

# Culture Shock and Countermeasures of Chinese Immigrants in the US — Taking the Gua Sha Treatment as Example\*

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**Abstract**—Today's world has experienced political and economic globalization, which has promoted increasingly frequent cultural exchanges among countries. In the course of communication, people will inevitably have misunderstandings and conflicts. Each nation has its own unique social system, legal system, cultural customs and so on, and these national characteristics will show diversity and difference in language and culture. In cross-cultural communication, such diversity and difference will lead to estrangement, misunderstanding and even conflict between different cultures. When contacting with different culture for the first time, it will often cause culture shock, which will lead to maladjustment. However, there are not only similarities but also differences between different cultures. Commonness provides common platform for mutual communication, and promotes their cooperative development. However, differences may lead to communication barriers between organizations or individuals with different backgrounds in cross-cultural communication, which may cause a variety of situations that they cannot adapt to the new culture, or serious cultural conflicts, which may lead to the stagnation of cross-cultural communication. The main manifestation is the phenomenon of "culture shock". However, in order to continue the communication, we must find a way to mitigate the impact and improve the ability to adapt. In order to resolve these culture shock, both sides should actively build a bridge of mutual communication. Due to the great differences between Chinese and western cultures, Chinese Americans encounter communication problems in life and work, which leads to cultural shock and communication failure in life and work. Therefore, it is particularly important to have good intercultural communication skills.

**Keywords:** *cross-cultural communication, the Gua Sha treatment, culture shock*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The English name of "cross-cultural communication" is "cross-cultural communication". It refers to the communication between native speakers and non-native

speakers, and it also refers to the communication between any people who have differences in language and cultural background. Cross-cultural communication, as a human activity, has existed since the beginning of history, and people have been paying attention to cross-cultural communication in the long history of thousands of years (R. Harris & R. T. Moran, 1996) [1]. Cross-cultural communication occurs when people from different cultures meet from all over the world. Cross-cultural communication is not a new phenomenon. In the era of globalization, increasing cross-cultural contacts promote the communication between people from different languages and cultural backgrounds. Since the middle of the 20th century, cross-cultural communication, as a research field, has developed rapidly and attracted much attention. Cross-cultural communication research focuses on the communication and interaction between people in different cultural backgrounds (Long Xiaoming, 2005) [2].

Such cross-cultural research can not only make us reflect on our work and life, but also shorten our distance with the world. Because of this, the practical significance of cross-cultural communication research is far greater than the theoretical significance. Film is an art form that reflects specific culture, expresses thoughts and expresses feelings by creating visual and auditory effects. It contains rich and unique cultural information and provides vivid materials for intercultural communicators to improve their intercultural communication ability. Film provides mass consumers with rich enjoyment of stories, music, drama, aesthetics and other aspects. Therefore, this paper selects the film contains the content of the cross-cultural communication classic movies — *Gua Sha*, through the analysis of work from the film because of the differences between Chinese and western culture through analyzing the problem of culture shock, different roles in different attitude when facing the conflict between Chinese and western culture, and puts forward some coping strategies for culture shock problem. Based on the plot of *Gua Sha*, this paper will analyze the conflicts of education concept, parents' view, and friendship. This film is adapted from real events, with a strong realism; At the same time, this film can not only provide case reference for resolving the cultural conflict between China and the west,

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but also has guiding significance for the practice of cross-cultural communication in reality, and enables the cross-cultural audience to have a deep understanding of the cultural differences between China and the west so as to reduce or avoid the problems caused by cultural shock.

## II. THE FILM INTRODUCTION OF *GUA SHA*

The film tells the story of a Chinese immigrant who is accused of child abuse in the United States due to cultural differences between China and the west because of the common traditional Chinese medicine treatment *Gua Sha*. The conflict caused by traditional Chinese medicine scraping pushes the film to a climax, highlighting the conflict between Chinese and western cultures in values, educational concepts, parents' views and friendship views. Since then, through the efforts of both sides, cultural conflicts have been transformed to the integration of culture. The film takes place in St. Louis, USA. The hero Xu Datong has immigrated to the United States for 8 years. Now he is a successful computer game designer with a successful career and a happy family. The film culminates in a series of cultural clashes. The computer games designed by Xu Datong were recognized by the boss and the market, and won the industry award of the year. Janine (Xu Datong's wife) also has her own business in the United States. Xu's son, Dennis, was born in the United States and speaks fluent English. It should be said that Xu Datong's family has been integrated into the mainstream society of the United States to some extent. Xu Datong also took his father to the United States and spent his old age in peace. Then disaster struck their family. Dennis suddenly had a stomachache, because his father could not understand the English on the medicine, he gave Dennis a scratch. Dennis once hurt his forehead in the dark because he was alone at home. When Dennis was sent to the hospital for medical treatment, the nurse found the scratch marks on his back and felt very frightened. She immediately reported to the child welfare bureau. Later, due to the scratch marks, Xu Datong was accused of child abuse and was taken to court. Finally, under the efforts of the boss Qunlan, the charges against Xu Datong were dropped and the family was finally reunited (Jia Yujia, 2019, P99) [3]. The film reflects the plight of Chinese immigrants abroad because of cultural conflicts. Film has won the popularity of people, and the director put the theme of the story in the east and west cultural differences caused by for his misunderstanding of culture level, cause people to think deeply about.

## III. THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE SHOCK

"Cultural shock" is a theory put forward by the American anthropologist Oberg in 1960[4]. It means that people living in different ecological, material, social and religious environments produce different language habits, social cultures and moral codes in their own different language environments. As a result, people from different cultural backgrounds experience ideological shock and emotional fluctuation during contact with different cultures. Culture shock means repression, severe psychological reaction, anger, aggression or avoidance of a new culture (Hu Wenzhong,

1999, P76) [5]. Its main performance is: because undertake necessary psychological adjustment ceaselessly and cause exhaustion; A sense of loss caused by the loss of friends, status, occupation, or possessions; Not accepting members of the new culture or being excluded from it; Confusion in the expectations, values, feelings, and self-identity of the character; The surprise, anxiety, even disgust and anger of perceiving cultural differences; A feeling of helplessness resulting from not being able to cope with a new situation. In fact, as long as there are different cultures, there will be a culture shock.

## IV. ANALYZING THE PROBLEMS OF CULTURE SHOCK BASED ON FILM *GUA SHA*

### A. *Culture shock in education*

Due to the influence of traditional culture, historical background and other factors, educational concepts also show differences in some aspects. When Xu Datong's child Dennis and the boss's child Paul had an argument, in the absence of knowing the reason, Xu Datong insisted that Dennis apologize to Paul. Dennis do not apologize, Xu Datong hit Dennis, to show respect for the leadership, but Qunlan is not grateful, think this is a mess of logic. Although Xu Datong immigrated to the United States for eight years, the relationship between father and son in China is deeply rooted in his heart. In China, fathers also have absolute authority over their children. If a father wants an apology, the child must. It is normal for parents to discipline their children and fathers to beat and scold them. The relationship between parents and children is more like the relationship between superiors and subordinates. If the child makes a mistake, the parents can even beat and scold the child to help the child correct the mistake. In America, everyone is equal. Children can call their parents by their names and express their opinions freely if they disagree with them. In addition, children and their parents are friends. Parents also pay attention to cultivating their children's independent personality. However, children love, regardless of national boundaries. When Xu Datong is accused of child abuse and deprived of custody, in order to bring his son home, although Xu Datong and Janine love each other very much, Xu Datong and Janine separation. On Christmas Eve, when Xu Datong was prevented from going through the front door of his apartment to see his family, he risked his life by climbing up the ninth floor from a pipe outside and nearly fell. The warmth of the film has also touched audiences at home and abroad.

### B. *Culture shock in family affection*

In China, Confucianism says, "filial piety comes first." Therefore, Xu Datong felt guilty for leaving his father alone in his old age. Therefore, Xu Datong felt guilty for leaving his father alone in his old age. When he settled down in the United States, he sent his father to the United States to fulfill his filial duty. In addition, in the film, when the judge asked Xu Datong who was scrapping Dennis, Xu Datong was afraid that his father could not get a green card and could not

live in the United States for a long time to enjoy his family. Fearing that his father would be imprisoned, he did not hesitate to say that he was himself. Xu Datong was willing to take the blame for his father's SINS. After that, Xu Datong's father found the Qunlan, said that he gave Dennis scrapping, not Xu at the same time, Qunlan is very confused. Qunlan sent Xu Datong's father back to the house, asked Janine: "why do you want to say that he gave Dennis scraping?" "Because he's Chinese," says Janine. It can be seen that filial piety in Chinese traditional culture is deeply rooted in Xu Datong's heart. In America, independence is cultivated from an early age. Children will also leave their parents and start their own lives when they become adults. Parents also prefer to live alone. Even in their later years, they still choose to live alone because of the social health care system in the United States. And, to Americans, filial piety is not the same thing as truth. Filial piety is filial piety and facts are facts. You can't lie just because you want to be filial. From an American's point of view, Qunlan was puzzled by the way Xu Datong took the fall for his father.

### C. Culture shock in friendship

In the heart of Xu Datong, Qunlan his leadership, provided him with talent, is also his best friend. When Qunlan as a prosecution witness appeared in the hearing, to prove that Xu Datong had beaten Dennis in front of Qunlan, Xu Datong was very surprised, also very indignant. As a friend, he thought, if you can't help, but become his opponent's witnesses, and this is let Xu Datong absolutely unacceptable. He angrily resigned, and told Qunlan: "no common goal, no common cause to cooperate." But Qunlan, said that he has the responsibility to know everything you say, facts are facts, a friend is a friend, as a citizen, to maintain fairness and justice. In China, the word "righteousness" is recommended between friends, since ancient times there is a friend "sincere treatment, do anything". In modern times, also pay attention to the relationship between friends, friends to take care of each other. But obviously, Qunlan's behavior let Xu Datong think he is wrong Qunlan when his friend, Qunlan is just a treacherous person.

## V. COUNTERMEASURES FOR DEALING WITH CULTURE SHOCK

### A. Mastering basic intercultural communication skills

Intercultural communication skills include cognitive ability, empathy ability and behavioral ability. Cognitive ability is mainly refers to the opening thought and vision and perspective transformation ability to see the problem, in terms of cross-cultural, mainly in the process of communication complexity and diversity of different countries, ethnic culture of comprehensive understanding; Empathy refers to the tolerance of emotion and psychology for various uncertainties occurring in the activities of both parties in cross-cultural communication. Behavioral competence refers to the ability to deal with various communicative problems in practice, including the ability to

establish and maintain bilateral relations and the ability to successfully complete communicative tasks (Hoare,2003, P125)[6].To minimize the impact of culture shock on cross-cultural communication and improve cross-cultural communication skills, on the one hand, cross-cultural training can be carried out to simulate the field situation, so that people can improve their ability to solve various problems in the real environment and feel the cultural differences of different countries. On the other hand, we should adjust ourselves psychologically to overcome the phenomenon of culture shock.

### B. Abandoning "culture-centered theory"

"Cultural -centered theory "mainly refers to the group or individuals think in cross-cultural communication, ethics, the value system of our national culture and language and culture and so on various aspects are better than any other nation, with the national standard to measure everything, do not recognize the values of other ethnic groups, and in communication with alien to keep a certain distance (Cai Rongtao & Li Caixia, 2006) [7]. In the subconscious of human beings, individuals with different national cultural backgrounds tend to have a strong tendency of their own national culture, believing that their own culture is superior to the foreign culture, which is influenced by the mindset. In addition, the excessive maintenance of the national superior status of such psychology and reflection will increase competition, fear, anger and other emotions, which will directly lead to communication with people or conflict (Fei Xiaotong, 1997) [8]. Both sides must correct view and respect foreign cultures, really understand the differences between different cultures, and through to the cultural differences, fully understanding, this paper analyzes the reason of the difference, meet a variety of diversity of world culture, from accepting foreign culture to adapt to the different culture, gradually merge. To improve the ability and skills of communication in cross-cultural communication is one of the ways to avoid culture shock.

### C. Cultural integration

As two cultural models of world culture, oriental culture and western culture influence and interact with each other. The existence of any culture has its inevitability and rationality, and there is no good or bad, so we should never take one culture as the standard to measure another culture. The existence of any culture has its inevitability and rationality, and there is no good or bad, so we should never take one culture as the standard to measure another culture. Cultural integration, discard the dross, focusing on the good and abandon is not suitable for the ethnic groups living habits and social customs, moral beliefs, absorb worthy of moving part of the new culture (Gao Yongchen,2002) [9]. Only in this way can we continuously inject new blood into the development of our national culture and maintain our vitality. With the development of world politics and economy, different cultural groups have already reached a consensus to solve the problems in cultural exchanges with equality and mutual respect. The rest of the film, Qunlan did first cognitive empathy phase of active listening, and stand in

the perspective of communication object and cultural background to correctly understand the communicative object of real information. A sentence "because he is Chinese" will bring Qunlan back from the previous lack of cultural integration to the appropriate cultural integration, which not only completed the appropriate cultural integration, but also actively completed the appropriate communicative empathy, namely personally experience scrapping. In this cross-cultural communication event, Quinlan can take the initiative to debug cultural conflicts and resolve cultural conflicts, so as to finally promote the smooth completion of cross-cultural communication.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Only by comparing and analyzing the differences between different cultures and understanding the differences between different cultures can we use the knowledge of cultural differences to avoid misunderstanding and even communication failure in the process of cross-cultural communication. Cultural differences are bound to cause culture shock, but culture shock is not a disease, but a cross-cultural complex personal experience, is a learning process. Although we may feel anxious, lost, lonely and even painful during this period, we need to realize that entering a foreign country to accept the influence of another culture will inevitably produce great pressure and anxiety, but this kind of pressure and anxiety is also normal. When a person encounters culture shock, and needs to maintain a healthy sense of self, for immigrants, with a positive and optimistic attitude. When conducting cross-cultural communication, we should respect and appreciate cultural differences, respect, accept foreign cultures, treat the surrounding environment with an objective and peaceful mind and be willing to absorb knowledge, discard stereotypes, view the differences between Chinese and American cultures objectively and accept American culture. Although culture shock is inevitable, for Chinese Americans, under the guidance of this philosophy, they should learn more and put themselves in others' shoes, so as to overcome the shock of Chinese and western culture, blend into the American cultural environment this morning, communicate smoothly and lead a happy life.

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