

## **Title: Textbooks that Connect Chinese Culture with Other Cultures**

Ms. April Zhang Xuehong 張雪紅 , Founder, Mandarin as a Second Language Master, Hong Kong

**Abstract:** For young adults or adults, non-Chinese speakers often come to learn Chinese for some practical reasons, for example, to travel around China and to learn Chinese culture. Chinese textbooks are the necessary means to fulfill this need.

Unfortunately, Chinese culture is often introduced in a way that alienates students from Chinese culture. For example, chapters on what Chinese people usually do during Chinese New Year, textual analysis often shows a clear boundary between Chinese culture and the students' culture. There is usually a Chinese person who is the know-it-all, departing essential cultural knowledge to other non-Chinese people. This scenario is also played out in the classroom, where the teacher is the know-it-all. Hence, textbooks become the cultural high ground. The implicit message is that non-Chinese speakers are always different from Chinese people. Chinese culture is the other culture, as opposed to the student's own culture. This inadvertently creates a cultural conflict in the classroom.

We must recognize the fact that people from different regions are connected in more ways than they are differentiated. And people often have a substantial amount of cultural knowledge through mass media. This is where the textbooks should be located, presenting Chinese culture in a way that connects Chinese culture with other cultures. Texts would facilitate cultural discussion and recognition. Through personal experiences and discussions, both teachers and students will have a deeper understanding of the meanings of Chinese culture as a heritage culture, and Chinese language as an integrated part of that culture. This engagement is critical to claim ownership of this heritage. Heritage is not something to be imposed upon; rather, it is something to live with.

In this paper I would use cases studies to demonstrate different ways of presenting texts to achieve the effect of connecting cultures.

**Keywords:**