

“Meta”-Tour of the Qian Clan: How the Metaverse Revitalizes Family Tradition Across Cultures

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Abstract: This paper investigates the practical pathways and feasibility of the metaverse as a novel communication carrier in the cross-cultural dissemination of traditional Chinese family culture, using the Qian family in Haiyan, Zhejiang Province, China, as a case study. It examines the fundamental values of this family instruction and investigates its potential for cross-cultural communication by incorporating the construction mode of metaverse virtual scenes, as well as employing methods such as field interviews, literature review, and case analysis. The research suggests that the Qian Family Precepts' emphasis on self-cultivation, family harmony, state governance, and world peace is highly consistent with the Contemporary Socialist Core Values. Additionally, it is universal, which can elicit value resonance across various cultural contexts. Metaverse mechanisms, such as virtual ancestral halls and immersive interactions, not only enhance the sense of engagement and experience of traditional family culture but also overcome the constraints of single communication forms and the strong sense of distance that audiences have previously experienced in terms of communication forms. This article posits that the integration of digital technology and family culture not only enhances the cross-cultural influence and soft power of Chinese traditional culture but also provides unparalleled academic approaches for cross-cultural communication and digital humanities research.

Keywords: Metaverse; Family culture; Cross-cultural communication; Qian Family Precepts

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1. Introduction

Family culture is an essential component of traditional Chinese culture and an important bond to maintain social ethical order and value norms^[1]. Recently, with the acceleration of globalization, it has become a common issue in the academic and practical fields of how to spread family culture effectively in cross-cultural communication, thus enhancing the international influence of Chinese culture. Against this backdrop, the rise of digital technology, especially the metaverse, provides new possibilities and channels for the inheritance and dissemination of traditional culture.

The Qian family originated from Qian Liu, the king of Wu, whose descendants migrated to Haiyan, Zhejiang, in the early Ming Dynasty and gradually developed into a locally famed family. The Qian Family Precepts condense the values of loyalty, filial piety, probity, thrift, and domestic harmony, and become an important principle passed down through generations in the Qian family. It encompasses personal self-cultivation, family governance, social responsibility, and national responsibility. It not only embodies the core spirit of Confucian's "self-cultivation, family governance and world

peace”, but also provides ideological support for maintaining the prosperity of the family. As a typical case of regional family culture, such family precepts are not only representative in local culture but also carry the universal connotation of traditional Chinese values.

The existing research mostly focuses on the historical inheritance and moral norms of family precepts and style, with few discussions on how to achieve cross-cultural communication by combining emerging technologies. Especially in the context of the metaverse, the sense of immersion and interactivity of virtual space provides new opportunities for the digital transformation of traditional culture, helping to break through the sense of distance for the audience and insufficient acceptance in traditional communication. Therefore, the combination of Qian Family Precepts and the metaverse can not only reveal the unique charm of traditional Chinese family culture but also contribute to exploring the innovative channel of cross-cultural communication in the era of digital humanities.

On the basis of the above, this paper takes the Qian Family Precepts in Haiyan as the research object. Through field interviews and literature review, it analyzes the core spirit and cross-cultural value of Qian Family Precepts, and explores the application mechanism and practical prospect of metaverse in the spread of family culture, and hopefully provides theoretical and practical reference for the creative transformation and cross-cultural communication of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

2. Research and design

2.1. Research object

This study takes the Qian clan in Haiyan County, Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, as the main research object. Originating from Qian Liu, the King of Wuyue, the Qian clan moved to Haiyan in the Ming Dynasty and gradually developed into a clan group with significant cultural influence (Figure 1). The Family Motto of the Qian Clan, as the core document of the clan, centrally embodies the values of loyalty, filial piety, integrity, diligence, and frugality, and puts forward normative requirements for individual self-cultivation, family harmony, social responsibility, and national commitment. The selection of the Qian clan as a research case is due to two reasons: on the one hand, its family tradition culture is representative; on the other hand, its values are highly consistent with the core socialist values of the contemporary era, which provides a typical example for cross-cultural communication research.



Figure 1. Qian clan ancestral hall

2.2. Research methods

This investigation employs a research methodology that integrates quantitative and qualitative methodologies:

Field Interviews: Field investigations were conducted at the Qian Clan Ancestral Hall in Zhongqian Village, Haiyan County. In order to ascertain the fundamental values of the family motto of the Qian Clan and the inheritance of the clan's

tradition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with local clan representatives and cultural inheritors.

Literature Analysis: The development context of the Qian clan and the formation process of its clan culture were sorted out by conducting a systematic search of databases such as CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), documents from the National Library of China, and relevant genealogy materials.

Case Study: This study examines the transformability of the value concepts of the family motto of the Qian Clan in the contemporary cross-cultural context and investigates the application simulations and mechanisms in conjunction with the metaverse communication scenario. The primary text is The Family Motto of the Qian Clan.

2.3. Data sources

The main data sources for this study are as follows: (1) documents and materials associated with the Qian Clan Ancestral Hall, including The Family Motto of the Qian Clan and Qian Clan Genealogy; (2) academic databases (CNKI, Wanfang Data, Web of Science) research findings on family tradition culture and cross-cultural communication; and (3) field interview records and on-site observation notes by researchers. The study is not only supported by real-world context but also has a sense of historical profundity as a result of the combination of documentary and field data.

2.4. Analytical path

First, the study conducts a thematic analysis of the core connotations of The Qian Family Precepts, summarizing its value norms in four dimensions: individual, family, society, and country. Subsequently, it compares these norms with the core values of contemporary socialism and the universal values in a cross-cultural context, extracting the feasibility of their cross-cultural communication. Finally, integrating the characteristics of metaverse technology, it designs virtual ancestral halls, immersive interactions, and cross-cultural dialogue mechanisms, and explores the innovative paths and potential challenges in the digital communication of family tradition culture.

3. Survey results and core findings

3.1. The core values of the Qian Family Precepts

The survey results indicate that The Qian Family Precepts, as the code of conduct followed by the Qian clan for generations, centrally embodies the essence of Confucian thought of “cultivating one’s moral character, governing the family well, administering the state effectively, and bringing peace to the world” (Figure 2). Its value connotations mainly cover the following four aspects:

Personal self-cultivation: It emphasizes that “one’s intention must not offend heaven and earth, and one’s words and deeds must be worthy of sages”, requiring individuals to exercise self-discipline in moral cultivation and behavioral norms, which embodies the spirit of valuing virtue and establishing oneself in traditional Chinese culture.

Family harmony: It advocates “not indulging in arrogance and extravagance, brothers being in harmony, and harmony between superiors and inferiors”, emphasizing harmony and moderation within the family, and highlighting core ethics such as “filial piety” and “righteousness.”

Social responsibility: It advocates “making friends with sincerity, benefiting neighbors universally, sympathizing with widows and orphans, and respecting the elderly and caring for the young”, which underscores the emphasis on education, benevolence, and righteousness, and mutual assistance among neighbors, highly aligning with the social responsibility advocated in contemporary society.

National commitment: It puts forward that “one must strive for what benefits the world; even more so for what benefits generations to come”, emphasizing that individuals and families should place the interests of the country and the nation above their own, demonstrating a profound sense of family and country.

From the above four dimensions, it can be seen that The Qian Family Precepts is not only a code of conduct for maintaining the clan but also contains universally significant moral norms, providing a solid value foundation for cross-

cultural communication.

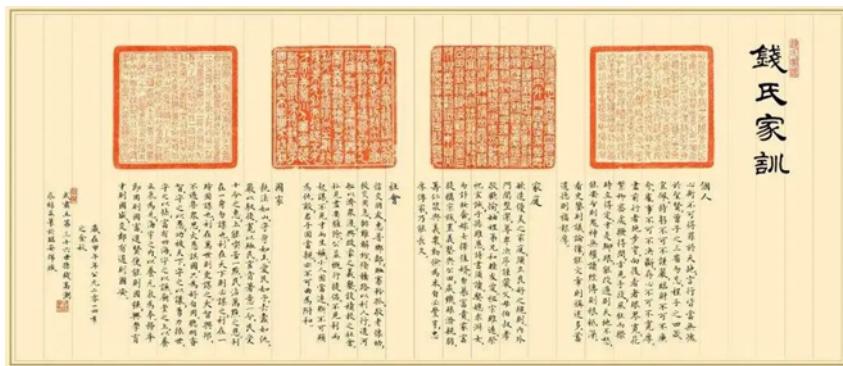


Figure 2. Qian Clan's family motto

3.2. The contemporary significance of the Qian Family tradition

Family tradition is a pride deeply rooted in the blood, while family precepts are cherished strategies for governing a household^[2]. The study reveals that the Qian Family Precepts highly align with the core values of contemporary socialism in multiple dimensions. Its emphasis on “loyalty, filial piety, incorruptibility, diligence, and family harmony” echoes the value orientation of “patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendliness” advocated in modern society. This alignment between history and reality endows the Qian family tradition with not only practical guiding significance in Chinese society but also the potential for cross-cultural resonance.

Against the backdrop of social transformation and globalization, some groups have encountered issues such as a lack of integrity and a weakened sense of responsibility. The moral self-discipline and social commitment advocated in the Qian Family Precepts precisely provide a value reference for contemporary society. Particularly in the construction of incorruptible culture, cautionary maxims like “Your salary and emoluments are the fat and grease of the people; the common people may be easily oppressed, but heaven cannot be deceived” still hold practical enlightenment for modern public governance and social ethics.

Consequently, the Qian family tradition is a valuable resource for addressing contemporary social issues, in addition to being a historical and cultural heritage. The practical vitality and international communication power of traditional Chinese culture can be improved through its value transformation.

3.3. Exploratory innovations in communication methods

Communication innovation is a critical approach to the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional family tradition culture, and practical innovation is the key to this process. The survey also indicates that traditional family culture frequently faces obstacles, including monotonous forms and inadequate audience participation in cross-cultural communication^[3]. This limitation can be effectively overcome by incorporating the immersion and interactivity of metaverse technology. The subsequent innovative pathways are proposed in this investigation:

Construction of virtual ancestral halls: Through digital modeling, the Qian family ancestral halls and family documents (such as The Qian Family Precepts, genealogy, calligraphy, and paintings, etc.) are transformed into virtual exhibition spaces, allowing users to acquire knowledge of family tradition culture through immersive experiences.

Immersive scene design: Interactive scenes themed around “loyalty”, “filial piety”, “propriety”, and “righteousness” are set up in the virtual environment. Users can deepen their understanding of the connotations of family tradition culture through methods such as dialogues with virtual characters and situational experiences.

Cross-cultural interaction mechanism: Establish a Sino-foreign dialogue platform and design a “cultural annotation point” and a “value comparison system” to help overseas audiences understand the differences and commonalities between concepts such as “zhong (loyalty)” and “loyalty”, “xiao (filial piety)” and “filial love”, thereby promoting value alignment

and cultural resonance.

Online-offline integration: Integrate offline promotion through WeChat official accounts, short-video platforms, and cultural attractions to expand the communication coverage and enhance the diversified participation of the audience.

These explorations indicate that through the innovative application of metaverse technology, family tradition culture can achieve a transformation from “static inheritance” to “dynamic interaction”, enhancing the sense of experience, understanding, and identity in cross-cultural communication.

4. Conclusion

This study examines the core tenets and contemporary relevance of familial culture through the case study of the Haiyan Qian family, while exploring the potential application of the metaverse in its transcultural dissemination. Findings indicate that the principles outlined in the Qian Family Precepts—pertaining to self-cultivation, familial harmony, social responsibility, and national commitment—possess both historical continuity and cross-cultural universality. These values can provide a robust foundation for the global dissemination of outstanding traditional Chinese culture. Furthermore, by leveraging virtual spaces within the metaverse to construct immersive scenarios and interactive platforms, the participatory and affective dimensions of cultural communication can be effectively enhanced, thereby offering innovative pathways for transcending cultural barriers in the transmission of traditional heritage (Figure 3). As highlighted by YangC in his research on civil etiquette and family culture in social service programs, effective cultural transmission relies on practical innovation and diverse media to genuinely achieve the goals of cultural heritage preservation and the construction of a harmonious society ^[4].

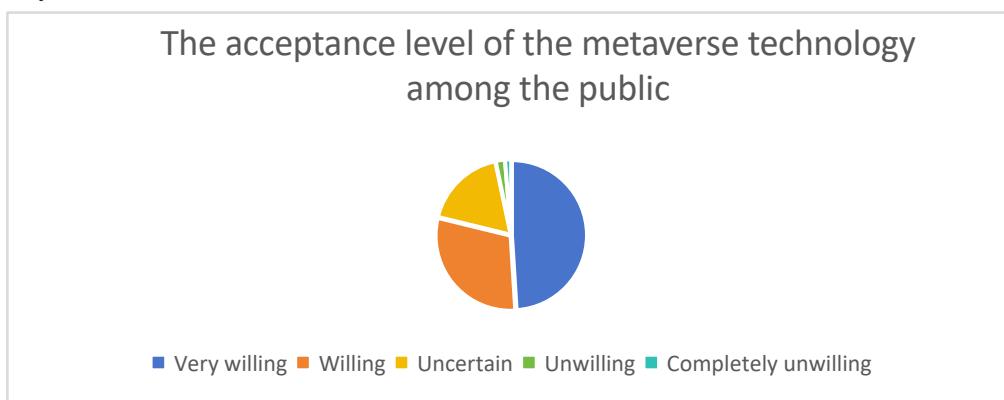


Figure 3. The acceptance level of the metaverse technology among the public

Nevertheless, this study is constrained by its limited sample size, and the application of metaverse technology remains in a nascent phase. However, considerable public optimism persists regarding its potential. The actual efficacy of its communication thus requires further empirical validation. Future research could further investigate the interplay among digital technology, traditional culture, and intercultural communication through broader cultural case studies and cross-national comparative perspectives ^[5]. In conclusion, this study not only offers practical insights for the creative reinterpretation and innovative development of familial culture but also contributes novel theoretical perspectives to the fields of digital humanities and intercultural communication.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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