

# TRADITIONAL CHINESE TEXTILE DESIGNS

in Full Color  
60 Authentic Examples



Edited by the  
Northeast Drama Institute  
People's Republic of China

# TRADITIONAL CHINESE TEXTILE DESIGNS IN FULL COLOR

Edited by the  
Research Studio of the  
**Northeast Drama Institute**  
People's Republic of China

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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Traditional Chinese opera, though aspects of it vary from region to region, is always a highly stylized drama incorporating rhythmic instrumental accompaniment and vocal recitative and song, and often featuring dance and acrobatics. The subjects are usually drawn from history, legend or classic novels.

Just as the movements and gestures of the actors follow age-old patterns, so their physical appearance is strictly controlled. Although Chinese opera uses relatively few props and practically no scenery, the performer's makeup and costume are elaborate. Wigs and face painting reveal the personality traits of the character being portrayed; the costume proclaims his rank in society or indicates his permanent or temporary occupation. (Certain elements of the costume, especially the sleeves, also aid the actor in expressing states of mind and emotions.)

The costumes are richly embroidered with traditional motifs in colored silk and cotton and gold and silver thread. The immediately recognizable motifs, which occupy specifically prescribed positions on the various types of garments, frequently serve as symbols or emblems. For instance, such noble creatures as dragons and lions are suitable for emperors, ministers and high officials. The phoenix, which represents peace and good fortune, but also feminine beauty, is often found on women's robes. Pairs of mandarin ducks, emblems of conjugal bliss, appear on bride's clothing. Cranes symbolize longevity; the lotus, purity amid a sinful world; the peony, wealth and honor; plum blossoms, the return of spring. The bat, through a play on words, stands for happiness.

The present volume reproduces sixty of these beautiful and meaningful motifs, as rendered in authentic color by the artists Lu Hua and Ma Chiang for an official publication in Peking. It is interesting to note the varying degrees of abstraction encountered in different versions of one and the same motif. Also instructive is the ingenuity with which the motifs have been adapted to their specific use on the garment: as circular "crests" for broad, flat areas, and as elongated panels for borders, collars and trouser legs. The captions identify each motif and briefly indicate the type of costume, and the parts of that costume, on which they occur.

FRONT COVER: Dragon. For the front and back of a dragon robe (*mang*). BACK COVER: Phoenixes. For the collar and sleeve borders of a woman's informal robe (*pei*).

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Goldfish. For the front and back of a woman's jacket and skirt.





Phoenix. For the front and back of a woman's ordinary robe (*hsueh tse*).





The character for longevity. For the front, back and sleeves of a woman's informal robe (*pei*).





The character for longevity encircled by five bats; the total composition stands for "five blessings and long life." For the front, back and sleeves of an informal robe (*pei*).





Chrysanthemum. For the skirt of a woman's ordinary robe (*hsueh tse*).





Chrysanthemums. For the front, back and sleeves of a woman's ordinary robe (*hsueh tse*).





Two phoenixes. For the front, back and sleeves of a woman's informal robe (*pei*).





Two dragons playing with a pearl. For the front, back and sleeves of an informal robe (*pei*).





LEFT: Lotus. RIGHT: Chrysanthemum. Both for the sleeves of an ordinary robe (*hsueh tse*).





Two renditions of peonies. For the collar of an ordinary robe (*hsueh tse*).





Lion playing with a ball. For the front, back and sleeves of an official's informal robe (*kai chang*).





Dragon. For the front of a dragon robe (*mang*).





Pear blossoms. For the collar, sleeve borders and skirt border of an ancient dress.





Chrysanthemums. For the collar and hem of a woman's jacket and trouser legs.