

Design Proposal: A National Flag For A United China Incorporating the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Tibet and Xinjiang

MATTHEW WOOD, MAY 26, 2011





The design brief

The new flag is to represent a unified and democratic China – one country under one system.

It will symbolize the peaceful unification of China with Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau, and reconciliation between China and the Tibetans and Xinjiang Muslim minorities.

It must recognise the past but be primarily about the future.

It will be non-political, and non-religious.

It will signal China's legitimate and peaceful ascension to global leader and herald the 21st Century as 'China's century'

The solution

Use green as the main colour to symbolize optimism, the future, and the importance of the environment

Incorporate an symbol of the Great Wall, but emphasizing the space outside the (old traditional) border it represented. This will symbolise China's psychological expansion beyond the boundaries towards the future

Symbolise the main ethnic groups through the use of colours black, white, blue, red and yellow.

Jiuzaiguo, a fragile, pristine environmental paradise in Sichuan, China



The countries involved

China

Population: 1.2 billion

Language: Putonghua (Mandarin)

“For centuries China stood as a leading civilization, outpacing the rest of the world in the arts and sciences, but in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the country was beset by civil unrest, major famines, military defeats, and foreign occupation.

After World War II, the Communists under MAO Zedong established an autocratic socialist system that, while ensuring China’s sovereignty, imposed strict controls over everyday life and cost the lives of tens of millions of people.

After 1978, MAO’s successor DENG Xiaoping and other leaders focused on market-oriented economic development and by 2000 output had quadrupled.

For much of the population, living standards have improved dramatically and the room for personal choice has expanded, yet political controls remain tight. China since the early 1990s has increased its global outreach and participation in international organizations” (CIA factbook)

The intention of this new flag is to forge a new and optimistic identity for the country, but still acknowledge its ancient history and achievements.



Taiwan

Population: 23,000,000

Language: Putonghua

Annexed to China in 1683, ceded to Japan in 1895, and returned to China in 1945, it became the Republic of China (Taiwan) in 1949 when Nationalists retreated there after the civil war. The civil war ended, but tensions still remain between the two.

In the mid 1980s Taiwan moved from dictatorship to democracy, heralding rapid development of its economy.

The official language of Taiwan, like China is putongua, and Taiwan shares as identifies with Chinese history up to 1949, but over 60 years separation between democracy and communism has created deep ideological, spiritual and social differences that have created two different identities.



Tibet

Population (2000) 2.62 million.

Language: Tibetan

'The rooftop of the world'. Ancient, mysterious, and shrouded in mysticism and spirituality. It is where Mt Everest (Joomulengma) borders Nepal. It has long been connected with China, but its religious, geographical, social and language differences have ensured an independent identity from the Han minority.



Hong Kong

Population: 7,000,000

Language: Cantonese

A Special Administrative Region of China since 1997, it was previously a British colony, and free port, ceded from China in the opium wars. It prospered during the Chinese civil war as capitalists and their corporations fled Beijing and Shanghai fearing persecution.

It has its own language (Cantonese) and very unique cuisine.

Xinjiang

Population 20,000,000

Language: Urghur

‘Xinjiang’ literally means ‘new frontier’, and was the last region of China to join the empire. Predominantly Muslim, it was a diplomatic battleground from 1912 – 1949 between China, Russia, Tibet and Chinese nationalists.

Violent ethnic tensions between Han nationals and Muslims continue to dog the region.

Macao

Population: 500,000

Language: Cantonese

Macao was a Portuguese colony from 1535 to 1999, when it became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. It’s casino industry has it labeled as the “Las Vegas of the Orient”

Chinese perceptions of China

These are the results from a questionnaire to 60 Chinese students in China. They were simple, one word answer questions asking the students what one word gives the best representations of Chinese identity.

The results are in percentages, showing only the most common responses

What Person best represents China?

80% Confucious: The great philosopher. The communists spent decades trying to eradicate his influence

10% Qin Sihuang: The forged the empire through brutality, ending centuries of war. Created the Han identiy. Greatly expanded the great wall and filled his tomb with the terracotta warriors

7% Chariman Mao. Brutal despot who won the civil war. Reignited Chinese nationalism and power after two centuries of humiliation and division.

What animal best represents China?

90% Panda
8% Lion

What colour best represents China?

96% Red



Left: Confucious
Middle: Chairman Mao
Right: Qin Shi Huang



What man made object best represents China?

96% Great Wall

What Food is China?

80% Dumplings

What natural location best represents China

47% Mount Everest

24% Yellow Mountain

21% Taishan Mountain

5% Yellow River

What one word best describes China?

41% Great

36% Ancient

17% Friendly

What not to use

China is full of grand natural and man made wonders. The difficulty was choosing one above others.

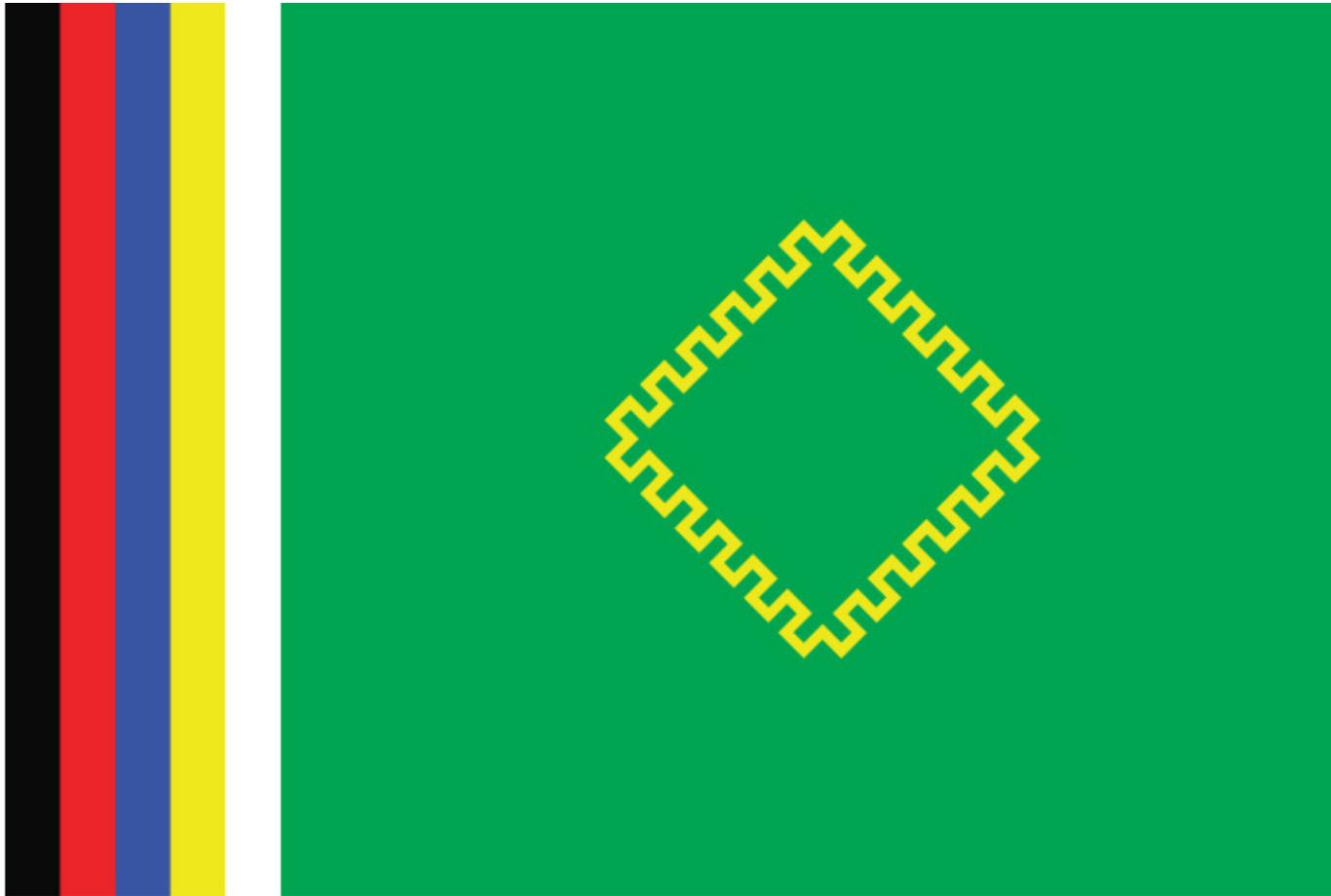
Red was discarded because of its connotations with communism and revolution

Panda's are adorable, and are a great symbol of friendship, but already has strong associations with the WWF logo

Joomulengma (Mt Everest) is shared with other Asian countries



The Flag



The flag is predominantly green, with a small, gold, diamond shaped icon in the middle representing the great wall. Surrounding the edges of the flag are strips of colour, representing the largest ethnic groups of China:

red = Manchurians
yellow = Han Chinese
blue = Mongolians
white = Muslims
black = Tibetans

How the new flag meets the design requirements

The design brief was about acknowledging the past, but focus on an optimistic future

No religious or political symbols

No similarities with past flags.

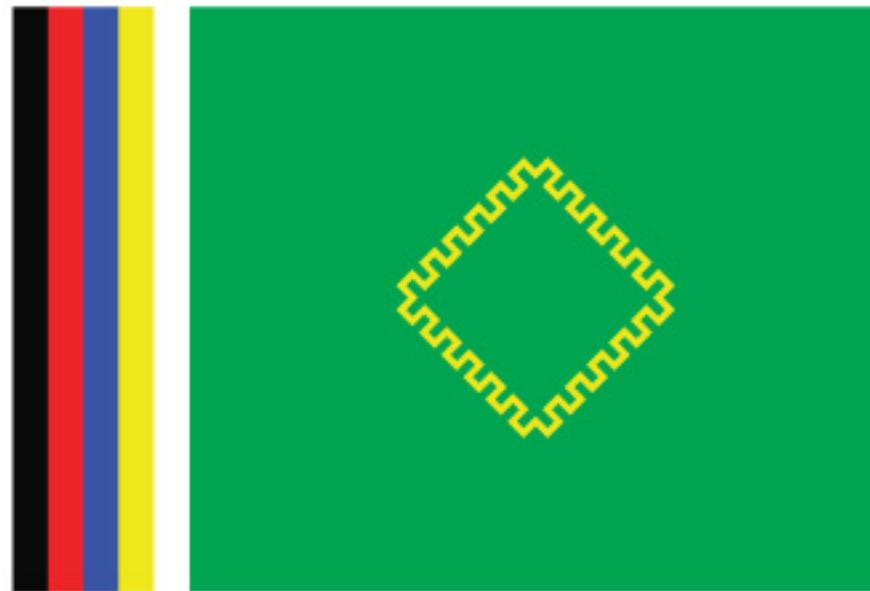
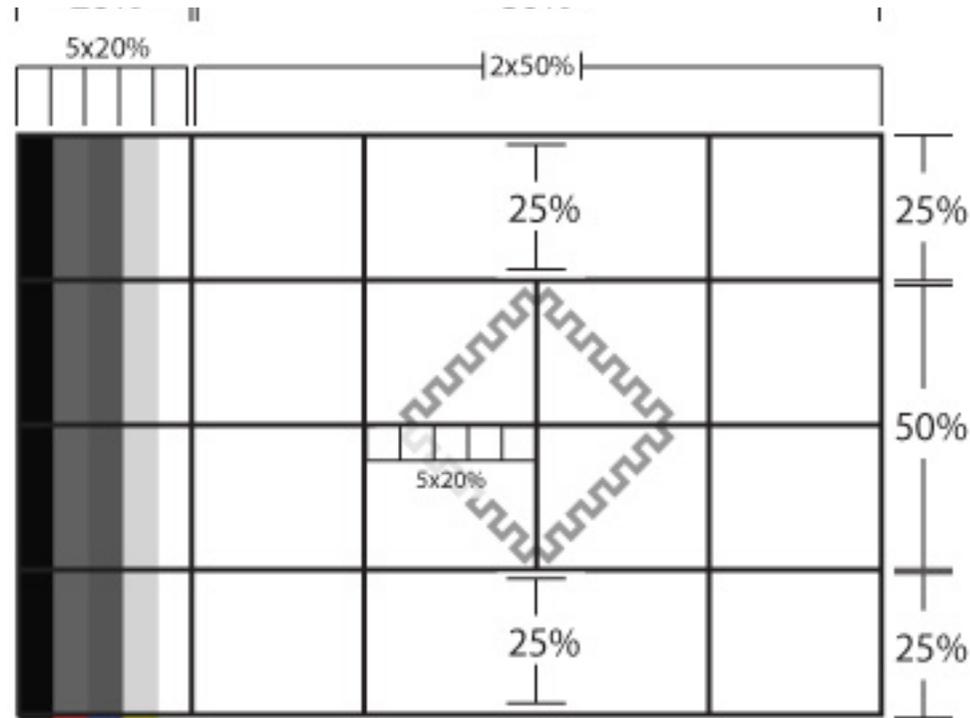
Red is the colour of revolution, communism, excitement and festivity – weddings and Chinese New Year. It's a colour overwhelmingly associated with China, so it's why it was discarded.

Green is the colour of hope, nature, and the environment. These are things essential to China's future.

The Great Wall was seen as the overwhelming man made symbol of China. Its symbolism is profound. It's a monumental barricade, to stop people (and their ideas) coming in, and preventing people from leaving. It was built through slave labour for a tyrant, Qin Shihuang, the emperor credited for uniting the country and forging the Han identity.

By tradition, the wall is on the outside, denoting boundaries, the edges of conformity. The Great wall in the new flag is small, and does not surround the edges. This symbolizes the new Chinese attitude, thinking beyond the wall into the new world. The shape of a diamond over a circle is to avoid similarity with China's rival Japan.

The colours on the edge of the flag symbolize the major nationalities of China – the Han, Muslims, Koreans, Tibetians and Mongols. It's similar to the old republic flag, but it's important to acknowledge the different nationalities that make up China.



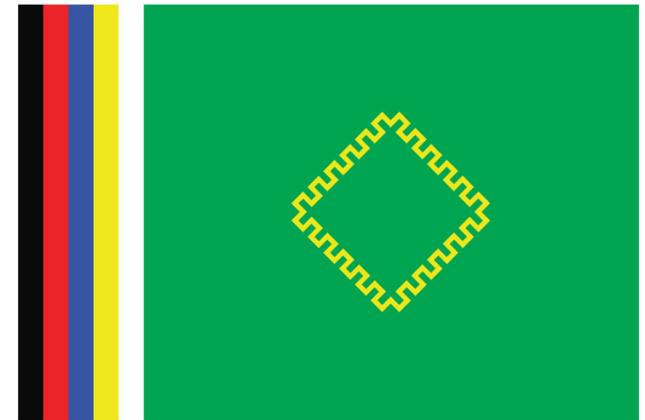
	CYAN	MAGENTA	YELLOW	BLACK
■	0	0	0	100
■	0	100	95	0
■	90	75	0	0
■	10	0	100	0
■	0	0	0	0
■	100	0	100	0



Conclusion

Throughout China's history, it has been a peaceful world leader. The 20th Century was a tragedy for this great nation. Its history has been long and eventful, and worthy of remembrance, but if the 21st century is truly to be 'China's century' it must grasp the future and look to beyond the 22nd century.

The 21st century will be China's psychological frontiers going beyond the Great Wall, being environmentally aware and accepting of all nationalities and races within and outside their borders.



References

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