# From "Going Out" to "Going In": The Upgrading Road of China's Cultural Industry

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Abstract
Chinese culture strategy has made a lot of achievements in the past few decades, but with the change of international cultural competition and the deepening of the understanding of Chinese culture by International friends, the strategy of Chinese culture has exposed many problems, it needs to be promoted from "going out" to "going in". The article points out the problems and challenges faced by Chinese culture strategy in "going out", and try to put forward countermeasures and suggestions for Chinese culture "going in" from the three dimensions of content, form and output mode, in order to improve the quality of China's cultural industry and enhance the overseas influence of Chinese culture.

Keywords
Cultural industry; Cultural dissemination; Cultural exchange

## Introduction

In this new era of growing globalisation, the status and the role of culture is constantly rising. Culture is not only becoming the new driving force of global economic development, but also the focus of competition in the diversified development of the world.

Under such an international situation, China's cultural "going out" strategy has played an important role in many aspects, including economic, political and cultural aspects, as follows: economically, it has strengthened China's comprehensive national power, improved the international competitiveness of China's cultural trade, changed the status quo of China's cultural trade deficit, and kept pace with the global economy. "In terms of international relations, through the international dissemination of Chinese culture, it has enabled more international people to understand Chinese culture and identify with Chinese values, thus contributing to the realisation of "In terms of international relations, through the international dissemination of Chinese culture, it has enabled more international

people to understand Chinese culture and identify with Chinese values, thus contributing to the widespread recognition of the concept of "community of human destiny" (Fan, 2020).

While the implementation of the "going out" strategy for culture has been fruitful, there are also many problems.

## Problems with "Going Out" Global

### Formalities Cause Negative Impact

In the pursuit of political achievements or fame, some "going out" projects have become a mere formality, failing to achieve the purpose of cultural "going out" and not really making an impact, resulting in a waste of national policy dividends and funds, such as the LED screen advertising in Times Square in New York, the gallery in the underground passageway of the Louvre and the donation of works by the United Nations. For example, the LED screen advertisements in New York's Times Square, the galleries for rent in the Louvre's underground passageways, and the donations of works to the United Nations have all become "fraudulent" means of gilding the lily. These "gold-plated" "outbound" performances have also damaged the international image of Chinese culture with their low-level cultural output, as exemplified by some of the Chinese cultural performances in the Golden Hall in Vienna. The low quality of the performances could not be rewarded with applause and praise, but only with ridicule and misunderstanding (Yuan, 2015).

### "Sending Culture Out" is Currently a Money-spinning Exercise

In order to help cultural enterprises "go out" and rapidly expand their overseas markets, the government has invested a lot of financial resources and formulated many preferential support policies, but this has resulted in many "going out" projects ignoring economic benefits and showing a state of investment without seeking returns. Although there have been successful marketing cases such as the Dunhuang Song and Dance "Silk Road Rain", which was transformed from a "sending out" to a "selling out" project, the majority of foreign cultural products are seriously under-marketed, with sales determined by output and development direction guided by the government. Some cultural export projects are aimed at enhancing the scope of cultural export, and promote the expansion of cultural enterprises against the laws of the market, which is not conducive to the enhancement of the international competitiveness of Chinese cultural enterprises.

### Lack of Innovation in Cultural Products

China is rich in cultural resources, but the development of cultural products is not creative enough,

and the quality of cultural products varies, which reduces the attractiveness of Chinese culture overseas. China's cultural industry started late, cultural trade has been in deficit, private enterprises entering overseas markets have real problems such as weak cultural heritage, insufficient artistic training and lack of technical talents, and there is a relative lack of quality cultural products. Cultural products that are produced at a low level and lack cultural connotation and artistic value in pursuit of quantity are unable to attract consumers in the face of international competition, not to mention spreading cultural values and ideas through the consumption of cultural products.

### Low Level of "localization" of Cultural Exports

An important reason why Chinese culture has struggled to make an impact on the international public is the neglect of the 'localisation' of cultural products and services. Countries with a strong cultural tradition, such as the United States, have focused on localising their cultural products when opening up the Chinese market, using Chinese actors in their films, Chinese internet buzzwords in their translations, and Chinese stories and images in their animations, which can quickly gaining the trust of the Chinese public and their openness to American culture. However, Chinese culture has gone global with an overemphasis on highlighting Chinese elements, focusing only on the presentation of Chinese culture, but rarely packaging Chinese culture in the skin of the exporting country's 'localisation' in order to gain the approval of the exporting country's population.

### Lack of Precision in the Host Market

The frequent failures of American internet companies in China are blamed on Chinese protectionism, but in essence they are a result of market differences. Chinese culture is facing the same problem when it goes global. For example, the financing "scam" of Luckin Coffee was due to the fact that American investors directly applied the frequency of American coffee consumption to Chinese people, misestimating the potential of the Chinese coffee market and causing RuiXing Coffee's market value to be overestimated. For Chinese cultural enterprises to enter any overseas market, an accurate grasp of the local market should be the first step, and the current product development of Chinese cultural enterprises is clearly inadequate to adjust to the characteristics of different overseas markets.

## "Going In" is an Upgrade of "Going Out"

Chinese culture "going out" is a further requirement in response to the current state of implementation of the "going out" strategy. The first step of the "going out" strategy is to showcase and export Chinese culture to the outside world, which is more formal in nature, while the second step of the "going out" strategy, "going in", requires Chinese culture must not only go out of the country, but

also enter the hearts of the international public and can be understood and accepted by them, so that Chinese values, outlook on life and worldview can really have an essential and substantial impact on the audience, instead of remaining in the perception of symbolic images.

Chinese culture "goes out" mainly adopts three methods: foreign cultural exchange, trade and propaganda (China Democratic League Central Committee, 2019). In foreign cultural exchange, cultural "going out" can provide a boost to the better realization of cultural "going out".

In terms of foreign cultural exchange, "going out" can cultivate the soil for Chinese cultural exchange activities. By developing civil society groups and people into active participants in cultural exchange activities, the current situation of cultural exchange activities being limited to a small group of people such as overseas Chinese can be changed, and long-term international cultural exchange activities that are continuous, systematic, vital and influential can be established.

In terms of foreign cultural trade, "going out" requires that high-quality cultural products and services that are rich in Chinese cultural characteristics and in line with local cultural values and aesthetics really enter the production and life of international people, and raise the international community's awareness of Chinese cultural connotations, thus laying a broad market foundation for Chinese culture to "go out". This will provide a broad market base for Chinese culture to "go out" and provide a driving force for the international development of cultural enterprises.

In terms of foreign cultural propaganda, 'going global' will develop a large audience for official media and provide overseas creators for self-published media, effectively expanding and enhancing the scope and strength of foreign cultural propaganda.

Going Global is the right approach to the current stage of the cultural outreach strategy, and is a further upgrade of China's cultural outreach strategy, which is a further upgrade of China's cultural outreach strategy, and can enhance the effectiveness of going global.

## The Challenges of "Going In"

### Cultural Differences Affect Cultural Exchange

The purpose of "going in" is to enhance international awareness and acceptance of Chinese culture, but the biggest obstacle of this enhancement is cultural differences.

All cultures have a self-protection mechanism to preserve their individuality and resist the influence of heterogeneous cultures (Liu, Li & Shi, 2019). Breaking through this protective mechanism

requires not only finding the point of cultural compatibility but also preventing the negative effects caused by cultural misinterpretation. “Interpreting another culture according to one’s own cultural traditions, way of thinking and everything one is familiar with” (Wu, 2016) is the kind of cultural misinterpretation that can easily lead to cultural connotation deformation. For example, the recently released live-action version of Mulan has performed poorly at the box office and in the domestic and international markets due to the discomfort in viewing caused by the overseas creators’ misinterpretation of Chinese culture. The film was criticised by Chinese audiences for its conjecture about Chinese culture and its deviation from historical facts, and the presentation of such images and ideological content also caused a serious misunderstanding of Chinese culture among overseas audiences who were exposed to Chinese culture through the film. In order to bring Chinese culture into the world, it is necessary to break through the barriers of cultural differences, to find points of interculturality based on a deep understanding of the customs, values, aesthetics and religious beliefs of different cultures, and to properly present the unique charm of Chinese culture with content that easily resonates with the public.

## The Quality of Cultural Industries Needs to be Improved

In order to go into, Chinese culture needs to practice its internal skills and solve the problems of uneven quality of cultural products and services and the lack of international competitiveness of small-scale cultural enterprises. When comparing the cultural products and services of China with those of traditional cultural powerhouses, there are obvious gaps in terms of creativity, artistic aesthetics and humanistic details. Although Chinese culture has a glorious history and rich heritage, it has also undergone a period of destruction and disruption in recent times. In an international market where modernism is the dominant aesthetic, oriental culture is seen by the majority of the international public as “mysterious” and an ancient exotic. To break this stereotype and enter the mainstream cultural market, it is necessary to rely on high-quality cultural products and services with a sense of technology, modernity and unique Chinese cultural charm. The Japanese cultural industry has been extremely successful in this regard, not only with direct cultural expressions such as anime films, but also by integrating its unique cultural connotations into various consumer products such as everyday items, stationery and books, make-up and care products, food and cars, creating brand companies led by “MUJI”, which have formed an international brand with a Zen-inspired cultural connotation. This has created an international image of the Japanese brand with its Zen-like cultural connotations. In order for Chinese culture to ‘go into’ in this way, high quality products and services are the foundation.

## The International Competitive Situation is Complex and Volatile

Chinese culture is also facing a complex international situation when it comes to “going in”. In the

international market of cultural industries, Western developed countries, as cultural powers, promote cultural imperialism, on the one hand promoting the globalisation of cultural industries to reap economic and social benefits through cultural exports from their own dominant position in cultural industries, and on the other hand implementing protection policies for their own culture to prevent national cultural security issues arising from the globalisation of cultural industries. This contradictory double standard concept makes the international competitive environment for cultural industries complex, involving multiple games of politics, economics and diplomacy. The rapid rise of China's economy, especially its cultural and technological development strategy has created a sense of hostility in the US, which pursues power politics, and has joined its allies in a comprehensive crackdown on China in recent years, using state power to directly target Chinese companies abroad, especially technology and cultural enterprises. ZTE, Huawei, ByteDance, Chinese official media platforms overseas and even Chinese embassies have all been expelled from overseas markets for various reasons, and Chinese companies that had gained an advantage through long efforts in competition have been directly disqualified from doing so. How China can break through the hegemony and resolve the resistance with Chinese wisdom and the idea of building a "community of human destiny" is a topic that cannot be avoided when Chinese culture "goes in".

## Countermeasures and Suggestions for Realizing the "Going In" of Cultural Industries

### Improving Content Acceptability

Firstly, the acceptability of creative themes should be improved. Using world topics of common concern to mankind as creative subjects not only breaks through cultural barriers, but also better reflects the attitude and values of Chinese culture towards these world topics. The messianic complex of American disaster films, the presentation of distorted human nature in Japanese horror films, and the aesthetic trend set by Korean romantic dramas all gain world pass with themes of common human destiny, nature and emotion. Topics of common anxiety and concern to the world's population are discussed in these films and dramas, and judgments or solutions are given in terms of the cultural values of the country, so that the audience will have a deeper understanding of the country's concept of culture and values while discussing the plot, and will be more receptive to cultures that conform to universal values or satisfy common human desires. 2018's Hugo Award-winning Chinese production "The Three Body Problem" and the South Korean film "Parasite", which won the Oscar in 2020, have been internationally recognized for their excellent creative quality, with the power of collectivism and the disparity between rich and poor in Korea entering the hearts of the international public through these works, based on the themes of human fate and class division, two topics of common concern to humanity respectively.

Secondly, the acceptability of China's image should be improved. Iconic images allow the international public to make direct connections with Chinese culture in terms of dress and behavior, and to understand complex ideas and culture with direct sensory perceptions, making it easier for people of different cultures to interpret and understand Chinese culture at a deeper level and reducing the chances of cultural misinterpretation. Through the Oscar-winning film "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon " and a number of kung fu stars such as Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan and Jet Li, China has succeeded in making the image of Chinese kung fu more popular overseas, but at the same time, many international people have the misconception that Chinese people are keen to fight with force, and even the perception of Chinese dressing is stuck in the late Qing Dynasty to Republican era. The lack of knowledge of modern China and the distorted reports of the international media have caused many international visitors to China to be shocked and "not what they expected" is the first impression of many visitors to China. Creating a modern image of Chinese culture is a good way to change the stereotypical image of China. High-quality films and TV dramas are the best vehicle for creating a representative image of the country's culture, and determining how Chinese culture wants to be presented to the world in modern civilization is an important prerequisite for creating a representative image of the country's culture. A representative image of Chinese culture that is in line with the times can be closer to the real life of overseas people.

Finally, the acceptability of content understanding should be enhanced. Using visual language expressions to break through language barriers is one way of doing this. Li Ziqi, a well-known Chinese self-media video creator, uploaded a video of Chinese garden food on an overseas platform, using Chinese language and text throughout without English commentary or subtitles, but it still gained great popularity on the overseas platform, with the highest number of views on a single video reaching over 20 million. An analysis of the success of Li Ziqi's videos reveals that the use of less dialogue and more visual language and the presentation of the entire process, from sowing of ingredients to plating of food, does not prevent people of different languages from understanding his graphic expressions but also meets the preference of overseas people who are generally keen on handicraft and private gardening. At present, with a shortage of professional translators of a standard comparable to that of native speakers (Zhu, 2013) and the difficulty for non-professional translators to accurately represent China's unique culture, self-publishers, who generally lack professional translators, can use enhanced visual language representation to address the cultural communication barriers caused by language issues.

## Focus on Digital Cultural Industries

Firstly, it is important to focus on developing content production and channel marketing on digital media platforms. The deep popular base of digital media platforms can provide a large number of content producers and product audiences for Chinese culture to 'go out'. China's digital culture in-

dustry has made very promising developments during the 13th Five-Year Plan period. In the second quarter of 2018, TikTok, the overseas version of ByteDance's , won first place in the worldwide App Store ranking in terms of the number of downloads. However, at the same time, the creation of cultural products on China's digital media platforms is dominated by pan-entertainment content, which is still lacking in the depth and breadth of cultural resources exploration.

To strengthen the production of content on digital media platforms, it is important to improve the cultural connotation of the content produced on digital media platforms, to organise a number of high-quality works to guide the creators of the platforms to focus on the presentation of Chinese cultural content, to stimulate the interest of creators to find creative inspiration from the rich Chinese cultural resources, to improve the cultural connotation and creative quality of works on digital media platforms through the fierce competition brought about by the large number of production groups, and to provide a high-quality carrier for culture to "go out".

To strengthen the marketing channels of digital media platforms, it is important to increase not only the number of users but also the usage rate of the platforms, to mobilize the participation of the public, and to make use of the natural intimacy and acceptability of Chinese culture shown by individuals sharing the details of their daily lives, and the instantaneous nature of the digital platforms to provide timely feedback to confirm the authenticity of the information disseminated, so that Chinese culture can gradually penetrate the hearts of the general public through communication and interaction.

Secondly, we must make full use of China's new advantages in digital technology to achieve a bend in cultural output. At present, the digital art production software in the world basically comes from the traditional cultural powerhouse of the United States, and the resources brought about by the time of development make these professional large-scale software in the industry almost in a monopoly position, with patents and standards to influence the creation and aesthetics of digital art worldwide. As digital technology continues to evolve, China is catching up in 5G network technology, big data analytics and artificial intelligence. In particular, Huawei's 5G network technology has been qualified to participate in industry standards and holds the world's highest number of 5G patents, giving China a head start in big data-related industries and in developing new applications for high-speed networks.

To capitalize on China's new digital technology advantage, it is important to strengthen capacity building in the use of technology for development and to take the lead in achieving breakthroughs in content and services, effectively enhancing the international competitiveness of China's cultural industries and capturing more international market share for Chinese cultural products. For example, with the speed advantage of 5G networks, develop more real-time interactive experiences,

break through existing forms of live video streaming, and provide more experiential and immersive live interactions, thereby bringing about an increase in the international competitiveness of China's digital media platform products.

To capitalize on China's new digital technology advantage, it is also important to strengthen digital standardization capacity building, establish and promote common digital formats, and break down the technical communication barriers for Chinese culture to "go global", thereby improving the international operations of Chinese cultural enterprises, expanding the scale of cultural trade through technological advantages, and truly transforming technological advantages into industrial advantages. For example, through the improvement of metadata and taxonomy, the interface between domestic e-books and international mainstream digital marketing platforms such as "Amazon" can be realized, so that Chinese digital publishing can directly penetrate into the "capillaries" of overseas mainstream markets (Zhang, 2017).

## Breaking Through International Environmental Barriers with Civil Power

First, the domestic market should be further opened to overseas private cultural organizations. On 4 February 2021, the UK cancelled the landing permit for China International Television in the UK, and in the early hours of 11 February, the first day of the Chinese Lunar New Year, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), which was still on its New Year holiday, announced that it would not accept BBC World In the early hours of 11 February, the General Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT), which was still on its New Year's holiday, announced that it would not accept BBC World News' application to land in the UK for the new year. Although both stations already have a limited presence in the other country, this confrontational attitude is clearly not conducive to cultural exchange.

While the complete opening of the domestic market to international culture is a historically proven threat to national cultural security, and opening access to international information before the Chinese media has gained effective influence in the international market can do more harm than good, increasing the opening of the domestic market to international civil culture organizations can do more good than harm. The advantages of opening up the domestic market include the following three points: firstly, the high quality of cultural products brought by international cultural organizations will help to improve the quality of domestic cultural products and services through competition and enhance their international competitiveness; secondly, international cultural organizations will bring Chinese voices to the international market while developing the Chinese market, which will help to export Chinese culture; thirdly, the supervision of the domestic market by the Chinese cultural authorities will help to ensure that Thirdly, the supervision of the domestic market by the Chinese cultural authorities will help to ensure that the Chinese people have access to correct inter-

national cultural information.

Secondly, the 'localization' of Chinese cultural exports should be further strengthened. Localization is a good way to bypass political and cultural barriers to cultural exchange and to increase the trust and acceptance of international people who are unfamiliar with Chinese culture. Localization of cultural exports can be achieved in a number of ways, from the product to the creator.

By using other cultures as the subject matter of the product, it will not only increase domestic awareness of the culture, but will also open up the market for the culture more easily. Creating a favorable market environment for Chinese culture to "go into". Japanese anime has created a large number of works based on Chinese culture, such as The Little House of China, which is based on Chinese food culture, and The Most Traveled, which is based on the Four Great Chinese Novels, Journey to the West, etc. These excellent manga works have not only been successful in the Japanese domestic market, but have also greatly increased Chinese readers' affinity with Japanese anime. The Chinese cultural images created by Japanese anime with distinctly Japanese anime artistry left a deep impression on Chinese readers, and to this day there are still Chinese self-publishers posting original videos that recreate the Chinese food mentioned in the Japanese anime "Chinese Little Pawnshop", the influence of this Japanese anime created in 1995 is evident in China. Street Fighter, released in 1987, created a series of classic national representations and succeeded in highlighting the Japanese national image of Ryu, the "solitary seeker". In the game, Chun Li, the Chinese representative who wears a cheongsam and specializes in Chinese kung fu, Darthi, the Indian representative who is dark and lean and wears Buddhist beads and specializes in yoga fighting, Sangerov, the Russian representative who is strong and strength-oriented and specializes in wrestling, and Ken, the American representative who is a keen challenger and specializes in innovative Japanese boxing techniques that have become a national hit through the film, are all iconic figures that combine the cultural symbols of their country and are easily recognized by the people of the country they represent. With this recognition, the image of the Japanese representative Takashi was also quickly accepted: karate, a pure heart for the pursuit of the Way, and a strong-willed Bushido spirit. These success stories can provide ideas for the path of 'localization' of Chinese culture.

By presenting Chinese culture through the works of local creators, it is possible to create works that are more in line with local aesthetics and values, and because of their 'local' nature, reduce the influence of political factors and create an equal environment for cultural exchange between the two countries. Disney's animated film Mulan is a classic example of this success. The live-action version of Mulan, released in 2020, was judged by Americans to have ruined their childhood due to a cultural misinterpretation of the film's poor quality. Today, China's economic development has led to a significant increase in its international investment power, more options and possibilities for collaboration with local creative companies, and the development of digital technology has led to

self-publishing and online literary platforms providing new channels for local creators to participate in the creation of Chinese cultural products. International people living or traveling in China are showing the true face of Chinese culture to the international community in a variety of ways, including live streaming, short videos and online literature, and this new attempt at 'localization' is having a positive impact. The recent questions and controversies over China's safety at night were clarified by the fact that international people in China were able to experience China's good night-time security in the form of live night-time broadcasts, which clarified inaccurate media reports.

As China develops its cultural industry in a complex international environment, it must both adhere to an open philosophy of welcoming international cooperation and equal exchange, and remain highly alert to political and cultural intrusion. China's international cultural exchanges are led by private exchanges, and taking a mass approach is an effective way of presenting the right image of China to the international community, while avoiding excessive political interference in cultural exchanges.

## Conclusion

In a word, the realization of cultural 'going out' is based on understanding the cultures of different countries, combining different cultures with Chinese culture, developing high-quality cultural products and services, and opening up overseas markets with content and forms that are more easily accepted by people of different cultures. Only when Chinese culture is profoundly understood and accepted by the international public in the process of consumption through cultural enterprises in the form of foreign cultural trade, is the right path to follow the laws of the market and realize the 'going out' of Chinese culture.

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