

# A Probe into the Path of Integrating “24 Solar Terms” into International Chinese Language Education from the Perspective of Cultural Communication

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**Abstract:** The "24 Solar terms" is the life experience and cultural memory of the Farming society of the Chinese nation. It contains the survival wisdom and life philosophy unique to the ancient working people, and is praised as "The fifth invention of China" by the international meteorological circle. This paper analyzes the data of International Chinese Language Education and culture textbooks and Chinese as a foreign language teaching materials by using statistical method, and puts forward the value and significance of introducing the 24 solar terms into Chinese culture teaching as a foreign language. Starting from Chinese textbooks is conducive to carrying forward Traditional Chinese culture and helping learners to truly feel the essence of Chinese farming culture and its derived knowledge of poetry, proverbs, folk festivals and so on, so as to enhance their understanding and identification of Chinese culture. The innovative reuse of the inherent cultural value of "24 Solar terms" is a new path for The confident "modernization export" of Chinese culture.

**Keywords:** International Chinese language education, Textbooks for International Chinese Language Education, Culture teaching, 24 solar terms

## 1. Introduction

The "24 solar terms" originated from China's ancient agricultural civilization. It is a knowledge system formed by ancient ancestors who complied with the agricultural season and summarized the changing laws of season, climate and phenology in the middle of the year through the observation of the movement of celestial bodies. The opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics on February 4, 2022 brought this typical Chinese culture into the eyes of the people of the world again, making the "impression of China" more deeply rooted in the hearts of the people.

"24 solar terms" is not only an important part of the long history and culture of the Chinese nation, but also an important carrier of Chinese cultural identity and dissemination. As a world-class intangible cultural heritage, it has strong theoretical value and practical significance in teaching. It is pointed out that the protection, inheritance, development and utilization of historical and cultural heritage is of great significance to the continuation of historical context and the construction of socialist cultural power.

As one of the indispensable links in International Chinese Language Education, the integration of the cultural chapter of "24 solar terms" can strengthen the dissemination of Chinese agricultural culture and folk custom culture. The author believes that taking the rich solar term culture teaching as the starting point, combined with the relevant expanded list of the heritage project, can help learners deeply explore the breadth and depth of Chinese culture and the correlation between language and culture, and further improve learners' reserve of Chinese cultural knowledge.

## 2. Date analysis of “24 solar terms” in Chinese textbooks

### 2.1. "24 solar terms" in the cultural textbooks of international Chinese Language Education Specialty

With the international trend of "peace and development", China's ties with the world have deepened, and the demand for Chinese from all countries has become stronger and stronger. At present, there are 199 master's enrollment points in Colleges and universities in China (author summarizes from the

graduate enrollment information network since September 2021). Due to the lack of information of some schools, the author consulted 149 colleges and universities, and calculated in detail the frequency, form and content of the "24 solar terms" in the cultural teaching materials used by colleges and universities.

In Cheng Yuzhen's "Introduction to Chinese culture"<sup>[1]</sup>, the "24 solar terms" appear in the "astronomical calendar" part of the chapter "scientific and technological achievements". The book introduces in detail the development and evolution process of the "24 solar terms" and the corresponding names of different months; Zhang Dainian and Fang Keli's "An Outline of Chinese Culture"<sup>[2]</sup> not only mentioned the "24 solar terms", but also described the economic and social forms of ancient China based on agricultural civilization, and put forward the characteristics of agricultural economy and its important impact on Chinese culture. It can be seen that Chinese agricultural culture has far-reaching significance in the long history; The book "College Students Must Know Basic Cultural Knowledge"<sup>[3]</sup> written by Zhao Jing also refers to the "24 solar terms" when introducing the "calendar", but it is short in length and has been taken in one stroke in the article without a detailed introduction.

Based on these data, it is not difficult to see that in the cultural textbooks of international Chinese education majors, the probability of "24 Solar terms" appearing as ancient scientific and technological achievements is almost 100%, but there is a certain difference in the proportion of space. That is to say, whenever the ancient Chinese astronomical calendar is mentioned, there must be a place for the "24 solar terms".

## **2.2. "24 solar terms" in International Chinese language Education**

The selection of textbooks for International Chinese Language Education plays an important role in teaching quality and teaching effect. As the written materials for teachers and students to teach and learn, teaching materials can be said to be the link and Bridge in second language teaching. Zhao Jinming once advocated that the compilation of Chinese textbooks should organically combine "structure, function and culture", that is, textbooks should focus on grammar "structure" and "function", supplemented by "culture"<sup>[4]</sup>. Li Quan and Zhao Jinming have also summarized the previous research results and put forward ten basic principles for textbook compilation: orientation principle, goal principle, characteristic principle, cognitive principle, era principle, style principle, cultural principle, interest principle, practical principle and three-dimensional principle<sup>[5]</sup>. All these prove that language learning without culture is powerless. Only by understanding the cultural connotation behind the language to a certain extent can learners choose more appropriate expressions in communication.

The author consulted and counted ten sets of commonly used comprehensive teaching materials for Chinese as a foreign language, including HSK standard course (9), New Silk Road Business Chinese (4), liberal Chinese (8), developing Chinese (28), new practical Chinese textbook (3), experiencing Chinese · Oral Course (10), practical course for Chinese as a foreign language (2), easy learning Chinese (8), happy Chinese (2) There are 81 volumes in total, of which only 4 volumes refer to the 24 solar terms, and most of them do not appear in the form of text. For example, the 24 solar terms in developing Chinese · intermediate reading I appear in the form of practical reading; In developing Chinese intermediate reading II, a text specifically introduces the winter solstice solar terms, but there is no written description of the 24 solar terms; The 24 solar terms in the practical course of Chinese as a foreign language appear in the form of cultural knowledge points; The new practical Chinese textbook only introduces the 24 solar terms in the text about the weather. However, in the process of investigation, the author found that most of these TCFL textbooks involve cultural knowledge closely related to the 24 solar terms, such as spring, summer, autumn and winter all year round, changes in weather and temperature, and the traditional Chinese festival Tomb-Sweeping Day.

## **2.3. Summary of the conclusions of "24 Solar terms" in international Chinese education textbooks**

Through the above data, it is not difficult to find that the 24 solar terms have a low sense of existence in the international Chinese education major and even the whole society. Part of the reason is that the society does not pay enough attention to it and does not give sufficient publicity and protection to this intangible cultural heritage; On the other hand, although the 24 solar terms exist in the cultural teaching materials of international Chinese education, they are rare in the teaching materials of Chinese as a foreign language and have not been reasonably applied. Since the "24 solar terms" was officially listed in the UNESCO representative list of human intangible cultural heritage in November 2016, its influence in society has gradually heated up. Primary and secondary schools around the country have opened campus cultural activities related to them. After the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics

on February 4, 2022, the 24 solar terms won unanimous praise from the people at home and abroad for its unique artistic charm, and more and more foreign students began to have a strong interest in this proud cultural heritage. Through the analysis of the application data of the 24 solar terms in International Chinese Language Education, the author defines the value of the 24 solar terms culture teaching, which is not only of great significance to the publicity and promotion of Chinese culture, but also helps learners better understand and feel Chinese culture in International Chinese Language Education.

### 3. Application value of "24 solar terms" in International Chinese language Education

The "24 solar terms" initially played a guiding role in agricultural activities in the Yellow River Basin. As a large agricultural country lasting for thousands of years, the output of crops is closely related to people's survival and development. Therefore, the ancients speculated a set of natural laws by observing the movement of celestial bodies, the refraction angle of the sun, the temperature and precipitation at different times, and the "24 solar terms" came into being. Therefore, farming meteorological culture can be said to be the core part of the "24 solar terms", and the naming of the 24 solar terms is also closely related to agriculture.

Along with the solar terms, there are various colorful customs and festivals. For example, Tomb-Sweeping Day, one of the four traditional festivals in China, is both a solar term and a festival. It is an important carrier of ancestral belief and sacrificial culture; For another example, lichun, as the first of the 24 solar terms, is also the ancient "Spring Festival". In the old days, major activities such as worshipping gods and ancestors, expelling evil spirits and eliminating disasters, praying for new years and blessings, welcoming the new year and so on will usually be held on the beginning of spring and its surrounding days. This series of festival activities not only constitute the framework of the first festival of later generations, but also its folk function has been left to this day.

In addition, a series of traditional Chinese medicine theories such as "poverty in spring and lack in autumn", "covering spring and freezing in autumn", "treatment of winter diseases in summer" also come from solar term culture. According to the theory of traditional Chinese medicine, man and nature are a whole of "correspondence between heaven and man and unity of form and spirit". The changes of human body and the occurrence of diseases are closely related to the 24 solar terms. The "24 solar terms" regimen is to explain the viewpoint of health preservation according to different solar terms, and achieve the purpose of strengthening the body and prolonging life by cultivating the spirit, adjusting the diet and practicing the body. For example, the elderly should not sleep more in spring, and their diet should be light and nourishing the liver; Pay attention to sleep in summer, and the diet in summer should be vitamin, iron and calcium; Be careful to add clothes in autumn and eat more food that moistens dryness and nourishes lung; In winter, the elderly should Stay indoors and try not to go out<sup>[6]</sup>.

Introduce the 24 solar terms culture teaching Chinese as a second language not only arouses our love of the traditional culture, also be able to attract more foreign friends understanding and attention to this, from verses to food, from landscape abdel hadi el-ghazzar to ritual sacrifice, the 24 solar terms because of the deep cultural inside information is the main aspects of the Chinese civilization is different from other civilization, It has important cultural identity value. In addition, In the process of its long inheritance and dissemination, the solar terms culture has various forms and rich connotation. The value concept of the unity of heaven and man also has a significant impact on the neighboring countries with only a strip of water in the Chinese cultural circle. For example, Japanese and Korean students have a high degree of understanding of solar terms, and their learning enthusiasm is not as high as that of students from European and American countries, or cultural and regional differences lead to disagreement and understanding. All these require that Chinese as a foreign language workers should take into account the cultural background of learners in the process of teaching the 24 solar terms, and teach learners from countries in the Chinese cultural circle and other countries in accordance with their aptitude. There is no solar term in the cultural background of learners in European and American countries. Different from the concept of "24 solar terms" conforming to the time of day, respecting life and following the laws of nature, western theories believe that human beings are "dominators of the earth", and the protection of the ecological environment is only their "love" for nature and other species. On the one hand, the application of "24 solar terms" in International Chinese Language Education helps to mobilize learners' enthusiasm and systematically teach the festivals, diets and customs familiar to them, such as Tomb-Sweeping Day, dumplings and Spring Festival couplets, so as to arouse learners' cognitive interest; On the other hand, his thought of harmony between heaven and man provides a new idea and method for today's increasingly severe global ecological environment, highlighting its universal value and shared value at the critical juncture of the crisis of sustainable development.

At this stage, there are still some problems in International Chinese Language Education, such as too old teaching ideas, lack of cultural content, learners' lack of understanding and mastery of Chinese culture and so on. The traditional mechanical culture teaching method can not well stimulate learners' interest in learning, and the teaching process is lack of effective pertinence, which greatly reduces the teaching effect. As a comprehensive carrier of Chinese traditional culture, "24 solar terms" involves all aspects of fields, such as diet, clothing, belief, sacrifice, etiquette, entertainment activities, production ceremony and so on. In addition, poetry, proverbs, ballads, legends, calligraphy and painting and other literary works related to the 24 solar terms also emerge in endlessly. At the same time, it has also been selected into the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage list. The 24 solar terms are the precious wealth of Chinese traditional culture and the precious cultural heritage of the Chinese nation and even the world. Applying "24 solar terms" to International Chinese Language Education, It can not only reasonably build a complete solar term culture system, but also connect the relevant words that usually appear independently as a knowledge point, so as to deepen learners' understanding of Chinese culture and cultural identity. "24 solar terms" can not only provide creativity for cultural teaching materials in International Chinese Language Education, but also stimulate learners' creativity in curriculum design. It is an important resource with educational innovation value.

#### **4. New thinking about “24 solar terms” in International Chinese Language Education**

The "24 solar terms" is like the main circuit switch of festivals and customs, which can connect the broad and profound Chinese culture with a long history and strengthen the development and design of cultural courses in international Chinese education. It has a strong application in the cultural teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, which is different from the single and simple expression in the previous teaching materials. In addition to the noumenon culture of "24 solar terms", it can also be combined with agricultural meteorological culture, diet folk culture, health preservation traditional Chinese medicine culture, as well as many relevant divine words and allusions, folk sayings, poems and songs to build a new framework system. This framework opens a window for Chinese traditional culture. While stimulating students' initiative and enthusiasm, it also enables solar term culture to "go out", forming a typical representative with distinctive Chinese characteristics.

These rich and colorful cultural connotations are also the cultural teaching contents needed in international Chinese education. Through them, learners can display Chinese traditional etiquette, sacrifice, diet, health preservation and other folk cultural knowledge in a three-dimensional way, combined with fascinating 24 solar terms myths, stories, poems and songs, tell the working people's yearning for a better life, stimulate learners' interest and mobilize their enthusiasm. The unique cultural characteristics of the 24 solar terms enable learners to study without sticking to textbooks. Based on these characteristics, the author tries to think about how to reasonably use the matching teaching methods in International Chinese Language Education, so as to enhance their cultural knowledge and interest in Chinese traditional folk culture while learners master the knowledge of words.

##### ***4.1. Comparative teaching method of Chinese and foreign solar terms culture***

The 24 solar terms began in the Xia Dynasty. Even though it has been baptized for thousands of years, it still occupies a place in the historical stage with a long history by virtue of its scientificity and practicability. Moreover, the solar terms culture has also spread to China's neighboring countries, such as Japan, South Korea, North Korea and so on. They are close to China geographically and culturally. The figure of the 24 solar terms can be seen in many festivals and celebrations. In the "Communication and Practical Application of the Twenty four Solar Terms in Japan"<sup>[7]</sup> written by Bi Xuefei, it is mentioned that in 522 ad, with a large number of Han immigrants coming to Japan, the 24 solar terms also entered Japan with the calendar, and many fields such as agrometeorology, customs and activities, literature and art were affected by it.<sup>18</sup> The cold food festival, one of the four traditional festivals in South Korea, is also based on the 24 solar terms, which has a homologous and heterogeneous relationship with China's traditional festival Tomb-Sweeping Day.

In International Chinese Language Education, the comparative method is often adopted to compare the cultural phenomena of China, the learner's native country and other countries. In this process, learners can not only strengthen their cross-cultural awareness, but also help them to deepen their memory after understanding and analyzing the cultural similarities and differences between countries. I have seen a set of data when access to information, namely "24 solar terms" representative in the state of Chinese culture, so on the Japan and South Korea students in International Chinese Language Education, can be calendar,

diet, and festival culture, through the cultural collision between countries get twice the result with half the effort to achieve the teaching effect.

#### ***4.2. Interesting teaching method with pictures and texts***

"The content and form of teaching materials are vivid and interesting, which can attract learners, make students have learning motivation and interest, and make the relatively boring learning process relaxed and happy."<sup>[8]</sup> The folk cultural knowledge behind the "24 solar terms" is interesting, including fairy tales related to solar terms, poems and songs with solar terms as the event background, and food customs arising from festivals. These cultures can give learners interesting feelings to a certain extent. However, the success of the "24 solar terms" at the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games is more inseparable from the presentation form with pictures and texts. Compared with the pale pure text, the combination of pictures and texts can make learners immersive and divergent thinking.

Stories are generally closely related to the production and life of primitive humans. Primitive humans are eager to understand nature, so they imagine all things in heaven and earth as adults based on themselves. Most of them are suitable for oral narration. Influenced by the region, the 24 solar terms also produced different customs in the process of spreading. For example, northerners will say, "the winter solstice is not proper, and no one cares about the frozen ears." This statement comes from the story of famous doctor Zhang Zhongjing. It is said that Zhang Zhongjing returned home in a very cold winter and saw many poor people with frozen ears. Therefore, on the day of the winter solstice, he set up a shed "Quhan Jiaoer Decoction" to treat chilblain. This "Jiaoer" is "dumplings". It is believed that eating dumplings on the winter solstice can freeze the ears. At the same time, it is also a memorial to the medical Saint Zhang Zhongjing<sup>[9]</sup>. Southerners will say that "the winter solstice is as big as years, and eating Tangyuan is one year older", because Tangyuan has the meaning of perfection and reunion. Eating Tangyuan is expected to make the family happy. The telling effect of these vivid and interesting stories alone is far from better than the multimedia presentation of pictures and videos. Therefore, in the International Chinese Language Education in the "24 solar terms", introducing the story situation into the classroom, supplemented by pictures or videos, can help learners better understand and accept the stories told.

Inspired by the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games, the teaching of "24 Solar Terms" poems, proverbs and common sayings can also be combined with pictures and texts. There are many proverbs related to the 24 solar terms. Working people sum up their long-term farming and life experience to form lively proverbs and pass them on orally. For example, "Minor heat is not hot, but major Heat is the dog days of Summer", "Toads keep chirping, heavy rain is sure to come", "The beginning of winter that year cold, cold air more a year" and so on. Poetry is written by literati and poets with lyrical sentiments in the face of "24 solar terms". Such as the southern Song Dynasty famous poet Xin Qiji "Han Palace Spring · Spring Day" wrote in the "spring has returned, look at the beauty head, curl spring flags. Gratuitous wind and rain, not willing to end the residual cold." Is to describe a picture of spring beauty. As a unique style of Chinese, ancient poetry has its special rhythm. It is the essence of Traditional Chinese culture and contains the ancient people's thinking on philosophy. In International Chinese Language Education, how to timely and appropriate teach ancient poetry has always been a subject of academic research and discussion. The combination of "24 Solar terms" and ancient poetry in TCSL can not only help learners understand Chinese culture and the way of thinking of Chinese people, improve their Chinese literacy, but also connect culture and knowledge in a systematic way. With the help of pictures and pictures, the aesthetic feeling of ancient poems is distributed by pictures, and the interesting pictures are helpful to output the teaching content clearly. This way also conforms to the aesthetic education thought in International Chinese Language Education to a certain extent.

#### ***4.3. Practical activity teaching method of experiencing customs***

"Xueji" records: "the teaching of the university is also, when teaching must have a decent career, retreat interest must have residence and study." It means that in addition to classroom learning, extracurricular activities related to learning content are essential. The practical activities in International Chinese Language Education are of great educational significance to promote the all-round development of foreign students. At the same time, it is also one of the teaching activities stipulated in the syllabus, which constitutes a complete teaching system together with classroom teaching. In his book introduction to International Chinese Language Education, Zhou Xiaobing pointed out that various and targeted classroom activities play an important role in testing teachers' learning and promoting students' Extracurricular enthusiasm. As a complex and huge cultural system, each solar term has its own

characteristics and customs<sup>[10]</sup>.

The beginning of spring old means the opening of the new cycle, all things at the beginning of the old cloth new, so there is a paste "Yichun" spring paste custom. Spring stickers are also what we often call Spring Couplets, which are traditional Chinese festival decorations used in the Spring Festival. The word "Yichun" is derived from "adapt to spring", which also means a good spring. However, with the change of the calendar in the early years of the Republic of China, the custom of pasting "Yichun" on the beginning of Spring gradually weakened, and the traditional culture was about to disappear. In the process of International Chinese Language Education, cultural activities about "Chuntie" will be loved and respected by more Chinese learners. The relaxed and pleasant classroom environment can also change the learners' fear of Chinese characters and make them feel the charm of Chinese. The vernal equinox day is equal to day and night, implying fairness. Ancient people would proofread weights and measures on this day. Therefore, on this day, regardless of men and women, old and young, will "retain childish heart" to play a game: standing round eggs; There is a custom of "boiling plum" in Grain in Ear, so plum soup has become an essential summer drink; "White dew tea" and "local wine" in white dew season are closely related to Chinese tea and wine culture. The winter solstice dumplings, dumplings eating customs, minor cold do bacon, cut window customs..... These special customs belonging to the 24 solar terms can be enriched in the TCFL class, learning in activities, change imagination in reality, let students practice, experience Chinese culture in practice.

## 5. Conclusion

"24 solar terms" is the product of continuous inheritance and development in the process of historical precipitation of the Chinese nation. It carries the cultural weight of 5000 years. It is a unique and unique precious heritage of the Chinese nation. In the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, there is such a paragraph: "culture is the soul of a country and a nation. Culture prospers the country and the nation. Without a high degree of cultural self-confidence and cultural prosperity, there will be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Therefore, the "24 solar terms", as an excellent traditional Chinese culture, should be paid attention to in today's social and cultural construction and cultural exchanges all over the world. Through the research on the cultural teaching materials of International Chinese Language Education specialty and the comprehensive teaching materials of Chinese as a foreign language, this paper finds the neglect and lack of "24 solar terms" in the field of International Chinese Language Education, so it discusses its significance and value from the aspects of cultural identity, communication and sharing, educational identity and so on, and provides new ideas and new thoughts on the application of "24 solar terms" in the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language culture according to the Chinese traditional solar term culture. "24 solar terms" is undoubtedly a powerful tool for Chinese learners to understand Chinese culture and feel Chinese civilization. At present, the cross-cultural communication of the 24 solar terms still faces many difficulties and challenges. As an important platform and channel for external communication, International Chinese Language Education needs to help the "24 solar terms" culture integrate with the world, so that more Chinese learners can understand and learn this excellent traditional culture.

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