

# What Is China's "National Color"

Alimova Sevara Farkhadovna

Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Faculty of Chinese Studies " Chinese philology", Senior Teacher of the Department, Uzbekistan

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**Abstract:** "National color" is tempered from the process of historical civilization, and modern times. In ancient times, the Qin Dynasty advocated black, and the atmosphere was simple; the Northern and Southern Dynasties advocated blue, which was bright and flying; the Song Dynasty advocated "preserving natural principles and removing human desires", fresh and elegant Green has become the mainstream; in addition, yellow, which symbolizes imperial power, and the majestic Chinese red have always been the national colors that will never fade in the hearts of the Chinese nation.

**Keywords:** Chinese civilization, five colors, five elements, chinese history, chinese cosmology, chinese medicine.

**Introduction:** The five national colors of black, red, blue, green, and yellow have become the colors that represent China in Chinese civilization and are consistent with popular colors. The five colors that best represent Chinese civilization happen to be the colors of the Olympic rings. This not only closely adheres to the purpose of national unity, but also echoes the theme of the Olympic Games. And tracing back to history, we can find representatives of the origins from the popular colors of clothing in each dynasty and each historical period. They have gone through time and space and have been given a new interpretation in today's high-end Chinese clothing series.

"Zhou Li Kao Gong Ji": "Green and white are the second phase, red and black are the second phase, and black and yellow are the second phase. Green and red are called wen, red and white are called chapters, and white and black are called fu. , it is called black when it is green, and it is called embroidery when it is more colorful."

The word "five colors" was first seen in the pre-Qin works "Shang Shu" and "Shang Shu-Yi Ji", which mainly records the dialogue between Emperor Shun and Dayu. Emperor Shun requested that twelve kinds of objects, including the sun, moon, stars, mountains, and dragons, be painted in five colors. It was embroidered on his own dress and supervised by Dayu, and later generations called it "Twelve Chapters". The five colors are white, green, black, red, and yellow as the "correct

colors". After speculation in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the prototype of the Five Elements Color Theory system was formed in the Han Dynasty. With the development of science and technology in the Han Dynasty, especially the establishment of the theory of traditional Chinese medicine, the theory of five elements and colors was enriched and perfected. As traditional Chinese medicine penetrated into people's lives, the theory of five elements and the use of five colors in the Han Dynasty penetrated into every corner of society and became common among the Chinese nation. Approved color usage practices. "Five colors" indicates that ancient China's color aesthetic consciousness has obtained the aesthetic meaning of rational consciousness from the accumulation of primitive concepts.

The "five colors" have become the foundation and orthodoxy of traditional Chinese colors. The five elements, five colors, five directions and five virtues correspond to each other and express the cultural attributes, ethical philosophy and thoughts and emotions of the Chinese people. The five elements form five stars in the sky, namely Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, and Saturn. On the earth, they are the five substances of gold, wood, water, fire, and earth. In humans, they are the five virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faith. sex. Each of these five types of elements has different properties,

such as wood with the property of growth and development; fire with the property of being hot and upward; earth with the property of peace and preservation; metal with the property of chilling and astringent; water with the property of coldness and moisturizing. . Gold, wood, water, fire, and earth in the "Five Elements Theory" correspond to white, green, black, red, and yellow in the "Five Color Theory" respectively. The "Five Colors" were artificially combined with the "Five Elements" theory, allowing color culture to penetrate into the field of philosophy, covering ancient philosophy with a colorful coat, which not only enriched the content of philosophy, but also increased the connotation of color. The color circle in the theory of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements, with yellow as the center, undergoes a spiral periodic cycle in the order of green, red, white, and black. Its colors correspond to the four directions and four seasons, thus containing the Chinese cosmology of the unity of man, nature, and man.

From the perspective of Chinese history, in ancient times, the colors used in painted pottery and textiles were: red (iron ore powder and cinnabar), black, yellow, white and blue.

Since the Shang Dynasty, the appearance of the five characters red, yellow, blue, black and white in ancient oracle bone inscriptions shows that the ancient Chinese had a deep understanding of the colorful natural phenomena in nature and applied them to social life. In ancient China, in the process of understanding and understanding nature, people boiled down the complex colors into five basic colors - red, yellow, cyan, black and white.

Starting from the Zhou Dynasty, the three colors of red, yellow, and cyan are called colors (that is, the current chromatic system), and black and white are called colors (that is, the current achromatic system). These five colors are classified as positive colors. Except for the positive colors In addition, other colors are called intermediate colors. It is recorded in "Shangshu" that "the five colors are given to the five colors, which are red, yellow, green, black and white". It is recorded in "There are no more than five colors, and the changes of the five colors are indescribable." "Ci Yuan" records that "(the five colors) are blue, yellow, red, white, and black. - In ancient times, these five were the main ones. Color." It can be seen that the ancient Chinese people have gradually mastered the basic principles of color matching in their social life practice.

From the Zhou Dynasty to the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, there were two main methods of silk dyeing: mineral pigment dyeing and plant pigment dyeing. Mineral pigments include:

cinnabar, ocher, stone yellow, orpiment, azurite and lead white, used to draw clothes or dye silk. Vegetable pigments are used for dip dyeing, counter-dyeing, mordant dyeing and over-dyeing of textiles. For example, you can get blue by dyeing with indigo grass, purple by dyeing with comfrey, and black by dyeing with soap beans. You can get red by counter-dyeing with madder three times, deep red by counter-dyeing five times, and deep red by counter-dyeing seven times. Get black. These show that the ancient Chinese have mastered dyeing technology and a relatively complete traditional color system.

### **1.Red dominates**

"Red" is considered the color of the sun. Enthusiastic, warm and energetic. Chinese people love and admire the color red. According to archaeological discoveries, as early as more than 20,000 years ago, the ancestors of the cave people began to admire the color red. The decorations found in the archaeological discoveries were all dyed red with hematite, and red powder was sprinkled around the corpse. This period is known as a totemic phenomenon in which red is the sacred color. Later, red pigments and other substances were found on corpses in cemeteries such as Banpo in Xi'an, Yuanyangchi in Yongchang, Wangwan in Luoyang, and Sanlihe in Jiao County. Some corpses still had large amounts of residual crimson material.

From these remaining information, we can see that the earliest clothing color in ancient my country was red. The "Red Crow", "Red Rabbit" and "Red Carp" in ancient legends are all auspicious things. In Chinese folk culture, red symbolizes happiness and good luck, and has the function of warding off disasters and exorcising evil spirits. From the red cloth strips hung on the lintel when a child is born to the "full moon" made when the child is one month old; from the red headband of the boudoir daughter to the red wedding dress of the daughter when she gets married; from the red belt in the year of birth to the longevity peach of the old birthday star; from the red ribbon posted during the New Year From Spring Festival couplets and window grilles to New Year's red envelopes and red lanterns, people tie or wear red ribbons and cloth strips on their bodies, or wear red jackets, trousers, shoes and socks, etc. in their natal year. The custom of wearing red clothing to ward off evil spirits and avoid disasters is still retained today. ···Red has always been considered the embodiment of happiness and auspiciousness, and is the main color of auspicious celebrations in our country.

To this day, red is still the Chinese color in the minds of most Chinese people. Red is also an indispensable color in popular colors, even in ancient times. In the Tang

Dynasty, pomegranate skirts were popular and became all the rage. There is a song that says, "The pomegranate flowers are about to burn down the street, and the branches and branches are all falling apart. Thousands of households can't buy them all, and only their children are left with dyed red skirts."

## 2. Yellow supremacy

In China, yellow has special symbolic meaning. It is located in the center of the five elements and symbolizes the color of the earth. In ancient times, there was a saying that "yellow gives birth to yin and yang", which regarded yellow as the master of colors, ranking above all colors. The Chinese people have an indissoluble bond with the color yellow: the birthplace of the Chinese nation is on the Loess Plateau, the Yellow River is the mother river of the Chinese nation, the ancestor of Chinese humanity is called the "Yellow Emperor", and the descendants of the Yan and Huang people have yellow skin and belong to the yellow race. . The Chinese nation has been a farming nation for a long time, and the working people attach great importance to the land. The most widely distributed temples in the country are undoubtedly the land temples, which shows that people worship the land. People's attitude towards the land is extended to the color yellow, which also carries people's deep feelings for the land. In addition, yellow also has the meaning of longevity. It is said that when a person gets old, he will turn white, and when he is too old, he will turn yellow. Later, yellow hair was used to refer to people with long life. Moreover, the yellow crane is also a symbol of longevity. It is often associated with people's good wishes to become immortals. For example, Cui Hao, a poet of the Tang Dynasty, left an eternal masterpiece: "In the past, people rode the Yellow Crane. The Yellow Crane Tower is vacant here."

The thinking model of the Five Directions and Five Elements gradually matured during the Warring States Period. The five directions refer to east, west, south, north, and center, and the five seasons represent spring, summer, summer, autumn, and winter. During the five seasons, you need to wear clothes in species colors, namely green, crimson, yellow, white and black. Among them, yellow is regarded as the central color of honor, and the color culture of yellow as the honor gradually formed, representing the emperor and a symbol of wealth. Therefore, since the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the emperor's clothing has been mainly yellow, which has profound philosophical thoughts. Yellow is also associated with the title of Yellow Emperor. According to the theory of Yin Yang and Five Elements, the Yellow Emperor was the supreme ruler who ruled the east, south, west and north. The Yellow Emperor is in the center, that is, the earth among

metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. The emperor is the earth. The worship of the Yellow Emperor is actually an extension of the worship of the loess. Secondly, yellow is the color of neutrality. Yellow and "neutral" are fused, so yellow is the color of the earth that will never change. This color represents the beauty of nature and the beauty of "neutralization", so it is called Zun color. Therefore, yellow means nobility and power.

## 3. Black eternity

Black is considered to be the color of the sky in the "Book of Changes". The theory of "Heaven is Yellow and Earth is Yellow" comes from the ancients' feeling that the sky in the north has been mysteriously black for a long time. They believe that the North Star is the position of the Emperor of Heaven, so in the Chinese cosmology and spiritual color, black is the color of the chaos of the universe and the mother color of nature. Black belongs to water, which means fairness and justice. The word "法" has water as its radical. Therefore, black often means "uprightness, fairness and selflessness". The black facial makeup in opera masks represents loyal and virtuous ministers. These people have the noble personality of "enforcement of justice and impartiality". Bao Qingtian, who is loved by the general public, is said to have a complexion as pale as coal.

The main color of the Qin Dynasty was black, from the emperor's robes to the flags. The Taoist view of color pursues the original color, advocates Taoism and nature, returns to the true nature, and takes the beauty of the original color as the most beautiful. Therefore, they admire black and believe that black is the color that ranks above other colors. As Lao Tzu said, "Xuan is mysterious, the door to all wonders." "Xuan" means black, the color of the underworld. It is the color of heaven beyond life and death. Yin and Yang are higher than all things, and black and white are higher than the five colors. The colorful beauty in the world is just the secular beauty that stimulates people's senses. It is not the true beauty. Only black and white is the simplest and most authentic beauty. There is also a saying in the Tao Te Ching, "Know the white and guard the black." "To the extreme of emptiness, keep quiet and sincere", "Tranquility is beautiful, but victory is not beautiful". The Taoist view of color is intended to guide people to use the spiritual world of their minds to perceive colors and comprehend nature, which will have a great influence on the color aesthetics of later generations.

## 4. White Holy

For the Chinese. White is a color word with a dual nature. The positive cultural connotation of "self-color" in Chinese mostly comes from the ancients' appreciation of jade and its extension and

interpretation. People often use "white jade to be flawless" as a metaphor for a perfect human being. White also means "innocence and incorruptibility", as in Gou Zi's saying, "Therefore, if you are poor, you will not hide, and if you are general, you will be enlightened, and your body will be white when you die", as well as "white" in "unwhite injustice" and "innocent innocent". this meaning. "White" is explained in "Shuowen Jiezi" as: "Western color. Yin is used for things, and white is the color." The most typical embodiment is in Chinese ink painting. The charm of ink painting lies in "the ink is divided into five colors" and "no painting is applied." ", radiant", using the shades of ink to express the charm, and the simplicity contains the brilliance of all things. White paper and black ink, but full of artistic conception.

The ink painting is light, strange, and distant, and at the same time pays attention to the white space, reflecting a kind of abandonment of form and profound meaning. Buddhists, a sublime and ethereal art, also advocate white. In Buddhism, the consequences caused by evil are called "black" and the consequences caused by good are called "white". Buddhist stupas are usually white. During festivals, monks will refresh the stupa with white lime powder. Most of the ancient Buddhist pagodas across China are white, such as the Beihai Pagoda in Beijing, the White Pagoda of Miaoying Temple, the White Pagoda of Lianxing Temple in Yangzhou, etc. The whiteness of the pagoda is meant to imply that the Buddha's nature is pure and flawless, and the white lotus is often used as a symbol of the Buddha's nature. The emergence of artistic realm is a deepening and sublimation of color by Chinese literati who inherited the spirit of Zhuang Chan.

### 5. Beautiful blue color

Blue was mostly colored cyan in ancient times. "Green. Life" symbolizes the vibrant spring. In the ancient people's concept, cyan is the color of life and the color of the East. It also means life. The pictographic character for "生" is grass growing out of the soil, and the color of the grass is green. "青" and "生" come from the same pictographic aspect. The ancients gave "green" the connotation of "life" from the cyan color that appears when plants grow, completing the upgrade from concreteness to abstraction. The word "quiet" comes from Qing, and "Qing Tong Jing" means Jing is also related to cyan. Among the five colors, cyan is indeed the color that makes people feel the most peaceful and tranquil.

In ancient times, people also believed that cyan has the effect of hair growth and prosperity, and is the color of inspiration. Therefore, Confucian scholars wearing cyan clothes can help their literary thoughts flow and write

thousands of words. In terms of utensils. China's blue and white porcelain is the variety with the widest coverage and largest output among Chinese porcelain. It is also the most influential and longest-lasting variety among monochrome porcelain. It is one of the symbols of Chinese classical culture. This all reflects people's love for cyan and its imagery, interest and connotations.

Every nation has the phenomenon of "advocating for the blue". But in China, the widely popular phenomena of blue calico and blue and white porcelain, which are highlighted in the form of living art (the coverage is particularly wide and lasts for a long time), in our view, is a "special" - special It is a symbol of culture and aesthetics and has profound and broad connotations of the "color philosophy" with Chinese characteristics.

Based on the basic meaning of "green", the words "quiet", "jing", "emotion" and "qing" are all extremely important philosophical categories and concepts in ancient China, indicating a "cyan-color thinking" with Chinese characteristics. Metalogical Paradigm". "Shuowen": "Quiet, Congqing, contending for voice. Trial". Xu Kai's note: "The painting is clearly judged"; Wang Jun's sentence reads: "The color is picked and carefully examined to obtain the appropriate tranquility." It can be seen that the "subtle meaning" of the philosophy of "Jing" (jing, examination, accuracy, accuracy, truth) comes from the phenomenon of color (painting, picking colors), specifically from the cyan phenomenon or "cyan" "Thinking" comes. This is a kind of "color (color) thinking" with cyan as the "core".

There are dozens of color names for Chinese blue. The Dream of Red Mansions' "blue sky after rain" is enough to arouse endless reverie. Blue and white porcelain, porcelain blue paper, blue calico, and cloisonné are all favorite colors among Chinese people. In terms of traditional dyeing colors, indigo dyeing is the longest-standing traditional technique and is still loved by the Chinese people.

Before the Han Dynasty, yellow did not become the exclusive color for emperors, but was the color revered by the country based on the "Five Virtues Theory". For example, in the Zhou Dynasty, "fire is stronger than gold, and the color is red." Then Qin Shengzhou is Shui De, and the color advocates black. Therefore, in the early days of China, "the people of Yin preferred white, the people of Zhou preferred red, and the people of Qin preferred black." In these three dynasties, white, red and black were the most respected colors respectively.

To sum up, China's national color does not refer to a single color, but to the five true colors of red, yellow, cyan, black and white. It is a comprehensive color system.

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