

The Enlightenment of the Concept of Cultural Confidence on International Chinese Education and Cultural Propagation

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Abstract: Cultural self-confidence is the full affirmation and active practice of a people, a country and a political party of its own cultural value, and the firm confidence in its cultural vitality. As an important hub and window for cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries, international Chinese education shoulders the important task of language and cultural propagation. In the mutual learning and exchanges between Chinese and foreign cultures, international Chinese education must insist on cultural self-confidence in teachers, teaching, teaching materials, etc., "tell Chinese stories and spread Chinese voice", and show the world a rich, stereo, and vivid image of China.

Keywords: Cultural self-confidence; International Chinese education; Cultural propagation

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Cultural self-confidence is the full affirmation and active practice of a people, a country, and a political party of its own cultural value, and the firm confidence in its cultural vitality. The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly stated that cultural self-confidence is a more basic, deeper and more lasting force in the development of a country and a nation. As an important window and link for the promotion of Chinese language and excellent Chinese culture, international Chinese education shoulders the important task of spreading culture. Volunteers of

international Chinese education must have firm cultural self-confidence to "tell Chinese stories and spread Chinese voice."

1 The Enlightenment of Cultural Confidence to International Chinese Educators

The practice of international Chinese education is not only the promotion of language, because language and culture are complementary and interdependent on each other. Language is the carrier of culture, and culture is the core of language. The two cannot be separated. Zhang Kebing (2017) proposed that "cultural self-confidence is the high degree of identification and conscious practice of cultural subjects with their own culture, and a cultural expression based on psychological superiority and behavioral firmness"^[1]. The main body of international Chinese education mainly refers to teachers and volunteers engaged in international Chinese education.

1.1 Current Status of International Chinese Educators' Self-confidence in their Own Culture and their Emphasis on Cultural Propagation

In recent years, with the rapid development of Chinese economy, General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly expounded the profound connotation of "cultural self-confidence" on different occasions, constantly deepening and enriching the top-level design of "cultural self-confidence" and promoting cultural exchanges. The implementation of the great concept of "One Belt One Road" has further stimulated the vitality of Chinese language and cultural propagation. Thanks to the active efforts

and actions of the government, Hanban, Confucius Institutes, and many international Chinese educators, remarkable results have been achieved in Chinese language and culture propagation, and the international influence of Chinese has increased significantly.

Throughout the course of China's history, China has been lagging behind and being bullied for a long time after the Opium War. Insightful Chinese, especially the intellectuals, developed huge psychological gap facing the past glory and current humiliation, and began to actively look for the reasons behind. This resulted in a series of proposition such as "All-Takenism", "abolish Chinese characters, and switch to pinyin characters", and "down with the Confucian store" etc., which completely denied Chinese culture, and instead proposed "Westernization" and even "complete Westernization". This reflects that Chinese culture was an inferior culture for a period of time. After the 1980s, Chinese culture was greatly impacted by Japanese, Korean, European and American cultures. Under the influence and even brainwashing of some popular music, animation, and Hollywood blockbusters, etc., a considerable proportion of the Chinese people had harbored the attitude and mentality of contempt, doubt and denial towards traditional Chinese culture, and developed the "cultural inferiority" complex.

In the practice of international Chinese education, in order to more effectively promote the propagation of excellent Chinese culture, Chinese teachers and volunteers must be able to consistently strengthen their "cultural confidence" and continuously improve and enrich their own cultural literacy. As the cultural propagation process of international Chinese education involves a wide range of cultural knowledge, often covering many fields such as history, geography, mythology, religion, folklore, and philosophy, etc., which raises extremely high requirements for Chinese teachers and volunteers. Chinese teachers and volunteers must not only have excellent Chinese teaching skills, but also have a high cultural literacy and humanistic qualities. They must be involved in many areas of Chinese culture, history, religion, folk customs, folklore, and philosophy, etc., understanding the context of China's excellent culture from all directions and aspects.

International Chinese education requires both

language and cultural publicity and exchange. As the window of "telling Chinese stories and spreading Chinese voice", international Chinese education should be promoting both language teaching and cultural communication. Language education promotes cultural propagation, and cultural propagation assists language teaching. The two are interdependent and mutually promoting. However, in the practice of international Chinese education, some international Chinese educators pay more attention to one of the two. Relatively speaking, they pay more attention to language education and use the display of Chinese excellent culture as a means of supporting language teaching. This requires international Chinese educators to value the close connection between language teaching and cultural propagation, grasp the connotation of "language is the carrier, culture is the core" deeply and accurately, clearly understand the positioning of international Chinese education, and fully display "cultural confidence" in practice to promote cultural propagation.

1.2 The Enlightenment of Cultural Confidence to International Chinese Educators

International Chinese educators, as messengers of Chinese language and cultural promotion, must have a deep comprehension and literacy of excellent Chinese culture, as well as solid cross-cultural communication skills, and be able to quickly adapt to the "hard" environment such as the weather and food as well as the "soft" environment such as the customs and values of the country where they will be appointed. For the professional training of international Chinese educators, it is necessary to emphasize both "external skills" and "internal skills".

For practitioners of Chinese international Chinese education, strengthen their cultural literacy and the steadiness of their multicultural awareness, and constantly improve their cultural confidence as the main body of international Chinese education. Through strengthening education and training, they can recognize and admire the excellent Chinese culture, and at the same time, they can face the culture of other countries with a tolerant attitude, neither blindly confident nor repelling the culture of other countries.

International Chinese educators should respect the culture of the host country, actively build harmonious interpersonal relationships, and ensure

that the promotion of Chinese language and cultural propagation can achieve the expected results on the premise of adhering to cultural self-confidence and adherence to their own values and beliefs. Meanwhile, international Chinese educators must firmly establish a sense of responsibility to actively promote China's excellent culture, continuously strengthen their skills in cultural communication, and have a deep understanding and grasp of Chinese cooking, embroidery, kung fu, festival customs, costumes, myths and legends etc., so that in the actual teaching process, they can explain Chinese culture more deeply and thoroughly on the basis of respecting local culture to ensure the effects of cultural teaching and cultural propagation.

In short, in the cultivation of international Chinese educators, we need both professional skills training and ideological instillation, which can not only cultivate professional talents that meet international needs, but also a solid sense of "cultural confidence" with solid and clear role-positioning, acting as a good link and window for Chinese culture propagation, tell Chinese stories properly, and spread Chinese culture properly.

2 The Enlightenment of Cultural Self-confidence to International Chinese Education and Teaching

Mr. Su Xinchun (2006) once pointed out that "language records the survival history of a nation, it is saturated with the cultural spirit of a nation, and language becomes a window to reflect the national culture"^[2]. Zhang Dexin (1996) believes that "the best model for teaching Chinese as a foreign language is the integrated teaching of language and culture, permeating and melting cultural teaching into language teaching."^[3] Ultimately, it is not only necessary to solve the problem of "saying" in international Chinese education, but it is more imperative to solve the problems of "why you say so" and the problem of "what is the meaning of saying this"^[4] as put forward by Lin Guoli's (1997). In other words, it is to let Chinese learners understand how the Chinese language formed its unique language habits and expressions, as well as the modes of thinking, living habits, folk culture, and historical evolution, etc. behind the Chinese language, which means that international Chinese education is not only about the promotion of Chinese language, but should also

include the spread of profound Chinese culture.

2.1 Current Status of International Chinese Language Education and Cultural Education

2.1.1 Emphasis on language, neglecting culture

In actual international Chinese education courses, the emphasis is still on language promotion. Although Hanban, Confucius Institutes, and overseas local colleges and universities have set up courses and activities related to Chinese culture, most of them are just to assist the promotion of Chinese language teaching, and are routinistically introducing cultural phenomena such as calligraphy, paper-cutting, porcelain, the Great Wall, Kung Fu, and Cheongsam, etc., without going deep into the cultural connotation and profound meaning under the surface. Such a teaching model can promote language teaching very well, and can also arouse the audience's interest in Chinese culture, but it does not allow them to deeply understand the wisdom contained in cultural phenomena.

2.1.2 Monotonous cultural selection

The selection of cultural points is often focused on the excellent traditional Chinese culture, such as Tai Chi, tea art, festival customs, dumplings and other traditional Chinese cultural elements, while ignoring the excellent contemporary Chinese culture, such as "harmony" culture and "ingenuity" culture etc. The cultural display also focuses on traditional cultural elements, ignoring modern cultural elements, and cannot effectively show the audience a true and stereo image of China.

2.2 The Enlightenment of the Concept of Cultural Confidence on International Chinese Education and Teaching

2.2.1 Raise the importance of cultural propagation

In the teaching mode of international Chinese education, emphasis should be placed on cultural propagation and the proportion of cultural propagation should be increased. Increase the proportion of cultural teaching courses from the curriculum, and at the same time international Chinese educators should also enrich cultural teaching modes and methods, which can display cultural phenomena and explore cultural connotations, so that the audience can truly understand Chinese culture from the surface to the inner, in-depth and concisely.

2.2.2 Focus on the diversity of cultural selection

In cultural courses, in addition to showing the charm of traditional Chinese culture, it is also necessary to inject contemporary Chinese cultural elements. General Secretary Xi Jinping (2016) proposed to “promote the cultural spirit that spans across time and space, across national boundaries, full of eternal charm, and has contemporary value”, “let the world know about China in academia, China in theory, and China in philosophical society”, and “let the world know about the China that is developing, opening up, and contributing to human civilization”^[5].

2.2.3 Grasp the "level" of cultural propagation

When carrying out cultural propagation, we should pay attention to the "level" and pay attention to flexible propagation. It is necessary to emphasize that the propagation of Chinese culture is to promote exchanges and mutual learning between cultures, and is not aggressive but constructive to other countries' cultures. The main purpose is to let the people of other countries feel the beauty of Chinese culture, enhance mutual learning and experiencing, and achieve "appreciate the beauty of each, appreciate the beauty of others, and appreciate each other's beauty together" through exchanges and mutual learning.

2.2.4 Focus on the audience

International Chinese education must spread Chinese stories when conducting cultural propagation, and it must also be close to the audience's needs for Chinese cultural information. When telling Chinese stories, we must be able to spread the culture with what the audience can accept, love, and want to understand. Zheng Tongtao (2017) pointed out that it is necessary to "focus on the audience, be close to China's development reality, spread the stories of ordinary Chinese people, and be close to foreigners' needs for Chinese information", and "conduct cultural propagation in a way that conforms to the thinking habits of international audiences", so that Chinese culture and Chinese image are told in words that they "want to hear, can listen to, and understand clearly"^[6].

3 The Enlightenment of Cultural Self-confidence to the Selection and Compilation of International Chinese Education Teaching Materials

In the propagation of Chinese language and culture

around the world, learners have a great demand for language and cultural products such as textbooks and teaching aids. These materialized cultural products also reflect the characteristics of Chinese culture to a certain extent, and will also affect learners' perception of China's image. Qiu Baisheng (2012) pointed out that “when we disregard the quality performance of Chinese products and Chinese services, and are just blindly obsessed with the so-called promotion of our own cultural products, to the extent that the quality of the exported cultural products are very different from the world's overall perception of Chinese people, Chinese products and Chinese services, it will make most people in the world have a vague or even horrible impression of China”^[8]. International Chinese education textbooks, as the main carrier for international students to learn Chinese language and the cultural product that these students are most exposed to, also reflect the quality of Chinese cultural products and Chinese services. Therefore, we must pay attention to the improvement of the quality of textbooks.

3.1 Current Status of International Chinese Education Textbook Compilation

The quality of teaching materials for international Chinese education is varies widely, and even some countries do not have relatively professional and standardized Chinese teaching materials that are in line with local reality. Liu Xiaobin (2018) pointed out that “in some countries in Central Asia, due to the lack of Chinese textbooks for the Kazakh language, many countries directly order textbooks from Russia.”^[7] In another example, a British student once said that before he went to study in China, the Chinese language learning materials that he used teach addressing people such as "Comrade Wang and Comrade Zhang", resulting in him attracting attention when he greeted others with "comrade (tongzhi)" when he first arrived in Beijing. The fact that some international students do not have textbooks that meet local needs, the content being seriously outdated, and the textbooks that are severely derailed from today's Chinese society and lack practicality are still in use shows to a certain extent that the quality of international Chinese education textbooks needs to be improved.

3.2 The Enlightenment of the Concept of Cultural Confidence on the Selection and Compilation of International Chinese Education Teaching Materials

Carry out a wide range of selections among the existing international Chinese textbooks, and select excellent textbooks that are standardized, rich in content, and novel in format to be absorbed, integrated and put into international Chinese education. Meanwhile, focus on improving the quality of international Chinese education textbooks. The textbook compilation should be easy to adopt and localize. As different countries have different national conditions, in order to better guide and realize Chinese language teaching and cultural promotion, the compilation of teaching materials needs to adapt to the different national conditions of different countries. For example, in British Chinese textbooks, the topic should start with talking about the weather, which is in line with local cultural customs and makes local Chinese learners more accepting of it. It is necessary to integrate outstanding Chinese and foreign faculty members, gather the strengths of all parties, and further improve and standardize the compilation of textbooks, curriculum syllabuses, examination syllabuses, etc., so as to implement policies precisely, and be able to write targeted and focused textbooks according to different countries and different audiences. Localized textbooks that are "down-to-earth", so as to gradually eliminate textbooks that are seriously outdated, derailed from today's Chinese society, and impractical.

4 Conclusions

In the new era, the international Chinese language

education undertakes the mission of spreading Chinese language and Chinese culture to the world, and promoting multicultural exchanges and mutual learning. "To forge iron, one must be strong himself", we international Chinese educators should carefully study the important statement of General Secretary Xi Jinping's thoughts on cultural self-confidence, internalize "cultural self-confidence" in the heart and express it in action, and contribute our own power to enable Chinese culture going global.

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