

RESEARCH ON COUNTERMEASURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY¹


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Abstract: Ecological civilization is a form of civilization and has cultural values. In the process of economic and social development, different countries, regions and ethnic groups are bound to differ in their understanding of the connotation of ecological civilization and its external expression due to differences in social practices. In the context of cultural diversity, the development of ecological civilization education in China is a long-term systematic project, which requires all people's participation, and can generally be carried out at three levels, including the social level, the national

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level and the school level. This paper argues that the whole society is the soil for developing ecological civilization education in China, the government is the external guarantee, the schools are the main battlefield and the government mainly relies on schools to achieve the goal of ecological civilization education. Therefore, this paper will focus on the school level to discuss the countermeasures for the development of ecological civilization education in China in the present day of cultural diversity, which includes the goal system, teachers, students, curriculum, methodology and environment. Besides, this article takes Sichuan-Tibet region and Tianjin city as examples to elaborate the specific actions of integrating ethnic ecological culture into ecological civilization education in schools.

Keywords: Cultural diversity; Ecological civilization education; Countermeasures for the development.

INTRODUCTION

The ecological civilization of China is a national commitment of the Chinese government to promote the establishment of a “harmonious world”, maintain global ecological security and promote sustainable development in the world, which is the international responsibility of a rising power. In the post-industrial era, a series of ecological crises such as resource scarcity, environmental pollution and destruction of biodiversity are common challenges faced by all countries. On the issue of natural resources utilization and ecological responsibility, the Chinese government advocates shared responsibility, equal opportunities and reasonable compensation for all countries, and opposes all kinds of egoism and hegemony of the big powers. Since 1996, China has made great efforts to promote global ecological protection and environmental construction by effectively implementing its “sustainable development strategy” and has been effective in such important areas as population control, energy conservation and emission reduction, and ecological construction (LIU, 2022, p. 49). The report of the 18th Party Congress points out that China would continue to adhere to the basic state policy of resource conservation and environmental protection and to the policy of giving priority to conservation, protection and natural restoration. The country would continue to make efforts to promote green development, circular development and low-carbon development. It would form a spatial pattern, an industrial structure, a mode of production and a lifestyle that conserve resources, China would continue to protect the environment, reverse the ecological environment and its deterioration from the source, create a good production and living environment for the people, and contribute to global ecological security (CHEN, 2020, p. 89).

Cultural variety is based on many people’s variations of social behaviours and on the ones of the nations. It is both a fundamental aspect of human

society and a driving factor behind the advancement of human civilization. Therefore, we should respect cultural diversity, identify with our own culture, respect, cultivate and develop it well, as well as respect the cultures of other nations. We should also uphold the principle of equality among all national cultures, respect differences, understand individuality, live in peace, strengthen communication and encourage the prosperity of world culture.

Ecological civilization is a form of civilization and has cultural values. In the process of economic and social development, different countries, regions and ethnic groups are bound to differ in their understanding of the connotation of ecological civilization and its external expression due to differences in social practices. For example, ecological civilization in the West is mainly presented through ecological movements. Since the last century, people have been thinking about ecology beyond the natural environment and have made profound thoughts about the root causes of the ecological crisis.

1 INTERPRETATION OF ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION UNDER CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The core of the values of ecological civilization is to respect and conform to nature, recognize the inherent value of natural ecosystems and establish the human beings' ethical responsibility and moral norms for nature. It is a criticism, inheritance and innovation of the traditional natural values of the East and the West. It has a profound historical and cultural basis, including the absorption of ancient Chinese natural ethics, the reflection and criticism of modern western anthropocentrism values and the reconstruction of natural values on the basis of modern organic natural views. The ecological civilization of China has a distinctive national character and has developed a systematic ecological ethics in the course of several thousand years (JI, 2013, p. 59). Confucianism, by affirming the intrinsic value of all things, advocates treating nature and others with benevolence and love; Taoism, by revering all things to perfect oneself, takes the way of nature as a basic code of conduct; and Buddhism, by showing the ecological ethics of compassion through the idea that all beings are equal and all things are spiritual (LV, 2019, p. 19).

Due to differences in national interests, national psychology, history and culture, various countries, nations and regions frequently exhibit different philosophical perspectives, ways of thinking and behavioral patterns, or even engage in conflict and confrontation when it comes to understand, apply and implement ecological civilization. The essence of ecological civilization

is to handle appropriately the interaction between humans and nature, necessitating that we both possess and control, utilize and preserve nature and, jointly, maintain the world: our one and only home. It is the logical presumption and conceptual foundation for discussion and collaboration among other nations and countries on ecological challenges, transcending the distinctions of particular national cultures.

Therefore, on the one hand, we need to understand and identify the common parts of “ecological civilization” in cultural exchanges and, on the other hand, we need to respect, understand and tolerate the differences. At the same time, since more than 200 years of industrialization in developed countries have put enormous pressure on the existing ecological environment, all countries in the world should adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and developed countries should take greater responsibility in international cooperation with the fundamental interests of mankind as the starting point.

The culture of any era is influenced by cultural traditions. Cultural inheritance and development are always two aspects of one process. Culture always develops on the basis of inheritance and inherits in the process of development. Therefore, we should base on our social practice, face the world, learn from all, inherit the tradition, push out the new and realize cultural innovation (XI, 2019, p. 2).

Understanding the cultural connotation of ecological civilization in the course of history, we realize that ecological civilization is the human beings’ development and innovation on the basis of primitive civilization, agricultural civilization, and industrial civilization. Ecological civilization is not a total negation of agricultural and industrial civilization, nor is it a simple return to primitive civilization; rather, it is a profound understanding and grasp of the relationship between man and nature, a dialectical negation of the relationship between man’s enslavement to nature in primitive civilization and man’s conquest of nature in agricultural and industrial civilization.

It must be pointed out that the gap between rich and poor countries is the main factor hindering harmony in the world. There are diverse ideas or paths to solve ecological problems. Each country faces different development starting points and survival situations, with its own special historical trajectory, unique natural conditions and humanistic traditions, social management mechanisms, different economic development models, cultural concepts and

value systems, industrialization levels and development depths, etc., which explain the differences in ecological civilization construction models. Building ecological civilization is a global responsibility, but it cannot replace and deny the unique living conditions and different development paths of each country and nation. Otherwise, global responsibility will lose its realistic support. China advocates global cooperation and emphasizes that each country should choose the appropriate development model according to its own status and development conditions. Ignoring the objective status and copying the models of other countries will do no good. Global ecological construction is not only about protecting the natural environment and ecology but also about choosing development models and economic growth paths. In a deeper sense, there are ideological differences and even significant differences (LIU; XUE, 2020, p. 20). Therefore, the global action of ecological protection needs to seek common ground while reserving differences, establish an inclusive international vision and build a global development concept of mutual respect, pluralistic coexistence and mutual support.

To eliminate the narrow ideological differences of unilateralism is the inevitable choice to achieve harmony in the world. Harmony is not the eradication of individuality. Harmony, but not uniformity. They are different, but are not in conflict with each other. Harmony is a symbiosis, and differences are complementary to each other. Harmony and difference are an important law of social things and social development. They are also a guideline that people should follow in the world and the true meaning of the harmonious development of human civilizations (LIN, 2020, p. 1).

We must therefore embrace ecological civilization from the globalization wave. Economic globalization forces us to broaden our global perspective, utilize both domestic and foreign resources to the fullest extent possible, boost international cooperation in the development of ecological civilization, establish common standards for global ecological construction and, actively, support the establishment of a new international ecological order. In order to democratize international relations, we must uphold the equality of all nations, respect the historical, cultural and practical circumstances of each nation, as well as the diversity of its people. We must also carry out international ecological cooperation on the principles of equality and mutual benefit, sincere cooperation and reciprocity of duties and rights.

2 BASIC MEASURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

(1) Construct a clear goal system of ecological civilization education. In the context of cultural diversity, the goals of ecological civilization education should be multi-directional and three-dimensional. First, it is important to understand the basic knowledge of ecology and the environment at the knowledge level (SONG; ZHANG, 2020, p. 3). Cognition is the basis for emotion, belief and action. To guide students to understand and deal with the relationship between human beings and nature scientifically, we need to help them master the most basic ecological and environmental knowledge, including ecology, environmental science, environmental laws, etc. Second, the concept of ecological civilization in diversity should be established at the value level. Based on the knowledge of ecology and the environment, students should be guided to form the concept of ecological civilization, such as “[...] respecting nature, following nature, and protecting nature”, and establish an awareness of ecology and environmental protection (LIN, 2020, p. 2). The third is ability to practice ecological and environmental actions. Action is the externalization of cognition and concepts.

The concept of ecological civilization should be internalized in the heart and externalized in action. Schools should lead students to participate in environmental protection activities in schools and communities to achieve the effect of unity of knowledge and action. The degree of aesthetics is the fourth. Ecological beauty is the component of beauty that comes from nature, and love of nature is the emotional expression of awe for the natural world.

By observing the connection and coexistence of various living things in nature, teachers can help students develop their interests in ecology and aesthetics while also helping them to appreciate the beauty of life and the natural world. Fifth, pupils should get a thorough understanding of ecology. The highest standard and level in the ecological civilization education aim system is ecological literacy, which is a very comprehensive literacy that incorporates ecological knowledge, value concepts, ecological activities and ecological aesthetics.

(2) Teachers are the key. In the context of cultural diversity, the in-depth development of ecological civilization education brings many challenges to teachers, and the construction of teachers is related to the overall situation of ecological civilization education. At present, the ecological civilization

education of China faces two major problems in the teachers' team: first, the lack of professional ecological civilization education teachers; and second, the lack of the teachers' awareness of various subjects about the diversity of inclusive ecological civilization education.

Therefore, the construction of ecological civilization education teachers should focus on these two aspects: on the one hand, we should improve the talent training system, increase the training of professional talents and build, in a large-scale, a high-quality ecological civilization education teachers' team to meet the needs of ecological civilization education for talents. Agriculture, forestry, normal colleges and universities can set up majors related to "ecological civilization education" according to the actual situation. They can train professional teachers for ecological civilization education and guide them to integrate the ecological environment knowledge and ecological civilization education concepts learned systematically into their education and teaching work. On the other hand, teachers of various subjects should be guided to form a consensus on ecological civilization education in diversity and to integrate ecological civilization education, in a more subtle way, in the actual teaching of their subjects. In particular, it is important to strengthen training for teachers of all subjects regarding ecological civilization education. Specifically, localities can convene relevant experts to prepare special readers for teachers on ecological civilization education according to the actual situation, mainly including special training on ecological and environmental knowledge, ecological civilization concepts and how to integrate ecological civilization education in the subjects they teach.

(3) Students are the main body. We should cultivate "eco-citizen" with ecological literacy. The term "eco-citizen" first appeared in the Canadian document issued by the government of Canada in 1990, but there is currently no uniform definition of the term in academic circles. Generally speaking, an "eco-citizen" is a modern citizen who is ecologically literate and actively engaged in the construction of ecological civilization. Cultivating eco-citizen with inclusive and open ecological literacy in the context of diversity is the main objective of ecological civilization education. In the World Education Report, UNESCO stated that the kind of world we leave behind for future generations depends to a large extent on the kind of future generations we leave behind for the world. This is in line with the fundamental questions of education in the new era: "what kind of people to train", "how to train people" and "for whom to train people. At the same time, we should clearly

understand that the cultivation of “eco-citizen” is not something that can be done overnight (ZHU, 2021, p. 113).

There is always a gap between the young students’ actual ecological literacy, who are the main subjects of education, and the ecological civilization requirements of a certain society. This gap is the basic contradiction in the process of ecological civilization education. To solve this contradiction, we need to follow the basic laws of education, i.e., the laws of respecting the students’ subject status and the ones of ensuring those teachers’ educational activities. They are in line with students’ actual literacy, as well as the laws of “bilateral interaction” and “internalization and externalization” (YANG, 2019, p. 60). At the same time, we should also follow the laws of “bilateral interaction”, “internalization and externalization” and “coordination and control” to effectively achieve the goal of ecological civilization education. On the other hand, in the context of cultural diversity, the cultivation of “eco-citizen” includes not only ecological awareness but also ecological behavior in order to achieve the effect of unity of knowledge and action. In general, it means guiding and encouraging young students to develop diverse ecological civilization values and ways of thinking, and to practice a simple and moderate, green, low-carbon, civilized and healthy lifestyle (SONG, 2021, p. 284). This not only affects each person’s healthy and happy life but also has a bearing on the effectiveness of the construction of ecological civilization in China and the human beings’ future development prospects.

(4) Curriculum is the main carrier and specific development of teaching activities. To carry out ecological civilization education, “ecological curriculum” is the carrier. The formation of “curriculum ecology” is the pursuit. Schools should break the limitations of inherent disciplines, courses and specialties, establish a mutually complementary ecological civilization education curriculum system and extend ecological civilization education to the entire field of curriculum construction. On the one hand, we must actively establish ecological courses, such as general education courses on ecological civilization, interdisciplinary courses on ecological civilization, optional courses on ecological civilization, etc.

All levels and kinds of educational institutions can create regional or school-based ecological courses, based on local peculiarities, and formally integrate them into the educational system. Schools can use this process to pool the teachers and students’ knowledge to create self-systematic educational resources for ecological civilization, including reading books and

manuals, creating promotional videos with an ecological civilization theme and, continuously, creating educational materials with rich content, varied formats, and online and offline integration. On the other hand, the concept of ecological civilization should be infiltrated into the teaching of specific subjects to promote the formation of “curriculum ecology”. Since ecological issues are complex and wide-ranging, ecological civilization education in diversity should break the boundaries of disciplines and achieve the same direction in ecological civilization education in all disciplines (SONG, 2021, p. 127). There are many subjects in geography, biology, chemistry, ideology and politics, and languages that are united with ecological civilization. For example, the geography subject shows environmental issues, and disaster prevention and mitigation; the biology subject explains the ecosystem and biodiversity; the chemistry subject introduces chemical products; the ideology and politics subject analyzes Xi Jinping’s ecological civilization thought and rural revitalization strategy; and the language subject inspires respect for life, etc. Therefore, we should make good use of the important channel of subject teaching to involve more subjects in ecological civilization education and to explore and bring into play the value of “curriculum ecology”.

(5) Methodology is the focus: As an important part of the basic education reform, ecological civilization education should follow the trend of education reform. It should advocate and widely apply the research-based learning and teaching mode to better reflect and give full play to the characteristics and advantages. These are the ones by which ecological civilization education proves to be significantly practical, comprehensive and social. Therefore, schools should encourage students to take the initiative to pay attention to social and ecological issues. The students should be encouraged to use their existing knowledge and experience to solve problems through independent inquiry and hands-on practice in the process of cultivating students’ diverse humanistic spirit and ecological literacy. In specific classroom teaching, teachers should also encourage students to actively pay attention to ecological and environmental problems in various fields, guide them to propose valuable research topics, and carry out specific research study activities in strict accordance with scientific research methods and the basic steps of the research study. At the same time, in the process, we should focus on stimulating students’ curiosity, imagination, innovation and critical thinking, and ensure that students experience the process of independent-cooperation-inquiry in a lively form and, eventually, propose targeted and practical solutions to ecological and environmental problems, cultivate students’ sense

of social responsibility, enhance cultural tolerance and improve their social participation ability. In short, efforts should be made to achieve ecological civilization education to help students gain a comprehensive understanding of the ecological environment and acquire the methods and skills to identify, solve and prevent environmental problems.

(6) Environment is the condition. The campus environment is an objective external condition for schools to carry out diverse ecological civilization education, and it has a subtle influence on students. Therefore, it is also particularly important to convey indirectly ecological civilization ideas to students by creating a diverse campus environment and diverse culture. Creating a diverse campus is also an important carrier of quality education and one of the ways to achieve the internal development of the school. A diverse campus is not only about diversity of life, but also about all teachers and students' high ecological literacy and proactive actions. Therefore, the creation of a diversity campus mainly includes three aspects: first, to establish the concept of diversity, that is, the school should be guided by the idea of ecological civilization and realize the organic combination of modern diversity culture and ecological environment; second, to advocate diversity culture, that is, the school should create a green, civilized, inclusive and collaborative spiritual and cultural atmosphere; third, to create a diverse environment, that is, the school should implement innovative actions of diversity campus, create beautiful teaching and living environment, let teachers and students enjoy and inculcate beauty. The concept of diversity is the core; the culture of diversity is the soul; and the environment of diversity is the foundation; all three are inseparable (QING, 2021, p. 9).

3 CASES

(1) The path of integrating ethnic ecological culture into ecological civilization education in schools in Sichuan and Tibetan areas. It is necessary for ecological civilization education in schools to form a holistic and strong curriculum cluster. In addition to the integration of ecological civilization education in ideological and political theory courses and some professional courses, special ecological civilization education courses should be offered to form an ecological civilization education system with intertwined humanistic and scientific spirits. The ethnic groups' ecological cultures of Sichuan-Tibet region can be included in the educational materials about ecological civilization

used in local schools since they have clear regional, ecological, and holistic characteristics and contribute to maintaining ecological balance of the region.

At present, there are more research results on the ethnic groups' ecological culture in the Sichuan-Tibet region, and turning the research results into materials for ecological civilization education in schools not only practices the spirit of putting learning into practice but also meets the needs of ecological civilization education in schools. At present, local colleges and universities are incorporating the content of ethnic ecological culture into their ecological civilization education materials. The process of preparing the teaching materials is based on the harmonious coexistence between human beings and nature, which is the main line and core of the national ecological culture. The framework is constructed on three levels: material, spiritual and institutional, i.e., the technology of knowing and using nature on the material level, the concept of knowing and respecting nature on the spiritual level and the system of protecting nature.

Strengthening the teachers' quantity and quality construction is a way of ecological civilization education. First, there have been multiple channels to integrate and train teachers in related fields (REN, 2018, p. 22). There are teachers who may only favor a particular ethnic minority ecological culture or a certain level of ethnic ecological culture research. These teachers primarily strengthen the study of ethnic ecological culture as a whole in order to adapt to the needs of ethnic ecological culture teaching. These teachers have some background in ethnic ecological culture research, and some of them have research and cognition of ethnic ecological culture. Secondly, some teachers of ethnic cultures are trained to teach ethnic ecological cultures. Teachers of ethnic cultures have certain knowledge and theoretical skills in ethnology and culture, and through self-learning and relevant training, they can transition to the ethnic ecological cultures teaching (CHEN, 2020, p. 88).

Besides, it should build ecological civilization education in colleges and universities by relying on the Sichuan and Tibetan ethnic minorities' ecological culture. In the case of compact classroom hours for ecological civilization education, the second classroom can be used to promote ecological civilization education. On the one hand, the second classroom can make up for the limited classroom hours and contents, and on the other hand, through on-site learning and perception, it can deepen students' knowledge and understanding of ecological civilization concepts and enhance ecological civilization awareness. Some living ethnic ecological cultures in the Sichuan-

Tibet region provide valuable resources for carrying out the second classroom. In the process of carrying out ecological civilization education, these resources are fully utilized to promote better results of ecological civilization education (CHEN, 2020, p. 87). For one thing, college students make use of the opportunity of returning to their hometowns during holidays to visit and investigate the local ethnic ecological culture. After returning to school, they organize investigation and exchange meetings. To construct the practice foundation for ecological civilization education, several ethnic communities are chosen. The ones that have traditional ecological culture, which has been better conserved and clear ecological consequences. The classroom theory of ecological civilization education is reinforced by visiting practice sites to see and experience the ecological concept of peaceful coexistence between humans and nature as well as the ecological effects caused on the ground.

(2) Similarly, in northern China, the Tianjin Municipal Regulations on Promoting Ecological Civilization Education were recently promulgated, aiming to further enhance the awareness of ecological civilization in the whole society and promote the construction of a national action system for ecological environment governance.

The Regulations focus on the important legislative concept of “ecological civilization education is the common responsibility of the whole society” in the system design and make institutional provisions on how to carry out ecological civilization education from all aspects of society and from multiple perspectives.

The Regulations put forward that the municipal and district people’s governments are responsible for promoting ecological civilization education in their respective administrative regions. The education department shall incorporate ecological civilization education into the education content of schools and kindergartens. Primary and secondary schools, institutions of higher learning and vocational schools shall incorporate the contents of ecological civilization education into their corresponding courses and carry out practical activities of ecological civilization education.

CONCLUSIONS

Ecological ethicists have extended the focus of ethics from human society to the entire ecosystem, indicating the sublimation of human

understanding of natural values and providing a valuable reference for modern society to re-examine the relationship between man and nature. Only when ecological, ethical values are transformed into the common sense of life and can have an impact on life practice, prompting us to rebuild the coordinate of life values and change the way of life to choose one that conforms to an ecological civilization. Especially in today's culturally diverse world, ecological civilization education is of great significance as it concerns ecological security and the sustainable development of all regions in China. From the school level, to promote ecological civilization education in the diversity of China, it is necessary to enhance relevance and pay attention to effect orientation, break the barriers between natural sciences and humanities and social sciences and build a discipline-integrated ecological civilization education system. This paper first proposes general countermeasures for developing ecological civilization education in a culturally diverse social environment at the school level and then uses the Sichuan-Tibet region of China as an example to illustrate how to take targeted actions at the school level if cultural diversity is to be respected in the process of ecological civilization development. As mentioned in the paper, the Sichuan-Tibet region has rich and unique endowments of ethnic ecological culture resources. Therefore, it should be integrated into ecological civilization education in schools, relying on the vernacular, vividness and liveliness of ethnic ecological culture to stimulate students' affinity for ecological civilization education and reduce the difficulty of understanding, thus enhancing the learning effect. Of course, the integration of ethnic ecological culture into ecological civilization education in schools is only a kind of idea combined with the characteristics of the Sichuan-Tibet region, and it may encounter many difficulties in concrete practice.

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Resumo: A civilização ecológica é uma forma de civilização e possui valores culturais. No processo de desenvolvimento econômico e social, devido às diferenças nas práticas sociais, diferentes países, regiões e grupos étnicos são forçados a diferir em sua compreensão da conotação da civilização ecológica e de sua expressão externa. No contexto da diversidade cultural, o desenvolvimento da educação da civilização ecológica na China é um projeto sistemático de longo prazo, que requer a participação

conjunta do povo, e pode, de modo geral, ser realizado em três níveis, incluindo o nível social, o nível nacional e o nível escolar. O presente artigo argumenta que toda a sociedade é o solo para desenvolver a educação da civilização ecológica; na China, o governo é a garantia externa e as escolas são o principal campo de batalha. Nesse sentido, o governo confia essencialmente nas escolas para alcançar o objetivo da educação da civilização ecológica. Portanto, o presente artigo se concentrará no nível escolar, baseado na diversidade cultural dos dias atuais, para discutir as contramedidas para o desenvolvimento da educação da civilização ecológica, na China, que inclui o sistema de metas, professores, estudantes, currículo, metodologia e meio ambiente. Além disso, o presente artigo toma a região de Sichuan-Tibet e a cidade de Tianjin como exemplos para elaborar as ações específicas de integração da cultura ecológica étnica com a educação da civilização ecológica nas escolas.

Palavras-chave: Diversidade cultural. Educação da civilização ecológica. Contramedidas para o desenvolvimento.

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