

Research on the Transmission of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture in Confucius Classroom at Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka Under the Background of “the Belt and Road” Cooperation Initiative

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“The Belt and Road” cooperation initiative contains Chinese excellent traditional cultural ideas, and is deeply rooted in Chinese excellent traditional culture. The proposal of “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative is not only the strategic need to implement the “going out” of Chinese culture, but also the need to promote cultural exchanges and mutual learning among countries along “the Belt and Road”, and more importantly, the practical consideration of building a community of shared future for mankind with cultural identity. Confucius classroom, as one of the important platforms to realize the “going out” of Chinese culture, shows the “image of China” and enhances the “soft power” of Chinese culture, integrates and configures Chinese teaching and Chinese cultural resources through cooperation, and plays an important role in telling Chinese stories, spreading Chinese voice, enhancing cultural mutual trust and people-to-people contacts as well as the awareness of a community of shared future for mankind. Taking the Confucius classroom jointly built by Huanggang Normal University in China and Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka as an example, this paper explores some effective transmission ways for spreading Chinese excellent traditional culture in Sri Lankan Confucius classroom under the background of “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative, aiming to give full play to the role of Confucius classroom in cultural exchanges and enhance inter-school exchanges and cooperation between China and Sri Lanka in terms of cultural mutual trust and respect.

Keywords: Chinese excellent traditional culture, transmission, Confucius classroom, Sabaragamuwa University

Introduction

“The Belt and Road” cooperation initiative advocated by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 has received extensive attention from the international community. The construction of “the Belt and Road” provides new opportunities for the external transmission of Chinese culture in the new era and cultural exchanges among countries and regions along “the Belt and Road” will contribute to the building of a community of shared future

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for mankind. Sri Lanka is an important cooperative country of “the Belt and Road”, and also the first country to issue a statement of support in the form of government after China put forward the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” initiative. Sabaragamuwa University is located in Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka, the “Confucius Classroom” at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka is the first “Confucius Classroom” of Huanggang Normal University in China, and it is also a specific measure for Huanggang Normal University to actively participate in and implement the national “the Belt and Road” initiative, which has a huge role in promoting Huanggang Normal University to deepen international opening and promote international exchanges and cooperation, especially with Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka.

Confucius classroom, as one of the important platforms to realize the “going out” of Chinese culture, integrates and configures Chinese teaching and Chinese cultural resources through cooperation, and plays an important role in telling Chinese stories, spreading Chinese voice, enhancing cultural mutual trust and people-to-people contacts as well as the awareness of a community of shared future for mankind. Therefore, under the background of “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative, it is of great significance to figure out the necessity and meaning as well as the effective ways for transmitting Chinese excellent traditional culture in the Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka since Huanggang Normal University and Sabaragamuwa University have established inter-school exchange and cooperation relations.

In this context, this paper hopes to answer the following research questions:

1. Why does “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative contain the essence of Chinese excellent traditional culture?
2. What is the significance of the spread of Chinese excellent traditional culture abroad?
3. What is the significance of spreading Chinese excellent traditional culture in Sri Lanka under the background of “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative?
4. What is the current situation of the transmission of Chinese excellent traditional culture in Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka?
5. What are the specific and effective ways for transmitting Chinese excellent traditional culture in Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka under the background of “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative?

Chinese Excellent Traditional Cultural Essence Contained in “the Belt and Road” Cooperation Initiative

“The Belt and Road” cooperation initiative contains Chinese excellent traditional cultural ideas, and is deeply rooted in Chinese excellent traditional culture. The proposal of “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative is not only the strategic need to implement the “going out” of Chinese culture, but also the need to promote cultural exchanges and mutual learning among countries along “the Belt and Road”, and more importantly, the practical consideration of building a community of shared future for mankind with cultural identity.

“The Belt and Road” cooperation initiative is guided by the concept of building a community of shared future for mankind, which reflects the valuable cosmopolitanism and world feelings. Advocating democracy and expanding public opinion in the way of governance reflects the ideas of “beauty of beauty”, “people-oriented”, and “valuing the people”. In terms of governance purposes, China strives for common prosperity and development, highlighting the spirit of “harmony” and the concept of symbiosis and sharing. “Harmony” is a

way of pluralistic and peaceful coexistence. It contains the wisdom and philosophy of Chinese traditional culture and is a new idea and ethical value orientation of global governance.

Confucian culture is the most representative Chinese culture. For example, the “harmony” culture advocated in Confucianism can guide China to effectively resolve international conflicts and thus establish good foreign cooperation relations with other countries.

The spiritual connotation of “harmony” culture is excellent coexistence and joint construction. The core concept of “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative, namely, joint consultation, joint construction and sharing, is the embodiment of this excellent Chinese traditional culture and wisdom. While pursuing its own development, China sincerely hopes to work with other countries in the world to advance in peace, common development, and prosperity, actively participate in the governance of globalization with a sense of propriety and self-confidence, and assume international responsibility.

The Significance of the Spread of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture Abroad

The spread of Chinese excellent traditional culture overseas is not only an objective need for the strategic development of “the Belt and Road” countries, but also an objective need to carry forward Chinese excellent traditional culture, and also an objective need for cultural identity of overseas Chinese.

The spread of Chinese excellent traditional culture overseas can better promote the “going out” of Chinese culture, show the “image of China”, and enhance the “soft power” of Chinese culture.

The spread of Chinese excellent traditional culture overseas will help to tell a good story about China, spread the voice of China, enhance cultural mutual trust and people-to-people communication, enhance the awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind, and promote world peace and development.

The Significance of Spreading Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture in Sri Lanka Under the Background of “the Belt and Road” Cooperation Initiative

From the Perspective of China-Sri Lanka Relations

Sri Lanka is an important cooperative country of “the Belt and Road”, and also the first country to issue a statement of support in the form of government after China put forward the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” initiative. Sri Lanka is a key node of China’s ancient “Maritime Silk Road” and an important strategic point in the current development strategy of “the Belt and Road”. Sri Lanka, with its superior geographical location and important influence in the Indian Ocean countries, has become the core site of trade between China and Europe, Africa and other regions. Historically, the cultural exchanges between Sri Lanka and China have a long history and the bilateral relations have been friendly for generations. The diplomatic relationship between China and Sri Lanka began in the Han Dynasty, and the establishment of extensive ties began in the early Tang Dynasty and reached its peak in the Ming Dynasty. Sri Lanka is a country that attaches great importance to etiquette, and China is also a country of etiquette. The spread of Chinese excellent traditional culture in Sri Lanka will contribute to the long-term development of bilateral relations.

From the Perspective of Cultural Mutual Learning

In the current “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative, cultural exchanges and mutual learning between China and Sri Lanka are still of great significance. Sri Lanka has an open, mild, and fascinating social culture. At the same time, it accepts and absorbs foreign influences at multiple levels of social life and continues to evolve.

Among them, Sri Lankans' extremely strong adaptability in cultural psychology is an important force in shaping this kind of multiculturalism. Through trade, commercial activities, and intermarriage, Sri Lanka has inherited a variety of different cultural characteristics and forged its cultural inclusiveness. Chinese excellent traditional culture is broad and profound, and the Chinese civilization has made great contributions to the world civilization. In the saying of the so-called "a hundred flowers bloom in spring", the Chinese culture advocates "beauty of beauty, beauty and co-existence". The inclusive characteristics of Chinese and Sri Lankan cultures have laid a good foundation for cultural exchanges and cooperation between the two countries. The dialogue and communication between Chinese and Sri Lankan cultures are not only possible, but also feasible.

The Current Situation of the Transmission of Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture in Confucius Classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka

With the global "Chinese fever" and "Chinese culture wave", more and more people are learning Chinese in Sri Lanka. Taking Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka for example, it is a main platform for Sri Lankan learners to learn Chinese and Chinese culture. The Chinese culture course is a four-year Chinese major course at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka. Generally speaking, Chinese traditional culture has been well spread in Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka, which has increased the proportion of cultural teaching and cultural activities in Chinese language teaching. However, there are still some problems needing to be further considered and solved in the future in order to improve Chinese teaching efficiency and the spread of Chinese culture. For example, the main problems are the following:

1. Relatively few kinds of Chinese cultural textbooks and Chinese cultural courses: The kinds of Chinese cultural textbooks used in Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka are far from being enough to meet the needs of the local learners to know more about Chinese and Chinese culture. The selection of Chinese cultural textbooks lacks certain systematicness and hierarchy. Besides, the types of Chinese cultural courses are somewhat unitary.

2. Lack of professional teachers with Chinese literature and culture background: The number of Chinese teachers sent to Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka to teach Chinese as a foreign language is relatively limited. Especially, the number of professional teachers with Chinese literature and culture background sent there is rare. Meanwhile, Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka is short of teachers who can teach Chinese. There are even fewer teachers with professional background in Chinese literature and culture there.

3. Insufficient teaching aids and seemingly single teaching strategies and methods: There are insufficient teaching aids in Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka except for pictures, books, lecture notes, slide presentation file, etc. Modern teaching facilities, like multi-media teaching equipment, online courses, MOOC platforms and resources, micro-lectures in cloud platform surrounding, are extremely rare. In addition, teaching strategies and methods for teaching Chinese and Chinese culture seem to be single, mainly adopting lecture-based teaching strategy and activity-based teaching method.

Construction of Effective Transmission Ways for Spreading Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture in Confucius Classroom at Sabaragamuwa University Under the Background of "the Belt and Road" Cooperation Initiative

Policy Support Lays a Solid Foundation for the Spread and Exchange of Chinese Culture

For example, *Guiding Opinions on Strengthening the Soft Power Construction of "the Belt and Road"*

(2016): In order to promote cultural exchanges, development, and dissemination between China and countries and regions along “the Belt and Road”, the 30th Meeting of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reform in 2016 adopted the *Guiding Opinions on Strengthening the Soft Power Construction of “the Belt and Road”*, proposing to strengthen the construction of international communication capacity and provide favorable cultural conditions for the construction of “the Belt and Road”.

Several Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Human Cultural Exchanges Between China and Foreign Countries (2017): In 2017, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued the *Several Opinions on Strengthening and Improving the Work of Sino-Foreign Human Cultural Exchanges*, which provided basic guidance for Sino-Foreign cultural exchanges in terms of guiding ideology, basic principles, and working mechanism.

“The Belt and Road” Cultural Development Action Plan of the Ministry of Culture (2016-2020): Proposal of the Ministry of Culture’s “the Belt and Road” Cultural Development Action Plan (2016-2020) proposes to strengthen cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and countries and regions along “the Belt and Road”, improve “the Belt and Road” cultural exchange platform, and actively establish direct cooperation with important cultural institutions in countries and regions along “the Belt and Road”.

Indeed, the policy support lays a solid foundation for the spread and exchange of Chinese culture, and makes more and more foreign people get a better understanding of China and Chinese culture.

Chinese Cultural Textbooks and Curriculum in Confucius Classroom Should Be Diversified

In terms of the current situation of the selection and usage of Chinese cultural textbooks in Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka, more series of Chinese cultural books, including textbooks, need to be introduced into the Confucius classroom there to satisfy the local learners’ needs. Since Huanggang Normal University and Sabaragamuwa University have established inter-school exchange and cooperation relations, Sabaragamuwa University can refer to the relevant Chinese cultural course materials and curriculum used by Huanggang Normal University to better implement local teaching. Cultural courses such as Introduction to Chinese Culture, Guide to and Appreciation of Chinese Literature, Chinese Traditional Festivals, Folklore and Culture, Introduction to Chinese Poetry, Chinese Dance Culture, Chinese Painting and Calligraphy, and Chinese Folk Arts and Crafts can be tentatively offered in Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University for Sri Lankan learners.

China and Sri Lanka Can Jointly Cultivate Teachers With Cross-Cultural Background and a Deep Understanding of Chinese Culture

In addition to sending Chinese teachers to Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka to teach Chinese, Huanggang Normal University in China and Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka can jointly cultivate teachers with cross-cultural background and a deep understanding of Chinese culture. Some flexible approaches can be adopted. For example, two universities can regularly hold teacher training classes and refresher courses for teachers to get systematic instructions and guidance of Chinese culture and Sri Lankan culture during winter vacation and summer vacation each year under the help of the English department and Chinese department of these two universities. Meanwhile, two universities can co-invite other professors with Chinese culture and literature background from other universities to give systematic lectures or offer related courses for teachers who teach Chinese in Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University. Sabaragamuwa University can even send local excellent teachers and other backbone forces to Huanggang Normal University in China to learn and

experience Chinese cultural courses teaching. Hence these teachers can go back to Sabaragamuwa University to teach learners Chinese and spread Chinese culture much better.

Enhance the Awareness of Technology Empowerment and Improve the Current Situation of Insufficient Teaching Aids

Teachers should constantly enhance the awareness of technology empowerment and actively use Internet information technology and multimedia network platform to assist traditional teaching. In real teaching practice, teachers should adjust their mentality and change their inherent ideas, actively integrate into the new online education model of “Internet Plus Education”, grasp the application of modern information technology, and use high-tech means such as big data, cloud class, virtual simulation to assist teaching.

Teachers and teacher teams can also give full play to their information technology advantages in PPT courseware production, audio and video synthesis, word processing, and other aspects, and jointly create relevant cultural curriculum teaching videos, such as micro-classes produced by the teaching team, which are released to learners with the help of the course platform, or provide online high-quality courses or links to courses related to the course content, while designing and developing online cultural expansion courses in the form of SPOC, and combining new teaching forms, such as live teaching, video teaching, and course playback to provide learners with a more convenient and flexible learning environment. In this way, learners’ learning space will become more open and diverse, which in turn can stimulate their initiative and inquiry in learning. At the same time, it can also greatly improve the teaching ecological environment of traditional classroom, help improve the quality of course teaching, and enhance teaching effectiveness. The complementarity of traditional classroom teaching and online digital education highlights the importance of cooperation, communication, and meaning construction. In the connection between classroom teaching and online learning, teachers and learners play their respective roles and work together to create a new type of teaching and learning space in interactive communication, which hence can effectively improve teaching quality.

Experiential and Interactive Learning Method Should Be Used in the Teaching of Chinese Cultural Courses in Confucius Classroom

The proper application of teaching strategies and methods is important for Sri Lankan learners to learn Chinese and Chinese culture. Teaching strategies and methods can directly affect learning efficiency and learners’ interest in learning Chinese and Chinese culture. With regard to the current situation of the adoption of lecturing type and activity-based method in Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University, more flexible teaching strategies and methods should be used in order to arouse learners’ greater interest in learning Chinese and Chinese culture. Taking learner-centeredness teaching strategy for example, the teaching design of cultural courses should take learner factors into consideration. Why do they learn this cultural course? What are their motivations for learning this cultural course? What are their concerns and interests in these cultural courses? What will learners feel about learning cultural courses? What are the appropriate teaching and learning methods for the learners to learn Chinese and Chinese culture well?

In order to answer all these questions, surely, experiential and interactive learning method should be used in the teaching of Chinese cultural courses in Confucius classroom. Experiential learning emphasizes experience as the source of learning and development; it is the process of making meaning from direct experience. It is achieved by participating in the activities by learners themselves or through the practical operation. According to American famous educationalist John Dewey (1930s), he emphasized the importance of learning by doing.

Experience acts as an organizing focus for learning. Experience is the aim of education and also it is the way to educate. In the view of Swiss famous psychologist Piaget (1950s), he thinks that experience is the product of the interaction between the individual and the environments. Learning relies on the interactive process. Experiential learning techniques include various interactive practices where the participants have opportunities to learn from each other's experience, being actively and personally engaged in the process. In Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University, teachers and learners may carry out the experiential learning of Chinese classical poetry and poetry recitation, story-telling of the Chinese characters and Chinese calligraphy competition, Chinese opera singing, such as the singing of Huangmei Opera which is open to students majoring in music performance in Huanggang Normal University, Chinese painting performance, appreciation of Chinese tea art and porcelain-making, etc. During the interactive teaching and learning process, related personal journals and reflection, role plays, drama activities, games, personal stories and case studies, discussions in cooperative groups, even visualizations and imaginative activities could be shared with each other among teachers and learners in Confucius classroom in order to help learners better understand Chinese and Chinese culture.

Furthermore, Huanggang Normal University in China and Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka can regularly hold China-Sri Lanka cultural festivals and art festivals apart from the annual China-Sri Lanka Communication and Cooperation Forum that has been co-sponsored and co-organized by these two universities since 2019. This is also a good way for the spread of Chinese culture in Sri Lanka and for the improvement of mutual cultural learning between China and Sri Lanka.

Conclusion

The transmission of Chinese excellent traditional culture in Sri Lanka under the background of “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative confirms the importance and value of cultural exchanges and mutual learning. The establishment of the Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka is not only a positive result of Sino-Sri Lanka inter-school cooperation in running schools, but also a beneficial attempt by Huanggang Normal University to continuously improve its international running ability and meet the major strategic needs of the country. The Confucius classroom jointly built by Huanggang Normal University and Sabaragamuwa University even functions as a bridge and has created conditions for the spread of Chinese excellent traditional culture in Sri Lanka. The exploration on the transmission ways for spreading Chinese excellent traditional culture in Confucius classroom at Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka under the background of “the Belt and Road” cooperation initiative will undoubtedly not only further enhance inter-school exchanges and cooperation between Huanggang Normal University and Sabaragamuwa University, but also better convey the voice of China and enhance cultural mutual trust and understanding between China and Sri Lanka.

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