

Research on the Belt and Road Initiative and the International Communication of Health Qigong

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Abstract—Under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative, this paper studies the international communication of Health Qigong by a combination of historical materialist dialectics and logic analysis. Health Qigong has the characteristics of both education and instruction that spans across many centuries and world regions. Based on the Belt and Road Initiative, the communication strategy of Health Qigong should include: strengthening scientific research; widening channels of communication and enhancing the radiant power of culture; boosting international exchange outreach, and promoting a deeper expansion and diffusion of Health Qigong culture. With the continuous advancement of the construction of the Belt and Road and the enhancement of soft power by China, Health Qigong will play a role in carrying forward the traditional culture of China, and help strengthen the exchange of sports between China and foreign countries, and promote the development of local society and economic development.

Keywords: The Belt and Road Initiative; Health Qigong; International Communication

1. Research Background

The Belt and Road Initiative was initially put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping and it became a major strategic decision by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council to coordinate both domestic and international affairs. Due to its size and reach, it has substantial potential for realizing China's desire to open up to the outside world, and to promote the growth of the Chinese economy and culture. At its base, the primary aim of the Belt and Road Initiative was to employ the historical symbolism of the ancient Silk Road, to develop economic partnerships with the countries that lie along its route; and to then build

upon various shared common interests, with the aim being to generate mutual trust, common economic growth and cultural inclusiveness.¹ With the deepening of China's Belt and Road Initiative, this study looks at the effect of strengthening research in the communication of Chinese traditional sports and Chinese traditional culture, within the countries located along the New Chinese Silk Road.

As is common, the aim of many national governments is to promote friendship and cooperation between countries, and in this respect, China is no different.

Health Qigong is an integral part of Chinese traditional culture. It employs body and mind control over limb movement, breathing, and psychological adjustments; and it also contains the spirit of Chinese culture, which is often described as the Harmony between Heaven and Man, and the need for Internal and External Harmony. This reflects a traditional way of keeping healthy in China, and it is deeply loved by many practitioners, both within and outside China. Therefore, led by the Belt and Road Initiative, it is important to research cultural methods to assist the spread of Health Qigong worldwide.

2. The Influence of the Belt and Road Initiative on the International Communication of Health Qigong

2.1 Building the Belt and Road Lays a Foundation for the International Communication of Health Qigong

In order to promote the development of the world economy and to enhance cultural transfer, and to construct a community of "shared destiny," China has put forward the Belt and Road Initiative. Under the new landscape of world politics and world

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economy, General Secretary Xi Jinping, put forward the idea of the “community of shared destiny”.

Within this, it is advocated that the international situation should be moderated through economic interdependence, and the international system and mechanism should be adopted to maintain and regulate the interdependent relationship so to safeguard common interests.

The proposal of the community of shared destiny based on peaceful development and “win-win” cooperation has become a common trend in world development. Therefore, the concept of building the “community of shared destiny”, as put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping, is a continuation of this concept of win-win cooperation and common development, through the practice of multiple common interactions. Among these, the cultural community is an important goal of this concept.

It can be said that culture is the basis of promoting economic prosperity and political mutual trust. Therefore, as a representative of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation, Qigong, with its internal spirit, external simplicity and elegance of ease, is able to promote both international cultural exchange and political mutual trust, through sharing people’s common interests in sports.

Since General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward the Belt and Road Initiative, the diplomatic concept of “affinity, sincerity, shared benefit and inclusiveness” strives for a good neighboring environment for domestic development.

As the surrounding environment has undergone great changes, the relationship between China and its neighbors has also undergone many profound changes. For example, the economic and trade ties and the interaction between China and its neighbors are closer than ever before; all of which reflect the consciousness amongst the international community of a shared common destiny. Here, the vision of the Belt and Road is to act towards both mutual benefit and common security, and to pursue closer economic ties, deeper political mutual trust, broader and deeper cultural exchanges, mutual learning and prosperity among different civilizations, and to allow people

within countries to know each other better, and to live together in harmony.²

For this, a good political environment, featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit and a concept of common, shared development, not only reduces the risk of unwelcome conflict, the international communication of Health Qigong also makes it easier for people around the world to obtain better physical and mental health, mainly because of the respect and inclusiveness shown to foreign cultures, under an improved political environment.

2.2 the International Influence of Health Qigong Culture

As is well known, with the rapid development of modern science and technology, the concept of distance and time has greatly narrowed, and exchanges between people around the world have become far more frequent and convenient. This has led many people to now compare the world to a global village, and in this case the village is very large.

As of 2022 there are more than 60 countries along the route defined by the new Belt & Road Initiative, and the current population, within these countries, is calculated to be 4.4 billion; generating a substantial 21 trillion US dollars annually. This accounts for 63 percent of the world’s populations and 29 percent of the world economy.

Because there is only one earth, it is clear the world’s common interests outweigh any potential differences. It is clear that the whole of mankind faces the same results from global economic instabilities and ecological crisis, and the threat of nuclear weapons, extremism and many other risks.

Through deeper international economic cooperation, many believe that it is possible to reduce these risks, and it will be possible to improve people’s lives, by increases in connectivity and improvements in efficiency in the transportation of goods. Thus the Belt & Road Initiative will facilitate more trade, which will result in increased investment in what was previously considered

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difficult to reach, poor transportation areas.

And with increases in people's workload, it is important to note that Taiji, can ease stress, and sport-based activities can improve worker's health.

Relief of stress can also be psychological. For example, something as simple as a person's pride in a country's achievements can result in the person working with a happier mindset. This can also be activated by a person's connection to a specific culture, or to a shared group activity.

The flourishing of culture is a distinctive symbol and it is strongly supported by many different governments. For example, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed in his report to the Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) that "Culture is the soul of a country and a nation. Without a high degree of cultural self-confidence and prosperity, there will be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."

In this context, it is important to note that Health Qigong international communication is not the only way for the international community to understand China. It, however, can be considered unique, among sports, in being open to all people, irrespective of their age and their physical ability. '

There are various sports and health preservation methods, such as the Yi Jin Jing (the changing tendon exercise), Wu Qin Xi (five mimic-animal exercise), Liu ZiJue (the six-character formula), and BaDuanJin (eight-sectioned exercise), and their simplicity creates a pathway for the international community to begin to understand the traditional cultural spirit that China has inherited over thousands of years.

Through the international component of the Belt and Road Initiative, and the greater spread of Chinese culture in the media, there has been an increase in awareness around the world of Chinese traditions, and as these traditions are quickly absorbed into new cultures, these new interactions may slowly create changes within the Chinese traditions. It is thus important to keep abreast of these changes, and for scientists to study how these changes occur.

Already, the gradual strengthening of cultural exchanges and industrial cooperation along these routes has promoted an international movement within Health Qigong itself, which will certainly play a positive role in carrying forward the further development of these sports, and the understanding of Chinese traditional culture.

2.3 The Macro Strategy of Belt and Road Provides a Wide Opportunity for the International Communication of Health Qigong

The Belt and Road Initiative has clearly accelerated the pace of opening up between China and the international community. With its multi-field, multi-level and all-round cooperation, and its integration in the fields of economy, trade, transportation, culture, education, information, tourism, science and technology, the internationalization of Qigong has been reinforced.

Health Qigong international communication is a huge cross-cultural communication activity. Rational cross-cultural communication must be like a dialogue, and the dynamic way of communication features mutual respect and understanding. Therefore, it is necessary to actively promote the international academic exchanges of Health Qigong in order to create an opportunity for mutual understanding. Through a series of academic research activities, it is possible to aid communication, and to help researchers learn and collaborate with each other, and also they can provide support for the dissemination of Health Qigong at the academic level.

Health Qigong is a unique physical and mental exercise method that originates from the ancient Chinese way of health preservation (which in English can be referred to as Preventive Care), but despite some recent advances there is still little known about the process from a modern scientific view point. This argues that there is a strong needs for more modern scientific research.

With many fitness mechanisms, fitness effects and cultural connotations, and the socialization of sport, there are many topics that are open to research, and

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perhaps many new fields can be explored and practiced - especially in the face of different cultural backgrounds and life styles. It is thus important for historians and Qigong researchers to continue to explore the fitness values, cultural values and social values of Qigong in order to make it more scientific and effective, to allow more people in the world to improve their life through Qigong.

To this end, the International Health Qigong Federation now holds Scientific Forums on Health Qigong every two years, to promote scientific research and international dissemination of Qigong. The first three forums were held in the United States, New York, Paris, and at the Hague Peace Palace in the Netherlands, in September, 2017.

3. The Features of Health Qigong International Communication

3.1 Education: Symbol Dissemination and Entity Dissemination

It is well known that the construction and dissemination of culture are based on symbols. Symbols are the carriers of information and are used to refer to specific things which are different from the forms of expression of the carriers. According to Pierce, one of the founders of modern semiotics, symbols consist of three parts: representative (symbol), object (object) and interpretant (interpretive character). Symbols have the function of annotation, which is the condition of their existence and the foundation of all their functions and values.³

Entity communication has been the main mode of communication of Qigong culture. It is true that coded communication has been the major focus since remote communication first emerged, but entity communication has not been taken seriously.

With the development of film and television technology, movements can be taught by means of many types of "symbols". Videos, pictures, books, and so on are the symbols of movements. But the real physical process cannot be replaced by any coded communication.⁴ This lack of in-depth teaching has thus resulted in the main form of Qigong being taught by overseas teachers. But face-to-face teaching cannot

easily be replaced by videos and books.

Motion disseminates not only the skills and the essentials of an action, but it also contains various specific cultural content. In addition, the performance of power, vigor, and spirit sometimes cannot be properly expressed in words, or by remote demonstrations. In-person teaching gives people a deep-level sense of meditation that cannot easily be substituted by code dissemination.

Therefore, in the process of Qigong dissemination, if there is no entity its dissemination, code dissemination can not be generated and understood. To a great extent, coded communication is nothing more than simulation, a language and image reproduction of entity communication. Actual things in the world are constantly transmitting information of their own existence and movement, and all the information transmitted by symbols comes from physical things.

In Chinese traditional culture Health Qigong contains the sum total of both spiritual civilization and material civilization. This involves not just fitness, but also a concern for life, and the pursuit of life. If we say that the various exercises of Qigong are the explicit "skills" to help study disease prevention, physical fitness and life health in symbolic communication, then the cognitive thinking mode, and the values and health concepts with unique Chinese characteristics, can be considered the physical "ways" of communication of Qigong.

Both skill and Tao are interrelated and have their own characteristics. However, in the international communication of Qigong, it is necessary to let the exercisers both understand the "skill" of Qigong and to feel the "Tao" of Qigong culture as well.

3.2 Spreading Space: Across the Boundary of Space-time

Within a scientific context, cultural space can be described as a place with specific cultural significance, which is specially reserved for certain cultural activities, during which traditional cultural activities, or events will be held periodically or irregularly according to the occurrence of a particular

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event.

Culture depends on the demonstration, storage and solidification of such spaces to obtain recognition, and to also aid continuation; and cultural space depends on the nourishment of this culture, to attain any meaning.

Cultural space can be thought of consisting of three distinct elements: time to carry out the activity, the space to do the endeavor, and culture (a term which covers many different elements; and, as stated previously, can be related to mental pride). Pride can be strongly linked to happiness, and is thus an important component in health.

Health Qigong not only contains knowledge of preventative health, it also contains profound cultural heritage. It carries a vast and rich knowledge in its oral traditions, and folk knowledge, which prompt many to seek a large amount of space and time to practice this knowledge, and concepts. At the same time, due to the small average site requirements, coupled with its gentle movements, Qigong has gained popularity among fitness enthusiasts, both in China and abroad.

3.3 Harmony between Heaven and Man: People-oriented Communication

Mr. Ji Xianlin once stated: “Heaven Harmony can save mankind.” Regarding the understanding of “people”, Mr. Ji Xianlin believes that “people are the mortal of all of us”. If the “unity of heaven and man” is regarded as a process of sanctification, then before the sanctification, man can only be mortal, so that the cultivation of the country and the cultivation of the individual become necessary; If the “unity of heaven and man” is regarded as the result of sanctification, the people here can only be saints, thus pointing out the direction of the cultivation of ordinary people. In fact, “the unity of man and nature” is not only a process, but also a result or realm. And the process of the unity of heaven and man is to make people conform to the law of heaven in all aspects. These thoughts are again linked to psychological well-being.

Overall, the continuation of Qigong culture is directly linked to the dissemination of knowledge of Qigong. This has occurred in many countries that are now

linked by trade, and completing the circle that joins these items together, trade is often linked to stress.

Health Qigong is outstanding in its ability to aid preventative health care; and it is being spread through various forms of communication, some of which are political, and some that are cultural.

The expression and interpretation, or encoding and decoding, of Qigong depends on the choices made by the author who writes information down, and by choices made by the reader or viewer that can hinder or aid their understanding of the information being presented. However, the transmitter and the recipient’s common cognition of health culture and Qigong culture, to a certain extent, also relies on culture. As the dissemination of Qigong culture is people-oriented, the subjectivity of human being is reflected in the fact that people are not only the transmitter of information, but also the receiver. So it can be argued that one of the important functions of the communication of Qigong culture is to carry out the education of the individual, so they becoming a person of “Qigong culture”.

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