



## Features of The Hanzi Character 福

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### ABSTRACT

This research was inspired by the author's curiosity about the specialty of Hanzi fú (福) characters. This study aims to identify the meaning and specialty of Hanzi fú (福) characters for Chinese people. The data collection technique used by the author is library research method. The method used by the author is descriptive qualitative method by describing the meaning of the fú (福) character and obtaining data sources from journals and articles relevant to this research. This hereditary custom is usually affixed to the front doors, windows, and front walls of Chinese homes to welcome the Chinese New Year. The word fú (福) is usually found in the spring of Chinese New Year. Each character that makes up the Chinese characters has a symbolic meaning that can represent human expressions and feelings. Fú dào le (福到了) has the linguistic meaning of 'luck arrives', the pronunciation of Fú dào le (福到了) is similar to the pronunciation of Fú dǎo le (福倒了) which means 'luck falls'. The benefit of this study is to provide knowledge to readers about the specialty of fú (福) character for Chinese people. The result of this study can be known the meaning and tradition of Chinese people towards fú (福) character.

**Keyword:** Hanzi; Fortune; Chinese New Year; Spring

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi dari keingintahuan penulis mengenai keistimewaan dari karakter Hanzi fú (福). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi makna serta keistimewaan karakter Hanzi fú (福) bagi masyarakat Cina. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan oleh penulis adalah metode penelitian kepustakaan. Metode yang digunakan penulis adalah metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan mendeskripsikan makna dari Karakter fú (福) serta memperoleh sumber data dari jurnal dan artikel yang relevan dengan penelitian ini. Karakter fú (福) sendiri secara umum memiliki arti dalam bahasa Kebiasaan turun-temurun ini biasanya ditempelkan di pintu depan, jendela, dan dinding depan rumah masyarakat Cina untuk menyambut Tahun Baru Imlek. Kata fú (福) biasanya ditemukan pada musim semi Tahun Baru Imlek, Setiap karakter yang membentuk aksara Cina memiliki makna simbolis yang dapat mewakili ekspresi dan perasaan manusia. Hal ini dikarenakan masyarakat Cina menyukai permainan kata, Fú dào le (福到了) memiliki arti linguistik 'keberuntungan tiba', pengucapan Fú dào le (福到了) mirip dengan pengucapan Fú dǎo le (福倒了) yang berarti 'keberuntungan jatuh'. Manfaat dari penelitian ini ialah memberi pengetahuan kepada pembaca tentang keistimewaan karakter fú (福) bagi masyarakat Cina. Hasil dalam penelitian ini dapat diketahui makna dan tradisi masyarakat Cina terhadap karakter fú (福).

**Kata kunci:** Hanzi; Keberuntungan; Tahun Baru Imlek; Musim Semi



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## 1. Introduction

Culture includes many aspects, such as knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, customary laws, abilities, and human habits as members of society. Culture can also be interpreted as a complex whole including knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, customary laws, and others. According to Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), culture is a complex system that includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, abilities, and habits acquired by humans as members of society. Culture has several functions that are present and can be felt by the community. The main function of culture is to learn the heritage of the ancestors, then the next generation needs to review whether the heritage needs to be renewed or continued and if abandoned then the culture can be damaged.

Chinese people have entered the archipelago since the 4th century to the 7th century AD. It is undeniable that many Indonesian cultures have been acculturated with Chinese culture so that many Chinese people have also contributed greatly to the Indonesian nation. One of the Chinese cultures that entered Indonesia is celebrating Chinese New Year. Chinese New Year is the day of the Chinese New Year. The tradition of celebrating Chinese New Year dates back thousands of years, which was brought by Chinese people who migrated to Indonesia. After independence, Chinese New Year became a religious holiday, but during the New Order, Chinese people were prohibited from celebrating Chinese New Year openly. During the reformation period, Chinese New Year was again allowed to be celebrated openly.

The relationship between Chinese New Year celebrations and rituals and traditions is very close, for example the tradition and ritual of decorating the house. Chinese people believe that the tradition of decorating during Chinese New Year celebrations with certain symbols will bring good luck. One of the traditions carried out during Chinese New Year is the pasting of hanzi 福 characters on the doorstep or in front of the house. Hanzi 福 is believed by the Chinese to be a letter that brings good fortune. There is a connection between Chinese New Year celebrations and Hanzi 福. Usually this hanzi is pasted upside down, this is not merely done like that but there is a hidden meaning in it.

Each Chinese hanzi character is formed by various characters that contain symbolic meanings within them. They reflect human expressions and feelings. Chinese characters have the potential to represent things or events, including both good and bad. Some Chinese Hanzi characters are considered by the Chinese people as positive symbols, for example the Hanzi character 福. Hanzi 福 itself means luck or happiness. It is believed by the Chinese that sticking this hanzi on the doorstep during Chinese New Year celebrations will bring blessings and luck to the owner of the house.

## 2. Research Methods

This study uses a library research type method where with this method the author can read and search for information related to the research material under study, this method is carried out by collecting information and data with the help of books, articles, journals, and websites related to the problem to be solved. In this study using the library research method, the author must be able to evaluate the information that has been

collected before using it in the research. This is done to ensure that the information used in the research is accurate and relevant to the chosen topic.

In addition, the writer must also be able to cite the sources of information used in the research using a standard format. In conclusion, research using library research methods can provide relevant and accurate information about the topic to be researched. This method can be used in various fields of study and can help writers to find sources of information that are relevant to the chosen topic.

### 3. Result and Discussion

#### Meaning of Hanzi Character 福

The specialty of Hanzi 福 characters is that they bring good luck to some people who install them. Hanzi 福 is a part of Chinese culture that has been practiced for generations. This Hanzi 福 character is often found during the Chinese New Year celebrations or commonly known as 春节. Literally, the Hanzi character 福 means good luck or happiness. If we put these Hanzi characters on the doors, windows, and walls of Chinese homes, it is believed that it will bring good luck into the house. Hanzi 福 can also be translated as "good fortune, happiness, luck, blessing". Hanzi 福 is also one of the important symbols in Chinese culture and is often used in various celebratory occasions. Historically, Hanzi 福 has also been a savior for some people.

Hanzi 福 has evolved in its writing, to understand the meaning of hanzi 福, we can look at the radicals in this hanzi. Hanzi 福 consists of 4 radicals which are divided into two parts, the right and the left. On the left side of Hanzi 福, there is the radical 示 which is usually a character that has this radical associated with worship, god, deity, or something mystical and spiritual. On the right side of Hanzi 福, there are three radicals namely 一, 口, 田, all three of which are believed to represent the balance of human life. At the very top right is the hanzi 一. The meaning of the hanzi 一 is a number that is likened to the entirety of human life. The second part after the 一 hanzi is the 口 hanzi. The hanzi 口 means mouth, which is interpreted as eating and drinking. Eating and drinking are the primary needs of humans, and as a whole, it means all the daily needs of humans. The last radical on the right side of the hanzi 福 is the hanzi 田 which means paddy field, this hanzi is interpreted as property or wealth that humans need. Combined, the three radicals on the right side of hanzi 福 mean a person whose needs are met. Meanwhile, one's life will not be happy if everything is not related to god or gods. So the overall

meaning of this hanzi 福 is that if a person has good spirituality and all his material needs are sufficient, then he can be said to live with 福 or full of happiness.

### **Origin of The Hanzi 福 Belief**

In the Ming Dynasty, there was an Emperor named Zhū Yuánzhāng who had a consort named Mǎ Huáng. One day Emperor Zhu went to a small town and saw a group of people laughing at a picture. When the Emperor saw the picture he was very angry, because the picture had a woman with big feet holding a watermelon that was thought to resemble his wife. The Emperor thought that the picture was a form of mockery for his wife where his wife happened to have big feet. The Emperor immediately sent soldiers to find out who was responsible for this incident and ordered to be killed. But the empress who was kind enough to hear this ordered her trusted bodyguards to ask the citizens to write and paste the character 福 on the doorsteps of the houses in the small town so that the soldiers sent by the emperor could not find the house that had committed the crime. So from this story, the Hanzi 福 character is interpreted to bring safety, blessings, and good fortune to the people who believe in pasting the Hanzi 福 character on the front of their houses.

In Feng Shui, Feng Shui is an ancient belief that originated in China. It deals with the principles of harmony and balance in life. Feng Shui itself comes from the Chinese language which consists of two characters, namely fēng (风) which means wind and shuǐ (水) which means water. In Feng Shui beliefs, wind and water are considered as two important elements that can affect human life. Feng Shui beliefs are concerned with the use of colors and symbols in the surrounding environment to create a positive energy balance. One of the important symbols in Feng Shui belief is the Hanzi character 福. According to Feng Shui beliefs, sticking Hanzi 福 characters in the right position can help create an energy balance in the surrounding environment. In Feng Shui beliefs, colors also have an important role in creating energy balance. Red is considered the most powerful color in Feng Shui and symbolizes fire, luck, and protection. Red is also believed to provide positive energy to the surrounding environment. In addition, black is also considered a strong color and represents power, splendor, strength, mystery, authority, and elegance. Although the origin of the Feng Shui belief cannot be ascertained with certainty, this belief has developed for thousands of years in China and is still practiced today. The Feng Shui belief itself has complex principles and is sometimes difficult to understand by people who are unfamiliar with this belief. However, the Hanzi character 福 is still considered an important symbol in the Feng Shui belief and is often used in various celebratory events in Chinese society.

History also has an origin for the reverse placement of the fú 福 symbol, dating back to the Qīng 清朝 Dynasty (1661-1911). Once upon a time, there was a decree stating that the Hanzi character 福 should be pasted on every door throughout the palace. However, one of the servants made the mistake of pasting the Hanzi 福 characters upside down. The emperor who saw this was furious and gave orders to find the servant who made the mistake and put him to death immediately. However, the butler claimed

that the 福 pasted upside down would bring good luck until or unless it arrived. Eventually, the emperor decided to forgive the servant and approved the use of the upside-down Hanzi character 福 as a symbol of good luck and happiness. In this case, it is inferred that the reversed Hanzi 福 characters can bring happiness or safety. Although the origin of the reversed Hanzi 福 character cannot be ascertained for sure, the belief is still growing in Chinese society and is often used in various celebratory occasions.

The Hanzi character 福 has many different histories and stories from different times and periods in Chinese history. However, it is undeniable that these Hanzi 福 characters have the same meaning, which is to bring safety, goodness, and blessings. Although the origin of the Hanzi 福 character has many different stories and histories, it is still considered as an important symbol in Chinese culture and is often used in various celebratory events.

### **The Uniqueness of Hanzi 福 Characters**

The Hanzi 福 character also has its own uniqueness, namely having a diagonal shape which can be interpreted in the Hanzi 福 character in Chinese culture symbolizes luck coming from the sky. In addition, the diagonal shape of the Hanzi 福 character also symbolizes luck that comes from an unexpected or unforeseen direction. Therefore, attaching Hanzi 福 characters with diagonal shapes on the door or wall of the house is believed to bring good luck and happiness to the residents of the house. Hanzi 福 characters with diagonal shapes are also often used in various celebratory events in Chinese society.

The Hanzi character 福 also has another meaning in that some people believe that pasting this reversed Hanzi character 福到了 symbolizes that it expresses fu 到 (dào/arrive), which signifies that good fortune arrives. In Chinese, the word dào 倒 means "to arrive or arrive dào 到". 福到了 is a Chinese expression that means "luck or happiness has arrived". This expression is related to the reversed Hanzi character 福, 福到了. According to Chinese belief, sticking this upside-down Hanzi 福 character on the door or wall of a house is believed to bring good luck and happiness. The Hanzi character 福 itself means luck and happiness in Chinese culture.

### **Identical Color of Hanzi Character 福**

The two main colors in fēngshuǐ 风水 are black and red. These two colors play an important role in creating energy balance in the environment. Red is considered the most powerful color in fēngshuǐ and symbolizes fire, luck, and protection. The Chinese believe red can bring happiness, and can ward off bad

luck and ward off evil. Black is considered a strong color and represents power, grandeur, strength, mystery, authority, and elegance. The golden yellow color in the Hanzi character 福 has different meanings in Chinese culture. Although the meaning of the golden yellow color in Hanzi 福 is different, Hanzi 福 is still considered an important symbol in Chinese culture and is often used in various celebratory occasions.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that every country has certain traditions that are believed and practiced for generations. China itself has a tradition that must be done every year, namely the Chinese New Year celebration and usually attaches Hanzi 福 characters as home decorations commonly found on the walls, doors and windows of the house. The specialty in Hanzi 福 characters is believed to bring blessings to us in the request for goodness in living life with happiness, luck, longevity, prosperity of sufficient wealth, and avoiding evil or bad luck in the new year. as a tradition that has been believed for generations must be preserved as it has become an obligation of the Chinese people. Besides being believed to be good luck, the hanzi 福 is considered a symbol of blessing, and happiness that is inseparable with Chinese culture. The character is pasted diagonally to symbolize good luck from the sky and pasted upside down to mean "good luck has arrived". Distinctive colors such as red and black also play an important role in creating positive energy. Some of these hanzi have origins in legends and play a role in Feng Shui beliefs. All in all, Hanzi 福 is not only a symbol, but also has a great meaning to the Chinese people.

The Hanzi character 福 has a deep and important meaning in Chinese culture. It is considered a symbol of good luck, happiness and blessings that has become an integral part of Chinese culture. In many celebrations, especially the Chinese New Year, the character 福 is often pasted on doors, windows, and walls of houses as a sign to bring good luck and happiness. In addition, the 福 character has some unique aspects that add meaning to Chinese culture. The character's diagonal shape symbolizes good fortune coming from the sky and can bring unexpected luck. Sticking the 福 character upside down, as in the expression "福到了" (good luck has arrived), is also believed to bring good luck. The distinctive colors in the 福 character, such as red and black, have an important role in creating a positive energy balance in the environment. Red is considered a very powerful color and symbolizes happiness, while black symbolizes power and grandeur. The golden yellow color also has different meanings in various festive contexts. Historically, there are several stories and legends that explain the origin of the use of the 福 character, including the story of this character being saved by the empress from death by pasting it all over the city. In addition, the 福 character also plays an important role in Feng Shui beliefs, where its proper placement can create a positive energy balance in the environment. As such, the Hanzi character 福 is not only a symbol in Chinese culture, but also

has profound meanings associated with luck, happiness and blessings in Chinese people's lives. It continues to influence and enrich Chinese celebrations and daily life to this day.

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