

Research on the Improvement of Chinese Culture's Overseas Communication --Take the Experience from Singapore's cultural communication

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Abstract: Culture is colorful due to communication, and culture is enriched by mutual learning. Through the spread of culture, countries around the world actively absorb the beneficial components of other countries' cultures, so that the cultures of all countries in the world can blend together and live in harmony. With the rise of China and the promotion of the "One Belt, One Road" strategy, Chinese culture and values are gradually spreading overseas. How to spread Chinese culture to Asian and African countries along the Belt and Road better, and how to further enhance the influence of Chinese culture's communication overseas are important issues at present. Singapore culture and Chinese culture have commonality, and their cultural identity and cultural sources belong to Chinese culture. Today's Singapore has developed from a "cultural desert" in the early days of the founding of the country to a country with strong cultural appeal in the world, mainly because Singapore focuses on using existing economic achievements to actively carry out foreign cultural communication and enhance the country's soft power. The success of Singapore's cultural communication has important implications for China. This article will explore how China can use its unique Chinese culture to better develop and enhance its culture's overseas communication through learning from Singapore which is a country with Chinese cultural origins.

1. Introduction

Culture can integrate the country, enhance national identity, and enhance national self-confidence. The outside world can attract and appeal to other people and the international community through cultural communication to enhance international prestige. Cultural exchange and communication is one of the important driving forces for the development of human civilization. The ancient Silk Road in China and Zheng He's voyages to the West are all through China's cultural communication and foreign exchanges to share our understanding of the world and deepen mutual understanding and mutual trust. Culture is colorful because of communication, and culture is enriched by mutual learning. Through the spread of culture, countries around the world actively absorb the beneficial components of other countries' cultures, so that the cultures of all countries in the world can blend together and live in harmony. With the rise of China and the promotion of the "Belt and Road" strategy, Chinese culture and values are gradually spreading overseas, especially along the "Belt

and Road” countries to the world. How to better spread Chinese culture to the Asian and African countries along the Belt and Road, to clarify the Chinese story, to make other countries recognize China’s values, to make Chinese culture a soft power to attract other countries' culture, and to further enhance the overseas communication of Chinese culture and influence? This is an important issue at present. We must learn from the experience of cultural communication in other countries, sum up and reflect on the problems and challenges of cultural communication in China, and thus enhance the appeal and influence of Chinese culture.

Singapore is the only Chinese-dominated country in the world. Singapore culture and Chinese culture have commonality. Its cultural identity and cultural origin belongs to Chinese culture, but its cultural attributes are not single oriental culture or Western culture. It learn from other cultures and form its own unique culture. Singapore is located at the crossroads where East and West civilizations meet. The history of the founding of the country is only a few decades old. There is no deep historical accumulation and no enviable civilization. But today’s Singapore has developed from a “cultural desert” in the early days of the founding of the country to a country with strong cultural appeal in the world, mainly because Singapore focuses on using existing economic achievements to actively carry out foreign cultural communication and enhance the country's soft power, shaping the image of a responsible international citizen. After decades of development, Singapore’s cultural communication has achieved great results. Through international assistance and cultural and artistic activities, Singapore has a series of world-influenced brand events. The success of Singapore’s cultural communication has important reference. This article will study how Singapore, as a country with Chinese cultural origins, conducts cultural dissemination, and explores how China can use its unique Chinese culture to carry out foreign cultural dissemination, so as to enhance the overseas dissemination of Chinese culture and strive for the country’s advantage International environment to maximize national interests. Summarizing the experience of Singapore’s cultural communication has very important reference significance for Chinese cultural communication.

2. The Problems and Challenges of Chinese Culture's Overseas Communication under the Background of “Belt and Road”

2.1 Cultural Identity Needs to Be Strengthened

With the continuous advancement of the “Belt and Road” initiative, China has gradually formed Chinese cultural communication and promotion system covering major countries and regions around the world. As to June 2019, there were 539 Confucius Institutes and 1,129 Confucius Classrooms in 155 countries and regions around the world. In addition, Chinese governments at all levels have also carried out a large number of cultural promotion activities every year, but sometimes they have not really achieved the actual effect of cultural communication. They have not entered the hearts of local people, so that they truly resonate and identify with their hearts.^[1] Some cultural communication projects do not fully grasp the cultural thinking and psychological characteristics of overseas audiences, and distinguish different groups to tailor them in a targeted manner, such as targeting young people, especially developing countries that are deeply influenced by Western culture and lack confidence in local culture. We need to present young people traditional Chinese culture that has been packaged in modern audiovisual languages to make them interested in Chinese culture. We need to work hard from the perspective of the audience to create a form of literature and art that meets the cultural thinking and psychological characteristics of the audience.

When China organizes or participates in foreign cultural exchange activities, it is often accustomed to attend with a large lineup. It is often that there are many people involved in the organization, most of the tasks to complete the task, and the final effect is often left unattended.

Many countries are not necessarily enthusiastic about such activities because of their limited population and government financial resources. We can take a market-oriented approach such that a small number of Chinese people participate as representatives or event managers, and a large number of activities are organized by locals. In the same way, after high-speed and high-volume development, the Confucius Institute is also facing the predicament that the front line is too long and the development of various regions is unbalanced. How to make the Confucius Institute achieve high-quality development and get the approval of the local people and the media. Taking the intensive development path is the key to the sustainable development of the Confucius Institute. How to eliminate the misunderstanding of the local media is also very important. For example, the “Chinese Academic Transliteration Project” established by the National Social Science Fund since 2010, the ideology is easily distorted by foreign media, causing the rejection of the audience. Knowing that the subject is not aware of the existence of cognitive objects, it is impossible to actively raise awareness of these cultural contents.

Driven by the background of the “Belt and Road”, Chinese culture is flourishing. We should make good use of this rare opportunity, strengthen refinement and interpretation, tell Chinese cultural values in a proper form, and put contemporary Chinese culture into international exchanges. All aspects of communication will enable other countries and people to understand Chinese society and understand Chinese culture, so as to gain true recognition.

2.2 Cultural Commonality Needs to Be Reflected

Any culture is rooted in the existing traditional culture soil, of course, the culture of all countries have a certain degree of commonality. To be specific, the cultural concepts in Chinese traditional culture, such as advocating etiquette and uprightness, virtue and kindness, hardworking wisdom, are common to all countries. We should put more emphasis on cultural harmony and differences in cultural communication. The process of cultural communication is the exchange and integration between different countries and ethnic cultures, which will not erode the culture of other countries. The universality of Chinese culture and international feelings should be better publicized. From historical experience, the Chinese nation has actively engaged in foreign exchanges and trade since ancient times, never through foreign aggression and expansion. The pursuit of peace and harmony is deeply rooted in the spiritual world of the Chinese nation and deeply dissolved in the blood of the Chinese people. At present, China proposes a community with a Shared future for mankind and actively shapes a new international order guided by the values of peaceful development, equity and justice. This is the further development of the quintessence of Chinese traditional culture. To spread Chinese culture is to spread the commonness of Chinese culture and other cultures, rather than the uniqueness of Chinese culture.^[2]

Today, when China is thinking about spreading its own discourse system, it should put Chinese cultural values in the discourse that can be understood by all countries in the world in some way, and convey more common cultural sounds. As Confucius said, “the use of propriety is the most valuable, and harmony is the most valuable.” It is impossible for China's discourse system to repeat the voice of western developed countries. Instead, it can only find characteristics from its own cultural traditions and refine and transform them to fit the pace of The Times of the world. China can gradually have a voice in the international community only in this way.

3. The Characteristics and Experience of Cultural Communication in Singapore

3.1 Characteristics of Cultural Communication in Singapore

3.1.1 Government-Led and Social Participation

The most prominent feature of cultural communication in Singapore is that it is led by the government and the society participates in it. International society is generally accepted that Singapore is a typical “authoritarian states”, which is highly centralized political and economic and social management. In such a country, cultural communication is part of the diplomacy, and the vast majority of activities are led by the government of Singapore, However, the government is only a leader. A large number of event organizations are jointly participated by social non-profit organizations. It pays attention to the interaction and cooperation of various social forces, fully mobilizes the power of community organizations, cultural groups, the media and individuals, and actively creates the entire society to promote a good atmosphere for cultural communication. For example, the Singapore Cooperation Program has been organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore since its inception, Singapore international foundation mainly dominated by the Singapore government departments. However, the government is not overwhelming, but it is handed over to social participation organizations to implement, such as Sriwana and people’s association in Singapore for community organizations which have assumed responsibility for spreading a large number of Singapore’s folk art culture.

3.1.2 The Process is Slow and Steady

Singapore’s cultural communication from the beginning to the end adhere to the long stream, perseverance. In carrying out foreign exchanges, we should follow the principle of continuous and steady progress. We should not strive for quick progress or novelty. For example, the Singapore international foundation program has played a very good role in the dissemination of cultural knowledge and technology over the years, providing effective help to many third world countries, enhancing friendship and establishing a responsible international image.

3.2 Experience of Cultural Communication in Singapore

Since the 1960s, the government of Singapore, on the one hand, has strengthened the construction of domestic culture, and on the other hand, paid attention to the introduction of foreign cultural achievements to promote the development of domestic culture. The Singaporean government has introduced books, films and other cultural products from China, Taiwan and other regions to strengthen ethical and moral construction, strengthen Asian values and promote the cultural quality of the Singaporean people. ^[3]In terms of science and technology, Singapore has actively introduced advanced technologies and equipment from developed countries in Europe and the United States, and reached agreements with them to help Singapore develop emerging technologies and cultivate managerial talents. By the 1990s, Singapore had made great achievements in economic and cultural development. Singapore began to adjust its cultural strategy, carry out extensive cultural exchanges with foreign countries, promote overseas cultural transmission and enhance its soft power. With the development of the Times, the mode of foreign cultural communication has broken through the traditional system and operation mode in the past. Compared with the traditional mode, it has more diversified forms and richer contents, such as undertaking international cultural and sports activities, cultural exchanges, visits by art groups, international assistance, volunteer programs and so on. Singapore's cultural forms are very diverse, mainly in the form of international assistance, cultural and artistic activities, and the development of

creative cultural industries.

3.2.1 International Assistance

International assistance is an important way of cultural communication for Singapore to provide assistance to developing countries, establish a responsible image of international citizens, and enhance its influence in diplomatic occasions. There are two main forms of international assistance provided by Singapore. First, under the framework of some international organizations, Singapore undertakes assistance jointly with other developed countries, aiming at providing training and services in medical care, education, health or technology for developing countries. On the other hand, Singapore provides assistance to other countries independently, such as bilateral assistance programs under the Singapore cooperation program, “Singapore overseas volunteer group” under the Singapore international foundation, etc.^[4] Singapore’s international assistance is very broad, and has a long history of relatively stable. Singapore’s international assistance has greatly narrowed the distance between Singapore and the local people and established friendly relations with many countries. The Singapore international foundation is also in close contact with overseas youth organizations. It regularly organizes various youth festivals, invites young people to discuss issues such as livelihood, employment and environment, and holds rock concerts which are popular with young people. This has helped to occupy the spiritual world of young people in many developing countries.

3.2.2 Promote Cultural and Artistic Activities

Promotion of cultural and artistic activities is another important way of cultural communication in Singapore. Singapore mobilizes various resources to promote various cultural and art activities overseas and attracts overseas youth to participate in cultural and art activities in Singapore. Most of these cultural and art activities can be divided into two categories: one is to undertake large-scale international cultural and sports activities; the other is to carry out cultural and art activities independently in Singapore. Every year, Singapore will host some large-scale international cultural activities, such as the 2010 youth Olympic Games, the Asian F1 competition and the Asian media festival. Through these international cultural activities, Singapore will attract the attention of the world and enhance its international influence. In addition to undertake international cultural activities, Singapore will be independent to carry out cultural exchange activities, invited artists from all over the world to Singapore held seminars, exhibitions, etc., after a period of development, formed some characteristics of cultural activities such as “Singapore cultural heritage festival”, “Singapore arts festival”, “Singapore art week”, “Singapore garden festival”, “Singapore season”, etc., these cultural activities not only spread the Singapore culture, broaden the channels for the world to Singapore, has enriched the Singapore foreign content and form. It can be found that cultural communication can not only “send out” the culture, but also “invite in”. Overseas target groups can be invited in to feel the cultural atmosphere of Singapore, thus increasing the sense of cultural identity.

3.2.3 Develop Creative and Cultural Industries

The development of creative cultural industry is also an effective way to carry out cultural communication in Singapore. Through the combination of culture and economy, the charm of culture is used to promote cultural products, promote the prosperity of cultural industry and promote the development of economy. Singapore promotes the development of tourism, design art, horticulture, gardening and related industries in Singapore by holding cultural activities such as “Singapore tourism festival”, “Singapore art festival” and “Singapore garden festival”.^[5]In addition,

Singapore also uses its experience in finance, management, design and other aspects to develop public management services, and uses its advantages in human resources and knowledge economy to strengthen economic ties between other countries and Singapore. Through its own cultural construction and cultural communication, Singapore promotes the development of cultural industry, strives to occupy a position in the competition of the world's cultural industry, better promotes the industrial transformation and upgrading of Singapore, and promotes the sustainable development of Singapore's economy. The development of cultural industry not only improves the international competitiveness of Singapore, but also further strengthens the connection between cultural industry of other countries and Singapore, thus deepening the interdependence between cultural workers of other countries and Singapore. The combination of cultural communication and economic diplomacy will comprehensively promote the survival, security and development of Singapore. Singapore's creative and cultural industry makes Singapore the capital of creative and cultural industry and attracts art talents from all over the world through overseas talent introduction and cultural industry support. These artists return to their home countries after their studies and further spread Singapore's culture. After nearly 20 years of development, Singapore's cultural communication has made great achievements and formed its own strategic characteristics.

4. The Experience and Enlightenment of Singapore Cultural Communication on Improving Chinese culture's Communication Overseas

China has a time-honored culture of 5,000 years with profound cultural accumulation and long-term centripetal force. Starting from the Han and Tang dynasties, China gradually expanded its territory until the peak of its national strength in the Ming and Qing dynasties, forming a concentric circular tributary system. In tribute, other small neighboring countries submitted to China. "The Chinese emperor, in line with the principle of 'thin come and thick go', bestowed kindness on the other side and showed his kindness by rewarding them with far more than the offerings." [6] The reason why China was able to achieve such a brilliant "coming from afar" is that China's cultural level has always been at a high level. In Chinese history, the main way to make the surrounding barbaric tribes submit to the central dynasty was virtue, not force. From the example of "capture and release Meng-huo seven times of Zhu-ge liang" in The Three Kingdoms period, we can see that our cultural level has been constantly improving, higher than the surrounding barbaric tribes' areas. China has long assimilated others for a long time, and it is rarely assimilated by others. It is because of our high cultural level that it is impossible to fight with force for a long time. The Britain established their colonies all over the world, but they were all lost within a hundred years. The reason why we have such a large territory today is that we use assimilation, cultural attraction and charisma, rather than force.

In recent years, from the central to the local level, China has also been emphasizing the spread of culture overseas and shaping China's image. We have also achieved many results. But sometimes we find that we have done a lot, but the foreign media reports are mostly negative. The underlying reasons are very complex, but I think the case of Singapore may help us learn from it when carrying out cultural exchanges with other countries and cultural communication overseas. We should always keep a peaceful mind when communicating with foreign countries. We should always maintain a peaceful mind when we spread to the outside world. We should not be too purposeful and deviate from the essence of cultural communication. The ultimate purpose of cultural communication is to enhance understanding and mutual trust with other countries. Confucianism is the core of traditional Chinese culture, and "harmony" is the core idea of Confucianism. It promotes "heart of love" and advocates the harmonious coexistence of people and people. We should always emphasize the peace of Chinese culture. Putting morality first, and convincing people with etiquette. Cultural

communication needs a long history and persistence. There are three revelations in specific practices.

4.1 Promoting Chinese Culture At Home When Spreading Culture Abroad

We should first promote Chinese culture at home when we spread culture abroad. In the early days of the founding of Singapore, Lee-kuan yew strongly advocated the cultural education in Singapore, which made the cultural centripetal force of all ethnic groups stronger and stronger. Today we find that our cultural assimilation is getting weaker and weaker. Many schools offer American high school classes and British high school classes early. Children start to learn English when they are very young. More and more domestic students take the SAT in the United States. It is a pity to blindly study foreign cultures, but to put Chinese culture aside. We should pay more attention to the education of Chinese people's traditional culture and the cultivation of etiquette habits when carrying out foreign cultural dissemination. When various bad images of Chinese tourists travel abroad frequently appear in newspapers, how to make Chinese cultural images respected by foreigners?

4.2 Adhering to Government Leadership and Mobilizing Broad Public Participation

When carrying out foreign cultural dissemination, we should, like Singapore, adhere to the government's leadership, mobilize the broad participation of society, adhere to the long flow of water, and persevere. We must not be shaken by some negative evaluations. Our foreign cultural dissemination itself is to promote cultural exchanges and is conducive to world peace. Therefore, we must not be impatient, eager for returns, and not be emotionally affected by reports from foreign media. For example, misunderstandings can also occur during the collision of cultural exchanges. We should relax our mindset, and not allow some foreign media to produce negative thoughts and negative thoughts, or bring nationalist sentiments abroad. China is a big country and is gradually developing. It should be able to tolerate diversified comments from foreign media. It should not be caused by some foreign media's negative news about the Confucius Institute. We should see that the Confucius Institute itself is promoting Chinese and Chinese culture, so that young people of all countries have the opportunity to learn Chinese and understand Chinese culture through the Confucius Institute. This is an effective method of cultural communication and integration. We do not seek to immediately change the minds of people in other countries, but to gradually understand the characteristics of Chinese culture by learning Chinese culture, and gradually develop a good impression of Chinese culture.

4.3 Summarizing Experience and Changing Ways and Methods

We should also learn from the good practices of other countries such as Singapore when conducting foreign cultural exchanges, summarize experience, and change ways and methods. Not only "send out", but also "please come in", attracting young people from various countries to participate in various domestic cultural festivals, attracting overseas cultural talents to China for employment, making them have a sense of identity and attraction for Chinese culture, and becoming a communicator of Chinese culture after returning to their home country. Another example is the establishment of the Singapore International Foundation in Singapore, which conducts various foreign aid activities every year. Through the open operation of the foundation, foreign exchange and assistance activities are made transparent. China does not seem to have such a "screaming" national organization of foreign exchanges and civil society. Many people do not understand these assistance activities. They just heard the news media report how much valuable materials they have

provided, and the participation of private forces is still relatively small. We see other forms such as “Singapore Overseas Volunteer Team” and “Singapore Overseas Scholarship” very good. We can carry out external exchanges through volunteering and other forms. We should improve and optimize the methods and means of external communication to better adapt to the public opinion environment of international cultural dissemination. Although Singapore is a small country, its experience in cultural communication is also of great significance for overseas communication of Chinese culture.

5. Conclusion

The cultural soft power of a country, fundamentally speaking, depends on the vitality, cohesion and appeal of its core values. Although Chinese culture has been going abroad for many years, cultural soft power is gradually showing its unique power in foreign exchanges, but compared with China’s current economic and military hard power, the affinity and influence of Chinese culture in external communication has not been truly. It shows that the soft power of Chinese culture still needs to be greatly improved in foreign exchanges, which is also a difficult problem to be solved in the spread of Chinese culture. China is a large cultural country. It should actively use its unique Chinese culture to carry out foreign cultural dissemination, promote the development of the country, strive for a favorable international environment for the country, and maximize the national interest. Now that China is strong, we should remember to keep calm and observe prudently, neither shrinking nor showing publicity. We should encourage ourselves to the praise voice of the world, we should reflect on ourselves to the criticism of the world, and be kind to our neighbors. Strive to maintain good relations with neighboring countries and continue to make Chinese culture more attractive and charisma.

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