

Article

# The Inheritance, Development and Protection of Manchu Folk Decorative Pattern Designs in China -- A comprehensive study Based on Qualitative and Quantitative Research

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**Abstract:** As an important part of China's rich cultural heritage, Manchu decorative patterns not only have deep historical significance but also possess unique artistic value. This paper explores the application and development of Chinese Manchu decorative motifs in folk art design by analyzing them and the underlying logic of their material culture. The study adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the cultural connotation and design value of Manchu decorative motifs, as well as their evolution and preservation in contemporary design. The findings of the study suggest that Manchu decorative motifs are significant in enhancing the cultural value of products, fostering a sense of cultural identity, and promoting sustainable development, while also providing a rich source of creativity for modern design.

**Keywords:** Manchu decorative patterns; folk art design; cultural connotation; design value; sustainable development

## 1. Introduction

The culture of the Manchu people holds an important place in China's diverse cultural landscape. As a significant component of folk art, Manchu decorative patterns not only reflect the history, beliefs, and social life of the Manchu but also embody rich cultural meanings and artistic value. In the context of cultural exchange and diversity, re-examining the design of Manchu decorative motifs offers valuable insights for the preservation and continuation of traditional culture, while also contributing new ideas and approaches to contemporary design.

In recent years, with increased attention to traditional cultural practices, the use of Manchu decorative patterns in modern design has gained growing interest. However, how to achieve the innovative development of traditional culture while ensuring its protection remains a crucial topic for research. This paper systematically investigates the value and significance of Manchu decorative motifs in folk art design and explores their potential for application in modern society.

## 2. Historical and Cultural Background of Manchu Decorative Patterns

### 2.1. Historical Origin of Manchu Culture

The Manchu people are an ancient ethnic group from Northeast China, with a history tracing back thousands of years to the Sushan, Yilou, Beji, and Mohe tribes. The formation and development of the Manchu ethnic group underwent many historical stages, eventually reaching its peak during the Qing Dynasty. Manchu culture not only absorbed elements from the Central Plains culture but also preserved distinct national characteristics.

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As a key element of their culture, Manchu decorative patterns reflect the Manchu people's perceptions and understanding of nature, their ancestors, and social life.

### *2.2. Cultural Connotation of Manchu Decorative Patterns*

Manchu decorative patterns are rich in cultural connotations, with design elements primarily derived from nature, religion, and daily life. For example, natural elements such as cloud and water patterns symbolize respect for nature, while religious motifs like the dragon and phoenix patterns reflect the spiritual beliefs and values of the Manchu people. Additionally, patterns such as bats and octagonal pavilions are traditionally associated with wishes for good fortune. These patterns serve not only as decorative elements but also embody the aspirations and hopes for a better life held by the Manchu people.

### *2.3. Artistic Style of Manchu Decorative Patterns*

The artistic style of Manchu decorative patterns is distinctive, characterized by simple and bright shapes, smooth and elegant lines, and vivid, rich colors. The design often emphasizes symmetry and balance, frequently combining geometric shapes with motifs of animals and plants. This style not only reflects the aesthetic values of the Manchu people but also demonstrates their deep appreciation for nature and life.

## **3. The Application of Manchu Decorative Patterns in Folk Art Design**

### *3.1. Product Packaging Design*

The application of Manchu decorative patterns in product packaging design is increasingly widespread. By integrating traditional Manchu patterns into modern packaging, products not only gain enhanced cultural value and artistic appeal but also improve the consumer's sense of connection and desire to purchase. For instance, some alcoholic beverages incorporate Manchu dragon, phoenix, and other motifs in their packaging designs. This not only imbues the product with distinctive cultural features but also boosts its competitiveness in the market.

### *3.2. Clothing Design*

The application of Manchu decorative patterns in clothing design is also prominent. Traditional Manchu garments, such as cheongsams and waistcoats, often feature embroidery, brocade, and other techniques to adorn the clothing with patterns like clouds, water, dragons, and phoenixes. These patterns not only serve a decorative purpose but also reflect the cultural connotation and aesthetic values of the Manchu people. In modern clothing design, designers merge Manchu decorative motifs with contemporary fashion elements through innovative approaches, creating garments that blend cultural identity with modern style.

### *3.3. Interior Design*

The application of Manchu decorative patterns in interior design is also relatively common. Through the application of traditional Manchu patterns in interior decoration, it can create a strong ethnic atmosphere and cultural atmosphere. For example, in some hotels with ethnic characteristics, restaurants and other places in the interior design, often using Manchu pattern elements for decoration, so that the space is more artistic and cultural connotation.

## **4. Qualitative Analysis of Manchu Decorative Patterns**

### *4.1. The Continuation of Manchu Cultural Tradition*

The continuation of Manchu cultural tradition in modern design is one of the important contents of the study. Through the analysis of Manchu decorative patterns, it is found that their application in product design not only enhances the cultural value of

products, but also strengthens the sense of national identity. For example, the application of Manchu patterns such as cloud pattern and dragon pattern in modern product packaging design not only reflects the uniqueness of Manchu culture, but also gives new vitality to the products.

#### *4.2. Adaptation and Innovation of Manchu Design*

Adaptation and innovation of Manchu design is an important way for its continuation in modern society. Through the innovative interpretation and expression of traditional patterns, Manchu decorative patterns have been revitalised in modern design. For example, the Manchu patterns incorporated in modern design not only retain the traditional elements, but also combine modern aesthetics and technical means, making it more contemporary and innovative.

#### *4.3. The Importance of Preserving Cultural Connotations*

The integration of traditional elements in modern design not only helps to promote innovation, but also has an important significance for the protection of cultural connotation. Through the study of Manchu decorative motifs, it is found that designers must have an in-depth understanding of their cultural and historical background during the design process in order to better integrate them into modern design. This conservation effort not only protects the uniqueness of Manchu art, but also fosters a sense of identity and pride in traditional culture.

### **5. Quantitative Analysis of Manchu Decorative Patterns**

#### *5.1. Demographic Data of Participants*

This study collected data from 366 participants by means of questionnaires. Among them, 41% were male and 57.4% were female; their ages were mainly between 25-44 years old, accounting for 65%; and their occupations were predominantly research-based, artistic and managerial occupations, accounting for 22.1%, 10.9% and 10.9%, respectively. In addition, 77.9% of the participants were Han Chinese, 0.8% were Manchu, and the rest were of other ethnicities. This indicates that the study sample is somewhat diverse and representative.

#### *5.2. Descriptive Statistical Analysis*

Through descriptive statistical analysis of the survey data, it was found that there were differences in participants' knowledge and understanding of Manchu decorative motifs. For example, 36.1 per cent of the respondents believed that Manchu folk art designs have important historical and cultural significance, 33.1 per cent believed that their importance is high, while 14.5 per cent believed that their importance is low. In addition, 38.8 per cent of the respondents believed that qualitative research methods are helpful in the preservation of Manchu folk art designs, while 33.1 per cent believed that they are more helpful. This indicates that although the cultural value of Manchu decorative designs has been recognised to a certain extent, their recognition and protection in modern society still need to be further strengthened.

#### *5.3. Quantitative Analysis of Research Objectives*

Objective 1: To explore the historical and cultural background of Manchu folk art designs

The study found that 37.4% of the respondents were neutral about the historical, geographical, social and cultural background of Manchu folk design, 27.9% had a high level of awareness, while 9.8% had a high level of understanding. This indicates that although some respondents have some understanding of the context of Manchu folk art design, the overall level of awareness still needs to be improved.

#### Objective 2: Evolution of Manchu design in contemporary culture

The study found that 35.2% of the respondents believed that interviews, observations and document analysis had some effect on the evolution of Manchu design, while 38.3% believed that their effect was proportionate. In addition, 14.2 per cent of the respondents believed that the visual appeal and cultural resonance of Manchu design in reinterpretation was very effective, while 35.5 per cent believed that it was more effective. This suggests that the evolution of Manchu designs in contemporary culture has been recognised to a certain extent, but there is still a need to further enhance their design effectiveness and cultural impact.

#### Objective 3: Cultural value of Manchu decorative patterns

The study found that 40.7% of the respondents were neutral about the role of Manchu decorative motifs in terms of visual, symbolic and cultural communication, while 29.0% thought they were more effective. In addition, 36.1% of the respondents believed that Manchu folk art designs have important historical and cultural significance. This indicates that the cultural value of Manchu decorative designs has been recognised to a certain extent, but their dissemination and application in modern society still need to be further strengthened.

#### Objective 4: Conservation of Manchu Folk Art Designs

The study found that 83.9 per cent of the respondents thought that qualitative research methods were helpful in the protection of Manchu folk art designs, and 33.1 per cent thought they were more helpful. This indicates that qualitative research methods play a positive role in the protection of Manchu folk art designs, but they still need to be combined with quantitative research methods to enhance their protection effects.

## 6. Protection and Inheritance of Manchu Decorative Patterns

### 6.1. Protection Status and Challenges

#### 6.1.1. Loss of traditional skills

With the acceleration of modernisation, the traditional skills of Manchu decorative patterns are facing a serious risk of loss. Many traditional craftsmen are getting old, and the younger generation's interest in these skills is gradually diminishing, leading to a break in the chain of inheritance. For example, Manchu embroidery, once a necessary skill for women, is now rarely practised. One interviewee mentioned, 'The traditional decorations of Manchu culture that I know of probably originated more from the design of incense bags for the annual Dragon Boat Festival.' This suggests that the transmission of traditional skills has been limited to a few specific occasions, making it difficult to be widely used and passed on in daily life.

#### 6.1.2. Weakening of cultural identity

Under the influence of globalisation, the younger generation's sense of identity with traditional culture has gradually weakened. Many young Manchu people know little about their own culture and prefer to pursue modern culture and fashion trends. This weakened sense of cultural identity makes the preservation and inheritance of Manchu decorative motifs a greater challenge. One interviewee noted, 'The integration of Manchu decorative patterns into packaging design may vary depending on the individual differences of consumers.' This suggests that differences in cultural identity affect the market acceptance and inheritance effect of Manchu decorative patterns.

#### 6.1.3. Changes in market demand

Changes in modern market demand also have an impact on the protection and inheritance of Manchu decorative patterns. Consumers' aesthetic and functional demands for products are constantly changing, and the application of traditional patterns in modern design requires constant innovation and adaptation. One interviewee mentioned, 'Different product positioning and target audiences have different preferences and needs for

design styles.' This suggests that changes in market demand require continuous innovation of Manchu decorative motifs in heritage to meet the needs of modern consumers.

## 6.2. *Strategies for Protection and Inheritance*

### 6.2.1. Strengthening the Protection of Traditional Skills

In order to protect the traditional skills of Manchu decorative patterns, a variety of measures need to be taken. Firstly, the government and relevant organisations should increase their support and protection of traditional craftsmen by providing financial and policy support to encourage them to continue to engage in the creation and transmission of traditional skills. For example, they can help traditional craftspeople to better pass on and develop their skills in Manchu decorative motifs by setting up special funds and providing training and exhibition opportunities. Secondly, schools and educational institutions should enhance education and promotion of traditional crafts by offering relevant courses and workshops to cultivate the interest and skills of the younger generation in traditional crafts. One interviewee suggested, 'Protecting and conveying these cultural connotations through design can help promote cultural heritage, enhance the cultural value of products, and convey artistic charm.'

### 6.2.2. Enhancing Cultural Identity

Raising the younger generation's sense of identity with Manchu culture is one of the important strategies for protecting and passing on Manchu decorative patterns. Through a variety of ways, such as education, media and cultural activities, the younger generation's understanding and identification with Manchu culture can be enhanced. For example, Manchu culture courses can be offered in schools, Manchu culture and art exhibitions can be held, and Manchu culture experience activities can be carried out to let more people understand and recognise Manchu culture. In addition, making use of modern media and online platforms to enhance the publicity and promotion of Manchu culture is also an effective way to improve cultural identity. One interviewee pointed out, 'Protecting and transmitting these cultural connotations through design helps to promote cultural heritage, enhance the cultural value of products, and transmit artistic charm.'

### 6.2.3. Innovative Design and Modern Application

On the basis of protecting traditional skills, innovative design and modern application is an important way to pass down Manchu decorative patterns. Designers should deeply study the cultural connotation and artistic characteristics of Manchu decorative patterns, combine modern design concepts and technical means to create contemporary and innovative design works. For example, applying Manchu decorative patterns to modern product packaging, clothing design, interior design and other fields can not only enhance the cultural value of products, but also strengthen their market competitiveness. One interviewee mentioned, 'This reconstruction is not a simple copy or imitation, but an innovative interpretation and expression of traditional decorative patterns.' This suggests that innovative design is an important means for the inheritance and development of Manchu decorative patterns in modern society.

### 6.2.4. Policy Support and Social Participation

The support and participation of the government and the community is an important guarantee for the protection and inheritance of Manchu decorative patterns. The government should formulate relevant policies and regulations to protect the intellectual property rights and cultural heritage of Manchu decorative patterns, and encourage and support relevant enterprises and organisations to carry out the protection and inheritance of Manchu decorative patterns. At the same time, all sectors of society should actively participate in contributing to the protection and inheritance of Manchu decorative patterns through donations, volunteer services and cultural activities. One interviewee pointed out,



'Protecting and transmitting these cultural connotations through design will help promote cultural heritage, enhance the cultural value of products, and transmit artistic charm.'

### 6.3. Future Development Trends

#### 6.3.1. Digital Protection and Dissemination

With the development of digital technology, the digital protection and dissemination of Manchu decorative patterns will become an important trend in the future. Through digital technology, the Manchu decorative patterns can be recorded and stored with high precision, and a digital database can be established to provide rich resources for research and inheritance. At the same time, using technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR), the public can be provided with immersive experiences, so that more people can understand and get to know the Manchu decorative patterns. One interviewee mentioned, 'The use of modern technology, such as VR technology, can provide an immersive experience and allow people to witness the creation process of these patterns.'

#### 6.3.2. Cross-Cultural Integration and Innovation

In the context of globalisation, cross-cultural integration will become an important direction for the future development of Manchu decorative patterns. By combining with the cultural elements of other ethnic groups and countries, Manchu decorative patterns can be spread and applied in a wider range. For example, combining Manchu decorative motifs with modern fashion elements creates designer brands with international influence. One interviewee noted, 'An important trend I foresee is the incorporation of traditional cultural elements such as Manchu decorative motifs into contemporary design, which is an exploration of cross-cultural integration.'

#### 6.3.3. Sustainable Development and Environmental Design

With the increasing awareness of environmental protection, sustainable development will become an important trend in the future development of Manchu decorative patterns. By using environmentally friendly materials and processes, Manchu decorative patterns can achieve sustainable development while protecting the environment. For example, the use of natural dyes and renewable materials not only reduces the impact on the environment, but also enhances the added value of the products. One interviewee mentioned, 'Incorporating Manchu decorative motifs into packaging design can help the sustainable protection and promotion of Manchu cultural heritage.'

#### 6.3.4. Public Participation and Cultural Education

Public participation and cultural education are important safeguards for the future development of Manchu decorative patterns. By strengthening cultural education and public participation, public awareness and recognition of Manchu decorative motifs can be improved, providing a solid social foundation for protection and inheritance. For example, through organising cultural activities, exhibitions and workshops, more people can understand and participate in the creation and inheritance of Manchu decorative patterns. One interviewee noted, 'Through reverence and respect, designers can better understand and make use of these traditional elements to create design works with unique charms and cultural connotations, contributing to the inheritance and development of traditional culture.'

## 7. Conclusion

As an important part of Chinese folk art, Manchu decorative patterns have a deep historical and cultural heritage and unique artistic value. Through the systematic study of

Manchu decorative patterns, its application value and cultural significance in folk art design are revealed. It is found that Manchu decorative patterns are of great significance in enhancing the cultural value of products, strengthening the sense of national identity and promoting sustainable development. However, its protection and inheritance still face many challenges in modern society. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt multifaceted strategies to strengthen the protection and innovative development of Manchu decorative patterns and promote their wide application in modern society. In the future, with the enhancement of cultural self-confidence and the emphasis on traditional culture, Manchu decorative patterns will take on a new vitality in modern design and make a greater contribution to the cultural prosperity of the Chinese nation.

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