

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE NUMEROLOGICAL SYSTEM IN CHINESE CULTURE: LINGUOCULTURAL AND ANTHROPOCENTRIC ANALYSIS



<https://doi.org/10.24412/2181-1784-2026-23-136-139>

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Abstract: This article analyzes the role of numbers in Chinese culture, their symbolic meanings, and their importance in everyday life from a scientific and linguistic perspective. The study highlights the phenomenon of homophony (consonance), which is the main reason for the classification of numbers as "lucky" or "unlucky". The article also shows, based on sources, the connection between numerology and concepts such as "Yin and Yang", "Five Elements", and "Luoshu Magic Square", which are the basis of the ancient Chinese philosophy. It analyzes the use of numbers in modern Chinese society, in particular in Internet communication and the banking system.

Аннотация: В данной статье анализируется роль чисел в китайской культуре, их символическое значение и важность в повседневной жизни с научной и лингвистической точки зрения. Исследование освещает феномен омофонии (консонанса), который является основной причиной классификации чисел как «счастливых» или «несчастливых». В статье также показана, на основе источников, связь нумерологии с такими понятиями, как «Инь и Ян», «Пять элементов» и «Магический квадрат Лошу», которые лежат в основе древнекитайской философии. Анализируется использование чисел в современном китайском обществе, в частности, в интернет-коммуникациях и банковской системе.

Key words: Chinese numerology, homophony, Luoshu square, Yin and Yang, 520, numerical codes, cultural symbols, Shang Dynasty, "Book of Changes".

Ключевые слова: китайская нумерология, омофония, квадрат Лошу, Инь и Ян, 520, числовые коды, культурные символы, династия Шан, «Книга перемен».

Introduction

Chinese civilization is one of the oldest in the world, where numbers are seen not simply as a means of mathematical calculation, but as symbols that determine

the mysterious order of the universe and human destiny. For the Chinese, numbers have both quantitative and qualitative properties, reflecting the vibrating energies of the universe. The roots of this system date back to 1600 BC, to the divination inscriptions written on tortoise shells during the Shang Dynasty.

The basis of Chinese numerology is based on the philosophy of "I-Shin" (Book of Changes), in which the whole of existence is explained through numbers. The world of numbers has developed in close connection with the theories of "Yin and Yang" (even and odd numbers) and "U-sin" (five elements). In this article, we will consider how deeply connected numbers are with the Chinese language and their reflection in modern life.

I. Numbers and Homophony: The Influence of Language on Numerology

The most unique feature of Chinese numerology is its phonetic basis. Due to the limited number of sounds in the Chinese language, many characters are pronounced the same but have different meanings (homophony). It is this phonetic similarity that gives numbers a certain "energy" or "lucky" stamp.

Number 8 (bā): It is considered the luckiest number in Chinese culture. This is because its pronunciation is very close to the word fā (发), which means "to get rich" or "to have good fortune." The Chinese value this number so much that the 2008 Beijing Olympics began on August 8 (the 8th month of the year), at 8:08 p.m. (8 minutes past 8 p.m.). Also, the more eights a phone number or car license plate has, the more expensive it is.

Number 4 (sì): It is considered the most feared and unlucky number for the Chinese. Its pronunciation is almost the same as the word for "death" sǐ (死), only the tone is different. This phenomenon is called "tetraphobia" (fear of four), and as a result, many hotels and hospitals do not have floors 4, 14, or 24. Even when giving gifts, giving four items is considered a symbol of bad luck.

Number 9 (jiǔ): This number is consonant with the word jiǔ (久), which means "eternity" or "longevity." In ancient times, this number was considered a symbol of emperors: for example, the doors of the imperial palace were nailed with 81 nails in a 9x9 pattern, and the emperor's clothes were decorated with images of 9 dragons. Even today, giving 99 or 999 roses at weddings is considered a symbol of "eternal love."

Number 6 (liù): The pronunciation is close to the word liú (流), which means "successful development" or "smooth flow." For this reason business owners always try to sign contracts on the 6th.

II. Philosophical and mathematical foundations of numerology

Chinese numerology is not just superstition, it is based on complex philosophical systems. At its heart is the balance of "Yin and Yang". Odd numbers (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) have Yang energy, representing the sky and the masculine principle, while even numbers (2, 4, 6, 8, 10) have Yin energy, representing the earth and the feminine principles. The Chinese, following the proverb "Good things come in pairs", favor even numbers, especially the number.

Another important pillar of numerology is the “Luoshu Magic Square”.

According to legend, the ruler Yu the Great saw a 3x3 numerical pattern on a tortoise shell. The numbers in this square, when added horizontally, vertically and diagonally, always give the number 15. This square still serves as the main calculation tool in the art of Feng Shui to determine the orientation of houses and manage the energy of universe.

III. Digital codes and internet jargon in modern life

In today's technological age, numbers are taking on a new linguistic function in China. Young people online express entire phrases using only numbers, a system called "shùzì biǎoshì hànzì" (replacing hieroglyphs with numbers):

- **520 (wǔ èr líng)**: It is pronounced very similar to the phrase "I love you" (Wǒ ài nǐ). For this reason, May 20th is celebrated as the unofficial "Valentine's Day" in China.

- **1314 (yī sān yī sì)**: It means "for a lifetime" (yī shēng yī shì). When the numbers 520 and 1314 are used together, it means "I will love you for a lifetime."

- **250 (èr bǎi wǔ)**: If this number is used against someone, it is a very serious insult, meaning "stupid" or "crazy."

- **88 (bā bā)**: Because it sounds similar to the word "bye-bye," it is used as a sign of farewell at the end of a conversation.

IV. A unique system of writing numbers: “Big” and “Small” Numerals

In the Chinese language, there are two ways to write numbers:

1. **Xiǎoxiě (Small writing)**: Simple characters used in daily life and ordinary texts.

2. **Dàxiě (Big/Complex writing)**: Commonly used in banking, finance, and legal documents. Its uniqueness lies in the extreme complexity of the characters, making them nearly impossible to alter or forge. For example, the number "one," which is a single line (一) in small writing, is written as (壹) in bank numerals. This system was introduced during the Ming Dynasty to combat corruption.

Furthermore, the number **zero** has a unique history. Initially, the Chinese did not use zero and represented it with a void. Later, under the influence of Indian arithmetic, the concept of zero and its complex character **líng** (零) appeared, which originally meant "light rain".

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Chinese numerological system is not just collection of mathematical digits, but harmony of the richness of language, the magic of sounds, and millennial philosophy. Through numbers, the Chinese strive to understand the world, attract luck, and avoid misfortune. Understanding this system is important not only for students of the Chinese language but for anyone wishing to comprehend the internal logic of Eastern culture. In Chinese culture, numbers "speak," providing a window into the people's psyche, hopes, and fears.

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