

A Study on the Use of Overseas Chinese Social Donations - Based on Case Studies of Qingtian, an Overseas Chinese Township

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Abstract: The characteristics presented by overseas Chinese social giving are influenced to some extent by the giving culture of the host country. Combining the actual situation in China, through case studies and literature research, we learn from the giving culture and its development experience of some countries to provide ideas to solve some of the current problems faced by China's philanthropy. At the same time, there is an opportunity for further international exchange of our traditional culture in the use of overseas Chinese donations. Overseas Chinese are promoting the construction of a community of human destiny with their unique advantages, and the efficient use of their donations will further promote cultural exchanges.

1. Introduction

The mutual appreciation and learning of human cultures is one of the most profound unions in the community of human destiny [1]. Overseas Chinese, who have long served as a link of cooperation and exchange between China and other countries, have witnessed and personally experienced the mutual appreciation and exchange of Chinese and foreign cultures.

Since the beginning of reform and opening up, overseas Chinese have played an important role in promoting cultural, scientific and technological exchanges between China and abroad. In recent years, as overseas Chinese resources have gradually become a unique resource for building a community of human destiny [2], overseas Chinese have become more diversified in their promotion of Sino-foreign exchanges and cooperation, and overseas Chinese have become an important driving force for cultural exchanges and mutual appreciation between Chinese culture and other countries around the world.

With the implementation of a series of strategies and technological advances in China, overseas Chinese social donation areas and means more diverse, but also more groups involved. According to incomplete statistics, in 2021, overseas Chinese donated a total of 3.669 billion yuan to domestic

public welfare undertakings, and a total of nine provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) received more than 100 million yuan in overseas Chinese donations, and five provinces exceeded 300 million yuan [3], including Zhejiang Province. As a well-known overseas Chinese hometown in Zhejiang Province, Qingtian's donation situation is representative. Thus, the project investigates the use of social donations from overseas Chinese in Qingtian and explores its effect on the promotion of cultural exchange.

2. Description of the Current Situation

2.1. Current Status of Research

Based on the existing literature examining the use of Chinese donations, it can be seen that the current field of study presents the following characteristics.

2.1.1. Publication of Regulations by Local Organizations and Institutions

Overseas Chinese liaison and research on overseas Chinese related topics are usually the exclusive responsibility of overseas Chinese organizations such as overseas Chinese associations and overseas Chinese offices, and the amount of research on overseas Chinese donations varies greatly from place to place due to the difference in the volume of overseas Chinese and overseas Chinese conditions in different regions.

As traditional overseas Chinese hometowns that are the main recipients of overseas Chinese donations, old overseas Chinese hometowns such as Fujian Province and Guangdong Province have updated their regulations on overseas Chinese donations at a faster pace, but there are fewer systematic studies on the mechanisms and case studies of overseas Chinese donations. In contrast, Zhejiang Province, as a new overseas Chinese hometown that has developed rapidly after the reform and opening up, has a large gap in research volume, its administrative regulations are still not perfect, and academic research on overseas Chinese donations needs to be further developed.

2.1.2. Fewer Studies Related to the Use of Overseas Chinese Donations in Recent Years

As the regulations governing the use of overseas Chinese donations continue to be improved and promulgated, the use of overseas Chinese donations is subject to stricter regulation and more precise punishment and recourse. But standardization is only the initial goal of the management of overseas Chinese donations, to achieve the sustainable development of charity, a complete charity system and a mature culture of charitable giving is essential. This requires that the use of overseas Chinese donations receive sufficient social attention, and with the development of the times, there can be professionals to continuously study the management and encouragement of donations adapted to the current social situation.

However, the current research on overseas Chinese social giving presents a phased character, with studies mainly distributed between 2002 and 2010, which is not unrelated to the large-scale donations of overseas Chinese during the SARS period, but also illustrates the inadequate research on the use of overseas Chinese donations in recent years, and the gradual decrease in social attention received by this field.

2.2. Current Status of Overseas Chinese Donations and Their Use

Overseas Chinese donations cover a wide range of fields, including education, health, poverty alleviation, disaster relief, etc. In 2021, affected by the rebound of the new crown pneumonia epidemic, coupled with natural disasters of varying degrees in many areas of the country, the total

amount of overseas Chinese donations for disaster relief amounted to 748 million yuan, accounting for 20.4% of the total, a significant increase compared to 2020, poverty alleviation and education still account for a greater proportion, accounting for about 60% of the total amount of overseas Chinese donations [3].

Through our research on the overseas Chinese town of Qingtian, we also learned that since the "100 Overseas Chinese Unite 100 Villages, Contribute to Rural Revitalization" campaign in 2018, Qingtian overseas Chinese have been donating to their hometown through the campaign platform to promote the cause of rural revitalization. In the field of education, Qingtian Overseas Chinese High School receives donations from alumni at home and abroad every year, and returned overseas Chinese leaders who are alumni are also invited to serve as school directors, contributing resources and energy to the development and construction of the school.

Overseas Chinese through donations to support the construction of their hometowns, local management also follow the principle of earmarking funds, the donation will be used directly for industrial and agricultural production, culture, education and health, science and technology, as well as public welfare production materials. For example, poverty alleviation donations are mainly used to help the disadvantaged groups and infrastructure construction; education donations are mainly used for education and training, financial assistance to students, donations to build school buildings.

2.3. Current Status of Cultural Exchange

2.3.1. Chinese Donor Behavior and Field, with Some Characteristics of the Host Country Donation Culture

Overseas Chinese usually donate and participate in philanthropic activities out of their own personal will, and thus the main donors are mostly individuals and families rather than corporate organizations, while the main donors in domestic philanthropy are corporations. In addition, the fields of poverty alleviation and education, which account for the largest share of overseas Chinese social donations, correspond to a certain extent to the more developed overseas donations for humanitarian services and alumni donations, respectively. In contrast, in recent years, the proportion of domestic social donations in the field of health care is affected by epidemics and disasters, far exceeding the proportion of education and poverty alleviation and development.

In our foreign exchanges, we have incorporated all the beneficial achievements of human civilization [4], and the present time is the right time to learn from the advanced international experience of the third distribution.

2.3.2. International Exchange of Chinese National Culture Needs to be Deepened

In the face of the sudden outbreak of the epidemic, China has assumed the responsibility of a great nation in supporting the global fight against the epidemic, but is still being questioned for some untrue statements.

In fact, since ancient times, China has advocated the concepts of "peace is precious" and "harmony is different", and the love of peace in the Chinese cultural gene determines our people's recognition of the value of the community of human destiny. If we can strengthen the international exchange of Chinese culture, it will not be difficult for foreign friends to understand China's role as a great nation.

3. Analysis of Existing Problems

3.1. The Structure of Donation Use is Uneven, and the "Altruistic" Characteristic is Greater than the "Public" Characteristic

These public welfare projects are usually aimed at promoting social development, while interviews with overseas Chinese leaders in Qingtian have revealed that overseas Chinese also sponsor local Chinese students overseas, which is both "altruistic" in nature. Altruistic" in nature. In domestic social donations, charitable crowdfunding projects such as caring for poor families and raising funds for serious illnesses are often more popular, and these projects to meet the survival and health needs of specific groups of people have more obvious "altruistic" characteristics, and relatively less "public" projects are donated. It can be seen that Chinese donations are to a certain extent influenced by Western donor culture, which seeks to achieve a balance between "public" and "altruistic" values [5].

However, overseas Chinese donations usually cover both "public" and "altruistic" projects, such as donations for poverty alleviation, which can be used for both specific poverty alleviation targets and infrastructure construction in poor areas; and donations for education, which can be used for for example, education donations can be used to support specific students or to build libraries. Under the influence of the domestic social giving atmosphere and the actual situation of the donor field, the use of donations is more inclined to the realization of "altruistic" values. However, the "unbalanced" structure of donations is not appropriate for the long-term development of each field.

3.2. Charitable Organizations Lack Professionalism and Have Limited Mobility and Value-Added Capacity of Donated Property

In order to fully and efficiently use charitable property, charitable organizations are allowed to carry out investment activities under the premise of meeting the prescribed requirements according to the relevant management methods in China. However, in practice, most of the endowment property in China is more like a reservoir, and its liquidity and value-addedness are not strong.

On the one hand, the management and distribution of funds and materials require a lot of manpower, material resources and time costs. The relevant charitable organizations do not have sufficient management capacity in fund operation and material handling, which results in unreasonable use of funds, untimely distribution of materials, and lack of transparency in management.

On the other hand, due to the lack of professional talents and low social recognition, some domestic charitable organizations currently only assume the role of fundraising initiators, and do not have reasonable and effective project operation methods.

3.3. Information Asymmetry between the Two Sides of the Donation, the Donation Incentive Mechanism is Not Flexible Enough

While the significant shift of overseas Chinese donations to poverty alleviation and education is not unrelated to the humanitarian care and alumni giving atmosphere in their home countries, it is also important to consider whether information on domestic donation needs has not been effectively disclosed. The phenomenon of "donations not needed" in some areas of China during the epidemic also illustrates the problem of information asymmetry between donors and recipients.

In addition, the donation incentive mechanism is inflexible, and the main incentives are still tax deductions and honorary awards. However, it is difficult for overseas Chinese to benefit directly from domestic tax policies, and interviews with Qingtian overseas Chinese leaders also reveal that

overseas Chinese do not have a high demand for honors. It can be seen that the traditional donation incentive mechanism is not fully applicable to overseas Chinese donations due to the special characteristics of the overseas Chinese donation group and the limitations of the incentive means.

3.4. Foreign Donations are Improperly Interpreted and Our Cultural Exchange is Not Well Recognized Abroad

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, China has been carrying out international support, donating supplies to various countries and promoting the building of a community of human destiny with practical actions. During this period, some anti-Chinese politicians have slandered China's donations and led the media to make inaccurate reports, leading to misleading public opinion in some countries and damaging China's international image. It is true that deliberate distorted interpretation is the main reason why public opinion was misled, but at the root of it, it is not because some overseas friends do not know our culture and philosophy that they believe in the media's inaccurate reports.

Since ancient times, our country has had the ideal of "the commonwealth of the world", and now we have put forward the concept of the community of human destiny, and we have been exploring and practicing step by step on the road of building a harmonious world. However, in the past, China's culture is usually caviar to the general, and cultural elements such as calligraphy and Beijing opera are a bit distant from the actual life, and the threshold of understanding is high, so that they do not have a deep enough emotional resonance with most groups.

4. Suggestions for Countermeasures

4.1. Optimize the Use of Donation Structure, the Culture of Giving to Inject Innovation Drive

In a sense, Charity, which provides direct social assistance, embodies the "altruistic" nature of the use of donations, while Philanthropy, which focuses on solving social problems at the root, has both "public" and "altruistic" characteristics^[6]. In order to balance these two characteristics, we can learn from the successful experience of donation transformation in western countries, and take into account the actual situation in China, and pay more attention to the causes of social problems in the structure of donation use, rather than only looking at the needs.

For overseas Chinese donations, the use of "public interest" items in the field of donations should be increased appropriately. Sometimes public construction problems may be the cause of some families' difficulties, and the realization of public interests can compensate to a certain extent for the lack of individual interests, thus effectively achieving a balance in the structure of donations.

With China's comprehensive victory in the battle against poverty, the traditional relief-oriented charity is no longer the mainstream, and the donation culture should be driven by innovative ideas, fully exchange and learn from international donation culture, and explore charity models that can solve social problems at a deeper level, such as "public welfare venture", "Internet New forms of philanthropy, such as "social venture" and "social enterprise".

4.2. Enhance the Treatment of Charity Practitioners and Revitalize Donated Property

Social giving increases dramatically in the face of major disasters, but charitable giving does not only need to be valued when facing a crisis. Philanthropy should receive more resource allocation, grow longer, and become an important force in advancing moral construction. Charitable organizations that can create certain public benefits for society and save the government the cost of

creating these public benefits deserve preferential policies and better treatment for their employees, which can also effectively guide the flow of social resources to charitable public welfare.

Only when there is no shortage of resources and talent for philanthropy will the management of endowments be more scientific and the fund operations of endowment assets more flexible. In terms of charitable asset management, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation is an excellent case study for its professionalism, high efficiency in the use of donated assets, acceptance of multiple forms of asset donations, and the ability to bring value beyond the assets themselves in their use. As you can see, professional use of charitable assets and fund operations are essential to regulate the orderly use of donations and reduce the wasteful use of donations.

4.3. Break Down the Barriers of Information Asymmetry and Attract Overseas Chinese to Participate in Donation Projects

To improve the quality of donations, information interaction channels should be improved, such as building a communication platform, material needs through the platform to release demand information, willing to donate through the platform to understand the actual needs, to achieve "donation on demand", effectively break the information asymmetry barriers. At the same time, the communication platform can also be used as a feedback channel, timely response to overseas Chinese donors, to avoid the fermentation of rumors in overseas public opinion, and to carry out effective interaction.

The platform can be designed to donate projects as a unit, overseas Chinese according to the information released by the project, free to choose the project they want to donate, each project has its own implementation cycle and donation raising channel, will record and share the project implementation progress in the form of graphics, video or live broadcast, and real-time exchange of feedback until the project is completed, during which overseas Chinese can follow up their donated projects at any time through the Internet, improving the donation. During this period, overseas Chinese can follow up their donated projects through the Internet, which improves the sense of participation and satisfaction of donation and attracts more overseas Chinese to participate.

While overseas Chinese are concerned about the development of the motherland, the motherland is also concerned about the growth of the next generation of overseas Chinese. The voluntary activities in China should pay attention to the growth of overseas Chinese children left behind and carry out various activities on a regular basis, so that they will not be left without companionship.

4.4. Focus on Overseas Activities, so that Chinese Culture Can "Go Out" at a Brisker Pace

The effective way to achieve sustainable development of donation is to have a back and forth. Most of Qingtian overseas Chinese donations are motivated by homeland sentiment, which is not difficult to see from the traditional overseas Chinese hometown has always been the main recipient of overseas Chinese donations. It is possible to use some of the results obtained from overseas Chinese donations to allow overseas Chinese to see more intuitively the benefits generated by their donations, further deepening their cultural identity and sense of belonging, and realizing a virtuous cycle of donations. For example, if overseas Chinese support the construction of rural revitalization at home through donations, then the industrial income generated can be transported overseas in the form of domestic specialty agricultural products, supporting the development of Chinese food overseas, and also alleviating the food shortage during the epidemic, allowing Chinese food culture to go out.

In addition, China's foreign material assistance and public welfare activities can also be carried out through overseas Chinese, encouraging overseas Chinese to participate in material distribution and activity planning, improving the status of overseas Chinese in the host country, enhancing

China's foreign image, correcting public opinion guidance, and enhancing humanistic exchanges and emotional resonance. For example, donated materials using national style design, such as ink auspicious clouds, Shanhaijing brush painting, etc., and in the organization of participation in public welfare activities, adding doll costumes of national comic or martial arts characters image, so that China's leisure art literature to go out.

China has a profound historical heritage and many cultural elements, among which food and leisure culture are closer to life, and have taste, temperature and touch, which can better arouse others' desire to know more. With the development of overseas activities, Chinese culture can "go out" at a brisker pace.

5. Concluding Remarks

Overseas Chinese are the promoters of the construction of China and the folk ambassadors of Chinese culture. They participate in the construction of their hometowns in the form of social donations and also promote the cultural exchange between their countries of residence and China by relying on their own carriers [7]. From the perspective of overseas Chinese donations, donations and their use will not only be given and received, but will also become the propellant of cultural exchange.

Through the study of the use of Chinese social donations, it is possible to draw on the international experience of the third distribution to provide solutions for common prosperity in China, and at the same time to provide new ideas for the construction of a community of human destiny, and even to build a "cultural community of destiny" among different cultures in the process of using Chinese donations for cultural exchange.

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