

Reflections on Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture Teaching in the Context of International Chinese Education

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Abstract: With the development of the times, both international Chinese education and traditional Chinese medicine have ushered in not only great potential development opportunities, but also various challenges. Traditional Chinese medicine culture has gradually gained international recognition, and many foreign students are now choosing to study traditional Chinese medicine. Therefore, the development of international Chinese education needs to embody traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching, which can promote the internationalization of traditional Chinese medicine. At the same time, encountering problems such as cultural differences ensue the need for improving the teaching system, which lacks teaching practice. On this basis, strategies such as exploring the teaching mode of traditional Chinese medicine culture, cultivating a team of high-quality international Chinese teachers, and creating experience courses with characteristics of traditional Chinese medicine culture have been put forward, so as to enhance the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine culture and promote the development of international Chinese education.

Keywords: International Chinese education; Traditional Chinese medicine culture; Traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching

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1. Introduction

Traditional Chinese medicine culture is the incomparable essence of traditional Chinese national culture, and it is also an important carrier of traditional national culture. As early as 2,000 years ago, with the opening of the silk road, China's papermaking, iron smelting, and traditional Chinese medicine have been shared across the world through Central Asia. Looking forward to the present, as the president asserts that the children of China should "tell ancient Chinese stories well, spread China's voice well, and present a true, three-dimensional, and comprehensive China," international Chinese education has also ushered in a new round of development opportunities. Language is the most important carrier of culture. At the same time, culture also affects the development and use of language to a certain extent. The two can be said to be inseparable. Cultural teaching, in the context of international Chinese education, is also a hot topic that has been discussed by experts and scholars in the academic field in recent years. In this context, the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine culture will help learners of Chinese as a second language to further understand the excellent traditional Chinese culture and also promote the internationalization of traditional Chinese medicine and further gain the recognition of people all around the world. Therefore, this paper

focuses on the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine culture under the background of international Chinese education, so as to further develop international Chinese education and promote traditional Chinese medicine to the world ^[1].

2. Necessity of carrying out traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching under the background of international Chinese education

Carrying out traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching in international Chinese education is not only conducive to learners of Chinese as a second language in grasping the language and characters as well as understanding traditional Chinese culture, but also in promoting traditional Chinese medicine culture to be further recognized on the international platform.

2.1. Necessity of traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching for the development of international Chinese education

Based on the official data of the Ministry of Education, the number of countries and regions offering international Chinese education has increased to more than 180 at the end of 2020. At the same time, more than 70 countries have incorporated Chinese into their national education system, and more than 20 million foreign second language learners are learning Chinese. In the context of the rapid development of international Chinese education, the number of foreign students studying in China is also increasing day by day ^[2]. According to the statistics provided by relevant departments, foreign students studying Chinese language in China ranked first, followed by foreign students studying traditional Chinese medicine in China. It is clear that such foreign students have evolved into a group that cannot be overlooked in the globalization of international Chinese education. For ordinary learners of Chinese as a second language, traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching is not only a key to the treasure house of traditional Chinese culture, but also a window to the essence of the excellent culture of the Chinese nation. For foreign students majoring in traditional Chinese medicine, traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching is not only the cornerstone of their learning, but also a link throughout their learning process. Therefore, traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching is a necessity for the development of international Chinese education ^[3].

2.2. Traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching promotes the internationalization of traditional Chinese medicine

“Traditional Chinese medicine contains the Chinese nation’s health concept and practical experience for thousands of years. It is the great creation of the Chinese nation and the treasure of ancient Chinese science,” as mentioned by the president. Therefore, it is crucial to stand on the basis of this profound cultural heritage, inherit, spread, and develop the culture of traditional Chinese medicine. TCM culture teaching can promote the understanding of Chinese culture among foreign students to a certain extent; it also assists these students in mastering basic language knowledge, narrowing cultural differences, and reducing cross-cultural communication conflicts ^[4]. Through traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching, international Chinese teachers can impart correct and systematic knowledge, stimulate foreign students’ interest in traditional Chinese medicine, ensure that their cognition of traditional Chinese medicine culture is not biased, form a benign communication process, expand the communication scope and influence of traditional Chinese medicine culture, as well as further promote the internationalization of traditional Chinese medicine ^[5].

3. Problems in traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching in the context of international Chinese education

In consideration of the actual situation of the current international Chinese education, there are still issues in the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine culture.

3.1. Cultural differences in traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching

As the essence of traditional Chinese culture, traditional Chinese medicine culture includes the concepts of yin and yang, the unity of heaven and man, as well as the compliance with the four seasons. At the same time, it also includes prescription methods, syndrome differentiation, and treatment. The complex prescriptions and fine processing methods of traditional Chinese medicine are indispensable to the culture of traditional Chinese medicine, and they have sustained the health of Chinese people for thousands of years. However, the culture and methods of traditional western medicine are very different from those of traditional Chinese medicine. Therefore, in order to carry out the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine culture, it is necessary to correctly explain these cultural aspects to foreign students. However, there are conflicts and hindrances due to cultural differences, medical concepts, professional medical terminology translations, and so on. At the same time, it is also difficult to verify the efficacy of traditional Chinese medicine proprietary prescriptions with scientific and technical means within a short period, in order to obtain wide recognition from all walks of life across the globe. Narrowing the gap in traditional Chinese medicine culture is an issue worth discussing.

3.2. Flawed teaching system

In the field of international Chinese education, the systematic research on culture teaching is still in its infancy. However, with the influence of traditional Chinese medicine culture, traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching has gradually gained the attention of researchers, educators, and learners. On the other hand, there are still many issues. First, as a part of the research field of international Chinese education and culture teaching, traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching has not attracted the attention of many experts and scholars in the academic field; hence, its theoretical basis has not made a significant breakthrough. There is also a lack of targeted and professional theoretical support when grass-roots teachers carry out traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching. Second, as far as the teaching team is concerned, the requirements for teachers to carry out the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine culture are higher, in which these teachers have to ensure the scientificity and professionalism of the teaching process. On the basis of perfecting the skills of professional international Chinese teachers, it is also necessary to systematically learn the cultural knowledge of traditional Chinese medicine and lay a solid foundation for teaching. However, at present, there is a lack of grass-roots teachers and college teachers with relevant teaching experience in the field, so it is difficult to effectively promote the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine culture. Finally, with regard to teaching materials, although the development of traditional Chinese medicine has attracted a lot of attention in the field of international Chinese education, there is a lack of authoritative, systematic, targeted, and timely teaching materials for the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine culture, which are the most important tools for accomplishing the teaching task. Therefore, the teaching system needs to be improved.

3.3. Lack of practice in traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching

Traditional Chinese medicine culture was born out of thousands of years of practical experience of medical practitioners. After years of extensive practical assessments and precipitations, this unique medicine was finally formed. However, in the actual process of traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching, it is difficult for international Chinese teachers to teach foreign students different treatment methods, cultural ideas, and proprietary prescriptions. Therefore, foreign students find it difficult to understand traditional Chinese medicine culture, resulting in deviated understandings. Apart from traditional Chinese medicine universities, it is also difficult for local universities to provide sites and opportunities for practice, not to mention observation and consultation, clinical trials, as well as other practical activities. Therefore, it remains stagnant at the level of theoretical teaching. In this way, it is difficult to stimulate the interest of

foreign students, which has also become a hindrance to teachers in teaching and promoting the innovative development of traditional Chinese medicine culture from the perspective of foreign students ^[6].

4. Relevant strategies for traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching in the context of international Chinese education

In consideration of the problems faced by current international Chinese education in the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine culture, this paper puts forward three strategies.

4.1. Explore the teaching mode of traditional Chinese medicine culture

First, in view of the lack of relevant theoretical support, experts, scholars, and grass-roots teachers in the field of international Chinese education, relevant experience should be accumulated through classroom practice in which traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching has been carried out, and a new model suitable for traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching should be explored; this is the most important task at present ^[7]. Second, international Chinese teachers who teach traditional Chinese medicine culture should also use different teaching methods based on their teaching experiences, so as to promote traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching ^[8]. For example, information technology such as multimedia can be used to visually display the efficacy of traditional Chinese medicine, so as to promote the understanding of students. At the same time, traditional Chinese medicine culture can also be infiltrated into daily classroom teaching. For example, when teaching words, such as “spring,” “summer,” “autumn,” and “winter,” the concept of “conforming to the four seasons” in traditional Chinese medicine culture can be explained simultaneously, so as to achieve the complementary effect of culture teaching and word teaching. Finally, different sets of traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching materials suitable for the current environment and learning habits of foreign students should be designed ^[9]. The design of teaching materials should be differentiated according to their areas of use, majors, groups, and other factors. For example, for different groups of students (domestic students and foreign students; students majoring in traditional Chinese medicine and other majors; students with moderate or high grades and those with low grades), different sets of traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching materials should be designed to promote the teaching and dissemination of traditional Chinese medicine culture according to their characteristics. From the aforementioned three points, it is necessary to explore a unique and efficient teaching mode ^[10].

4.2. Train high-quality international Chinese teachers

As the main workforce in the teaching of traditional Chinese medicine culture, the cultivation of professional talents in this field is directly related to the development of international Chinese education. At present, Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Shaanxi University of Chinese Medicine have established a master’s course in international Chinese education to train up high-level and compound international Chinese teachers with Chinese medicine background. On the basis of traditional core courses for international Chinese teachers, the training program also offers courses related to traditional Chinese medicine culture, such as Medical English and Introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture. At the same time, teachers should be given more opportunities for clinical observation and the learning of basic traditional Chinese medicine skills ^[11]. This acts as a strong support for international Chinese language teachers to carry out professional medical term translation, impart correct traditional Chinese medicine culture knowledge, and carry out the traditional Chinese medicine culture practice. This will further reduce cross-cultural communication conflicts among foreign students and narrow the gap between different medical cultures ^[12], so as to promote the development of international Chinese education with the characteristics of traditional Chinese medicine culture and the dissemination of traditional Chinese medicine culture ^[13].

4.3. Design experience courses with Chinese medicine culture characteristics

In view of the lack of practice in traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching, it is necessary to combine the current teaching methods, make full use of the teaching resources and practical opportunities provided by local colleges and universities, as well as design experience courses with traditional Chinese medicine culture characteristics ^[14]. In the learning of traditional Chinese medicine culture, the most interesting teaching mode for foreign students is to discuss, discover, and summarize unique cultural knowledge through personal observation and experience. Therefore, for learners of Chinese as a second language, visiting activities to local traditional Chinese medicine hospitals or clinics, traditional Chinese medicine tasting activities, and traditional Chinese medicine culture knowledge competitions can be carried out. Through the rich experience of traditional Chinese medicine culture, foreign students can practice in the process of learning. At the same time, it also further stimulates the learning interest of foreign students and helps them experience the charm of this traditional culture in an immersive way ^[15].

5. Conclusion

In the context of international Chinese education, the establishment of a unique traditional Chinese medicine culture teaching through professional teaching methods and high-quality talent teams can further promote the expansion of international Chinese education in the field of culture teaching while complying with the requirements of the times. Moreover, learners of Chinese as a second language can effectively promote the spread and development of traditional Chinese medicine culture in various fields across the world as well as the internationalization of traditional Chinese medicine. All these will contribute to the further development of China's foreign communication work and the in-depth development of the concept of "Healthy China" in the new era.

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