

# The Application of Solar Term Cultural Elements in Jewelry Design

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**Abstract:** As an important part of traditional Chinese culture, the 24 solar terms contain rich spiritual connotations. However, from the perspective of design, the 24 solar terms culture exists more in two-dimensional space. Although it shows the beauty of the solar terms to a certain extent, it still has great limitations on people's all-round experience of the broad and profound Chinese traditional culture and its connotation. Jewelry has a long history of development in China, which has undergone social baptism and style evolution in different periods. This paper studies the 24 solar terms and jewelry creative products respectively, aiming at combining the 24 solar terms with jewelry design, and bringing the 24 solar terms into people's eyes based on the principle of ornamental and practical jewelry products. Carry forward and inherit the culture of the 24 Solar Terms.

**Keywords:** Cultural Heritage; The 24 Solar Terms; Chinese Traditional Culture; Jewelry Creative Design

## 1. Introduction

As time progresses, traditional Chinese culture is increasingly valued by people. To promote China's excellent traditional culture and enhance cultural confidence, our country has initiated an unprecedented craze for traditional Chinese culture. It is evident that the integration of traditional Chinese culture with modern design is the overall trend for the future development of the design industry.

## 2. Research on the 24 Solar Terms Culture

### 2.1 Cultural Background

The twenty-four solar terms include: Spring Begins, Rain Water, Insects Awaken, Vernal Equinox, Pure Brightness, Grain Rain, Summer Begins, Slight Fullness, Grain in Ear,

Summer Solstice, Slight Heat, Great Heat, Autumn Begins, End of Heat, White Dew, Autumnal Equinox, Cold Dew, Frost's Descent, Winter Begins, Slight Snow, Heavy Snow, Winter Solstice, Slight Cold, and Great Cold. They are a chronological sequence based on the sun and moon as reference points. Looking back at the historical development of the twenty-four solar terms, their origins can be traced back to the Shang Dynasty, when the concept of "sun's position" already existed in China; during the Western Zhou Dynasty, ancient people could measure the sun's position by the length of shadows, forming the concepts of the Vernal Equinox, Summer Solstice, Autumnal Equinox, and Winter Solstice[1]; during the Spring and Autumn period, the method of "measuring shadows with a gnomon" was widely used, making measurement results more accurate, and by then there were already eight solar terms: "two equinoxes" and "two solstices," as well as the Beginning of Spring, Beginning of Summer, Beginning of Autumn, and Beginning of Winter; by the late Warring States period, the concept of the twenty-four solar terms in China was basically formed, and with the continuous progress of civilization, the development of the twenty-four solar terms has been constantly improved[2].

The formation process of the twenty-four solar terms has undergone thousands of years of sedimentation, embodying the wisdom of ancient Chinese people. The culture of the twenty-four solar terms includes the corresponding natural phenomena, climate, and seasons for each term. Each solar term culture has its own characteristics, within which are contained the content from humanistic thoughts to regional cultures of the ancients. At the same time, the twenty-four solar terms are also an important manifestation of China's agricultural civilization.

### 2.2 Inheritance Significance

The culture of the twenty-four solar terms is present everywhere around us. In agriculture, the twenty-four solar terms serve as the fundamental guidelines for farming activities, guiding people to engage in agriculture in an orderly manner. In terms of health maintenance, the principles of "spring generating yang, summer nourishing yin, autumn enriching yin, and winter replenishing yang" provide guidance for people's diet. The twenty-four solar terms exist in various forms around us, subtly changing our lifestyle. Within the culture of the twenty-four solar terms, we can observe the patterns of change in all natural phenomena and the state of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. The culture of the twenty-four solar terms is profound and extensive. Only by delving deeply into understanding and perceiving it can we appreciate the subtleties within.

### **2.3 Expression and Value Creation in Cultural and Creative Design**

As the nation prospers, in recent years we have been emphasizing cultural confidence, and gradually people's attention has turned to traditional Chinese culture. The 24 solar terms, as one of the most representative elements of traditional Chinese culture, have begun to be widely applied in the design industry. For example, in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, director Zhang Yimou used cultural elements of the 24 solar terms in the opening ceremony, presenting the countdown in the form of short films about the 24 solar terms. This was poetic and showcased a Chinese-style romance, reflecting the unique charm of Chinese culture. The cultural and creative design of the 24 solar terms should summarize, categorize, and refine the elements of the 24 solar terms under the conditions of contemporary people's lifestyles and aesthetic styles. It is necessary to explore the profound meanings behind the culture of the 24 solar terms and then engage in design and creation, integrating the culture of the solar terms into products, allowing people to experience the culture while using them.

### **3. Jewelry Cultural Creative Product Analysis**

Jewelry refers to decorative items made from various materials such as gold, silver, jade, etc.,

which are worn on the body or clothing. As human society and civilization progress, jewelry is also continuously evolving. From the changes in jewelry, we can also observe the advancement of human civilization.

During the Bronze Age, people began to use materials such as gold, copper, jade, and bone to make jewelry. Back then, the meaning of jewelry was influenced by the social system and was imbued with various implications, serving as a representation of religion and social class[3]. By the Zhou Dynasty, a ritual system had been established in China, and during this period, jewelry became an important part of Zhou ritual culture. During the Qin and Han dynasties, the range of jewelry types expanded, and there was a leap in the craftsmanship and materials used in jewelry making, with the emergence of the kingfisher feather technique. In the Han Dynasty, people placed great importance on elaborate burials and believed in the idea that "after death, one ascends to immortality," which led to the development of jewelry that was colorful and elaborate to serve this belief. During the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, a period of great turmoil, people lived in dire straits. The introduction of Buddhist art caused a collision between Eastern and Western cultures, significantly enhancing jewelry-making techniques, with the emergence of filigree, inlay, and gold bead welding. The Sui and Tang dynasties were relatively short in history, and fewer pieces of jewelry have been unearthed. The most exquisite pieces include pearl inlays and gold necklaces adorned with lapis lazuli carvings of large deer.

#### **3.1 Jewelry Design Style Analysis**

Jewelry design refers to the process where designers conceive and express products visually in multiple aspects such as shape, materials, and craftsmanship, and then proceed to create them. With the development of the socioeconomy, people's aesthetic standards are continuously improving. In the current era of internet connectivity, information spreads rapidly, and under the influence of diverse cultures, our country's jewelry development has been greatly affected. Different styles such as classical, artistic, exaggerated, and ethnic have distinct differences in shape and cultural expression. Overall, the value of modern

jewelry has transcended the realm of traditional jewelry to a certain extent. It represents the taste of designers and consumers[4].

The characteristic of classical style jewelry is that the more classical it is, the more popular it becomes. In design, it places great emphasis on symmetry, simplicity, and harmony. In terms of color coordination, it tends to be soft and gentle. The way of wearing is relatively simple as well, and classical jewelry is finely crafted with rich curves, making it fresh and elegant, deeply favored by female consumers. When it comes to clothing coordination, classical jewelry can be paired with any outfit, which makes classical jewelry have a longer usage period. Therefore, it can be worn in any situation, always in a proper and classical manner[5]. In classical jewelry, traditional principles and values are reflected, with French Baroque style jewelry being considered a representative of classical jewelry. In the creation of materials, select more precious metals such as gold, platinum, silver, and high-end gem materials. Symmetrical design makes the jewelry soft yet rigorous and restrained, luxurious and valuable, giving classical jewelry a regal air, as shown in **Figure 1**.

With the development of society and economy, designers are no longer confined to precious metals and gemstones for their designs. They have begun to focus on ordinary and readily available materials, applying simple materials to their artistic designs, allowing works to exhibit unexpected artistic effects and making the expression of jewelry interesting. There are no restrictions on the use of materials in artistic jewelry design; designers can freely choose suitable materials and combine different textures to create the most cutting-edge jewelry, as shown in **Figure 2**.



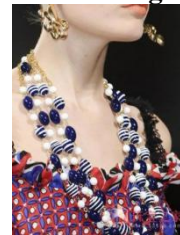
**Figure 1. Figure Example**



**Figure 2. Figure Example**

Extravagant jewelry stands out in a crowd, with its bold colors, shapes, and size contrasts that break free from the constraints of traditional jewelry. This style liberates designers from conventional thinking, allowing them to create pieces that are both striking and aesthetically pleasing. Such jewelry is deeply loved in contemporary designs, as seen in **Figure 3**.

Ethnic style jewelry is characterized by its distinct regional and cultural features. Different ethnic jewelry evokes unique feelings. Materials commonly used for ethnic jewelry include silver, gemstones, agate, and shells, often featuring ethnic patterns that represent cultural heritage. The craftsmanship tends to be rougher and the techniques used are more simplistic, with traditional shapes being prevalent. Ethnic style jewelry showcases the raw beauty and individuality of the culture[6], as seen in **Figure 4**.



**Figure 3. Figure Example**



**Figure 4. Figure Example**

### **3.2 Analysis of Innovative Points in Jewelry Design**

#### **3.2.1 Diverse materials**

In jewelry design, the materials used can greatly affect the final effect. In ancient times, people used simple processing techniques on animal teeth, feathers, and bones from hunting to create ornaments that were worn on the body. These ornaments gave a sense of monotony and roughness, lacking any design elements. As society developed, there were significant breakthroughs in manufacturing techniques and the variety of tools available, leading to a diverse range of materials for jewelry. During the Bronze Age, metallurgy and silverworking were used to create gold

and silver jewelry, which began to show a sense of technical skill and more refined craftsmanship[7]. By the Qin and Han dynasties, the materials for jewelry making had become very rich, including jade, stone, gold, silver, agate, and pearls, among others. There was also a great development in the craftsmanship of jewelry making. From ancient times to the present, materials for jewelry making have been continuously evolving. Today, we can tailor Craftsmanship materials to our needs and combine them, altering the hardness and luster of existing metal materials through physical and chemical methods. For example, gold and silver, which are commonly used in jewelry, are softer when the proportion of gold is higher, making it difficult to shape during the creation process. To solve this problem, we add other metal elements during production to increase the hardness of the jewelry, ensuring that it can be worn comfortably.

In addition, we can also combine different materials through current technology. Jewelry made from a combination of various materials not only meets the individual needs of consumers but also provides designers with more design inspiration. The use of diverse material combinations in jewelry is deeply favored by contemporary designers. Many designers combine pearls, jade, gold, and silver, among other materials, to create jewelry that is more full-bodied and has a sense of depth and layering.

### 3.2.2 Art display

In recent years, with the development of society, installation art has emerged in society, bringing new functions to jewelry. Installation art is not what we commonly understand as exhibitions, but rather, under the guidance of fashion, it integrates the exhibition space, jewelry-making materials, and emotions into a single artistic display. Artistic displays require designers to use deconstruction and reconstruction methods to transform material culture, thereby presenting artistic forms with narrative qualities to the audience. In installation art, jewelry often does not demonstrate its wearable function but is exhibited as a work of art, expressing the thoughts of the designers and serving to evoke empathy from the viewers. At this point, the jewelry can be considered a piece of art, capable of directly showcasing the aesthetic

standards of contemporary society[8].

### 3.2.3 Functional

Jewelry design has been evolving alongside the development of human society. In today's society, jewelry that only serves decorative purposes can no longer meet people's needs. To satisfy these needs, contemporary jewelry has broken away from traditional designs and now features multi-functional pieces. For instance, pocket watches, necklaces with USB drives, bracelets that combine headphones, and rings that incorporate watches. Since different pieces of jewelry have various functions, functional jewelry has broken the boundaries of traditional jewelry, bringing significant innovations in materials, design, and functionality.

The most significant difference between functional jewelry and traditional jewelry lies, first of all, in the consideration of the current state of technological development during the design process, integrating technological outcomes to create jewelry that aligns with reality. Secondly, in terms of material selection, traditional jewelry typically uses gold, silver, gemstones, and other precious materials. However, for functional jewelry, the choice of materials must consider the functional characteristics, and therefore, precious metals are often not used. Instead, materials such as alloys, natural plants, and porcelain are commonly employed in the creation of functional jewelry.

### 3.3 Analysis of Future Trends in Jewelry

Minimalist style, after extensive research, it has been found that minimalist jewelry is deeply loved by contemporary young people due to its simple wearability, elegant design, and light portability. Speaking of minimalism, most people would think that this style originated abroad, but in fact, it did not. As early as the Spring and Autumn period in China, a minimalist trend emerged. In Chinese literature, the great philosopher Laozi mentioned, "Less is more, more is confusion," meaning to take the essence and discard the dross. In fact, minimalist jewelry design is not simple; the simpler the design, the more stringent the requirements for details in the design process, and the more demanding it is on the designer's design capabilities and cultural depth.

Cultural embodiment, both domestically and

internationally, there is great emphasis on whether a product has cultural connotations. In China, with the revival of Chinese culture, traditional culture has been deeply loved by people both domestically and internationally. For consumers, jewelry with cultural connotations is no longer just a simple ornament but a reflection of culture and has a certain value for collection[9]. Not only domestically, but abroad, culture is also highly valued, such as designs related to the cross, lucky numbers, etc.

Mixed elements, with the development of globalization, cultural exchanges have become more frequent. Under the collision of cultures from different countries and ethnic groups, there is a significant impact on the design industry. Under the influence of multiculturalism, the products designed by designers also contain cultural elements from various aspects.

#### **4. The Design Principles of Cultural Jewelry Products Inspired by the 24 Solar Terms**

##### **4.1 Cultural Function**

As cultural and creative products, jewelry carries certain cultural connotations. It's not difficult to find these in the history of Chinese jewelry development; domestic jewelry design is often related to "good fortune and prosperity," expressing people's aspirations for a better life in the future. Today's designers, when creating, always combine design with culture, expressing traditional Chinese culture in jewelry and passing it on. For example, well-known domestic brands such as Chow Tai Seng and Lao Fengxiang adhere to expressing culture in their jewelry designs, creating jewelry products that are imbued with cultural significance and designed to appeal to contemporary aesthetic tastes.

Chinese culture is profound and extensive, attracting the attention of many foreign jewelry brands, such as the renowned foreign brand Cartier, which features a dragon-shaped diamond-set tanzanite platinum necklace, a two-dragon playing with a pearl brooch, and a dragon-shaped ruby bracelet. When we mention dragons, we often think of China. Cartier incorporates the shape of the dragon with tassels in its designs, showcasing Chinese culture and giving the jewelry an oriental flair.

##### **4.2 Personalization**

As people's living environment improves, consumers have further demands for jewelry. Beyond serving as decoration, they also expect jewelry to have certain functional uses. This poses new challenges for designers, who are required to think creatively and design jewelry based on consumer needs to meet the expectations of the target audience[10]. In this regard, the brand Cartier is at the forefront, designing not only ordinary jewelry such as earrings, bracelets, and necklaces but also cufflinks, brooches, and pocket watches that combine decorative and functional aspects. These items perfectly meet the current demand for jewelry.

The design of personalized jewelry requires not only the participation of designers but also the involvement of consumers. Collecting consumers' ideas and requirements for personalization is the prerequisite for designers to create better personalized designs. Customized jewelry design based on consumer needs involves communication with consumers regarding the appearance, materials, and expression of meaning of the jewelry.

##### **5. Summary**

The integration of culture with personalization in design is a major trend for future design development. The 24 solar terms, as representatives of traditional Chinese culture, are what modern consumers, especially those in economically developed areas, seek for—personality. They wish to showcase their uniqueness through jewelry. Nowadays, people emphasize cultural confidence, which means we need to continue to promote and pass on traditional Chinese culture. Jewelry cultural and creative design, as a medium for promoting culture, combined with personalization, meets the modern consumer's need to express individuality while also passing on traditional culture.

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