

Chinese culture and beliefs



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Prepared by Laoshi Heri
Batam, Nov 5, 2023



The most iconic symbols of Chinese culture:

Chinese culture is rich with symbols and iconography that represent its values, traditions, and beliefs. Here are some of the most iconic symbols of Chinese culture:

Chinese Dragon (龙 - Lóng): The dragon is an ancient and revered symbol in Chinese culture, representing imperial power, strength, and good fortune. It has a history dating back thousands of years, and Chinese emperors often associated themselves with the dragon. In Chinese mythology, the dragon is a creature that can control the weather and bodies of water, emphasizing its importance in agricultural societies.

Chinese Dragon (龙 - Lóng): The dragon is a symbol of power, strength, and good luck. It is often associated with the emperor and is an enduring symbol of China.





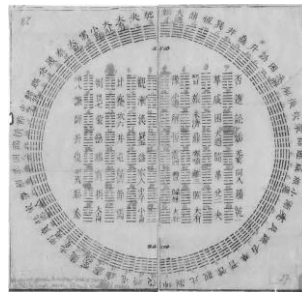
Chinese Phoenix (凤凰 - Fènghuáng): The phoenix, known as the "queen of birds," is associated with beauty and grace. In Chinese culture, it represents virtue and the union of yin and yang. Its history is intertwined with ancient Chinese folklore, and it has been a symbol of high moral standards for centuries.

Chinese Phoenix (凤凰 - Fènghuáng): The phoenix represents beauty, grace, and virtue. It is often paired with the dragon to symbolize the unity of yin and yang, or male and female energies.



- **Yin and Yang (阴阳 - Yīn Yáng):** The concept of yin and yang represents the dualistic nature of the universe. It symbolizes the balance between opposing forces, such as light and dark, male and female, and positive and negative.

Yin and Yang (阴阳 - Yīn Yáng): The concept of yin and yang is rooted in ancient Chinese cosmology and philosophy. It represents the balance of opposing forces and the interconnectedness of all things. The earliest references to yin and yang can be traced back to ancient texts like the “I Ching” (Yijing / 易经), which dates to around the Western Zhou period (c. 1046–771 BCE).



<p>Yin night dark cold negative passive female solid liver heart spleen lungs kidney</p>		<p>Yang day light warm positive active male hollow gall bladder small intestine stomach large intestine urinary bladder</p>
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Chinese embroidery 刺绣 (Cìxiù)



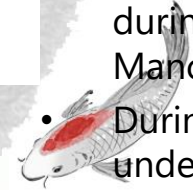
- Chinese embroidery is indeed an iconic and highly regarded art form within Chinese culture. It has a long history, dating back thousands of years, and is celebrated for its intricate designs, craftsmanship, and cultural significance.

- <https://www.chinaeducationaltours.com/guide/culture-chinese-embroidery.htm>
- <https://www.birdcityfabrics.com/a-little-history-about-chinese-embroidery/>

Qipao 旗袍 / Cheongsam



- the qipao, also known as the cheongsam, is indeed an iconic and enduring symbol of Chinese culture. The qipao is a traditional Chinese dress that has a rich history and remains an important cultural symbol. Here are some key points about the qipao in Chinese cult.
- The qipao has its origins in the Manchu people's clothing during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). It evolved from the Manchu " Qipao " (旗袍), which means "banner gown."
- During the Republican era in the early 20th century, the qipao underwent changes in design to become the form we recognize today.



Iconic Design:

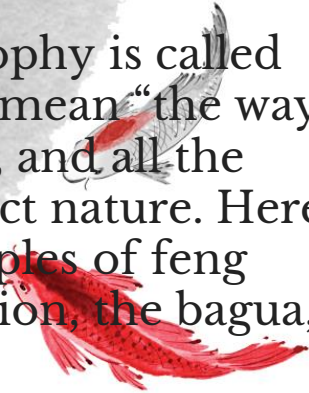
- The qipao is characterized by its form-fitting, one-piece design with a high collar, and it often features intricate embroidery or unique patterns.
- It typically has a straight skirt and a side slit, which makes it both elegant and comfortable for movement.



Feng shui 风水



In Asian culture, this philosophy is called the Tao, which translates to mean “the way.” Taoism is the way of nature, and all the basic [rules of feng shui](#) reflect nature. Here's a look at the essential principles of feng shui: the commanding position, the bagua, and the five elements.



- <https://www.thespruce.com/what-is-feng-shui-1275060>
- <https://academy.archistar.ai/the-basic-principles-of-feng-shui-and-four-buildings-that-use-feng-shui-design-principles>

<https://plantationhomes.com.au/design-and-building-resource/feng-shui-tips>

Feng Shui 风水



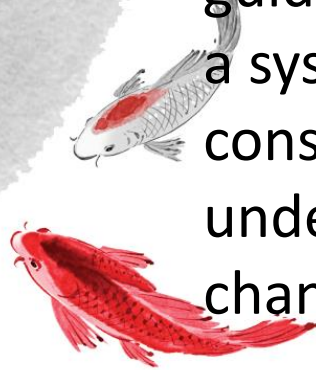
- Feng Shui: Feng Shui is the practice of arranging the environment to promote harmony and balance. It is often used in architecture, interior design, and city planning to ensure good fortune and positive energy flow.

<https://www.indoindians.com/7-feng-shui-lucky-charms-to-bring-good-fortune/>

I Ching 易经

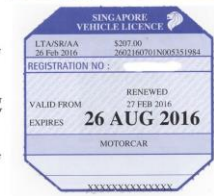
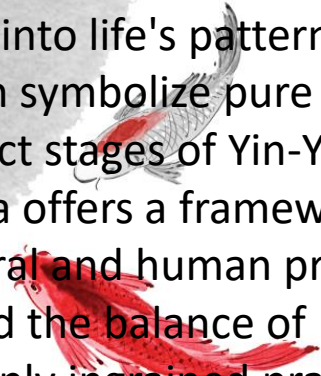


- I Ching: The I Ching, also known as the Book of Changes, is an ancient divination text used for seeking guidance and insight. It is based on a system of hexagrams and is often consulted for decision-making and understanding the nature of change.



The relationship between Yin and Yang and the Bagua

- The Bagua is a symbolic system rooted in the interplay of Yin and Yang, fundamental concepts in Chinese cosmology. It's constructed from trigrams, combining broken (Yin) and solid (Yang) lines, representing universal forces with symbolic meanings. Used in divination, such as the ancient I Ching, it provides insights into life's patterns. Trigrams like Qian and Kun symbolize pure Yang and Yin, while others depict stages of Yin-Yang transformation. The Bagua offers a framework to comprehend cyclical natural and human processes, explaining energy flow and the balance of opposing forces. It's a deeply ingrained practical and philosophical tool in Chinese culture with centuries of history.



- **The Great Wall of China (长城 - Chángchéng):** As a symbol of strength and protection, the Great Wall is one of China's most iconic landmarks and symbolizes the country's historical defense and unity.

The Great Wall of China (长城 - Chángchéng): The construction of the Great Wall began over 2,000 years ago during the Warring States period (c. 476–221 BCE) and continued over centuries. It served as a defensive fortification and symbolized the unity of various Chinese dynasties against external threats.



- Chinese Zodiac Animals (生肖 - Shēngxiào):** The Chinese zodiac consists of 12 animal signs, each representing a year in a 12-year cycle. These animals include the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig.

RAT	OX	TIGER	HARE	DRAGON	SNAKE	HORSE	RAM	MONKEY	ROOSTER	DOG	PIG
											
1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911
1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923
1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935
1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947
1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971
1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043
2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055














Chinese Zodiac Animals (生肖 - Shēngxiào): The Chinese zodiac has a history of over 2,000 years and is based on a 12-year cycle, with each year named after an animal sign. The zodiac system became popular during the Han Dynasty (c. 206 BCE – 220 CE), and its origins are believed to trace back to earlier folk traditions.

Astrology 占星术

Astrology: Chinese astrology is based on the lunar calendar and the twelve animal signs associated with each year. It is used to determine personality traits, compatibility, and make predictions about a person's future.



<p>鼠 </p> <p>Year of the Rat 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008</p> <p>Rat people are very popular. They like to invent things and are good artists.</p>	<p>牛 </p> <p>Year of the Ox 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009</p> <p>People born in this year are dependable and calm. They are good listeners and have very strong ideas.</p>	<p>虎 </p> <p>Year of the Tiger 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010</p> <p>Tiger people are brave. Other people respect tiger people for their deep thoughts and courageous actions.</p>	<p>兔 </p> <p>Year of the Rabbit 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011</p> <p>People born in this year are nice to be around. They like to talk, and many people trust them.</p>
<p>龙 </p> <p>Year of the Dragon 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012</p> <p>Dragon people have good health and lots of energy. They are good friends because they listen carefully to others.</p>	<p>蛇 </p> <p>Year of the Snake 1977, 1989, 2001</p> <p>People born in this year love good books, food, music, and plays. They will have good luck with money.</p>	<p>马 </p> <p>Year of the Horse 1978, 1990, 2002</p> <p>People born in this year are popular, cheerful, and are quick to compliment others. Horse people can work very hard.</p>	<p>羊 </p> <p>Year of the Goat 1979, 1991, 2003</p> <p>People born in this year are very good artists. They ask many questions, like nice things, and are very wise.</p>
<p>猴 </p> <p>Year of the Monkey 1980, 1992, 2004</p> <p>Monkey people are very funny. They can always make people laugh. They are also very good problem solvers.</p>	<p>鸡 </p> <p>Year of the Rooster 1981, 1993, 2005</p> <p>People born in this year are hard workers. They have many talents and think deep thoughts.</p>	<p>狗 </p> <p>Year of the Dog 1982, 1994, 2006</p> <p>Dog people are loyal and can always keep a secret. Sometimes dog people worry too much.</p>	<p>猪 </p> <p>Year of the Pig 1983, 1995, 2007</p> <p>People born in this year are very good students. They are honest and brave. They always finish a project or assignment.</p>



- **The Forbidden City (紫禁城 - Zǐjìnchéng):** The Forbidden City in Beijing, with its red walls and yellow roofs, symbolizes imperial power and is a significant representation of Chinese culture and history.

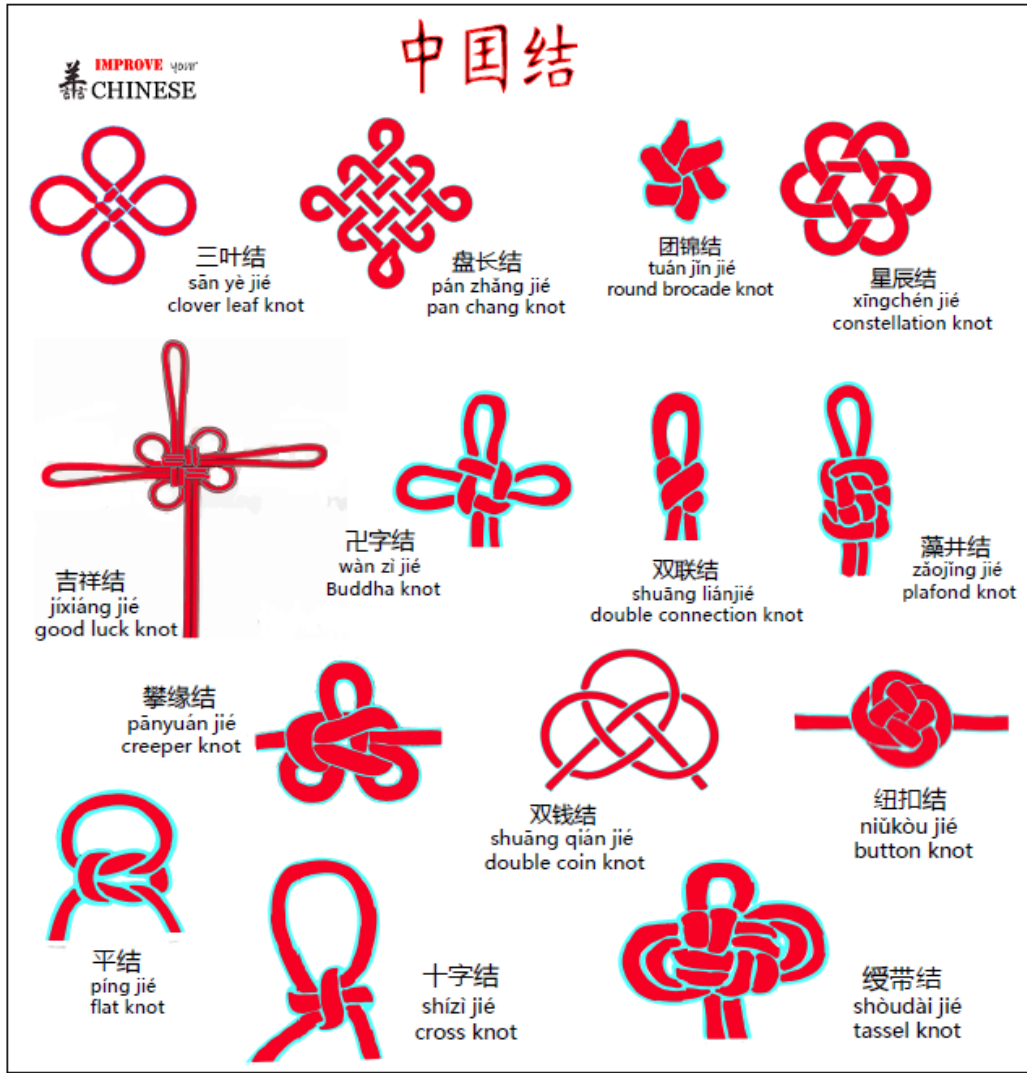


The Forbidden City (紫禁城 - Zǐjìnchéng):
Built during the Ming Dynasty (c. 1368–1644), the Forbidden City was the imperial palace of China for nearly 500 years. It symbolized the absolute power and authority of the emperor and was off-limits to the common people.



- Chinese Knot (中国结 - Zhōngguó Jié):** The Chinese knot, often made from red cord, represents good luck, longevity, and the unbreakable bond of love or friendship.

Chinese Knot (中国结 - Zhōngguó Jié): The Chinese knot has been used for thousands of years and was initially developed for practical purposes, such as tying items together. Over time, it evolved into an art form with symbolic meanings, representing good luck, unity, and happiness.



- **Chinese Calligraphy (书法 - Shūfǎ):** The art of Chinese calligraphy is a symbol of cultural refinement and elegance, expressing emotions and values through brushwork.



Chinese Calligraphy (书法 - Shūfǎ): Chinese calligraphy has a history of over 2,000 years and has been integral to Chinese culture, conveying emotions and values through brushwork. It has evolved through various dynasties and styles, with each era contributing to its development.



Click here

<https://www.thecollector.com/chinese-art-auction-results/>





1. Jade (玉石 - Yùshí): Jade has been cherished in China for over 7,000 years. It is regarded as a symbol of purity, beauty, and immortality. It was often associated with Chinese emperors and is considered the "stone of heaven."



- **Jade (玉石 - Yùshí):** Jade is considered a symbol of purity, beauty, and longevity in Chinese culture and is highly valued as a precious stone.



Click here 

<https://mays.com.au/blogs/news/top-10-most-expensive-jadeite-bangles>

- **Red Color (红色 - Hóngsè):** Red is associated with good luck and happiness in Chinese culture. It is prominently used in festivals, weddings, and other celebrations.



Red Color (红色 - Hóngsè): Red has been a significant color in Chinese culture for thousands of years. It symbolizes good luck, joy, and happiness. It is prominently featured in traditional Chinese weddings, the New Year, and festive celebrations. Red paper lanterns and decorations are commonly used during these events.



围棋 (Wéiqí)



- In traditional Chinese characters, it is written as 圍棋. Weiqi is also known as 圍棋 (Wéiqí) in Mandarin Pinyin and pronounced as "way-chee."
- Weiqi originated in China over 2,500 years ago, making it one of the oldest board games in the world. Its origins can be traced back to the Eastern Zhou period (around 6th century BCE).
- Weiqi is a game of strategy and intellect that is played on a gridded board. The objective is to capture your opponent's stones while preserving your own territory.
- It requires deep strategic thinking, long-term planning, and an understanding of complex tactics.
- Weiqi is often associated with traditional Chinese philosophy and culture. It reflects concepts such as balance, harmony, and the interplay of opposites (Yin and Yang).
- The game has been used as a metaphor for life and decision-making in Chinese literature and philosophy.
- Other names of Weiqi: **1. Go (囲碁 or 碁)**: This is the name for Weiqi in Japan, where the game has a strong tradition and is known simply as "Go." **2. Baduk (바둑)**: In Korea, Weiqi is referred to as "Baduk."

Traditional Chinese Musical Instruments

Traditional Chinese music is known for a wide variety of musical instruments, each with its unique sound and cultural significance. Some of the most famous traditional Chinese musical instruments include:



- **Guqin (古琴):** The guqin is one of the most revered and ancient musical instruments in China. It is a seven-stringed zither known for its delicate and meditative sounds. The guqin is often associated with scholarly pursuits and Confucian ideals.



- **Pipa (琵琶):** The pipa is a plucked string instrument with a rich history. It is known for its expressive melodies and is often used in solo and ensemble performances.



- **Erhu (二胡):** The erhu is a two-stringed bowed fiddle known for its emotional and haunting sound. It is a versatile instrument used in various genres of Chinese music.



- **Dizi (笛子):** The dizi is a Chinese bamboo flute that produces a melodious, airy tone. It is commonly used in Chinese folk and classical music.



- **Guzheng (古筝):** The guzheng is a large zither with 21 or more strings. It is known for its wide tonal range and is used in both traditional and contemporary music.

Question

- Why red ?



Answer

- In China, red is auspicious—associated with life-generating energy (the **sun**, **blood**, and **fire**)—and is the color of represents good fortune and joy or celebrations and prosperity. Red was, and still is, one of the most important colors in Chinese culture.



- **Bamboo (竹子 - Zhúzi):** Bamboo is a symbol of flexibility, strength, and resilience. It represents integrity and modesty.



Bamboo (竹子 - Zhúzi): Bamboo is one of the "Three Friends of Winter" in Chinese culture, along with pine and plum. It has a history of over 7,000 years of usage in China, with significance in literature, art, and daily life. Bamboo represents flexibility, strength, resilience, and modesty. It's often depicted in Chinese paintings and poems.



Question

- why China is called the Bamboo Curtain Country ?

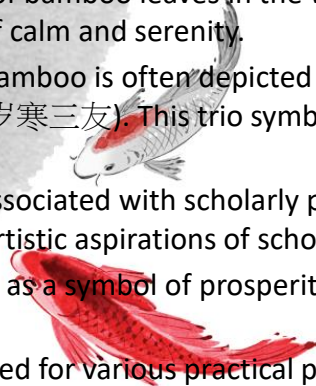


Answer

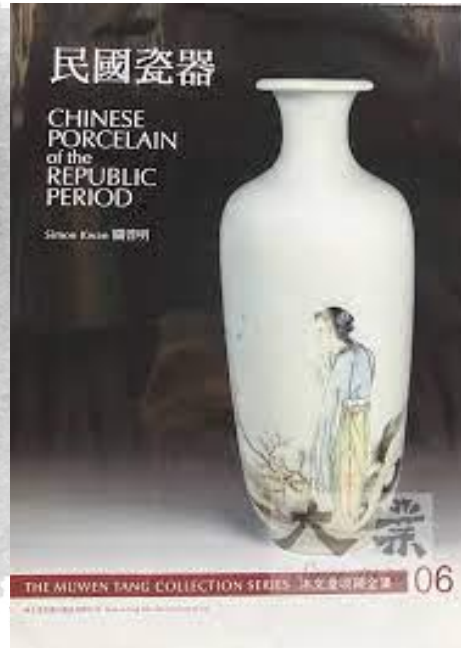
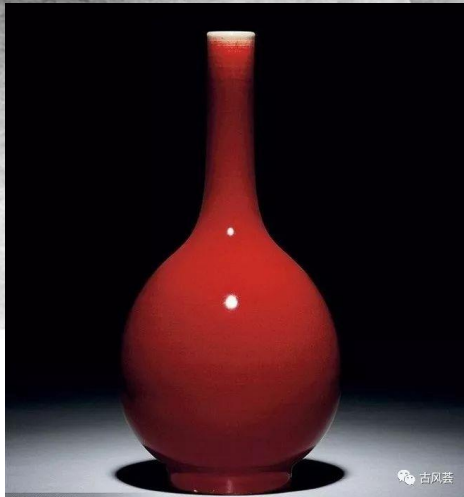
- There are various reasons why China is called the Bamboo Curtain Country (*negara tirai bambu*). One reason is that bamboo plants can be easily found in China because they grow abundantly there. Apart from that, bamboo is also food for pandas, which are animals typical of China.



- Bamboo holds significant cultural and symbolic meaning in Chinese culture. It is a revered and cherished plant, and its symbolism is deeply rooted in traditional Chinese values and beliefs. Here are some of the key meanings associated with bamboo in Chinese culture:
- Resilience and Flexibility: Bamboo is known for its strength and flexibility. In Chinese culture, it symbolizes resilience, adaptability, and the ability to withstand adversity. Bamboo bends in the wind but does not break, which is seen as a metaphor for how people should endure challenges and remain strong.
- Longevity: Bamboo is often associated with long life and longevity. Its ability to grow quickly and thrive in various conditions is seen as a reflection of the wish for a long, healthy, and prosperous life.
- Honesty and Integrity: The straight, upright growth of bamboo symbolizes honesty and integrity in Chinese culture. It serves as a reminder to uphold moral values and maintain an unwavering commitment to ethical behavior.
- Humility: Bamboo is a humble plant that grows without showiness. It encourages people to stay modest and not boast about their achievements, reflecting the virtues of humility and modesty.
- Tranquility and Peace: The rustling sound of bamboo leaves in the wind is associated with tranquility and peace. It is often depicted in Chinese art and poetry to evoke a sense of calm and serenity.
- Friendship and Harmony: In Chinese art, bamboo is often depicted with other elements, such as plum blossoms and pine trees, to represent the "Three Friends of Winter" (岁寒三友). This trio symbolizes the virtues of endurance, friendship, and harmony, especially during difficult times.
- Symbol of Scholarly Pursuits: Bamboo is associated with scholarly pursuits and is a common motif in Chinese literati paintings and poetry. It represents the intellectual and artistic aspirations of scholars and artists.
- Prosperity: In some cases, bamboo is seen as a symbol of prosperity and wealth. Its rapid growth is likened to the idea of financial growth and abundance.
- Cultural Significance: Bamboo has been used for various practical purposes in Chinese culture, such as making tools, utensils, and building materials. Its versatility and usefulness have further solidified its importance in daily life.
- The symbolism of bamboo is deeply ingrained in Chinese culture and has influenced various aspects of art, literature, and daily life. It is often used as a decorative motif in traditional Chinese paintings, calligraphy, and crafts to convey the rich cultural meanings associated with this plant.



- **Chinese Porcelain (瓷器 - Cíqì):** Chinese porcelain, particularly blue and white ceramics, is famous worldwide and symbolizes the country's artistic achievements.



Chinese Porcelain (瓷器 - Cíqì): Chinese porcelain production dates back to the Shang Dynasty (c. 16th–11th centuries BCE). The famous blue and white ceramics, in particular, have been highly prized and have influenced ceramics around the world.



<https://alaintruong2014.wordpress.com/2014/12/31/top-12-most-expensive-chinese-ceramics-sold-at-sothebys-in-2014/comment-page-1/>



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porcelain>

Porcelain ([/ˈpɔːrs\(ə\)lɪn/](#)) is a [ceramic](#) material made by heating [raw materials](#), generally including [kaolinite](#), in a [kiln](#) to temperatures between 1,200 and 1,400 ° C (2,200 and 2,600 ° F)



Properties associated with porcelain include low permeability and elasticity; considerable strength, hardness, whiteness, translucency, and resonance; and a high resistance to corrosive chemicals and thermal shock.

CHINA VS PORCELAIN

- Many people are confused as to the difference between "china" and "porcelain". Actually, the two terms describe the same product. The term "china" comes from its country of origin, and the word "porcelain" comes from the Latin word "porcella," meaning seashell. It implies a product which is smooth, white, and lustrous. The term **"porcelain" is preferred in Europe** while **"china" is favored in the United States**. China is "at the top of the list" of ceramic products because of its delicate beauty, and the extreme care and skill taken to produce it. China is very delicate in appearance only, as it is known for its great strength and resistance to chipping, which results from a high firing temperature.

<https://noritakechina.com/what-is-china#:~:text=China%20vs%20Porcelain&text=Actually%2C%20the%20two%20terms%20describe,smooth%2C%20white%2C%20and%20lustrous.>

Porcelain shop in Batam, near DC Mall



- **Lotus Flower (莲花 - Liánhuā):** The lotus flower symbolizes purity, enlightenment, and rebirth. It is often associated with Buddhism.



Western Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss or Sukhavati (Sanskrit)
西方极乐世界



Lotus Flower (莲花 - Liánhuā): The lotus flower has deep cultural and religious significance in China, particularly in Buddhism. It symbolizes purity, enlightenment, and spiritual rebirth. The lotus is often associated with graceful emergence from the mud to bloom in pristine beauty, representing spiritual growth.

- **Tea (茶 - Chá):** Tea culture is deeply rooted in Chinese traditions and symbolizes hospitality, harmony, and respect for nature.



Tea (茶 - Chá): Chinese tea culture dates back over 2,000 years. Tea was originally used for medicinal purposes and later became a symbol of hospitality, harmony, and respect for nature. The art of tea preparation and the various types of tea, such as green, black, oolong, and white, have enriched Chinese culture over centuries.



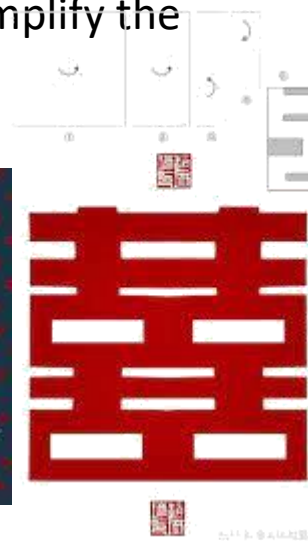
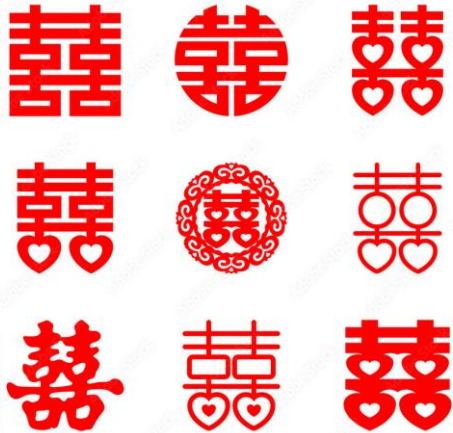


Double Happiness (囍 - Shuāngxǐ):
The "Double Happiness" symbol is commonly used in Chinese weddings and expresses marital happiness and good fortune. It has a long history and represents the joy of unions and celebrations. The character for "happiness" (喜 - xǐ) is often doubled to amplify the joyful sentiment.

- **Double Happiness (囍 - Shuāngxǐ):**

The "Double Happiness" symbol is often seen at weddings and represents marital happiness and good fortune.

DOUBLE HAPPINESS IN CHINESE WEDDING

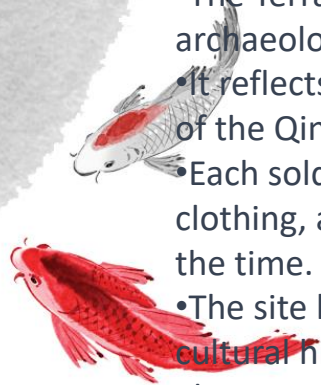


- **Terracotta Army (兵马俑 - Bīngmǎyǒng):** The Terracotta Army is a collection of life-sized terracotta statues representing soldiers, horses, and chariots. These sculptures were created to accompany China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, in his afterlife. They were buried with him in the late third century BCE during the Qin Dynasty (between 221 BC to 206 BC).



Historical Significance:

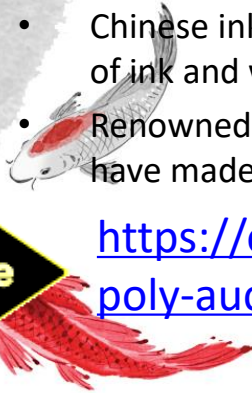
- The Terracotta Army is considered one of the most remarkable archaeological discoveries of the 20th century.
- It reflects the incredible craftsmanship and artistic achievements of the Qin Dynasty.
- Each soldier is unique, and the attention to detail in their faces, clothing, and weaponry is a testament to the advanced skills of the time.
- The site has provided valuable insights into the military and cultural history of ancient China.



The Terracotta Army is not only a symbol of Chinese culture but also a symbol of China's rich historical heritage and archaeological achievements. It stands as a representation of China's ancient military prowess and the grandeur of its early imperial history.

- **Chinese Opera (中国戏曲 - Zhōngguó Xìqǔ):** Chinese opera is a traditional performing art that combines music, singing, acting, and elaborate costumes. It has a history dating back over a thousand years, with different regional styles.
- Historical Significance:
- Chinese opera can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty (c. 618–907 CE).
- There are several major regional opera styles, including Peking Opera, Cantonese Opera, and Sichuan Opera, each with its unique characteristics.
- Chinese opera has played a role in preserving historical stories, myths, and cultural heritage.
- The art form involves various elements, such as elaborate makeup, stylized movements, and storytelling.
- These cultural elements, including Kung Fu, drawing and art, and Chinese opera, have deep historical significance and have made significant contributions to Chinese culture and society. They reflect the artistic and martial traditions of China and have gained international recognition and appreciation.





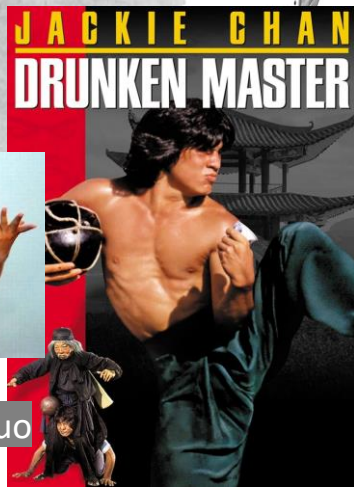
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- **Chinese Drawing and Art (绘画和艺术 - Huìhuà hé Yìshù):** Chinese art has a rich history that spans thousands of years, encompassing various forms like painting, calligraphy, ceramics, and more. Chinese painting, in particular, is known for its unique styles and techniques.
Historical Significance:
Chinese painting dates back to ancient times, with examples of bronze ware designs and oracle bone inscriptions.
- Landscape painting became a major form of Chinese art during the Tang Dynasty (c. 618–907 CE).
- Chinese ink painting, characterized by brushwork and the use of ink and water, developed as an influential artistic tradition.
- Renowned artists like Wang Xizhi, Zhang Zeduan, and Qi Baishi have made lasting contributions to Chinese art history.

<https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/xu-yang-poly-auction-handscroll/index.html>

中国十大传世名画，你没见过这么全的高清图

<https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/73827328>



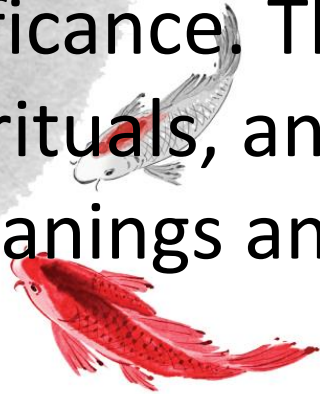
- **Chinese Kung Fu (中国功夫 - Zhōngguó Gōngfu):** Chinese martial arts, commonly known as Kung Fu, have a history that dates back thousands of years. It has its origins in ancient China and has evolved over time. Kung Fu is not only a form of self-defense but also an important cultural expression.
- **Historical Significance:**
- Chinese martial arts have their roots in the Xia and Shang dynasties (c. 2000–1600 BCE).
- Different martial arts styles, such as Shaolin Kung Fu and Tai Chi, developed and gained prominence during various dynasties.
- These arts were used for self-defense, combat training, and as a way to promote health and longevity.
- Kung Fu has played a significant role in Chinese history, including the protection of villages and the defence of the nation.

Traditional Medicine



- Traditional Medicine: Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is a holistic approach to health and healing that includes acupuncture, herbal remedies, qigong, and other practices. It is rooted in ancient Chinese beliefs about the balance of yin and yang, as well as the flow of Qi (life force energy).

- These symbols are an integral part of Chinese culture and have deep cultural, historical, and spiritual significance. They are used in art, architecture, rituals, and daily life to convey important meanings and values.



Chinese culture and beliefs



Chinese practices in

- Beliefs
- Religions
- Folk Religions
- Traditions
- Customs
- Superstitions



Chinese beliefs and practices

- Beliefs and practices. Beliefs and practices tied to Confucianism, Taoism and Chinese folk religions generally fall into three broad areas: filial piety (xiao 孝) and ancestor worship (jizu 祭祖), veneration of deities and ghosts, and beliefs that involve supernatural forces, such as fengshui (风水)

Beliefs

Beliefs are convictions or acceptance of the truth of something, often based on faith, personal experiences, cultural teachings, or other influences. Beliefs can encompass a wide range of ideas, values, and principles that shape an individual's worldview and guide their thoughts, behaviors, and decisions.

1. Moral and Ethical Values: Many Chinese people, regardless of their religious or philosophical beliefs, practice and uphold Confucian values, emphasizing virtues such as filial piety, respect for elders, and social harmony.

2. Veneration of Ancestors: Ancestor worship is a central practice in Chinese culture. Families often maintain ancestral altars and perform rituals to honor and remember deceased family members.

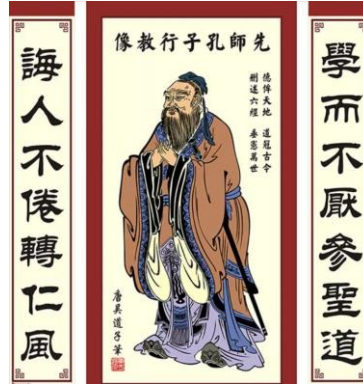
Confucianism

Why did Confucius start a school?

Confucius | Biography, Teachings, & Facts | Britannica

Confucius is known as the first teacher in China who wanted to make education broadly available and who was instrumental in establishing the art of teaching as a [vocation](#). He also established ethical, moral, and social standards that formed the basis of a way of life known as Confucianism.

The ancient Confucians comprised a “school” in a true sense: during the period of the Warring States (450-221) Confucian teachings were passed down from masters to disciples who studied together in groups, and who viewed themselves as part of a well-defined movement to change people's ideas and behavior



- Confucianism is a philosophical and ethical system that emphasizes the importance of moral values, family, social harmony, and the cultivation of virtue. It has had a profound influence on Chinese culture and continues to be a significant guiding principle in Chinese society.

Click here

https://chinatxt.sitehost.iu.edu/Thought/Confucian_School.pdf



《论语》浅说
为政篇

学而不思则罔
思而不学则殆

中华传统文化讲坛

「溫故而知新，
可以為師矣。」



findmotivation.org



**"LEARNING WITHOUT THINKING
IS USELESS. THINKING WITHOUT
LEARNING IS DANGEROUS."**

— Confucius

FINDMOTIVATION.ORG

Definition 定义

Gain new insights through
restudying old material

Similar English Idioms 相似 英文习语

Back to basics; to see
something in a new light; to
revisit a text



wēn gù zhī xīn
温故知新

The "Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars" or "Ershi-si xiao" (二十四孝) is a traditional Chinese text that provides a set of moral and ethical guidelines for filial piety. Filial piety, known as "xiao" (孝), is a central virtue in Chinese culture, emphasizing respect and devotion to one's parents and elders. The Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars presents 24 stories or examples of individuals who demonstrated extraordinary devotion and sacrifice for the sake of their parents or other family members.

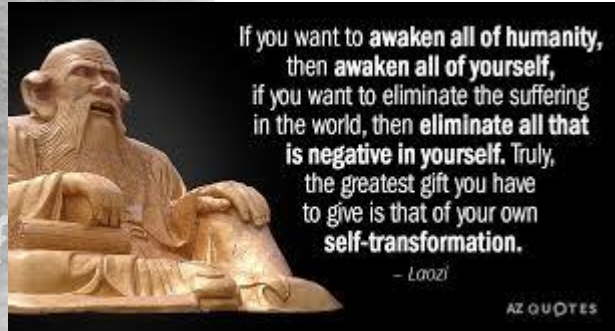


Religions

Religions are organized systems of beliefs, practices, and rituals centered around the worship of deities or a divine being. They often include moral and ethical guidelines, sacred texts, religious leaders, and institutions. Religions provide a framework for understanding the nature of existence, the purpose of life, and the afterlife. Examples include Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

1. **Taoist Rituals:** Taoist rituals often involve purification ceremonies, offerings to deities, and the burning of spirit money or joss paper for the deceased. Taoists also seek guidance from Taoist priests.
2. **Buddhist Practices:** Buddhists in China engage in practices such as meditation, chanting, and circumambulation (walking around sacred objects or structures) at Buddhist temples. They also offer incense and prostrations to pay respects to Buddha and Bodhisattvas.
3. **Islamic Practices:** Muslims in China observe the five daily prayers (Salat), fast during the holy month of Ramadan, give alms (Zakat), and make the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) if possible.
4. **Christian Worship:** Christian practices in China involve attending church services, singing hymns, reading the Bible, and participating in sacraments such as baptism and communion.

Taoism (Daoism):



Taoism (also known as [Daoism](#)) is a [Chinese philosophy](#) attributed to Lao Tzu (c. 500 BCE) which developed from the folk [religion](#) of the people primarily in the rural areas of [China](#) and became the official religion of the country under the [Tang Dynasty](#). Taoism is therefore both a [philosophy](#) and a religion.

Taoism (Daoism): Taoism is another major philosophical and religious tradition in China. It focuses on the concept of the Tao (or Dao), which represents the fundamental principle that underlies the universe. Taoism emphasizes living in harmony with nature, simplicity, and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment.

Buddhism

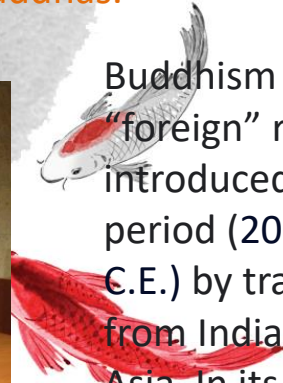


Buddha statue in Sichuan, China

“Ceasing to do evil, Cultivating the good, Purifying the heart: This is the teaching of the Buddhas.”

- Siddhartha Gautama, known as Buddha Shakyamuni, was a spiritual teacher and the founder of Buddhism. He lived in ancient India, in the 623 - 543 BCE.
- Buddha Shakyamuni's life story is characterized by his quest for enlightenment and the Four Noble Truths, which form the foundation of Buddhist teachings. He is known for achieving enlightenment under the Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya, India.
- Buddhism: Buddhism was introduced to China from India and has become one of the major religions in the country. Chinese Buddhism combines elements of Indian Buddhism with indigenous Chinese beliefs and practices. There are various schools and sects of Buddhism in China, including Pure Land Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism.

Buddhism is the oldest “foreign” religion in China, introduced during the Han period (206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.) by traveling monks from India and Central Asia. In its earliest days, it was primarily practiced by foreign monks and merchants.



China



India



Maitreya Buddha, 705 AD, Tang Dynasty, China



<https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/615548910>

The Big-belly Maitreya Buddha is a Buddha that has its own person in Chinese history. He was born in Fenghua, Zhejiang Province during the Five Dynasties (between the fall of the Tang dynasty (ad 907) and the founding of the Song dynasty (960)). His original name was Qiji, his nickname was Tingzi, and he became a monk at Yuelin Temple in Fenghua. He was fat and always had a cloth bag on his shoulder. He cherished food very much. When he saw the grains falling on the ground, he would pick them up in the cloth bag and use it to give alms to the poor. He was known as the "Budai Monk".

Islamic Practices in China



- Islam has a long history in China, with records of its presence dating back to the 7th century during the Tang Dynasty. Islam spread to China through the Silk Road trade routes and was embraced by various ethnic groups, including the Hui and Uighur people.
- Muslims in China, particularly the Hui and Uighur communities, continue to observe these practices. There are mosques across China, and religious leaders provide guidance and support to the Muslim community.



Christian Worship in China



- The history of Christian worship in China dates back to the 7th century during the Tang Dynasty when Nestorian Christianity was introduced to China. However, Christianity in China experienced significant growth during the Ming and Qing Dynasties in the 16th and 17th centuries, with Jesuit missionaries playing a crucial role in introducing Catholicism to the Chinese court.



Folk Religions

Folk religions, also known as traditional or indigenous religions, are belief systems practiced by a specific cultural or regional group, often outside the framework of organized religions. They involve the veneration of local deities, ancestors, and nature spirits and may incorporate rituals, ceremonies, and practices passed down through generations.

- **Local Deity Worship:** Followers of Chinese folk religions often visit local temples and shrines to make offerings to village deities and spirits. They may light incense, burn paper offerings, and participate in traditional rituals.

Local temples / Shrines



Customs

Customs are social and cultural behaviors and practices that are commonly observed in a particular society or community. These practices include everyday actions, manners, and etiquette, as well as rituals and ceremonies associated with specific events or occasions. Customs help shape and maintain the identity of a culture or group.

- 1. Greeting Etiquette:** Chinese customs often involve specific greetings and etiquette. Bowing, nodding, and the use of honorific titles, especially when addressing elders or superiors, are common customs.
- 2. Gift-Giving:** Giving and receiving gifts is an important part of Chinese customs, especially during festivals and special occasions. Gifts are often presented with both hands as a sign of respect.



<https://www.topchinatravel.com/china-guide/chinese-etiquette-fist-and-palm-salute.htm>

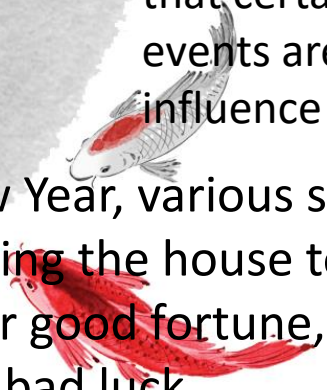


<https://studycli.org/chinese-culture/chinese-gift-ideas/>

Superstitions

Superstitions are irrational beliefs or practices that are often rooted in folklore, tradition, or cultural beliefs rather than in rational or scientific reasoning. They involve the belief that certain actions, objects, numbers, or events are omens of good or bad luck and can influence future outcomes or events.

- During the Chinese New Year, various superstitions and customs are observed, such as cleaning the house to remove bad luck, offering red envelopes (hongbao) for good fortune, and avoiding certain words or actions associated with bad luck.

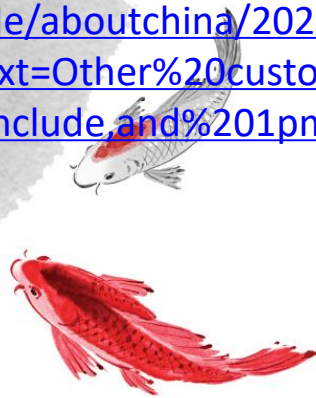


Superstitions

迷信

<https://www.hanhai-language.com.sg/blog/2021/7/19/chinese-superstitions-on-colours-numbers-and-flowers>

<http://us.mofcom.gov.cn/article/aboutchina/202011/20201103012645.shtml#:~:text=Other%20customs%20and%20superstitions%20include,and%201pm%20quarrels%20will%20ensue.>



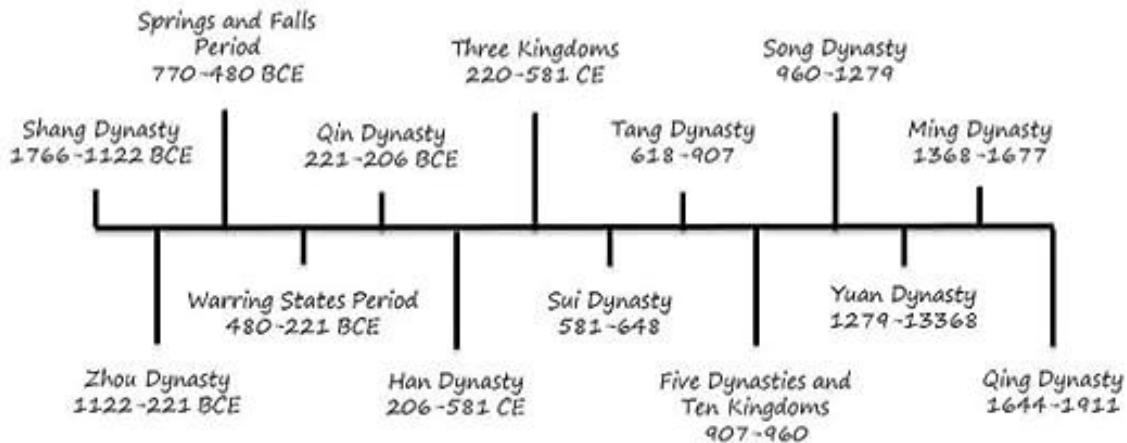
- Superstitions: Chinese culture is rich in superstitions and beliefs about lucky and unlucky symbols, numbers, and colors. For example, the number 8 is considered lucky, while the number 4 is associated with bad luck due to its pronunciation similarity to the word for "death."

The timeline of China Dynasties

The Dynasties

Chinese history is divided into dynasties – period whereby the country is ruled by one royal family.

Chinese Dynasties



<https://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/518950-china---dynasties>

Folk Religion

民间宗教



BiblioAsia - National Library Board
The Chinese Spirit-Medium: Ancie...



Chinese Folk Religion

- Belief in spirits
- Polytheistic and animistic
- Reverence for ancestors
- Yin and yang
- Balance of the universe
- Astrology
- Divination
- Future telling



Chinese Jiaobei: Divination With Moon Blocks

- Folk Religion: Chinese folk religion is a collection of various beliefs and practices that vary from region to region. It often involves the veneration of ancestors, local deities, and spirits of nature. These beliefs are deeply ingrained in Chinese culture and are often intertwined with other belief systems.

Chinese Jiaobei 筊杯 / jiǎo bēi



擲杯意義



一正一反>聖杯
(同意)



兩正>笑杯
(不好不壞)



兩反>陰杯/無杯
(不同意)

Ancestor worship (jizu 祭祖)

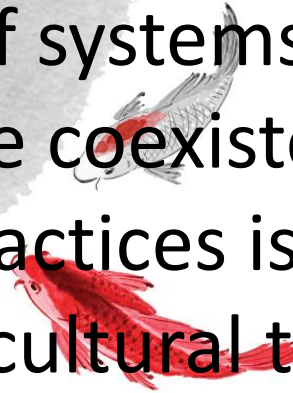


Veneration of deities

崇拜神灵



- It's important to note that Chinese beliefs can vary widely among individuals and regions, and many people may practice a combination of these belief systems and traditions in their daily lives. The coexistence of these diverse beliefs and practices is a testament to the rich and complex cultural tapestry of China.



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- All images are from Google image search



谢谢!