as well as for making sense of their societies, cultures, and relationships (Brady et al., 2019). Amy Roberts et al. examined the history of Pudek No. 1 Rock- Shelter in South Australia and its different cultural symbols, analyzing how these symbols embody cultural conflict, identity, and the legacy of history in the region (Roberts et al., 2019). Dorothy K. Washburn identifies the origins and transmission paths of Sikyatki-style geometric patterns in mural painting in the American Southwest, focusing on how these patterns were introduced from Central America into the textile and pottery decoration of the region through trade and migration (Washburn, 2019). Joaquim Soler explores the dating, graphic features, distribution, and cultural context of the earliest pottery in the Western Sahara (Soler et al., 2024). Some other studies focus on a

specific era, summarizing the continuity of relationships in forming and evolving a particular pattern (Sun Yi & Zhang Yi, 2020). Alternatively, from a historical depth perspective, scholars have analyzed the stages of traditional patterns' evolution from their inception to the present, exploring their cultural value and role in cultural heritage (Liu Dongyun & Yan Qi, 2018; Chen Zhenwang & Peng Yanping, 2020; Wei Yilin et al., 2021; Xu Yingjie et al., 2021).

2.2 Traditional pattern design

The 20th century marked the formation and development of modern design theories in China, representing a gradual transition from "patterns" and "arts and crafts" to "modern design." (Zhang Duoduo, 2011) Under this trend, the academic focus on the design issues of traditional pattern forms has significantly increased. Specifically, research on traditional pattern forms has shown a growing diversity in approaches and perspectives. On the one hand, researchers have focused on patterns that contain rich regularity and order and have summarized some patterns of change in form, such as symmetry, balance, overlap, and other structural properties, by studying the changes in their shape, lines, structure, and other visual features (Chi Ningjun & Xie Jiayang, 2022; Chen Yu & Jia Chaohong, 2024). These studies have explored various types of patterns from the perspective of formal beauty. However, they are limited to regular and orderly patterns and have low applicability to the design of non-regular structural patterns. At the same time, they lack in-depth analysis of the meaning of patterns. Another part of the study perfected the shortcomings of the above studies. It analyzed them in depth from the level of form to meaning, for example, the national cultural connotations of Chinese round flower patterns from the perspective of the form (Xia Mujingzi, 2006). Analyzing the Formal Aesthetics to Connotation with Tang Dynasty Animal Patterns as the Main Focus (Zhao Gang et al., 2020). The findings of these studies provide good examples for analyzing pattern connotation. However, as they tend to focus on a certain type or a single form of a pattern, the results of their analyses are highly specific, and difficult to comprehensively cover the diversity of pattern characteristics in different cultures, historical stages, and design contexts. As a result, the applicability of such studies may be limited when used on a larger scale.

2.3 Cultural connotation of traditional patterns

Chinese traditional patterns can draw on Western "Design" concepts in terms of formal expression. However, when analyzing the deeper cultural connotations, it is difficult for Western design concepts to fully interpret the unique cultural phenomena carried by traditional Chinese patterns (Li Beilei, 2016). Since the ancient Neolithic Age, the rich and diverse cultural concepts of patterns have been deeply rooted in history and continue to this day, becoming the roots and cornerstones for the construction of the theoretical system of Chinese patterns. As the pattern scholar Chen Zhifo said, the creation of a pattern begins with a concept, and the generation of this concept precedes the decision of its form (Chen Zhifo, 1932). This indicates that patterns originate from the collective consciousness of specific cultures, beliefs, or clans, and through continuous evolution, they gradually become symbolized in specific forms. Therefore, Chinese pattern design is not a mere modeling design but a symbol system carrying deep cultural connotations, and its value lies in the expression of cultural spirit and historical identity. In a large number of studies on the cultural connotation of Chinese traditional patterns, scholars have obtained a lot of constructive results. These studies are mainly divided into three perspectives: First, the comprehensive study of pattern form and connotation review (Wang Yiwen & Liang Hui'e, 2018); Secondly, the connotation of pattern is studied from the perspectives of national history, belief, and value (Wang Qiaoqiao, 2018); Third, applying semiotic theory to emphasize the cultural, functional and historical symbolic value of traditional patterns as symbols (Zhang Yuting & Zhang Hanwen, 2024). However, this study argues that the aforementioned research has yet to fully approach the essence and

characteristics of patterns. To explore the development of traditional pattern connotations within Chinese design trends, it is essential to systematically identify their meanings within the framework of overarching cultural consciousness. Only then can this understanding be gradually achieved.

3. Methodology

The research methodology provides a comprehensive and systematic framework for collecting data, analyzing them, and discussing the results, a framework that not only ensures the rigor and logic of the research process but also fundamentally guarantees the scientific validity and effectiveness of the results. In order to achieve the research objectives and provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study, the specific research methodology of this study was qualitative content analysis and case study.

3.1 Research Methods

The methodology of this study was constructed based on the qualitative aspects of the Saunders Onion Study (Saunders, 2009). In 1962, Thomas Kuhn introduced the concept of "paradigm" in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, a concept that fits with the interpretivism adopted in this study. The roots of interpretivism as a method of social science research can be traced back to the 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant, and the idea was further developed through the impetus of Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Weber, Edmund Husserl, and other scholars. The central aim of the interpretivist paradigm is to understand people's perceptions and behaviors and the interplay of these perceptions and behaviors in different contexts (Corrine Glesne, 2013). Each paradigm influences theories and methods within the paradigm. Therefore, in the research context of this paper, the focus is on the qualitative study of interpretivism. The interpretivist paradigm followed in this research is rooted in epistemology, and its counterpart is inductive.

First, 36 representative traditional patterns of contemporary Chinese design trends were identified through one-on-one interviews with Generation Z youth, the mainstream audience of Chinese design trends (Zong Zupan & Liu Xinyu, 2022). Secondly, to more effectively analyze and distill the formal characteristics of these patterns, we adopted a dual-track extraction strategy. On the one hand, a working group of designers was formed, and their task was to carry out meticulous form extraction work on these patterns. On the other hand, as a supplement and calibration to the study, the author drew on the compositional laws of the *Fundamentals of Decorative Patterns* to independently carry out the form extraction work. After extraction by both parties, experts were invited to judge the consistency of the extraction results of the two groups and merge them into one reviewed final version. Finally, this study combines the results of form extraction and information from existing literature and materials to summarize the design principles of 36 traditional patterns in terms of form and connotation.

3.1.1 Qualitative analysis of visual content

Content analysis is a systematic research methodology to uncover potential information in photographic and textual material. The method simplifies the data analysis by categorizing phenomena or events into predefined categories (Harwood & Garry, 2003). It is suitable for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research, showing high flexibility. In *Media Research Techniques* (1998), Arthur Asa Berger pointed out that content analysis is a systematic method for examining forms of image communication. This implies that qualitative visual content analysis focuses on gaining a deeper understanding of the unique themes and meanings behind traditional patterns rather than emphasizing numbers and statistics as in quantitative content

analysis (Zhang, & Wildemuth, 2009). Based on the above definitions and explanations, qualitative visual content analysis is an important method for exploring the principles of formal change and connotative development of traditional patterns.

3.1.2 Case study

The research method in this article is the case study. The research method of this study is the case study, which is appropriate for explaining how some social phenomena are formed or operated and is particularly suitable for providing in-depth descriptions of a certain social phenomenon (Yin, 2009). These cases involve many images as a direct source of knowledge and an intuitive view of objective, independent objects. Visual images also add a more profound understanding (Leavy, 2017).

3.2 Data collection process

This study's data collection was divided into two phases, which ran throughout the study.

Phase I: Interviews - Generation Z Youth

In order to explore the research questions in depth, the researcher designed an interview outline related to the research topic. This outline aims to reveal the core elements of current design trends in China through in-depth communication. Subsequently, the researcher selected 20 Generation Z youths as interviewees, and through semi-structured interviews centered on relevant questions and main themes, and collected 36 traditional patterns from their answers. Generation Z was chosen because they are the mainstream consumer group and cultural leaders of the current society, and their aesthetic preference and value orientation can broadly reflect the latest developments in Chinese design trends (Liu Hongwen et al., 2022; Musi et al., 2023)

Phase II: Designer Working Group

This stage is designed to extract the forms of traditional patterns and clarify the principles of their formal changes. The core members include five designers with more than 10 years of experience, all of whom work in the Cultural and Creative Design Department. One of the designers was the project manager, responsible for coordinating the team's progress and ensuring the project was completed on time.

4. Findings

The intensity of symbols and their potential historical meanings evolve over time (Hofmann, 2013). This is a continuous cultural flow. This flow enables culture to maintain vibrant vitality in different historical stages and social backgrounds, and it has been running through the entire process of Chinese social development (Ma Yichu & Guo Yihong, 2022). The study shows that the 36 patterns' formal and connotative development processes can be categorized into four directions: (1) Both form and cultural connotations change. (2) Both form and cultural connotations remain the same. (3) Form remains the same, and cultural connotations change. (4) Form changes and cultural connotations remain the same. Due to space limitations, only one of each direction is shown below.







4.1 Both form and cultural connotations change






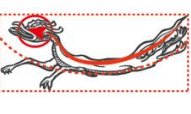










Lotus pattern and pomegranate patterns in plant patterns, Birds, fish, tigers, lions, deer, and butterflies in animal patterns, The dragon, phoenix, Kylin (Chinese unicorn), and flying apsaras in the auspicious patterns, The water pattern and cloud pattern in the Landscape patterns apply to the dimension of development in which both the form and the cultural connotations change.

Below, taking the popular and widely recognized dragon pattern as an example, we will elaborate on its evolutionary direction:

It can be seen from the evolution of the form and the development of the connotation of dragon patterns. In the Neolithic Age, the dragon pattern as a totemic symbol had not been entirely stereotyped, and its image showed various characteristic differences among different tribes. Shang to the Warring States, this period of the dragon pattern deification attributes strong, in the serpentine based on the growth of claws, the dragon image gradually tends to realistic beast shape, the exaggerated structure. Dragon patterns are mainly used for tomb decoration and to call back the spirit of the dead. During the Han Dynasty, the image of the dragon pattern has gone through many evolutions. It already has all the organs of the later generations of dragons, and its image collects the characteristics of nine kinds of animals. During the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties, the introduction of Buddhist culture greatly influenced patterns. For example, dragon patterns were also integrated into religion as decoration during this period, promoting further development of dragon patterns (Tao Liyan, 2024). From the Tang Dynasty onwards, the dragon pattern as a tomb decoration was no longer popular. However, in practical or decorative vessels many dragon patterns, and the Tang Dynasty dragon pattern continued the essential characteristics of the Han Dynasty to stereotype formulaic direction. However, during this period, the dragon pattern was a fat and robust snake body, showing the decorative characteristics of the Tang Dynasty. At the same time, its implied meaning shifted from deified beliefs to seeking good fortune and blessings. The Ming and Qing Dynasties were the heyday of Chinese dragon images and the last period of development of Chinese dragons. At this time, the shape and meaning of the dragon pattern continued to evolve, becoming a symbol of the emperor. Under the emperors' esteem, the dragon image developed in a diversified direction. Moreover, sometimes, it is combined with the phoenix pattern to symbolize marital bliss.

Table 1: Overall Form Evolution and Development of the Cultural Connotations of Dragon Patterns

Dynasty	Original image	Extraction form	Cultural connotation	Source
Neolithic Age			Deification	National Museum of China
Shang Dynasty				"History of Chinese Decorative Designs" p76
Western Zhou				"Chinese Pattern Compendium, Volume 1" p605









the Warring States period				Hunan Museum
Han dynasty				“Chinese Pattern Compendium, Volume 2” p340
Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties			Religious Characterization	“Complete Collection of Chinese Patterns: Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui and Tang Dynasties, and Five Dynasties Volume” p130
Tang dynasty			Auspicious Transformation	“Chinese Pattern Compendium, Volume 3” p476
Song dynasty				“Complete Collection of Chinese Patterns: Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties Volume” p157
Yuan dynasty				“Chinese Pattern Compendium, Volume 4” p364
Ming dynasty				“Chinese Pattern Compendium, Volume 4” p586
Qing Dynasty				“Chinese Pattern Compendium, Volume 5” p122

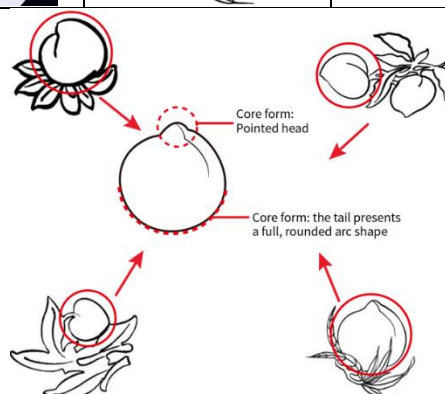
4.2 Both form and cultural connotations remain the same

Among the plant patterns, there is the peach pattern; among the auspicious patterns, there are the eight immortals pattern and the auspicious characters; among the human figure patterns, there are the beauties pattern, the hermit pattern, and the figure story pattern; The forms and connotations of natural landscapes and pavilion architectures in landscape patterns remain relatively constant and stable. The peach pattern is selected below for a detailed auxiliary explanation:

The origin of peach patterns as decorative patterns remains uncertain. However, based on ceramic patterns, peach patterns can be traced back to the Song Dynasty (Dong Jianli, 2002). Thereafter, in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, the peach pattern gradually became one of the popular decorative patterns. Especially in the Qing Dynasty, the peach pattern inherited the form of the previous generation and had a relatively stable form of inheritance. In the evolution of the form and development of the meaning of the peach pattern, it can be seen that it is mainly structured in the form of fruits, branches, and leaves, as well as in combination with various patterns representing longevity: A combination of peach and bat, its symbolizes good fortune and longevity together. Combining double, nine, and ten peaches represents longevity and peace. Peach patterns, pomegranates, and finger citron fruit reflect the ancient people's beautiful expectations for "longevity, fertility, and blessings." Peach and crane represent longevity and health. The peach pattern is combined with the character for "longevity," which is more directional and means prolonging life. Although peach patterns exhibit various combinations, from a macro perspective, whether in their diverse arrangements or compositional adjustments, their core form consistently retains the characteristic peach shape with a pointed top and a full, rounded base. At the same time, their inherent meaning remains relatively stable. This stability has been deeply rooted in people's psychological cognition, forming a fixed cultural and psychological set.

Table 2: Overall Form Evolution and Development of the Cultural Connotations of Peach Patterns

Dynasty	Original image	Extraction form	Cultural connotation	Source
Song dynasty			Longevity	China Art Database : Artron.Net LOT 0669
Yuan dynasty				China Art Database : Artron.Net LOT 0091
Ming dynasty				China Art Database : Artron.Net LOT 8130
Qing Dynasty				China Art Database : Artron.Net LOT *2115




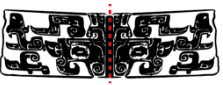









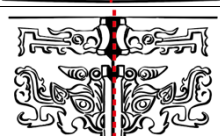



4.3 Form remains the same, and cultural connotations change

In line with the regularity of development of "Form remains the same and cultural connotations change" are: Bao-Xiang flower pattern, the curly grass pattern and persimmon calyx pattern in the plant pattern; zoomorphic mask pattern in the animal pattern; Auspicious patterns in the four gods and the door god pattern; and the geometric pattern in the hui pattern, pan-chang pattern, ru-yi pattern, fang-sheng pattern and lian-qian pattern. The phrase 'unchanged in form' refers to, in a relative sense, adjustments within the scope of stylization. The overall skeleton is stable. The following is an example of the zoomorphic mask pattern:

The formal characteristics of the zoomorphic mask pattern are very obvious. It takes the nose as the central axis, with eyebrows, eyes, ears, and other parts symmetrically distributed, forming a mysterious and shocking image. Reflected in pattern composition, this independent and integrated symmetry aligns with the human psychological need for order and structure, making it a traditional and powerful compositional form (Shi Chunshan, 1985). The form of the zoomorphic mask pattern remains more or less the same from one historical period to the next, but it adds or subtracts some auxiliary elements. For example, the early Shang Dynasty had a single-line composition and "broadband" shape, and the zoomorphic mask pattern in this period began to show a conventionalization and standardization tendency. The form of the zoomorphic mask pattern in the middle of the Shang Dynasty was gradually enriched, and the main pattern was neatly arranged with the Shading and auxiliary patterns. By the late Shang Dynasty, most zoomorphic mask patterns often contained some of the features of several actual animals, as well as combining animal and human faces. Its design was simplified and weakened to auxiliary patterns during the Western Zhou period. However, during the Song Dynasty, influenced by the revivalist trend, these patterns returned to the public's view, with their connotations differing from earlier symbolic meanings. Zoomorphic mask patterns on artifacts largely imitated the styles of the Shang and Western Zhou periods. While the animalistic designs showed a tendency toward simplification, they consistently remained highly stylized. In terms of cultural connotations, there was a gradual shift towards secularized auspicious meanings and away from expressions of mystical beliefs. Its application occasions and carriers also from the ritual or tomb special bronze into people's lives everyday utensils and decorative appliances.

Table 3: Overall Form Evolution and Development of the Cultural Connotations of Zoomorphic Mask Patterns

Dynasty	Original image	Extraction form	Cultural connotation	Source
Shang Dynasty			Deification	Henan Museum
Western Zhou				"Complete Collection of Chinese Patterns: Neolithic Period, Western Zhou, and Spring and Autumn Period" P320
Spring and Autumn period				"Complete Collection of Chinese Patterns: Neolithic Period, Western Zhou, and Spring and Autumn Period" P320

				Spring and Autumn Period” P331
Song dynasty			Auspicious Transformation	China Art Database : Artron.Net LOT 0211
Yuan dynasty				China Art Database : Artron.Net LOT 0105
Ming dynasty				China Art Database : Artron.Net LOT 2085
Qing Dynasty				China Art Database : Artron.Net LOT 3123
<div><div>Filled Textures</div><div></div><div>Filled Textures</div></div> <p>Frontal Beast Face + Split Jaw + Side View of a Symmetrically Split Body</p>				






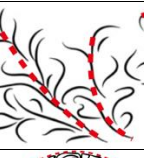



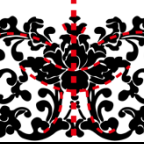
4.4 Form changes and cultural connotations remain the same

In these patterns, only the peony pattern, the "three durable plants of winter" pattern, and the yin-xi pattern conform to the dimension of the development of "the form changes and the cultural connotations remain the same." The following is an example of the peony pattern:

The peony pattern originated during the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties. The earliest known depiction of a peony appears in this period's "Nymph of the Luo River" painting. However, as the original version of the "Nymph of the Luo River" has been lost, only later reproductions remain. Therefore, the analysis of peony motifs in this paper starts from the Tang Dynasty. The peony pattern flourished during the Tang Dynasty and continued to evolve through the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing periods. Its formal variations have been categorized into three tendencies in The Fundamentals of Decorative Patterns: a tendency toward realism, a tendency toward exaggeration, and a tendency toward deformation (Bao Bin, 1980). Specifically, the visual effect of peony patterns in the Tang Dynasty is "full," "dense," and "complex," and the use of continuous compositions to emphasize the fullness of the picture. Peony patterns of the Song Dynasty are predominantly balanced in composition, and the form is more realistic than that of the Tang Dynasty, a form that is close to the natural real object. The peony patterns of the Yuan Dynasty broke through the limitations of the peony form, and the successive and repeated forms of composition made it interlaced with branches and leaves, with a strong sense of decoration. By the Ming and Qing periods, peony patterns returned to more figurative and realistic styles, with branches and leaves interwoven in a natural and lively manner. However, unlike earlier periods, peony patterns also emphasized overall compositional harmony in addition to continuous compositions. Each element was thoughtfully arranged within a specific outline, focusing on the integrity of both composition and imagery. Overall, the form of the peony has a great deal of differentiation, but in terms of cultural

connotation, when the peony patterns are combined with other elements, the superimposition of other elements will only further enrich the connotation, but rarely change the meaning of "wealth and prosperity" symbolized by the peony pattern.

Table 4: Overall Form Evolution and Development of the Cultural Connotations of Peony Patterns

Dynasty	Original image	Extraction form	Cultural connotation	Source
Tang dynasty			Auspicious Transformation	"Chinese Pattern Compendium, Volume 2"p586
Song dynasty				the Palace Museum
Yuan dynasty				National Museum of China
Ming dynasty				the Palace Museum
Qing Dynasty				China Art Database : Artron.Net LOT 0254

5. Discussion

Analyzing the evolution of traditional Chinese patterns' forms and cultural connotations helps to apply them to modern design better. In this study, the researcher conducted an in-depth qualitative content analysis based on representative traditional patterns collected from interviews. By systematically combing the changes in the form and connotation of these patterns from ancient times to the present, the researcher has summarized four significant principles of traditional pattern design: (1) Both form and cultural connotations change. (2) Both form and cultural connotations remain the same. (3) Form remains the same, and cultural connotations change. (4) Form changes and cultural connotations remain the same.

In the dimension of "Both form and cultural connotations change," designers need to consider the relationship between the two in a comprehensive manner through a deep understanding of the core values of traditional cultural connotations, innovate in the form of expression, and integrate the two organically. Transform, reorganize, or refine their classic forms and imbue them with new contemporary significance, integrating these elements into modern life contexts to give them renewed vitality. For example, in the modern work scene, the connotation of the flying apsaras pattern, which also meets the dimension of "Both form and cultural connotations change," is transformed from a "Religionization, auspiciousness" connotation to a "Buddhist-style" connotation. "Buddhist style" is a connotation derived in modern times to express a state of calmness without anger, anxiety, or worry. Although the traditional flying apsaras pattern does not directly explain the connotation of "Buddhist style," designers cleverly apply it in

modern life contexts. It combines with the contemporary daily overtime routine to create a state of dealing with busy work in a relaxed manner. This fusion method allows the decorative elements that initially existed only in religion to be transformed into elements that meet the life background and needs of the target audience. To a certain extent, another possibility of applying this type of pattern is considered.

In the dimension of "Both form and cultural connotations remain the same," emphasis should be placed on the dual integration of formal beauty and cultural content to ensure that this integration closely matches the expectations and actual needs of the target audience. This means that designers must respect these classic traditional patterns' historical stability and unique cultural characteristics. When designing and applying them, designers should preserve their essence visually and ensure that the cultural connotations are conveyed precisely and profoundly (Hangjian et al., 2005). These patterns can undergo moderate modernization while preserving their original forms and cultural connotations. However, avoiding excessive exaggeration, distortion, or weakening of the connection between the patterns and their inherent meanings is essential. For example, the cultural connotation of peach patterns has consistently symbolized "longevity" from ancient times to the present and is often used in birthday celebration contexts. Its cultural significance has remained unchanged.

In the dimension of "Form remains the same, and cultural connotations change", firstly, it should be clarified whether, based on no change in form, the change in content can keep pace with the times. With their stable structural framework, these patterns have traditionally served as conventional objects of worship or religious symbols. However, over time, their connotations have shifted from deification to a focus on auspiciousness, reflecting changes in societal values and the continuity of their cultural functions. Therefore, when modernizing the application of such patterns, the sustainability of their connotations in the long term needs to be considered. Secondly, whether the change of pattern connotation can be understood and accepted by users, users usually have a certain knowledge of the old connotation of the pattern, and the new connotation should be conveyed to avoid confusion or misunderstanding. Thirdly, focus on the integration of pattern connotation with Chinese design trends. Under the modern and complex social structure, Chinese design trends are becoming a link between tradition and modernity, the past and the future. Therefore, exploring the multiple cultural connotations of traditional patterns helps enrich modern design's expressive power and cultural value.

In the dimension of "Form changes and cultural connotations remain the same," this kind of pattern has many forms of expression in historical development, and designers can flexibly explore new forms of expression. Secondly, in terms of connotations, the meanings of the Peony, "Three Durable Plants of Winter" pattern, and the Ying-Xi pattern have consistently maintained a high degree of stability and continuity. They are also applied with almost direct references to inherent traditional connotations, with few extensions and innovations that deviate from the core. Therefore, when designers choose this dimension of pattern for design, they should focus on seeking innovation and changes in the form and, at the same time, ensure that these changes can accurately convey and strengthen the original connotation and core value of the pattern, to maintain the clarity and solidity of its cultural identity.

6. Conclusion

In the current trend of Chinese design, the value of traditional patterns is not only reflected in their historical significance but also their inspiration and innovation for modern design. This study explores the innovative application path of traditional patterns in contemporary design

by sorting out the evolution law of the form and cultural connotation of traditional Chinese patterns, which plays a role in avoiding the problems of homogenization and superficiality in the application and expression of the elements in the subsequent practice and contributes to the sustainable development of traditional culture. However, this study has certain limitations. Firstly, due to the vast number and variety of traditional Chinese patterns, the research samples are primarily derived from interviews with mainstream audiences. Although efforts were made to cover a broader range of pattern types, some omissions may still exist. Secondly, based on the evolution of forms and connotations of traditional Chinese patterns, the research conclusions may not be fully applicable to the study of traditional pattern design in other countries or regions.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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