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## Overseas Chinese as one of the main tools of Chinese soft power

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**Abstract.** Overseas Chinese have not only influenced their residence countries, but also deeply influenced Chinese culture, especially in religion, language and literature. In various fields such as Chinese communities, media, and education, overseas Chinese and Chinese culture have achieved integration and exchange. This phenomenon not only injects new vitality and promotes the inheritance and development of Chinese culture, but also becomes one of the important sources of China's soft power and plays an important role in China's public diplomacy. Based on multi angle and multi-level analysis, this paper aims to show the relationship between Overseas Chinese and Chinese culture, and emphasize the importance and value of Overseas Chinese in China's public diplomacy.

**Keywords:** overseas Chinese, Chinese communities, Chinese culture, Chinese soft power, China's public diplomacy

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Научная статья

## Китайская диаспора как один из основных инструментов китайской «мягкой силы»

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**Аннотация.** Китайцы, живущие за границей, не только повлияли на страны своего проживания, но и оказали глубокое влияние на китайскую культуру, религию и язык. Адаптация китайцев к странам проживания происходила следующим образом: они унаследовали традиционную культуру и обычаи, переданные предками по крови и языку, и в то же время характер различных мест проживания способствовал постоянной адаптации и приспособлению китайских этнических групп. Религиозные верования и традиционные обычаи играют важную роль в жизни зарубежных китайцев. Здесь работает аналогичный механизм: хотя китайцы предпочитают подстраиваться под коренное население в плане языка и письменности, они все же поддерживают традиционные китайские верования и обычаи, что, безусловно, способствует сохранению и распространению китайской культуры за пределами Китая.

Данная статья, основанная на многогранном и многоуровневом анализе, призвана показать взаимосвязь между китайцами, живущими за границей, и китайской культурой, а также подчеркнуть важность и ценность китайцев, живущих за границей, в общественной дипломатии Китая. В различных областях, таких как средства массовой информации и образование, зарубежные китайцы и китайская культура достигли интеграции и обмена. По мере роста силы Китая его традиционные ценности становятся все более и более важными. Китаезычные СМИ также играют важную роль в продвижении китайского языка среди китайцев, живущих за границей. Более того, китайские СМИ настаивают на социальных правах, которыми должны обладать китайцы за границей, уделяя внимание освещению условий их жизни. Китайские общины не только придают новую жизненную силу и способствуют наследованию и развитию китайской культуры, но и становятся одним из важных источников мягкой силы Китая и играют важную роль в общественной дипломатии КНР.

**Ключевые слова:** китайцы за границей, китайские общины, китайская культура, мягкая сила Китая, публичная дипломатия Китая

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Culture is an innate characteristic of migrant groups. The combination of Chinese culture and Overseas Chinese has emerged as a vital force for the global inheritance and development of Chinese culture. As Overseas Chinese gradually integrate into local communities, they effectively leverage their rich cultural advantages to inject new vitality and innovative thinking into Chinese culture, thus promoting its influence on a wider world stage. In addition to being indispensable inheritors of Chinese culture, Overseas Chinese are also an integral component of it. Thanks to their unique cultural inheritance abilities, the strength of Overseas Chinese has become one of the primary sources of China's soft power.

There is an ancient Chinese saying: *Wherever there is seawater, there are overseas Chinese*. According to incomplete statistics, nearly 40 million of the more than 60 million overseas Chinese in the world are distributed in countries and regions along the "the Belt and Road" [1].

The large number of overseas Chinese plays an important role in the economy, culture, society and even politics of their residence countries. They are the natural messengers of Chinese culture and play an irreplaceable role in helping Chinese culture go abroad. At the same time, Overseas Chinese are a strategic resource to improve the reputation and recognition of Chinese culture and expand the attractiveness and influence of Chinese culture [2].

Overseas Chinese have settled down all over the world. On the one hand, they inherited the traditional culture and customs handed down by their ancestors through blood and language. On the other hand, the nature and humanity of different places of residence have promoted the continuous adjustment and adaptation of the Chinese ethnic groups, so that the overseas Chinese communities everywhere will develop their own social and cultural variations in terms of language, lifestyle, ideology and belief, as well as in terms of systems, norms and structures. "It is the localization of overseas Chinese society" [3].

Overseas Chinese and their descendants living in different regions and countries, in the process of localization, used Chinese culture and local culture, joined their own feelings and thinking, and mixed to produce cultural identity belonging to local Chinese ethnic groups. The overseas Chinese have accumulated capital from the past labor-intensive industries such as peddlers, workers and chefs, and have grown to become an ethnic group with huge commercial strength. On this basis, the overseas Chinese have expanded into many industries, including finance, transportation, trade and tourism. Every industry involved has become a window for spreading Chinese culture. The breadth of overseas Chinese culture determines the breadth of Chinese culture transmission, and the depth of overseas Chinese culture also determines the depth of Chinese culture transmission.

The feelings of family and country are deeply inherited in Chinese culture. Overseas Chinese, especially early generation immigrants, pay attention to human relations. In the face of unfamiliar social environment, in order to obtain the help of Chinese compatriots and gain strength from the whole ethnic group, they will condense the feelings about family and mother country in the culture into a bond, and try to extend to every corner of the overseas

Chinese society, including individuals, groups, ethnic groups, so that scattered overseas Chinese and groups can converge into a cultural community in some aspects. In this community, they have consistent values, ethics, and development goals to form a sustainable and endogenous operating mechanism and build the overseas Chinese society into a huge resource pool. Therefore, the united overseas Chinese force has become a unique role in the process of spreading Chinese culture, promoting the development of Chinese culture and China itself.

China's national power is the backing for the development of overseas Chinese. Chinese culture provides spiritual strength for overseas Chinese, and well developed overseas Chinese groups have also become part of China's soft power.

With China's achievements in the economic field in recent years promoting the gradual renaissance of national strength, China has increasingly become a force that has an important voice in the international arena. The enhancement of China's national power is conducive to the enhancement of the influence of overseas Chinese in the country where they live. Take Southeast Asia as an example, as early as hundreds of years ago, China had a strong influence in Southeast Asia. In many dynasties in ancient China, a large number of countries in Southeast Asia belonged to China's vassal states. With the development of Zheng He's navigation activities, countries and citizens in Southeast Asia also have a deeper understanding of China. Before and after World War II in the last century, China's comprehensive national strength was relatively weak, and overseas Chinese at that time were not positively affected by China's national strength. On the contrary, the Southeast Asian overseas Chinese had economic advantages at that time, which provided important economic support for China to repel Japanese aggression. When China's national power is weak, the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia will also be more guarded and suspicious of the indigenous people. In the 1970s, there were many riots (even massacres) against the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, and the lives and properties of the Chinese in Southeast Asia were threatened, the political status plummeted.

After the 1970s, as China adopted an open policy, its national strength gradually rose. After becoming an emerging country with important influence, Southeast Asian aborigines' attitudes towards China and overseas Chinese also changed. As a link between China and Southeast Asian countries, overseas Chinese enjoy the cultural confidence and economic opportunities brought by China's rise.

With the improvement of China's strength, China's traditional values have become more and more important. The spread of traditional values has made overseas Chinese feel the spiritual power in the cultural gene, which also helps them to actively inherit and maintain Chinese cultural values. Chinese nationals and Southeast Asian overseas Chinese have similar national values for the inheritance of Chinese culture, which is a conscious choice formed in the long-term historical development process, can withstand the test, and has a positive role for the overseas Chinese. The overseas Chinese take the initiative to contact China and spread Chinese related elements, making China's influence transcend the local and overseas geographical boundaries, linking the overseas Chinese

with China's past, present and future, and bringing more confidence and hope to the future of overseas Chinese.

### **1. The ways for overseas Chinese to spread Chinese Culture**

When the first generation of overseas Chinese first arrived overseas, they faced a difficult life and felt very lonely. As a result, the overseas Chinese survived by establishing bonds and forming groups, and finally gradually evolved into overseas Chinese communities [4]. As a Chinese gathering area and business district, Chinatown is the birthplace of many overseas Chinese associations, where overseas Chinese organize activities and provide services. Therefore, Chinatown has become an important unit for the dissemination of Chinese culture and an important disseminator of Chinese associations. [5. P. 19]

It is difficult to have accurate figures on the total number of overseas Chinese associations. At present, the number commonly used is more than 20000, including more than 7000 in Malaysia, ranking first in terms of number. There are more than 3000 in the United States, more than 2000 in Europe, and more than 5000 organizations scattered around the world [6. P. 1]. In Thailand, there are more than 180 overseas Chinese associations registered in the government in the capital Bangkok alone. Before the outbreak of the Second World War in Indonesia, there were about 400 overseas Chinese associations. By the mid-1990s, there were more than 8900 Chinese associations around the world [7].

Chinese associations can be classified according to different elements, such as politics, economy and culture; traditional and modern; region, industry, culture, kinship, interest, etc. Some Chinese associations have established kinship identity system to connect families or clansmen with blood relations. And the Chinese with a common ancestral home locus through the formation of regional identity, like a province, city. Similarly, by connecting overseas Chinese with specific hobbies, some Chinese associations achieve a specific range of interest identification. While there are divisions and allegiances within groups based on blood, language or class, the majority of Chinese in Malaysia (and the same argument applies to Chinese-Indonesians) recognize themselves as part of a wider Chinese collective. [8. P. 44] The Chinese community is like a stone building cultural identity, gradually forming the overall cultural landscape of overseas Chinese. It carries forward and inherits Chinese culture and becomes the most important symbol of overseas Chinese cultural identity.

These numerous associations, through regularly or irregularly holding a variety of community activities, build a bridge of communication and exchanges between their home country and their residence countries, and spread Chinese culture and customs to overseas. At the same time, they also help enhance the local social influence of Chinese, which is an important manifestation of soft power.

As an important medium of Chinese culture, religious beliefs and traditional customs play an important role in the lives of overseas Chinese. Some overseas Chinese will gradually choose to believe in the mainstream religion of their country of residence due to the influence of religious

belief tendency. For example, some overseas Chinese in the Philippines refer to choose Catholicism. However, most overseas Chinese still adhere to traditional Chinese religious beliefs, that is, Taoism, Confucianism and various folk beliefs derived from Chinese culture, and some people believe in Chinese Buddhism. In Malaysia, Indonesia and other countries, there are some indigenous overseas Chinese who do not understand Chinese characters and do not speak Chinese. Although they choose to be adapted to the local aborigines in terms of language and writing, they still believe in traditional Chinese beliefs and customs, such as Guan Yin Bodhisattva and Land Duke, and they still tend to be Chinese in their self-identity.

Chinese society in its long history has been dominated by secular culture, Chinese culture is also the representative of morality and humanism. Religious beliefs closely related to Chinese cultural traditions are therefore characterized by pragmatism [9. P. 59]. Chinese culture is known for its inclusivity, in contrast to religions that typically focus on the worship of a single deity. For thousands of years, foreign religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism have existed harmoniously alongside Confucianism and Taoism within China. Additionally, many local gods in folk beliefs are believed in by large groups of people and coexist [10. P. 87]. Overseas Chinese often worship Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism at the same time, especially Confucianism is particularly popular. One reason is that Confucianism focuses on winning hearts and minds [11. P. 94]. Confucian philosophy has become integrated into the more overseas Chinese way of thinking, and many overseas Chinese are familiar with the literature documenting Confucianism. Confucian values and humanistic ideas have long been embraced, especially by the wealthy in Southeast Asia, who are seen as Asia's "Confucian capitalists", particularly the Chinese in Singapore [12. P. 391]. Every year during various festivals, overseas Chinese observe different religious beliefs, including the Taoist Wealth God who is believed to safeguard prosperity, as well as the Kitchen God who originated from primitive traditions and is thought to protect against food-related issues.

In addition, apart from traditional religions, many local deities were formed in ancient China. These gods are also popular in overseas Chinese communities. For example, Mazu - the sea goddess from the coastal provinces of Fujian, and Zheng He- the famous navigator of the Ming Dynasty, became objects of worship.

Moreover, overseas Chinese often choose to worship specific gods according to different situations they encounter. This custom of unlimited status and diversified worship has become an obvious feature of Chinese religious belief. Many Chinese gods have exclusive and detailed areas of responsibility. Some are responsible for making money, some are responsible for eliminating disasters, some are responsible for treating diseases, and some are responsible for childbearing. They do not necessarily belong to the same religious system. Overseas Chinese will choose gods in their fields to worship according to temporary needs.

Most Chinese live in different cultural environments and are unwilling to be merged and assimilated by the local

culture and religion. They choose to bring the gods of their home country to their country of residence. Besides, some temples established by the overseas Chinese can also provide services including funerals, ancestor worship and urn storage. They also provide financial aid and scholarships to students, help the poor, and provide martial arts training through secret societies [13. P. 141]. This religious culture objectively helps Chinese people gather national identity and inherit cultural customs. It even expresses that it has a place in the local cultural field.

While Chinese culture is spreading to the outside world, it also attracts many people to study in China, and then bring their feelings back to their home countries. This process is mostly done by international students who relocate to China. Overseas Chinese who go to China to study abroad have a more refined and profound feeling of Chinese culture. They will transmit the deep cultural connotation they feel in China back to their country of residence, which is more flexible and more effective.

Flexible transmission refers to communication in a gentle and friendly manner and behavior, and the communication strategy is realized through some non-rigid communication characteristics [14]. Most of the overseas students in China have a strong interest in Chinese culture, and the behavior of studying abroad is a voluntary and active behavior. This activity is a choice made by individuals, with a clear consciousness [15]. Therefore, during their life and study in China, the foreign students' understanding of China is authentic and unique. They use their own experiences to spread Chinese culture without official compulsion and stereotype. International students show their personal experiences and feelings for China through photos, videos and other personalized ways, so that local audiences can more intuitively and impressively feel the characteristics of Chinese culture.

## **2. Overseas Chinese Language and Chinese Education**

People's language choice is an important factor affecting the maintenance and dissemination of language, and people's identity is an important factor affecting people's language choice. Identity is mainly embodied in two aspects: political identity and cultural identity. Language is not only one of the symbols of political and cultural identity, but also an important means to obtain new political and cultural identity [16. P. 38].

The overseas Chinese have two tendencies in language selection. First, in order to integrate into the local mainstream society more quickly and better, the overseas Chinese choose to learn and use the local language. In this process, they will also inherit the core of Chinese culture, but not as widely as the local language. This tendency is represented by Filipino overseas Chinese, who use less Chinese. Early immigrants can use some Chinese, while the younger generation overseas Chinese is only interested in Chinese. The local Chinese will learn the local mainstream language - English, or the dialect Bisaya. Second, overseas Chinese insist on taking Chinese as the main language and sending their descendants to Chinese schools for education. At the same time, in order to adapt to the

social environment of the residence country, they will also actively learn the local national language or common language. The representatives of this tendency are Malaysian overseas Chinese, who are the most cohesive overseas Chinese group in the world and maintain the most Chinese traditions. They usually let their children receive Chinese education. However, in order to survive, Malaysian overseas Chinese will also learn the local native Malay or common English.

In different countries where they live, if overseas Chinese want to maintain their local achievements, they will be more inclined to integrate into the local society and think that the local common language is more practical in terms of language selection. With the change of generations and times, the identity of overseas Chinese has changed, followed by the change of their recognition of Chinese language and Chinese culture. Some overseas Chinese are more or less gradually naturalized in the target language country in terms of political identity and cultural identity, which is not only the self-protection of the overseas Chinese, but also the choice of the overseas Chinese to settle down, which is the general trend after the Chinese migrate to the target language country [16. P. 66].

However, although the overseas Chinese in some countries are citizens of the country of residence in terms of political identity, they are still difficult to obtain the same rights as the local aborigines in their specific life because of racial discrimination. In this case, it is difficult for the local overseas Chinese to fully integrate with the local aborigines in terms of cultural identity, and the overseas Chinese will still adhere to Chinese loyalty in terms of language selection. Language loyalty refers to the efforts made by members of the speech community to maintain their language when the status or inheritance of the first language or family language is facing real or perceived threats [17].

Overseas Chinese families deeply influenced by traditional Chinese culture will actively choose to use and inherit Chinese. They have a strong sense of national pride and superiority for Chinese culture and language. They even interfere with the marriage of their children, and ensure the purity of the Chinese blood through the intermarriage of their descendants with the Chinese ethnic group.

In addition to the active choice of local overseas Chinese, the rapid growth of China's national power has also changed the language choice of overseas Chinese to a certain extent. China's growing economic, technological and cultural power has attracted many overseas Chinese to have a passion for learning Chinese. Speaking Chinese fluently can help overseas Chinese to work in some multinational companies from China, and it is also easier to watch cultural works from China.

Chinese language education refers to "Chinese language and culture education carried out by overseas Chinese whose mother tongue or first language is not Chinese as the main teaching target (including a small number of non-Chinese students)" [18. P. 238].

"Maintaining and inheriting the language and culture of the nation through Chinese education is not only the result of the feelings of the overseas Chinese and Chinese, but also the need for ethnic identity" [19].

The original purpose of Chinese education was to teach overseas Chinese and their descendants to use the national language and to inherit Chinese culture. However, with the gradual increase of China's strength, Chinese education has gradually developed the media function of promoting the exchange of Chinese culture between the country of residence and China, but the language and culture education behavior beyond the scope of overseas Chinese education [20].

According to incomplete statistics, there are nearly 20,000 overseas Chinese language schools with hundreds of thousands of teachers [21]. Overseas Chinese schools in Southeast Asian countries are usually funded and managed by overseas Chinese groups. Although these schools are not supported by the government, and even in some countries, the diplomas of overseas Chinese schools are not recognized by the government education department, but the overseas Chinese still inherit the national language. Their behavior is starting from the original intention of cultural inheritance, and insisting on running a school with its own strength.

An important symbol of traditional overseas Chinese schools is that Chinese is a language that all students must learn and master, and it is also the main medium of instruction and classroom language for teaching various subjects [22. P. 289].

In Cambodia, as of 2019, the Federation of Khmer Chinese in Cambodia and its subordinate branches have opened a total of 58 overseas Chinese schools, with a total of more than 1,200 Chinese teachers and about 55,000 students. The Duan Hua School in Phnom Penh has become the largest Chinese school in Southeast Asia. In January 2021, the construction of the main structure of "Duanhua University", the first Chinese university in Cambodia built by the Federation of Khmer Chinese in Cambodia, has been basically completed. With the efforts of the overseas Chinese, Cambodia will soon form a complete Chinese education system from kindergarten to primary school, middle school and university [23].

Malaysian Chinese independent high school is the general name of the high schools sponsored by the Malaysian civil Chinese society. At present, there are a total of 60 Chinese independent high schools scattered all over Malaysia, which is a unique education system in Malaysia. Chinese independent high school is a school that insists on mother tongue teaching under the implementation of Malaysia's "Education Act 1961", refuses to be transformed into a national-type high school and is forced to raise funds to run the school on its own. According to 2018 data, there are 84,462 students and 4,857 teachers in independent high schools [24]. In addition to basic education, in 2013, Malaysia established the first higher education institution with Chinese as the medium of instruction, New Era University College. There are also many Chinese-taught majors in higher education institutions such as Tunku Abdul Rahman University and Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology in Malaysia.

In the Philippines, in 1973, the government promulgated a law that stipulated that 60% of the capital of overseas Chinese schools should be controlled by Filipino companies and associations, administrative and operational con-

trol of schools should be exercised by Filipinos. Overseas Chinese schools are not allowed to enroll only overseas Chinese students, and the proportion of overseas Chinese students shall not exceed one-third of the total number of students in the school. This plan unifies the education system of overseas Chinese schools and local schools in the Philippines. With the introduction of the new policy, overseas Chinese education in the Philippines has been continuously restricted, the overseas Chinese are deeply worried about the complete loss of independent status of Chinese education and Chinese education integration into the localized education. Under this circumstance, the "Philippine Chinese Education Research Center" was established in May 1991. The Education Center believed that the Chinese education in the Philippines was in urgent need of reform, and tried to transform Chinese teaching into second language teaching. The Chinese Education Center has formulated a Chinese teaching syllabus that conforms to the theory of second language learning, and has also compiled and reformed the teaching materials for Chinese teaching [16. P. 66]. Since then, Chinese education in the Philippines has been carried out in the form of second language teaching. With the improvement of China's comprehensive national strength, the practicality of Chinese has gradually become prominent. In addition to the overseas Chinese, indigenous Filipinos are also increasingly active in learning Chinese.

Indonesia has the largest overseas Chinese population, but the local overseas Chinese community's attitudes towards the official language Bahasa Indonesia vary greatly due to a variety of social factors. Indonesian authorities and locals maintain a level of suspicion towards the Chinese community, fearing that they pose a potential threat to the country and that their loyalty to Indonesia may be in question. As a result, intelligence agencies closely monitor the Chinese community [25. P. 82]. Zhou Wei's research reveals that in Indonesia, the majority of overseas Chinese speak Chinese dialects as their mother tongue, while a select few adopt Chinese and Indonesian as their family language. In urban areas, Chinese is commonly used as the primary language, while smaller cities tend to favor the use of Chinese dialects. Meanwhile, some individuals may also adopt a local indigenous language as their mode of communication. In 1966, the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (MPR) enforced a ban on the use of Chinese language in the media. Chinese characters were removed from public shops and displays. The import of Chinese newspapers, literature, and documents became equally restricted alongside weapons, drugs, and dynamite [26. P. 40]. Public celebrations of the Chinese New Year were prohibited, and in Semarang, the sale of Chinese cookies was even banned [27]. Later, Indonesia's anti-Chinese policy was so strict that sometimes speaking Indonesian with a Chinese accent was enough to arouse hostility [28. P. 55]. The complex language and social environment, as well as the fluctuating language policies, have made it challenging for Chinese communities to reach a consensus on the Chinese language [29]. As a country that used to be strict with the existence of Chinese language and words, Indonesia mainly uses Indonesian as the language of education. Therefore, a large

number of Indonesian overseas Chinese had no choice but to give up the study of Chinese, and gradually integrated with other local ethnic groups [30].

However, Indonesian overseas Chinese still maintain the most instinctive emotional attachment to Chinese after experiencing many hardships in national language: they still believe that Chinese is the best language to listen to. From the development trend of Chinese language education in Indonesia in recent years, it seems unlikely that Indonesian overseas Chinese will give up using Chinese in the future, as emotional and practical considerations make it very important for them to maintain Chinese language. On the contrary, they may seize this opportunity to gradually regain their mastery of Chinese [29].

Language and culture are the soul of a nation, with mother tongue representing a crucial part of that soul [31]. Many countries have lost their own languages and people's recognition of their national culture due to Western colonialism. Overseas Chinese, because they try their best to maintain their loyalty and yearning for their mother tongue, can inherit more of their national culture [32. P. 6]. Overseas Chinese recognition of Chinese language is an important manifestation of ethnic cultural identity. Through the unremitting efforts of overseas Chinese communities, Chinese language education has been carried out in different forms in various countries. Chinese language education and Chinese language schools use Chinese language and characters to generate self-awareness at the language level, help students and parents understand the core of national spirit, strengthen the identity of Chinese culture, and become an important fortress for spreading Chinese culture and gathering the strength of the Chinese nation.

### 3. Overseas Chinese Literature and Media

Overseas Chinese literature refers to literature written in Chinese outside China. Generally speaking, the authors of overseas Chinese literature are overseas Chinese. "The naming of overseas Chinese literature includes four kinds of historical images: the first is the history of overseas Chinese, the second is the history of overseas Chinese literature, the third is the history of the country of residence, and the fourth is the history of China [33. P. 212].

Overseas Chinese literature can be divided into Southeast Asian overseas Chinese literature, Australian overseas Chinese literature, North American overseas Chinese culture, European overseas Chinese literature and other sections. Among them, Southeast Asian overseas Chinese literature and North American overseas Chinese literature play an important role in overseas Chinese literature.

After years of development, overseas Chinese literature has become an important force for inheriting Chinese cultural traditions, gathering overseas Chinese and promoting the development of overseas Chinese associations. The immigration background of overseas Chinese and the complex social environment of their home countries provide writers with variously and deeply creative space. From the perspective of overseas Chinese, using polybasic vision and transcultural thought to perceive the world, to create unique literary works.

Under the multiple pressures of survival and development in residence countries, and in an environment far

away from the Chinese, overseas writers not only did not lose their spiritual values and humanistic pursuits, but found unlimited and free expressions, which had a profound influence on readers. Overseas Chinese literature reflects the history of the conflict and integration of Chinese and foreign cultures in the context of globalization [34].

When it comes to the development of overseas Chinese literature, one topic that cannot be avoided is Chinese media. Media is the carrier or material basis of literature. The development of literature requires the media to make corresponding changes and adaptation, and at the same time, the emergence of a new media often gives birth to a new literary style [35].

The overseas Chinese newspapers and periodicals, which are called the "Three Treasures" together with overseas Chinese associations and overseas Chinese language schools, are an important carrier for inheriting the national character and strengthening the cohesion. They also play an important role in close communication with the mainstream society, increasing the right to speak, and improving the social status of overseas Chinese [1].

There are more than 180 years from 1815 to 1996, a total of 4,245 kinds of newspapers and periodicals in Chinese or Chinese and other languages were published in 54 countries and regions overseas, including 668 kinds of daily newspapers and 1,041 kinds of periodic newspapers, the largest number of journals, up to 1886 kinds, there are 621 kinds of journals [36].

In Malaysia, there are currently 18 Chinese newspapers and 63 Chinese periodicals, making it the country with the largest number of Chinese-language daily newspapers overseas. Malaysian overseas Chinese account for about 28% of the total population, but the daily sales of 18 Chinese-language newspapers exceeds that of Malay-language and English-language newspapers [37].

Because the circulation of Chinese newspapers and periodicals is huge and they are the daily media that overseas Chinese associations and Chinese readers can read, Chinese media has become the most powerful media for the development of overseas Chinese literature and the spread of Chinese culture. The system of "Malaysian Chinese literary world" operates in this way: newspaper supplements (mainly Nanyang Siang Pau and Sin Chew Daily), literary and artistic journals, publishing houses, literary and artistic associations, Chinese language associations, bookstores, higher education or academic research institutions, literary awards, etc., plus writers, editors, critics and works [38]. Overseas Chinese newspaper supplements have become a window to inherit traditional culture and reveal current life, involving many corners of overseas Chinese society. Many authors like to publish poems, essays, novels and other literary works that reflect the living conditions of the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia in the supplements of Chinese media. The overseas Chinese Media become a link to help Malaysian overseas Chinese form a cultural identity and connect with the spiritual world of the Chinese associations.

The changes in the form of media have had a profound impact on the development of literature. From oral communication to print communication to digital communication, literary works have gradually moved from elite to mass,

from professional to secular. With the rapid development of the Internet, new media has become an important direction for the transformation of traditional Chinese newspapers. Faced with this situation, overseas Chinese media have also begun to actively expand their online business.

Chinese-language media displays literary works, overseas Chinese needs, and Chinese culture. This is an effective way to spread Chinese culture and an important way to promote the understanding of Chinese among different ethnic groups in the countries where the overseas Chinese

live. In addition, overseas Chinese media often pay attention to the influence of political and public opinion in the residence countries. On the basis of inheriting Chinese culture, they not only strive for the social rights that the overseas Chinese should have, but also focus on the poor class of the local indigenous peoples, pay attention to reporting and publicizing the living conditions of the lower-class people, and promote mutual understanding among all ethnic groups, so that they have a good reputation both in the overseas Chinese world and in the local area.

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