

Inheritance and Innovation of TCM Culture: Acupuncture's Belt and Road Promotion

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Abstract:

As a treasure of Chinese civilization, TCM culture is facing the dual mission of inheritance and innovation. This study takes the promotion of acupuncture therapy in Belt and Road countries as a starting point to systematically examine its current situation of global dissemination and development path. Through methods such as literature analysis and case studies, it reveals key issues existing in the promotion of acupuncture in countries along the Belt and Road, such as cultural cognitive differences and the lack of a standard system, and innovatively proposes a four-dimensional coordinated development model of “culture-standard-education-industry”. This study provides a theoretical basis and practical guidance for the modern transformation of TCM culture and its international dissemination within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Keywords:

Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture, International Communication, Acupuncture

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

In the era of profound changes in global health concepts, the unique value of traditional medicine is becoming increasingly prominent. The World Health Organization's Traditional Medicine Strategy (2023-2030) points out that 88 countries and regions around the world have incorporated traditional medicine into their national health systems. The proposal of the Belt and Road Initiative has brought new opportunities for the international communication of TCM culture. With its unique theoretical system and definite clinical efficacy, acupuncture therapy has become a “pioneer” for TCM to enter Belt and Road countries. Studying the promotion of acupuncture therapy in Belt and Road countries has important implications for exploring the path of inheritance and innovation of TCM culture.

1.2. Research Significance

As the core carrier of TCM culture, acupuncture therapy contains practical and scientific values that constitute the deep driving force for its international dissemination [1]. This value is not only reflected in the empirical nature of its clinical efficacy but also highlighted in the complementary potential between its theoretical system and modern medicine. It has become a concrete symbol for enhancing the soft power of Chinese culture and has opened up an important path for the collaborative innovation between traditional medicine and modern medicine.

Under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, acupuncture therapy, with its unique advantages such as simple operation, wide range of indications, and remarkable efficacy, precisely meets the diverse health needs of countries along the route. From the prevention and treatment of joint diseases in the hot and humid regions of Southeast Asia to the conditioning of neuralgia in the cold regions of Central Asia, acupuncture has quickly integrated into the local medical system with its characteristic of being a green therapy. This adaptive dissemination not only promotes the technical mutual learning and experience sharing in the field of health among countries but also, using the silver needles as a cultural link, promotes the construction of a human health community based on the wisdom of traditional medicine. Through the output of standardized diagnosis and treatment programs, the cultivation of local talents, and transnational clinical research cooperation, acupuncture is gradually transforming from a cultural symbol into a substantial medical resource of the “Healthy Silk Road”, continuously releasing the modern value of TCM.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation of the International Development of Acupuncture Therapy

2.1. Remarkable Dissemination Achievements

Driven by the Belt and Road Initiative, the dissemination of acupuncture medicine in countries along the route has achieved remarkable results. The Chinese government has signed TCM cooperation agreements with many countries along the route, laying a solid policy foundation for the international promotion of acupuncture. Taking Hungary as an example, the Central and Eastern European Chinese Medicine Center jointly established by Semmelweis University and Heilongjiang University of Chinese Medicine has significantly enhanced the popularity and influence of acupuncture medicine in Central and Eastern Europe by providing high-quality acupuncture diagnosis and treatment services. In terms of academic exchanges, the World Traditional Chinese Medicine Congress and the Belt and Road TCM Culture Week regularly held by the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies have become an important platform for promoting international exchanges and cooperation of acupuncture techniques, effectively promoting the innovation and dissemination of acupuncture techniques. It is worth mentioning that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) has officially issued a series of international standards such as Acupuncture Needles. The formulation of these standards provides an important basis for the standardized application of acupuncture worldwide, marking that the internationalization process of acupuncture has entered a new stage.

2.2. Emergence of Diverse Development Models

Under the Belt and Road framework, each participating country, combined with its national conditions and the characteristics of its medical system, has explored

diversified development models of acupuncture. In the field of educational cooperation, China has actively carried out joint education projects with countries along the route. For example, the National TCM Education Internationalization (Nanchang) Pilot Zone participated in the construction by Jiangxi University of Chinese Medicine has trained a large number of acupuncture professionals for countries along the route through systematic curriculum settings and clinical practices. In terms of industrial integration, some countries have innovatively combined acupuncture with the tourism industry and developed acupuncture-themed health tourism projects, which not only promote the dissemination of acupuncture culture but also drive local economic development. The cooperation in the field of medical services is particularly prominent. Countries such as Kazakhstan have, through cooperation with China to establish traditional medicine centers, incorporated acupuncture as a characteristic diagnosis and treatment project into the national medical system, significantly enhancing the status and influence of acupuncture in clinical practice. These diversified development models provide valuable experience for the localized development of acupuncture in Belt and Road countries.

2.3. Facing Many Challenges

Despite significant progress, the promotion of acupuncture in Belt and Road countries still faces many challenges. At the cultural cognitive level, due to the cultural differences between the East and the West and the influence of local traditional culture and Western medical thinking, many people have difficulties in understanding acupuncture therapy that contains TCM theories, resulting in low public acceptance [2]. The problems in terms of technical standards are also prominent. Most countries along the route have not established a complete acupuncture operation specification system, resulting in uneven quality of acupuncture services in different regions. There are obvious differences in operation techniques, acupoint location, treatment courses, etc., which to a certain extent affect the promotion effect of acupuncture. The shortage of talents is particularly severe. Countries along the route generally lack a complete acupuncture talent cultivation system. Problems such as insufficient educational resources and weak teaching staff seriously restrict the cultivation of acupuncture professionals and are difficult to meet the growing local market demand. These challenges need to be gradually solved through measures such as strengthening international cooperation, improving the standard system, and increasing the intensity of talent cultivation.

3. Path Model of Inheritance and Innovation of Traditional Chinese Medicine Culture

In the context of globalization, the inheritance and innovation of TCM culture require the construction of a systematic path model. The construction of cultural identity is a fundamental task. By deeply exploring core cultural symbols such as acupuncture, meridians, yin-yang and the five elements, and using modern communication means for international promotion. For example, producing high-quality TCM documentaries and short video content and holding international TCM exhibitions can effectively enhance the cultural awareness of TCM in countries around the world. At the same time, when promoting in Belt and Road countries, it is necessary to pay attention to cross-cultural adaptation strategies, organically integrate TCM theories with local traditional medical systems such as Arabic medicine and Indian Ayurveda, and adopt a more acceptable narrative method to reduce the cultural

barriers in communication. By creating global activity brands such as “World Acupuncture Day” and “International TCM Culture Week”, the international influence of TCM culture can be continuously strengthened [3].

The innovation of technical standards is a key link in enhancing the international recognition of TCM. On the one hand, it is necessary to actively participate in the standard-setting work of international organizations such as the WHO and ISO, and promote the internationalization of acupuncture terminology, operation specifications, and safety standards. On the other hand, it is necessary to strengthen evidence-based medicine research, and focus on carrying out high-quality clinical research on diseases with the treatment advantages of acupuncture, such as chronic pain and nervous system diseases, to accumulate reliable evidence-based evidence [4]. With the development of science and technology, the research and application of intelligent diagnosis and treatment tools provide a new path for the innovation of acupuncture. The introduction of new technologies such as AI-assisted acupuncture diagnosis and treatment systems and intelligent acupuncture robots not only improves the accuracy of acupuncture treatment but also greatly enhances its accessibility [5].

The innovation of the education system is a long-term mechanism to ensure the inheritance and development of TCM. At present, it is necessary to focus on building an international TCM education system, cooperate with universities in Belt and Road countries to develop Chinese-English bilingual acupuncture textbooks and online courses, and expand the educational coverage. In terms of talent cultivation, local talents can be cultivated by setting up “Confucius Institutes of Traditional Chinese Medicine” or acupuncture training centers overseas. For example, the international student project of the Cambodian Chinese Medicine Center is a successful example. At the same time, the traditional master-apprentice education model also needs to keep pace with the times. With the help of digital technology means such as VR acupuncture simulation training, the valuable experience of famous veteran TCM doctors can be inherited more efficiently [6].

The integrated development of industries provides economic support for the internationalization of TCM. Innovatively combining TCM with the tourism industry and promoting TCM health care tourism in regions such as Southeast Asia and the Middle East to attract international patients to experience acupuncture therapy in person is a successful practice of industrial integration. In the field of science and technology, promoting the intelligent development of acupuncture instruments, such as the research and development of innovative products such as electro-acupuncture devices and laser acupuncture, and deeply integrating with the biomedicine industry can further expand the international market. In addition, relying on the “Internet + TCM” platform to carry out cross-border service trade and provide remote acupuncture consultation and training services is also an important direction of industrial integration.

4. Practical Paths for the Promotion of Acupuncture in Belt and Road Countries

Policy coordination is crucial for the international promotion of acupuncture. Signing mutual recognition agreements on traditional medicine with Belt and Road countries to make acupuncture legal in local areas. The practices of Russia and the United Arab Emirates in incorporating it into medical insurance can be widely learned from. Strengthen cooperation with international organizations such as the WHO and

jointly formulate clinical guidelines to enhance China's voice. Chinese medical teams dispatched abroad take acupuncture as a characteristic, establish demonstration clinics in Africa, Southeast Asia and other places, and build a promotion network [7].

Digital technology adds innovative vitality to the internationalization of acupuncture. The telemedicine platform realizes "cloud acupuncture", and intelligent diagnosis and treatment APPs provide online consultations and training, breaking through geographical limitations. Blockchain records the qualifications of acupuncturists and the information of medicinal materials, enhancing international trust. Big data analysis establishes a case database, optimizes treatment plans, predicts diseases, and helps with precision medicine [8].

Cultural narrative innovation enhances the international charm of acupuncture. Digging out successful overseas stories of acupuncture, such as its contribution to the treatment of malaria in Africa, and producing multilingual content to enhance its appeal [9]. Collaborating with artists from Belt and Road countries and using forms such as film and television to showcase acupuncture culture. Setting up immersive experience areas at international exhibitions and combining with VR to let the audience feel the curative effect, achieving good communication results [10].

5. Conclusion and Outlook

The promotion practice of acupuncture in Belt and Road countries fully demonstrates the modern value of TCM culture, and its successful experience provides an important reference for the international development of other traditional medical systems. Looking to the future, it is necessary to continue in-depth exploration in multiple aspects. Establishing an interdisciplinary research platform to promote the cross-integration of acupuncture with modern disciplines such as neuroscience and biomechanics, and deeply revealing the mechanism of action of acupuncture, which is the basic work for enhancing the scientific nature of acupuncture. Based on the data of international multi-center clinical research, formulating acupuncture application specifications by disease type and region, and forming diagnosis and treatment guidelines supported by evidence-based medicine, will significantly enhance the recognition of acupuncture in various countries. Building a coordinated development ecosystem of "culture-technology-industry", promoting the deep integration of acupuncture with industries such as health care, science and technology, and cultural tourism, and forming a sustainable international development model.

By systematically promoting the construction of cultural identity, breakthroughs in technological innovation, and integrated industrial development, acupuncture is expected to become the core content of the construction of the "Healthy Silk Road". It can not only promote the international communication of TCM culture but also contribute unique Chinese wisdom to global health governance. This process requires the joint efforts of all parties. While maintaining the characteristics of TCM, it is necessary to continuously innovate and adapt, and ultimately achieve the beautiful vision of making treasures of TCM such as acupuncture better benefit all mankind.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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