

# The Application of Chinese Traditional Talents in International Chinese Education

## -- Based on "the Cultural Triangle" Methodology

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### Abstract

**Chinese traditional talents are integral to China's rich cultural heritage. In the context of contemporary international Chinese education, there are pressing issues in the application of these talents. This paper analyzes the advantages and shortcomings of Chinese traditional talents in international Chinese education, utilizing the "cultural triangle" methodology to propose a streamlined "Chinese Traditional Talent Triangle" comprising talent concepts, activities, and products. Using specific talents such as "tea art" and "Chinese opera" as exemplars, it puts forth design and assessment strategies for the implementation of the Chinese Traditional Talents. Additionally, it offers insights for optimizing the dissemination and application of Chinese traditional talents: Designing Chinese traditional talent courses with a focus on "language skills +vocational proficiency"; enhancing the competence of International Chinese language teachers in Chinese traditional talents; fostering "talent concepts": innovating the "talent activities" platform and "talent products" brand.**

### Keywords

**Chinese traditional talent, International Chinese Education, Culture Triangle.**

## 1. Introduction

The relationship between culture, language, thinking, and social identity has consistently been a focal point of discussion and research[1,2]. The "cultural triangle" is the teaching method adopted by teachers in primary and secondary schools in the United States, which includes three elements: cultural perspectives, cultural practices and cultural products. Wang Xuesong[3]formulated the methodology of the cultural triangle by drawing on these three cultural elements, subsequently applying the theory in the context of cultural teaching within international Chinese education. The combination of language and specific content is a new trend in second language teaching[4]. Through an in-depth investigation of the connections, the paper focuses on the interplay between three cultural elements in Chinese traditional talents and their relevance to language instruction, aiming to explore three issues: the current research status of the application of Chinese traditional talents, the advantages and shortcomings associated with the application of Chinese traditional talents and methodology for optimizing the application of Chinese traditional skills, along with insights derived from the research.

## 2. Overview of Chinese Traditional Talents

### 2.1. Chinese Traditional Talents

Chinese traditional talents, also known as Chinese traditional skills, include Chinese painting, ethnic musical instruments, crosstalk, calligraphy, martial arts, opera, tea art and, etc. Shaped

by specific geographical and socio-political factors, these traditional talents reflect distinct traditional concepts, customs, and social mentalities.

Many scholars have reviewed the development process of Chinese traditional talents from a diachronic perspective. The research spans multiple fields, including Chinese medicine, printing, and handicraft production, affirming the driving role of outstanding Chinese traditional talents in the preservation of Chinese culture. This is exemplified by figures such as Ning Yong [5] and Yang Xiaolan [6].

The proliferation of media has resulted in a substantial diversification of public entertainment modes. Consequently, the focus of research has shifted towards realizing the inheritance and innovative development of Chinese traditional talents in the new era. These research analyzes strategies for this through assessing public demand, integrating knowledge resources, and fostering aesthetic education in universities, while also exploring methods for actively disseminating Chinese traditional talents.

## **2.2. Traditional Chinese Talents in International Chinese Education**

Research on Chinese traditional talents primarily unfolds along the line of localization. The research findings predominantly focus on countries like Thailand, Japan, Myanmar, Italy, among others. Specifically, the studies delve into the courses and cultural activities of Chinese traditional talent within overseas Confucius Institutes or affiliated Chinese language institutions. The aim is to cater to the diverse needs of language learners from various countries and cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the study of Chinese traditional talents and international Chinese teaching is characterized by individual cases, starting from the teaching of Chinese talents and culture, such as calligraphy, paper cutting and other skills. Feng Xiaoling [7] analyzed the specific implementation methods with Chinese talents. Zong Rui [8] summarized the examples of Chinese talents courses on intangible cultural heritage. In the teaching process, Guo Hanqi [9] paid close attention to the relationship between the content of the course for Chinese talents and the emotional attitude of second language learners. Regarding the study of Chinese traditional talents and the evolution of international Chinese education, scholars actively discussed the innovation methods through the means of network. Relevant research results were represented by the online course model, the documentary model, the cultural experience course model, the second-level classroom construction model. In summary, while the academic community has extensively researched the inheritance of Chinese traditional talent and case studies of Chinese talent courses, there are still opportunities to explore the core essence of Chinese traditional talents and their application in international Chinese language teaching and cultural communication.

## **3. Application of Chinese Traditional Talents in International Chinese Education: Advantages and Challenges**

### **3.1. Advantages**

#### **3.1.1. Language Acquisition**

Accessing traditional Chinese talents enhances immersion and experiential learning for language learners. In terms of learners' emotions, it is easy to foster a warm and creative atmosphere to help them get in touch with the real language context. From the current situation of international Chinese teaching, factors such as high requirements of course content, Chinese test anxiety, and difficulty in communicating the target language reduce learners' self-confidence and hinder their learning. In contrast, as the carrier of Chinese culture, Chinese traditional talents could alleviate these challenges to a certain extent. Experiencing traditional Chinese talents doesn't require complex language expression from learners, it can also spark their interest in learning Chinese. As Kolb[10]stated, Each learner brings their existing

linguistic and cultural competencies and identities into the learning process. In the process of language acquisition, it can stimulate learners' self-esteem and enhance their motivation to learn language.

### 3.1.2. Cultural Identity

The utilization of Chinese traditional talents helps learners bridge the cultural gap between their native culture and China's, facilitating a smoother comprehension and acceptance of cultural disparities between their native language culture and China's target language culture. Li Xiaopi [11] argues that Chinese traditional talents help non-native Chinese learners establish a positive cycle of "understanding the second culture, learning the second language, gaining a deeper understanding of the second culture, and better utilizing the second language for communication." Through traditional talents, learners can perceive the deep concepts of Chinese traditional talents and cultivate cultural identity and appreciation ability.

### 3.1.3. Overseas Dissemination

Applying Chinese traditional talents as soft cultural elements can promote the global dissemination of Chinese culture. This endeavor aligns closely with the central mission of Confucius Institutes, which prioritize cultural promotion. In recent years, Confucius Institutes have actively promoted outstanding traditional Chinese culture, forming a chain model with the theme of promoting Chinese culture. As cultural exchange deepens, individuals are not only appreciating Chinese talents but also integrating creative elements. This not only fosters a deeper connection with Chinese culture but also serves as a bridge for individuals worldwide learning Chinese. Such engagement offers opportunities for gaining insights into China, underscoring the pivotal role of this cultural exchange as a bridge project.

## 3.2. Challenges

### 3.2.1. Unclear Course Positioning

Presently, Chinese talent courses offered by Chinese language institutions are rarely included in the academic curriculum of international students and are in a marginal position. On one hand, Chinese talent courses exhibit a predominant emphasis on traditional experiential teaching, characterized by a strong tool-oriented approach and a diminished emphasis on humanistic aspects. On the other hand, Chinese talent showcases predominantly take the form of cultural activities, performances, and enrichment classes. While these formats aim to captivate the interest of international students in Chinese culture, they often lack detailed plans and instructional case designs as guiding frameworks.

### 3.2.2. Systematic Lack of Talents Dissemination

①Content of Dissemination. The overemphasis on ancient forms in Chinese traditional cultural skills often overshadows innovative projects that reflect the spiritual and cultural essence of Chinese culture. This tendency may lead to the stereotyping of Chinese culture, potentially causing misconceptions in cultural assimilation.

②Modes of Dissemination. The dispersion of Chinese traditional talent across various platforms has contributed to a lack of focus on audience receptivity. The absence of fresh themes and coherent content obstructs meaningful feedback from audiences, thereby overlooking cultural nuances. Without consistent and broad-reaching engagement efforts, soliciting public responses becomes increasingly difficult.

③Feedback from Dissemination. Gao Shanhu [12] argued that overseas communication feedback primarily relies on foreign media reports and random audience interviews, which can contribute to the public's vague and perceptual impression of traditional talents. The lack of systematic collection and organization of feedback opinions on the reporting of Chinese traditional talents has consequently impacted the effectiveness of overseas communication efforts.

### 3.2.3. Deficiency in Traditional Chinese Talents among International Chinese Language Teachers

There is a general deficiency in professionals skilled in traditional arts and specialized teachers for Chinese traditional talents within Confucius Institutes. If the training standards for international Chinese language teachers focus solely on language proficiency without emphasizing core competencies in traditional Chinese talents, the fundamental goal of Chinese cultural education may be compromised. Some teachers may lack expertise in traditional talents, resulting in vague teaching objectives and arbitrary teaching methods. This deficiency poses significant challenges to effectively integrating traditional Chinese talents into education.

## 4. Solution: The Application of Chinese Traditional Talents within the Framework of the "Cultural Triangle" Methodology

Chinese traditional talents serve as a suitable medium for language teaching and cultural communication. However, they also present various challenges. Enhancing the application of Chinese traditional talent is closely related to the effectiveness of cultural communication within Chinese language dissemination organizations, and it is imperative to address its current situation urgently.

### 4.1. The "Cultural Triangle" Methodology

According to the "cultural triangle" theory, culture is composed of perspectives, practices and products. Cultural perspectives encompass philosophical notions such as attitudes and values; cultural practices involve historical and contemporary social behaviors; cultural products encompass tangible and intangible social assets, ranging from books, tools, and food to music, games, laws, and beyond. Wang Xuesong [3] takes cultural practices and cultural products as the bottom point of the triangle, and cultural perspectives as the apex which form the cultural triangle.

### 4.2. Theoretical Application

#### 4.2.1. Constructing Triangles

Based on the cultural triangle methodology, this paper designs the "Chinese Traditional Talent Triangle", which is applicable to the courses and cultural activities related to international Chinese language education. It consists of three parts: (1) "talent concepts" (the top), cultural perspectives contained in Chinese traditional talents; (2) "talent activities" (the bottom), practices that personal participation that allows for the acquisition of cultural experiential knowledge; (3) "talent products" (the bottom), Chinese cultural products that meet the needs created by traditional Chinese talents. "Talent activities" and "talent products" are the expression forms of "talent concepts", which are also promoted and restricted by "talent concepts". These three parts respectively represent folk culture, material culture, and spiritual culture. Language learners must "understand the studied culture deeply," considering the interplay between cultural activities and concepts, as well as the relationship between cultural products and concepts in the learning culture [13]. Within the triangular model, all three elements construct a complete cultural form, which can avoid the problem of ignoring the core connotation of talents.

The construction of this triangle begins with the most representative Chinese cultural symbols and relevant cultural factors in language teaching. It involves setting Chinese talent application goals based on learners' interests, coupled with key aspects of Chinese language instruction. It is impossible to have the reality of a universal language and culture syllabus [10]. Considering this reality, teachers should incorporate specific linguistic and cultural elements of Chinese

traditional talents, highlighting the alignment between historical and contemporary culture. While the cultural key points in the Chinese Proficiency Grading Standards for International Chinese Language Education offer valuable insights, it is imperative to build upon the students' cultural background[14].

**4.2.2. Applying Triangles**

Experiential learning emphasizes direct sensory experience and situational action as primary sources of learning, while experiential education programs underscore the importance of students' thinking and analysis based on experiential learning [10]. Thus, it is crucial to consistently focus on inspiring students to contemplate "talent concepts" as the core and develop relevant plans around "talent activities" and "talent products." Although the connection between the three may not always be apparent, especially for young learners and beginners in Chinese, grasping the distinctive characteristics of Chinese traditional talent makes the initial experience of "talent activities" and "talent products" more readily accepted. "Talent concepts" exhibit strong independence, with a lag in grasping their connotation. However, this characteristic presents opportunities for cultural comparison. For example, the "Chinese Talent Triangle Application Content Design" for tea art is outlined as follows (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Chinese Traditional Talents Triangle Application Content Design**

Talent interpretation	Corresponding cultural triangle	International Chinese teaching content
Tea art experience	Cultural activities	Events
Tea product	Cultural product	Artistic Works
Tea culture	Cultural concept	Cultural Significance

As a "talent product", tea has been introduced from China to the world with distinct cultural elements. The way to combine talent products with talent activities can be to organize students to practice tea picking, watch the process of tea farmers picking and making tea, or watch tea art performances, appreciate tea poems. After engaging in talent experiential activities, students can compare the cultural aspects of beverage consumption in their native countries with Chinese tea-drinking customs. This comparison can highlight the Chinese preference for tea, influenced by historical habits and cultural etiquette. The learning process of traditional Chinese talents related to tea also serves as an exploration of Chinese philosophy and a means of finding tranquility in the fast pace of life. While understanding this point may not be easy for Chinese beginners, introducing such designs allows them to experience various cultural products and customs, laying a foundation for grasping these concepts.

**4.2.3. Evaluating Triangles**

Currently, there lacks a mature evaluation mechanism and reference standard for traditional talent courses in China. Drawing on the "Cultural Triangle" theory and customizing to the audience's needs, the objective is to establish an evaluation system for traditional Chinese talents guided by practical experience and objectives, as detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Chinese Talent Triangle Application Evaluation Design**

Integration	The whole explanation of Chinese traditional talents
Comparison	Cross-cultural interpretation of Chinese traditional talents
Expansion	Multidimensional interpretation of Chinese traditional talents
Feedback	Subsequent interpretation of Chinese traditional talents

The evaluation system consists of four stages: integration, comparison, expansion and feedback. (1)Integration: gaining a comprehensive understanding of traditional Chinese talents and

appreciate the unique charm of Chinese culture through a brief introduction; (2) Comparison: acquiring an understanding of the distinctions between cultures by engaging in cultural comparisons; (3) Expansion: designing more enlightening questions to focus specifically on cross-cultural differences related to Chinese talents; (4) Feedback: gathering students' understanding of the intrinsic essence of Chinese talents and their feedback on the conduct of Chinese talent activities.

To elucidate this evaluation system more clearly, this paper takes the renowned artistic form of Sichuan Opera face-changing in traditional Chinese opera as an example. Firstly, promoting "integration" through activities such as mask painting and watching face-changing performances. Secondly, guiding students in cross-cultural comparisons of specific viewpoints to achieve the aspect of "comparison." For example, to explore whether their own country has similar facial masks, guiding them to compare the performance characteristics of Sichuan Opera with realism, and facilitating open-ended discussions. Thirdly, engaging them with enlightening questions, such as eliciting their views on the personalities and motivations of characters of masks of Sichuan opera, gradually alleviates cultural barriers caused by differences. Finally, obtaining feedback from individuals who have gained a profound understanding of traditional talent culture. This can be achieved through methods such as script adaptations, collective performances, and the succession of short plays, allowing them to truly grasp the essence of Chinese culture and its humanistic values. Applying an assessment system offers a comprehensive evaluation of learners' cultural understanding and provides ample opportunities for language interaction.

To sum up, the methodology of "Chinese traditional Talents Triangle" first requires the selection of Chinese traditional talents accepted by students as a bridge of cultural exchange; Secondly, to construct the "Chinese traditional talent triangle" in an appropriate way, to complete the introduction of the core of Chinese culture; Finally, according to the needs of the audience, the evaluation of "traditional Chinese talents" is completed. This process is gradual and acceptable.

## **5. The Enlightenment**

### **5.1. Designing Traditional Chinese Talent Courses with a Focus on "Language Skills + Vocational Proficiency"**

Currently, in terms of academic categorization, the positioning of traditional Chinese talent courses should not be marginalized as entertainment. As adult education increasingly shifts towards "Chinese + vocational skills," it becomes essential to grasp the profound changes in the learning objectives of contemporary Chinese learners. This entails integrating traditional Chinese talents with vocational and technical requirements, along with professional knowledge of Chinese language and culture, for applications in fields such as education and international business. Learners from diverse majors often exhibit varying preferences for delving into traditional talent courses. Preliminary assessments can take the form of traditional talent activities, gradually integrating into the formal curriculum as proficiency develops. For example, students majoring in computer graphics or design might display a heightened interest in Chinese painting. In the absence of specialized courses of Chinese talents, teachers should endeavor to infuse Chinese culture into various language elements, thereby incorporating traditional values and customs into classroom instruction. This approach fosters cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

## 5.2. Enhancing the Competence of International Chinese Language Teachers in Traditional Chinese Talents

The methodology of the "Cultural Triangle" imposes elevated demands on the cultural communication awareness and abilities of international Chinese teachers. Teachers must tailor the teaching or planning of cultural activities in Chinese talent courses to suit the psychological and emotional characteristics of learners. This entails presenting elements of the learners' native language in a Chinese style while balancing the integration of "traditional talent perspectives" with contemporary appeal. In cultivating international Chinese language teachers, it is paramount to assess their proficiency in traditional Chinese talents, emphasizing the integration of their Chinese language skills with the local culture of the overseas teaching destination. To achieve this objective, Chinese language institutions can establish both on-campus and off-campus internship opportunities for international Chinese education teachers. This initiative helps address the gap in training platforms for showcasing Chinese cultural talents.

## 5.3. Fostering Talent Concepts: Innovating the Talent Activities' Platform and Talent Products Brand

Innovative talent activity platforms can be customized based on the characteristics of different audiences. By gaining a thorough understanding of the background, interests, and expectations of the target audience, tailored activity plans and experience designs can better meet their requirements. For newcomers to Chinese culture, establishing a dedicated showcase space for outstanding works serves as a window to exhibit Chinese talents globally. This space offers an opportunity for deeper understanding of Chinese culture, fostering cultural exchange and appreciation. For with a certain foundation in Chinese language, participation in experiential and enjoyable cultural activities is encouraged, with a focus on seamless integration of talent concepts, activities, and products. For example, establishing a competition platform specifically tailored for students at this level of Chinese proficiency can effectively showcase the charm of Chinese talents as perceived from their perspective." Advanced learners and scholars with discernible proficiency in Chinese studies are envisioned to participate in traditional talent lectures and book clubs, covering various facets of Chinese culture.

The above design not only caters to the diverse needs of Chinese language learner groups regarding traditional Chinese talents but also provides them with enriching experiences of traditional Chinese talents. Building upon this foundation, continuous optimization of brand strategies is implemented based on feedback to enhance coherence. Simultaneously, a culture of continuous innovation and adaptability to market changes is fostered to maintain the vitality and competitiveness of Chinese traditional talent products, thereby effectively meeting the evolving demands of the learners and a broader overseas audience, contributing to the dynamic landscape of Chinese cultural dissemination.

## 6. Conclusion

The "Cultural Triangle" methodology introduces a fresh approach to utilizing traditional Chinese talent within the realm of international Chinese education. Drawing upon an analysis of the current application landscape, this paper has extended and enhanced the Cultural Triangle theory, unveiling a model for content design and evaluation systems of traditional Chinese talent. The outcomes of this research are tailored to provide insights into the methods and strategies for applying traditional Chinese talent, with the objective of serving as inspiration for advancing Chinese language teaching and facilitating the global dissemination of Chinese culture.

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