

The Cross-Cultural Communication Dilemma of Tai Chi Culture and Its Solution under the Concept of Light Sports

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Abstract: Tai Chi culture is the essence of China's traditional sports culture, which has been cherished by the Chinese people and passed down from generation to generation. In recent years, with the deepening of the China's opening to the outside world, the communication and amalgamation between Chinese and foreign culture have gradually deepened. The term "light sports" has emerged in the international sports circles and become a new fashion of mass sports fitness. Under this background, how Tai Chi can be effectively and vividly displayed in the international dissemination and how to show the positive image of China has become a topic that should be considered in the cross-cultural communication of Tai Chi. Combined with the concept of light sports, this article proposes corresponding solutions to the cross-cultural communication dilemma of Tai Chi culture under the concept of light sports.

Keywords: Light Sports; Tai Chi; Cross-cultural Communication

1. Light Sports and Tai Chi

Light sports are recently proposed forms of mass fitness exercise by European and American sports scholars. ^[1]Light sports require low technical skills and minimal physical exertion. They are not only flexible and diverse, but also easily learned and conveniently practiced. People enjoy themselves while exercising. Light sports require people to understand the essence of movement, regardless of speed or outcome, and to use any form of appropriate exercise and training according to their actual physical condition, while maintaining a happy and relaxed mood throughout the entire process. Compared with competitive sports, light sports have their own distinct characteristics. They can make sports and exercise easier, allowing participants to relax to the maximum extent possible and participate in their favorite sports activities with a cheerful mood.

The characteristics of modern people's lifestyle are "high efficiency and fast pace". Especially with the development of society, modernization of production methods, and intensified social competition, people are more prone to nervous exhaustion and tension. Therefore, a way to relax and relieve stress is increasingly needed by society. With the development of the times, the competitive nature of Tai Chi culture has gradually been dissolved and differentiated, leading to the distinction between traditional Tai Chi and competitive Tai Chi. Traditional Tai Chi emphasizes "perception" and "technique" rather than "strength" throughout the entire training process, requiring practitioners to calm their *qi* in their hearts, so as to promote blood circulation and spread *qi* throughout the body, that is, "internal and external cultivation". It not only focuses on "training", but also on "nurturing". ^[2]It can strengthen the body and develop towards the direction of pleasure and enjoyment. As a group activity, Tai Chi has the characteristics of low intensity and low energy consumption. Tai Chi participants move gently and slowly, without requiring excessive physical exertion, yet achieving the effect of fitness. Therefore, Tai Chi is highly compatible with the core requirements of light sports and is an excellent fitness exercise. The light sports attribute of Tai Chi has enabled it to usher in new development opportunities in modern society and become a popular healthy lifestyle.

On December 17, 2020, Tai Chi was successfully listed as world intangible heritage. In December 2021, Henan Daily reported that Tai Chi has spread to more than 150 countries and regions, and more than 80 countries and regions have established Tai Chi organizations.^[3]

Under the background of national policies and the influence of contemporary global light sports

trends, it is necessary to re-examine and reflect on the inheritance and dissemination of Tai Chi. This requires us to delve deeper into its contemporary value and characteristics, and actively explore the current cross-cultural communication difficulties. Therefore, this article combines the new opportunities brought by the concept of light sports to propose a new plan for national fitness, solve the development problems of Tai Chi, and enrich the diversity of its inheritance and dissemination.

2. Challenges in Cross-Cultural Dissemination of Tai Chi

In the context of the increasing popularity of light sports, the challenges faced by the cross-cultural dissemination of Tai Chi have become increasingly prominent. Cultural differences, dissemination methods, and teaching philosophies are all issues that Tai Chi needs to face in the process of cross-cultural dissemination.

2.1 Weak cultural connotation in cross-cultural dissemination

Unlike the binary opposition between the body and the soul in Western philosophy, while China's traditional sports culture believes that the body and the soul are inseparable and pursues the unity of heaven and man.^[4] Western fitness emphasizes the perfect combination of muscle and strength, speed, and shape. Chinese fitness, on the other hand, emphasizes the unity of body and mind, as well as self-cultivation and character building.^[5] This cultural difference has posed certain obstacles to the dissemination of Tai Chi culture. And there are significant differences between China's social system, mainstream values, and ideology and those of the West, which has inevitably become a target for some cultural powers, causing considerable trouble for Tai Chi to go global.^[6] In the cross-cultural dissemination of Tai Chi, people often focus on martial arts techniques but downplay the Chinese cultural connotations carried by Tai Chi. Therefore, the scope and depth of international dissemination of Tai Chi are currently limited, partly due to a lack of attention to the cultural connotations of Tai Chi.

2.2 Insufficient qualified Tai Chi disseminators

Firstly, the number of international disseminators of Tai Chi in China is relatively low. Domestic Tai Chi coaches, retired athletes, inheritors, and overseas practitioners are the main disseminators of Tai Chi. Although they adopt different forms to spread Tai Chi skills and theoretical knowledge, there is a certain gap between China and other sports powerhouses in terms of the quantity of sports output.

Secondly, the overall quality of cross-cultural disseminators of Tai Chi in China is relatively low. A high-quality disseminator of sports culture not only needs to have good professional theoretical knowledge, but also excellent English expression ability and familiarity with international law. However, currently there are very few high-quality sports culture disseminators in China, which seriously affects the dissemination of Tai Chi.

In addition, there are many traditional Tai Chi schools, which are influenced by clan beliefs, caste systems, and blood relationships. It is inevitable that they will adopt the inheritance methods of family, clan, and kinship, which will also pose certain obstacles to the cross-cultural dissemination of Tai Chi.

2.3 Lack of dedicated international promotion institutions

Although China has established some institutions and organizations such as Tai Chi research associations both domestically and internationally, they have not been recognized by relevant departments. These institutions and organizations have a low status, lack systematic management, and lack a sense of collectivism. At present, the international dissemination funds provided by China for Tai Chi are far from meeting its needs. China has almost never provided free Tai Chi coaches and training programs to the outside world, nor has there been any specialized institution for the international dissemination and promotion of Tai Chi. Therefore, the lack of specialized institutions for the international dissemination of Tai Chi and insufficient funding are important challenges facing the international dissemination of Tai Chi.

3. The Solutions to the Dilemma of the Cross-cultural dissemination

With the new challenges arising from the cross-cultural dissemination of Tai Chi, corresponding solutions should be proposed from multiple perspectives. It is urgent to actively explore effective

strategies to promote the internationalization of Tai Chi.

3.1 Integrating Chinese Culture in Tai Chi dissemination

Tai Chi is a beneficial martial art for both body and mind, with unique rhythms and profound philosophical ideas. It is a cultural treasure that combines the essence of ancient Chinese medicine and philosophy. Tai Chi is deeply rooted in various fields such as traditional Chinese philosophy, traditional Chinese health preservation, traditional Chinese medicine, and traditional Chinese aesthetics. Therefore, Tai Chi can be said to be a historical product of China's splendid culture for thousands of years. This profound cultural connotation adds a mysterious color and charm to Tai Chi. In the context of the new era, the cross-cultural dissemination of Tai Chi can only gain more sustainable development momentum by fully exploring and utilizing its Chinese cultural core. Only by integrating traditional Chinese culture into the cross-cultural dissemination of Tai Chi can more people truly understand the Chinese wisdom contained in Tai Chi culture.

However, in reality, Tai Chi teaching mostly neglects the transmission of these cultural connotations and only emphasizes the standards and norms of martial arts techniques.

When cultivating practitioners of Tai Chi, organizations or associations promoting Tai Chi should make them aware that every move and gesture of Tai Chi has its own unique essence. Tai Chi boxers should not only teach surface movements, but also convey the inherent Chinese culture of Tai Chi techniques. If practitioners can understand the principles behind movement techniques during practice, their interest in learning will also be enhanced as a result. When the disseminator feels the relevance between Tai Chi culture and their daily life, the culture can be integrated into their daily life. If the connotation of Tai Chi culture is connected to daily life, it can promote practitioners to understand and absorb the culture through real life.

3.2 Fostering high-qualified Tai Chi dissemination talents

On the path of cross-cultural dissemination of Tai Chi, sufficient talent resources are essential, and its role is crucial and crucial to success or failure. Only with high-quality talent resources can we smoothly accelerate the spread of Tai Chi in the world. Therefore, we need to attach great importance to the cultivation of high-quality talents in the dissemination of Tai Chi. At present, it seems that the construction of Tai Chi majors for foreign students in universities is a long-term plan to cultivate talents in cross-cultural communication of Tai Chi. Establishing compulsory courses in relevant majors within universities to efficiently cultivate cross-cultural communication talents in Tai Chi. For example, sports training, martial arts theory, cross-cultural communication, etc. Set up elective courses such as Education, Physical Education Teaching Methods, and Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. Through these courses, we aim to cultivate high-quality talents who possess both professional knowledge theory and a high level of foreign language proficiency. During the internship period, universities should provide as many opportunities as possible for students majoring in Tai Chi to intern abroad. This not only allows students to personally experience the process of cross-cultural dissemination of Tai Chi and cultivate talents, but also increases the opportunities for Tai Chi to go abroad.

3.3 Strengthening support and management of Tai Chi institutions

There are many schools of Tai Chi in our country, and the dissemination of Tai Chi relies not only on formal association organizations, but also on individual units lacking mentorship, which has caused great confusion in the dissemination of Tai Chi. Therefore, relevant departments of the country must integrate individuals and organizations engaged in the dissemination of Tai Chi, strengthen management and evaluation. Firstly, official institutions should focus on establishing a sound organizational management system. The official institutions of Tai Chi should establish authority and unify the management of relevant sects, associations, and individuals. Official institutions regularly review the qualification certification and teaching materials of the responsible personnel of Tai Chi associations or institutions established in domestic and foreign institutions. Secondly, official institutions should establish a comprehensive evaluation mechanism. Regularly evaluate associations and individuals, taking into account their comprehensive abilities such as organizational level, technical skills, and personal conduct. Associations or individuals who do not meet the standards should have their dissemination qualifications revoked; Thirdly, the country provides support for strengthening international cooperation. The state should provide policy support and financial assistance to Tai Chi associations or branches established abroad.

3.4 Optimizing domestic Tai Chi cultural tourism projects

With the flourishing development of Tai Chi culture in China, many regions have utilized the advantages of Tai Chi culture to carry out its cultural tourism projects. In 2024, Jiaozuo City will leverage its advantage as the birthplace of Tai Chi and continue to promote its youthful, fashionable, and international development, calling it the “energy of life, heritage of humanity” Tai Chi cultural world brand. Jiaozuo is committed to running all kinds of Tai Chi competitions and activities at all levels, organizing famous Tai Chi practitioners to participate in inheriting Tai Chi abroad, constantly promoting the integration of Tai Chi culture into the “the Belt and Road” construction, and strengthening the spread of Tai Chi culture.^[7] For example, the Jiaozuo Tai Chi International Annual Conference, Tai Chi Summit Forum, Chinese Bridge International Exchange Project, as well as the Wenxian Yellow River Ecological and Tai Chi Cultural Integration New Area Project and Henan Tai Chi Academy.

Taking the successful experience of Jiaozuo Tai Chi cultural tourism project as a reference, China can vigorously develop planning and construction domestically, fully focus on ecological protection and cultural tourism integration, and strive to create a Yellow River cultural tourism health integration development exhibition area.

4. Conclusion

Practice has proven that the ideas of “the fragrance of wine is not afraid of deep alleys” and “the emperor’s daughter does not have to worry about marriage” are outdated in today’s era. Faced with the cross-cultural dissemination dilemma of Tai Chi culture, it is urgent to further carry out Tai Chi culture popularization activities on a global scale. The state should play a leading role in building a sound system for the protection and inheritance of Tai Chi culture, providing favorable internal conditions for the cross-cultural dissemination of Tai Chi. Tai Chi itself should also conform to the trend of the times while retaining the essence of tradition, explore its inherent value, actively absorb excellent elements from other cultures, and promote broader international cultural exchanges. The participation and support of the public are crucial for the dissemination of Tai Chi, which requires enhancing peoples recognition and understanding of this cultural heritage, and cultivating more outstanding talents for the cross-cultural dissemination of Tai Chi. The disseminators of Tai Chi culture should take advantage of the development of online media, fully utilize contemporary new media technology, break the limitations of time and space, and improve communication efficiency. Through these methods, we can continuously promote the “going global” of Tai Chi culture, and write good “Tai Chi story”.

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