

Chapter 11

Heritage Education in Central China: Agendas for Cultural and Inter- Cultural Citizenship Education

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ABSTRACT

Based on a review of the linkage between heritage education and citizenship education that includes cultural and inter-cultural education, this chapter provides a case study of heritage education in the Central Plains of China, which is one of the most important cradles of Chinese civilization with a splendid cultural heritage. Heritage education in this region helped youngsters to construct characters and qualities to be citizens. Even though heritage education is mainly a study of the past, Central China's past is not only "cultural" but also "inter-cultural" as it has been the traffic hub in history, and thus the growth of Chinese culture through the Central Plains is characterized by the absorption of diverse cultures passing through the hub. Its positioning is important for both teachers and students to reflect upon what we should be and how China can interact with other parts of the world in this age of globalization.

INTRODUCTION

Citizenship education has a multifaceted nature, and a wide range of subjects were used to teach citizenship education worldwide. Among the wide range of subjects, citizenship education also covers cultural education and inter-cultural education. Heritage education is a significant component of cultural educa-

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tion that will bring students to understand their own cultures from the past, and how the past heritage develops and transforms alongside history, linking the past to the present. Thus, there is intrinsic relationship between heritage education and citizenship education from the perspectives of cultural and inter-cultural education.

In China, cultural heritage contains tangible cultural heritages and intangible cultural heritages. The Central Plains Region, generally referred to the lower reaches of the Yellow River and the south of the North China Plain, is one of the most important cradles of Chinese civilization with significant cultural heritage. The tangible and intangible cultural heritages handed down from thousands of years ago have formed a profound historical background for the citizens to search, identify and recognize their own cultural and inter-cultural identity. Even though heritage education is mainly a study of the past, Central China's past history is not only a tale of "Cultural" but also "Inter-cultural" traditions, as it has been China's transportation traffic hub throughout Chinese history. Thus, the development of Chinese culture originated from the Central Plains region is characterized by the absorption and assimilation of diverse cultures passing through the hub. Its location as the origin of Chinese civilization is important for both teachers and students to learn about in heritage education, being part of citizenship education, how China has interacted with other parts of the world throughout its history – China has always been interacting with the "globe", even before the notion of globalization proliferates. Taking the Central Plains Region of China as a case, this article aims to explore its strategic location today and in the past, and what methods adopted to make use of its cultural heritage as inherited resources to construct citizenship education in this region.

BACKGROUND: HERITAGE EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Citizenship education¹ has a multifaceted nature, with multi-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary characters. In his analysis of 24 qualitative case reports submitted to the IEA Civic Education Study in 1998, Lee (2002) found that a wide range of subjects were used to teach citizenship education across the 24 participating countries, including history, geography, language and literature, social studies, religion, religion and ethics, ethics/morality, personal and social education, social and political education, civic culture, morality and civics, history and politics, history and civics, democracy, peace and social life, homeland and society, human beings and society, society and ethics, law and economics, economics and public affairs, and science/environmental education, etc. Such expressions as ethics/morality, social and political education, religion and ethics, history and politics show that different countries use different combination of subjects to teach citizenship education, and this shows the cross-disciplinary features of citizenship education – no one subject can cover the span of teaching citizenship. The Hong Kong (1996) *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools 1996* made specific stipulation on the multi-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary features of citizenship education:

1.3 The first issue of the *Guidelines on Civic Education in Schools* was published in 1985, recommending schools to adopt a cross-curricular approach in the implementation of civic education. Schools were encouraged to promote civic education through different subjects in the formal curriculum, in particular such subjects as Economic and Public Affairs, Social Studies, Government and Public Affairs and Liberal Studies at secondary level, and Social Studies at primary level. At the same time, civic education was implemented through school assemblies, class-teacher periods and extra-

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