

## *Original Paper*

# A Study on the Cultural Identity of Chinese Youth in Excellent Traditional Culture

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### **Abstract**

*This article examines how Chinese traditional culture shapes young people's cultural identity. It explores how they can establish identity, strengthen responsibility, and fulfill their mission through cultural inheritance and innovation to support China's rejuvenation. It delves into key cultural concepts such as "the world as a commonwealth," "people as the foundation of the state," "cultivating oneself and governing the state," "harmony between heaven and man," and "seeking truth from facts." The goal is to deepen cultural identity, internalize values as beliefs, and externalize them as actions, transforming cultural confidence into responsibility and contributing to national rejuvenation.*

### **Keywords**

*youth cultural identity, excellent traditional Chinese culture, great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation*

## **1. Introduction**

Culture is vital to the destiny of a nation, and the youth carry the future of the nation. In the new era and on the new journey, enhancing the cultural identity of the youth is crucial for strengthening the cultural confidence of socialism with Chinese characteristics and consolidating the cultural subjectivity of the Chinese nation. Cultivating the cultural identity of the youth involves guiding them to clearly recognize their 'Chinese' identity, reinforcing their pride and sense of responsibility as members of the Chinese nation, and solidifying the cultural subjectivity of Chinese culture. Specifically, this includes: first, recognizing the 'source of one's self,' deeply understanding the identity of being a member of the Chinese nation and the Chinese people, and clarifying their historical mission within the Chinese national community; second, recognizing the 'self's aspirations,' understanding the historical logic and contemporary characteristics, and clarifying the historical responsibilities of the youth in the great cause of national rejuvenation, placing the interests of the country and the people first, and establishing a political belief of courage to take on responsibilities; third, practicing the 'true self's actions,' combining ideals with actions, not letting down the era or the prime of life, running the relay race on the track of youth, and advancing bravely towards the goal of national rejuvenation.

The excellent traditional culture of China is the 'root' and 'soul' of the Chinese nation, serving as a

profound source of Chinese socialist culture. It encompasses a wealth of ideological resources, such as the social ideal of 'the world for all, the world in harmony,' the governance philosophy of 'the people are the foundation of the state, governance should be based on virtue,' the tradition of 'unified under heaven, diverse yet integrated,' the patriotic sentiment of 'cultivating oneself, managing one's family, governing the state, and being responsible for the rise and fall of the country,' the spiritual pursuit of 'virtue supports all things, virtue promotes the way,' the economic ethics of 'enriching the people, balancing righteousness and profit,' the ecological concept of 'harmony between heaven and man, all things growing together,' the philosophical thought of 'seeking truth from facts, unity of knowledge and action,' the thinking method of 'holding both extremes, maintaining the middle to achieve harmony,' and the social interaction principle of 'promoting trust, building good relations, and being kind to neighbors.' These elements collectively shape the distinctive features of Chinese civilization, the cultural subjectivity of the Chinese nation, and the sense of community among the Chinese people, providing rich spiritual nourishment and clear value guidance for the growth and progress of young people in the new era.

The excellent traditional culture of China is not only the spiritual root of the Chinese nation but also the life gene of cultural identity among the youth. Deeply understanding the 'cultural subjectivity and vibrant vitality' of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation, enhancing the theoretical foundation of the excellent traditional culture of Chinese civilization, and shouldering the new cultural mission of 'continuing to promote cultural prosperity, building a strong cultural country, and constructing a modern Chinese civilization at a new historical starting point' is a key approach for young people in the new era to strengthen their cultural identity, boost cultural confidence, and consolidate the cultural subjectivity of the Chinese nation. Therefore, in the new era and on the new journey, strengthening the recognition of excellent traditional Chinese culture involves grounding in historical roots, establishing the cultural 'self-identity' of 'I am a member of the Chinese nation'; deepening the sense of subjectivity, clarifying the 'self-mission' of 'my responsibility in the great rejuvenation'; focusing on practical transformation, practicing the 'true self' action wisdom of 'how I will contribute to the rejuvenation'; and advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with a youthful China.

## **2. Id: The Identity Foundation of Youth Cultural Identity**

The core of youth cultural identity is to answer the questions of 'Who am I?' and 'Where do I come from?' The essence of the 'self' dimension is to awaken young people's deep recognition of the continuity, unity, and inclusiveness of Chinese civilization. This process establishes their cultural identity as members of the Chinese nation, providing a solid spiritual foundation for cultural confidence. This is not about abstract identity labeling but about activating the collective memory and value genes of excellent traditional Chinese culture, ensuring the conscious continuation of cultural lineage through intergenerational transmission. Strengthening young people's recognition of Chinese culture hinges on defining the cultural genes and spiritual roots of the Chinese nation. In exploring their 'self,' young people should draw wisdom from history to understand their place in the cultural lineage. The 'self' is reflected

in young people's recognition and sense of belonging to their cultural identity, with the core being the affirmation that 'I am a member of the Chinese nation' and 'I am Chinese.' This sense of belonging is not only an acknowledgment of the cultural origin but also a deep cultural identification with the Chinese nation. By understanding the historical origins of excellent traditional Chinese culture, young people can clearly define their cultural gene positioning. The social ideals of 'the world for the public good, the world in harmony' and the governance philosophy of 'the people are the foundation of the state, governance through virtue' found in excellent traditional Chinese culture provide young people with profound historical memory and spiritual inspiration. These ideas are both the long-term value goals pursued by the Chinese nation and important resources for young people to strengthen their identity. Learning, carrying forward and inheriting the excellent traditional Chinese culture will help young people in the new era to deeply understand the close connection between individuals and the country and society, enhance their identity and sense of mission to the Chinese nation community, and thus shoulder the historical responsibility of inheriting the Chinese cultural heritage and promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional culture.

### *2.1 To Activate the Social Ideal of "the World is for all and the World is one" among Young People*

The concept of a 'Great Harmony Society' as described in the 'Li Yun' chapter of the 'Book of Rites' reflects the social ideals and practices of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, which embodied a yearning for a harmonious society. The idea that 'When the great way is practiced, the world is held in common, the virtuous and capable are chosen, and trust and harmony are cultivated' in the 'Book of Rites' not only highlights the principle of prioritizing public interests but also underscores the importance of social equity and harmony, which has become a core value upheld by the Chinese nation. From the ancient system of abdication to the modern concept of 'the world held in common,' this ideal has consistently inspired the Chinese nation to strive forward.

The core of the social ideal of 'the world for the public good, the world in harmony' lies in 'promoting benevolence and valuing the people,' aiming to achieve social harmony, fairness, and the maximization of public interests. For the youth of the new era, the noble ideal of 'the world for the public good, the world in harmony' aligns deeply with the process of exploring one's true self. When young people define their roles within the Chinese nation community, this collective social perspective that emphasizes 'the world for the public good' helps them transcend individual limitations, build a sense of collective identity, and deeply understand that personal value is not only reflected in personal achievements but also in contributing their youthful energy to society and the nation.

The social ideal of 'the world as a commonwealth, the world as a great community' promoted by China's excellent traditional culture is crucial for strengthening the cultural identity and sense of belonging among young people. It inspires a strong sense of historical responsibility in young people as members of the Chinese nation, reinforcing their cultural identity as 'I am Chinese.' By promoting the value of 'the world as a commonwealth, the world as a great community,' it guides young people to integrate their personal growth into the broader context of national development, thereby deepening their sense of

belonging and mission to the Chinese nation. The social ideal of 'the world as a commonwealth, the world as a great community' from China's excellent traditional culture provides a clear direction for young people to strive for socialist communism, inspiring them to maintain firm beliefs in the face of social injustice and challenges, and to actively participate in the great cause of advancing socialism with Chinese characteristics, contributing to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

## *2.2 Strengthen the Responsibility of Young People to Govern the Country as the Foundation of the People and Govern with Virtue*

The principle that 'the people are the foundation of the state, and governance should be based on virtue' is at the heart of Confucian political philosophy. This concept can be traced back to the Book of Documents, which states, 'the people are the foundation of the state; with a solid foundation, the state will be at peace.' It underscores that the people are the core of the state, and ensuring their well-being is essential for national stability. The Mencius further emphasizes, 'the people are the most important element in a state, the state comes second, and the ruler is the least important,' reinforcing the principle of putting people first. This people-centered governance philosophy has shaped the fundamental norms of traditional Chinese political culture and provides valuable insights for modern governance.

The core of the governance philosophy 'the people are the foundation of the state, and governance should be based on virtue' lies in focusing on 'upholding integrity and upholding justice.' It emphasizes that moral principles should form the foundation of national governance and the well-being of the people. This is not only a cultural mission but also a practical approach to governing the country. For the youth of the new era, the governance concept of 'the people are the foundation of the state, and governance should be based on virtue' shares an intrinsic historical connection with the process of finding one's true self. As young people explore their cultural identity and sense of belonging, they clarify their roles and responsibilities in national governance. This governance philosophy, by emphasizing the value of 'the people as the foundation of the state,' instills a deep sense of social responsibility in young people. It helps them understand that personal value is not just about personal achievements but also about contributing to society and the nation.

The traditional Chinese governance culture plays a crucial role in strengthening the national sense of belonging and ethnic identity among young people. It emphasizes the principle that 'the people are the foundation of the state,' encouraging young people to genuinely identify themselves as part of the Chinese nation, thereby reinforcing their ethnic identity as 'I am Chinese.' By emphasizing the principle of 'governance through virtue,' it motivates young people to integrate their personal growth with national governance, thus enhancing their sense of belonging and mission to the Chinese nation. The governance philosophy of 'the people are the foundation of the state, and governance through virtue' provides clear guidance for young people on national governance, helping them establish appropriate views on power and responsibility when facing social responsibilities. This encourages them to actively participate in social services and public affairs, better understand the relationship between individuals and the state,

enhance their sense of social responsibility, and contribute their youthful energy to the modernization of Chinese-style governance.

### **3. Self: The Responsibility Foundation of Deepening Youth Cultural Identity**

The essence of young people's self 'identity is to inspire the intrinsic motivation for mission and responsibility, with the core being to answer the value question and define the sense of responsibility.' Why do I strive? 'Awakening the value consciousness in young people that' a scholar must be broad-minded and resolute, 'it involves building a meaningful connection between the' small self 'and the' greater self 'through dialogue between tradition and modernity. This process transforms the excellent cultural genes of Chinese tradition into an internal driving force for responsibility, elevating young people from' cultural carriers 'to' cultural subjects,' and encouraging them to take on the new cultural mission of building a modern civilization for the Chinese nation.

Enhancing the 'self' cognition of young people is reflected in their understanding of their roles and responsibilities, clarifying their duties and missions, and courageously shouldering the heavy burdens of the times. A clear sense of responsibility not only helps young people understand their personal values and life goals but also ignites their passion, enabling them to contribute to national development and the rejuvenation of the nation. Responsibility serves as a crucial guide for young people's lives, boosting their confidence and action; it is also a driving force for social progress and national prosperity. The sense of mission among young people is key to inheriting and promoting China's excellent traditional culture and achieving national rejuvenation. The patriotic sentiments of 'cultivating oneself, regulating one's family, governing the state, and bringing peace to the world, with a sense of responsibility for the rise and fall of the country 'and the spiritual pursuit of' bearing virtue and carrying all things, illuminating virtue and promoting the way 'from China's excellent traditional culture provide valuable guidance for young people. These concepts serve as beacons, illuminating the path ahead for young people, helping them deeply understand their responsibilities and missions, and inspiring them to uphold their beliefs and take on responsibilities in a complex and ever-changing social environment. Through in-depth study and practice, young people can internalize these concepts as values, enhancing their sense of social responsibility and mission.

#### *3.1 Cultivate Young People's Patriotic Feelings of "Cultivating Oneself, Governing the Country and Being Responsible for Prosperity and Decline"*

The sentiment of "cultivating oneself, regulating one's family, governing the country and bringing peace to the world, and being responsible for the rise and fall of the country" originates from the "cultivating oneself, regulating one's family, governing the country and bringing peace to the world" in The Great Learning, which emphasizes the close connection between personal cultivation and state governance. It holds that personal moral cultivation is the basis for achieving family harmony, national stability and social prosperity, and is the core of Confucianism and an important embodiment of Chinese values.

The mission of the youth in the new era is to work alongside the people to achieve the second centenary goal of building a strong country and reviving the nation. This mission aligns closely with the patriotic sentiment of 'cultivating oneself, regulating one's family, governing the state, and bringing peace to the world, and taking responsibility for the rise and fall of the nation. 'Both emphasize the inseparable relationship between individuals and the state or society, as well as the individual's role in social progress. By cultivating virtue and personal integrity, young people can not only enhance family harmony but also serve as the foundation for national stability and the source of social prosperity. This concept provides clear value guidance for the youth, encouraging them to actively contribute to the development of the country and the nation while realizing their own value.

The core concept of 'cultivating oneself, regulating one's family, governing the state, and bringing peace to the world, and bearing responsibility for the rise and fall of the nation 'significantly enhances young people's sense of responsibility. Firstly, it emphasizes personal cultivation, guiding young people to establish positive values, clarify their life goals, and deepen their understanding of the historical mission of national rejuvenation. Secondly, it highlights the organic connection between family, country, and society, enhancing young people's emotional connection to the Chinese nation and making them realize that personal growth is closely tied to national development. Thirdly, it underscores the responsibility for the rise and fall of the nation, inspiring young people to align their actions with the fate of the country, fostering a sense of action. This sense of family and national sentiment not only strengthens young people's social responsibility but also provides them with an inexhaustible source of spiritual strength, motivating them to bravely face challenges and contribute their wisdom and talents to the nation's rejuvenation.

### *3.2 Stimulate the Spiritual Pursuit of "Bearing Things with Great Virtue and Carrying Things with Great Virtue" among Young People*

The spiritual pursuit of 'bearing all things with virtue and promoting the way with clarity' is rooted in the \*I Ching\* (Book of Changes), which states, 'Heaven moves with strength; the gentleman should strive for self-improvement without ceasing. Earth's condition is yielding; the gentleman should bear all things with virtue. 'It also echoes the \*Great Learning\*, which teaches, 'The path of the university lies in illuminating virtue, in loving the people, and in striving for the highest good.' Individuals should uphold noble morals, embrace an inclusive heart, actively promote moral values, and work together to elevate the moral climate of society.

The spiritual pursuit of the youth in the new era of China is to promote national spirit, striving to be idealistic, responsible, hardworking, and dedicated young people. They aim to demonstrate their youthful contributions and strength in the great cause of building a strong country and achieving national rejuvenation. This pursuit aligns closely with the core values of 'bearing all things with virtue and promoting the way with clear virtue,' which emphasize personal moral cultivation and a strong sense of social responsibility.

The principle of 'bearing all things with virtue' guides young people to cultivate noble virtues, to uphold their beliefs and refine their character in a complex and diverse environment; the principle of 'promoting virtue and righteousness' inspires young people to actively spread positive energy, practice the core socialist values, and continuously elevate the moral standards of society. This spiritual pursuit not only lays a solid foundation for young people to establish correct worldviews, life views, and values but also ensures they never forget their national mission and social responsibilities as they pursue their dreams. The principles of 'bearing all things with virtue and promoting the way with clarity' are crucial for shaping the spiritual appearance of young people in line with the new era. Firstly, it emphasizes the cultivation of moral character, guiding young people to embrace positive values and deepen their understanding of the great cause of national rejuvenation. Secondly, it highlights the brilliance of morality, fostering a deep resonance among young people with the core socialist values, making them realize the close connection and synchronous resonance between personal moral pursuits and national development goals. Thirdly, it underscores the practical orientation of 'promoting the way,' motivating young people to translate their moral insights into concrete actions. This noble pursuit not only significantly enhances the social responsibility of young people but also infuses them with powerful spiritual motivation, inspiring them to face challenges bravely and contribute their wisdom and strength to the great goal of national rejuvenation.

#### **4. True Self: The Practical Foundation of Youth Cultural Identity Practice**

The essence of the 'true self' identity among young people lies in elevating cultural cognition to a methodological approach for civilizational practice, with the core being the practical path of 'how I act.' In the critical journey of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the 'true self' identity of young people integrates cognition and action, transcending mere ideological recognition and mission calls, and directly addressing the ultimate proposition of cultural subjectivity — how to reshape the practical logic through the genetic code of Chinese civilization, transforming young people from 'cultural inheritors' into 'creators of civilization.' Therefore, the 'true self' is the confident and self-reliant, forward-moving attitude that naturally emerges when young people have a clear sense of their 'true self' and a strong sense of responsibility. The prosperity and strength of the nation depend on the young generation stepping forward and taking on responsibilities. The core of the 'true self' is for young people to live up to the times and their youth, striving and advancing courageously on the path of national rejuvenation. The ecological concept of 'harmony between heaven and man, coexistence of all things' and the philosophical idea of 'seeking truth from facts, unity of knowledge and action' provide fundamental guidance for the growth of young people and the practice of national rejuvenation. These concepts not only help young people establish a correct worldview and methodology but also inspire them to exhibit a robust and proactive spirit in the new era. Through continuous learning and practice, young people can deeply internalize these concepts, thereby strengthening their sense of social responsibility and mission, contributing to building a more harmonious and beautiful society.

#### *4.1 Cultivate Young People's Ecological Concept of "Harmony between Man and Nature and the Cultivation of all Things"*

The ecological concept of 'harmony between heaven and humanity, and the coexistence of all things' is rooted in the 'harmony between heaven and humanity' philosophy from the \*I Ching\* and the idea from \*Mencius\* that 'all things coexist without harming each other, and the ways proceed together without conflict.' This concept posits that humans and nature form an organic whole, and human survival and development must adhere to natural laws, reflecting the intrinsic unity between humans and nature. It emphasizes that when utilizing natural resources, humans should respect these laws and avoid over-exploitation and destruction.

In the new era, the practice of national rejuvenation demands that young people, at the critical juncture where the 'two centenary goals' intersect, bravely shoulder the historical mission. They should start from the practical responsibilities of building a strong country and achieving national rejuvenation, deeply understanding their role in this process. Young people should unwaveringly prioritize the interests of the country and the people above all else, upholding the noble belief of courage to take responsibility and stand up for what is right.

The concept of 'harmony between heaven and humanity, and the coexistence of all things' aligns deeply with the mission of young people in the new era in terms of values and practical approaches. Firstly, it emphasizes the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature, which aligns with the requirements of sustainable development and ecological civilization in the new era. This helps young people understand that environmental protection is not only a matter of respect and responsibility towards nature but also a safeguard for the country's long-term development and the well-being of the people. Secondly, it requires young people to strictly follow natural laws in their practices and use resources scientifically and reasonably, which aligns closely with the scientific exploration spirit and practical skills needed for national rejuvenation. Thirdly, it highlights the diversity and complexity of ecosystems, encouraging young people to embrace an inclusive and open mindset, accept different viewpoints and cultures, actively broaden their international perspectives, and strengthen their cooperative spirit.

The concept of 'harmony between heaven and humanity, and the coexistence of all things' demonstrates a profound logical foundation when addressing the demands of the new era. Firstly, it promotes harmonious coexistence, helping young people develop a scientific ecological and developmental perspective and deepen their understanding of sustainable development. Secondly, it emphasizes respecting natural laws, encouraging young people to use scientific methods and technological innovation to promote sustainable development. Lastly, it advocates diversity and inclusiveness, fostering respect and understanding for different cultures and perspectives among young people, and shaping their international vision and collaborative skills. This concept provides young people with clear value guidance and strong spiritual motivation. Through in-depth study and practice, young people can transform this concept into action, contributing to the construction of a beautiful China and the modernization process that promotes harmony between humans and nature.



#### *4.2 Cultivate Young People's Philosophical Thinking of "Seeking Truth from Facts and Integrating Knowledge with Practice"*

"Pragmatism and the unity of knowledge and action" is a key philosophical concept in Chinese traditional culture. "Pragmatism" originates from the \*Book of Han\*, emphasizing objective understanding and rational analysis; "the unity of knowledge and action" is the core of Wang Yangming's philosophy, asserting that knowledge and action are inseparable, with knowledge being the starting point of action and action leading to the realization of knowledge. This philosophy has shaped the Chinese way of thinking and provides a theoretical foundation for modern practice.

In the new era, the great mission of national rejuvenation demands that young people continuously hone their skills, strengthen their ideals and beliefs, broaden their international perspectives, and dedicate their precious youth to the grand cause of national rejuvenation. Young people should be bold in practice, continue to learn, and strive for constant growth, aiming to achieve a deep integration of theory and practice. By leveraging scientific understanding and practical actions, they can contribute to social progress.

The principles of 'seeking truth from facts and the unity of knowledge and action' resonate deeply with the mission of young people in the new era. 'Seeking truth from facts' encourages young people to base their understanding and transformation of the world on objective reality, avoiding subjective assumptions. This aligns with the scientific spirit and rational thinking emphasized in the new era, inspiring young people to explore and innovate through practice. 'Unity of knowledge and action' emphasizes the connection between theory and practice, urging young people to transform knowledge into action and deepen their understanding through practical experience. This aligns with the new era's expectations for young people, encouraging them to enhance themselves through practical activities.

The philosophy of 'seeking truth from facts and integrating knowledge with action' strongly guides the growth and practice of young people in the new era and on the new journey. Firstly, respecting objective facts is fundamental, helping young people build a scientific worldview and methodology, thereby enhancing their ability to analyze social issues and find solutions. Secondly, it emphasizes the unity of theory and practice, encouraging young people to continuously explore and learn through practice, thus comprehensively improving their overall personal qualities. Thirdly, it highlights the value of action, reinforcing young people's sense of responsibility and mission, inspiring them to face challenges bravely and overcome difficulties without fear. The philosophical thought of 'seeking truth from facts and integrating knowledge with action' provides young people with clear value guidance and strong spiritual motivation. Through in-depth study and practice, young people can transform this philosophy into practical actions that promote the development of Chinese-style modernization.

### **5. Epilogue**

The excellent traditional culture of China is the spiritual root of the Chinese nation and a deep foundation for the cultural identity of the youth. On the journey of the new era, young people are transforming their

self-identity, sense of responsibility, and practical awareness into concrete actions in various fields, including social construction, ecological protection, and scientific innovation. Guided by the social ideal of 'the world as a commonwealth, the world as a great community,' the governance philosophy of 'the people are the foundation of the state, governance should be based on virtue,' the patriotic sentiment of 'cultivating oneself, regulating one's family, governing the state, and bearing the responsibility for prosperity and decline, 'the spiritual pursuit of' bearing all things with virtue, promoting virtue and righteousness, 'the ecological concept of' harmony between heaven and man, all things growing together, 'and the philosophical thought of' seeking truth from facts, unity of knowledge and action,' young people will surely find their direction, shoulder their responsibilities, and move forward resolutely in a complex and changing environment.

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