



# Research on Surname Totem Art from the Perspective of Taoist Aesthetics

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the surname totem from the Taoist aesthetic ideas, analyzes the aesthetic value of artistic expression research, and discusses the relationship between Taoist aesthetics and surname totem art. By comparing the core concepts, it reveals the commonality of Taoist aesthetic thought and surname totem in cultural inheritance and artistic creation, and then explores the new innovative enlightenment of Taoist aesthetic thought to art design, which helps to deepen the understanding of traditional culture. At the same time, it expands the new possibility of blending Taoist aesthetics and surname totem in contemporary art, and provides a new perspective and inspiration for artistic creation.

**Keywords:** surname totem, Taoist aesthetics, commonality, artistic expression, innovation enlightenment

## 1. The Research Value of the Surname Totem

Max Müller scholars put forward that a totem, first on behalf of the clan totem mark, then on behalf of the tribe's name, and then become the name of the tribe's ancestors[1]. The surname source and allusions carried in the surname totem often contain rich symbolic meaning and family wisdom. Totem has family attributes, has a specific totem, and can not exist alone from the group[2]. The continuous development and evolution of the totem of the surname reflects the national integration and development of the surname culture in the process of migration, which follows the inherent law of historical development of 'long time will be combined, long time will be divided'.

Nowadays, the surname totem plays an important role in social interaction and ritual activities. Such as in weddings, family gatherings, especially sacrificial occasions. The study of surname totems reflects the history and development of surnames to a certain extent. It can provide inspiration for modern art innovation and be applied in modern design, fashion and other fields.

## 2. Artistic Expression of Surname Totem under the Perspective of Taoist Aesthetics

### 2.1 The Beauty of Nature

Nature is the source of art. The art of the totem comes from the ancestors' interpretation of the gods, and expresses the unique life style and behavior prayer in the form of beautiful symbols[3]. The emergence of surname totem symbols is inseparable from local culture and natural attributes, including the integration of natural elements such as plants, animals, the sun, and expresses the worship and admiration of the natural society, which coincides with the aesthetic view of Chinese Taoist aesthetics that is based on the principle of reverence for heaven and nature.

In terms of pattern expression, the traces of natural elements can be traced from each surname totem. Various natural elements, such as sun, bird, beast, water, wood and tree, are used to enrich the connotation of the pattern and form the natural beauty of various animal plants as patron saint totems. These natural elements are not only decorations, but also clan patron saint totems. They reflect the feeling of the wonderful diversity of nature, echoing the Taoist aesthetic thought of symbiosis between man and nature.

In addition to the worship of the sun, the worship of animals and beasts, as well as the love and worship of natural resources such as mountains, water, trees and forests, the protection of water sources, the care of trees, and the support of them with the power of gods[4].

### 2.2 The beauty of Yin and Yang

According to the balance of yin and yang in the Book of Changes, the ancient surname totem created after the creation of calligraphy and painting is the source of Chinese characters with the same origin of calligraphy and painting. It is an ancient surname Chinese character that has been simplified and evolved from ancient times and continues to this day[5]. There

is a more detailed discussion in the 'name': all theories must be based on yinyang[6]. The surname totem reflects the beauty of yin and yang through the fusion of yin and yang elements in the pattern composition.

In Chinese traditional culture, dragon and phoenix respectively symbolize the characteristics of men and women, yang and yin. There are dragons and phoenix, such as Yan surname totem, which means that 'dragon' and 'phoenix' guard the worship of 'door', for the family of sacrifice or temple. The images of the two blend in totem without losing their respective characteristics, showing the aesthetic effect of mutual penetration of yin and yang, and showing the harmony and unity of the beauty of yin and yang in art.

Male yang and female yin, is the yin and yang philosophy and gender symbols linked to describe the characteristics and relationship between men and women, symbolic opposition, emphasizing complementarity, interdependence and balance and coordination. Like the Feng surname totem, the Feng surname is the ethnic name of the herding horse nation. The Feng family totem is composed of male horses and female horses, which symbolizes the prosperity of offspring.

Mountain yang and water yin, mountain and water respectively symbolize yang and yin in Chinese culture, and are also one of the symbols of yin and yang philosophy. Mountain is tough and tough, and water represents the complementary balance in nature. Like Liang's totem, there is water under the mountain, and the combination of mountain, yang, water and yin embodies the unity of softness and rigidity. The quality of flexibility and strength has its value, which needs to be integrated with each other to convey the endless and cyclical way of life.

### **2.3 The Beauty of Simplicity**

Taoist aesthetics pursues the aesthetic standard of simplicity and truth. The aesthetic explanation mentioned in 'Laozi' is that 'less is more'[7]. In the shape of totems, the simplest visual and easy-to-understand totem signs are used. The surname totem usually adopts simple lines and shapes, the image simplification of natural elements, the simple and popular design concept, tends to be more pure and simple. In the process of civilization evolution, surname totem has experienced the evolution and derivation of different periods and styles. Surname totems draw inspiration from nature and integrate elements such as animals, plants, and astrology. Early totems were dominated by animals, such as dragons, birds, and beasts. Over time, more surnames were derived from ancient surnames, and totems gradually integrated more elements, including plants, utensils, and stories and legends related to family history, as records of surname commemoration and kinship.

## **3. Innovative Enlightenment of Taoist Aesthetics to the Creation of Surname Totem**

### **3.1 Integration of Inaction Aesthetics, Conform to the Natural Beauty**

Break through the diversified thinking, integrate Taoist aesthetics, emphasize natural harmony, and create a stable and flexible pattern space beauty. Surname totem can create a unique totem image by integrating natural elements with surname features, combining surname glyphs with animals and plants in nature, or selecting flowing elements in nature, such as water flow, clouds, etc., and abstracting them into lines and shapes in patterns. Natural elements and totems are integrated. This integration is not only a superficial combination, conveying the close relationship between family and nature, but also a profound understanding of the interdependence and mutual influence between human and nature.

### **3.2 Integrate the Law of Reality and Reality to Balance the Beauty of Yin and Yang**

There is no virtual reality, that is, there is no aesthetic thought of mutual generation and complementarity of virtual reality. The main characteristics of Taoist aesthetic thought are the complementarity of existence and nonexistence, virtuality and reality, which has an important influence on artistic creation and design[8]. Fusion of virtual and real rules, the aesthetic taste of virtual and real, showing an infinite vitality[9]. Using the concept of yin and yang philosophy, the totem is innovatively applied to design the elements in the pattern. Using the principle of visual illusion, by comparing the visual elements such as light and shade, virtual and real, and shape, the main core part of the totem is real, the secondary part is virtual, the real is the idea, the virtual is supplemented, and the image is highlighted. It has a comparative formal beauty and shows the aesthetic thought of yin and yang interdependence and interaction.

### **3.3 Fusion to Simple to True, Presenting a Simple Aesthetic Feeling**

The simplest and truest concept of Taoist aesthetics provides a streamlined and simple innovative inspiration for the design of surname totems, eliminating redundant elements. In the surname glyph or totem design, the complexity is simplified, the pattern is simplified to the most basic elements, and the pattern is outlined with smooth lines. The sense of flow in the lines can convey a natural lightness and vitality, which echoes the Taoist understanding of nature and presents a simple beauty. The ultimate goal of contemporary design is to realize the maximum care for people's life from both material and spiritual aspects[10]. People-oriented, or into the family history, tradition, values and other elements, to arouse the viewer's

emotional resonance, so that the visual focus on the core content, highlighting the core elements.

## 4. Conclusion

From the correlation between Taoist aesthetics and surname totem, it can be seen that Taoist aesthetics plays an important influence and value in the art of surname totem. The integration and innovation of Taoist aesthetics and surname totem provides more inspiration for the inheritance and development of traditional surname culture. In the future research, we can further explore the relationship between the changes of surname totems in different regions and ethnic groups and Taoist aesthetics, integrate the different interpretations of design aesthetics with Chinese characteristics in creation, and continue to deepen the spread and cognition of surname totems as art and cultural symbols in contemporary society.

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