

# Communication Strategies of Chinese Traditional Culture to Foreign Countries in the All-Media Era

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**Abstract:** *In a time of constant change in mainstream new media platforms, new opportunities have arisen for the external development of traditional Chinese culture. Diversification of channels and modes of expression has increased dissemination efforts. However, the "too new" as well as the "too old" nature of the information also leads to a communication dilemma. This paper takes the current situation of Chinese traditional culture as an orientation, analyzes the dilemma of external communication, and discusses the strategy of external communication of traditional culture.*

**Keywords:** *Chinese traditional culture, all-media, international communication*

## 1. Introduction

Throughout history, the inheritance and development of good culture has always been engraved in the blood and bones of the Chinese people. Since the reform and opening up of the country, until today, information is booming. The rapid pace of information change has brought international communication into a state of flux not seen in a century. The booming of the all-media era also brings new opportunities for cultural communication.

## 2. Current status of traditional Chinese culture

### 2.1. Diversified channels and multi-level audiences

Short video platforms have seen a surge in user growth in recent years. From 2016-2021, monthly active users of short video platforms climbed all the way from 217 million to 907 million. In 2023, the total number of Jitterbug users has surpassed 2 billion. And the international version of Douyin - TikTok - is the second app after Facebook to surpass 3 billion downloads. TikTok has over 16.77 billion users as of 2023, 1.1 billion monthly active users. The United States tops the global list with 150 million total TikTok users. YouTube, one of the largest video sharing platforms in the world, also has a total of over 2 billion users.

When you search for content related to "excellent traditional Chinese culture" on Douyin, the top three accounts in the search results all have more than 400,000 ofollowers. It can be seen that the user acceptance of traditional culture disseminated in the form of short videos is high. The traditional culture-related topics that have accumulated more than 100 million plays on the Douyin platform cover a wide range of categories, including opera, Chinese painting, shadow, folk music and poetry. Among them, the Peking Opera topic "I change my face faster than turning over books" has nearly 6 billion video plays, and the topic "I want to laugh out of the national essence" has nearly 2.6 billion plays, The "Who Says" series of topics ("Who Says Traditional Culture Doesn't Shake", "Who Says Chinese Painting Doesn't Shake", etc.) attracted more than 70,000 users to participate in the creation of Chinese paintings, with a total broadcast volume of more than 1.7 billion.<sup>[1]</sup>

Li Ziqi, a popular Chinese online self-publishing creator, is also popular on the YouTube platform. With 17 million total subscriptions, it also averages 10 million views per video, to a high of over 100 million total views. Cultural factors such as traditional food, traditional customs and traditional dress have thus been spread more widely. The spread of Chinese culture is not only popular locally, but has also gained a foothold on many international platforms.

## **2.2. Diversification of expression and breakthrough of inherent concepts**

In the summer of 2023, a critically acclaimed animated film, "30,000 Leagues of Chang'an", released in China mainland, took in an outstanding \$1.742 billion at the box office by 16 August. It also surpassed \$80 million at the North American box office.

What makes this film so popular? In the age of all-media, the dissemination of excellent traditional Chinese culture is not only presented in black and white in textbooks, but also by virtue of diversified performances, the history of literature and the image of literati, which are considered boring in the eyes of many Chinese, are interpreted in a vivid and graphic way. "China on the Tip of the Tongue" is also a successful example of the spread of many traditional cultures. The hottest documentary of 2012 was also released to 27 countries in Europe, America, Southeast Asia and other regions, with the first round of overseas sales reaching \$350,000 USD. Popular self-published media creator, Li Ziqi, has exploded in popularity on YouTube, earning millions of subscribing fans overseas. The common point between them is to combine traditional elements with novel elements, and to produce works with "craftsmanship", so that traditional culture is no longer "traditional", but really lively. Through different media platforms such as Douyin, TikTok, YouTube, etc., the traditional Chinese culture has been delivered to the world and has won the praise of both domestic and overseas audiences. In the era of fragmented information, people are busy with the exhaustion of their work life and spend their rest time occasionally accessing information via mobile phones to relax. Overly boring communications can test the patience of people in the flood of information. Breaking homogenisation and capturing the novelty of the audience at the tipping point of people's patience, such works make it easier to spread traditional culture.

## **3. The Dilemma of External Communication of Traditional Culture**

Throughout history, a wide variety of cultures have been linked together to form the word "history". People in different times have new or old ways of communicating culture. The first ancient Chinese oracle bones, the earliest cuneiform inscribed on clay tablets in European and American civilisations, and countless evolutions in between, until the technological explosion after the Industrial Revolution, with the gradual emergence of the telegraph, radio, television and computers. Today's mobile phones are the fastest way to disseminate information to audiences. This has made it easier to transmit and disseminate culture.

From the fusion of East and West on the Silk Road to today's global integration, it is easy to see that cultural exchange is a vital part of development at any time. In the process of spreading Chinese traditional culture to the outside world, on the basis of easier and faster information dissemination, it also faces a lot of dilemmas and challenges. A number of media outlets and creators are worth learning from when it comes to the dissemination of cultural values. However, in today's world, where information travels too fast and content is too complex, it is extremely difficult to differentiate yourself. As a result, there are two extremes - "too new" and "too old".

### **3.1. The "too new" phenomenon**

The phenomenon of "too new" is actually caused by creators who have over-processed their work in order to create a work that is in line with current trends. It is true that novel communication can attract the attention of young people, but too new communication may result in a situation where the value of communication is difficult to be highlighted, or even counterproductive, turning it into a widely controversial work. Network singer Hua Zhou in 2018 created the song "Stealing will line", with the ancient style, since the release of a great heat, the singer Hua Zhou also won a lot of fans by virtue of this. Ancient forms of creativity undoubtedly make it easier to spread culture. However, it didn't take long for the critics to take over, saying that it was just a piece of work with no substance made up of flashy words. Some famous university professors even said that the song had no logic or value.

The popularity of old-fashioned songs has indeed given cultural communication great scope for dissemination, especially in the context of the call for the revival of traditional Chinese culture in the new century. Some forms are "too new" and may inappropriately nationally package traditional cultural elements, with traces of showmanship, superficiality and commercialisation. This may be formally adapted to the habits of the contemporary people, but its form and the combing of the essence of traditional culture are not free from the sense of masochism, which makes it difficult for people to have a depth of identity, and also creates a serious lack of a sense of value.

### **3.2. The "too old" phenomenon**

The straightforward meaning of "too old" is that "traditional" is too traditional. All traditions are things of the past, and when they need to be transmitted in the present, they need to be "newly interpreted" in order to make them viable. If, without any explanation, Uninnovatively lifting traditional cultural elements, which are vastly different from the times, directly into modern communication may make it difficult for modern people to adapt and spread. This is even more evident in international communication. Even ordinary Chinese who are not familiar with traditional Chinese culture, when they see some unexplained traditional culture, they will have in their minds the rough outline of an educated mind as to what it is. Instead, it is too abstract a presence for overseas audiences. Indeed, Chinese culture is so profound that people in many countries and regions around the world are happy to learn and study it. However, if the initial impression of the communication is not processed, it may significantly diminish the effectiveness of the communication. This is inevitably boring when contrasted with the popular elements that capital has gone to great lengths to create at the moment.

## **4. International Communication Strategy of Chinese Traditional Culture**

It is very urgent to enhance the contemporary dissemination of traditional Chinese culture, it is also a long process. After analysing the existing dilemmas, the root of the problem is how to really communicate well. Under the premise of ensuring the value of the content, you can focus on three key points to improve the communication strength.

### **4.1. Make the "traditional" no longer "traditional", evoke a sense of empathy among the public, and grasp the "new"**

In today's information like a torrent, the traditional culture will be re-created and processed into more innovative content to move people with emotions, which has become the breakthrough point of short video communication nowadays. In order to do a good job of communicating externally, the first thing you need to do is to do a good job of communicating internally. International communication can only be achieved by arousing the audience's "national pride", creating emotional empathy between the audience and the content of the communication, and enhancing self-confidence and empathy for one's own culture. The previously mentioned "30,000 Leagues of Chang'an" has managed to spread across the ages. It makes history and culture come alive. The famous singer Jay Chou and lyricist Fang Wenshan have also composed very famous songs, both in China and in the West. "Celadon" has been popular since its release in 2007. Through the story-telling lyrics, it paints a moody picture with Jiangnan colours, depicting the elegance of the heirloom blue and white porcelain. Love in the B.C., on the other hand, gives a picture of the splendour of Sumerian civilisation during the period of Ancient Western Europe, and arouses curiosity as to what it was like in that period. The famous film star Jackie Chan participated in the shooting of a variety of action films also made him famous in the world, was named by the United States "New York Times" as the "20 greatest action movie star" list ranked first, Jet Li, Bruce Lee is also on the list. The spread of Chinese martial arts to the outside world has led to the rise of the saying that "all Chinese know martial arts" in many parts of the world over a period of time. It is indeed an exaggerated description, but it is also an expression of the successful dissemination of traditional Chinese culture to the outside world. These works have also enhanced Chinese national pride and increased the motivation of Chinese people to explore their own culture.

International dissemination is a process from the inside out, and when domestic dissemination is far-reaching, expanding it to the international arena is a natural progression. Blending traditional culture and current fashions, it refines the typical, positive and millennia-old core contents of traditional Chinese culture. Through appropriate convergence and expansion, drawing on language, experience, and contemporary expression, the "degree" should not be "too new" or "too old."<sup>[2]</sup>

"Too new" will lose the profound connotation that traditional culture itself should have, and thus be held hostage by capital. Being "too old" creates a sense of "distance", which may inadvertently reduce dissemination. Both cultures and civilisations can be passed on and transmitted. Especially in today's information-rich world, classic works of excellent quality are enough to make traditional culture circulate more widely and for a longer period of time. The typical and positive core contents of traditional Chinese culture, which have been inherited for thousands of years, are appropriately refined and packaged, and converted into a form suitable for contemporary communication. Then, with the help of various means of contemporary communication, create a culture that meets the tastes, needs and perceptions of

contemporary people. Starting from culture, the means of enhancing cultural goals, such as economic means and new media means, are expanded to be compatible with a society in transition. Songs, film and television productions, variety shows, self-published authors, etc., their communication success is also a cultural level of communication success. The works they create firstly enhance the national pride of the Chinese people, give "new interpretations" to the "old traditions", make the traditions catchy and popular nowadays, and the "traditions" are no longer "traditional". The "traditional" is no longer "traditional".

#### ***4.2. Conducting "media-type" diplomacy, strengthening the media and avoiding "obsolescence"***

Along with the development of the all-media era, self-media has gradually become a venue for different countries to seize the right to speak. In order to spread Chinese traditional culture on the international stage, it is also important to improve the penetration of different media. With a number of audio-visual productions on the rise, the Chinese themselves have done well with their traditional culture internally, but more importantly externally, and this requires a more diversified approach to building cultural output content on communication platforms. An example is the currently hugely popular app TikTok. It's a lot easier to disseminate fragmented information when comparing it to long articles and long videos. There is also an inevitable trend to innovate tradition into a form that is more accessible to the audience through fragmentation. Domestic mainstream media, such as the "News Broadcast" and "People's Daily", are already excellent in terms of communication, but their influence at the international communication level is slightly inferior to that of other international communication platforms.<sup>[3]</sup>

The matter of letting Chinese traditional culture go out is also essentially letting China's international discourse go out. A good "media-oriented" diplomacy is in fact also a strengthening of the self-media. Online media has led to the creation of the social media generation, which is young, energetic and adept at sharing what they think and feel online. The "Diplomacy" has also never been about high-level exchanges between countries, but nowadays diplomacy, the cultural intermingling of nationals and citizens, is also carried out on a large level by social media users. The bridge between online information communication, such as TikTok, Twitter and other online media users are increasing, when the national recognition of their own country's traditional culture, the spread of it through the network has become a matter of course.

#### ***4.3. Lowering the user threshold and increasing the audience's willingness to spread the word***

As a matter of fact, traditional culture has already occupied a certain position in the communication media in recent years, and there are also a lot of audience groups. For example, the popular blogger "Guo Dazhan" has 15 million followers, and each short video has hundreds of thousands of likes on average. He is dedicated to spreading the culture of traditional Chinese martial arts, as well as folk customs. The "Xuanze Vision", with over a million followers, specialises in concisely introducing a traditional craft in one short video.

While these short videos lead people to appreciate the beauty of traditional culture, they also unknowingly advance the process of propagating inherited culture. What they have in common is to make traditional culture more "people-friendly", and traditional culture is no longer just a word in the mouths of fathers and mothers, or broadcast on TV sets. As you can see by their huge following, tradition has turned into a spontaneous interest. At the same time, the spread of culture is not limited to the country. On TikTok, the overseas version of DouYin, there are a similarly large number of video productions that have become hugely popular in Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia and other regions. For example, action challenges based on Shaolin culture have spread overseas, attracting users from many countries to follow suit. "Zimeng Amy, a popular TikTok user, has gained a large number of fans with her videos of her playing traditional Chinese music while dressed in Chinese costume. The personalised interpretation and practice of traditional culture by young people has led to an increasing interest in traditional Chinese culture, and increased the audience's own willingness to disseminate and create, making tradition the "new wave".

The creation of music and its dissemination on film and television is difficult for ordinary people. But when the threshold of creation is lowered, distribution is naturally no longer out of reach. The "intersubjectivity" of Husserl, a contemporary Western philosopher, is worthy of study by all, as it provides a new interpretation of tradition through dialogue and interaction between subjects on an equal footing. The development of traditional culture is also a long process of constant limitation and breaking down of limitations, and it is obviously wrong to place the traditional viewpoint, which is solid and unchanging without renewal, in today's information explosion. Therefore, the main body of

dissemination should no longer be experts and officials. When something is disseminated by all people, it is really accepted by the general public.

China is also paying increasing attention to the protection of various "intangible cultural heritages". When the official creates a big trend, which is in turn created by singers, film and TV people, and network V, the audience can also create and disseminate it twice to improve the interactivity, which is a virtuous cycle.

For Chinese people, the familiar traditional culture will be a new sight for international friends when it is spread abroad. Just like the Silk Road, the transmission of silk and tea to the outside world and the introduction of jewellery, medicines and so on to the inside world are beneficial to the construction and development between the two countries. In the age of all-media, communication is no longer difficult, and Chinese people can evolve from self "resonance" to "sharing" to achieve cultural interoperability and value sharing.

## 5. Conclusion

To do a good job in the international dissemination of traditional Chinese culture, it is also essentially to improve the international dissemination power from the four dimensions of subject, appeal, channel and type. The "subject" represents the communicator, including the official platform and each audience. The "demand" is the deep value of the communication content, the "channel" is the different platforms and channels under the environment of media convergence, and the "type" is the "new interpretation" of the "old tradition" in the new era. The "genre" is the "new interpretation" of the "old tradition" in the new era.<sup>[4]</sup>

Global economic integration is also accompanied by the integration of global cultural exchanges, and the different exchanges and dissemination of multinational cultures essentially enhance international discourse. Traditional culture also represents the history and story of a great nation, and it is difficult to move forward if you forget your history.

Multi-cultural integration is also about learning from each other's strengths and weaknesses, and moving forward from experience to experience. Nowadays, the power of words is greater than in any previous era. The question of how to grasp the "degree" of dissemination so as not to deviate from the "origin" of traditional culture, but also to make it deeply rooted in people's hearts with the development of the times, is also worthy of our continued exploration and analysis.

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