

Research on the Development of International Students Education in China against the Backdrop of "The Belt and Road" initiative

-Taking Tianjin Agricultural University as a Case

Yin Fang

Tianjin Agricultural University

Abstract—"The Belt and Road" initiative has promoted the development of education for international students in China, which has in turn provided human and intellectual support for the construction of the "The Belt and Road". However, there are problems in the education of foreign students in China, such as regional differences in the country of origin, low level of training, poor quality, and weak management system. Those problems have seriously hindered the development of education for international students in China. Taking the development of education for foreign students in Tianjin Agricultural University as an example, this paper analyzes the current situation and challenges of education for them in China, and proposes to improve the education by improving the quality, optimizing the structure, improving management services, and respecting for cultural differences. Only in this way can colleges and universities truly shoulder the important mission of developing the education for overseas students in China.

Keywords—"The Belt and Road"; Education for overseas students; Tianjin Agricultural University; Challenges; Countermeasures

I. INTRODUCTION

With the continuous advancement of the "One Belt, One Road" strategy, the international exchanges and cooperation between Chinese universities and colleges have become more frequent and deeper, laying a bridge for students from the "One Belt, One Road" participating countries to study in China. Studying in China is an important platform for international talent training against the backdrop of "One Belt, One Road" strategic and a powerful guarantee for promoting humanities exchanges. The "One Belt, One Road" strategy complements the development of study abroad education in China and is indispensable. On the one hand, the "One Belt, One Road" strategy provides opportunities and possibilities for studying abroad in China, greatly increasing the number of students who are studying in China. On the other hand, the development of studying in China provides talent and intellectual support for the "One Belt, One Road" construction. Therefore, in the face of the international situation, it is imperative to study in-depth study abroad against the backdrop of "One Belt, One Road" strategic.

II. THE IMPACT OF "THE BELT AND ROAD" INITIATIVE ON THE EDUCATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CHINA

Education for international students in China is an important part of the "One Belt, One Road Initiative" initiative. International student education is one of the main ways of international personnel mobility. It can promote humanities exchanges between different countries, strengthen cooperation, strengthen mutual trust and enhance influence. The development of "One Belt, One Road" education for international students in China is an important part of humanities exchanges[1]. It provides powerful talent and intellectual support for the "One Belt, One Road Initiative" initiative, and needs to be included in the overall strategic framework for scientific planning and careful design.

A. "The Belt and Road" initiative provides opportunities for the development of education for international student.

In recent years, the number of Chinese students studying in China has increased rapidly, but compared with the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and other educational powers, China is still in a state of "deficit". Therefore, China's higher education should take the initiative to face the world, learn from Western advanced education management, ideas, curriculum and evaluation, school experience, etc., and promote the international transformation of education. This is also the urgent need for education in the "One Belt, One Road" initiative. Since the launch of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, China has extensively cooperated in running schools, formulated and promulgated relevant policies and established government scholarships, encouraged young people along the "One Belt, One Road" countries to study in China, and promoted the vigorous development of overseas education in universities.

B. The education for international students in China promotes the training of "The Belt and Road" talents.

The "One Belt, One Road" is dominated by emerging economies and developing countries, which is one of the fastest growing regions for trade and cross-border investment. Economic cooperation with the "One Belt, One Road" countries requires the support of talents in various fields. Without a large pool of professional talents, it is difficult to promote the implementation of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative. Only by developing education for foreign students in China, and focusing on cultivating localized talents in the "One Belt, One Road" countries that are familiar with and understand Chinese culture, can we solve the problem of talent gap.

C. The education for international students in China is conducive to the cultivation of international friends who know and have a special feelings for China.

Many developed countries regard the education of international students as an important means of diplomacy. Through the education of international students, they will train a group of international friends who know and realize the foreign policy of the country. On the one hand, the students from the countries along the "One Belt, One Road" have a good understanding of the history, culture and customs of their countries. On the other hand, the experience of studying and living in China has enabled them to understand China's customs and customs, and to become a messenger of Chinese and foreign cultural exchanges. The college and university tells the Chinese story to the students abroad. The international students return to their country to tell the Chinese story and bring back what they see and feel in China. This is to close the relationship between China and the countries along the One Belt, One Road, to cultivate more international people who know and love China, to promote regional common development, to shape a good national image and to enhance national soft power are of great significance[2].

III. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE EDUCATION FOR FOREIGN STUDENTS IN CHINA AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF "THE BELT AND ROAD" INITIATIVE

According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education, a total of 489,200 international students were studying in higher education institutions in China in 2017. Among them, there were 317,200 international students from the countries along the "One Belt, One Road", accounting for 64.85% of the total number, an increase of 11.58%[3]. Obviously, the "One Belt, One Road" initiative has become an important growth point for studying in China, and the demand is far from saturated. There is still a large growth potential.

In response to the national "One Belt, One Road" development strategy, Tianjin Agricultural University has started to develop education of international students by expanding the scale of enrollment, improving the quality of training, and improving the management system. Up to now, the number of international students in our school is 54, an increase of 200% compared with 2016. The countries of origin are all "One Belt, One Road" countries, such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, etc. In addition, Tianjin Agricultural

University attaches great importance to the system of the education of international students, and has successively formulated the "Handbook for International Student of Tianjin Agricultural University", "Tianjin Agricultural University's Interim Provisions on the Establishment of Scholarships for International Students with Undergraduate and Above Degrees during the 13th Five-Year Plan Period" and "Comprehensive Reform Program for International Student Training of Tianjin Agricultural University" and other rules and regulations, which provide institutional guarantee for strengthening the study abroad.

IV. THE CHALLENGE FACED BY THE EDUCATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CHINA AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF "THE BELT AND ROAD" INITIATIVE

The "One Belt, One Road" strategy has brought many new opportunities while providing new opportunities for studying in China. Identifying the problem is the actual demand for the development of education of international students in China. It not only contributes to the development of international exchanges and cooperation in China's universities, but also contributes to the continuous advancement of the "One Belt, One Road" strategy.

A. Significant regional differences in the country of origin

According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education, the scale of China's study abroad in China continued to expand in 2017, and the top 10 countries were stable, that is Korea, Thailand, Pakistan, the United States, India, Russia, Japan, Indonesia, Kazakhstan and Laos. Among the countries along the "One Belt, One Road", Southeast Asia and South Asia have a good momentum of studying abroad in China, while the scale in other regions is relatively small. All the 54 international students in Tianjin Agricultural University are from Southeast Asia and South Asia, and the regional differences are very significant.

B. The low level of training for international students in China

Statistics from the Ministry of Education show that in 2017, the number of degree international students in China was 241,500, a year-on-year increase of 15.04%, and the total number of master's and doctoral international students was about 75,800, an increase of 18.62% over 2016. Although the number of academics and masters and doctoral international students is on the rise, the proportion of degree international students in the total number of international students studying in China is still lower than that of non-degree international students, and in terms of academic level, the proportion of undergraduates in international students is far more than the proportion of graduate students. In terms of the distribution of international students in China, although the number of international students studying engineering, management, science, art, and agronomy has increased significantly, the number of students majoring in liberal arts is still the highest, accounting for 48.45% of the total[4]. The 54 students in Tianjin Agricultural University are all bachelor degree international students. There are no graduate students, and most of them are majoring in human resources management. There

is a phenomenon of unreasonable structure in the distribution of academic qualifications and disciplines.

C. Poor quality of international students studying in China

At present, the international students of Tianjin Agricultural University are mainly concentrated in developing countries such as Southeast Asia and South Asia. Their education level is relatively lagging behind, and the quality of education is far from the developed countries. The overall quality of education for international students in China is low. Due to the short history of training international students in Tianjin Agricultural University and the lack of enrollment experience, a mature evaluation system for international students has not yet been formed. In order to pursue the number of international students, universities and colleges only focus on expanding the scale and neglect to improve the quality. At the same time, Tianjin Agricultural University's enrollment channels for international students are relatively simple, and entrusted the intermediary to enroll students. This has made the quality of international students discount at the entrance, which has affected the development of studying in China to a certain extent.

D. The backward management system for international students

Tianjin Agricultural University adopts a two-level management system for university and colleges in the management of international students. International office combine the relevant colleges and other administrative departments to manage international students, which has led to the phenomenon of multi-management. Due to the late start of Tianjin Agricultural University's international education, a management system with clear division of labor has not yet been formed. The management of international students is mainly concentrated in the International Office, which has caused tremendous work pressure on the International Office. In addition, the construction of management service staff for international students is relatively backward, and the overall quality of management service staff is low. Although the foreign language level is relatively high, it lacks professional knowledge in education and psychology. In terms of international apartments, Tianjin Agricultural University provides a special international apartment, but only stays in the basic accommodation for international students, lacking unified planning, and there is a huge gap between the first-class international apartment community. In addition, with the increasing number of international students, the existing international apartment space is limited, and it is difficult to adapt to the actual needs of the university. The foreign language level of the international apartment accommodation staff is almost zero, so it is difficult for them to communicate with international students, which is inconvenient for the daily life of international students.

V. THE COUNTERMEASURES OF THE EDUCATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN CHINA AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF "THE BELT AND ROAD" STRATEGY

With the continuous promotion of the "One Belt, One Road" initiative, the number of international students studying in China along the route has increased year by year, which not only promoted the process of nationalization of education in China, but also provided talent support for the construction of the "One Belt, One Road". Both the state and the university should attach great importance to it and take corresponding measures to help them study in China.

A. Strengthening top-level design and improving the quality of international students

In view of the significant differences in the source countries and the poor quality of international students, the state should strengthen the top-level design and formulate long-term plans and overall goals for the development of overseas education in the countries along the "One Belt, One Road", and develop special promotion program for in China for countries along the "One Belt, One Road"[5]. Tianjin Agricultural University should steadily expand the number of cooperative countries on the basis of consolidating the countries along the "One Belt, One Road" with close cooperation, especially seeking cooperation with countries with higher levels of basic education. At the same time, in the process of enrolling international students, we must explore and establish a scientific and reasonable enrollment evaluation mechanism in line with the actual situation of the university to improve the enrollment threshold for international students, so as to ensure the quality of international students.

B. Giving full play to the advantages and optimizing the source structure

Discipline and professional ability are the core elements to promote the development of international students education in China. As the only agricultural university in Tianjin, Tianjin Agricultural University should give full play to its advantages in agricultural characteristics and specialties. On the basis of the existing two enrollment majors, it should expand its enrollment majors especially in major of agriculture, aquatic products, animal science and gardening. At the same time, the university should increase the investment in scholarships to attract international graduate students from all over the country along the "One Belt, One Road" level, and changing the current status of undergraduate students.

C. Innovating work mode and perfecting management services

At present, Tianjin Agricultural University does not set up an International Education College. The International Office only cooperates with relevant colleges and departments to manage the international students. The division of labor is not clear and the management is relatively chaotic. In the future, Tianjin Agricultural University should incorporate the establishment of the International Education College into development plan, clarify the post setting and job responsibilities of the International Education College to further improve the management and service of international

students. In view of the relatively backward construction of the management service staff, the university should strengthen the business training of the management service staff and improve the level of foreign language, while focusing on the cultivation of pedagogy, psychology and cultural communication skills. In addition, in the face of expanding the number of international students, the university should focus on increasing the number of international apartments, improving the accommodation environment of international apartments, and focusing on the cultural construction of international and domestic apartment communities.

D. Respecting for cultural differences and conducting cultural exchanges and cooperation.

The university should shoulder the cultural mission. They should improve the appeal and soft power of Chinese culture by introducing China's excellent traditional culture to the countries along the line to, and should promote the cultural innovation of our country by introducing the excellent and advanced culture of the countries along the route[6]. First of all, under the principle of complying with the Chinese legal framework, we should maximize the respect for the culture and history of countries along the "One Belt, One Road". Countries along the "One Belt, One Road" have their own unique customs, traditional festivals, worship beliefs, taboos and principles of doing things. The university should fully consider the special characteristics of international students, and provide the necessary conditions for accommodation, food and activities in line with the principle of humanization and caring for international students. Organize various activities in major traditional festivals to create a festive atmosphere and let the international students feel the warmth. Only by respecting their culture and history can we win their respect. Second, show Chinese culture and promote cultural integration. To achieve common economic development along the "One Belt, One Road" countries requires mutual exchange, tolerance and coexistence among different cultures. The university should play the role of "cultural messengers" for international students in China, organize national cultural festivals along the "One Belt, One Road" to showcase the history, culture, policies, laws and customs of the countries along the "One Belt, One Road". Using the traditional Chinese festivals such as the Spring Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival and the Mid-Autumn Festival, the university should carry out the various activities such as writing Spring Festival couplets, post paper-cut, racing dragon boat, making race dumplings, eating moon cake, lion dance and so on in order to introduce Chinese civilization and to establish a bridge of communication for international students, to promote cultural integration between countries and countries, and to enhance mutual understanding and trust. While demonstrating the talents of international students and enriching their amateur cultural life, it plays an active role in promoting the "One Belt, One Road" initiative and promotes the commonweal.

VI. CONCLUSION

The "Belt and Road Initiative" is a road to friendship for common development and common prosperity, and a road to peace for promoting cultural communication and progress. Studying in China is an important platform for international talent training under the "Belt and Road Initiative" initiative and a powerful guarantee for promoting cultural exchanges. The "Belt and Road Initiative" has put forward new requirements for the development of international education in Tianjin Agricultural College. In the face of challenges, the school can only take the responsibility of the innovative education open concept, perfect personnel training system, innovative management work model and respect for cultural differences among countries. The important mission of studying abroad in China under the Belt and Road Initiative.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Yin Fang (1986-), female, Linyi, Shandong province, Master of Arts, research assistant, currently working in the International Office of Tianjin Agricultural University, research direction: higher education management.

REFERENCES

- [1] Jiang Dongmei, Wang Huamin. Development of Chinese University Students' Academic Education under the Background of the One Belt, One Road Strategy[J]. Shanxi Archives, 2016(6): 187-188.
- [2] Zhai Fengchi, Sun Wei. The Significance and Problem Sets of the Study of "One Belt, One Road" Countries in China[J]. Journal of Jiangsu Normal University, 2018(1): 10-13.
- [3] Zhou Longying. Analysis of the Path of Higher Education under the Demand of Strategic Talents of "One Belt, One Road"[J]. China Adult Education, 2017(4): 39-41.
- [4] Zhou Mian, Plateau. Study on Chinese Study Abroad and the "One Belt, One Road Initiative" [J]. Journal of Jiangsu Normal University, 2018(2): 2-5.
- [5] Ministry of Education, Notice on Printing and Distributing the Educational Action on Promoting the Construction of the Belt and Road Initiative, Jiaowai [2016] No. 46. July 13, 2016
- [6] Communication and Adoption: A Research on International Students in China from the Perspective of Intercultural Communication (1950-2015)[D]. Shi Tongzhe. Shanghai International Studies University 2017.