



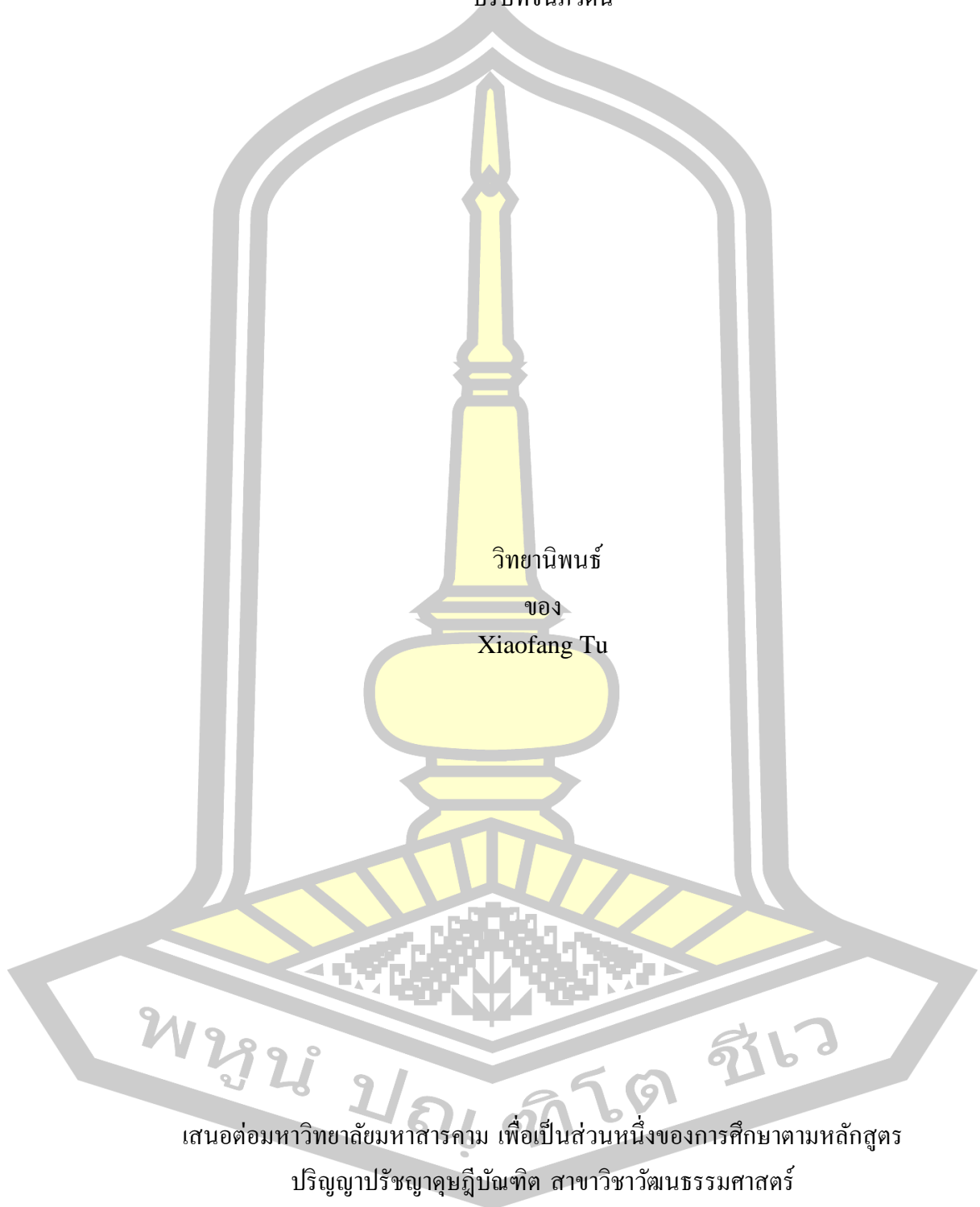
The CCTV Spring Festival Gala of China: National Self-Identity Construction in the
Context of Chinesenization

Xiaofang Tu

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Science
February 2024

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งานกาล่าเทศกาลฤดูใบไม้ผลิใน CCTV ของจีน: การประกอบสร้างตัวตนและอัตลักษณ์ชาติใน
บริบทจีนกั๋วตัน

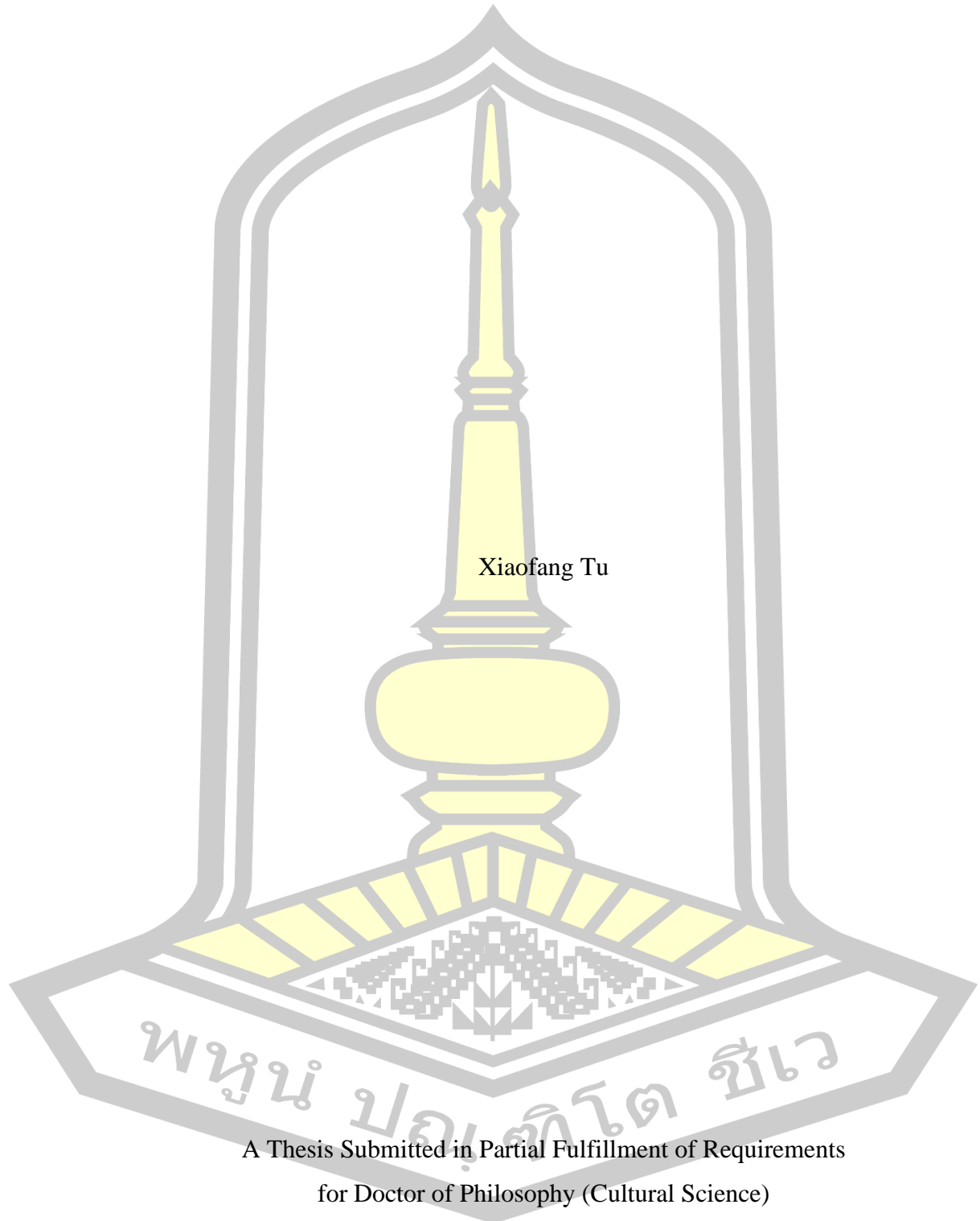


เสนอต่อมหาวิทยาลัยมหาสารคาม เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตร
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February 2024

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The examining committee has unanimously approved this Thesis, submitted by Ms. Xiaofang Tu , as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Cultural Science at Mahasarakham University

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ABSTRACT

This study is a basic research type, which conducts an interdisciplinary qualitative research method to study the phenomenon of the 'CCTV Spring Festival Gala in China' on the issue of National Self-Identity Construction in the Context of Chinesenization. The research found that Gala's media discourse was made into a space combined with the creation of Chinese people both domestically and internationally through media culture mechanisms. The Gala, therefore, has changed its focus. "Reform and opening up" (1983-1992) continued together. It includes "Socialist Market Economy and Consumerism" (1993-2002), "Scientific Perspectives on the Development and Building of a Harmonious Socialist Society" (2003-2011), "Realization of China's Dream of the Great Reconstruction of the Chinese Nation (2012-2022)." However, what we found to be unchanged is that the media practice of the Gala over the past 40 years was a process of Chineseization with political and cultural significance. In this process, the Gala serves to rebuild the Chinese national community and reconstruct the national self-identity by reproducing Chinese "nation" and "state" images and discourse. This research proposed that the Gala was not only a comprehensive Gala that Chinese people watched on Lunar New Year's Eve but also the creative invention and modern transformation of the traditional folk rituals of the Spring Festival in modern society. In the context of globalization and Chinesenization, through the Gala, the Chinese government has created large social networks across regional boundaries and rebuilt the self-identity of the Chinese nation by integrating the reproduction of national ideology with the latest television technology. This is the significance of the Gala as a "new folk tradition."

Keyword : The CCTV Spring Festival Gala, Media Culture, National Self-identity Construction, Chinese national community, Chinesenization

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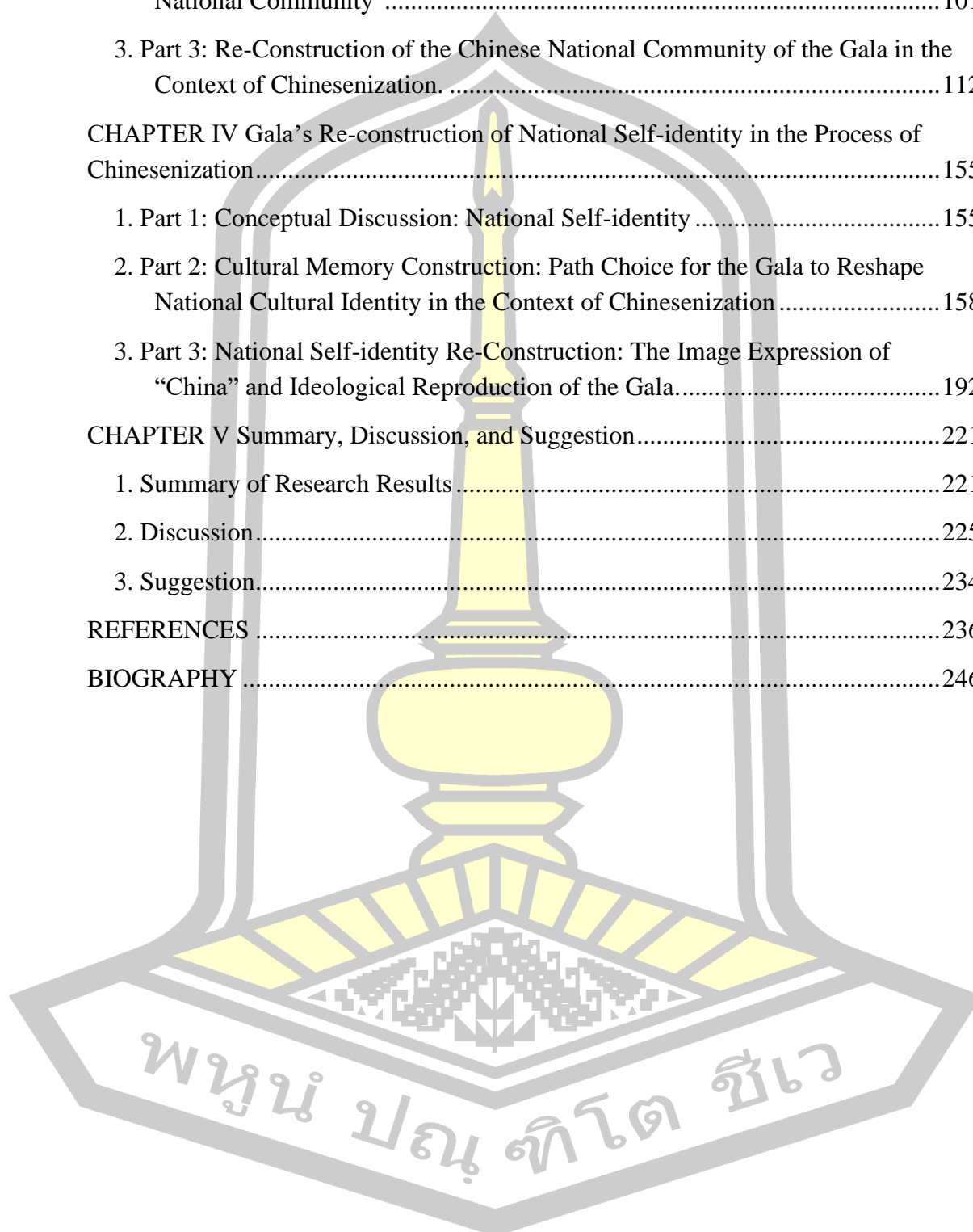
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Xiaofang Tu

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

1. Research Background

The Spring Festival is the grandest traditional festival in China. It is a folk festival of praying for good fortune, resisting disaster, celebrating entertainment, and eating. The Spring Festival has a long history, arose in the period of Yu Shun worship of God and ancestor activities, to the Han Dynasty of Wudi, to make the calendar not disorder, created and implemented the "TaiChu Calendar", and fixed the lunar calendar of Meng Chun month (that is, today's first lunar month) as the beginning of the year, has been used to the end of the Qing Dynasty. "New Year" is "Spring Festival", it was the first day of the first lunar month, called "Yuan Dan". After the Revolution of 1911, the Republic of China switched to the Gregorian calendar, which is commonly used in the world. The Gregorian calendar fixed January 1 as "Yuan Dan," and the first day of the first lunar month was called "Spring Festival." The establishment of modern China did not interrupt the festival ceremony based on the traditional calendar method. Both the 1911 Revolution and the New China adopted the "dual track system", which was the parallel of the Western calendar and the traditional calendar." As a traditional festival ceremony in Chinese society, the Spring Festival has not been interrupted by the establishment of a modern nation-state. It can also be seen that modern China's national identity has never been able to leave the historical tradition extending from pre-modern times to reality "(He Guimei. 2014:116).

In December 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China opened a new historical situation of "reform and opening up" and modernization. At that time, the Chinese people who had just got rid of poverty and became rich enjoyed material civilization but also began to wake up to the strong cultural needs of life. After the 1990s, television eventually replaced newspapers and radio to become the main media affecting Chinese people's lives. The pattern of "Two newspapers and one magazine" and broadcasting during Mao Zedong's era has been broken, replaced by the ever-expanding CCTV.

"Spring Festival Gala" is not only the historical product of the reform and opening up, but also the product of the TV media era (Shi Libin. 2014:14). During the Spring Festival, especially on New Year's Eve, the most important traditional festival in China, the state department of literature and art holds a large-scale Gala, which is broadcast live on TV. This kind of cultural activity began in 1983. In 1983, the Spring Festival Gala, directed by Huang Yihe and Deng Zaijun, set five firsts in CCTV's history: it was broadcast live (it was always recorded); Viewers call-in programs on demand; Set up multiple hosts; Set up a teahouse type audience area and a lower stage on the scene, so that the audience and actors can have fun together; Set up a prize quiz during the program. The party highlighted the theme of "joy" and was a great success. In 1984, in response to the strategic decision of "One country, Two systems" to reunify the motherland put forward by the CPC Central Committee, Huang Yihe, the chief director, broke through all the difficulties and invited actors from Hong Kong and Taiwan (Taiwan returnee Huang A-yuan and Hong Kong actors Chen Sisi, Zhang Mingmin, Xi Xiu-lan) to participate in the Spring Festival Gala to celebrate the New Year's Eve with compatriots from the mainland. The unprecedented grand occasion caused a huge audience response (Hong Minsheng. 1990:28).

Through the exploration of directors Huang Yihe and Deng Zaijun, the basic mode of broadcasting Spring Festival Gala programs was fixed in the 1990s: First, the evening Gala is fixed from 8 PM to 1 AM on the Lunar New Year's Eve, and the time length is between four and a half to five hours. The most important "holy hour" of the evening is when the clock strikes midnight. Second, the Gala is a comprehensive evening party, which consists of healthy, lively, and highly entertaining cultural programs and non-literary and artistic programs. Among them, the literary and artistic programs are songs and dances, crosstalk and sketches. The non-literary and artistic programs are mainly documentary or emotional programs specially planned by the Gala crew in combination with the major policies of the Party and the state in the past year or the hot events of general concern to the Chinese people. Third, the theme of the party is basically around the atmosphere of unity, joy, endeavor, and reunion. Fourth, the evening party has the characteristics of a large platter, which is the most extensive coverage of 56 different ethnic nations in China, different regions in the east, west, north, and south, and different social identity groups of workers, peasants,

soldiers, and businessmen. Fifth, every year, the production team of the Gala invites representatives from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, as well as overseas Chinese, to perform alongside mainland actors to celebrate the Spring Festival.

Through the relay of several directors, the annual CCTV Spring Festival Gala has become a unique cultural activity and "new folk custom" in Chinese society. It has changed the traditional Chinese New Year habits, and making dumplings, setting off firecrackers, and watching the Gala have become three major events on New Year's Eve (Hong Minsheng.1990:13). In terms of performance scale, cast, broadcast duration, and audience ratings at home and abroad, the Spring Festival Gala has set three world records for the China World Record Association World Variety Gala. In April 2012, the Gala was awarded the Guinness World Record Certificate.

After 2000, China began to rise peacefully. Based on rapid and steady economic growth, China has continuously improved its national cultural soft power, established the historical mission of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with a high degree of cultural confidence and cultural consciousness, and constantly improved the international influence of Chinese culture. Under such historical background and national realistic needs, China's national media represented by CCTV, as the vanguard of building the international influence of Chinese culture, has always sought to accelerate and enhance the influence of external communication. In 2009, CCTV put forward the goal of building first-class international TV media, vigorously promoted the branding strategy of professional channels, accelerated the construction of multi-language international channels, strengthened the construction of overseas sites, established and improved video resource exchange platforms, and actively expanded overseas operations, thus entering a new period of prosperity and development of external communication of CCTV (Li Shudong.2013:117). By 2018, "China's TV external communication has initially formed a new pattern of external communication with CCTV and Phoenix TV as the main force, Dragon TV and Yellow River Channel as the front force, and multi-language, all-media and all-weather as the development trend" (Hu Zhanfan.2019:20). Later, the China Media Group (CMG) was set up, and its international influence was significantly enhanced.

Li Jiashan (2018:248-256) reviewed China's foreign cultural exchanges in the 40 years of reform and opening up, and pointed out that "since the 18th National

Congress of the Communist Party of China (2012), the influence of China's foreign cultural exchanges has been increasing day by day, and a pattern of foreign cultural exchanges with high-level support, government and public support, and multi-party participation has been gradually formed". "It has successfully created four well-known brands for cultural exchange between China and the rest of the world: 'Mutual National Year', 'Happy Spring Festival', 'Cultural China · Universal Spring', and 'China-CEEC Dance Summer Camp'". Among them, two well-known Chinese and foreign exchange cultural brands are related to the Spring Festival and the late Spring Festival.

After 2000, especially after the first decade, the influence of Chinese Spring Festival culture overseas continued to increase and even formed the global phenomenon of "China fever" and "Spring Festival fever". Many scholars have studied this phenomenon (Ruan Jing, 2013, 2014; Yan Qing, 2019,2020; Fan et al., 2022). As Yan Qing and Du Jiayun (2020:48) analyzed, the reasons for the increasing influence of Chinese Spring Festival in the world are as follows: First, the peaceful rise of China and overseas Chinese all over the world promote the spread of Spring Festival culture; Many overseas countries attach importance to the Spring Festival at the government and non-governmental level; The Chinese government actively guides the Spring Festival. Second, the Internet has compressed the global space, and the whole world is connected through the network. For example, social media has increasingly become a channel for people to express the Spring Festival culture.

The 2014 Gala is positioned as a national cultural project. Since mid-2014, China International Television Corporation has focused on the overseas dissemination of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala fully launched the series of China's Spring Festival Gala, took effective measures to collect high-quality programs, increase market operation and overseas promotion, constantly expand the international influence of the Spring Festival Gala, and build a Chinese cultural brand (Tang Shiding.2016:82).

In general, the research on CCTV Spring Festival Gala began to rise in the 1990s and grew rapidly after 2000. The earliest scholars who systematically studied the content of the Spring Festival Gala were scholars of literature and art, represented by Geng Wenting. They mainly analyzed the aesthetic characteristics and changes of the Gala program from the perspective of literary and artistic aesthetics (Geng

Wenting,2005; Wang Zifang, 2014; Jiang et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2021). These studies pay more attention to the micro level of program content and form and often neglect the analysis and discussion of political, economic, and other influencing factors behind the production of the Gala program content.

“Any analysis of the Spring Festival Gala from an aesthetic or artistic perspective is clearly not to the point. In fact, the discourse replacement and rhetoric of the national mainstream discourse behind the Spring Festival Gala are the truly eye-catching ones” (Pan Zhichang, 2007). Some scholars have revealed the ideology of the Spring Festival Gala from a critical perspective of cultural research and its essence as a tool for state power practice and ideological control (Zhao bin,1998; Lv Xinyu, 2003, 2006; Pan Zhichang, 2007; Wang Xiaoyu, 2005; Panzhongdang,2010).

Pan Zhichang (2007) believes that the national ideology, through the "practice" of the Spring Festival Gala, has undergone multiple discourse permutations to the traditional "Spring Festival": firstly, there is a discourse exchange between "family" and "state". The Spring Festival Gala "tampered" with the traditional folk customs of the Spring Festival into a political ceremony of a modern nation-state, thus completing the "common imagination" of a modern nation-state. Secondly, there is a discourse exchange between "communication" and "dissemination". Finally, there is a discourse exchange between "participation" and "observation". In the traditional Chinese New Year, everyone was the protagonist of the festival, but now they have been "tampered with" as bystanders. From the multiple perspectives of Political Economy in cultural research, Lv Xinyu (2006:122)explains the significance of the "Spring Festival Gala": "There is not only the appropriation of traditional folk rituals, folk dramas, and folk art forms by the national ideology but also the sensitive and complex expression of crises and conflicts within society in the national ideology pedigree; there is also the strong shaping of the party by the development of China's television market and Consumerism ideology ". Wang Xiaoyu (2005:27) focused on how to construct an "imagined community" in the Spring Festival Gala. She called the construction of this kind of community a "summoning" mechanism, which is achieved by creating an "image community" in space and a "collective memory" in time. Influenced by them, many scholars have discussed the Spring Festival Gala from the aspects of communication stance, content, audience, symbols, and so on, focusing on

family-state ideology (Guo Zhenzhi, 2012; Zheng Shujun, 2014; Chen et al.,2015; Dezheng Feng, 2016).

Chen Lu (2012:14) believes that there is a common major flaw in previous studies of the Spring Festival Gala - the lack of analysis on the evolution of the Spring Festival Gala. Shi Libin (2014:5-6) refuted Pan Zhichang's sharp criticism, arguing that Pan Zhichang's research has certain implications for our understanding of "what the Spring Festival Gala is", but disagreed with the description of the Spring Festival Gala as "an immutable and rigid ideological state apparatus". In Shi Libin's eyes, the Spring Festival Gala has become a "field" of meaningful struggle and negotiation, where a variety of social forces, ideas, and demands are represented, and the audience is not entirely passive.

In the face of the modern transformation of traditional Spring Festival folklore, some folklorists criticized the medium behavior of Spring Festival and the excessive entertainment and commercialization of Spring Festival Gala from the perspective of inheriting and protecting Spring Festival cultural heritage, which resulted in the dilution of the traditional cultural spirit carried by the Spring Festival (Guo Deoyong, 2014; Ma Shuo, 2021).

Some scholars take a different view. Qi Lin (2017:85) believes that the significance of the Spring Festival Gala lies in the fact that it is an important representation of the modern transformation of traditional Chinese culture. Qi pointed out that the Spring Festival Gala introduces "mass communication" into the folk structure of New Year's Eve. This transformation of communication structure not only changes the connotation of the Spring Festival, but also changes the mental model of the Chinese people to celebrate the Spring Festival, and then affects their self-identity as the subject. "New Year's Eve is no longer a sacred time for the family, but a critical moment shared by an 'imagined community'. At this time, under the interpellation of the Spring Festival Gala, the context in which people define their identity is no longer the universe and the continuity of family lineage, but the country, society, and era, and thus the national, citizen, professional identity, social class, etc. become the criteria for new identity' (Qi Lin.2017:88). By comparison, Fan Yaping and Cheng Hao (2019:51) point out that there is an obvious inheritance relationship between

traditional Spring Festival customs and new Spring Festival customs, and the "gene" connecting the two is national identity.

Different from Pan Zhichang and other scholars who sharply criticized the interference of national ideology in the Spring Festival Gala, Qi Lin and other scholars affirmed the positive construction of national ideology through the Spring Festival Gala and revealed that such media production and construction may have a huge impact on the audience's identity or national identity. Emphasizing and affirming the role of media in forming social integration and control in the time dimension and providing "identity power" is obviously influenced by the "communication ritual view".

The connection between communication and ritual can be traced back to the concept of communication ritual proposed by American scholar James W. Carey in the 1980s. In his collection "Communication as Culture", Carey (1989/2005:7) proposed a "ritual perspective" opposite to the "transmission perspective" of communication: "The ritual perspective of communication does not refer to the expansion of information in space but to the maintenance of society in time. It does not refer to an act of information or influence, but rather the creation, representation, and celebration of a common belief, Its core is the sacred ceremony that brings people together in the form of a group or community".

In 2005, Ding Wei, a Chinese scholar, translated James W. Carey's collection of essays "Communication as Culture". Only then did the domestic academic circles gradually pay attention to the relationship between communication and rites. Zhang Bingjuan, Guo Jianbin, and Liu Jianming have made positive academic thinking on the adaptation, development, and innovation of Communication studies learning from Cultural anthropology. Academic research on media rituals in China has increased significantly since 2009 and has been widely used in the study of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala. These studies regard CCTV Spring Festival Gala as a sacred media ritual, focusing on the dimensions of constructing national identity, cultural identity, shaping social memory and collective memory, and constructing a "narrative community" (Jin Yuping, 2010; Shao et al., 2010; Xing Yan-hui, 2013; Ouyang et al., 2018; Zeng et al., 2019; Wang Qiang, 2020).

In summary, these studies on the Gala, whether from the perspective of cultural criticism or media ritual, are mostly based on the "imagined community" proposed by Benedict Anderson, and believe that the Gala builds a national cultural ceremony by using the folk tradition of the Spring Festival, to construct the community imagination of "all sons and daughters of the Chinese nation at home and overseas" (this imagined community is also called the Chinese national community). This research holds that there are three important problems to be solved in these Gala studies.

The first question is, is the "imagined community" in the Western nation-state sense the same as the "Chinese national community"? What is the difference between China and the modern nation-state in the West? The existing research on the Gala is mostly confined to the perspective of communication and neglects these basic but core issues.

As He Guimei (2014:116) explained, Benedict Anderson called the modern nation an "imagined community" and regarded it as a completely modern "invention". However, this nationalist theory, based on Western European countries as the basic model, often faces difficulties in dealing with China's problems. For example, the biggest difference is that today's "China" is not entirely a product of modern nationalism's "imagination" and "invention" but is closely related to the long history of dynastic states and their cultural habits (i.e., the pre-modern "community" culture).

Since 2009, "rejuvenation" has become a keyword that defines China today, which also means that how understanding the state needs to relate to the long history of Chinese civilization. In this vision of "civilization," contemporary China is placed in the same continuous historical process as classical China and modern China, rather than the internal break between tradition and modernity of the 1980s. The so-called "civilization" here refers to the recognition of Chinese culture and historical tradition from the height of world history based on criticizing modern Western civilization. Its most prominent feature is to emphasize that "China" is not a "nation-state" in the general Western European modern state form, but a unique "civilization-state": It has a long history of state formation and is a special unified state form that can overcome nation-state homogeneity and form a "pluralistic unity" pattern that embraces cultural and historical diversity (He Guimei, 2014:118).

Zhu Jun and other ethnologists' research on the common connotation of the Chinese nation also provides us with important inspiration. China's long history has given birth to diverse ethnic units, and through contact, mixing, union, and integration, the Chinese nation has been formed as a diverse and unified nation. This kind of multi-ethnic fusion with a pan-blood basis and cultural commonality is a major feature of the Chinese nation different from the Western nations (Zhu Jun. 2021:34). Fan Ke (2022:24) believes that the Chinese nation, which is composed of multiple ethnic groups, should not exclude numerous overseas Chinese if they believe that China is their homeland. However, such a Chinese nation needs to be defined culturally. Fan Ke proposed that the Chinese nation can be understood from the following aspects: 1) The Chinese nation in the sense of a nation-state, whose constituent population is all Chinese citizens; 2) The Chinese nation in the sense of cultural China, whose constituent population identifies with China in the cultural sense; 3) The Chinese nation in the sense of Cosmopolitanism.

The analysis of the above scholars has great enlightening significance for our understanding of "China," "Chinese nation," and "Chinese national community." The "imagined community" proposed by Benedict Anderson is a nation-state community in the political sense, while the Chinese national community is a cross-ethnic, cross-regional, cross-territorial, and cross-nationality compatible cultural and political community. The pluralistic modernity of this kind of community is closely related to China's historical development, socialist construction practice, especially China's modernization construction practice and media construction practice since the new period of reform and opening up. The existing studies on the Spring Festival Gala often neglect to combine the Western theory of "imagined community" with the historical, cultural, political, and other actual conditions of the formation of the Chinese national community and treat the Chinese national community with fixed concepts. Therefore, it can neither find the problems existing in the existing research of the Spring Festival Gala nor can it observe the new situation and new problems.

Back to the previous criticism of Pan Zhichang (2007) on the Spring Festival Gala: "The Spring Festival Gala 'falsifies' the traditional folk custom of the Spring Festival into a political ceremony of a modern nation-state, thus completing the' common imagination 'of a modern nation-state." We find that Pan Zhichang's research

on the Gala is focused on China's internal. The group of overseas Chinese is inadvertently excluded. Paradoxically, Pan mentioned in his argument that the Gala is for "all sons and daughters of the Chinese nation at home and overseas," including overseas Chinese naturally. Since most of the overseas Chinese are not Chinese citizens, the imagination and identity of the overseas Chinese towards China is more inclined to a historical and cultural identity rather than a politically significant nation-state identity. Pan is not alone, and similar contradictions often appear in previous studies of the Gala. As a special group, overseas Chinese are often ignored or excluded. This is out of step with the annual tradition of inviting Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan compatriots and overseas Chinese to participate in the Gala since its inception.

The second question is, most of the studies mention that the audience of the Gala is the community of "all sons and daughters of the Chinese nation at home and overseas". But what are the different groups included in this community? What is the social foundation for the formation of a community as one? What changes has the community scope of the "Chinese nation" undergone in the past century? The cognition of "community" in previous studies is vague and unexplained. This study drew on the research results of ethnology and history, used interdisciplinary qualitative research methods to retrospect the connotation and extension of the community of "Chinese nation", and applied a post-modern perspective to research how the Gala reconstruct an imagined community of "Chinese nation" in modern society.

The third problem is the lack of international perspective in previous studies, which failed to analyze the development of the Gala, the CCTV, China's social, economic and cultural development and the Chinese government's United Front policy in the context of globalization. This study took the concept of "Chinesenization" to summarize the essence of the 40-year Gala media practice, which can integrate the domestic and international communication of the Gala, integrate the national identity and cultural identity of the community of "Chinese nation", integrate the domestic governance and international governance of the Chinese government, and revealed the flexibility and innovation of the Chinese

government in implementing state control and constructing transnational nationalism through the Gala.

To sum up, this study took the CCTV Spring Festival Gala as the research text, drew on "imagined community" and "National Self-identity" as the theoretical basis, applied the interdisciplinary qualitative research methods of cultural studies, media studies, ethnology, and history, and took post-modern perspective to study the cultural and political significance of the 40-year media practice of the Gala in the context of Chinesenization. That is to study how the Gala constructs an imagined community of "Chinese nation" across ethnicities, regions, and nations and to reconstruct the national self-identity in the context of Chinesenization.

2. Purposes of Research

- 2.1 To study historical development of the Gala in the 40 years (1983-2022).
- 2.2 To study the CCTV Spring Festival Gala and the Chinese national community.
- 2.3 To study the Gala's re-construction of National self-identity in the process of Chinesenization.

3. Research Questions

- 3.1 What meaning changes has the Gala experienced in the past 40 years (1983-2022)?
- 3.2 What kind of "Chinese national community" was reconstructed by the Gala in the process of "Chinesenization"? How does the Gala reconstruct it?
- 3.3 How does the Gala reconstruct the self-identity of Chinese nation in the process of Chinesenization?

4. Definition of Terms

4.1 The CCTV Spring Festival Gala

The CCTV Spring Festival Gala in this research is the research text. It is a comprehensive Gala held by CCTV on the eve of the Lunar New Year to celebrate the Chinese New Year. The first Gala began in 1983. The time is fixed at around 8 pm to 1 am on the 30th day of the Lunar New Year every year, and the duration is between

four and a half to five hours. The show covers various art forms such as skits, songs, dances, acrobatics, magic, opera, and crosstalk. Every year, the Gala invites actors from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, as well as overseas Chinese performers, to join in and celebrate the Spring Festival with mainland actors. This research regards the Gala as a media tool for the Chinese government to promote Chinesenization under the new historical conditions. Through various forms of programs and artistic performances, together with the latest media shooting and media presentation technologies, Chinese culture is disseminated to the world in a medium form to build the self-identity of the Chinese nation and form the identity of all Chinese people.

4.2 National Self-identity

“National Self-identity” in this research means the cultural and political significance of the 40 years of media culture practice of the Spring Festival Gala for the Chinese state and nation. Under the background of China's social class differentiation, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the large number of overseas Chinese, how to form the community consciousness of the "Chinese nation" and reconstruct the identity of each member of the community to the Chinese nation is becoming a major issue that the Chinese government needs to face in the domestic and international situations. Specifically, this concept emphasizes the use of the Spring Festival Gala as an ideological tool to form the national identity of each member of the "community" through the active discourse construction of "ethnic unity," "national unity," "social harmony" and "Chinese cultural diversity and unity."

4.3 Imagined Community

“Imagined Community” in this study means the political and cultural significance of the Chinese government's positive cultural production and media construction through the Gala. This community in this study is different from the modern Western nation-state political community. It is a political and cultural community with multiple modern characteristics, which is formed across ethnic, regional, and national boundaries and has a wide range, numerous groups, and rich connotations.

4.4 Chinesenization

“Chinesenization” in this research is the research context. As a cultural phenomenon and process, "Chinesenization" can be understood from two aspects: On

the one hand, within the scope of China's territorial sovereignty, the Chinese government appeals to the national mainstream ideology to the people of all ethnic groups and compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan through the Gala, and "summons" them with feelings of family-state and patriotism, in order to reshape their national identity. On the other hand, as a civilization-state, the Chinese government, through state-level media represented by CCTV, Confucius Institutes, overseas cultural exchange centers, the Ministry of Culture of The State Council, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, and other organizations, has built a vast network of online and offline cultural communication and exchange, thus forming the acceptance and consumption of Chinese culture around the world. Especially for overseas Chinese, the Gala calls on them emotionally to the long history and culture of the Chinese nation in order to reconstruct their "Chinese" identity.

4.5 Media Culture

Media culture in this research means the CCTV Spring Festival Gala. As a kind of media culture, CCTV serves as a powerful ideological tool for the Chinese government to carry out social control at home and national unity abroad. Through 40 years of continuous development, it actively interacts with the economy, politics, culture, media technology of modern Chinese society at different stages of development to form the construction and presentation of Chinese society. However, the presentation of Chinese society in the Gala is not a mirror but plays an essential function of ideological reproduction. Through positive media construction, the Spring Festival Gala builds the self-identity of the Chinese nation and summons Chinese people worldwide to identify their Chinese identity through these rich images.

5. Research Methodology

This research uses a qualitative research methodology. Collect research data by fieldwork and document studies. Analyze through the humanities and social science concepts. Present the research result in a descriptive-analytical, accompanying photographs and tables. To explain the research methodology as follows:

5.1 Research populations and groups

The research topic “The CCTV Spring Festival Gala of China: National Self-Identity Construction in the Context of Chinesenization” included several research populations. They can be classified as follows:

5.1.1 The producers (communicator) of the Gala content

1) The censors: the director of the Department of Culture and Art of CCTV, the director of CCTV, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Ministry of Culture, the United Front Work Department and other relevant responsible leaders.

2) The Gala Cast and crew: CCTV selects the chief director to set up the Gala crew in July and August every year. Including chief director, executive director, writer, music director, dance director, etc.

3) Actors participating in the Gala : Ethnic minorities, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan compatriots, overseas Chinese actors and mainland actors, and foreigners.

5.1.2 The audiences watching the Gala: Chinese people at home and abroad and foreigners interested in Chinese culture

5.2 Field of Research

The research text of this study is the CCTV Spring Festival Gala, which studies the construction of self-identity of Chinese nation in the process of Chinesenization. The CCTV actively builds a multi-level and all-around international media matrix to promote the Chinese Spring Festival and Chinese culture. Therefore, the media culture practice activities of the Gala are mainly through virtual media. The research field of this study is the Internet network space.

6. Research Data Collection Tools

6.1 Data Collection

6.1.1 Fieldwork and data collection

1) Interview; Formal interview, Informal interview, Focus group interview.

2) Observation; Normal observation (or general observation), Participatory observation

6.1.2 Documentary Data Collection

6.1.3 Tool or Equipment for data collection

- 1) Motion picture (cameras, video recording equipment)
- 2) Voice record
- 3) Field notebook

6.2 Data Synthesis and Data Analysis

6.2.1 Data synthesis

The researcher has set group the data simply while collecting data using the research conceptual framework as the primary tool. And synthesize information in detail after collecting data by providing information in the system according to research objectives. I have continually reviewed the data to determine whether is each group of information sufficient or not and whether there is any part that is not enough. This is for the purpose of collecting additional information.

6.2.2 Data Analysis

The researchers analyze the data by descriptive analysis with concepts in each chapter of the research. In addition, I have analyzed by dialogue with other people's studies. Both the study of Indigo culture and the work of the same concept group in my study of this matter.

7. Scope of research

7.1 Scope of research area

The research text of this study is the CCTV Spring Festival Gala. which studies the construction of national self-identity in the context of Chinesenization. So, the scope of the research area be divided into two parts: one area is inside China, and the other is outside China.

7.2 Scope of the Time

This research studies the media culture practice of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala in the past 40 years and its cultural and political significance in the context of Chinesenization. The first Gala was invented in 1983. Therefore, the time scope of this study is 40 years from 1983 to 2022.

8. Research Conceptual Framework

As can be seen from the conceptual frame diagram, the research text is the CCTV Spring Festival Gala, and the research context is Chinesenization. The Gala is a media culture that spreads to Chinese people at home and abroad. The "imagined community" reconstructed by the Gala is a Chinese national community composed of 56 ethnic groups, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan compatriots, and overseas Chinese and foreign Chinese transcending China's territorial boundaries. This process of media culture practice is a process of Chinesenization. Therefore, this study takes Chinesenization as the research context, uses the concept of "national self-identity" to reveal that the cultural significance of the Gala lies in the construction of the self-identity of the Chinese nation and calls on Chinese people all over the world to identify with the Chinese identity in the context of Chinesenization.



Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework

9. Literature Review

9.1 Research on The CCTV Spring Festival Gala

9.1.1 The Spring Festival Gala contents

The research on the Spring Festival Gala began in the 1990s. It has increased rapidly since 2000. The earliest scholars who systematically studied the content of the Spring Festival Gala were scholars of literature and art, represented by Geng Wenting. They mainly analyzed the aesthetic characteristics and changes of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala program from the perspective of literary and artistic aesthetics (Geng Wenting, 2005; Wang Zifang, 2014; Jiang et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2021). These studies pay more attention to the micro level of program content and form and often neglect the analysis and discussion of political, economic, and other influencing factors behind the production of Spring Festival Gala program content.

Some scholars study the image construction of Spring Festival Gala, such as the image of rural outsiders or migrant workers (Chen Shihai, 2014; Jiang Jing, 2016; Yuan Yan, 2017), elderly image (Zhou et al., 2022), female image (Luo Xiaojun, 2016; Zhu Jielei, 2018), foreigner or "other" image (Yang et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). There are also studies on certain kinds of programs in the Spring Festival Gala, such as ethnic minority programs in the Spring Festival Gala (Sun Yanze, 2018; Zeng Xinman, 2023), Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan programs in the Spring Festival Gala (Fu Rao, 2014; Zhang Aifeng, 2018).

9.1.2 The Spring Festival Gala contents

Some scholars have revealed the ideology of the Spring Festival Gala from a critical perspective of cultural research and its essence as a tool for state power practice and ideological control (Zhao bin, 1998; Lv Xinyu, 2003, 2006; Pan Zhichang, 2007; Wang Xiaoyu, 2005; Panzhongdang, 2010).

Pan Zhichang (2007) believes that the national ideology, through the "practice" of the Spring Festival Gala, has undergone multiple discourse permutations to the traditional "Spring Festival": firstly, there is a discourse exchange between "family" and "state". The Spring Festival Gala "tampered" with the traditional folk customs of the Spring Festival into a political ceremony of a modern nation-state, thus completing the "common imagination" of a modern nation-state. Secondly, there is a discourse exchange between "communication" and "dissemination". Finally, there is a discourse exchange between "participation" and "observation". In the traditional Chinese New Year, everyone was the protagonist of the festival, but now they have been "tampered with" as bystanders. From the multiple perspectives of Political

Economy in cultural research, Lv Xinyu (2006:122) explains the significance of the "Spring Festival Gala": "There is not only the appropriation of traditional folk rituals, folk dramas, and folk art forms by the national ideology but also the sensitive and complex expression of crises and conflicts within society in the national ideology pedigree; there is also the strong shaping of the party by the development of China's television market and Consumerism ideology ". Influenced by them, many scholars have discussed the Spring Festival Gala from the aspects of communication stance, content, audience, symbols, and so on, focusing on family-state ideology (Guo Zhenzhi, 2012; Zheng Shujun, 2014; Chen et al., 2015; Dezheng Feng, 2016).

Chen Lu (2012:14) believes that there is a common major flaw in previous studies of the Spring Festival Gala - the lack of analysis on the evolution of the Spring Festival Gala. Shi Libin (2014:5-6) refuted Pan Zhichang's sharp criticism, arguing that Pan Zhichang et al. 's research has certain implications for our understanding of "what the Spring Festival Gala is," but disagreed with the description of the Spring Festival Gala as "an immutable and rigid ideological state apparatus." In Shi Libin's eyes, the Spring Festival Gala has become a "field" of meaningful struggle and negotiation, where a variety of social forces, ideas, and demands are represented, and the audience is not entirely passive.

Qi Lin (2017:85) believes that the significance of the Spring Festival Gala lies in the fact that it is an important representation of the modern transformation of traditional Chinese culture. Qi pointed out that the Spring Festival Gala introduces "mass communication" into the folk structure of New Year's Eve. This transformation of communication structure not only changes the connotation of the Spring Festival, but also changes the mental model of the Chinese people to celebrate the Spring Festival, and then affects their self-identity as the subject. By comparison, Fan Yaping and Cheng Hao (2019:51) point out that there is an obvious inheritance relationship between traditional Spring Festival customs and new Spring Festival customs, and the "gene" connecting the two is national identity.

9.1.3 Research on Spring Festival Gala as a "Media Ritual"

The connection between communication and ritual can be traced back to the concept of communication ritual proposed by American scholar James W. Carey in the 1970s and 1980s. In his collection "Communication as Culture," Carey

(1989/2005:7) proposed a "ritual perspective" opposite to the "transmission perspective" of communication: "The ritual perspective of communication does not refer to the expansion of information in space but to the maintenance of society in time. It does not refer to an act of information or influence, but rather the creation, representation, and celebration of a common belief, its core is the sacred ceremony that brings people together in the form of a group or community ". Academic research on media ceremonies in China has significantly increased since 2009 and has been widely applied to the study of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala. These studies regard CCTV Spring Festival Gala as a sacred media ritual, focusing on the dimensions of constructing national identity, cultural identity, shaping social memory and collective memory, and constructing a "narrative community" (Jin Yuping, 2010; Shao et al., 2010; Xing Yan-hui, 2013; Ouyang et al., 2018; Zeng et al., 2019; Wang Qiang, 2020).

9.1.4 Spring Festival Gala media technology and communication effect

Some research on the application and development of new stage beauty technology on stage (Zhu Shanshan 2021; Ren Pengfei, 2016); Some think about the double-sided effect of the application of new technology on theater art (Zhao Linuo, 2021); Some discussed the innovative strategies of CCTV Spring Festival Gala and the enlightenment of overseas communication from the perspectives of communication channels and media integration (Lei Lian, 2015; Zheng Chi, 2018; Gao et al., 2021; Li et al., 2022; Zheng et al., 2022). Ji Deqiang and Yan Bowie (2023) observed the international communication process of the Spring Festival Gala from a historical perspective and believed that the Spring Festival Gala not only built cultural consensus with diverse cultural values and diverse cultural elements but also shaped the national image and promoted Chinese ideas.

9.1.5 Spring Festival Gala audience

On June 16, 1992, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and The State Council issued the Decision on Accelerating the Development of the Tertiary Industry, and the cultural undertakings belonging to radio and television were included in the "tertiary industry" in addition to industry and agriculture. Chinese media began the market-oriented transformation of independent operation and self-responsibility, and media groups and media industries emerged rapidly. After

2010, the network media transition from web1.0 to web2.0, network users from "passive" audiences to "active" information producers and disseminators. Overall, the audience research of the Spring Festival Gala has undergone two trends: one is from the public to the niche; The second is to shift from passive to proactive. The audience is not only the recipients, consumers, and viewers of media information, but may also be proactive producers, self-expression or group identity seekers, and advocates for social rights (Wu Di, 2014; Shen et al., 2014; Ma et al., 2020; Xie Zhuoxiao, 2020).

9.2 Research on the Chinese National Community

9.2.1 China's ethnic policy and Chinese National Community

Jin Bingho (2019:5) reviewed the ethnic policies and development of the People's Republic of China in the past 70 years, and pointed out that the ethnic theory with Chinese characteristics should solve the two basic problems of what is a nation and what is the ethnic problem in theory, and the two core problems of how to promote ethnic development and how to coordinate ethnic relations in practice. The main ethnic policies to solve these two core issues are ethnic equality, ethnic unity, ethnic regional autonomy, and ethnic development and prosperity. Shen Guiping and Song Supei (2021:5-12) sorted out the development of the CPC's ethnic policy in the past century and divided it into four periods: First, the exploration of the equality and union of all ethnic groups during the New democratic revolution (1921-1949); Second, the exploration of national identification and regional national autonomy in the period of socialist construction (1949-1978); Third, the innovative development of national theory in the new era of reform and opening up and socialist modernization (1978-2012); Fourth, the innovation and development of ethnic theories and policies in the new era.

The theory of the Chinese national community in the new era can be understood from four aspects: First, the Chinese nation is a "community of common destiny" for all Chinese people. Second, the Chinese nation is structurally "pluralistic and integrated". Third, the Chinese nation is a community of people with a common history and culture. Fourth, Chinese culture is the common spiritual home of all ethnic groups (Shen et al., 2021:9). Cui Rong and Zhao Zhina (2021:1) emphasize that Chinese cultural identity is a powerful force that integrates and condenses the sense of community of the Chinese nation. Liu Hongwu and Ao Manyun (2022) discussed the

cultural characteristics of "harmony in diversity" and "harmony and coexistence" in Chinese culture from the perspective of history and culture.

Shen Guiping and Shen Chunyang (2022:6) hold that the Chinese nation can be divided into broad sense and narrow sense, which can also be said to have the dual meaning of historical and cultural community in the sense of cultural anthropology and civic community in the sense of political science. From the three dimensions of history, reality and development, ancient China has provided a strong historical and cultural identity for the Chinese national community. The modernization practice of the Chinese revolution and construction since modern times has promoted the transformation of the traditional identity of the dynastic state into a modern national identity, and the consciousness of the Chinese national community in the new era has shown the connotation of historical continuity, compound modernity, and structural constraint. It also has the dual significance of domestic governance and global governance to firmly build a sense of community in the Chinese nation (Zhu Jun, 2021:23).

Some scholars combined the construction of Chinese national community consciousness with the current new media environment. Fan Ke (2022:69) put forward that the construction of moral community in the Internet era should become the development direction of national community. Some studied on how to promote the consolidation of Chinese national community consciousness through the strategic layout of new media (Duan Peng, 2020; Chen et al., 2021; Shen et al., 2022).

9.2.2 Research on the "One Country, Two Systems" policy, and United Front

Initially, "one country, two systems" was a strategic consideration for the settlement of the Taiwan question, and later, according to the priority needs of solving the Hong Kong and Macao issues and demonstrating the significance of Taiwan's system, it was successfully applied in the negotiations on the return of Hong Kong and Macao and was transformed into two basic Laws, which gradually formed the relevant institutional systems and practical forms after the return of Hong Kong and Macao (Tian Longfei. 2023:3).

How can we strengthen national identity in the face of institutional differences? Chen Duanhong (2015:45) put forward two approaches: one is to make

an effort in the construction of specific institutions and increase the content of the state; The other is to work hard on social division of Labour to build organic unity between the Mainland and Hong Kong. Guo Hui-zi (2021:88) pointed out that the measures taken by the State to support Hong Kong and Macao in integrating into the overall development of the country, to support Hong Kong and Macao in participating in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the Belt and Road Initiative, to implement equal treatment for Hong Kong and Macao compatriots in the Mainland, to promote exchanges and cooperation between Hong Kong and Macao and the Mainland, and to implement the comprehensive governance power of the Central Government are all new practices to implement the concept of co-governance and sharing.

In the study of the united front, some scholars have studied the history of the United Front and summarized the historical experience and significance of the United Front (Zhang Caiyun, 2022; Lin Huashan, 2022); Some scholars have conducted research on promoting the harmony of the "Five Relationships" (Zhu Jun, 2021; Shen Guiping, 2021; Zhang Jian, 2021; Li Yining, 2022); Other scholars have done research from the aspects of united front and discourse right construction (Ding et al., 2022; Xiang et al., 2022).

9.2.3 Research on overseas Chinese and China's overseas Chinese policy

Wang Gungwu (2019) is one of the founders of overseas Chinese studies. From the perspectives of history, sociology, and cultural anthropology, he studied the change of the overseas Chinese immigration mode and the multi-identity of overseas Chinese. The relationship between overseas Chinese and the Chinese Revolution; the Chinese complex of China and other related issues. Zhao Jian (2018:14) elaborated on the evolution process and characteristics of China's overseas Chinese affairs policy in the past 40 years of reform and opening up by combining the main spirit of the eight national conferences on Overseas Chinese Affairs since the reform and opening up.

Liu Yanling (2015:64-65) divides the studies on immigrant identity into three categories: First, from the perspective of the country of residence, that is, from the perspective of whether immigrants integrate into or assimilate into the social culture of the country of residence, which is the most common and traditional research paradigm; The second is the transnational perspective since the 1990s, that

is, researchers pay more attention to the integration or adaptation of immigrants into the social culture of the country they live in, but also emphasize the inextricable connection between them and the country of origin. The third is the global perspective. Researchers who adopt this perspective emphasize the network of "diaspora consciousness" and "deterritorialized" of immigrants. Liu Yanling (2015:69-70) believes that the single country of residence (the United States) research perspective is becoming more and more narrow and one-sided. On the contrary, the global perspective that emphasizes diaspora and network ignores the status and role of the nation-state at this stage to some extent and overemphasizes the "de-national centralization" of identity. In fact, with the deepening of globalization, the nation-state has not died out, and the state's control over national identity has continued, and even been strengthened in some respects.

Han Xiaoming (2020:133) believes that Southeast Asian Chinese society has gone through a hundred years from "re-sinicization" to "re-Chinesenization," which is a spiraling development process, including the return of "Chinese-ness." This kind of return condenses the complex process of identity reconstruction of Southeast Asian Chinese in the past hundred years and has an obvious correlation with the development of Chinese education.

From the beginning of the reform period, Deng Xiaoping and subsequent Chinese leaders attached great importance to the role of overseas Chinese in China's development. This is reflected in the abundance of related scholarly publications in China. "Several themes stand out in the academic and official characterizations of the roles of overseas Chinese in China's national modernization project: overseas Chinese as the drivers of Chinese modernization; overseas Chinese as patriots; the 'Chinese heart' of the overseas Chinese; and overseas Chinese as a political force" (Elena Barabantseva. 2011:100). Since the new era, overseas Chinese have also played an important role in spreading China's soft power (Cao Yunhua, Zhang Yan, 2012), assisting the construction of the "Belt and Road" (Zhang Xiuming, 2019), building the identity of the Chinese community among overseas Chinese (Chen Shibai and Li Yun, 2020), and promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind (Liu Fangbin, 2022).

9.3 Literature review on research context

9.3.1 China's cultural policies and cultural development in modern China

Hu Zhengrong, et al.(2018:1) summarized the conceptual changes of cultural development in the past 40 years on the basis of studying previous Party congresses, relevant plenary sessions and their major cultural decisions: The process of cultural development has its unique characteristics, from political leadership to the coexistence of political, economic and social attributes and values, from being a part of the construction of socialist spiritual civilization to the construction of a socialist cultural development system with Chinese characteristics, from a single enterprise attribute to the direction of undertaking and industry development.

Li Jiashan (2018:248-256) reviewed and reflected on China's foreign cultural exchanges in the 40 years of reform and opening up, and pointed out that since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the influence of China's foreign cultural exchanges has been increasing day by day, and a pattern of foreign cultural exchanges with high-level support, government and public support, and multi-party participation has been gradually formed. It has successfully created four well-known brands for cultural exchange between China and the rest of the world: "Mutual National Year", "Happy Spring Festival", "Cultural China · Universal Spring", and "China-CEEC Dance Summer Camp". Two well-known Chinese and foreign exchange cultural brands are related to the Spring Festival and the late Spring Festival.

From the perspective of "cultural China", Jia Wenshan, Ji Zhiwen and Liu Changyu (2018:30) divide China's cultural construction in the past 40 years of reform and opening up into four stages: the recovery period of cultural subjectivity consciousness, the growth period of cultural subjectivity consciousness, the development period of cultural subjectivity consciousness, and the formation and development period of interculturality. With the reform of cultural system, Chinese culture has experienced the process from pan-ideology to life, from "Chinese culture" to "cultural China", and is on the great journey from a cultural power to a cultural power.

9.3.2 China's media policy and media development in modern China

On June 16, 1992, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and The State Council issued the Decision on Accelerating the Development of

the Tertiary Industry, and the cultural undertakings belonging to radio and television were included in the "tertiary industry" in addition to industry and agriculture. Since then, Chinese media has opened the road of transformation of independent management and self-financing. Media has both the "dual attributes" of public institutions and enterprise management.

In June 2009, the Central Government issued the Notice on Printing and distributing the Master Plan for the Construction of International Communication Capacity of China's Key Media from 2009 to 2020 (referred to as the "No. 24 Document"), which clearly proposed that the construction of international communication capacity of China's key media should be included in the overall plan for national economic and social development. This is the first time that the Central Government has issued a special document on the issue of "international communication capacity building" (Cheng Manli, 2017:5-6).

On August 18, 2014, the fourth meeting of the Central Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reform reviewed and adopted the Guiding Opinions on Promoting the Integrated Development of Traditional Media and Emerging Media, marking the rise of media integration to a national strategy.

In March 2018, the CPC Central Committee issued a plan to deepen the reform of Party and State institutions, further expanding the administrative authority of the Central Propaganda Department. The State Administration of Radio and Television was established on the basis of the duties of the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, as an agency directly under The State Council. Set up the China Radio and Television Group. On April 19, the China Media Group was officially inaugurated.

In the early 1990s, with the gradual improvement of China's international status, the importance of overseas communication became increasingly prominent. The first international satellite channel - the Chinese International Channel was born, which opened a new world of Chinese TV external communication on a qualitative level. The national mission has given the Chinese International Channel a special historical task: the program focuses on reporting the policies of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan and overseas Chinese, propagating the achievements of the mainland,

providing services for Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan compatriots and overseas Chinese, liaising with each other, and promoting exchanges (Liu Dongxiao. 2014:66).

In 2009, CCTV put forward the goal of building first-class international TV media, vigorously promoted the branding strategy of professional channels, accelerated the construction of multi-language international channels, strengthened the construction of overseas sites, established and improved video resource exchange platforms, and actively expanded overseas operations, thus entering a new period of prosperity and development of external communication of CCTV (Li Shudong. 2013:117). By 2018, "China's TV external communication has initially formed a new pattern of external communication with CCTV and Phoenix TV as the main force, Dragon TV and Yellow River Channel as the front force, and multi-language, all-media and all-weather as the development trend" (Hu Zhanfan.2019:20).

9.4 Literature review of concept theories

9.4.1 National Self-Identity

Modern nation-states construct people's national identity through nationalism. Nationality is a kind of collective identity of the members of a modern country, which means that the members of the society take "nationality" as the symbol and form a community with "nation."

Anthony D. Smith (1991) explored the origins of national identity in his book *National Identity*. He constructed the ethno-symbolism system by criticizing modern and proto-nationalism. In his view, national identity is not a purely artificial product as claimed by modernism, nor is national identity a primitive product rooted in the blood of the nation as believed by proto-nationalism. Based on critiquing and absorbing both theories, Smith argues that national identity is rooted in the history and culture of an ethnic group and can provide an individual with an identity.

Smith believes that the object of national identity is pluralistic and integrated, and the object of national identity is derived from the constructed symbol and the natural blood relationship. He pointed out that there are Western "citizen" mode and non-western "ethnic" mode of national identity and summed up the five dimensions of national identity objects with general significance, that is, common ancestral land, common customs, common laws, common mass culture, and everyday economic life.

Modern nation-states construct people's national identity through nationalism. Nationality is a kind of collective identity of the members of a modern country, which means that the members of the society take "nationality" as the symbol and form a community with "nation." Smith argues persuasively that history and culture must be fundamental elements of nationalist theory because they give power to national identity and provide us with a context.

The concept of a nation defined by Smith refers to the nations that make up the nation-state or can also be called "nation," which formed the pattern of "one nation, one country" in the historical evolution process of Western Europe. In the process of nation-state construction, the late developing countries such as East Asia and Africa often integrate multiple "ethnic groups" existing in the country into a "nation" or "nation" to establish a nation-state.

In the face of globalization, Anthony Smith refuted the "extinction theory" and "decay theory" of national identity, and he is still optimistic about the future of national identity. Global cultural and political diversity have redefined and consolidated the concept and form of the nation-state, making it difficult to form a super-national identity, and national identity will still play an essential role in the future process of globalization.

In this research, I have used "National Self-Identity" to explain the cultural and political significance of the 40 years of media culture practice of the Spring Festival Gala for the Chinese state and nation. Under the background of China's social class differentiation, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the large number of overseas Chinese, how to form the community consciousness of the "Chinese nation" and reconstruct the identity of each member of the community to the Chinese nation is becoming a major issue that the Chinese government needs to face in the domestic and international situations. Specifically, this concept emphasizes the use of the Spring Festival Gala as an ideological tool to form the national identity of each member of the "community" through the active discourse construction of "ethnic unity," "national unity," "social harmony" and "Chinese cultural diversity and unity."

9.4.2 Imagined Community

In the case of the nation-state, Anderson's (1983) argument has been enormously influential. Modern nationhood was not only invented through the

'imagined community', but this was the only vehicle capable of unifying vast numbers of dispersed citizens, divided by class and other interests, into the unit of belonging we call the nation. Thus, the prime ingredient that makes a national or any other kind of community viable is 'the idea we have of it, the meanings we associate with it, the sense of community with others we carry inside us'(Hall, 1998: 182). Among the representations crucial in bringing modern nationhood to life as a rallying point for citizen loyalty were the following: the ability through art, popular culture, or the media to relate the 'narrative of the nation', its turning points, defining features, and past glories; the emphasis on its continuity with a distant past, aided by traditions and ceremonies which speak of an ancient lineage; the existence of a 'foundational myth' of national origin; and the idea of a pure 'primordial folk' from whom all are descended (Hall, 1992: 294-5).

Zhang Aifeng (2018:73) studied the discourse expression of Hong Kong programs on the Spring Festival Gala stage and pointed out that the discourse expression has changed from the "homesickness discourse" of cultural roots to the national discourse of clear identity, strong patriotism, and collectivism. It is pointed out that the Spring Festival Gala is an important carrier to building the "imaginary community" of the nation and the country. Wang Qiang (2020:85) investigated the Taiwan narration in the Spring Festival Gala program and pointed out the existing problems: basically following the similar and solidified plot structure and discourse rhetoric, it mainly shaped and satisfied the unilateral "Taiwan imagination" of mainland audiences, and could not accurately grasp and respond to the new changes in Taiwan's social public opinion and public mentality, so it was increasingly difficult to obtain the emotional resonance of Taiwan audiences.

In this research, I have use "Imagined Community" to describe and explain the political and cultural significance of the Chinese government's positive cultural production and media construction through the Gala. This community in this study is different from the modern Western nation-state political community. It is a political and cultural community with multiple modern characteristics, which is formed across ethnic, regional, and national boundaries and has a wide range, numerous groups, and rich connotations.

9.4.3 Chinesenization

Ying Jiang (2012:4), in his book *Cyber-Nationalism in China*, focused upon this passion — Chinese bloggers' angry reactions to the Western media's coverage of censorship issues in current China—to examine China's current potential for political reform. A central focus of this book, then, is the specific issue of censorship and how to interpret the Chinese characteristics of it as a mechanism currently used to maintain state control. A central focus of this book, then, is the specific issue of censorship and how to interpret the Chinese characteristics of it as a mechanism currently used to maintain state control. Instead, this book's more intricate theoretical approach does not only accommodate the kind of liberal (apolitical or political) use observed on the Internet in China but indicates that desires for political change, such as they are, are implicitly embedded in the relationship between China's online communities and state apparatus —noting, however, that the latter claims total governance over the Internet in the name of the people.

Wai-Chung Ho (2021:1) attempted to examine cultural and national values in relation to the teaching of musical multiculturalism, which is defined as music from regions around the world, as well as Taiwanese nationalism (i.e., a desinicized version of national identity based on Taiwan's localization movement) in school music education. Data were drawn from questionnaires completed by 70 in-service and 40 pre-service teachers between February and October 2018. Two major questions will be explored in paper in response to the changing society of Taiwan: (1) how do teachers feel about music teaching related to diverse music cultures; and (2) how have they reacted to Taiwanese nationalism in school music education? The findings indicated a significantly higher preference for teaching traditional Western music versus that of other cultures among all the teachers. In addition, the participants with more experience exhibited a significantly greater preference for teaching traditional Chinese music and national education compared to their less experienced counterparts. Based on the survey data, Wai-Chung Ho argue that there is a cultural gap between teaching traditional Chinese music, Taiwanese local music, and other music cultures alongside the question of nationalism in contemporary music education in Taiwan.

This research mainly used "Chinesenization" to summarize the essence of the Gala's media construction at home and abroad in the past 40 years and took it as the research context.

10. Benefit of Research

10.1 Benefit to academic circle

10.1.1 Understands the CCTV Spring Festival Gala as a New Folk Custom

From the transition of traditional society to the modern society of China, CCTV created the Gala by invoking the traditional Spring Festival cultural resources with the help of new media. The Gala then transforms the individual's identification with family and ancestors in traditional society into the individual citizen's identification with nation and state in modern society, which is the first level of understanding the Spring Festival Gala as a new folk custom.

In the context of globalization and Chinesenization, the Gala is more than just a comprehensive artistic evening party that Chinese people usually see on every traditional New Year's Eve. Through the media practice over the 40 years, the Gala uses cross-ethnic (uniting 56 multi-ethnic groups), cross-regional (uniting the three regions on both sides of the Taiwan Strait), cross-territorial and cross-nationality (uniting overseas Chinese and foreign Chinese) flexible forms to reconstruct the community imagination of "Chinese nation," and reconstructs the self-identity of "Chinese Nation." It has become a powerful media tool for the Party and the government to widely carry out "a cultural united front" at home and abroad in the context of Chinesenization. This is the second level of understanding the Spring Festival Gala as a new folk custom.

10.1.2 Breaks through the research population of the previous Gala research.

The population of the previous Gala research is generally considered the domestic audience. Some literature on the overseas communication effect of the Gala positions the audience of the Gala as the overseas audience. The audience of the Gala has been mechanically divided into domestic and foreign parts, ignoring the historical, group, and cultural characteristics of the multiple units that constitute the audience of the Spring Festival Gala. Therefore, the internal composition and external category of "Chinese people worldwide" have not been explained and studied. This study

integrates the domestic and international communication of the Gala, combines the Chinese government's policies on ethnic minorities, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, overseas Chinese affairs, and the United Front, and uses interdisciplinary theoretical knowledge to analyze the characteristics and historical shaping of the community of "Chinese nation."

10.2 Concept development: Through the research of the Gala, two concepts are expanded: "Chinesenization" and "National Self-Identity."

10.2.1 "Chinesenization" is the research context of the Spring Festival Gala

As a cultural phenomenon and process, "Chinesenization" can be understood from two aspects: On the one hand, within the scope of China's territorial sovereignty (including 56 multi-ethnic groups in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan), the Chinese government appeals to the national mainstream ideology to the people of all ethnic groups and compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan through the Spring Festival Evening, and "summons" them with feelings of family-state and patriotism, in order to shape their national solid identity. To reconstruct its "Chinese" identity. On the other hand, as a civilization-state, the Chinese government is constantly improving the influence of Chinese culture in the world based on steady economic growth. The Chinese government, through state-level media represented by CCTV, Confucius Institutes, overseas cultural exchange centers, the Ministry of Culture of The State Council, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office, and other organizations, has built a massive network of online and offline cultural communication and exchange, thus forming the acceptance and consumption of Chinese culture around the world. Especially for overseas Chinese, the Spring Festival Gala calls on them emotionally to the long history and culture of the Chinese nation to reconstruct their "Chinese" identity.

The concept of "Chinesenization" integrates the domestic and international communication of the Gala, the national identity and cultural identity of the "Chinese people all over the world," and the domestic and international governance of the Chinese government. It effectively explains the essence of Gala's media practice over the past 40 years and reflects the flexibility and innovation of the state control and

transnational nationalism construction implemented by the Chinese government through the Gala.

10.2.2 National Self-Identity

This research is the first to study the construction of the self-identity of the Chinese nation by the CCTV Spring Festival Gala in the context of Chinesenization. It is innovative research using the concept of national self-identity to study the Gala phenomenon. The concept of National self-identity can be understood in two aspects in this research.

On the one hand, since 2003, the Chinese government has proposed a "peaceful rise" to rediscover China's place globally. The Chinese government has realized that the influence of Chinese culture in the world needs to catch up to economic development, so it proposed to improve the soft power of national culture. The Chinese government has vigorously revived Chinese traditional culture. Especially since 2009, the word "revival" has become a theme widely discussed by Chinese mainstream media and intellectual circles. Since 2012, the Gala has consciously used the latest TV technology to express the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Through the creative reproduction of the images of the 56 ethnic groups, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan compatriots, and overseas Chinese and foreign Chinese in the community, the theme of ethnic unity, national unity, and the unity of Chinese culture is built. By showing the Chinese image through three symbol systems. By transforming the network subculture into the mainstream culture of "nation" and "nation," the construction of the self-identity of the Chinese nation is realized. It is the essential expression of the national state-seeking political and cultural identity internally and seeking national historical and cultural identity externally.

On the other hand, along with the construction of the self-identity of the Chinese nation, a process co-occurred to summon the Chinese self-identity of all Chinese people so that they form their Chinese identity in the process of watching the Gala year after year. This is a process of Chinesenization. Therefore, national self-identity points to the construction of the national self-identity and the formation of the Chinese identity as a member of the Chinese national community.

CHAPTER II

Historical Development of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala

Introduction

In this chapter, the author has studied the CCTV Spring Festival Gala's media practice and development in 40 years in modern society. It is introduced in four parts: First, the origin and historical development of the Spring Festival, the largest traditional festival of the Chinese nation, from the historical time dimension. Second, the modernization transformation of traditional Spring Festival folklore in the post-socialist Era (China's reform and opening up period) - the birth of the Spring Festival Gala and its social foundation. Third, the Gala program types and performance process. Fourth, the media's cultural practice and cultural significance of the Gala in 40 years from the perspective of the interaction between media and society. It paves the way for the construction of the "Chinese national Community" of the Gala and the construction of national self-identity in the Process of "Chinesenization" in the following chapters.

1. Part 1: Spring Festival: The largest traditional Folk Festival of the Chinese Nation

This part analyzes the cultural connotation and significance of the Spring Festival folklore and compares the Spring Festival's origin and historical development from the historical time dimension. The Spring Festival has experienced four different historical periods from its birth to its development: In the ancient period, it was the only traditional folk custom recognized by the Chinese feudal dynasty and civil society. During the Republic of China period, there was a dual-track system, and the importance of the Spring Festival was after the Gregorian New Year's Day. In the socialist construction period of New China, the dual-track system was still realized, and the traditional Spring Festival culture was destroyed. In the new period of China's reform and opening up, the modern transformation of the Spring Festival - the CCTV Spring Festival Gala was invented.

1.1 Cultural Connotation of Spring Festival Folklore

The Spring Festival is the traditional Lunar New Year of the Chinese nation. It is the grandest traditional festival of the Chinese people. It is a folk festival integrating praying for blessings and fighting disasters, celebrating entertainment, and eating. Today's Spring Festival used to be called "Da Nian" or Nian Festival.

"A New Year's Day is a time process that consists of two consecutive periods, the end of the old year and the beginning of the New Year "(Xiao Fang. 2006:50). In folk, the traditional Spring Festival is from Laba to the 19th day of the first lunar month. The eating of Laba is related to the ancient lunar sacrifice. Laba is after the "Xiao Nian." "Xiao Nian" in the north is in the twelfth month, twenty-three, and the south is mostly in the twelfth month, twenty-four. As the starting point of entering the final stage of the New Year, people attach great importance to the "Xiao Nian." The "Xiao Nian" custom is to offer sacrifices to the Kitchen God and send the Kitchen God to heaven. The next few days are to clean the room, bathe and change clothes, buy New Year's goods, prepare New Year's food, and decorate the house.

New Year's Eve is the festival's climax; there are community exorcism ceremonies, family reunions, closing the door to eat the reunion dinner, firecrackers, lighting a fire, and the taboo to say unlucky words. On the first day of the New Year, people put the whip in the morning, open the door to welcome the New Year, worship ancestors, and then pay New Year's greetings to elders and relatives. The Lantern Festival on the fifteenth day of the first month is the grand finale of the New Year. People spend the Lantern Festival beating drums, watching lanterns, performing social fire, and walking Bridges.

The Spring Festival has become a typical festival for 39 ethnic groups in China, including the Han. Among them, 31 ethnic groups generally celebrate the Spring Festival, while some people in the other eight ethnic groups also celebrate the Spring Festival (Chen Lianshan. 2004:10). Under the influence of Chinese culture, some countries and nations belonging to the cultural circle of Chinese characters also have the custom of celebrating the Spring Festival. Overseas Chinese have always regarded the Spring Festival as a representative of national culture.

In 2005, the Central Propaganda Department and the Central Civilization Office issued "Opinions on the Use of Traditional Festivals to Promote the Excellent Tradition of National Culture." On May 20, 2006, "Spring Festival" folklore was

approved by The State Council to be included in the first batch of the national intangible cultural heritage list. On December 7, 2007, the 198th Executive Meeting of The State Council approved the Spring Festival, Qingming Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, and Mid-Autumn Festival as national legal holidays. The Spring Festival has long become "the emotional convergence of the Chinese people and has a sacred status in the minds of the Chinese people." "People gather their feelings, wishes, ethics and beliefs on this festival, making it a symbol of national culture and an important force to unite national emotions" (Xiao Fang. 2006:12). From the moral emotional point of view, it embodies the excellent Chinese traditional culture "peace is the most valuable, people-oriented, solidarity" thought; From the perspective of religious belief, it embodies the thought of "reverence for nature, worship of ancestors, harmony between heaven and man" in the excellent traditional Chinese culture. From the perspective of spiritual education, it embodies the thought of "respecting the old and loving the young, living endlessly and passing on from generation to generation" in Chinese excellent traditional culture. Pursuing ideals reflects the excellent traditional Chinese culture of "self-improvement, hard work, moral commitment." (Ruan Jing. 2013:3-4).

In short, the formation of the cultural connotation of the Spring Festival has experienced a long historical process. It has already become the Chinese people's spiritual motivation and emotional support at home and abroad. Especially after entering the first decade of the 21st century, China's Spring Festival culture is being strongly supported by an increasingly strong motherland, accompanied by more and more overseas Chinese entering the world, and has caused a global Spring Festival whirlwind, gradually becoming popular among people in more and more countries around the world.

1.2 Origin and Historical Development of the Spring Festival

1.2.1 The Spring Festival in Chinese Ancient times (2000 BC-1911)

The Spring Festival has a long history of more than 4,000 years. It is generally believed that the Spring Festival originated from offering sacrifices to gods and ancestors during the period of Yu Shun. One day in 2000 BC, Shun, the son of Heaven, led his subordinates to worship Heaven and Earth. Since then, people have regarded this day as the beginning of the year. This is the origin of the Lunar New

Year. The dates of New Year's Day in various Chinese dynasties are not consistent. To the emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty, to make the calendar not to be confused, they created and implemented the "TaiChu Calendar" and fixed the lunar calendar of Meng Chun month (that is, today's first lunar month) as the beginning of the year, which has been used to the end of the Qing Dynasty. "New Year" is "the Spring Festival"; it was the first day of the first lunar month, called "Yuan Dan".

1.2.2 The Spring Festival in the Republic of China (1912-1949)

After the Revolution of 1911, the Republic of China changed to the Gregorian calendar used worldwide and designated January 1 as "New Year's Day." In 1912, the National government issued a decree abolishing the old calendar, taking the Gregorian calendar as the national calendar, and abolishing the Spring Festival. However, the folk still use the old calendar according to tradition, that is, the Xia calendar, and still celebrate the traditional New Year on February 18 (the first day of the first lunar month of Renzi Year), and other traditional festivals are still the same. Given this, In July 1913, the then chief of Internal Affairs of the Beijing Government submitted a report on the four-season holiday to the Great President Yuan Shikai, said: "China's old customs, four seasons of the year, that is, should be expressly stipulated that the lunar New Year's Day is the Spring Festival, the Dragon Boat Festival for the summer festival, the Mid-Autumn Festival for the autumn festival, the winter solstice for the winter festival, where my nationals have to rest, in the public personnel, also allowed a day off." However, Yuan Shikai only approved the first day of the first lunar month as the Spring Festival and agreed to a regular holiday for the holiday, which began to take effect the following year (1914). The modern Spring Festival, the first day of the first lunar month, is called the "Spring Festival," which began in 1914 after the revolution of 1911 and before the restoration of Yuan Shikai.

After the success of the Kuomintang's Northern Expedition, harsh administrative measures were taken, including the military and police, to forcibly prohibit everyone from celebrating the Spring Festival. In 1934, the Nationalist government stopped forcibly abolishing the lunar calendar and demanded that "for the old calendar year, except for government agencies, folk customs should not be too interfered with," marking the failure of the Kuomintang to abolish the Spring Festival.

1.2.3 The Spring Festival in the Socialist Construction Period of New China (1949-1978)

On September 27, 1949, the first plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference decided to establish the People's Republic of China while adopting the universal era of the Christian era, but at the same time, referred to the first day of the Gregorian calendar as "Yuan Dan" and the first day of the first lunar month as "Spring Festival." This makes the position of the "Spring Festival" rooted in our traditional culture more stable and also solves the problems that the Kuomintang did not solve back then. On December 23, 1949, the People's Government of the People's Republic of China stipulated a three-day holiday for the Spring Festival each year.

According to Sun Jiashan, "There are three kinds of time concepts in modern China: One is the traditional time concept represented by Yuan Shikai. The other is the radical Westernized time concept represented by the Kuomintang. The other is the time concept represented by the CPC. The struggle of these three concepts of time is precisely the historical struggle of constructing a modern nation-state "(Shi Libin and Liu Yan. 2012:34). As a traditional festival ceremony in Chinese society, the Spring Festival has not been interrupted by the establishment of a modern nation-state. It can also be seen that modern China's national identity has never been able to leave the historical tradition from pre-modern times to reality "(He Guimei. 2014:116).

During the Cultural Revolution, the State Council of China issued a notice requesting the masses to "change customs" and "celebrate a revolutionary and combative Spring Festival." During the Spring Festival, Chinese people must focus on revolution, promote production, and work hard until the 28th of the twelfth lunar month. Chinese people will not rest on New Year's Eve and start working on the morning of the first day of the lunar new year. The Spring Festival is no longer on holiday. After the reform and opening, the Spring Festival holiday has been restored.

2. Part 2: The Birth of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala

2.1 "Reinvention" of Traditional Folk Customs

During the Spring Festival, especially New Year's Eve, the most important traditional festival in China, the state literature and art department holds a large-scale Gala broadcast live to the whole country on television. This cultural event began in 1983.

According to Huang Yihe, director of the Spring Festival Gala in 1983, "When I conducted the Spring Festival Gala in 1983, the Beijing TV station at that time and some TV stations in the south had already had Spring Festival Gala or Spring Festival special programs. In order to attract the audience to CCTV's Spring Festival Gala, we have taken several measures:

- 1) Live Broadcast
- 2) Engage in lottery puzzles and telephone on-demand
- 3) Set the host of the program
- 4) The national leaders are invited to attend

Moreover, the prize quiz and on-demand telephone call must be broadcast live to mobilize people's enthusiasm to participate in the event. The recording and broadcasting need a sense of live experience and cannot encore programs on-demand. The audience still passively accepts the "Spring Festival Gala," which we do not want. So we decided to do live broadcasting, using the most flexible, direct and fresh way to attract the audience's attention"(Huang Yihe. 2008:36-37). The first Spring Festival Gala is of great significance to spend the Spring Festival with the audience in the way of a synchronous live broadcast on New Year's Eve so that the CCTV Spring Festival Gala naturally integrates the Spring Festival tradition and has a unique legitimacy and sanctity in time. As Geng Wenting (2003:80) said, "The broadcast of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala on the holy time - the Spring Festival Eve makes it carry on the collective unconscious of the New Year's Eve customs and has the nature of sacredness and some kind of folk religion, thus creating a sense of sanctity separated from the daily secular life."



Figure 2. The First CCTV Spring Festival Gala's hosts and animation in 1983

Source: Baidu (Access: January 20, 2023)

Through the relay of several directors, the annual CCTV Spring Festival Gala has become a unique cultural activity and "new folk custom" in Chinese society, which has changed the past habits of Chinese New Year, making dumplings, setting off firecrackers, and watching the Spring Festival Gala has become three significant events on New Year's Eve (Hong Minsheng. 1990:13). In April 2012, the Spring Festival Gala of China Central Television was recognized as the "most watched Gala in the world" during the Cannes International Television Festival in France and won the Guinness World Records certificate. Due to the world's three highest ratings, performance time, and actors, this event is known as the "world's largest stage."

Raymond Williams (1994), when exploring the impact of communication technology on society, once found that the invention of technology and its wide acceptance by society are not entirely the contribution of scientists, but people have long hidden in their hearts a desire to use the technology to meet their own needs, wishes and even dreams. In this sense, behind the audience's general recognition of the Spring Festival Gala is an existing festival demand, and TV art meets this demand." It is precisely because of the decline in modern society of the concept and essence of heaven, earth, God, and man connected by traditional family rituals that the structural gap left by it has been filled by television, which has made the evening party successfully embedded in the most important festival of the Chinese people, which used to belong to gods and ancestors" (Lv Xinyu. 2006:7). As a newly invented tradition, the Spring Festival Gala brings people into the imagination of the community, because this program form is effectively embedded in the ancient folk tradition, thus realizing the appropriation of folk symbols and public festival psychology (Pan Zhichang. 2007).

2.2 The Social Foundation of the Invention of the Gala

2.2.1 Television replaced newspaper and radio and became a new media with rapid development.

On May 1, 1978, BTV was named CCTV and became a national television station. At the institutional level, a new Ministry of Radio and Television was established under The State Council in 1982, and television rose to become the most essential tool of political propaganda. Beginning with the 12th National Congress of the Party in 1982, the Party Central Committee moved the first place to release authoritative news from the traditional 8 pm "Local People's Radio Broadcast" program to the 7 pm "News Broadcast" program of CCTV, which has since become the preferred channel for the Party and the country to release the most important political news (Zhao Yuezhi. 2011:183).

In 1983, at the 11th National Radio and Television Work Conference, the Central Government proposed "four levels (central, provincial, prefecture-level, county) to run radio, four levels to run television, and four levels of mixed coverage." TV stations at all levels have been established throughout the country, and China's television industry has entered a period of rapid development. Between 1985 and 1992, the average annual increase in the number of television sets ranked first among home appliances. In the mid-1980s, televisions became a commodity in short supply. By the beginning of 1990, China's TV production had risen to the first in the world (Shi Libin. 2014:14). By the end of 1992, 586 television stations had been officially approved and registered by the Ministry of Radio, Film, and Television, with a television coverage rate of 81.2 percent and a TV audience of 806 million (Ji Deqiang and Yan Bowei.2023:3-4).

In addition, television is a home media that combines audio and visual elements, and its unique viewing scenarios align with the emotional needs of family reunions during the Spring Festival. The forms of pasting couplets, setting off firecrackers, eating New Year's Eve dinner, and New Year's greetings in the old customs of the Spring Festival not only symbolize the joy of bidding farewell to the old and welcoming the new but also symbolize the joy of family reunion. The Spring Festival Gala embodies these ethical imaginations through televised means. In Pan Zhichang's (2007) view, "During the era of universal celebration, the Chinese people from all over the world were glued together to watch a" play "and listen to the same words. It found an extremely suitable carrier for the Chinese nation, which values" the world as one family "and" great unity. "

2.2.2 The Chinese people's strong desire for new cultural life in the New Era

In December 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China opened a new historical situation of "reform and opening up." Emancipating the mind has become the common consensus and pursuit of Chinese people. In 1983, the launch of the first Spring Festival Gala happened to take place in the first process of ideological liberation, which indicates that the Chinese people who had just gotten rid of poverty and started to become rich began to have unique requirements and pursuits for spiritual and cultural life. However, the liberation of ideas cannot be completed overnight, and the fierce confrontation and struggle between old and new ideas were fully reflected in the preparation and performance of the Spring Festival Gala in 1983.

When arranging the program, mime artist Wang Jingyu prepared a mime sketch called "Eating Chicken". This program showcases the humorous process of a person eating chicken with a greatly exaggerated performance. It is such a program that everyone has different opinions on whether to perform at the Spring Festival Gala. Because "Eating Chicken" had been criticized during the Cultural Revolution, Wang Jingyu had concerns. Wang Jingyu said: "This program has no theme. A simple laugh without a theme will likely make people feel vulgar and ridiculous." Ma Ji, a leading figure in the crosstalk circle, unexpectedly said: "If we want to be bold, we will highlight the word 'joy.'" People need to have fun. Let us make everyone happy at the Spring Festival Gala. When people feel pleased watching the Gala, the program will be successful "(Li Qingshan and Li Jing. 2007:7).

In the old ideological framework, joy and laughter were to be criticized, especially if they were far from political themes. However, Ma Ji's words cut to the essence of the Spring Festival Gala, which is joy. Since then, Joy has become one of the constant themes of the Spring Festival Gala. "Eating Chicken" achieved the effect of making millions of viewers happy. The great success of the first Spring Festival Gala precisely shows that it conforms to the development of The Times and satisfies the cultural needs of the vast masses of people who have been repressed for a long time in line with humanity and emotion.



Figure 3. In 1983 Gala, Wang Jingyu(left) performed the pantomime "Eating Chicken". Li Guyi(right) sang the once banned song "Hometown Love." Source: Baidu (Access: January 20, 2023)

Another example is the performance of the banned song "Hometown Love" on the first Spring Gala.

"Hometown Love" was created in 1979 as an episode of the television drama "The Legend of the Three Gorges." Composed by Zhang Piji, the song adopts a tango rhythm, and singer Li Guyi uses the "air voice" singing method to start the wind first. The song shows the Han Dynasty beauty Wang Zhaojun's longing for her native land when she left her hometown. The lyrics transform Zigui's landscape into Zhaojun's loved ones: "Your shadow and song are always reflected in my heart. Yesterday is gone, we can never see each other again, how can we forget your deep love..." The lyrics are accurate, the tunes are touching, and the singing is soulful. However, as Li Guyi's air singing method was far from the revolutionary song requirements of "high, fast, loud and hard" during the Cultural Revolution, "Hometown Love" was criticized once broadcast. Many critics accused it of being a "dark, decadent, rumbling sound" and a "worthless imitation of foreign pop songs." It soon became a banned song.

At the 1983 Spring Festival Gala, four telephones were installed in the venue. Audiences can call the studio to order programs, and the stars present can perform. After midnight, many viewers called the studio and requested to listen to Li Guyi's "Hometown Love." Although there were many audience members for the song, the chief director, Huang Yihe, dared only make claims with authorization. Huang Yihe requested instructions from Wu Lengxi, the then Minister of State Radio and

Television, sitting at the scene. Wu Lengxi hesitated momentarily and agreed for Li Guyi to sing the song.

The singing of "Hometown Love" is not only lifting the ban on a song but also a breakthrough in conservative concepts and a liberation of human nature. As the Spring Festival Gala director, Huang Yihe, said, "This manifests people's desire to be released after long-term isolation and oppression. It is a backlash against the literary works represented by the eight model operas during the Cultural Revolution, which only focus on politics and do not discuss any affections or emotions" (Huang Yihe. 2008; 38).

2.2.3 The ideological needs of the Chinese government in constructing social identity under the new historical background.

Under the media system controlled by the Communist Party of China, the Spring Festival Gala, founded by China's national television station, has never been just a simple literary evening; it carries profound and rich political connotations. The consistent theme of the Spring Festival Gala is the emphasis on national unity, the singing of national unity, and the admiration for social harmony (Zhou Xian and Liu Kang. 2011:118). In the new historical context of reform and opening up, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala cleverly utilizes the "collective unconsciousness" of Chinese national culture to embed the television media as a national machine into the folk customs of the Spring Festival, which has a broad mass foundation. Through innovation in content and form, it continuously instills the mainstream discourse of reform and opens up among the people to gain widespread social recognition and maintain national unity and the unity of the people. As Shi Libin (2014:18) analyzed, the legitimacy argument for reform and opening up became the theme of the text of the Spring Festival Gala in the 1980s. The most striking clue is the shift from "suspecting wealth" to "wanting it." This historical shift is represented in the Spring Festival Gala.

3. Part 3: Program Types and Performance Process of the Gala

3.1 Program Types of the Gala

3.1.1 Songs

The Spring Festival Gala program has many songs of various types, including main melody, folk, and popular songs. The "main melody" songs mainly include four categories: revolutionary historical themes, promoting patriotism and national spirit, praising social righteousness, truth, goodness, and beauty, and praising the glorious image of heroes (Zhou Shuzhen, 2013:127). As a national media, the most significant task faced by CCTV is to reflect the policies and guidelines of the Party and the State and achieve the principle of giving orders from the top. Therefore, most of the songs on the stage of the Gala are undoubtedly the main melody.

In the 1980s, there were few singers at Spring Festival Galas; most of the time, they sang several songs alone. Due to the underdeveloped record industry, there were fewer newly developed songs, most well-known interludes in film and television dramas. With the launch of the Spring Festival Gala brand, more and more actors are rushing to attend, and the duration of the Gala is fixed. So starting in 1986, song singing began to appear on the stage of the Spring Festival Gala, changing from one person singing several songs to several people singing one song together. In the 1990S, many record singers from Taiwan and Hong Kong became very popular among mainland Chinese audiences. The form of "song combinations" appears, refining famous singers' songs to no repetition and performing several songs within 5-6 minutes. After 2000, online singers and TV talent show singers began to appear. Since 2015, the Spring Festival Gala has added intangible cultural heritage programs, and some original ecological intangible cultural heritage songs are increasingly known and familiar to the audience through the Spring Festival Gala stage.

3.1.2 Dances

As one of the critical artistic forms of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala, dance mainly includes song and dance, ethnic minority song and dance, and pure dance. Song and dance are the primary forms of dance programs, with the most significant number of programs used to embellish the performance of songs. Ethnic minority song and dance programs have themes such as "welcoming the Spring Festival," "paying New Year's greetings," and "joyful ethnic songs."

The number of pure dance programs is relatively small. Before 2010, only a few pure dance programs that left a deep impression were the peacock dance performed by Bai dancer Yang Liping in the 1980s and 1990s, the 2005 "Thousand Handed Guanyin," the 2006 shadow puppetry dance "Pretty Sunset," and the 2008 "Flying Sky."

Since the Spring Festival Gala in 2010, the holographic stage design concept has given new vitality to TV dance programs. Since then, pure dances with high ornamental and artistic value have increased and often become popular programs in the Spring Festival Gala. Such as "Dragon and Phoenix" (2012), "Crested Ibis" (2021), "Song of the Morning light" (2021), "The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting" (2022), "Golden mask" (2022) and so on. In addition to the blessing of technological innovation, explosive pure dance in recent years is a creative program of the intangible cultural heritage of the Spring Festival Gala, fully excavating the connotation of traditional culture and creating Chinese dance aesthetic style.



Figure 4. The 2012 Gala dance "Dragon and Phoenix". The dragon and phoenix symbolize auspiciousness in Chinese culture. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 5. 2022 Gala dance "The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting". The dance uses costumes and bodies to simulate the peaks of ancient Chinese green landscape paintings. The classical beauty of traditional Chinese painting is reproduced by combining dance and virtual TV technology. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

3.1.3 Language programs

The language programs of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala mainly include crosstalk and skits. Crosstalk is a folk rap art form. It takes the form of speaking, learning, teasing, and singing, mainly performing orally. It is a folk-art form rooted in the people, originating from daily life, and deeply popular among the masses. At first, sketches were just a form of basic training for performance or directing in theater academies to enable students who started learning to perform or to master the essential elements of performance or directing through these different exercises. The Spring Festival Gala sketch grew out of nothing and eventually developed into a highlight and protagonist in the program.

At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, as television replaced radio and newspapers as increasingly influential media, television crosstalk also ushered in its golden age. In the 1983 Gala, as many as nine crosstalk programs appeared on the stage (including seven live performances and two recorded crosstalk programs). Ma Ji was a transitional figure who transitioned from radio to television, while Jiang Kun's generation truly ushered in the era of crosstalk artists using television as their leading platform. Feng Gong took it to the extreme, thus establishing his position as a mainstream actor on the front line. In 1984, the sketch first appeared on the stage of the Gala, starting with the performance of "Eating Noodles" by Chen Peisi and Zhu Shimao. Eating Noodles "became the first complete sketch in Chinese TV shows, and Chen Peisi and Zhu Shimao also became the first generation of most popular sketch actors on the stage of the 1980s and 1990s Gala.



Figure 6. In 1987, Jiang Kun performed crosstalk "Tiger's Mouth Reverie"(left). 30 years later, Jiang Kun performed crosstalk "New Tiger's Mouth Reverie" in 2017(right).Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 7. 1984 Skit "Eating Noodles" performers: Chen Peisi, Zhu ShimaoSource: Screenshots by the author from the show video of Bilibili (Access: January 20, 2023)

Since the 1990s, sketches have entered a golden period of prosperity and diversity, with actors such as Zhao Benshan, Huang Hong, Song Dandan, Zhao Lirong and Gong Hanlin, Guo Da and Cai Ming taking over from Chen Peisi and Zhu Shimao. After 2012, the new generation of comedy commercial brands "Happy Mahua" and "Dawan Entertainment" opened the third development era of Spring Festival Gala sketch comedy. The representative figures are Shen Teng and Ma Li, Jia Ling, and Zhang Xiaofei. In the field of crosstalk, crosstalk performers trained by the "Deyun Crosstalk Club" founded by traditional entertainer Guo Degang have succeeded Ma Ji, Jiang Kun, and Feng Gong as regular performers of crosstalk performances in the Spring Festival Gala.



Figure 8. 1990 sketch "Blind Date" Performers: Zhao Benshan (male), Huang Xiaojuan
Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of Bilibili (Access: January 20, 2023)

3.1.4 Operas and other programs

In the early days of establishing the Gala, traditional Chinese opera programs held an important position. In 1984, the number of theatrical programs reached nine. With the development of the social economy and the acceleration of the pace of life, the slow pace and difficulty in understanding the lyrics of traditional Chinese opera have become bottlenecks that constrain its development. In addition, changes in audience aesthetics have led to the emergence of various entertainment and variety shows, which have severely impacted the dissemination of traditional Chinese opera.

Since the 2001 Gala, traditional Chinese opera programs have been changed to joint singing, and there are no independent programs for each type of performance. The duration has been compressed from the original forty minutes to about ten minutes. There are as many as sixteen types of traditional Chinese opera that appear on the stage but compared to more than 360 types of traditional Chinese opera in China, they are only a tiny part. Among them, Peking Opera, Huangmei Opera, Yu Opera, Yue Opera perform relatively frequently. In addition to singing and dancing, language, and opera programs on the stage of the Spring Festival Gala, there are martial arts, acrobatics, magic, and other programs.



Figure 9. 2021 Chinese Traditional Opera Program "Flowers in Garden of Prosperity". It combines with Peking Opera, Yue Opera, Huangmei Opera, Cantonese opera, and Henan Opera. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

3.1.5 Non-arts programs

There is no fixed name for non-arts programs, documentary programs, emotional programs, or unique designs. There are only a small number of such shows in the spring evening each year, about one or two. But often with essential political tasks. This kind of program often combines the significant events of the Party and the country in the past year, the hot issues reported by the media, or the things that can stimulate the collective pride and identity of the people to carry out thematic planning. This type of Spring Festival Gala is a specially designed program that combines two forms: news and literature. The narrative method of a program generally combines the emotional narration of the host (or the host's on-site interview or insertion of documentary videos) with the singing of a song (the theme of the song is consistent with the specific theme) or dance performance to elevate the theme and achieve the maximum emotional effect.

3.2 Performance Process of the Program Broadcasting

Feng Xiaogang, the director of the 2014 Spring Festival Gala, is the only social figure in the Gala's history who did not come from a CCTV director background. Audiences once expected Feng Xiaogang to make a big difference in the Gala. Feng Xiaogang (2014) said in an interview, "My changes to the Spring Festival Gala are not as great as the changes it has made to me... Overall, it has a powerful

force that invisibly tells you that the Spring Festival Gala has its own rules". Over the past 40 years, the directors of the Spring Festival Gala have changed one after another, but the basic process and overall framework of the live broadcast of the Gala have always followed a fixed pattern, and no director of any Spring Festival Gala has ever broken this pattern despite innovation.

The live-streaming process of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala: Firstly, the Spring Festival Gala will officially start live-streaming at 8 pm. Use the opening short film to lead the audience into the Spring Festival Gala, creating a festive atmosphere with lively singing and dancing scenes. Next, the host will appear to send New Year's greetings to Chinese people worldwide. Next, different literary and artistic programs such as songs, dances, cross talk, sketches, magic, acrobatics, and traditional Chinese opera will appear alternately under the host's introduction. During the program, the director team should ensure that 1-2 small climaxes are set every hour (4 hours before midnight and 1 hour after midnight). The closer the time slot approaches zero, the more inclined the program is to express grand ideologies such as "state" and "nation."

During the entire live broadcast process, the director team usually arranges 1-2 documentary or emotional programs to reflect national events and advocate for government policy calls: the host introduces relevant topics on-site, interviews or introduces relevant people and events, and finally presents artistic programs to echo the program theme.

Before midnight Beijing time, the evening party often solemnly introduces to the audience some moral and social role models who practice the core socialist values at the Spring Festival Gala. Before the zero point, a theme song about the motherland, the CPC, or China and the new era is usually arranged for professional singers in the national literary and artistic system to sing. On the stage, representatives of 56 ethnic groups will inevitably surround the singers or sing together. When the song ends, the hosts will come on stage, and with the countdown, everyone will bid farewell to the old and welcome the new year together. The program after midnight is still a regular alternating artistic programs, and the final program will come to a successful end with the singing of "Unforgettable Tonight".



Figure 10. Li Guyi sang the Gala theme Song "Unforgettable Tonight." On the left is 1990 Gala, on the right is 2022 Gala. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

4. Part 4: Reflection of The Times and Chinesenization: Forty Years of Media Cultural Practice of the Gala

This study summarizes the forty-year development process of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala into four stages based on the interaction between the Gala and Chinese society: the first stage (1983-1992), during which the Spring Festival Gala emerged as a "new folk custom"; The second stage (1993-2002) is the golden development period for the Gala to construct socialist market economy and consumerism discourse under the background of media marketization transformation; The third stage (2002-2011) is a period of imbalance and adjustment in the value pursuit of the Gala in the context of China's "peaceful rise" and the enhancement of China's "cultural soft power" strategy in the new century; The fourth stage (2012-2022) is a period of cultural innovation and development in which the Gala strengthens the sense of Chinese national community in the context of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation. Each stage will examine the program characteristics, media discourse construction, as well as the domestic and international influence of the Gala from the perspectives of the media ecological environment, social politics, economy, cultural background, and Chinese government policies, to outline the roadmap for the development of the Gala over the past 40 years.

4.1 The First Stage (1983-1992): The Gala as a "New Folk" Birth Period

4.1.1 Media ecological environment: Television began to replace newspapers and radio as the most influential "new media" in China.

On May 1, 1978, BTV was named CCTV and became a national television station. At the institutional level, a new Ministry of Radio and Television was established under The State Council in 1982, and television rose to become the most essential tool of political propaganda. Beginning with the 12th National Congress of the Party in 1982, the Party Central Committee moved the first place to release authoritative news from the traditional 8 pm "Local People's Radio Broadcast" program to the 7 pm "News Broadcast" program of CCTV, which has since become the preferred channel for the Party and the country to release the most important political news (Zhao Yuezhi. 2011:183).

In 1983, at the 11th National Radio and Television Work Conference, the Central Government proposed "four levels (central, provincial, prefecture-level, county) to run radio, four levels to run television, and four levels of mixed coverage." TV stations at all levels have been established throughout the country, and China's television industry has entered a period of rapid development. Between 1985 and 1992, the average annual increase in the number of television sets ranked first among home appliances. By the beginning of 1990, China's TV production had risen to the first in the world (Shi Libin. 2014:14). By the end of 1992, 586 television stations had been officially approved and registered by the Ministry of Radio, Film, and Television, with a television coverage rate of 81.2 percent and a TV audience of 806 million (Ji Deqiang and Yan Bowei.2023:3-4).

4.1.2 Socio-economic and cultural background

From December 18th to 22nd, 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Communist Party of China was held, marking the beginning of the reform and opening up and socialist modernization construction. From then on, China entered an era with the goal of "modernization construction".

(1) The rural economy is vibrant, and the society has appeared to initial common prosperity.

After the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, China achieved breakthroughs in reforming the rural economic system. Eighteen farmers in Xiaogang Village, Fengyang County, Anhui

Province, signed a "life and death certificate," dividing the land in the village into separate contracts and creating the household contract responsibility system. By early 1983, 93% of rural production teams in China had implemented this responsibility system. According to Sun Liping, a sociology professor at Tsinghua University (2004:39-40), in the 1980s, the market-oriented economic system reform undoubtedly had a wealth growth and resource diffusion effect. During this process, there will be three trends: firstly, the vulnerable and marginalized groups in society will benefit from the reform first. Secondly, there is a thriving atmosphere and vital development in the marginal areas of society. The rapid development of township enterprises has far exceeded the growth rate of the entire national economy. Once again, with the advancement of decentralization and profit transfer reform, grassroots governments and enterprises have gained more autonomy and available resources. "In the current situation, apart from a very few prosperous self-employed households, society had no excessively wealthy class". Sun Liping said that the vast majority of people in the 1980s society were beneficiaries of reform. In this context, the so-called "common prosperity" situation has emerged.

(2) China's literature and art entered a period of unprecedented vitality with a "hundred flowers blooming."

On October 30, 1979, the Fourth Congress of Chinese Literary and Artistic Workers was held, and Deng Xiaoping delivered a speech. He criticized the literary and artistic policies of the "Gang of Four" and proposed to lead literary and artistic work based on the characteristics and laws of art (Ma Licheng and Ling Zhijun, 1998:65-66). Deng Xiaoping proposed a new concept: "The people are the mother of literary and artistic workers." On the other hand, Deng also did not forget to warn artists to use their art to serve modernization construction, to fight against all erroneous tendencies that hinder modernization construction and attempt to cause chaos and undermine stability and unity, and to work together with theoretical workers, journalists, and others in the field of ideology to create public solid opinion, paving the way for the smooth progress of modernization construction (quoted from Song Xiangrui, 2007:19-20). Deng's speeches indicated the direction for academic and creative workers' literary and artistic practice. China's literature and art entered a

period of unprecedented vitality with a "hundred flowers blooming." (Anderson B, 2016)

4.1.3 The Gala's program characteristics and the discourse construction of "reform and opening up."

(1) Establish the excellent traditions of the Gala program production

Huang Yihe, the director of the first Spring Festival Gala, said in an interview, "There was a subconscious at that time that we wanted to reflect the audience's right to be the masters of the family" (CCTV Record Channel, 2013:152). The Spring Festival Gala during this period was simple, lively, and approachable, highlighting the "get-together" and "interaction" with the audience.

Through the exploration of directors Huang Yihe and Deng Zaijun, the fundamental mode of broadcasting Spring Festival Gala programs was fixed in the 1990s: First, the evening Gala is fixed from 8 PM to 1 AM on the Lunar New Year's Eve, and the time length is between four and a half to five hours. The evening's most essential "holy hour" is when the clock strikes midnight. Second, the Spring Festival Gala is a comprehensive evening party comprising healthy, lively, and highly entertaining literary and artistic programs and grand non-literary and artistic programs. Third, the theme of the Party is basically around the atmosphere of unity, joy, endeavor, and reunion. Fourth, the evening party has the characteristics of a large platter, the most extensive coverage of 56 ethnic nations in China, different regions in the east, west, north, and south, and different social identity groups of workers, peasants, soldiers, and businesspeople. Fifth, every year, the production team of the Spring Festival Gala invites representatives from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, as well as overseas Chinese, to perform alongside mainland actors to celebrate the Spring Festival.

It is worth pointing out that during the birth of the Spring Festival Gala, directors were able to view it with a broad international perspective as a link between mainland China and the Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan regions, connecting the spirit, culture, and emotions of Chinese and overseas Chinese. In 1983, actress Lin Lifang, born in Taiwan, performed a recitation of a poem titled "Thinking of My Family Twice Every Festival." In 1984, director Huang Yihe broke through various difficulties and invited Huang Ayuan from Taiwan and Chen Sisi from Hong Kong to

be the evening party hosts. He also invited singers Xi Xiulan and Zhang Mingmin from Hong Kong, highlighting the theme of "mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, one family." In 1985, Chinese American Huang Jinbo sang the song "Descendants of the Dragon" to express the childlike heart of overseas Chinese, becoming the first overseas Chinese to perform on the stage of the Spring Festival Gala.



Figure 11. 1984 Gala invited Hong Kong singers for the first time. Zhang Mingmin (left) sang "My Chinese Heart" to express the wanderer's love for the motherland; Xi Xiulan (right) sang "Why Are Flowers So Red" which is a Tajik folk song from the film "Visitors on the Iceberg".Source: Screenshots by the author from Bilibili

(Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 12. Chinese American Huang Jinbo sang "Descendants of the Dragon" at the 1985 Gala(left). Chinese American Fei Xiang sang "Clouds in My Hometown" at the 1987 Gala(right).Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of Bilibili

(Access: January 20, 2023)

(2) Actively construct the mainstream discourse of reform and opening up

The Gala constantly inculcates the mainstream discourse of reform and opening up to the people through innovation in content and form, in order to obtain

broad social recognition and maintain the unity of the country and the unity of the people." Demonstrating the legitimacy of reform and opening up became the theme of the text of the Spring Festival Gala in the 1980s. The most striking clue is the shift from "suspecting wealth" to "wanting to be rich." Shi Libin explained, "In the early 1980s, although the reform and opening discourse was established at the political and institutional levels, it was not consolidated at the broader levels of society, culture, morality, and the new cultural leadership in Gramsci's sense had not yet been established". Therefore, the affirmation of the legitimacy of getting rich, the pursuit of material life, and the imagination of the individual subject based on private human space all became essential themes of the Spring Festival Gala in the 1980s "(Shi Libin, 2014:18-19). For example, Chen Peis and Zhu Shimao's sketch "Mutton Skewers" (1986), Wang Fuli and Chen Yude's sketch "Loving Couple" (1987), Xiao Lin and Li Guosheng's crosstalk "Comparison," Lei Kesheng and Song Dandan's crosstalk "Blind Date with Lazy people" (1989), Jiang Kun's crosstalk "Elevator Adventure" (1988).

4.1.4 The influence of the Spring Festival Gala at home and abroad

During this period, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala became an eagerly awaited program for mainland Chinese viewers every Spring Festival. CCTV Spring Festival Gala has exclusive advantages in both broadcasting and viewing. The external communication of CCTV was still in the pioneering stage, and it was still a situation of sending videotapes to foreign TV stations and overseas Chinese TV stations and renting time slots from foreign TV stations to broadcast Chinese TV programs. This communication effect could be better, and the influence and coverage are small. Most overseas Chinese can only watch the CCTV Spring Festival Gala through the delivery of videotapes.

4.2 The second stage (1993-2001): The Gala experienced a Golden Development Period of Socialist Market Economy and Consumerist Discourse Construction under the Background of Media Marketization Transformation

4.2.1 Media Ecological Environment

(1) CCTV has an exclusive leading competitive advantage in the Spring Festival program market in the context of Chinese media marketization transformation.

On June 16, 1992, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Decision on Accelerating the Development of the Third Industry," which included radio, television, and cultural undertakings in the "Third Industry." Chinese media began a market-oriented transformation of independent operation and self-responsibility for profits and losses, and media groups and industries rapidly emerged. Expansion of channels from central to local television stations, with commercial cable television stations appearing in various regions; The broadcast time has changed from a few hours per day to a 24-hour continuous and rolling broadcast; Local television stations broadcast television programs through communication satellites, and in large and medium-sized cities in China, they can generally receive 30-60 channels of television programs (Dai Jinhua, 2018: 27-28). In November 1994, Tan Xisong, then the director of CCTV's advertising information department, founded the first CCTV advertising bidding fair, selling CCTV's prime time to enterprises nationwide. The advertising resources for sale in the first bidding meeting were limited to 13 advertising target pages between CCTV News and Weather Forecast in one minute, and the transformation of the attributes of national media achieved initial economic results (Chen Lu, 2012:52).

In the mid to late 1990s, the wave of information technology revolution also surged towards mainland China. The emergence of new online media based on internet technology has nurtured tremendous energy that will change the social life of China in the 21st century. CCTV established the CCTV network (CCTV.com) in 1996. However, at this time, the development of China's internet is still in the stage of Web 1.0, with portal websites as the primary focus. Website content production heavily relies on traditional mass media and has not exerted significant pressure on television media.

In the late 1990s, the competition for the viewing market between central and provincial television stations became increasingly fierce. From 1996 to 1997, provincial-level television stations appeared on the satellite one after another and established satellite channels, achieving a transformation from regional broadcasting in the province to nationwide broadcasting. In July 1997, Hunan TV officially launched the "Happy Camp" game entertainment program with star participation in games and performances as the main content. Provincial and local TV stations have

followed suit, and entertainment and variety shows are blooming everywhere. On the one hand, they have rewritten the existing form and style orientation of domestic variety programs, posing an indirect challenge to the Spring Festival Gala model. On the other hand, influenced by the demonstration effect of the Spring Festival Gala, local television stations have competed for the "Spring Festival Gala" market, forming a scene of various levels of media competing to hold the Spring Festival Gala during the Spring Festival (Chen Lu, 2012:57-58).

(2) CCTV opens up a new situation in external communication: Implementing the "Two Lines" and "Three Steps" plans.

Regarding CCTV's external communication construction, from May 15 to 18, 1992, the CCTV External Center held a cadre meeting in Baiyangdian, Hebei Province, to study and discuss how to open up a new situation for external communication. Xu Xiongxiang, Director of CCTV's External Center, proposed new ideas for external communication; namely, with one hand grasping the "underground" and the other hand grasping the "sky," the two lines of "underground" and "sky" fight simultaneously. The so-called "sky" refers to the transmission of television programs through satellite, covering foreign countries and directly providing programs to foreign audiences, changing the backward situation of providing festival services to foreign Chinese stations through delivery. It refers to establishing an overseas program sales network to enter the international videotape sales market for Chinese television programs, enabling them to enter thousands of households overseas.

After reviewing the overall trend of satellite television development worldwide, Yang Weiguang, the head of CCTV, presided over developing a "three-step" implementation plan for external broadcasting. The first step is to build a Chinese international channel that transmits television signals globally through satellites, allowing nearly 50 million overseas Chinese, overseas Chinese, and foreigners who understand Chinese to see Chinese television programs and understand the current situation in China. The second step is establishing an English-speaking international channel so mainstream Western society can also see Chinese television programs. The third step is to develop multilingual external channels, broadcasting in their languages for non-English speaking countries, including Spanish, Portuguese, French, Russian, and Arabic (Li Shudong, 2013:38-39).

4.2.2 Social background

(1) The establishment of the socialist market economic system in China.

From January 18 to February 21, 1992, Deng Xiaoping made a series of essential speeches during his southern tour of Wuchang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shanghai, and other places, pointing out that the pace of reform needed to be further accelerated and China's economic reform has entered a new historical stage. The market economy has expanded comprehensively, and new economic forces represented by the individual and private economies have rapidly developed.

In the mid to late 1980s, the debate about getting rich shifted to gradually recognizing market value in the 1990s. The report of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1987 pointed out that the private economy is a "necessary and beneficial supplement" to the public sector of the economy. In the report of the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1992, The expression of the new economic components has added a new term of "long-term joint development of multiple economic components," which means that the non-public economy's position in politics is more stable. However, on March 29, 1993, in the constitutional amendment passed at the first session of the Eighth National People's Congress, the original Article 15 of "the state implements planned economy based on socialist public ownership" was changed to "The country implements a socialist market economy". Thus, the discourse of market economy has obtained legal protection (Shi Libin, 2014:171-172).

(2) The contradiction between one-sided economic growth and comprehensive social development in China has begun to emerge.

The contradiction of uncoordinated economic and social development is highlighted by the widening gap between the rich and the poor, the aggravation of the binary contradiction between urban and rural areas, and the unbalanced development of the eastern and western regions. In Chinese society, a considerable number of vulnerable groups have appeared.

Sun Liping (2004:40-41) pointed out, "The vulnerable groups include the following components: Firstly, the energy of rural reform in the mid-1980s was released. In the mid-1990s, township enterprises reached the end of their strength. In addition, with the continuous decline in prices of agricultural and sideline products

such as grains, farmers' "weak" characteristics are gradually emerging, and the urban-rural gap is rapidly expanding. Secondly, migrant workers are entering the city. The meaning of vulnerable groups is not only economic but also social. Migrant workers are a typical vulnerable group created by dual economic and social factors. Thirdly, the impoverished class in the city is mainly composed of laid-off and unemployed individuals. Since the mid to late 1990s, the problem of unemployment and layoffs in China has become increasingly severe. A new impoverished class has formed in the city, mainly composed of unemployed and laid-off workers”.

4.2.3 The Gala's discourse construction of “socialist market economy” and media governance

The Spring Festival Gala of the 1990s is a representation of the rise of consumer culture and the comprehensive establishment of market values "(Shi Libin, 2014:19). The emergence of private enterprises or self-employed individuals in language programs of the Spring Festival Gala symbolizes the rise of new economic forces and the emergence of new social classes, closely related to the rapid development of contemporary new economic forces. As a social governance "technology," Spring Festival Gala language programs mainly construct the mainstream discourse of socialist market values from two levels at this stage.

(1) To establish correct market values and maintain social harmony through positive advocacy and pessimistic satire

On the one hand, it actively advocates value pursuits such as "market economy," "fair competition," "competition for success," and "self-realization." It demonstrates the positive spirit and drive of people in the new stage of development to liberate their minds and join the market economy trend. Representative works include the 1993 sketch "The Ugly Fight for Spring," "Shoe Cleaning," "Bridge," "Market Sketch," and crosstalk "Auction," as well as the 1996 music skit "Crossing the River."

Through the self-expression of the clowns, the drama sketch "The Ugly Fight for Spring" calls for people to establish a positive life attitude and values that face the tide of the market economy, dare to fight hard and compete, boldly pursue wealth, and dare to emancipate their minds. In other words, pursuing wealth and stiff competition are not "ugly" but "heroes" who adapt to the trend and dare to challenge.

As Shi Libin (2014:172) commented, "The Ugly Fighting for Spring" "integrates the form of opera, the tone of ridicule, the distorted body image and the post-modern cultural atmosphere, and proves the myth of the market through the mouth of traditional opera clowns." Male actor Pan Changjiang's sketches "Bridge" and "Crossing the River" praise market heroes from the front. The sketch utilizes the contrast between Pan Changjiang's appearance characteristics (short stature, unattractive appearance) and his role as an individual or private entrepreneur to create a dramatic effect, and through the acquisition of a beautiful love story by the male protagonist, it demonstrates to the audience the legitimacy of the new economic power represented by Pan Changjiang.



Figure 13. 1993 drama sketch "The Ugly Fight for Spring"

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 14. 1996 sketch "Crossing the River" by Pan Changjiang (male), Yan Shuping

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

On the other hand, it exposes the "perverse wind" in satirizing the market economy and the decline of social morality caused by it. The performance is ironic speculation, fake and shoddy, excessive packaging, and other lousy market behavior. It reveals the adverse effects of replacing traditional moral values with the law of money, such as moral decline, vanity, and utility, distrust between people, and social disharmony.

Representative works include skits such as "Promoting" (1993), "Playing Poker" (1994), "Demolition Variations" (1994), "Packaging Star" (1995), "Father" (1995), "Working Adventures" (1996), "Intersection" (1996), "Shoe Nails" (1997), and "Heart to Heart" (1999); Cross talk "Dianzi Company" (1994), crosstalk "Free Eating"(1999). For example, Huang Hong and Gong Hanlin starred in "Shoe Nails" (1997), where a shoemaker (played by Huang Hong) mends shoes on the roadside and tells the owner of the upcoming car trading market (played by Gong Hanlin) the rule of doing business: to keep your stall, you must first hold onto your path. This “Dao” is various industries' professional ethics and moral standards.



Figure 15. 1995 Sketch “Packaging Star” Satirize the market phenomenon of excessive packaging. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 16. 1997 Sketch “Shoe Nails”. It Calls on the market economy under the impact of the concept of money-first, operators should adhere to integrity and other values. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

(2) To mask and stitch up deep social contradictions through specific artistic rhetoric of the Gala programs.

In the 1990s, as China's urban-rural income gap expanded, the number of farmers flowing into cities rapidly increased (Lv Xinyu, 2003:52). At the same time, due to the market-oriented development of the media, its financial revenue was entirely dependent on advertising. Therefore, the target audience of advertisers - the urban middle class with consumption ability - is increasingly becoming the target audience pursued by television. As a result, the farmers and workers who were once the main body of Chinese society not only became vulnerable groups in the rapidly advancing wave of market economy reform but were also ruthlessly "ignored" and "forgotten" by the mass media: Either they appeared in the social news of the mainstream media and are associated with bloody events such as mining accidents, crimes, and murders, and become the existence of "things" and "others," Or they are entirely excluded from mainstream media (Lv Xinyu, 2009:91).

On the one hand, the farmer images on the Gala stage successfully covered the cruel social reality that Chinese farmers have increasingly become "vulnerable groups" during the market reform in the 1990s. The Gala is the biggest stage of the Spring Festival and, of course, can be equal to the participation of farmers. The farmers' images loved by the audience and active on the Gala stage all year round

belonged to a series of farmers' images with distinctive characteristics shaped by Zhao Benshan, a folk artist from Northeast China.

Zhao Benshan first appeared at the Gala in 1990 and retired from the Gala sketch performance in 2011, having participated in 21 Galas (only not participating in 1994). The sketches he starred in won the first prize in the sketch category more than ten times, and he became the most popular "sketch king" in China. On the Gala stage, Zhao Benshan maintains a consistent stereotypical image: a wrinkled Zhongshan coat, a worn octagonal hat, a "pig's kidney face" that looks like a smile and a cry, and a reformed Northeast dialect. These symbols point first to a concept familiar to the Chinese: the farmer. As Shi Libin (2010:18) analyzed, "Zhao Benshan has filled the gap in the image of peasants in the Chinese cultural pattern since the 1990s."

This research holds that Zhao Benshan's distinctive peasant image meets the dual needs of political ideology and consumerism ideology in the Spring Festival Gala. It is a successful combination of "political farmers" and "market farmers," which not only strengthens the political legitimacy of the Gala as a national cultural celebration on behalf of the largest group but also satisfies the "peasant imagination" and "rural imagination" of the urban audience in the market-oriented operation of the media and also covers the cruel social reality that farmers have increasingly become "vulnerable groups" in the market-oriented reform in the 1990s.



Figure 17. Zhao Benshan's distinctive peasant images in the Gala sketches. "Pay a New Year's Visit" in 1998 and "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" in 1999. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

On the other hand, the same covering applies to laid-off/unemployed workers.

Dai Jinhua (2018:268-269) pointed out two rhetorical ways in Chinese media reports on the social problem of millions of unemployed people caused by the transformation of the state-owned large and medium-sized enterprise system since 1996: one is to explain the dilemma of re-employment as the problem of "concept change," "quality," and "lack of professional skills" of the unemployed themselves. Another form of rhetoric Dai Jinhua calls "absurd": some ordinary workers, once laid off, "change their minds," seize "opportunities," and suddenly "get rich." In these media stories, unemployment and layoffs are godsend opportunities.

The social fact that millions of workers have been laid off due to the reform of the system of large and medium-sized state-owned enterprises since the mid-1990s is rarely reflected in the Spring Festival Gala, and the topic of "laying off" has become a sensitive topic in society. It was not until the end of the 1990s- in 1999- that the Gala featured the only skit on laid-off workers, "Pump up the Bike." The sketch was written by military artist Huang Hong and starred Huang Hong and Full Stop. It tells the story of conflict and reconciliation between a laid-off worker (played by Huang Hong) who repairs bikes and a small cadre (played by Ju Hao) who was demoted to work in a street office.

The small cadre is angry because he is dissatisfied with his work and happens to meet a repairman (a laid-off worker from a bike factory) pumping up his bicycle tire, so he questions the repairman's motivation with a deplorable attitude. The repairman pulled out the valve core on the bicycle because of a misunderstanding, and their conflict reached its climax. The resolution of the contradiction is straightforward: see the small cadre's anger down, and the repairman helps the small cadre pump up his bicycle again. Finally, the small cadre walked out of the emotional trough under the repairman's optimistic "spiritual infection" and noble "moral inspiration" and rekindled his enthusiasm for work. The following are the dialogue lines at the end.

Small cadre: Everyone else walks towards high places, but I tend to flow towards low places. Why am I so miserable? Why is it so difficult?

Bike Repairer: You are amid luck and do not know your luck. Who has not encountered anything complicated in their life? Let me take it for example. After graduating at eighteen, I went to a bicycle factory. I first joined the Communist Youth League and then the Communist Party. I have been on the honor list three times, and the factory director highly values me. I am about to be promoted to deputy team leader. As soon as the leader talked to me and said that the factory would downsize and merge with another factory, I made a statement at that time. Our workers should think for the country, 'If I do not layoff, who will lay off?!'

Small cadre: Old comrade, you have been laid off. I'm sorry, old comrade. I was supposed to find a leader today, but I ended up venting my anger on you.

Bike Repairer: It's okay. Sometimes it's just like this bike tire. If there is too much air in it, let some air out; If there is not enough air in it, let's pump some air in, so that you can have a good mood and life, right?

Small Cadre: When the wheels of the bike turn forward, people should look forward.

Bike Repairer: Hey, you're right. Starting from scratch. I'm not bragging to you. Once I start my bike-repairing stall, it won't take six months. I'll be the largest stall owner on this street.



Figure 18. 1999 Sketch "Pump up the Bike" Performed by Huang Hong, Ju Hao. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

This sketch text uses two rhetorical devices to suture social contradictions and express ideology: firstly, through the discourse of "sharing difficulties with the state and government," it advocates the spirit of "self-sacrifice" in the pre-socialist era in the era of "market economy" and "fair competition" as the central theme (Dai Jinhua, 2018:274). Another approach is to adopt the model of "the lowly are the smartest, the noble is the dumbest" in the art of sketch drama (Dai Jinhua, 2018:23).

Laid-off workers in the "lowly" social reality structure have risen to a dominant position in skit dramas, providing moral and spiritual "redemption" for small cadres in high positions in the natural social structure. This discourse pattern attempts to elevate the status of the "lowly" in drama, providing spiritual virtual "praise" and "comfort" to the laid-off workers, allowing them to obtain temporary psychological and imaginative self-comfort. However, the heroic words in the lines of laid-off workers, "We workers should think for the country. If I do not lay off, who will be laid off," demonstrate a high degree of moral consciousness and self-sacrifice, making the characters appear to lack authenticity, revealing the text's inability to sew up social contradictions.

4.2.4 The influence of the Gala at home and abroad

In China, due to the strong appeal and influence of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala brand created after ten years of market cultivation in the 1980s and the dominant position of television media in the media ecosystem, CCTV, as a national media, has more legitimacy and authority in occupying the sacred time of Spring Festival Eve. At this stage, popular music in mainland China has begun to mature, and many good songs with emotions and markets have been released. The sketch is in a golden development period, with rich works and diverse styles. Therefore, despite the stimulation of local satellite TV's division of the Spring Festival Gala market and the bottomless marketization of a variety of entertainment programs, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala can still effectively form a solid appeal to domestic audiences on New Year's Eve, practicing its social integration and media governance functions.

Abroad, CCTV expanded its international reach, and the international influence of the Gala has dramatically increased. On October 1, 1992, the fourth program, the first international satellite television channel of CCTV, officially began broadcasting. The program is transmitted through the "Asia One" satellite and mainly

covers the Asian region. The fourth program mainly serves Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and overseas Chinese audiences. CCTV-4 became an all-Chinese foreign television channel with the channel call sign "Chinese International Channel" (Li Shudong, 2013:64-65). From 1992 to 2002, CCTV mainly achieved overseas landing through three methods: firstly, CCTV rented international satellite transponders to cover the target area directly; Secondly, the entire channel entered the overseas operation system for broadcasting; The third is the partial time slot landing or partial program broadcasting, which means overseas television broadcasting institutions or operating institutions selectively broadcast CCTV's external channels or programs in the local area (Li Shudong, 2013:92-93).

From then on, CCTV had its channel for overseas reporting, and the Gala used it to change the outdated situation of providing programs to foreign Chinese channels through delivery in the 1980s. More and more overseas Chinese can watch CCTV Spring Festival Gala programs through Chinese international channels to express their homesickness for overseas tourists.

4.3 Third Stage (2002-2011): A Period of Imbalance and Adjustment in the Value Pursuit of the Gala in the Context of China's "Peaceful Rise" and the Enhancement of China's "Cultural Soft Power" Strategy in the New Century

After the new century, the Chinese government proposed the "peaceful rise" theory, reinterpreted China's development ideas, and repositioned China's position in the world pattern. On December 10, 2003, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao delivered a speech titled "Turning Our Eyes to China" at Harvard University, which comprehensively expounded the idea of "China's Peaceful Rise" for the first time. In September 2004, the decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on strengthening the construction of the Party's governance capacity stated that it encouraged China's cultural industry to participate in international competition, absorb foreign cultures, promote Chinese culture to enter the world better and enhance international influence. In the same year, the Ministry of Culture deployed the transformation of units into enterprises. In October 2007, the report of the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed to "enhance the country's cultural soft power and better safeguard the basic cultural rights and interests of the people." The proposal of "national cultural soft power" indicates that

the CPC has begun to promote the development of cultural soft power at the national level (Hu Zhengrong et al., 2018: 11).

4.3.1 Media Ecological Environment

(1) CCTV's external communication enters a prosperity period under the needs of the global development strategy of China.

Since 2001, the state began implementing the radio and television "going out" project in many aspects, such as policy, funding, and all-around support for the overseas landing of CCTV programs. In 2003, CCTV proposed establishing a new strategy of "television media with international influence and competitiveness commensurate with China's international status" and put forward a response to overseas landing work. From 2002 to 2012, CCTV launched five international channels successively, forming a pattern of 6 languages and seven international channels in the international version of Chinese, English, Spanish, French, Afghan, Russian, and documentary channels. In 2009, CCTV put forward the goal of building first-class international TV media, vigorously promoted the branding strategy of professional channels, accelerated the construction of multi-language international channels, strengthened the construction of overseas sites, established and improved video resource exchange platforms, and actively expanded overseas operations, thus entering a new period of prosperity and development of external communication of CCTV (Li Shudong, 2013: 117). At the end of 2012, CCTV signed landing cooperation agreements with TV organizations in 119 countries and regions worldwide. TV signals covered 171 countries and regions worldwide, with more than 300 million overseas users (Li Shudong, 2013: 259-260). The global coverage of CCTV programs has been preliminarily completed.

(2) The Gala's self-innovation under the intense competition of domestic media.

In China, the rapid development of online media since 2000 has given rise to various forms of online and animated Spring Festival Galas. Provincial TV stations, represented by Hunan TV, have launched various variety shows and New Year Galas. In addition, the popularity of Chinese New Year movies and TV dramas has greatly diverted the CCTV Spring Festival Galas audience, posing a significant challenge that must be addressed.

On the one hand, implementing "Open the Door for the Gala". 2005 was the first year the CCTV Spring Festival Gala implemented the idea of "opening the door for the Spring Festival Gala." On May 18, 2004, the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television issued a document entitled "On the 2005 CCTV Spring Festival Gala Recommendation Plan and Program Notice" (No. 466), noticing that "the CCTV will solicit nationwide plans and programs for the 2005 Spring Festival Gala. Provincial, municipal, and autonomous regional radio and television bureaus and TV stations shall organize and implement according to the spirit of the documents of the General Bureau and uniformly recommend party planning ideas and excellent programs to the cast and crew of the Spring Festival Gala of CCTV". As a way of giving back to local TV stations for their contributions, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala created a particular format where program hosts from 31 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions across China, as well as actors from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, all came together to participate in the Spring Festival Gala.

On the other hand, integrate CCTV's internal channel resources and actively use new network Media to strengthen the dissemination of the Gala. Within CCTV, the use of "News Broadcast" and "News 30" to report the rehearsal situation promptly and fully mobilize the resources of CCTV channels on the eve of New Year's Eve to promote the Spring Festival Gala without stopping. Every year since 2002, CCTV has launched a particular news program, "Year after Year," four hours before the Spring Festival Gala broadcast to promote and warm up the Spring Festival Gala.

In addition, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala actively utilizes the advantages of online media to expand its influence. In 2006, CCTV International Network formulated a plan for "CCTV.com to cooperate with hundreds of TV stations nationwide to jointly launch the 2006 Spring Festival Gala network interactive program", effectively reflecting the concept of "opening the door to hold the Spring Festival Gala." In 2007, CCTV Spring Festival Gala formed the "2007 Spring Festival Gala Network Alliance" for the first time with online media such as Sina, Sohu, Baidu, and Tencent, and launched related online products such as video Spring Festival Gala, interactive Spring Festival Gala, mobile Spring Festival Gala, and

search Spring Festival Gala. Since 2011, CCTV has held “Online Spring Festival Galas”.

4.3.2 The Chinese government's development strategy and policies

In his address on July 28, 2003, Hu Jintao propounded the notion of prioritizing people's well-being, establishing an all-encompassing, harmonious, and sustainable development paradigm, and advancing the comprehensive development of the economy, society, and the populace. By requiring the synchronization of urban and rural development, regional development, economic and social development, harmony between humans and nature, domestic development, and opening-up, Hu Jintao advocated the reform and development methodology of the Scientific Outlook on Development.

In October 2004, the Fourth Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee put forward the strategic thought of “Constructing a Harmonious Socialist Society. “The Decision on Several Major Issues concerning the Construction of a Harmonious Socialist Society”, adopted at the Sixth Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee in October 2006, calls for promoting "reform and innovation of the social system." “The Decision” points out that China has entered a critical period of reform and development, with profound changes in the economic system, the social structure, and the pattern of interests and ideas. Building a harmonious socialist society is a continuous process of resolving social contradictions.

Considering the persistent inequality in urban-rural development and the disadvantaged position of migrant workers, the central government of China has implemented a series of policies and measures to acknowledge the contributions of migrant workers to the country's industrialization and market economy. These policies aim to address the challenges faced by migrant workers in urban areas and enhance social recognition of this community. Notably, in 2006, the "Several Opinions of the State Council on Solving the Problems of Migrant Workers" was introduced to enhance leadership in addressing the issues faced by migrant workers and elevate the importance of resolving their problems. The 10th Standing Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference also acknowledged the significance of migrant workers in the Chinese working class in the same year. Subsequently, in January 2007, the Central Committee of the Communist

Party of China and the State Council issued the "No.1 Document" to increase the cultivation of high-level skilled talents among migrant workers, improve institutional guarantees for their employment, provide public services for their employment, and resolve issues related to education, work-related injuries, medical care, and elderly care for their children. These measures aim to improve the quality of life and social status of migrant workers in China (Chen Shihai, 2014:72-73).

4.3.3 The Gala's discourse construction and media governance on "The Scientific Outlook on Development" and "Socialist Harmonious Society"

(1) Programs on grassroots (migrant workers/farmers) have sprung up

On the one hand, since 2000, the Chinese government has put the issue of agriculture, rural areas, and farmers on the vital agenda of government work. Guided by the relevant policies issued by the Chinese government, the Gala focuses on constructing grassroots (migrant workers/farmers) images, breaking through the "conscious" collective silence of the media in the 1990s. The image of migrant workers has transformed actor portrayal to inviting farmers or migrant workers with real farmer identities to participate in the Gala.

On the other hand, it is also a means for the Gala to maintain a solid competitive position in the highly competitive media market. Faced with the endless market competition of new network media and entertainment variety shows on local and provincial TV stations, CCTV launched "Star Avenue" in October 2004. Since 2010, CCTV Variety Channel has launched an interactive variety show called "I Want to Go to the Spring Festival Gala," which aimed to select excellent folk programs for the Gala. As the following table shows, Abao (2006), Ma Guangfu (2009), Ren Yueli (2011), rock group "Xu RI Yang Gang" (2011), and Shenzhen Wanfu Street Dance Troupe (2011) - all ordinary people with the identity of "farmer" or "migrant workers." According to Yuan Yan (2015:143-144), the reason why these "ordinary people" were able to enter the Spring Festival Gala was that they were all winners in CCTV's talent competition of "Star Avenue" or "I Want to Go to the Spring Festival Gala." Therefore, the Gala became an authentic reality show award ceremony. By playing the "real person card," grassroots people with real identity have become a ceremonial tool for CCTV to continue defending its central position in a decentralized market.

Table 1. The Migrant Workers/ Farmers Images Presented in the Gala in this Period.

Year	Programe Name	Performer's Identity	Theme
2002	song“Away From Home”	Xue Cun: a Singer	express the heartache and dreams of migrant workers
2004	Skit “Brothers”	Sketch actors	Express the theme that city people and country people are all brothers and sisters in one family.
2004	Skit“City Outlander”	Sketch actors	Whether a city person or a City Outlander, as long as he does his job well, he can get society's respect.
2006	Skit “Kindergarten for migrant workers' children”	Child actors	Calls for improving the educational environment for

			children of migrant workers
2006	song "The Rising Sun on the Grassland"	Abao: Folk Song Enthusiast	Glorify the CPC
2007	Poetry recitation "Words from the Heart"	Children of migrant workers at Xingzhi School in Haidian District, Beijing.	Express children's self-esteem, self- strengthening attitude to life
2007	Dance "Entering the City"	College dancers	Show migrant workers as builders full of vitality of the spirit
2008	sketch "Bus Concerto"	Wang Baoqiang: a Film and television star	To express the whole society's care for migrant workers
2008	Song "Song of Migrant Workers"	Five representatives of migrant workers from Chongqing	Singing out the confident and positive attitude towards the life of migrant workers

		Guangxia First Construction	
2009	"Western Song" and "Beyond Dreams"	Ma Guangfu: A farmer from Henglongjiang	Express joy and the pursuit of dreams
2011	Song "Homesick"	RenYueli: Migrant Worker	Miss the home
2011	Song "In Spring"	"XuRi YangGang": Migrant Workers Combination	Express expectations for the future
2011	Street Dance "We Workers Have Strength"	"Shenzhen Migrant Workers Song and Dance Troupe": migrant workers	Show the energy and enthusiasm of migrant dancers

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

(2) Three themes of discourse construction of the grassroots programs in the Gala

The first theme is to respond to national policies to rectify the name of migrant workers. Affirming their great contributions to reform, opening, and socialist modernization, calling on the whole society to protect the legitimate rights and

interests of migrant workers, caring for migrant workers, and advocating harmonious coexistence among different groups in society. works include dramatic sketches "City Outsiders"(2004), "Brothers"(2004), "Kindergarten for migrant workers' children"(2006), and "Bus Concerto"(2008).

Another theme is expressing migrant workers' life attitudes, actively pursuing their dreams, and the value of pursuing self-esteem and self-improvement. Related works include poetry recitation of "Words from the Heart" by children of migrant workers at Xingzhi School(2007), dance "Entering the City" (2007), dance "We workers have Power" by "Shenzhen Migrant Workers Song and Dance Troupe" (2011), and songs "The Rising Sun on the Grassland" by Abao(2006), "Song of Migrant Workers" (2008), "Beyond Dreams" by farmer Ma Guangfu (2009) and "In Spring" by migrant workers Combination "XuRi YangGang" (2011). The Spring Festival Gala serves as a "pressure relief valve" for social emotions by constructing a "myth" of the grassroots's realization of their dreams of performing on the top stage. Social unity and harmony can be achieved by alleviating various negative psychology and emotions caused by regional economic development imbalance, social class differentiation, and widening wealth gap.

The third theme is to express the missing and caring for "home" of ordinary people living away from home and struggling outside, like Xue Cun's "Away From Home" (2002) and Ren Yueli's "Homesick" (2011). For all Chinese people, "home" is the eternal source of strength and emotional destination for all those who wander outside. The longing and protection of home is a collective unconsciousness flowing in every Chinese person's blood. It is also an important cultural factor that can summon Chinese people to form an identity.

4.3.4 The Imbalance and adjustment of the Gala's value pursuit in the game between political power and market power

After ten years of market-oriented media operation, since the beginning of the new century, the Gala's excessive pursuit of market-oriented economic benefits has damaged its broad social foundation as a "national Gala" festival ceremony and has damaged its public and folk characteristics as a shared social memory and national memory of Chinese people.

By the 2010 Gala, the number and frequency of implanted advertisements had reached their highest level in history. The overall advertising revenue reached 650 million yuan, with only implanted advertisements reaching 100 million yuan (Chen Lu, 2012:96). In the 2010 Gala, there were four implanted brands in one sketch performed by Zhao Benshan, the "sketch king." In the sketch, the actor who plays a rural widow (She cannot afford her child to go to school) unexpectedly presented two bottles of Chinese high-end Liquor (Liquor brand: GuoJiao1573) as gifts to a kind person who donated money for her child. This logical inconsistency and absurdity made the implanted advertising of the 2010 Gala a focus of satire among the general audience.

Table 2. Product or Brand Placement in the 2010 Gala Programs

Name	Program Type	Brand	Implantation Form
Take a Picture	Song and Dance	Sony Camera	All Dancers have one Sony Camera for Shooting Action
The Story of One Sentence	Sketch	Sharp mobile phone	Actors and actresses each hold a Sharp phone to make phone calls
Fifty Yuan	Sketch	"Lu Hua" peanut oil	Protagonists of the bun shop are Wearing aprons with the word "Lu

			Hua"
There are Graduates	Sketch	Liquor brand: Yang He	A gift bag that the heroine carries when she visits her friend's house
Donate	Sketch	Souhu, Sogou	The microphone, jacket, and lines of the supporting actor
Donate	Sketch	Hainan Tourism Bureau	In the form of a lead line
Donate	Sketch	Central Meteorological Observatory Station	In the form of a lead line
Donate	Sketch	Liquor brand: National Cellar 1573	Brands appear in the form of gifts and actor lines
Ever-changing	Magic	"Hui Yuan" fruit juice	As a prop for a magic show
Legend	Song	Shanda Online Games	The song is the theme song of the Shanda

			online game of the same name
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Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)



Figure 19. The Liquor brand implanted in Zhao Benshan's sketch "Donation":
National Cellar 1573
Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of
CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

After the advertising resource bidding conference in November 2010, Chen Linchun, Deputy Director of CCTV's Large Program Center, changed his view at the beginning of the year and announced that the Spring Festival Gala in the Year of the Rabbit would not include advertisements and language-related content would

also be strictly scrutinized. In the 2011 Gala, the zero-hour advertising that had accompanied the party for decades was canceled, and few advertisements were implanted during the party process. In the CCTV News on January 25, 2011, He Haiming, deputy director of the Advertising Management Center, solemnly said: "As a national television station, we pay attention to our competitiveness in the international market, which is related to our economic strength, but we should practice the principle of social benefits first and economic benefits subject to social benefits" (quoted from Chen Lu, 2012:96-97).

When the Spring Festival Gala's market-oriented behavior affects the program content's coherence, impedes the discourse appeal of national ideology, and destroys the broad social ritual foundation on which the Spring Festival Gala is based, political power will intervene in the ideology of consumerism. In addition, since the new century, the Spring Festival Gala, as a disseminator of Chinese culture, has shouldered the mission of promoting national culture to go out, which also requires that the program content of the Gala should not be eroded too much by commercial product placement. Based on the double needs of domestic and international communication, the Gala after 2010 entered a new period: placing social and cultural benefits above commercial benefits in pursuing "green advertising."

In 2012, the general director of the Gala, Ha Wen, canceled the evening title advertisement, zero-hour time reporting advertisement, various program placement advertisements, and congratulatory message advertisements and gave the audience a pure party. Since 2013, 1-2 public service advertisements promoting socialist core values have been interspersed between Spring Festival Gala programs. All the adjustments show the confidence and perseverance of the Gala as a national cultural project in pursuing social benefits.

4.4 The Forth Stage (2012-2022): A Cultural Innovation and Development Period for the Gala to Strengthen the Consciousness of Chinese National Community under the Background of Realizing the Great Revival of the Chinese Nation

In October 2012, the report of the 18th National Congress of the CPC put forward the strategy of strengthening the country through culture. Cultural power is reflected internally in the improvement of national quality and the cohesion of the Chinese nation while externally in the enhancement of the influence of Chinese

culture. The proposal of the cultural power strategy means that culture has shifted from serving local areas to serving the overall national strategy, enhancing the subjectivity of culture and completing the leap from cultural consciousness to cultural confidence at the theoretical level. The 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (2017) clarified the basic strategy for cultural construction in the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, emphasizing the fundamental position of cultural confidence and highlighting the importance of innovation (Hu Zhengrong et al., 2018: 12-13). Stimulate the vitality of cultural innovation and creation throughout the nation and enhance the spiritual strength to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In the report of the 20th National Congress (2022), Xinjinping pointed out that to build a modern socialist country in an all-round way, we must adhere to the path of socialist cultural development with Chinese characteristics, increase cultural confidence, stimulate the cultural innovation and creativity of the whole nation, and enhance the spiritual strength of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

4.4.1 The Chinese government and the Gala have successfully created an offline and online social network for the global dissemination of Chinese culture through the window of Spring Festival culture.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the influence of China's cultural exchanges with foreign countries has been increasing. The cultural exchange model has become more pragmatic, and the effectiveness of cultural exchanges has become increasingly prominent. A pattern of foreign cultural exchanges with high-level support, simultaneous participation of officials and civilians, and multiple parties has gradually formed (Hu Zhengrong et al., 2018:248). The Chinese government has successfully created four well-known Chinese and foreign cultural exchange brands: "China Foreign Exchange National Year," "Happy Spring Festival," "Cultural China · Universal Spring," and "China-Central and Eastern European Countries Dance Summer Camp." Two well-known brands are related to the Spring Festival and the Spring Festival Gala.

(1) The Ministry of Culture and the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council take the "Spring Festival" as an opportunity to create offline and online exchange channels to spread Chinese culture.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Chinese Ministry of Culture began to hold a series of Spring Festival-themed cultural activities overseas during the annual Spring Festival period, targeting local people. In 2009, the event was uniformly named "Happy Spring Festival". The theme of "Happy Spring Festival" is "joy, harmony, dialogue, and sharing," with the core concept of "natural festivals, family festivals, and spiritual festivals." It has formed nearly ten key brands covering the fields of performance, visual, and creative design, including "Spring Festival Temple Fair," "Square Celebration and Parade," "Walking New Year's Eve Dinner," "Art China Collection," "Chinese Spring Festival Concert," and "Chinese Style", which are widely loved by overseas people. The "Happy Spring Festival" has become a comprehensive brand activity with the broadest coverage, the most significant number of participants, and the greatest overseas influence in China's foreign cultural exchanges.



Figure 20. 2019 "Happy Spring Festival · Charming China" in Los Angeles Source: China News Agency (Access: January 20, 2023)

"Cultural China · Universal Spring" is sponsored by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council and the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese. In order to meet the spiritual needs of overseas Chinese, expand the understanding and cognition of Chinese culture among the people of the world, and enhance the soft power of the country and the international influence of Chinese

culture, the Spring Festival series of cultural brand activities are dedicated to the Spring Festival. Every year, the Chinese traditional festival is taken as an opportunity. China has sent high-level art troupes to countries inhabited by overseas Chinese to celebrate the traditional Chinese New Year with overseas Chinese by holding comforting performances and photo exhibitions. Since 2009, by 2019, it has sent 75 art groups to 156 countries and Hong Kong and Macao regions and performed 450 performances in 331 cities on five continents, which is widely welcomed by overseas Chinese and enjoys the reputation of "Overseas Spring Festival Gala."



Figure 21. 2019 "Cultural China · Universal Spring" Visited Washington in the United States Source: China News Agency (Access: January 20, 2023)

In addition to offline cultural exchange activities, since 2015, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council has also collaborated with Hunan TV, a leading provincial-level TV station in China, to launch the "Four Seas in One Spring" Global Chinese New Year Gala, which is broadcast globally through Hunan TV at 19:30 on the evening of New Year's Day every year. Yang Ziyang, the chief director of the 2019 Overseas Chinese Spring Festival Gala, stated that "as a platform for

China's self-image display and cultural exchange with the world, the Overseas Chinese Spring Festival Gala is conducive to strengthening the pride and identity of traditional Chinese culture, and enhancing the cohesion of the Chinese nation”.



Figure 22. 2019 Global Overseas Chinese Spring Festival GalaSource: Baidu
(Access: January 20, 2023)

(2) CCTV actively builds a multi-level and all-round international media matrix to promote the Chinese Spring Festival and Chinese culture

In 2012, the Gala cooperated with National Geographic magazine for the first time to shoot the international version of the Spring Festival Gala documentary - Perspective Spring Festival Gala: China's Biggest Celebration. During the Spring Festival in 2013, the international version of the Gala was launched on National Geographic Channel's TV channels in 26 Asian countries and regions, and CCTV's documentary channel was broadcast simultaneously.

Since 2014, China International Television Corporation has focused on the overseas dissemination of the Gala, launching the "China Spring Festival Gala" series of programs, taking effective measures to gather high-quality programs, increase market operation and overseas promotion, continuously expand the international influence of the Gala, and create a Chinese cultural brand (Tang Shiding, 2016:82). “China Spring Festival Gala” is a series of programs specifically aimed at overseas audiences. It focuses on the CCTV Spring Festival Gala and related programs over the years, focusing on the representative and local characteristics of the outstanding programs in the Spring Festival Gala of several provincial TV stations in China, in the

form of a variety of evening parties, documentaries, special columns, and other programs. The official channel of the "China Spring Festival Gala" opened on YouTube and was officially launched on January 23, 2015, and launched a large-scale promotion of the world's most influential new media social platforms such as Google+, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest.



Figure 23. The 2015 Gala overseas promotion meeting was held at Beijing Media Center.

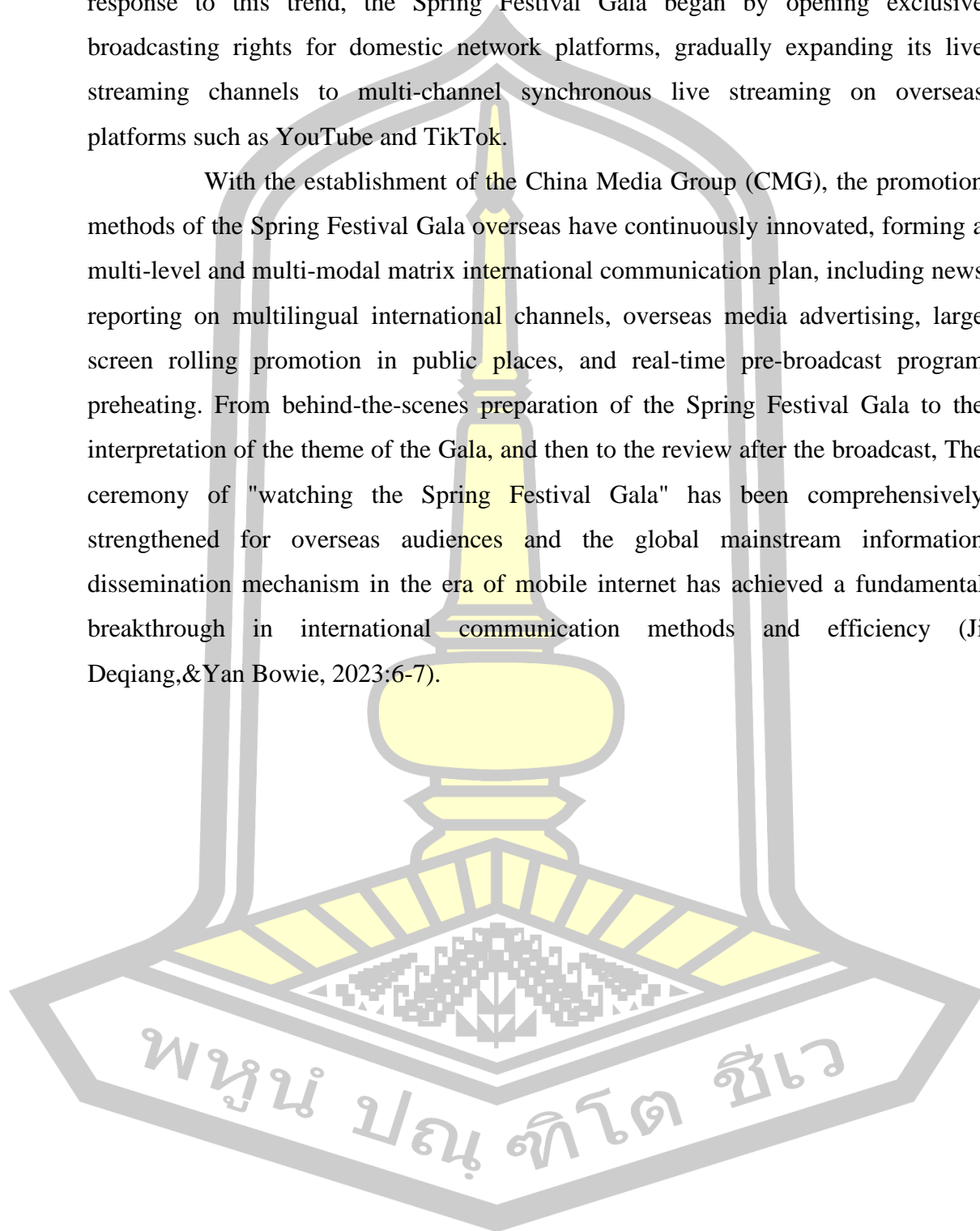
Source: Sina Entertainment (Access: January 20, 2023)

According to the "Statistical Report on the Development of China's Internet" released by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), in 2012, the number of netizens in China reached 564 million, the internet penetration rate reached 42.1%, and the proportion of netizens using mobile phones to access the internet reached 74.5%; By 2022, the number of internet users in China will be 1.051 billion, with an internet penetration rate of 74.4% and a proportion of 99.6% using mobile phones to access the internet. Mobile devices have become the main direction of current media development. From the central to local levels, media at all levels have basically formed a communication system with "LiangWei YiDuan" as the main body.

In 2015, CCTV's Spring Festival Gala of the Year of the Sheep handed over exclusive domestic and overseas online live-streaming rights to the video website iQiyi. Since 2015, it has been a period of breaking the bottleneck of mobile internet traffic and the rapid development of cross-border internet platforms. Internet platforms have made the economic Internet industry a global phenomenon focus

globally and influenced and challenged the existing global communication order. In response to this trend, the Spring Festival Gala began by opening exclusive broadcasting rights for domestic network platforms, gradually expanding its live streaming channels to multi-channel synchronous live streaming on overseas platforms such as YouTube and TikTok.

With the establishment of the China Media Group (CMG), the promotion methods of the Spring Festival Gala overseas have continuously innovated, forming a multi-level and multi-modal matrix international communication plan, including news reporting on multilingual international channels, overseas media advertising, large screen rolling promotion in public places, and real-time pre-broadcast program preheating. From behind-the-scenes preparation of the Spring Festival Gala to the interpretation of the theme of the Gala, and then to the review after the broadcast, The ceremony of "watching the Spring Festival Gala" has been comprehensively strengthened for overseas audiences and the global mainstream information dissemination mechanism in the era of mobile internet has achieved a fundamental breakthrough in international communication methods and efficiency (Ji Deqiang,&Yan Bowie, 2023:6-7).



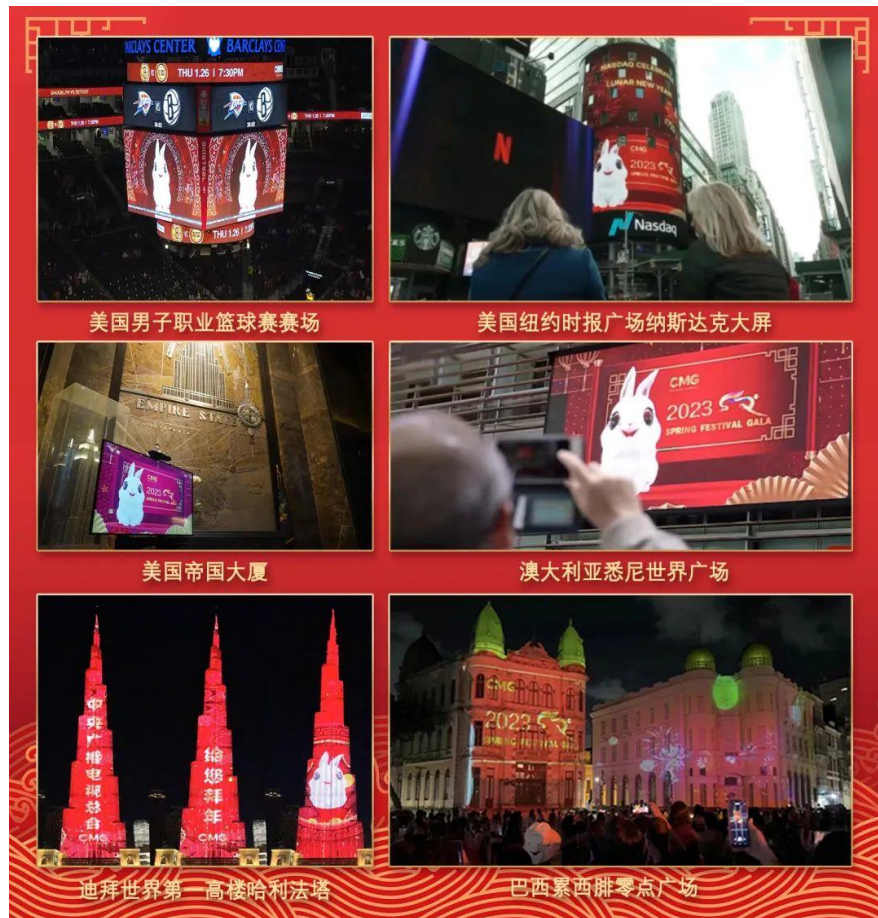


Figure 24. Overseas Media Advertising of the 2023 Gala. Overseas media include the American men's professional basketball arena, the Nasdaq screen in Times Square in New York, the Empire State Building in the United States, the World Square in Sydney, Australia, Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building in Dubai, Zero Square in Recife, Brazil. Source: CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

4.4.2 Cultural shift: The modernity transformation of excellent traditional Chinese culture by the Gala under the background of the cultural power strategy

The importance of establishing cultural confidence and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture has been emphasized multiple times by General Secretary Xi Jinping, pointing out that "cultural confidence is a more fundamental, broader, and profound confidence". "Excellent traditional Chinese culture is the spiritual lifeline of the Chinese nation, an important source of cultivating socialist core values, and a solid foundation for us to stand firm in the global cultural turmoil". The state attaches great importance to the development of traditional culture and has

introduced a series of policies in recent years, from the macro guidance to the micro-operation level. "These policies and guidelines have had a significant impact on the production platform construction, content structure, style change, and cultural structure of cultural programs" (Yan Qing and Yang Wei, 2019:141). It is also the main reason for the popularity of cultural TV programs in China today.

Table 3. Chinese Government Policies Related to Cultural TV Programs Since 2013

Administrative agency	Document or policy	Related Content
State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (2013)	"Notice on Actively Launching Original Cultural Programs to Promote and Inherit Excellent Traditional Culture"	Advocate for various radio and television institutions, especially major satellite TV stations, to deeply explore traditional cultural resources, and actively launch original cultural programs with the theme of promoting and inheriting excellent traditional culture.
State Council (2014, 2015)	"Government Work Report"	Advocate for universal reading and build a scholarly society
CPC Central Committee (2015)	"Opinions on Flourishing and Developing Socialist Literature and Art"	Let the Chinese spirit become the soul of socialist literature and art: Focus on the theme of the Chinese dream; Cultivate and promote socialist core values; Sing the theme of patriotism; To carry forward and promote fine traditional Chinese culture.
State Council (2015)	"Several Policies on Supporting the Inheritance and	Play the important role of the internet in the inheritance and development of traditional Chinese opera and encourage the

	Development of Traditional Chinese Opera”	popularization and promotion of traditional Chinese opera through new media. News media at all levels should increase their efforts in promoting traditional Chinese opera.
Ministry of Culture (2016)	“Several Opinions on Promoting the Development of Cultural and Creative Products in Cultural Heritage Units”	Exploring the creative development of Chinese cultural resources and industries to better disseminate traditional Chinese culture.
State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (2016)	“Notice on Vigorously Promoting the Independent Innovation of Radio and Television Programs”	1.Require the launch of independent innovative programs with Chinese cultural genes, Chinese characteristics, and Chinese style; 2. The program should carry the theme of the Chinese Dream, core socialist values, patriotism, and excellent traditional Chinese culture, tell Chinese stories well, and promote the Chinese spirit;
General Office of the CCCPC and General Office of the State Council	“Opinions on Implementing the Project of Inheriting and Developing	1. Launch excellent literary and artistic works based on excellent traditional culture; 2. Strengthen support for traditional culture such as Chinese poetry; 3. Organize the

(2017)	Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture”	creation of a batch of programs that inherit the genes of Chinese culture
State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (2017)	“Draft Regulations on the Promotion of Universal Reading”	Incorporating universal reading into national strategies
State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (2017)	“Notice on Strengthening the Management of Reality TV Programs”	1. Actively integrate into the socialist core values and play a leading role in the value of reality shows; 2. Rooted in excellent traditional Chinese culture, vigorously promoting innovation and excellence;
State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (2017)	“Notice on Transforming the TV Star Comprehensive Channel into a Lecture Oriented and Cultural Communication Platform”	1. The comprehensive channel on TV should adhere to the correct political direction, value orientation, and public opinion guidance; 2. Make every effort to praise the great practices of the people and strive to climb the peak of positive energy; 3. Further strengthen the public welfare and cultural attributes of the TV Star Integrated Channel
CCCPC and General Office of the State	“Opinions on Further Strengthening	1. Encourage the rational use of intangible cultural heritage resources for literary and artistic

Council (2021)	the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage”	creation and design and improve quality and cultural connotation; 2. Adhere to the main line of forging a strong sense of community among the Chinese nation; 3. Actively promote exchanges and cooperation between the mainland and Hong Kong and Macao, as well as between the mainland and Taiwan;
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Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

In response to the call and requirements of the Party and the country, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala has seen a significant shift in content production towards traditional culture, with an increasing number of programs promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture.

The 2015 Spring Festival Gala specially set up a creative program section for intangible cultural heritage. The Spring Festival Gala production team is increasingly consciously exploring the traditional culture and aesthetics contained in programs such as songs, dances, acrobatics, and martial arts. At the same time, it is combined with television communication and performance technologies such as 5G+4K/8K+AI to showcase the breadth, profundity, and artistic beauty of Chinese culture. During an interview with reporters, Spring Festival Gala director Ha Wen stated “We dream of one day the Spring Festival Gala becoming a cultural business card of China. Bringing foreigners in is not yet internationalization. How can we truly achieve internationalization? The level, ability, and final presentation of television production, as well as the influence of the brand, are the key factors” (Yang Fangxiu and Wu Yanzhen. 2013:71). For example, in 2022, with the help of AI, VR/AR, holographic projection, CG special effects, and other technologies, the dance “The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting”, the dance “Golden Mask” in the intangible cultural heritage program “National Treasure Go back Home”, and the creative music, dance, poetry, and painting “Memories of the South” broke the space restrictions by using multi-dimensional modern technology, so that the program

scenes, characters, lights, and stage space can be perfectly integrated, with a sense of immersive experience.

Table 4. Excellent Traditional Culture Programs of the Gala (2012-2022)

Year	Name	Type	Traditional Culture	Expressions
2012	The Legend of New Year's Eve	children's programs	Nian Culture	Using realistic and animated techniques to depict ancient Chinese New Year's Eve legends
2012	Drum Rhyme and Dragon Dance	Drum dance	National Intangible Cultural Heritage: Shanxi Jiangzhou Drum Music	The Integration of Traditional Jiangzhou Drum and Western Drum
2012	Chasing Love	Ethnic music and dance	Marriage and Love Folklore of the Yao Ethnic Group in Xiangxi, Hunan	Tells the story of young Yao people in Xiangxi pursuing love
2013	Cut the Paper Flower	children's programs	Traditional custom: paper cutting	Two children perform nursery rhymes on a stage full of Paper Cuttings patterns in different shapes
2015	Splendid	Song	Traditional	Singer Li Yuchun

	Embroidery		embroidery: Su Xiu, Shu Xiu, Xiang Xiu, Yue Xiu	performs in traditional embroidered clothing; Stage presentation of four major embroidery works
2016	Chinese Beauty of Mountains and Rivers	Song	Intangible Cultural Heritage: Pingtan	Three mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan actors performed, and two Pingtan masters played
2016	Huayin Laoqiang Shouts Out	Song	Intangible Cultural Heritage: Huayin Laoqiang	Mainland singer Tan Weiwei collaborates with inheritors of Huayin Laoqiang
2018	“National Treasure Returns Home”	Special design for intangible cultural heritage programs	National treasure painting "Silk Road Landscape Map"	The host invited the director of the Palace Museum and the chairman of the board of directors of Hong Kong Shimao Group to talk about how the national treasure went home
2018	Sing to the Heart	Song	the Dong chorus	Chorus of Indigenous Folk

				Songs of Ethnic Minorities
2019	Dunhuang · Flying Sky	Dance	Dunhuang Mural Flying Sky	Integrating Chinese traditional dance Dunhuang dance with Western ballet
2021	National Treasure Returns Home”	Special design for intangible cultural heritage programs	The main Buddha head on the north wall of Cave 8 of the Tianlongshan Grottoes, which has been lost overseas for nearly a century	Narrator Zhang Guoli and guest speaker Hang Kan, President of Yungang Research Institute, introduce the cultural value of national treasures
2022	The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting	Dance	Song Dynasty Green Landscape Painting	Presenting the beauty of ancient literati landscape painting through the unique dance posture of actors
2022	'Let National Treasures Come to Life'	Special design for intangible cultural heritage programs	The bronze mask was unearthed from Sanxingdui.	The host introduces the major archaeological discoveries of Sanxingdui in China; Dance “Golden Mask”

2022	Memories of the South	The program integrates music, dance, and poetry	The Painting of Dwelling in Fuchun Mountain	Actors from the three regions on both sides of the Taiwan Strait use dance and poetry to portray different character images and poetic scenes of "fisherman, woodcutter, farmer, and Scholar" in ancient paintings in Jiangnan.
2022	The Song of the Land	Original Ecological folk songs	Hubei's "Enshi Taigong Hao Zi", Shaanxi's northern folk song "Yellow River Boat Riding Song", Ewenke's children's song "Aolu Gu Ya", She ethnic folk song "Tea Picking Song", Yunnan's Bai ethnic song "Xin Gan piao"	Using mountains, water, forests, fields, and lakes as creative carriers, and combining the intangible cultural heritage of the five regions of China - original ecological folk songs as the theme, it showcases the cultural composition of multiple ethnic groups in China.

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)



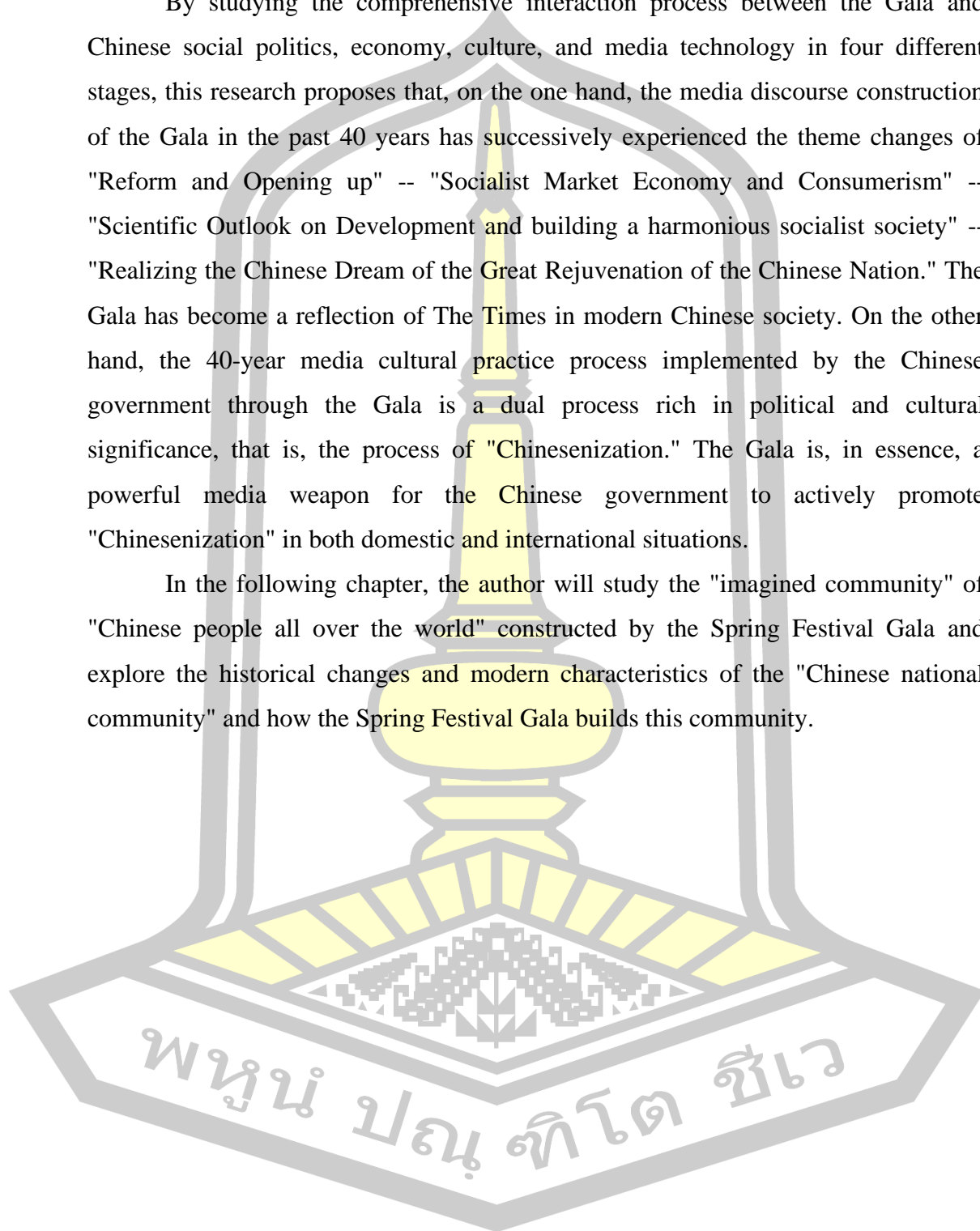
Figure 25. 2015 Intangible Cultural Heritage Creative Program "Splendid Embroidery". The show presents four famous Chinese traditional embroideries: Suzhou embroidery, Sichuang embroidery, Hunan embroidery, and Guangdong embroidery. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

Since 2009, "rejuvenation" has become a keyword that defines China today, meaning that understanding the country needs to relate to the long history of Chinese civilization. Looking at China from the perspective of a "civilization-state" means that the Chinese government can consciously and confidently transform traditional culture based on China's historical and cultural resources. Therefore, the "cultural shift" is a cultural practice and a political one. Not only based on the formation of a broad national identity in China but also spread to the world to form a broad cultural identity of the Chinese nation. It is not only a domestic governance tool of the Chinese government but also an international governance tool. Simply put, the emphasis on "patriotism," on the uniqueness and subjectivity of China in the global pattern of state relations, makes "reviving the tradition of civilization" rather than "anti-tradition" or "socialist revolution" a more integrated ideological practice.

Conclusion

By studying the comprehensive interaction process between the Gala and Chinese social politics, economy, culture, and media technology in four different stages, this research proposes that, on the one hand, the media discourse construction of the Gala in the past 40 years has successively experienced the theme changes of "Reform and Opening up" -- "Socialist Market Economy and Consumerism" -- "Scientific Outlook on Development and building a harmonious socialist society" -- "Realizing the Chinese Dream of the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation." The Gala has become a reflection of The Times in modern Chinese society. On the other hand, the 40-year media cultural practice process implemented by the Chinese government through the Gala is a dual process rich in political and cultural significance, that is, the process of "Chinesenization." The Gala is, in essence, a powerful media weapon for the Chinese government to actively promote "Chinesenization" in both domestic and international situations.

In the following chapter, the author will study the "imagined community" of "Chinese people all over the world" constructed by the Spring Festival Gala and explore the historical changes and modern characteristics of the "Chinese national community" and how the Spring Festival Gala builds this community.



CHAPTER III

The CCTV Spring Festival Gala and the Chinese National Community

Introduction

In this chapter, the author has studied the "Chinese national community" constructed by the Spring Festival Gala in the process of "Chinesenization". I divide the research into three parts: The first part analyzes the characteristics of the "Chinese nation" as a "civilization-state". In the second part, this study research the historical process and realistic basis of the formation of the "Chinese National Community". In the third part, research on the re-construction of the "Chinese national community" by the Gala in the context of "Chinesenization" be carried out from the following two aspects: to study on the construction of shared time and unique-unity space by the Gala; to study the image presentation and discourse function of different constituent groups of "community" in the Gala.

1. Part 1: From "Imagined Community" to "Chinese National Community"

1.1 "Imagined Community" and Conceptual Discussion

Benedict Anderson, in his book "The Imagined Community: The Origin and Spread of Nationalism," considers the nation, national identity, and nationalism as a "special cultural artifact" and defines the nation as "an imagined political community." This subjectivist definition cleverly sidesteps the search for the "objective characteristics" of a nation and points to the "cognitive" aspect of collective identity - "imagination" is not a "fabrication" but a cognitive process essential to the formation of any group identity, so the name "imagined community" does not refer to the product of some "false consciousness." It is a kind of social psychological "social fact."

Anderson believes that "nation" is essentially a form of modern imagination - it stems from a profound change of human consciousness in modernity. Two crucial historical conditions make this scenario possible. The first is the epistemological precondition, a "fundamental change" in "the way people understand the world" since

the Middle Ages. This change in human consciousness manifests itself in the decline of world religious communities, dynasties, and oracular notions of time. Only when the old worldview of the "sacred, hierarchical, and simultaneous with the end of time" composed of these three has lost its hegemonic position in the human mind can people begin to imagine the "nation" as a "secular, horizontal, horizontal" community. Anderson borrowed Walter Benjamin's concept of "homogenous, empty time" to describe the new view of time; he points out that the emergence of two forms of imagination in the early 18th century - the novel and the newspaper - "provided the technical means for the imaginative community of 're-presenting' peoples." In other words, for Anderson, the "nation," the "imagined community," is first and foremost imagined through words (reading). Another social-structural prerequisite is "the convergence of capitalism, printing technology, and the fatalistic diversity of human language." The "semi-accidental but explosive interaction" between these three factors contributed to the decline of Latin and the rise of a vernacular "printed language," and the formation of a particular dialect based on individually printed dialects, the secular language community was the prototype of the later "nation."

1.2 Chinese National Community

"Nation" is referred to in Chinese academic literature as a concept with two direct meanings. One sense of nationality is broad; the other is narrow. In the narrow sense, the nation refers to all ethnic groups living in China, emphasizing their culture, tradition, religion, and other characteristics. In a broad sense, the nation contains the idea of national unity, so the national unity of the Chinese nation.

China's long history has given birth to diverse ethnic units, and through contact, mixing, union, and integration, the Chinese nation has been formed as a diverse and unified nation. This kind of multi-ethnic mix with a pan-blood basis and cultural commonality is a significant feature of the Chinese nation that is different from Western nations (Zhu Jun, 2021: 34). As He Guimei (2014:116) explains, Benedict Anderson refers to the modern nation as an "imagined community" and regards it as an entirely modern "invention." However, this nationalist theory based on the Western European state as the basic model is often inadequate in facing China's problems. "Its most prominent feature is to emphasize that 'China' is not a 'nation-state' in the general Western European modern state form, but a unique 'civilization-

state’ : It has a long history of state composition and is a special unified state form, which can overcome the nation-state homogeneity and form a ‘pluralistic unity’ pattern inclusive of cultural and historical diversity (He Guimei, 2014:118).

The research of some ethnologists on the common connotation of the Chinese nation also provides us with essential inspiration. Zhu Jun (2021: 23) summarized, “From the three dimensions of history, reality, and development, ancient China provided the Chinese national community with a strong historical and cultural identity, and the modernization practice of Chinese revolution and construction in modern times promoted the transformation of the traditional identity of a dynastic state into a modern national identity. The consciousness of the community of the Chinese nation in the new Era also shows the connotation of historical continuity, compound modernity, and structural constraint, and forging the community of the Chinese nation also has the dual significance of domestic governance and global governance”.

The Chinese nation can be divided into broad and narrow senses, which have the dual meaning of historical and cultural community in the sense of cultural anthropology and citizen community in political science. From the perspective of cultural anthropology, the Chinese nation mainly refers to the compatriots of all ethnic groups living in the land of China throughout the ages and the community of people represented by the historical and cultural identity of the Chinese nation. Historical and cultural identity is essential for overseas Chinese to belong to the Chinese nation. From the perspective of political science, the Chinese nation is the national identity of the Chinese state. All Chinese citizens who hold Chinese nationality are members of the Chinese nation. This includes mainland ethnic groups, Hong Kong compatriots, Macao compatriots, Taiwanese compatriots, and foreigners who have acquired Chinese citizenship (Shen Guiping and Shen Chunyang, 2022:6).

Fan Ke (2022:24) believes that the Chinese nation, which is composed of multiple ethnic groups, should not exclude numerous overseas Chinese if they believe that China is their homeland. However, such a Chinese nation needs to be defined culturally. Fan Ke borrowed Du Weiming's "Cultural China" concept and proposed that the Chinese nation can be understood from the following aspects: 1) The Chinese nation in the sense of a nation-state, whose constituent population is all Chinese

citizens; 2) The Chinese nation in the sense of cultural China, whose constituent population identifies with China in the cultural sense; 3) The Chinese nation in the sense of Cosmopolitanism.

The analysis of the above scholars has great enlightening significance for our understanding of "China," "Chinese nation," and "Chinese nation community." The "imagined community" proposed by Benedict Anderson is a nation-state community in the political sense, while the Chinese national community is a cross-ethnic, cross-regional, cross-territorial, and cross-nationality compatible cultural and political community. The pluralistic modernity of this kind of community is closely related to China's historical development and socialist construction practice, especially China's modernization construction practice and media construction practice since the new period of reform and opening up. The existing studies on the Spring Festival Gala often neglect to combine the Western theory of "imagined community" with the historical, cultural, political, and other actual conditions of the formation of the Chinese national community and treat the Chinese national community with fixed concepts.

In the following parts, this study will sort out the historical background of the formation of the Chinese national community from a long-term historical perspective and analyze the changes in the connotation and extension of this community. Furthermore, this study is to reveal that the construction of a "Chinese nation community" in the context of "Chinesenization" is the strategic demand of China's modernization development since the reform and opening up, and the reliance on and exploitation of excellent traditional Chinese culture is the necessary strategy to realize this strategic demand and the inevitable requirement of China's transition from domestic governance to global governance.

2. Part 2: Historical Process and Realistic Basis of the Formation of the "Chinese National Community"

The "Chinese nation" community has pluralistic modernity, which is both a nation-state in the political sense and a civilization-state in the cultural sense. It is not only a political community formed in the crisis of "the other" -Western powers since the mid-19th century, but also a historical and cultural community that continues the

tradition of pre-modern China for thousands of years. Historically, the connotations and extension of the "Chinese nation" have constantly changed and are directly related to the policies of the authorities and governments at different times. This section will start from the long-term perspective of history, combined with the background of The Times and the authorities' policies to sort out the historical process and realistic basis of the formation of the Chinese national community.

2.1 Ethnic Policies of the Chinese Government in the Past Century

Modern China was a multi-ethnic country composed of Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui, and Tibet. The compatriots of all ethnic groups suffered from the exploitation and oppression of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism. The revolutionaries led by Sun Yat-sen advocated a "republic of five nationalities." In 1912, Sun Yat-sen proposed in the "Proclamation of the Provisional President of the Republic of China" that "the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui, and Tibetan lands are one country, that is, the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui and Tibetan ethnic groups are integrated. It is the unity of the Chinese nation." The Kuomintang government, formed after Sun Yat-sen's death, believed that "the Chinese nation is Han" and did not recognize the rights of ethnic minorities. In this regard, Zhou Enlai believes that Chiang Kai-shek's ethnic view is "outright Han chauvinism" (cited in Shen Guiping and Song Supei, 2021:6).

Completely different from the Kuomintang, the Communist Party of China has attached great importance to the equal union of all ethnic groups since its founding. "They are in favor of equal union and not in favor of mutual oppression" (cited in Shen Guiping and Song Supei, 2021:6). On this basis, during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, the CPC set up the Ethnic Minority Working Committee and the Northwest Bureau of the CPC Central Committee to carry out the work of rallying compatriots of all ethnic groups against Japanese aggression. At the same time, the Ethnic Department of Shaanxi North Public School, the Ethnic Class of the Central Party School, and Yan 'an Ethnic College were set up to train ethnic minority cadres and explore regional ethnic autonomy.

In the early days of the founding of New China, in order to implement the principle of equality and autonomy of all ethnic groups within the "big family of the Chinese nation," the Communist Party of China carried out ethnic identification in

conjunction with Stalin's definition of "nation." The identification work began in 1950 and ended in 1979, and 56 ethnic groups were identified by consensus, completing the construction of the "big family" of the "Chinese nation" composed of "56 ethnic groups". At the same time, the CPC explored regional ethnic autonomy under the centralized and unified leadership of the state. In 1949, the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference declared that "all ethnic groups in the People's Republic of China are equal, regional ethnic autonomy was practiced in areas where ethnic minorities lived in compact communities" (Shen Guiping, 2020:55).

After more than 40 years of reform and opening up, in the process of more and more deeply integrating into the global society, China is also facing more and more challenges of religious identity that exceeds the nation-state and ethnic (ethnic) identity that is lower than the nation-state. For example, there is a tendency for "pan-nationalism" and "de-Chinesenization" in the ideological field, and individual ethnic interests are emphasized in places where multiple ethnic groups coexist. Ethnic separatist acts such as "Xinjiang independence" and "Tibet independence" have appeared in the social field, directly challenging the Chinese national identity (Shen Guiping, 2021:60).

General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed "actively cultivating the consciousness of the Chinese national community" at the "Central Ethnic Work Conference" in 2014, and the report of the "19th National Congress of the Party" in 2017 formally proposed "firmly forming the consciousness of the Chinese nation community," Xi Jinping has discussed the theory of "Chinese nation community" in the strategy of "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" in the new era on several occasions. The Chinese National Community of the Party theory in the new era includes three layers of connotations. Firstly, the Chinese nation includes all Chinese children, covering compatriots of all ethnic groups in the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, as well as overseas Chinese. Secondly, members of various ethnic groups, although also known as "ethnic groups," are included within the "Chinese nation" and constitute the components and elements of the Chinese nation. Thirdly, compatriots of all ethnic groups, regardless of party affiliation, social class, belief or nonbelief in a particular religion, regardless of being on the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, or

residing abroad, are a community of "sharing weal and woe, honor and disgrace, life and death, and destiny," jointly assuming the core interests of safeguarding national sovereignty, security, and development (Shen Guiping, Song Supei, 2021:9).

The concept of "the Chinese nation" has gone through the construction of "the nation" from Sun Yat Sen's integration of "Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui and Tibetan" to Jiang Jieshi's "the Chinese nation is Han" and then to the construction of "the pluralistic integration of the Chinese nation" of the CPC. The contemporary construction of the "Chinese nation" has gone from "diversification" to "integration," from the development and prosperity of various ethnic groups to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and has forged a strong sense of community among the Chinese nation. The fundamental goal is to gather magnificent strength for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and all people will move forward with one heart (Shen Guiping, 2020:54).

2.2 Changes in the Relationship Between Overseas Chinese and China Since Modern Times

"Hua qiao" and "Hua ren," as a group composed of Chinese immigrants and their descendants, although often used together legally, are two different concepts. , Overseas Chinese ("Hua Qiao") "refers to" Chinese citizens who have settled abroad, "And "foreign Chinese" ("Hua Ren") refers to "former Chinese citizens who have joined foreign nationality and their foreign descendants" and "foreign descendants of Chinese citizens." The former is a Chinese citizen, while the latter is a foreign citizen (Zhang Xiuming, 2021:3-4). Since modern times, the identity of Chinese immigrants has undergone several significant changes.

2.2.1 The transition from "Qimin" to "Qiaomin"

Wang Gungwu (2020:5) argues that "the cultural center on which the gentry relied was located in the north, and in terms of the nature of imperial Chinese civilization, it was a continental way of thinking 'bound by the land.'" For successive Chinese emperors, this idea formed the basic premise of agrarian power." Therefore, China's southern and coastal provinces, which have maritime technology, trade tradition, and economic needs, have not only failed to become the world maritime pioneer in East Asia due to the "restriction of continental thinking mode" but also lack the enthusiasm for maritime activities. Due to political, military, and cultural

considerations, the late Qing government continued the policy of prohibiting nationals from emigrating overseas in the Ming Dynasty, and for a long time, Chinese emigrants were regarded as "self-renouncing" people, so Chinese immigrants had to survive in Southeast Asia as "abandoned people in the Celestial Dynasty (Qimin)."

It was not until the second half of the 19th century when the Chinese Empire suffered several fatal blows from European powers, that a name was invented for these overseas Chinese and their misfortunes and achievements: "Qiao". The settlers, known as "Huaqiao", were legalized. According to Wang Gungwu (2020:35-36), "The reason for the explicit recognition of the phenomenon of migration is the challenge to the national consciousness and the need to call for a new patriotism to help the poor and weak China defend itself against the aggressive West." "This term did not create the fact of emigration, but merely used a refined and noble term to describe the phenomenon, giving a clear direction and a new purpose to stay abroad, and making emigration a powerful political force in the 20th century." In the first decade of the 20th century, the Qing government, reformers, and revolutionary organizations all courted overseas Chinese, mainly in order to obtain their financial help, the former for the development of the imperial economy, the latter for reform or revolution to overthrow the Qing court (Wang Gungwu, 2020:43).

After the signing of the Treaty of Beijing in 1860, China was forced to allow its nationals to emigrate, and the Qing government had to take some measures to protect Chinese workers overseas. On March 28, 1909, the Qing government promulgated the Nationality Law, which adopted the principle of bloodline, stipulating that any person who was "born to a Chinese father," or "born after the death of his father, who was a Chinese at the time of his death," or "a person whose mother was a Chinese but whose father was untested or stateless" had Chinese nationality. It also stipulates that Chinese nationals who voluntarily naturalize abroad should first obtain permission from the Ministry of the Interior of China. It also allows Chinese citizens in other countries to hold "dual citizenship." These provisions effectively brought Chinese immigrants closer to China (cited in Han Xiaoming, 2020:136-137).

In 1911, the Qing Dynasty collapsed. The Republic of China was established. The National government was responsible for safeguarding the settlers.

Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a committee for Overseas Chinese Affairs was eventually formed, whose work extended beyond fundraising and diplomatic protection to education and identity preservation—programs to provide new textbooks and train teachers from China to teach overseas Chinese. It not only supports emigration but affirms it as a patriotic duty. When the Kuomintang came to power in 1928, the government became more committed to promoting the welfare of overseas Chinese. This task relied not only on consulate officials but also on locally absorbed Kuomintang members, who were regularly honored by the Nanjing government (Wang Gungwu, 2020:45).

Patriotism peaked in the 1940s when China's efforts to support the war of resistance were in full swing. During the War of Resistance against Japan, overseas Chinese were seen as the primary source of economic support and were encouraged to form volunteer armies. It is estimated that between 1937 and 1940, overseas Chinese contributed more than \$294 million to China's war against Japan (cited in Elena Barabantseva, 2011:37). After the end of World War II, the two parties resumed the civil war, and the Kuomintang was defeated and retreated to Taiwan. The Communists and the KMT continued to compete for the hearts and minds of the Chinese over whether to support the political legitimacy of the Communist Party authorities or to embrace mainland revolutionary nationalism. After 1949, the Cold War's emphasis on ideology permeated all overseas Chinese communities. When China became socialist, and its former Southeast Asian colonies established nation-states, this patriotism became a double-edged sword.

2.2.2 The transformation from "Huaqiao" to "Huaren"

Overseas Chinese remained desired participants in the new socialist China based on their ethnic affinities and roots in China. Nevertheless, when the PRC's overseas Chinese policies started conflicting with the CCP's ambitions to be the internationally accepted government of China, China's leaders had to slow their attempts to incorporate overseas Chinese into their socialist nation-building (Elena Barabantseva, 2011:56).

In the 1950s and 1960s, when domestic instability was accompanied by the international isolation of China due to the United States' support of the GMD government in Taiwan and the PRC's territorial conflicts with India and the Soviet

Union, China was seeking to improve its relations with the states in Southeast Asia, where most overseas Chinese lived. Any activities of the overseas Chinese in support of the communist regime in China would endanger relations with the local governments and be disadvantageous to international recognition of the People's Republic. Having failed to attract substantial contributions from the overseas Chinese and facing the danger of further upsetting relations with the Southeast Asian states, the PRC, which was winning its battle for legitimacy against the nationalists, renounced the dual nationality law in 1955. At the 1955 Bandung Conference, the PRC signed an agreement with Indonesia that rejected the earlier *jus sanguinis* principle and the institution of dual nationality and embraced the principles of territoriality, sovereignty, and citizenship. At China's request, a clause repudiating dual nationality for overseas Chinese with foreign citizenship was included in the communiqués signed when diplomatic relations with Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand were established in the mid-1970s. The Party changed its overseas Chinese policy to disengagement and detachment from the overseas Chinese. It was implemented in the 'three good policies of nationality, noninterference and resettlement' and was followed by the nominal exclusion of the overseas Chinese from the People's United Front. These developments were part of China's ambition at the time to assume the role of the leader of the Third World, which was implied in the adopted Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the theoretical basis of China's foreign policy (Elena Barabantseva, 2011:58).

After China abandoned its dual nationality policy in 1955, overseas Chinese, especially those in Southeast Asia, became citizens of the host countries one after another, transforming the "Huaqiao" society into a "Huaren" society. Although some people still retain Chinese nationality, the proportion is small.

2.2.3 The "Re-Chinesenization" of overseas Chinese since reform and opening up

After 1977, Deng Xiaoping successively proposed a series of important ideas such as "overseas relations are a good thing" and "overseas Chinese are a unique opportunity" for China's development, fundamentally correcting the "left" bias in treating overseas relations (Han Xiaoming, 2020:142). In January 1978, the State Council Overseas Chinese Affairs Office was established, with Liao Chengzhi serving

as the director. The 1979 National Conference on Overseas Chinese Affairs and the Second National Congress of Returned Overseas Chinese Representatives were held in Beijing, which comprehensively implement the strategic decision made at the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to quickly shift the focus of work to socialist modernization construction. It clarifies the basic principles of overseas Chinese affairs work such as "equal treatment, no discrimination, appropriate care based on specific circumstances". The main task is to implement the Party's overseas Chinese affairs policy and make great efforts to solve historical legacy problems.

After the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, China opened its doors to economic development and formulated various preferential policies to attract foreign investment. Since China had not yet opened up its international relations at that time, overseas Chinese became an important channel for China to develop overseas economic cooperation and attract investment (Han Xiaoming. 2020:142). In 1979, China established special economic zones in Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen mainly for the strategic consideration of introducing funds from overseas Chinese. The five ASEAN countries (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia) were the main investors of Southeast Asian countries in China in the 1980s and 1990s.

In 2005, Comrade Hu Jintao received all representatives of the National Conference on Overseas Chinese Affairs and delivered an important speech, proposing the "Three Great Achievements": in terms of rallying the hearts of overseas Chinese, exerting their power, and contributing to the grand goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, overseas Chinese affairs work has made great progress; In carrying out folk diplomacy, disseminating excellent Chinese culture, and expanding friendly exchanges between the Chinese people and people from all over the world, overseas Chinese affairs have made great progress.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the CCCPC has coordinated the domestic and international affairs, made new arrangements and put forward new requirements for doing a good job in overseas Chinese affairs and rallying the hearts and efforts of overseas Chinese to achieve the Chinese Dream. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of

China proposes: "Strengthen and improve overseas Chinese affairs work, and form a strong force jointly committed to national rejuvenation.

Since the late 1970s, under the dual impetus of China's reform and opening up and developed countries' policies to attract immigrants, China has continued to experience a large-scale wave of overseas immigrants. The number of Chinese citizens who have migrated abroad through studying abroad, investing, visiting relatives, and other forms is constantly increasing, gradually forming a "new overseas Chinese" group overseas, including overseas Chinese who migrated from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and other places during this period. Former Director of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council, Li Haifeng (2012), believes that over time, new overseas Chinese have become an important component of overseas Chinese.

Chen Xu (2023), Director of the Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs of the State Council, pointed out in his report on the work of overseas Chinese affairs in the new era that China's historic achievements in the past decade have greatly stimulated the national, national, and cultural identity of overseas Chinese, and strengthened the strength of patriotism and friendship. Various cultural activities spontaneously organized by overseas Chinese through traditional Chinese festivals such as the Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival have become important windows for residents to understand the unique charm of Chinese culture, enhancing its affinity, infectivity, attractiveness, and influence.

In short, over the past century, the identity of overseas Chinese immigrants has undergone three stages of change: from "Qimin" to "Qiaomin", from "Huaqiao" to "Huaren", and then to the restoration of "Chinese identity". This reflects the significant impact of the Chinese government's overseas Chinese affairs policy on the relationship between overseas Chinese and China. From political identity to economic mutual benefit and cultural co-development, it continuously adjusts the relationship between the two sides. Since the reform and opening up, the positive effects of overseas Chinese in politics, economy, culture, and other aspects of China's development strategy have included this group in the scope of the Chinese National Community.

2.3 "One Country, Two Systems" Policy

On June 22 and 23, 1984, Deng Xiaoping systematically elaborated on the complete meaning and policy concept of "one country, two systems" during his meetings with the visiting delegation of the Hong Kong business community to Beijing and the renowned Hong Kong figure Zhong Shiyuan. After two years and up to 22 rounds of negotiations, the Chinese and British sides officially signed the "Sino-British Joint Declaration" on December 19, 1984. Two sides decided that from July 1, 1997, China would establish a particular administrative region in Hong Kong and exercise sovereignty and governance over Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula south of Boundary Street, the New Territories, and other land. In June 1986, China and Portugal held the first round of talks on the Macau issue in Beijing. On April 13, 1987, the governments of China and Portugal signed the "Joint Declaration of the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of Portugal on the Question of Macau," declaring that the Macau region (including the Macau Peninsula, Taipa Island, and Coloane) is China's territory. The People's Republic of China resumed sovereignty over Macau on December 20, 1999.

"One country, two systems," abbreviated as "Yiguo Liangzhi," is an innovative policy concept and institutional arrangement for China to achieve national peaceful reunification and solve modernization development problems. It is also a characteristic element of China's new form of political civilization. According to Chen Duanhong (2015:40), "The wisdom of 'one country, two systems' lies in thinking about the relationship between 'one and two' and 'state and system'." One 'is harmony and identity, and' two 'is division and difference. One country is a single sovereignty, and two systems are inclusive of local heterogeneous systems under the system of state entities. The concept of "One Country, Two Systems" was initially a strategic consideration for resolving the Taiwan issue. Later, based on the priority needs of resolving the Hong Kong and Macao issues and the guiding significance of demonstrating Taiwan's system, it was successfully applied in the negotiations on the return of Hong Kong and Macao and transformed into two fundamental laws. After the return of Hong Kong and Macao, it gradually formed a relevant institutional system and practical form (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2021).

In 2014, the State Council Information Office issued a white paper titled "The Practice of" One Country, Two Systems "in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" (referred to as the "White Paper"), which proposed the legal principle of "comprehensive governance power" as an authoritative and theoretical response to disputes over constitutional order. It straightened out the legal logic of the relationship between the central government and the Special Administrative Region under "One Country, Two Systems" and provided a solid legal basis for establishing and improving the "One Country, Two Systems" system. Comprehensive governance power is the legalization of sovereignty, which affirms the central government's superior governance power over Hong Kong in principle. Under this legal premise, a high degree of autonomy can be established and subject to the vertical supervision of the central comprehensive governance power. The white paper marks the transition of the central government from a partial "vacancy" to a comprehensive "position," which significantly impacts Hong Kong society. In the long run, it will help promote the transformation of the rule of law in the relationship between the central government and the Special Administrative Region and the reconstruction of Hong Kong people's "Chinese historical perspective" (Tian Feilong, 2023:12).

To sum up, looking back at the history of China's development in the past century, the "Chinese nation" has evolved from the "nation-state" proposed by Sun Yat-sen, integrating the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui, and Tibetan ethnic groups into one, to the contemporary Xi Jinping age emphasis that the Chinese nation is a community of people with a shared history and culture, including all sons and daughters of the Chinese nation, including compatriots of all ethnic groups in the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and overseas Chinese. The connotation and extension of the "Chinese national community" have changed along with the historical development and realistic needs at different stages of the Chinese revolution, the socialist construction of new China, reform and opening up, and the socialist modernization. It is a political means resorted to by the Chinese government to strive for a more favorable domestic and international environment for the road of rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In the next part, this research will focus on the media construction of CCTV Spring Festival Gala to study how CCTV Spring Festival Gala construct the community imagination of "Chinese nation".

3. Part 3: Re-Construction of the Chinese National Community of the Gala in the Context of Chinesenization.

In this part, research on the re-construction of the Chinese national community by the CCTV Gala in the context of Chinesenization will be carried out from the following two aspects: to study on the construction of shared time and unique-unity space by the Gala; to study the image presentation and discourse function of different constituent groups of "community" in the Gala.

3.1 Shared Time and Unity Space Construction of the Gala

3.1.1 Beijing time: Share the same moment across the world.

The CCTV Spring Festival Gala is broadcast live on the eve of the Chinese Lunar New Year, which is the 30th day of the Lunar New Year. New Year's Eve is not only a time for family reunion, but also a time to bid farewell to the old and welcome the new, and to update everything. "The broadcast of the Gala on the sacred time of New Year's Eve has preserved the collective unconsciousness of the customs related to New Year's Eve, with the nature of sacredness and a certain folk religion, resulting in a sense of sacredness that is separated from daily secular life "(Geng Wenting, 2003:80). And the start time of the Gala live broadcast is anchored at 20:00 Beijing time on the Chinese New Year's Eve. According to the 24 time zones around the world, Beijing is the East Eighth Zone. At exactly 20:00 Beijing time, the world happens to be on the same day. In this sense, the opening of the Gala at 20:00 Beijing time undoubtedly maximizes the sacred and romantic invitation to Chinese people around the world to "share this moment in the world". Beijing time has become a sacred time to unite the global Chinese community consciousness.

The most exciting moment is the ringing of the midnight bell at the Gala every year. Regardless of the viewing level of the program, the program and host's crosstalk before and after midnight have been carefully arranged and designed to become the climax of the annual Spring Festival Gala, becoming one of the few sacred and solemn cultural ceremonies left in the tide of the times. When the host starts the countdown to zero, the time is accurately measured to seconds and structured and rhythmically connected to the past, present, and future with the dominant posture of the Chinese nation. "The audience's experience with time has

also been deliberately extended here. The 'still' time eliminates geographical barriers, while rituals and myths rewrite the practical significance and ensure the consolidation of cultural identity and identity”(Ouyang Hongsheng and Xu Shujie, 2018:144). At the most sacred and ceremonial moment of midnight, the Gala uses two methods to construct community imagination:

(1) The representation of the image of "state" and "nation" summons the imagination of the "community" of all Chinese people

From the arrangement of the midnight programs of the Gala, the programs revolve around two major themes: one is welcoming the spring; the other theme is the praise of "state" and "nation." The latter has far more programs than the former. (Zero Hour shows on the theme of "Spring" are 1987, 1999, 2000, and 2022.) The Gala is increasingly conscious of allowing the "country" to appear in a vivid and visible image at midnight to express the national will and emotional call to its citizens. At this moment, the imagination of "the state" and "the nation" has become the true "protagonist" in the CCTV Spring Festival Gala, occupying a vital gateway to bid farewell to the old and welcome the new. “The Gala replaces the individual's life imprint with the achievements of the country in the past year and replaces the hope for individual families with the blessings for the nation, transforming personal emotional space into public space; this makes New Year's Eve, the most important traditional festival night, a night of national construction that summons all citizens” (Li Lidan, 2011:30-31).

Table 5. Program Theme Statistics before midnight of the Gala

Year	Program Type	Theme	Expressions
1987	Song "Bells of Spring"	praises of spring	Female Solo
1989	Song“My Motherland”	Praises of motherland	Female Solo
1990	The then general	wish the whole country a happy	The Chinese president

	secretary Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng delivered a speech	New Year	attended the scene in person
1991-1995	The then state leaders extended New Year greetings to the people of the whole country	wish the whole country a happy New Year	Play the New Year video of state leaders
1996	The three places sing a song "The Great Duet of China"	Sing about the land of China	Beijing (home), Shanghai (sub-venue), Xi 'an (sub-venue) three places to sing a song
1997	Orchestrated poem recitation "Beijing Time"	Celebrating the Return of Hong Kong	Recitation: Ni Ping, Zhao Zhongxiang
1999	Chorus "Spring Bell"	Singing of Spring; Celebrating the Return of Macau	Four children from Beijing, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan ring the New Year bell together

2000	Poetry recitation "Waiting for the Bell"	Welcome spring	The host read the Chinese New Year message inscribed by the then President Jiang Zemin
2005	Song "Peaceful China"	Best wishes for China	Male and female chorus
2006	Song "Happy Families"	Best wishes for common people	Male and female chorus
2008	Special Ceremony "Symphony of Heaven and Earth"	Praise the strength of the motherland	Seven space heroes came to the Spring Festival Gala
2009	Special planning: Space heroes pay a New Year's call; song "China Drink Together"	Celebrate the achievements of the motherland	Zhou Jianping, chief designer of the space project, and space heroes Yang Liwei and Zhai Zhigang paid New Year greetings to the national audience
2010	Song "Towards	The great	Singers: Dai

	Revival"	rejuvenation of the Chinese nation	Yuqiang, Yin Xiumei
2011	Song "Brighter Flags"	Praise the motherland	Singer: Tan Jing
2014	Song "Heaven Shining China"	Blessing China	Singers: Yao Beina, representatives from various industries and ethnic minorities
2016	Song "Glory"	Expression of national pride	Singer: Yin Xiumei
2017	Song "stay true to the mission"	stay true to the mission	Singers: Han Lei, Tan Weiwei
2018	Song "Our new era"	Praise the new era	Singers: Yan Weiwen, Lei Jia
2019	Song "With the motherland"	Praise the motherland	Singers: Lei Jia, Han Lei
2020	Song and dance "Dear China"	Praise the motherland	Li Guangxi and other 9 people sang together
2021	Singing and dancing "Sing a folk song to the Party"	Praise the Communist Party of China	Yang Hongji and other 8 people sang together

2022	Song "Bells of Spring"	Welcome spring	Singers: Sun Nan, Tan Weiwei
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Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

The image of "state" and "nation" will be presented in three different narrative ways at the zero moment.

Firstly, the appearance of national leaders at midnight. A country's highest leader is undoubtedly the most authoritative image representative of a nation. Either personally visit the live broadcast of the Gala to pay New Year's greetings to the people of the whole country (1990) or appear in the form of New Year's greetings videos (for five consecutive years from 1991 to 1995) or borrow the host to read the New Year's greetings written by leaders (2000). For Chinese citizens, it is undoubtedly a call to their "Chinese" identity.

Secondly, arrange a specific theme song before midnight. This kind of performance generally has three characteristics: first, songs are usually around patriotic themes such as singing the motherland, singing the CPC, singing the Chinese, or eulogizing the new era. Secondly, singers are usually the best literary and artistic representatives trained by literary and artistic units within the national system. The number of singers tends to increase, from the original solo to a duo choir, and in recent years, the choir lineup has increased to 9-10 people. The composition of singers is also becoming more complex, with a lineup consisting of mainland Chinese singers, ethnic minorities, and representatives of singers from Hong Kong and Macau (such as in 2020 and 2021). Finally, at this moment, performers of ethnic minorities and representatives of various industries often appear on the stage, dancing or singing with the singers. Alternatively, while the singer is singing, there is a giant LED display screen behind it that displays images of national leaders and the people together or can display images of the country's tremendous achievements in construction. For example, "Peaceful China" (2005), "Towards Revival" (2010), "Heaven Shining China" (2014), "Give My Heart to You" (2015), "Our New Era" (2018), "Together with Our Motherland" (2019), "Dear Motherland" (2020), and "Sing a folk Song to the Party" (2021).

Third, arrange some planning programs with unique themes. The Gala Choose the theme of the motherland's reunification and the country's prosperity, which can stimulate the Chinese people's national pride, self-confidence, and patriotic enthusiasm, such as the return of Hong Kong (1997), aerospace theme (2008,2009), sports theme (2009).



Figure 26. 2015 Song "Give My Heart to You" before midnight. Singers: Warren Mok (Hong Kong), Lu Wei. National leader Xin Jinping's image appears in the video in the background. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

(2) Using television technology to reproduce the "co-presence" of the community members at the zero moment to strengthen the imagination of the "Chinese big family"

The CCTV Gala usually strengthens the "shared presence" across space with zero time, creating a sense of "being together" ritual of "sharing the moment with the world" and "enjoying the world together." After the midnight bell strikes, the Gala will insert pre-recorded video clips through television clips reflecting the celebration of the Spring Festival or Chinese New Year by compatriots from all ethnic groups, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, or overseas Chinese, to stimulate the audience's imagination of the "Chinese nation" community through the "coexistence" of the "image community." For example, at the Gala after zero o'clock in 2015, video videos of workers from all walks of life in Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong compatriots,

Macao compatriots, Taiwan compatriots, and overseas students paying New Year greetings to the people of the country were inserted.



Figure 27. 2015 Chinese New Year greetings over the world after midnight. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

3.1.2 "Beyond 9.6 million square kilometers": All Chinese people united and co-presented together through the Gala.

"The Gala has always expressed the sovereignty and integrity of territories through the construction of 'audio-visual territories.' With Beijing - the political center as the axis, cities with both landmark and cultural significance in the east, west, north, and south were selected as sub-venues so that the 'Great Unity' ideology of ancient Confucianism can be perfectly demonstrated in contemporary times" (Ouyang Hongsheng and Xu Shujie, 2018: 145).

As of 2022, the Gala has set up sub-venues for seven times in its history and maintains Beijing as the main venue of the Gala. In 1996, two additional venues were established in Xi'an and Shanghai. Before the sound of the midnight bell, Beijing, Shanghai, and Xi'an sang the same song, "The Great Song of China," together. The three places singing together emphasize "simultaneity" and "coexistence," and is a common narrative technique for constructing the "Chinese nation" community in the Gala. After a 20-year hiatus, the 2016 CCTV Spring

Festival Gala set up four sub-venues in the east, west, south, and north of China to achieve the creative tone of "East West North South, and National Celebration", which was preserved in later Spring Festival Galas. In 2020, on the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Gala once again arranged a grander scene of three places singing the same song - "My Motherland." The original singer of the song "My Motherland," Guo Lanying, returned to the stage at the age of 90, leading young singers Jin Tingting, Chu Haichen, and ethnic minority singers Aruazuo (Yi) and Yun Duo (Qiang) to sing "My Motherland" at the main venue in Beijing. Meanwhile, 10000 people from the Guangdong Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay sub-venue and the Zhengzhou sub-venue in Henan sang together with the main venue. The three regions passed on to each other, with compatriots from 56 ethnic groups, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan living together. As an imagined 'community,' the motherland China is so natural now!

Table 6. Statistics of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala Sub-Venues (1983-2022)

Year	Main Venue	Sub-venue	Meanings
1996	BeiJing	Shang Hai	China's economic center
		XiAn, Shanxi	Representing the Long History and Modern Development of the Ancient City
2002	BeiJing	Shang Hai	China's Reform and Opening Up Window
		Shen Zhen	China's Reform and Opening Up Window
2016	BeiJing	Quan Zhou	The Starting Point of the Ancient Maritime Silk Road
		Xi An	The Starting Point of the Ancient Land Silk Road
		Hulunbuir, Inner Mongolia	Cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities; National unity
		Guang Zhou	Showcasing China's

			achievements in reform and opening up
2017	BeiJing	Shang Hai	China's economic center
		Liangshan,SiChuang	Cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities; National unity
		GuiLin,Guang Xi	Cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities; National unity
		Harbin, Hei Longjiang	International Ice and Snow Cultural City; Important manufacturing base
2018	BeiJing	Tai 'an, Shandong	National Historical and Cultural City
		ZhuHai,GuangDong	China's Reform and Opening Up Window
		Sanya, Hainan	Territory security; city on the Maritime Silk Road
		Dong Village, Zhaoxing, Guizhou	Cultural characteristics of ethnic minorities; National unity
2019	BeiJing	Jinggang Mountain in Jiangxi Province	old revolutionary base areas
		Changchun, Jilin Province	Revitalizing the Old Industrial Base in Northeast China
		ShenZhen, GuangDong	China's Reform and Opening Up Window
2020	BeiJing	Guangdong-hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area	“One Country, Two Systems”, and the Reunification of the Motherland
		Zhengzhou, Henan Province	Display the Yellow River civilization, Conveying the belief in poverty alleviation

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

In addition, during breaks in the program, the host always recites congratulatory messages and broadcasts footage of Chinese and overseas Chinese celebrating the New Year overseas. Wang Xiaoyu (2005:29) believes that "China's imagination of its community is not limited to 9.6 million square kilometers, but rather follows the global imagination of the 'Heavenly Empire.' However, as a regional festival, the Spring Festival may challenge this imagination. Reciting congratulatory messages from embassies in various countries can precisely maintain the illusion of 'coming from all over the world'". Wang Xiaoyu believes that the video of overseas Chinese celebrating the New Year appearing in the Gala is just to satisfy the fantasy and psychological comfort of the Chinese national subjectivity. This study suggests that this criticism is too extreme. Not to mention that China in the 21st century is no longer the Qing government that was immersed in the dream of "the Heavenly Kingdom" a hundred years ago and closed its doors. Chinese embassies overseas sending congratulatory messages on New Year's Eve is not a "coming from all countries" because Chinese embassies abroad are China's overseas offices, representing the Chinese government and host countries in political, economic, commercial, and cultural exchanges. It is an important platform and channel for China's foreign exchange and connection with overseas Chinese. It is biased to compare Chinese embassies abroad to "countries" entirely different in culture from ancient empires.

Moreover, Wang Xiaoyu's criticism overlooks some fundamental cultural facts, that is, with the peaceful rise of China in the 21st century, the overseas influence of the Spring Festival has increased. It is common for overseas Chinese to celebrate the Spring Festival in their country of residence. The Spring Festival is not a regional festival but has increasingly become a global festival with international influence. Chinese people worldwide celebrate the Spring Festival, whether organized through offline temple fairs, parades, cultural performances, or watching the Spring Festival Gala online; it is an objective existence and cannot be seen as an "illusion" of seeking psychological satisfaction within China.

It is because overseas Chinese around the world retain the cultural habits and traditions of celebrating the Spring Festival that the Gala serves as a media

practice to express or reflect this objective existence. It is because overseas Chinese have a continuous identification and attachment to Chinese culture that the Chinese National Community cannot exclude it. In the process of "Chinesenization," the Gala relies on the overseas landing of the CCTV International Channel and the international dissemination of mobile network media to spread Chinese culture and national image, spanning 9.6 million square kilometers of territory to build an imagined community of "Chinese people across the world is happy together", with a long way to go.

To sum up, through the construction of a particular time and space, the Gala is to realize the community imagination of Chinese people worldwide. The Gala rivets "Beijing time" in the broadcast time and program flow arrangement and integrates with traditional folk time to have a broad public base. At 20:00 Beijing time on Chinese New Year's Eve, the Gala kicks off worldwide on the same day. As 24:00 Beijing time approaches, Chinese people worldwide count down together to welcome the arrival of spring and accept the grand call of the "state" and the "nation" together. "Beijing Time" structures and rhythms time with the dominant posture of the Chinese nation, calling on Chinese people from all over the world to gather in the imagination of the time of "sharing this moment in the world." On the other hand, the Gala builds a trans-regional concept extending from domestic to overseas in the production of the program: through synchronous live streaming of the main venue and branch venues, by singing the same song at the same time, creating a national community imagination of "East West North South Central, National People's Great Reunion"; By playing footage of Chinese and overseas Chinese celebrating the New Year in front of landmark buildings overseas, it has constructed a cross-border regional imagination of "Four Seas Together," extending the National Community to the Chinese National Community, including overseas Chinese. In addition, the Gala actively expands overseas media communication channels, genuinely achieving the global coverage of CCTV programs, television networks, and social media, building a vast global communication network, using the unified image of the Gala to summon cultural and emotional appeal to Chinese people around the world, and constructing a community imagination of the "Chinese nation."

3.2 Image Presentation and Discourse Function of Different Constituent Groups of "Community" in the Gala

In this sub-part, by analyzing the image presentation and discourse narration of different groups of the Chinese national community in the Spring Festival Gala, this research studies what roles and functions different groups play in the imagination of constructing the Chinese national community in the Spring Festival Gala.

3.2.1 Ethnic Minority Groups in the Gala

"In cultural research, discourse is contained within the power and also a part of the 'system' in which power is implemented and disseminated" (Zhang Aifeng, 2018:79). Contemporary China has always been an organic whole of a nation-state, a political party state, and a civilized state. The nation is not a specific ethnic group with an absolute majority of the population in the European sense, but a Chinese nation that integrates political and cultural identity and integrates 56 specific ethnic groups into one" (Yan Yilong et al., 2015:33). Therefore, the image of ethnic minorities is an indispensable part of every Spring Festival Gala stage. The presence of ethnic minority images directly serves the three discourse expressions of "unity of all ethnic groups," "cultural diversity," and "national unity" in the Spring Festival Gala.

(1) The discourse expression of "unity of all ethnic groups" by the ethnic minority programs

The discourse narrative of "ethnic unity" is often carried out in three ways:

Firstly, through group performances showcasing ethnic minority costumes and distinctive songs and dances to express ethnic diversity, cultural diversity, and ethnic unity. In the Gala, ethnic minority songs and dances are often concentrated in a separate program section, named "National Happy Song," "Ethnic Unity Song," or "Ethnic Dance." This section often showcases multiple ethnic minority songs or dances at once. For example, in the 1987 Ethnic Unity Concert, there were 14 folk songs, of which ethnic minority singers sang 7. In the 1988 dance "Ethnic Dance," Han and ethnic minority dancers danced on the same stage.

"Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, scholars have mostly believed that the construction project of the 'Chinese nation' work has been done relatively solidly in the construction of the 'diversity' of the Chinese nation,

while work has been done relatively insufficiently in the construction of the 'integration' of the Chinese nation "(Shen Guiping, 2021:60). The construction of the contemporary "Chinese nation" has gone from "diversification" to "integration" stage. Reflected in the Spring Festival Gala program, in recent years, ethnic minority song and dance programs have not focused on showcasing the differences in their ethnic songs and dances but have been more used in the form of dance to assist the main melody of Mandarin to express the "unity" of the Chinese nation.



Figure 28. 2017 song and dance "Mother is China." Four singers sang in the center of the stage, and ethnic minority dancers danced hand in hand around the singers, expressing their recognition of the Chinese nation. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

The second is to express their support for the development policies of the party and government, their satisfaction with a happy life, and the deep friendship between ethnic minorities and the Han people through the presence of ethnic minority actors. In 2010, two Xinjiang singers sang Happy Life in Yakesi in Chinese in the song group "Harmonious Home," which positively expressed the satisfaction and joy of the people of Xinjiang under the leadership of the CPC for a happy life. The 2017 ethnic minority sketch "Tianshan Qing," starring Uyghur actors, draws inspiration from the real story of the construction of the Geku Railway and tells a touching story

of the love and affection between Han builders and the local people of the ethnic groups.



Figure 29. 2017 Spring Festival Gala Ethnic Minority sketch "Tianshan Qing"

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

The third is to complete the interpretation of "ethnic unity" through "being represented" by some star singers with minority identities. As a 'representative' singer, they usually have strong market appeal and a genuine ethnic identity. The state will summon the emotional centripetal force of the ethnic minority group towards the party and the country through the singer's singing. The songs sung do not highlight ethnic minority colors, while they highlight the primary melody color. Moreover, when singers sing, they usually arrange ethnic minority actors to accompany them, strengthening the singer's rationality as a "representative." The song "Tianlu" (2005), sung by singer Han Hong (Tibetan), is a song specially created in response to the national policy of Western development during the Spring Festival Gala to celebrate the new life and development brought by the construction of the Qinghai Tibet Railway to Tibetan compatriots. When Han Hong sang, a group of actors dressed in Tibetan costumes accompanied the dance. Singer Jike Junyi (Yi ethnic group), dressed in traditional Yi clothing, sang the old song "Deep Love and Long Feelings" (2017) at the Daliangshan sub-venue in Sichuan, praising the deep love between the Red Army and ethnic minorities during the revolutionary era. The background is a scene of a Yi group in Daliangshan wearing Yi costumes and holding torches.



Figure 30. Revolutionary song "Deep Love and Long Feelings" in 2017. Singer: Jike Junyi, a pop singer with Yi ethnic identity Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

(2) The discourse expression of "cultural diversity" and "diversity and unity" by the ethnic minority groups

In the recent twenty years of the Spring Festival Gala, there has been an apparent cultural shift in the production of programs. More and more programs deeply exploring China's excellent traditional culture and intangible cultural heritage appear on the Gala stage. Moreover, "5G+4K/8K+AI and other TV communication and performance technology combined to express Chinese culture's profound and artistic beauty. Among them are some original ethnic minority song and dance programs. For example, the ethnic song and dance "Chasing Love" reflects the marriage and love folklore of the Yao people in Xiangxi, Hunan Province, in 2012. In 2018, the Dong ethnic minority's big song, "Enjoy the Song," shows the original ecological folk songs of the ethnic minorities in southeast Guizhou. In 2022, the original ecological scene

performance "Song of the Land" takes mountains, water, forests, fields, and lakes as the creation carrier and combines the intangible cultural heritage of China's five places - original ecological folk songs as the theme, demonstrating the multi-ethnic cultural composition of the motherland. Among them, the original ecological folk songs include the Hubei stone worker's song "Enshi Carrying the Gongzi," the northern Shaanxi folk song "Yellow River transport ballad," the Ewenki children's ballad "Aolu Ancient," the She folk song "Tea Picking Song," Yunnan Bai Daben song "Xingan Piao." The combination of minority culture and Han culture has creatively completed the discourse expression of the "pluralistic unity" of Chinese culture.

(3) Ethnic minority groups assist in Gala's discourse expression of "national unity"

The images of ethnic minorities also often appear in the program of expressing the grand discourse narration of "state" and "nation" in the Gala, and as an indispensable part of the Chinese nation, they help complete the expression of the "national unity". There are three basic forms of presentation: First, occupy the foreground of the stage with the presence of "sound." As previously analyzed, at 24:00 Beijing time, the sacred critical point of bidding farewell to the old and welcoming the new, the imagination of "state" and "nation" has become the real "protagonist" in the Gala. Some ethnic minority singers will join the singing lineup of the main melody songs before midnight and express their feelings for the "state" and "nation" together with other compatriots. For example, "Me and My Motherland" (2019) and "Praise the New Era" (2019). Some choral songs are not close to the zero hour, but because of the grand theme (singing praises to the motherland, singing about the new era), ethnic minority singers are inevitably present.

Table 7. Main Melody Songs Performed by Ethnic Minority Singers

Year	Time	Program Name	Theme	Singers
2020	Before 24:00	Dear China	Express love for China	There are 10 singers in total, including Lee Kwang-xi (91), A Yunga (Mongolian) and Mok Hua Lun (Hong Kong)
2021	Before 24:00	Sing a folk song to the Party	Express love for the Party	Zong Yong Zhuoma (Tibetan), Ulan Tuya (Mongolian), Yun (Qiang) and other 8 singers
2019	After 24:00	Me and My Motherland	Express love for Motherland	There are 14 people, including Dedema (Mongolian) and Xialio (Macau, China)
2019	After 24:00	Praise the New Era	Express love for the new Era	Ulan Tuya (Mongolian) and other 5 people

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)





Figure 31. 2021 Gala before midnight song "Sing a Folk Song to the Party." Three ethnic minority singers sang with Han singers. The song expresses loyalty to the party. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

Secondly, ethnic minority groups act as a stage background in a 'visual' presence. If there are no ethnic minority singers in the singing lineup of the main melody song before midnight, the image of ethnic minorities will also be "present" in another form. When national singers solemnly and affectionately sing the main melody song, ethnic minority actors will appear in the background of the stage, surrounded by the front stage singers. They either serve as singers or hosts in the background to highlight the joyful atmosphere of reunion and welcoming the spring, or as dancers or choirs for singers. Express the true "coexistence" of each component of the Chinese National Community in the presence of "image". Whether these ethnic minority actors on the stage are ethnic minorities with real identities, or they are played, the symbolic images of ethnic minority groups cannot be absent in the main melody song before zero, in the countdown time of Chinese people around the world. In 2014, when singer Yao Beina (Han nationality) performed "Heaven Shining China" before midnight, Yao Beina was at the center of the main stage, surrounded by images of various ethnic minorities and laborers from various industries.



Figure 32. Singer Yao Beina sings "Heaven Shining China" before midnight of the 2014 Gala. The song expresses the love for the Chinese nation and the pride of being a member of the nation. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

Thirdly, it appears in some special planning programs for the Gala with the theme of "national unity." In the 1995 Gala's particular program, "Look at the Mother River," host Ni Ping first introduced a schematic diagram of the Yellow River's direction arranged by 99 bottles of Yellow River water samples. Later, representatives from more than ten regions from the source of the Yellow River to the mouth of the Yellow River were invited to the Gala, and they solemnly introduced which city along the Yellow River they came from. The representative of the water supplier at the source of the Yellow River is a Tibetan girl who wears Tibetan clothing and holds Tibetan silver vessels to bring water from the source of the Yellow River. The host specially introduced the difficulty of this Tibetan girl coming to the Gala. Finally, Tibetan girls from the source of the Yellow River and representatives from the Yellow River estuary dedicated the collected Yellow River water to teachers and students from Taiwan, China, completing the grand theme of the reunification of the motherland. The ethnic identity of Tibetan girls demonstrates the diversity of Chinese culture and the region's vastness and assists in the political narrative of "national reunification."

3.2.2 Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Programs in the Spring Festival Gala

The types of programs in the Gala that involve actors from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan include songs, sketches, martial arts, magic, cross talk, and Beijing opera. The overwhelming majority of the program types are songs.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Hong Kong's, Macao's, and Taiwan's programs were about singing songs. After 2000, the cooperation and exchange between Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwanese, and mainland actors became more and more in-depth, and the types of programs began to expand, but the number of programs in each type was minimal. As the table below shows, only 2 Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan skits exist. Four martial arts programs are from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan (as of 2022). There are five magic programs in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. In 1994, Wang Haibo became the first Taiwanese actor to perform the traditional Beijing Opera at the Gala. In 2002, Taiwanese and Chinese actors Jin Shijie, Ni Minran, Zhao Ziqiang, and Li Jianchang debuted at the Gala with the comic short drama "Who is Afraid of Lord Baylor?" In 2006, Taiwan and China crosstalk actors Liu Zengkai and Zhu Degang brought the traditional crosstalk "New Tongue Twister" for the first time.

Table 8. Programs from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan of China (excluding songs)

Type	Year	Name	Performers	Performance form
Sketch	2000	"Small Station Story"	Huang Hong (Mainland) Ling Feng (Taiwan)	Cross-straits cooperation
	2018	"Go home"	Fang Fang (Taiwan) Zhang Chenguang	Cross-straits cooperation

			(Taiwan) Di Zhijie (Taiwan); Wang Ji, Du Ninglin (Mainland)	
	2015	“Picturesque landscape”	Zhang Zhen (Taiwan), Wu Jing (Mainland)	Cross-straits cooperation
	2016	“Harmony between heaven and earth”	Donnie Yen (Hong Kong) Chinese Martial Arts School, Laizhou, Shandong, China	Hong Kong and mainland actors
Martial arts	2020	“Martial arts”	Hui Yinghong (Hong Kong) Ma Jianchao (Mainland), etc	Hong Kong and mainland actors
	2021	“Heroes of Heaven and Earth”	Donnie Yen (Hong Kong), Wu	Hong Kong and mainland actors

			Jing (Mainland), etc	
Beijing opera	1994	Clip from "Zha Mei An"	Wang Haibo (Taiwan)	solo
		Clip from "Chisang Town"	Wang Haibo (Taiwan) Wang Shufang (Mainland)	Cross-straits cooperation
Crosstalk Short Drama	2002	"Who's Afraid of Lord Baylor"	Jin Shijie, Ni Minran, Zhao Ziqiang, Li Jianchang (All from Taiwan, China)	actors from Taiwan,China
Crosstalk	2006	"New Tongue Twister"	Liu Zengkai (Taiwan) Zhu Degang (Taiwan)	actors from Taiwan,China
Magic	2009	"JinYu ManTang"	Liu Qian (Taiwan, China)	actor from Taiwan,China
	2010	"Ever changing"	Liu Qian (Taiwan, China)	actor from Taiwan,China

		China)	
2011	“Pass through”	Ding Jianzhong (Taiwan), Joe Yung (Hong Kong), Yu Cuizhi (Macao), Li Xiaoran (Mainland),	actors from four regions across the Taiwan Strait
2012	“Phantom mirror”	Liu Qian (Taiwan, China)	Actor from Taiwan, China
2013	“Magic piano”	Qian Liu (Taiwan, China) Yundi Li (Mainland)	Cross-straits cooperation

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

This study focuses on the most numerous and typical song programs in the Gala programs of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan. The songs sung by Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan singers basically have four main themes.

(1) Pop songs with healthy content, expressing personal emotions such as love, friendship, and kinship

This type of song accounts for many Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan programs. In the early stages of reform and opening up, Hong Kong and Taiwan pop music was the first to enter mainland China and was deeply loved by Chinese people. Since the 1990s, many Hong Kong and Taiwanese singers have had a massive market in mainland China. Due to rating considerations, the Gala is happy to invite Hong Kong and Taiwan singers with market guarantees to perform their famous songs. For

political narrative, on the one hand, the Gala uses personalized emotional expressions such as love and friendship in Hong Kong and Taiwanese pop songs to alleviate the seriousness brought by political and ideological discourse to the audience. On the other hand, by reproducing the program's private feelings into public emotions, the Spring Festival Gala cleverly grafts an emotional space more suitable for expressing "family-state" emotions on the pop song matrix to complete its ideological discourse expression.

Firstly, transform an individual's "small family" and kinship into a "big family" - the "country" and its wanderers towards their motherland.

David Morley (2001:2) believes that radio and television play an important role in the process of combining family and country into a national family. The Spring Festival is the most important time for people to reunite with their loved ones and relive the beauty of their family relationships. "The Gala takes this opportunity to take the ethical kinship shared by people as the starting point of ideological construction, extrapolating from family kinship to neighborhood kinship, national kinship until they belong to the same big Chinese family, family and country are the same structure, extending from the family kinship structure to the emotion of the country, the emotion of the people, and even the identification of ideology." (Li Lidan, 2011: 33). For example, in 1991, Pan Meichen (Taiwan, China) sang "I Want to Have a Home," and Zhen Ni (Hong Kong, China) sang "Lu Binghua," in which one expressed the longing for home, and the other expressed a deep yearning for mother and hometown. On the Gala stage, Taiwan and Hong Kong are drifters relative to the Chinese Mainland. Their longing for home, their yearning for their mother and hometown naturally turned into their longing for returning to "China."

Secondly, transform the emotional commitments in love and friendship into loyalty and protection of a member of the "national community" towards the country.

The words "miss" and "love" in "Missing You 365 Days" (2014) and "Love You 10000 Years" (2017) initially pointed to the unwavering love in popular songs. However, when the Spring Festival Gala arranged for singers from the three regions on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to sing together, the love here went beyond narrow personal love and expanded to the love and loyalty of Chinese people from the

three regions on both sides of the Taiwan Strait to their motherland. Similarly, the song "Friends" appeared at the 2019 and 2022 Spring Festival Gala. The presentation of the two songs is different, and the emotions expressed are different. In 2019, Lang Lang played the piano, and the song "Friends," sung by Zhou Huajian (Hong Kong) and Ren Xianqi (Taiwan), pointed to a larger discourse narrative: It expressed the relationship between Hong Kong, Taiwan, China and the mainland, supporting each other like brothers and uniting forever; In 2022, a band composed of five representatives Hong Kong pop singers from the older generation of China, including Alan Tam, performed "Friends" with a strong sense of nostalgia. The expression is the touching friendship between band members who have spent their entire lives together and the audience's friends who follow, protect, and love them all the way.

Finally, transform love into kinship.

This study will analyze the song "When You Are Old" by Mo Wenwei (Hong Kong) at the 2015 Spring Festival Gala as an example, revealing that the theme of kinship on the stage of the Gala is far more politically correct and discourse valuable than the theme of love.

The lyrics of the song 'When You Are Old' are based on the passionate and sincere love poem dedicated by Irish poet William Butler Yeats to his girlfriend. It was written and composed by Chinese musician Zhao Zhao, arranged by Peng Fei, and performed by Hong Kong singer Mo Wenwei at the 2015 Spring Festival Gala. This song is sincere and touching and became the number one song on the global Chinese music chart on March 14, 2015. The theme of the song has multiple connotations, and the "love" expressed in the lyrics can be either love or kinship. This study focuses on analyzing how the Gala anchored the theme of this song to family relationships rather than love.

A unique program was planned for the 2015 Gala with the theme of kinship and filial piety. This program consists of three sections. The first section is the song "When You Are Old," sung by Mo Wenwei, which provides emotional warmth and foreshadowing for the upcoming host's appearance and storytelling. The second section is the host's introduction of a touching family story and on-site interviews between a mother and her son. Zhu Qingzhang, a coal miner from Baotou, Inner

Mongolia, has been dedicated for 31 years to caring for his mother, who became a vegetable due to a sudden old bleeding until his black hair turned white. Mother finally opened her eyes and regained her health. The third section takes on the emotional appeal of the host, with singer Liu Hegang singing the song "Hold Mom's Hand," which echoes the theme of the program to create an emotional climax and achieve a wide range of emotional resonance.

The planning program revolves around China's ancient family filial piety and traditional ethics. Therefore, from the arrangement of the program sequence and image processing of the Gala, the emotional theme of the song "When You Are Old" is anchored in kinship, especially the gratitude and filial piety of the younger generation towards the elderly. When Mo Wenwei was singing "When You Are Old," a vast clock symbolizing the passage of time appeared in the background picture, and a giant photo of an elderly person was next to it. This program's audio-visual language points to the expression of family affection: the home is a warm harbor, and parents' health is the greatest happiness in life.



Figure 33. Mo Wenwei sings the Song "When You Are Old" at the 2015 Gala.

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access:

January 20, 2023)



Figure 34. The host introduced Zhu Qingzhang's touching story of filial piety, calling on all people to accompany their parents while their parents are alive.

Source: Screenshots by the author from CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

China's long-standing tradition of integrating state and family, politics, and ethics effectively integrates different social classes and interest groups. Under the expression of family ethics, the nature of conflicts and structural crises between social classes has transformed, becoming problems that can be resolved within families through warmth and affection "(Li Lidan, 2011: 33). Although modern society has had a significant impact on the traditional family structure, the kinship that is linked by blood is melted into our blood, summoning everyone to identify. It is more conducive to stabilizing social stability and harmony to express the warmth and social-emotional bonding of family and filial piety through discourse. Therefore, if necessary, the Gala will transform the love in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan pop songs into family love and then turn family love into patriotism or directly transform love and friendship into patriotism. By recreating popular songs, the Spring Festival Gala has always firmly grasped the initiative and decision-making power of the ideological discourse construction of the "Chinese National Community."

(2) The second type of theme around the New Year festival to express good wishes to relatives and friends, the ardent expectation of spring, the joy of infinite hope for the future

Some express annual blessings to family and friends, such as "Shared Happy Year" (1985), "Blessing Song" (1986), "Happy New Year" (1992), "Congratulations and Wealth" (2005), "All Things Go Well" (2015) (2022), and "Happy and Auspicious Year" (2022); Or express the joy of Chinese people's reunion,

their expectations for the future, and their uplifting mental state directly. For example, "Heart Forever in Love" (1992), "Good Mood" (2001), "Today is Good" (2001), "Singing Stronger" (2007), "Every Day Upward" (2008), "Stand Up" (2009), "The Sun Comes Out in Joy" (2017), "Chinese Joy" (2019), "Sleepless Tonight" (2019), and "Tomorrow Will Be Better" (2020); Or to express praise and hope for spring, such as "Swallow" (1986), "Beautiful Spring" (1986), "Searching for Plum in the Snow" (2002), and "Snowflake Ode" (2019).

(3) The third type of theme focuses on "family" and "country" to develop a grand discourse narrative of "family and country"

Firstly, surrounding home and reunion, express the sincere emotions of "wanderers" who yearn for their hometown and long to return home for thousands of miles.

The nostalgia for their hometown and the longing to return home are the most authentic and natural emotional expressions of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan's "wanderers" towards their motherland on the stage of the Gala. For example, "Hometown" (1985), "My Chinese Heart" (1984) (2012), "Hometown Love" (1985), "Hometown Clouds" (1987), "Gathering in the Year of the Dragon" (1988), "365 Miles Road" (1988), "Wanderer's Heart" (1988), "Mingyue Sends Acacia from a Thousand Miles" (1989), and "Looking Forward to Reunion" (2001); In 1997 and 1999, after a hundred years of separation, Hong Kong and Macau returned to their mother's embrace. Hong Kong and Macao singers also sang the joy of returning and their confidence in the future. Such as "1997 AD", "Appointment 1998" (1998), "Song of the Seven Sons - Macau" (1999), and "Macau, I Take You Home" (2000). The Road Home "(2015) and" How Far Must We Be Together "(2015) express the difficulty of the return of Hong Kong and Macao.

Secondly, focusing on country and national unity, the songs express the patriotic sentiment and national identity of our compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, who are close and united with mainland China.

As analyzed by Zhang Aifeng (2018:73), after the return of Hong Kong, "the discourse expressed in Hong Kong programs on the Gala stage has also evolved from the 'nostalgic discourse' of cultural roots seeking to a national discourse that identifies oneself and expresses strong patriotism and collectivism. For example, "I

"Love You China" (1998), "Greater China" (1998), "Passion Leap" (1999), "Love each other" (2010), "My Chinese Dream" (2014), "Give My Heart to You" (2015), "Country" (2017), "China" (2018), "Mom, I am Back" (2019), "Common Home" (2020), and "Dear Motherland" (2020). In 2017, "Country" was led by Hong Kong actor Jackie Chan and performed by representatives of students from both sides of the Taiwan Strait and ethnic minorities. As the lyrics sing, "Fill the country with one heart, support the family with one hand; the family is the smallest country, the country is millions of families united as one. With a strong country, there is a rich family; I love my country, I love my family." This song vividly and dialectically interprets the relationship between "country" and "family," inspiring every Chinese person to identify with China.



Figure 35. 2017 Spring Festival Gala Song and Dance Program "Country". Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

(4) The fourth theme revolves around Chinese culture, expressing the recognition and love of Chinese people towards Chinese culture

"As the unity of historical creation and creators, the Chinese nation is not only a free national entity formed over thousands of years of history but also a

conscious national entity formed in modern times in confrontation with Western powers. Whether it is an objective national entity formed through interaction, communication, and reproduction, or a self-acting ethnic group manifested in ethnic emotions and common ethnic names, cultural identity plays an important role in Color "(Zhan Xiaomei and Liu Jing, 2021:3-4). "Chinese cultural identity is a powerful force for integrating and condensing the consciousness of the Chinese national community" (Cui Rong and Zhao Zhina, 2021:1).

Since the new century, especially since 2009, the Gala has deeply explored and presented Chinese culture with a high degree of cultural consciousness and confidence. The 2015 Gala specifically added a section on intangible cultural heritage programs. In Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan programs, there has also been a similar cultural shift in the collaborative performances of the three or four regions across the Taiwan Strait: There are more and more programs that showcase the excellent traditional Chinese culture and the television presentation and shooting techniques of the programs are also becoming more and more diverse. The production of the Gala programs increasingly focuses on exploring the cultural appeal of Chinese culture to members of the Chinese National Community.

These programs use typical symbols of Chinese culture as carriers, ranging from the Great Wall, the Yellow River, and the Yangtze River to Chinese landscapes and Jiangnan Pingtan; From Dragon Fist to Chinese Martial Arts; From the hundred surnames, Chinese dialects, dragon script, blue and white porcelain, and Compendium of Materia Medica, the rich and profound history of Chinese culture is showcased everywhere. These symbols summon the emotional resonance and cultural identity of every Chinese person subtly and silently through the singing of singers and the audio-visual presentation of television art. The Chinese cultural connotations and aesthetics displayed in such programs are also critical cultural foundations for the Gala to go out and communicate with world cultures.

Table 9. Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan Programs of Chinese Culture

Type	Year	Performers	Name	Performance form
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Beijing opera	1994	Wang Haibo (Taiwan) Wang Shufang (Mainland)	Clip from "Zha Mei An"; Clip from "Chisang Town"	Cross-straits cooperation
Crosstalk Short Drama	2002	Jin Shijie, Ni Minran, Zhao Ziqiang, Li Jianchang	Who's Afraid of Lord Baylor	actors from Taiwan, China
Crosstalk	2006	Liu Zengkai (Taiwan) Zhu Degang (Taiwan)	New Tongue Twister	actors from Taiwan, China
Song	1985	Wang Mingquan (Hong Kong)	The Great Wall	solo
	2004	Jay Chou (Taiwan)	Dragon Fist	solo
	2006	Xie Tingfeng (Hong Kong) Yu Chengqing (Taiwan) Man Wenjun (Mainland)	A hundred surnames	Sing together in three places across the Taiwan Strait
	2008	Jay Chou (Taiwan)	blue and white porcelain	solo
		SHE (Taiwan Women's Group)	Chinese	solo
	2009	Jay Chou (Taiwan) and Song Zuying (Mainland)	Compendium of Materia Medica	Cross-straits cooperation
	2010	Eason Chan (Hong Kong) Tan Jing (Mainland)	Dragon script	HongKong Mainland Cooperation
	2016	Liang Yongqi (Hong Kong), Lin	Landscape and Chinese Beauty	Intangible cultural

		Xinru (Taiwan), Liu Tao (Mainland)	(Song+Pingtan)	heritage programs Cross-straits cooperation
	2018	Zhong Hanliang(Hong Kong) YanChengxu (Taiwan) Xia Liao (Macau) Huang Xiaoming (Mainland)	Descendants of the Dragon	Sing together in four places across the Taiwan Strait
	2022	Xiao Jingteng (Taiwan), Wang Jiaer (Hong Kong), Peng Yongchen (Macau), Chen Kun (Mainland)	Yellow River and Yangtze River	Sing together in four places across the Taiwan Strait
Creative Cultural Program	2022	Li Liqun (Taiwan), Yang Zongwei (Taiwan), Pu Cunxin (Mainland), Ayenga (Mongolian), and a total of 8 people	Memories of the South	Cross-straits cooperation
Martial arts	2015	Zhang Zhen (Taiwan), Wu Jing (Mainland)	picturesque landscape	Cross-straits cooperation
	2016	Donnie Yen (Hong Kong) Chinese Martial	Harmony between heaven and	Hong Kong and mainland actors

	Arts School, Laizhou, Shandong, China	earth	
2020	Hui Yinghong (Hong Kong) Ma Jianchao (Mainland), etc	Martial arts	Hong Kong and mainland actors
2021	Donnie Yen (Hong Kong), Wu Jing (Mainland), etc	Heroes of Heaven and Earth	Hong Kong and mainland actors

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)



Figure 36. 2021 Martial Arts Program "Heroes of Heaven and Earth".

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

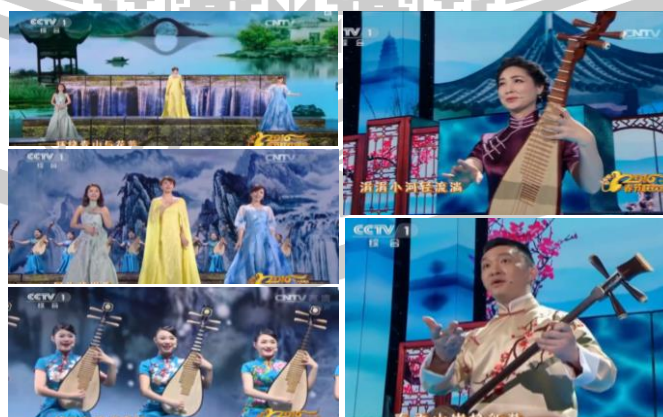


Figure 37. 2016 Intangible Cultural Heritage Program "Landscape and Chinese Beauty". It combines traditional Pingtan with virtual technology to show the beauty of Chinese mountains and rivers in spring.

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 38. 2022 Creative traditional cultural program "Memories of the South". Ancient poetry, painting, music, dance and TV virtual technology are combined to show the beauty of Jiangnan in traditional culture.

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

In addition, the participation of actors from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan in the Gala program has changed:

One change is that after 2000, there has been an increase in the number of Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwanese, and mainland actors singing a song together. On the one hand, co-signing became a regular program arrangement after the launch of the Gala brand, and it is relatively rare for one person to sing one song alone. On the other hand, co-signing between the three or four regions across the Taiwan Strait often points to the construction of an ideology. As members of the Chinese nation, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan compatriots gather with mainland actors at a sacred time to express their identification and love for the motherland and the Chinese nation

through singing together. They emphasized the sense of belonging that constitutes an individual's sense of community. After 2015, the number of co-performances in the same program has significantly increased.

Another change is that collaborative programs have expanded from songs to martial arts, opening songs and dances, and creative traditional cultural programs. Since 2015, traditional martial arts programs have incorporated actors from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Starting in 2018, the opening song and dance of the Gala has changed from the usual practice of mainland actors and singers gathering and instead arranged for actors from both sides of the Taiwan Strait, three regions, or four regions to make a joint appearance and kick off the Gala together. Formally, it can better highlight the sense of presence and experience of compatriots from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, as well as those from mainland China, so that the Gala truly creates a sense of ritual of "coexistence" that cannot be missed by the Chinese people from the beginning to the end. The creative music, dance, poetry, and painting program "Memories of the South" in 2022 is co-starring actors from Taiwan and mainland China.

3.2.3 Overseas Chinese in the Spring Festival Gala

Li Changchun (2003), a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, stated after reviewing the Spring Festival Gala program that "using the brand of (Spring Festival Gala) to unite the people of the whole country, overseas Chinese and Chinese at home and abroad, provides the strong spiritual impetus for achieving the grand goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and the revitalization of the Chinese nation." Folklorist Xiao Fang (2014) once said, "CCTV Spring Festival Gala plays a significant role in conveying the country's mainstream culture, ideas, and values to the people. On the one hand, it can enrich people's lives and meet their spiritual needs. On the other hand, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala is also a very effective cultural link for Chinese people worldwide."

In 2018, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council pointed out in a report on protecting the rights and interests of overseas Chinese that among the more than 60 million overseas Chinese, there were about 6 million overseas Chinese and about 50 million foreign Chinese. The composition of the nationality

identity of overseas Chinese has undergone fundamental changes (cited from Zhang Xiuming, 2021:4). “From the perspective of cultural anthropology, the Chinese nation mainly refers to the community of compatriots of various ethnic groups living on the land of China from ancient times to the present, as well as the people represented by the historical and cultural identity of the Chinese nation. Historical and cultural identity is essential for overseas Chinese to belong to the Chinese nation” (Shen Guiping and Shen Chunyang, 2022:6).

Overseas Chinese, as a member of the Chinese nation, have been present since the birth of the Gala. As a particular group of overseas Chinese concerned about China, overseas Chinese generally ensure the "presence" in three forms.

(1) “Verbal presence” of the overseas Chinese in the Gala

"Oral presence" refers to the presence of overseas Chinese in the language during the Gala: The Gala host will express New Year's greetings to overseas Chinese in the opening; It may also appear in the New Year's greetings of national leaders; The host of the Gala completes the "virtual presence" of overseas Chinese by reciting overseas greetings.

(2) “Image presence” of the overseas Chinese in the Gala

The Gala program team needs to pre-shoot video footage of overseas Chinese and edit it into the live broadcast of the Gala program according to the program schedule, appearing in the presence of video footage.

The content of these images can be divided into two categories. One type is the scene of overseas Chinese celebrating the Chinese New Year overseas or the video of overseas Chinese collectively paying New Year's greetings to the Chinese people, usually set against iconic buildings or scenic spots in different cities around the world where the overseas Chinese reside. Another type is the performance of overseas Chinese programs. For example, the song "Wind, Please Tell Me" in 1999 was organized by the Gala crew to shoot overseas and broadcast during the live broadcast of the Gala. This song is sung by ten overseas Chinese artists, expressing the nostalgia and passion of overseas travelers.

Usually, the Gala inserts video footage of overseas Chinese celebrating the Spring Festival immediately after midnight Beijing time, creating a sense of "being together" ceremony of "sharing the moment with the world" and "enjoying the world

together." Although it is objectively impossible for Chinese people in different regions and countries to celebrate this moment at the same time, the use of television editing technology in the Gala successfully obscured the objective existence of time and regional differences and constructed such a natural and vivid "community of the Chinese nation." For example, in 2017, after the song and dance program "Mother is China," immediately after the midnight bell, the Gala inserted the flash video "Chinese and Overseas Chinese New Year's greetings". The video features a children's voice singing "My Chinese Heart" as the background music, presenting the scene of an event where overseas Chinese people, old and young, hold red balloons to make giant auspicious characters outdoors. As the prominent red auspicious character slowly pulls up and floats into the sky, everyone embraces each other to greet their relatives with New Year's greetings.



Figure 39. 2017 Flash video "Overseas Chinese New Year's greetings" after midnight. In the video, overseas Chinese made a big "Fu" character with balloons and released it into the sky together. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

(3) “Physical presence” of the overseas Chinese in the Gala

It refers to breaking through regional restrictions, where overseas Chinese actors collaborate with domestic actors to personally participate in the live broadcast of the Gala and perform live programs. In 1985, Chinese American Huang Jinbo came to mainland China to celebrate the Spring Festival. The Spring Festival Gala crew invited him to sing the song "Descendants of the Dragon," which expressed the pure heart of overseas Chinese. He became the first overseas Chinese to perform on the stage of the Gala.

Table 10. Statistics of Live Participation of Overseas Chinese in the Gala

Year	Type	Performers	Program Name	Performance form
1985	Song	Huang Jinbo (Chinese American)	Descendants of the Dragon	Live solo
1987	Song	Fei Xiang (Chinese American)	The Clouds of Hometown; A Fire in Winter	Live solo
1992	Song	Hu Haobo (Portuguese Chinese residing in France)	Homesickness	Live solo
1993	Song	Luo Wen (Hong Kong), Su Rui (Taiwan), Wu Qixian (Singapore)	Walking Hand in Hand	Chorus with Xie Xiaodong and Na Ying (mainland singers)
1994	Dance	Tan Yuanyuan (Chinese American); Xu Gang (Mainland)	Homesickness	PianoPerformance: Kong Xiangdong; Violin performer: Lv Siqing

		China)		
2002	Song	Wang Leehom (Chinese American)	Beautiful New World	Chorus with Mainland Singers
2006	Dance	Tan Yuanyuan (Chinese American)	Three Friends of the Cold Year	Collaborate with Yang Liping and Liu Yan (mainland dancers)
2010	Song	Wang Leehom (Chinese American); RongZu'er (Hong Kong)	Love	Chorus with mainland singers such as Sun Nan
2012	Dance	Hu Qizhi (Chinese American)	Affection	Performing Crystal Ball Dance
	Piano and song	Wang Leehom (Chinese American); Piano performer: Li Yundi	Piano "Golden Snake Dance" Song "Descendants of the Dragon"	Cooperate with mainland artist
	Song	Fei Xiang (Chinese American)	The Clouds of Hometown	Live solo
2013	Song	Wang Leehom (Chinese American)	The Twelve Zodiac Signs	Live solo
2014	Magic	YIF (French Chinese)	Reunion Dinner	solo

2016	Dance	Overseas Chinese children	Jasmine Flower	From Atlanta Chenxing Dance School
	Magic	YIF (French Chinese)	Missing Home	solo
2019	Song and dance	Rong Zu'er (Hong Kong), Lin Zhixuan (Taiwan), Han Zi (Overseas Chinese), Sha Baoliang (Mainland)	Mom, I'm home	Cross Strait, Three Places, Four Seas Together
2021	Piano and dance	Dance: Tan Yuanyuan (Chinese American) Zhang Aoyue (Mainland China)	I Love You, China	Piano performer: Li Yundi (Mainland China)

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

The main types of programs for overseas Chinese include songs, dances, and magic. The program's central theme concerns homesickness, identification with Chinese culture, and patriotism. Among them, representative works expressing hometown feelings and wandering hearts include songs such as "Homesickness" (1992 solo), "Wind, Please Tell Me" (1999 choir), "Clouds of Hometown" (1987, 2012 solo), "Mom, I am Back" (2019 choir), dances such as "Homesickness" (1994), "Love" (2012), and magic like "Reunion Rice" (2014) and "Missing Home" (2016); Works that express Chinese cultural identity include the song "The Descendants of the Dragon" (sung by Huang Jinbo in 1985) (re-sung by Wang Leehom in 2012), "The Twelve Zodiac Signs" (sung by Wang Leehom in 2013), and the dance "Three Friends of the Cold Year" (collaborated with Chinese American dancer Tan Yuanyuan in 2006) and "Jasmine Flower" (2016); Works that

express patriotism include songs such as "Walking Hand in Hand" (1993), "Love" (2010), and dance "I Love You China" (2021 collaboration between Tan Yuanyuan and mainland dancers and pianists).

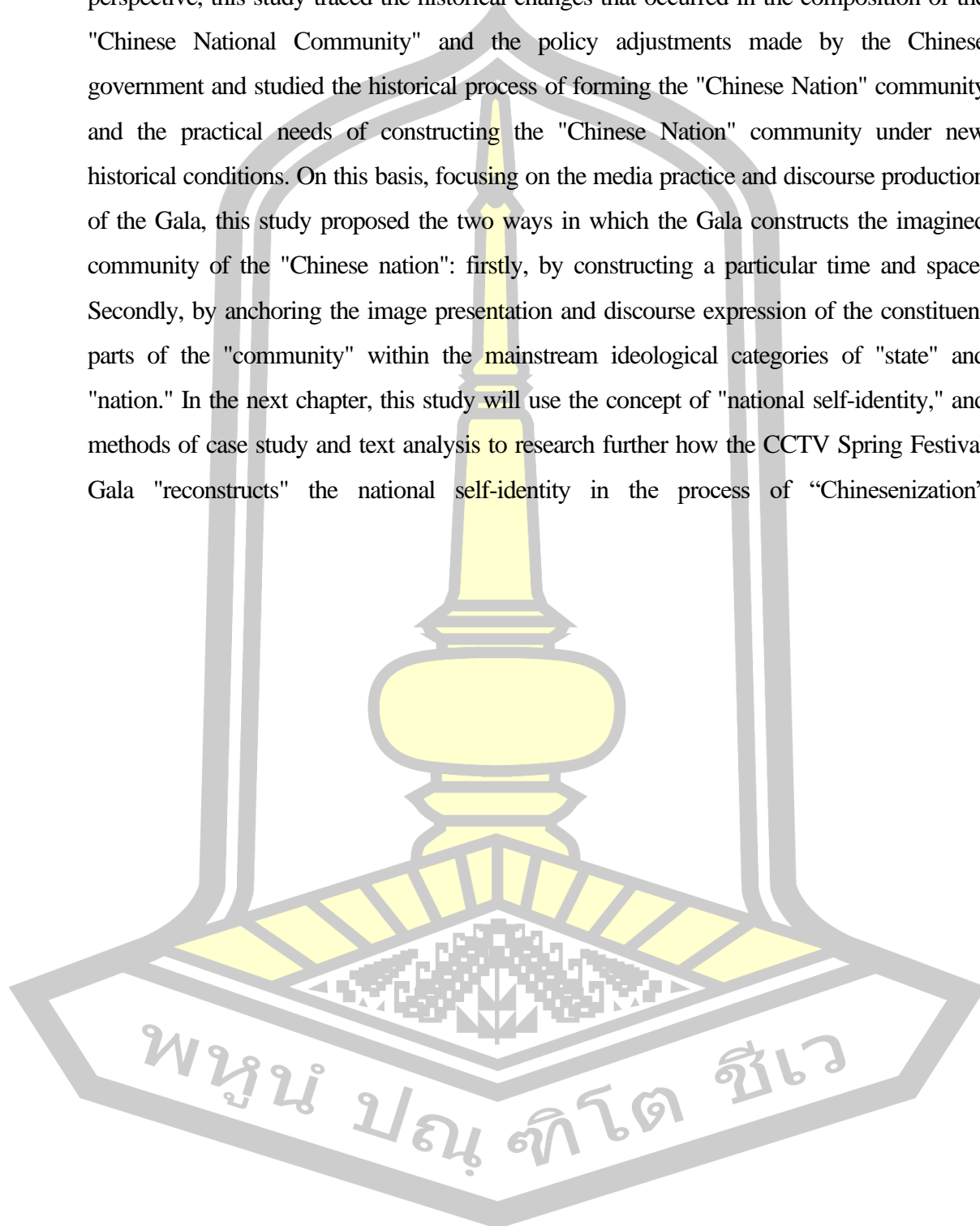
Among them, most overseas Chinese programs express homesickness and Chinese cultural identity among wanderers. Compared to Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, the Gala program focuses on constructing the historical and cultural identity of overseas Chinese, which aligns with the unique identity and historical facts of overseas Chinese. Fully exploring the essence of Chinese culture represented by the cosmology of renewal and unity between heaven and humanity, as well as the values of family reunion and welcoming the new year, fully showcasing the unique charm of excellent traditional Chinese culture and contemporary Chinese values, is an essential means for the Gala to attract cultural recognition from overseas Chinese and stimulate their "Chinese characteristics" and "Chinese sentiment."

This part analyzes the image presentation and discourse functions of different groups in the Gala to study how the Gala constructs the common entity of the "Chinese nation". This research has found that although the constituent groups of the "Chinese national community" appear in different images during the Gala, their discourse functions consistently point to the grand discourse narrative of the "nation" and "country." They often construct the imagination of the "community" by co-singing a song in "three regions across the Taiwan Strait" or "four regions across the Taiwan Strait." Among them, ethnic minority programs bear the discourse narrative of "ethnic unity," "cultural diversity and unity," and "national unity" in the Gala; Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwanese actors, as well as overseas Chinese actors, often express their longing and loyalty to their motherland as "wanderers", rising from their attachment to "home" and "family" to their patriotism towards "China" and identification with "Chinese culture." In addition, many popular songs in Hong Kong and Taiwan programs often transform private love and friendship into kinship or national feelings through the Gala's reproduction to better serve the mainstream ideological narrative of "national unity" and "social harmony" in the Gala.

Conclusion

Starting from the connotation of the "Chinese nation," this research analyzed the characteristics of the "Chinese nation" as a "civilization-state": it has a long history of national composition, is a particular form of a unified state, and is a "diverse and integrated"

pattern that includes cultural and historical diversity. Next, from a long-term historical perspective, this study traced the historical changes that occurred in the composition of the "Chinese National Community" and the policy adjustments made by the Chinese government and studied the historical process of forming the "Chinese Nation" community and the practical needs of constructing the "Chinese Nation" community under new historical conditions. On this basis, focusing on the media practice and discourse production of the Gala, this study proposed the two ways in which the Gala constructs the imagined community of the "Chinese nation": firstly, by constructing a particular time and space; Secondly, by anchoring the image presentation and discourse expression of the constituent parts of the "community" within the mainstream ideological categories of "state" and "nation." In the next chapter, this study will use the concept of "national self-identity," and methods of case study and text analysis to research further how the CCTV Spring Festival Gala "reconstructs" the national self-identity in the process of "Chinesenization"



CHAPTER IV

Gala's Re-construction of National Self-identity in the Process of Chinesenization

Introduction

In this chapter, the author applied the concept of "national self-identity" to study the Gala's reconstruction of national self-identity in the process of "Chinesenization." The author divided the discussion into three parts: The first part introduces the specific application of the concept of "national self-identity" in this study; In the second part, this study focuses on non-literary and arts programs of the Gala to study the mechanism by which the Gala constructs historical and cultural memories to achieve the national cultural identity of the Chinese people around the world; In the third part, research on the triple symbolic expression of "China" and the ideological reproduction of the Gala will be conducted to study the self-identity reconstruction of the "Chinese national community" by the Gala.

1. Part 1: Conceptual Discussion: National Self-identity

1.1 Self-identity Construction

In contemporary cultural research and criticism, the word "identity" has two primary meanings: First, it refers to some clear and distinctive characteristics of an individual or group to confirm their status in a society, such as gender, class, and race. In this sense, we can use the word "identity" to express it. On the other hand, when a person or group tries to seek and confirm their cultural "identity," "identity" is also called "identification." In cultural research, people often focus on the "social identity" and "cultural identity" of different social groups. Today, most influential cultural researchers agree that social and cultural identities are fluid and constantly changing in historical and practical contexts (Wang Min'an. 2019: 513-514).

Anthony Giddens (1991) proposed a new framework for explaining modernity and its relationship with the self in his book "Modernity and Self Identity." The author continues his viewpoint in his book "The Consequences of Modernity," stating that "extreme" or "late" modernity is a post-traditional order characterized by developed

institutional reflexivity. The globalization trend of modern institutions is accompanied by a transformation of daily life, which profoundly impacts individual behavior. So, the self becomes a kind of "reflexive planning," achieved and maintained through a modifiable narrative about self-identity.

Liu Yanling (2015:64-65) divided research on immigrant identity into three main types: 1) From the perspective of the country of residence, that is, whether immigrants have integrated or assimilated into the social and cultural context of the country of residence, this is the most common and traditional research paradigm. 2) Since the 1990s, the transnational perspective has been where researchers not only focus on the integration or adaptation of immigrants into the social and cultural context of their host countries but also emphasize their intricate connections with their ancestral countries. 3) A global perspective, in which researchers emphasize the "diaspora consciousness" and "de-regionalized" network of immigrants.

Liu Yanling (2015:69-70) believed that the perspective of studying a single country of residence (the United States) is becoming increasingly narrow and one-sided. On the contrary, a global perspective emphasizing diaspora and networking has somewhat overlooked the status and role of nation-states at the current stage and overly emphasized the "de-nationalization" of identity. As globalization deepens, nation-states have not disappeared, and the control of national identity by the state continues, even strengthening in some aspects. Many immigration-receiving countries implement control over immigration status through national policies such as immigration access, legal status, and social welfare and influence the identification of immigrants through means such as national construction and patriotic education. On the other hand, contemporary governments of immigrant exporting countries often compete for the recognition bias of their overseas immigrants through various means such as emotional appeals, economic preferential policies, and political mobilization.

1.2 National Self-identity Construction

Anthony D. Smith (1991) explored the origins of national identity in his book *National Identity*. He constructed the ethno-symbolism system by criticizing modern and proto-nationalism. In his view, national identity is not a purely artificial product as claimed by modernism, nor is national identity a primitive product rooted in the blood of the nation as believed by proto-nationalism. Based on critiquing and

absorbing both theories, Smith argues that national identity is rooted in the history and culture of an ethnic group and can provide an individual with an identity.

Smith believes that the object of national identity is pluralistic and integrated, and the object of national identity is derived from the constructed symbol and the natural blood relationship. He pointed out that there are Western "citizen" mode and non-western "ethnic" mode of national identity and summed up the five dimensions of national identity objects with general significance, that is, common ancestral land, common customs, common laws, common mass culture, and everyday economic life.

Modern nation-states construct people's national identity through nationalism. Nationality is a kind of collective identity of the members of a modern country, which means that the members of the society take "nationality" as the symbol and form a community with "nation." Smith argues persuasively that history and culture must be fundamental elements of nationalist theory because they give power to national identity and provide us with a context.

In the face of globalization, Anthony Smith refuted the "extinction theory" and "decay theory" of national identity, and he is still optimistic about the future of national identity. Global cultural and political diversity have redefined and consolidated the concept and form of the nation-state, making it difficult to form a super-national identity, and national identity will still play an essential role in the future process of globalization.

American scholar Huntington (2005: 11-12) wrote anxiously, "The debate on national identity and national characteristics is a common characteristic of our time. People in almost every place are asking, reconsidering, and redefining what commonalities they have in themselves and what differences they have from others: Who are we? What do we belong to?" Huntington (2005: 11-15) The explicit and problematic issue of national identity can be attributed to the rise of sub-national and super-national identities, which essentially points to the challenges posed by the increasing social scale in the era of globalization (such as the phenomenon of multi-ethnic migration) to the cohesion of political communities. Establishing an effective community integration mechanism to accommodate the social scale of multiple ethnic groups has become a core issue in constructing political and social order in any multi-ethnic country. "The prevalence of the concept of community today can be seen as a

response to the crisis of unity and belonging caused and exacerbated by globalization" (Gerard Delanty, 2003:1-2). Therefore, the national or national identity crisis has become a modern issue that every country must face in the era of globalization (Zhu Jun. 2021:35).

In this research, I have used "National Self-Identity" to explain the cultural and political significance of the 40 years of media culture practice of the Spring Festival Gala for the Chinese state and nation. Under the background of China's social class differentiation, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the large number of overseas Chinese, how to form the community consciousness of the "Chinese nation" and reconstruct the identity of each member of the community to the Chinese nation is becoming a major issue that the Chinese government needs to face in the domestic and international situations. Specifically, this concept emphasizes the use of the Spring Festival Gala as an ideological tool to form the national identity of each member of the "community" through the active discourse construction of "ethnic unity," "national unity," "social harmony" and "Chinese cultural diversity and unity."

2. Part 2: Cultural Memory Construction: Path Choice for the Gala to Reshape National Cultural Identity in the Context of Chinesenization

The memory of culture is vital for a nation to maintain cohesion and gain a sense of cultural belonging. As a branch of memory theory, cultural memory theory is significant in enriching the connotation and extension of memory theory. The collective memory theory proposed by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs has led to a formal shift in memory research from the individual to the collective and from psychology and cognition to sociology. In his book "How Society Memories," Paul Connerton explores "how collective memory spreads and is maintained." The research of the Asman couple has advanced the evolution of memory theory from individual and collective memory to social and cultural memory (Ouyang Hongsheng and Xu Shujie, 2018:142). Ouyang Hongsheng and Xu Shujie (2018) analyzed the cultural memory mechanism of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala from three aspects: "poetic form," "collective participation," and "ritual performance," using the cultural memory theories of Yang Asman and Aleda Asman. Their study provides a reference path for the international dissemination of visual national culture.

2.1 Nonliterary Programs: Cultural Memory Construction and National Cultural Identity

The nonliterary and art programs of the Gala have a distinct "annual" nature. The program team carefully selects "events" or "themes" that have significant value and significance to the Party, government, country, and the people in the past year and processes them in a relatively vivid artistic form around the "events" or "themes" to achieve the sublimation of the theme and the emotional mobilization of the audience, ultimately completing the specific expression of national ideology. Unlike literary and artistic programs, these types of programs usually combine two forms: news and arts. The general presentation method of a program is to combine the emotional narrative of the host (or live interviews by the host or the insertion of documentary videos) with the performance of literary and artistic programs. The number of nonliterary programs in each Spring Festival Gala is small, usually around 1-2.

The Gala sets its program agenda by taking stock of significant events in the past year, monitoring the media environment, and gaining insights into the audience's social cognition, psychology, and memory. Moreover, at the end of the year, at the sacred time, artistic audio-visual presentations are used to shock and inspire the Chinese people's "national" emotions, thereby once again echoing and strengthening the audience's social cognition, emotions, and collective memory formed through interaction with the media in the past year. Therefore, from a vertical time dimension, annual memory will form historical memory. The CCTV Spring Festival Gala revisits and strengthens the public's social and cultural memory through continuous repetition, review, and tracing, thus completing a mainstream single narrative of national identity and historical and cultural events. As Chinese people follow the Gala year after year to review the past year and look ahead to the following year, they have quietly accumulated countless political and cultural resources to form a national cultural identity.

By sorting out and analyzing the nonliterary and art programs of the Gala over the past 40 years, this research proposed that the nonliterary and art programs construct the historical and cultural memory of the Chinese nation and reshape the national cultural identity of the Chinese people through six discourse narrative types. The six discourse narrative types are as follows: Firstly, to promote the socialist core

values through media coronation of national moral models. Secondly, by comparing the present and the past, nonliterary programs highlight the achievements of modernization construction to stimulate the Chinese people's national pride and identification with the current regime. Thirdly, they revisit historical moments through anniversaries of the Party and the country to summon the high recognition of the national spirit of all Chinese people. Fourthly, it expresses ethnic solidarity and national unity through political ceremonies. Fifthly, portraying disaster and trauma to strengthen the Chinese nation's sense of community. Sixthly, cultural programs such as "National Treasure Comes Home" are specially planned to stimulate Chinese people's identification with national culture.

2.1.1 Promoting the core socialist values through the media coronation of national moral models.

Every Gala has a segment where the host solemnly introduces national moral and era model representatives. These "role models" wearing honor ribbons sit on the round table in the front row of the audience. This treatment is rare. After the host's introduction, they will gather to pay New Year's greetings to the audience and friends across the country. The camera will feature mid-shots and close-up shots to highlight the importance they place on them. Another way of presentation is to select a typical example to present his deeds in detail and depth. The narrative process includes three sub steps:

- 1) The host introduces the touching story of what happened to this typical character. At the same time, the LED screen on the Spring Festival Gala stage will synchronously supplement the host's language narrative with visualization.
- 2) The host will conduct an on-site interview with the character involved.
- 3) Emotional rendering and sublimation of the story's theme are achieved through artistic performances (such as singing or dancing), achieving the maximum effect of "moving people with emotions."

As shown in the table below, some representatives treat their work with dedication, selfless dedication, and down-to-earth dedication; Some treat their families with filial piety and love for the elderly; Some are willing to help friends or strangers in society, honest and trustworthy, and brave in their actions; Some dedicate

their entire lives to the grassroots and rural causes of their country, regardless of gains or losses.

Table 11. Nonliterary Programs: Commending National Moral Model Representatives

Year	Event	Program Theme	Presentation Form
1985	In 1984, the Chinese women's volleyball team won the 23rd women's volleyball competition championship.	Salute to the "unknown heroes" who silently contribute to their work positions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CCTV sports program host Song Shixiong introduces eight representatives on site. 2. Video recordings show scenes of accompanying trainers, doctors, chefs, and others caring for women's volleyball players.
1987	Li Bin, the director of the Beijing Red Cross Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital, is 80 years old and has worked in an ordinary position for over 50 years.	Salute to all ordinary and great workers like midwives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host Li Muran introduces Li Bin's deeds. 2. Yang Dongsheng, who became a member of the People's Liberation Army after being delivered by Li Bin, presented flowers to Li Bin 3. Sing the song "Stars Rise Before Your Eyes"
1988	Chinese Go player Nie Weiping's sister Nie Shanshan supports the treatment of a young nanny who is suffering from cancer.	Affirm the spirit of mutual assistance and love in the whole society	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host Ju Ping introduces the story of Nie Shanshan 2. Singer Wei Wei sings the song "Dedication of Love"

1993	Ordinary worker Shang Yuzhen used her blood to transfuse her daughter with aplastic anemia for nine years	Praise maternal love	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host NiPing introduces Shang Yuzhen and her little daughter 2. Intervening news and documentary videos 3. Singer sings "Song in Mom's arms"
2014	The host introduces six national moral model representatives	Praise the spirit of selfless dedication	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The host told the story of Gong Quanzhen, a 91-year-old woman who rooted herself in the countryside. 2. Singer Han Lei sings the song "Old Auntie"
2015	Zhu Qingzhang, a coal miner from Baotou, Inner Mongolia, has been devoted to taking care of his mother, who became vegetative due to a sudden old hemorrhage, for 31 years until she regained her health.	Praise the Chinese family's affection and filial piety	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hong Kong singer Karen Mok sings "When You Are Old." 2. Host Dong Qing introduced a touching real story about Zhu and his mother. 3. On-site interview with Zhu Qingzhang 4. Liu Hegang sings "Hold Mom's Hand"

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)



Figure 40. The host introduced the six national moral model representatives (2014)

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access:
January 20, 2023)



Figure 41. The host introduced the deeds of 91-year-old Gong Quanzhen who rooted herself in the countryside.

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access:
January 20, 2023)

Although these moral models are ordinary people, they are "role models" for Chinese society to learn regarding ideology, morality, and values. Their morality and spirit best reflect the core socialist values. The fundamental task of building a socialist cultural power is to construct the socialist core value system. Fan Ke (2022:12) believes, "In order to strengthen the awareness of national community, in addition to considering the objective and even measurable social and cultural elements that traditional communities should have, we should also consider the direction of national community development. This is a question of further consolidating social unity within the community. Building a moral community should be a direction". Therefore, each CCTV Spring Festival Gala promotes the socialist core values by coronating national moral model representatives through the media, which is conducive to building a moral community of the Chinese nation, strengthening the sense of community of the Chinese nation, and conducive to the formation of recognition of the Chinese culture in the community.

2.1.2 By comparing the present and the past, nonliterary programs highlight the achievements of modernization construction to stimulate the Chinese people's national pride and identification with the current regime.

As shown in the table below, nonliterary and artistic programs that reflect the achievements of modernization construction since China's reform and opening up involve three types of themes: one type reflects the country's strength through breakthroughs in high-precision and cutting-edge technology research and development, such as aviation and aerospace. Aerospace heroes have become regulars in nonliterary programs of the Spring Festival Gala. The second type expresses that "without a strong country, there would be no athletes who are higher, better, and faster," based on China's remarkable sports achievements. Olympic champions are also regulars of the Spring Festival Gala. The third category reflects the tremendous achievements of China's economic and social construction through the phased achievements of the development strategies and policies implemented by the CPC and the government, such as the "Western Development" strategy, the construction of the "Qinghai Tibet Railway," the "South to North Water Diversion" project, and poverty alleviation.

Table 12 Nonliterary programs: reflecting the tremendous achievements.

Theme 1: Aerospace Achievements		
Year	Major Events / National Policies	Presentation Form
2004	2003, Yang Liwei completed the first crewed space mission of Shenzhou-5, which marks China as the third country capable of independently sending people into space.	Before midnight, Yang Liwei brought his five-star red flag, which accompanied him on a journey through space, to the venue to send his blessings to the motherland.
2008	China will launch the Shenzhou-7 spacecraft, marking the first spacewalk in 2008.	The flag bearer of the Tiananmen Square Flag Class presented a Chinese flag to the representatives of the space heroes, wishing them a successful completion of their mission.

2013	<p>In June 2012, the human-crewed spacecraft Shenzhou-9 successfully engaged in automatic rendezvous and docking with the target spacecraft Tiangong-1, as well as manned rendezvous and docking with astronauts; China's first female astronaut entered space, achieving a breakthrough of zero.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Singer Li Yugang plays the mythical character Chang'e and sings the song "Chang'e." 2. Three space heroes arrived at the Spring Festival Gala venue. 3. The host interviewed the aerospace heroine Liu Yang on-site.
2017	<p>In 2016, Shenzhou-11 flew into outer space; 2016 also marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of China's aerospace industry.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The host invited 11 aerospace heroes to the scene. 2. Hold a solemn ceremony of hand modeling. 3. Hong Kong celebrity Jackie Chan leads college students from both sides of the Taiwan Strait and ethnic

		minorities to perform the song and dance "The Country".
2021	In 2020, China's aerospace industry achieved another series of brilliant achievements.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yang Mengfei, Zhang Bonan, Xie Jun, and Sun Zezhou, four Chinese space science academicians, came to the Spring Festival Gala to pay their respects to the Chinese people. 2. Han Hong sings the song "Dream Road"

Theme 2: Sports Achievements

Year	Major Events / National Policies	Presentation Form
1986	National "Top Ten Athletes" Award Ceremony	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Athletes appear, interviewed by host Song Shixiong 2. Li Ning and other athletes performed

		"Pommeled Horse Blossoms".
2008	Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics approaching the opening ceremony	<p>1. Host Bai Yansong introduces Olympic topics</p> <p>2. Liu Chengyu and ten representative athletes recited the poem "A Centenary Dream Come True."</p> <p>3. Chinese Hong Kong and Macau singers, mainland singers, and foreign singer representatives sang the song "One Dream" in a choir.</p>
2009	The Beijing Summer Olympics have successfully concluded. The Chinese sports delegation achieved outstanding results with 51 gold and 100 medals, ranking first on the Olympic gold medal table for the first time.	<p>1. The host introduced that the four sparkling characters "Long Live the</p>

		<p>Motherland" on-site were composed of athletes using their medals and were gifts for the 60th birthday of New China.</p> <p>2. Zhang Ye sings the song "Ode to the Motherland".</p>
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Theme 3: China's Economic and Social Construction

Achievements

Year	Major Events / National Policies	Presentation Form
1994	<p>Photographer Xu Yonghui has been tracking and capturing four "family photos" of an ordinary farmer's family for over 40 years.</p>	<p>1. Host Ni Ping introduces four "family photos" taken at different times</p> <p>2. On-site interview with photographer Xu Yonghui</p> <p>3. Yin Xiumei sings "Today's Chinese People"</p>

2021	After eight years of struggle, China has won the battle against poverty. Nearly 100 million impoverished rural people have eliminated poverty, and 832 poverty-stricken counties have eliminated poverty.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The host introduces the phased victories achieved in poverty alleviation. 2. Representatives of the winners of the National Poverty Alleviation Award come on stage and give short speeches. 3. Han Hong sings the song "Dream Road"
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Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

The Gala often presents the tremendous changes before and after the reform and opening up by tracing history and comparing the past and present. A national prosperity and strength narrative inspires Chinese people to confirm the current happy life and identify with the country and the nation. The Spring Festival Gala vividly portrays the traumatic historical context of the past, immersing the audience into the historical context of the past and allowing them to revisit and experience the humiliating history of China since modern times. Through the "reappearance" and reconstruction of the past historical memory, the Spring Festival Gala forms an evaluation and historical positioning of the present and achieves the legitimacy of the demonstration of the current regime and country led by the Communist Party of China. Furthermore, It formed a set of cause-and-effect logic of political Discourse expression: 1) backwardness - national humiliation - weak sports;

2) The independence of the State - reform and opening up - muscular national strength - national revitalization - vigorous sports, and the critical point of the connection and transformation of these two causal chains lies in the establishment of the leadership of the CPC, in such construction, the CPC has become an inevitable and correct choice in history.

Take the nonliterary program "A Century of Dreams" as an example. The program is themed around the 2008 Beijing Olympics and consists of three parts in chronological order. In the first part, the host, Bai Yansong, introduces the topic of the Olympics, taking the audience back to 1908, a hundred years ago. The host's opening is as follows: "Dear friends, at this joyful moment, let us turn the view back to a hundred years ago. In 1908, Tianjin Youth magazine posed three questions: When can we have athletes participate in the Olympics? When can we team up to participate in the Olympics? When can we host another Olympics? No one can answer these heavy questions. It is not only the dream of the Olympics but also the dream of prosperity. However, from 1908 to 2008, time perfectly answered these three questions" (According to the CCTV Spring Festival Gala program video). The host said, "We have walked a long way today. However, remember how we started. If we look back at the Olympics as a 100-meter track, how lonely and emotional the Chinese people who first stood up were. Let us listen together." The program naturally entered the second stage through the host's introduction - reciting the poem "A Hundred Year Dream."

Recitation consists of two parts. The first half of the reciter, Liu Chengyu, dressed in Zhongshan attire, created a "real" historical context about the past through passionate storytelling and real old photos appearing on the stage LED screen: the backward predicament of the Chinese nation a hundred years ago and the humiliation and hardships experienced by the first generation of Chinese athletes participating in the Olympics. With a mournful and indignant voice, Liu Chengyu expressed his expectations for the nation's future: "I long for, look forward to, and firmly believe in it. One day, we will be proud under the flag of the Five Rings. One day, one day." Immediately after, ten representatives of Chinese athletes who have won Olympic medals appeared collectively. They gave a historical answer in the new era: "This day has arrived, with a hundred years of hope in sight. This day has finally arrived amidst

the smiles of Beijing in 2008". The first half of Liu Chengyu's recitation created a "vivid" and "real" historical context, visualizing historical memories and symbolizing China and sports from a hundred years ago. The collective recitation of the latter half of the athletes symbolizes the assertive new China and the rising Chinese nation in today's new era. The two parts form a sharp contrast, dialogue, and continuation, incredibly stimulating the Chinese people's patriotic enthusiasm and national identity.



Figure 42. 2008 Music Poem Recitation "A Hundred Year Dream". On the left is China 100 years ago, and on the right is China about to host the Olympic Games. The progress and strength of the country are reflected by comparison. Source: Screenshots by the author from YOUKU.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

The third segment is a representative choir song, "One Dream," by Chinese Hong Kong and Macau singers, mainland Chinese singers, and foreign singers. The Beijing Olympics is a global participation in the Olympics, and the inclusion of foreign singer representatives in the song-singing segment effectively demonstrates China's openness and inclusiveness, breaking through the narrowness that may arise from nationalist media Discourse and gaining more recognition from global audiences.

2.1.3 Revisiting historical moments through anniversaries of the Party and the country to summon the high recognition of the national spirit of all Chinese people.

Another way for the CCTV Spring Festival Gala to "recreate" historical memories is to connect history and the present by celebrating significant national

anniversaries, gaining a high degree of recognition from the Chinese people for the national spirit and the legitimacy of the current State and political power.

Table 13. Nonliterary Programs: Planned around Historical Commemorative Days

Year	Commemoration Day	Subject	Presentation Form
2010	The 2009 National Day Parade Commemorates the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of New China.	Praising the Motherland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sketch "My Heart Flying". It tells the story of a female pilot in the Republic who worked hard to train for the parade and was willing to become a reserve pilot. 2. 16 female pilot representatives stepped onto the Gala stage. 3. Singing the song "Long Live the Motherland"
2016	2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War.	Praising the Victory of the Anti-Japanese War	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The host introduces the Victory Day parade 2. Short sketch performance "General and Soldier" 3. The choir song "Iron Blood Loyalty" by the Three Armies Honor Guard 4. Host Dong Qing introduces veteran Zhang Yuhua.
2017	2016 marks the 80th anniversary of the Red Army's Long March victory. The Spring Festival Gala set up a "Salute to	Salute to the Old Red Army and praise the spirit of the Long March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The host introduces five veteran Red Army representatives who have participated in the Long March. 2. Zhu Guangdou, an old artist

	the Old Red Army" segment to celebrate the birthday of the 105-year-old Wang Dingguo Red Army on New Year's Eve.		from the Yan'an period, performed a fast tempo. 3. The Chinese People's Liberation Army Third Army Honor Guard Chorus Song "When That Day Comes."
2017	Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the establishment of China's aerospace industry	Salute to the spirit of aerospace and the outstanding achievements made in the aerospace industry.	1.The host introduced the special significance of 2016 to China's aerospace industry and invited 11 aerospace heroes to the scene. 2. Hold a solemn ceremony of hand modeling 3. Hong Kong celebrity Jackie Chan leads college students from both sides of the Taiwan Strait and ethnic minorities to perform the song and dance "The Country."
2018	2017 marks the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland.	Celebrate the return of Hong Kong and the tremendous strategic decision of the Belt and Road.	1. Host Zhang Guoli introduces the national treasure, the Silk Road landscape painting. 2. Interview with Hong Kong businessman Xu Rongmao, the donor of the national treasure "Silk Road Landscape Map." 3. Dance performance "Silk Road Blooms."

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

Take the 2017 Spring Festival Gala's non-literary program, "Salute to the Old Red Army," as an example. Host Dong Qing introduced five old Red Army soldiers, including Wang Dingguo, who had participated in the Long March. When introducing Wang Dingguo, Dong Qing specifically mentioned some vivid historical details. She said, "In 1933, Wang joined the Red Army and completed the 25000-mile Long March. On the way to the Long March, enemy bullets broke her leg bones, and she was so cold that she lost her toes, but she did not shed a single tear." Later, Zhu Guangdou, an old artist from the Yan'an period, performed the fast-paced performance "Carrying Forward the Past and Opening Up the Red Army Flag." This Allegro traces back to the glorious history of the CPC, leading the Chinese people to carry out the revolution. Finally, the Chinese People's Liberation Army Third Army Honor Guard sang the song "When That Day Comes." The appearance of five old Red Army soldiers at the Spring Festival Gala made the distant revolutionary history clear. The songs of the Three Armies Honor Guard, full of ambition and passion, demonstrate today's Chinese people's recognition and inheritance of the spirit of the Red Army and the Long March.



Figure 43. Special Plan for the 2017 Gala "Salute to the Old Red Army" Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of iQIY.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 44. Zhu Guangdou performs clapper talk of "Inheriting the Past and Opening Up the Red Army Flag."

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of iQIY.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

The commemoration and review of significant historical events in the past by the Spring Festival Gala will be carried out cyclically through Discourse expression and media construction as the number of commemorative days continues to increase. The large-scale replication and permanent preservation of the media will continuously affect modern people who rely heavily on media, reshaping the historical memory of Chinese people worldwide and forming their identification with national culture. From the perspective of the narrative Discourse mechanism of media, whether it is showcasing the achievements of national construction or commemorating major historical events, media relies on tracing and "reproducing" history and, through comparison between the present and the past, enables the current society and regime to gain practical significance and legitimacy. Therefore, the historical and cultural memory construction of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala

provides a continuous source of memory nourishment for Chinese people worldwide to identify with national culture.

2.1.4 Expressing political demands for ethnic solidarity and national unity through solemn ceremonies.

As a national cultural ceremony and media tool for national ideology, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala naturally expresses political Discourse on ethnic solidarity, national unity, and social harmony. Nonartistic programs have the most vital sense of ceremony among all Spring Festival Gala programs. The unique planning around national unity especially has a sense of solemnity and sacredness of ceremony.

Table 14. Nonliterary Programs: Political ceremony with the theme of national unity

Year	Program Planning	Theme	Presentation Form
1995	"Looking at the Mother River": Water delivery personnel from more than ten regions along the Yellow River came to the Spring Festival Gala and presented the collected Yellow River water to representatives of Taiwan compatriots.	national unity, ethnic solidarity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host Ni Ping introduces a schematic diagram of the direction of the Yellow River arranged by 99 bottles of Yellow River water samples. 2. The water delivery person delivers the water to the representative of Taiwan's compatriots 3. Singing the song "Immortal Yellow River"
1997	"Beijing Time": Hong Kong's Return to China	national unity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Before midnight, the hosts Zhao Zhongxiang and Ni Ping recited the poem "Beijing Time" with music 2. Singing the song "Good Weather"

1998	<p>“The Mother River”: The confluence of the Riyuetan Pool water brought by Taiwanese compatriots with the Longkou water sample from the Three Gorges Dam and the Xiaolangdi diversion tunnel water sample from the Yellow River.</p>	national unity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host Ni Ping invites representatives of Taiwanese compatriots to come on stage 2. The "Three Waters Confluence" ceremony will be held on-site. 3. Singing the song "Greater China," singers are Mao Ning (mainland China), Andy Lau (Hong Kong of China), and Zhang Xinzhe (Taiwan of China).
2003	<p>“Land soil Convergence”: The organizing committee of the Huaxia Cultural Link Project has sent a special gift of 34 boxes of soil collected from the land of China.</p>	national unity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host Ni Ping introduced the origin of 34 packs of soil. 2. A solemn national land soil gathering ceremony be held at the Gala venue. At the same time, host Zhao Zhongxiang recited ancient poetry. 3. Song "Homeland Love"

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

The reunification ceremony is highly symbolic in the choice of ceremonial symbols. On the one hand, elements such as "Yellow River" and "native land" emphasize that Chinese nation has a shared history and culture. The Yellow River is the mother river of the Chinese nation and has nurtured the Chinese people. Both sides of the Strait are on the same land, fed by the same river, a continuous blood relationship. The ritual actions of "convergence" emphasize the recognition of the "central" status of the community.

On the other hand, elements such as "bronze ding" and "army" emphasize that China has absolute sovereignty over its territorial boundaries. In the 2003 land soil gathering ceremony, 34 boxes of soil were collected from China's vast territory: 31 provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Macao Special Administrative Region, and Alishan, Taiwan Province. Converging soil from 34 local administrative units in China in the "bronze ding" symbolizes the absolute support and unity of Chinese local administrative regions to the Party Central Committee and the government, and also symbolizes the characteristics of Chinese culture "diversity and unity." "Ding" symbolized absolute royal power and China's sovereignty over the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, especially Taiwan. Thirty-four localities united to form a unified and powerful Chinese community.



Figure 45. 2003 Special Planning Ceremony "Land soil Gathering". The envoy in white gathered soil from 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities in mainland China, as well as soil collected from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, in the Baoding. Source: Screenshots by the author from YOUKU.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

2.1.5 Representing disaster and trauma situations to strengthen the sense of community of the Chinese nation.

Non-literary and art programs reflect annual state events and are documentary. China's socialist modernization is not sailing smoothly, and it often faces the test of sudden disasters, such as floods raging in nature, frozen disasters that

have not occurred in decades, major earthquakes, and the COVID-19 epidemic sweeping the world.

Li Hongtao's research examines how Chinese news media have invoked the SARS past in their epidemic coverage, understanding how the past is involved in the present and how collective memory serves as a social framework. "Plague Imagination uses a metaphor of war to point to a single narrative collectively: COVID-19 is the latest chapter in the war between man and plague, and with brave warriors, ultimate victory is certain" (2020:29). The Festival Gala to reflect the disaster events is surprisingly consistent with the Discourse narrative reported by the COVID-19 media: The external disaster has become the touchstone to test the internal unity of the Chinese nation. As long as all the Chinese people unite closely around the Party Central Committee and the Government, they can turn the crisis into a turning point and strive for the final victory.

Therefore, the disaster narrative in the Spring Festival Gala transformed into a "nation-state" narrative. Four narratives intertwined in it:

- 1) emphasizing the national unity.
- 2) Praising the "national heroes" who fought the disaster at the critical moment.
- 3) Affirming significant social progress through historical comparison.
- 4) Proving the legitimacy and rationality of the current regime.

Table 15. Non-arts programs: Reflecting the disaster and trauma as a topic.

Year	Disaster Event	Theme	Presentation Form
1999	Devastating floods in southern China in 1998	Praise the deep friendship between the army and the people	1. The host, Ni Ping, introduced the representatives of the victims and the soldiers in the 1998 catastrophic floods on the spot. 2. Song "For Whom" (Singers: Zu Hai, Tong Tiexin).

2008	As 2008 drew to a close, severe ice storms in southern China disrupted traffic and prevented millions of migrant workers from reuniting with their families.	United, Fight against ice and snow	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Host Bai Yansong introduced the topic of ice disaster. 2. CCTV hosts and actors recited "Warm 2008" with the soundtrack. 3. Four singers led the song "The Snow is Merciless, but Chinese People Have Love."
2009	A massive earthquake struck Wenchuan County, Sichuan Province, on May 12, 2008.	National unity against the massive earthquake	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The host brought out the topic of people's New Year in the earthquake-stricken areas. 2. The video shows local people celebrating the Spring Festival together at Yingxiu, the epicenter of the earthquake. 3. The host interviewed representatives of the disaster area on the spot. 4. Sang the song "Heaven and Earth Auspicious".
2020	In late 2019, the novel coronavirus outbreak occurred in	Expressing the spirit of solidarity in fighting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The host paid tribute to the medical staff on the front line of the fight against the epidemic. 2. Reciting "Bridge of

	Wuhan.	the epidemic	Love" (6 hosts from CCTV News Channel)
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Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

Take the documentary program planned in 1999 as an example. The program began with a live introduction and storytelling by the host. The host, Ni Ping, first introduced an elderly farmer and his family, who came to the scene to represent the disaffected people from the Yangtze River basin. The farmer did not speak, and the host relaid the whole process. The host's Discourse narrative revolves around a worn copper lock from the elderly farmer.

Ni Ping said, "This 88-year-old farmer had often experienced floods because he grew up near the Yangtze River. He also vividly remembered the 1931 flood, when 30 million people were washed away on both sides of the Yangtze River, leaving behind only a broken copper lock. The man had carried it for almost seventy years. Last year, he said, his family suffered the worst flooding in 100 years, but they were all safe. " (The author arranges the host's lines according to the program).

The bronze lock is a carrier of painful memories of the past and a witness of history. The host's narration starkly contrasted the tragic situation of 30 million people swept away by floods along the Yangtze River in 1931 and the safety of the farmer and his family during the once-in-a-century flood in 1998. Through the historical comparison between the past and the present, the program completes the expression of political Discourse: Without the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese Government, the bitter memory of the floods and the people's livelihood will not end.



Figure 46. Host introduced the elderly farmer from disaster area and the armed soldiers.

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

The song "For Whom" by military singers Zu Hai and Tong Tiexin affectionately eulogizes the bravery of the people's army. The LED screen on the Spring Festival Gala stage simultaneously played the video of the people's army fighting the flood and the national leaders (Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Zhu Rongji) going to the front line of the flood command. The dual narrative of music and video images points to the "nation-state" narrative, inspiring all Chinese people's national identity and unprecedented national cohesion.



Figure 47. Song "For Whom". The song praises the sacrifice of the People's Liberation Army and the solidarity spirit of all parties to support one side in trouble.

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

2.1.6 Cultural programs such as "National Treasure Comes Home" are specially planned to stimulate Chinese people's identification with national culture.

The report of the 18th National Congress of the CPC (October 2012) proposed to solidly promote the construction of a socialist cultural power, comprehensively improve the moral quality of citizens, enrich the spiritual and cultural life of the people, and enhance the overall cultural strength and competitiveness. Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, has repeatedly emphasized the importance of establishing cultural confidence and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture, pointing out that "cultural confidence is a more fundamental, broader, and deeper confidence." "Excellent traditional Chinese culture is the spiritual lifeline of the Chinese nation, an important source of cultivating socialist core values, and a solid foundation for us to stand firm in the world cultural turbulence."

The creative transformation and dissemination of excellent traditional Chinese culture are not only conducive to the formation of national and cultural identity among the 56 multi-ethnic groups in mainland China and compatriots in Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan but also crucial to summon the historical and cultural identity of overseas Chinese, thus forming a "Chinese nation" with diverse modernity to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, excellent traditional Chinese culture is the greatest common divisor that unites the "Chinese national community," it is also an indispensable cultural resource and symbol for the Spring Festival Gala to go global and exchange with other cultures. Since 2012, CCTV Spring Festival Gala has vigorously explored the inherent spiritual connotations and aesthetic styles of Spring Festival folk culture and excellent traditional Chinese culture and creatively presented them using TV communication and expression technologies such as "5G+4K/8K+AI". The 2015 Spring Festival Gala also created a unique program section for intangible cultural heritage.

Noliterary programmes such as "Bring National Treasures Home" and "Bring National Treasures to Life" showcase China's long history and splendid culture. These programs activate Chinese people's cultural memory and imagination

of the past by creating a cultural context and space of the past, thereby stimulating Chinese national pride and identification with Chinese culture.

Table 16. Non-Literary Programs: National Treasure Cultural Programs

Year	Planning Background	Theme	Presentation Form
2018	2017 marks the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland. The first "Belt and Road" International Cooperation Summit Forum was held in May 2017.	Showcasing the long history and culture of China	1. Host Zhang Guoli invited the director of the Palace Museum, Shan Jixiang, to introduce the national treasure. 2. Interview Hong Kong businessman Xu Rongmao, the donor of the national treasure. 3. Dance performance "Silk Road Blooms"
2021	The main Buddha's head (Sui sandstone) on the north wall of the eighth cave of Tianlongshan Grottoes in	Cultural prosperity leads to national prosperity	Host Zhang Guoli invited Hang Kan (Professor at the School of Archaeology, Peking University, and Dean of the Yungang

	Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, returned home from overseas.		Research Institute) to introduce Buddha's head to the audience.
2022	2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of modern archaeology in China. During the heyday, bronze masks were unearthed from the Sanxingdui site (Sichuan).	Showcasing the diversity and profoundness of Chinese civilization	1. The host introduced the exciting archaeological Discoveries in Sanxingdui, China, and their significance. 2. The dance "Golden Mask" used a duet to depict a love story that spans thousands of years.

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)





Figure 48. 2018 "National Treasure Returns"--- "Silk Road Landscape Map" Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

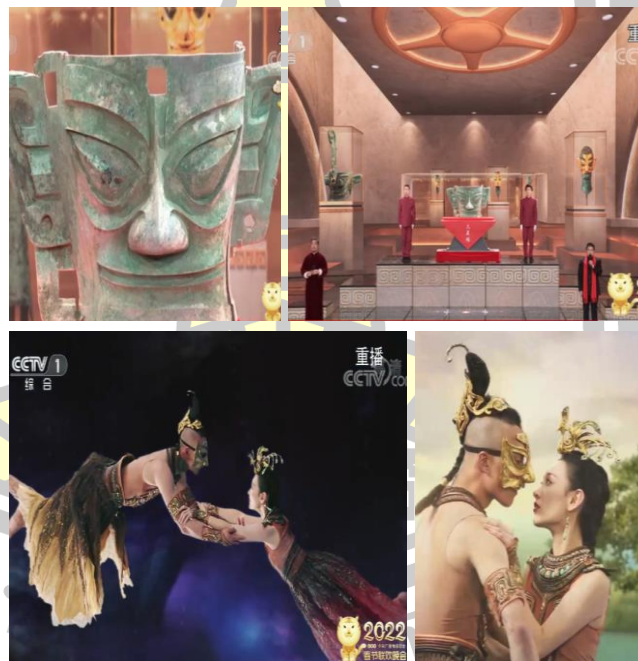


Figure 49. 2022 "Bringing National Treasures to Life" - "Golden Mask" Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

2.2 Spring Festival Gala Memory: Strengthening the National Cultural Memory of All Chinese People through the Continuous "Reproduction" of the Gala Programs

The Spring Festival Gala is influential because it never disappears with the end of the live broadcast but becomes a collective memory on any day of the year through topics, replays, and dissemination. (Wang Xiaoyu, 2005:32).

On the one hand, the Gala has continuously reconstructed historical and cultural memories for audiences through large-scale replication and replay through different media channels. Repeated replays have promoted the dissemination of the Spring Festival Gala in two ways: one is the dissemination of the program; Another type is disseminating, where people use words, sentence structures, and tone in street discussions.

On the other hand, the Gala has formed a creative tradition of reviewing the past and paying tribute to classics in program production over the past 40 years. Lead the audience to repeatedly revisit the collective memories of the past Spring Festival Gala or the social, historical, and cultural memories carried by the Gala. The specific methods include re-singing or re-creating old songs; The old singers returned to the stage of the Gala after many years; Reproduction of the Gala program context; Salute to the 30th anniversary of the Gala and other forms.

Take the 2012 Gala as an example. The theme of 2012 Gala is a comprehensive tribute to the 30 years of the Gala. Many old songs and singers reappeared on the Gala stage after 20 or 30 years. The 26th program of the 2012 Gala is the song collection "Salute 30 Years". Among them, six songs and singers became popular overnight after their debut in the Gala. These songs and singers have long become the collective memory of all Chinese people, along with the widespread of the Spring Festival Gala. When these old songs and singers appear again on the Gala stage, for every Chinese person, it is not only a kind of nostalgia and review of the past common experience but also a re-confirmation of the social memory framework and a re-strengthening of the national cultural identity.



Figure 50. 2012 CCTV Spring Festival Gala Song collection "Salute to 30 Years". In 1987, Fei Xiang sang "Clouds of Hometown." In 2012, Fei Xiang re-sang "Clouds of Hometown". Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 51. 2012 CCTV Spring Festival Gala Song collection "Salute to 30 Years". 1984 Cheung Ming-min sang "My Chinese Heart". 2012 Cheung Ming-min re-sang "My Chinese Heart". Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of YOUKU.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 52. 2012 CCTV Spring Festival Gala Song collection "Salute to 30 Years". In 1988, Wei Wei sang "Dedication of Love". In 2012, Wei Wei re-sang "Dedication of Love." Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

In this part, the author mainly used case analysis and text analysis methods to study the construction of cultural memory in the Gala to summon the national cultural identity of all Chinese people. Firstly, this research took nonliterary and artistic programs (also known as documentary programs or specially planned programs) as the research text, focusing on analyzing the cultural memory content constructed by the Gala through nonliterary and artistic programs and how these contents affect the national cultural identity of Chinese people around the world. By organizing and analyzing nonliterary programs of the Gala, this research proposed that nonliterary programs construct the historical and cultural memory of the Chinese nation and reshape the national cultural identity of the Chinese people through six types of narrative discourse. This research further investigated two main methods for constructing the memory of the Gala: On the one hand, from the perspective of communication, large-scale replication and replay of the Gala program through the media are used to reconstruct historical and cultural memory for the audience. On the other hand, from the perspective of program production, the focuses on utilizing the resources of past Gala programs, continuously strengthening the cultural memory of Chinese people by looking back at the past, paying tribute to classics, and summoning their recognition of national culture.

3. Part 3: National Self-identity Re-Construction: The Image Expression of “China” and Ideological Reproduction of the Gala.

In this part, the author studied the image of the Chinese "nation" and "state" in the multi- images expression system of the Spring Festival Gala, furthermore, by studying the reproduction of the star images in the Spring Festival Gala to reveal how the Gala cleverly transforms the individual and consumerist pop culture into the collective, national mainstream culture to reconstruct the identity of all Chinese people.

3.1 Chinese "Nation" and "State" images in Gala

Xi Jinping emphasized the need to "establish and highlight the symbols of Chinese culture and the image of the Chinese nation shared by all ethnic groups." In cultural identity, nation and state are the most important considerations. The most stable form of community in the international system, the complex and profound interaction between the nation and the state, constitutes the source of cultural, political, party, and road identities. Culture is a subjective way of creating the world and a realistic Figure of national existence. As a social phenomenon, culture is attached to the specific country with the nation as the carrier and becomes the deep memory of the community and the spiritual meaning of the nation-state. Therefore, national identity is mainly manifested in historical and cultural identity. The state is the superstructure built on the national organism, the national community's power organization, the national culture's defender, and the representative of national interests and national sovereignty. As "the highest form of a political entity, the political shell of national spirit, and the material embodiment of national will and destiny," the state takes the principles of territory, people's sovereignty, and political legitimacy as the principles to build a bridge of national connection, implement a stable system, and extract and abstract the ideas and thoughts of national consciousness cohesion (Zhan Xiaomei and Su Zeyu, 2016:30).

3.1.1 Image presentation of the Spring Festival Folk

The Gala, a new folk custom "invented," relies on the ancient Spring Festival folklore inherited by the Chinese nation for thousands of years. As Qi Lin (2017:85) said, the significance of the Spring Festival Gala is that it is an essential representation of the transformation of Chinese traditional culture.

Yuan Dewang (chief director of the Gala in 1997 and 2004) once said, "The Spring Festival Gala is the most important traditional festival in China; in this traditional festival, folk things must be vividly displayed, so I think that the chief director of the Gala must have some understanding of folk culture. Otherwise, it is difficult to do well" (CCTV Record Channel, 2013:163). No matter how the Spring Festival Gala changes, the grafting and embedding of folk customs is the fundamental basis of its culture. Therefore, the display of traditional folk customs in the Spring Festival Gala almost becomes the unconscious behavior of every cast. The short film of the opening of each Gala is full of the thick atmosphere of the Chinese New Year:

1) People from all over the country are eager to return to the direction of home, see people say auspicious words, set off firecrackers, go to the temple fair, make dumplings, and the whole family get together to prepare the New Year's Eve dinner.

2) The Spring Festival Gala stage design frequently appears only to belong to this year's zodiac animals, red lanterns, a considerable fortune, red clothes, red spring couplets, and Chinese knots.

3) There are also different local customs and celebrations of the Spring Festival to show the world the broad mass base of Spring Festival folklore and the cultural diversity of the Chinese nation.

Since 2012, the Gala has begun to show programs dedicated to exploring the cultural history of the year and reflecting folk traditions: the children's program "Legend of the New Year's Eve" (2012), the dance "Dragon Phoenix Auspicious" (2012), the song "Zodiac" (2013), and the children's rhyme "Cutting Flower" (2013). It shows that the reflection of the Spring Festival Gala on folk customs has entered the stage of conscious creation and transformation from the unconscious state. Since 2015, the Gala has also featured programs dedicated to displaying Chinese intangible cultural heritage, which has further explored and expressed the inner spiritual connotation and aesthetic style of the Spring Festival folk culture and excellent traditional Chinese culture.

In the name of the ancient Spring Festival, it calls Chinese people scattered around the world to gather in front of the screen at the same time to celebrate the holy time together, pray for disaster, and jointly welcome the arrival of spring. From

sincere prayers for families and individuals to sincere blessings for the country and nation, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala creatively uses the folk symbols of the Spring Festival to create a global cultural celebration that can call on all Chinese people to participate. Now, it is not only a global Chinese festival but also becoming a worldwide festival.



Figure 53. The Children's Rhyme "Cutting Flower" (2013). The paper-cut elements of the Spring Festival folklore are applied to the stage space. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

3.1.2 Image presentation of the Chinese State Power

The Gala programs often use highly political symbols of state power and territorial sovereignty to summon the national identity of every Chinese. Symbols such as the national flag of China, the flag of the People's Liberation Army, the CPC, the national emblem, and the Chinese army often appear in non-arts programs. For example, the Chinese national flag is often displayed in special programs to celebrate the outstanding achievements of athletes at the Beijing Olympic Games or reflect the achievements of China's aerospace industry. The flag of the CPC appears in "Sing a Folk Song to the Party" (2021), celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Party. The army flag appears in the Military Flag Red (2017), a particular project to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army Long March. In

some grand main melody songs praising the motherland, the Chinese nation, the CPC, the Chinese Great New Era, and the Frontier Liberation Army soldiers, there are often images of Chinese national leaders across different generations and symbols such as the national flag, the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, Huabiao in front of Tiananmen Square, Zhongnanhai, and China's border lines.

In the 1990s, the Spring Festival Gala began to use symbols of national leaders to express political Discourse consciously. On the midnight of the 1990 Spring Festival Gala, Chairman Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng personally delivered speeches at the event and paid New Year's greetings to the national audience. From 1991 to 1995, the Spring Festival Gala featured videos of national leaders Jiang Zemin and Li Peng visiting the grassroots and paying New Year's greetings to nationwide audiences. Since the CCTV Spring Festival Gala No. 1 studio (available area of 1800 square meters) was used in 1998, the live broadcast and presentation technology of the Spring Festival Gala stage has developed rapidly. Since 1998, the Spring Festival Gala has often used LED screen displays to match the emotional expression of the song singing, with vivid or solemn video Figures and song sounds to express the song's lyrical theme. Combining Figures and sound can convey the national ideology's identity and emotional call to the Chinese people more effectively.

Table 17. Presentation of the Chinese State Power Images in the Gala

Year	Programme/ Song	Background/Theme	Images Presentation
1999	Song "For Whom"	The devastating flood in 1998; Praise the deep friendship between the army and the people	National leaders Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, and Zhu Rongji; Chinese People's Liberation Army
2003	Specially planned "Land Soil Convergence"	The ceremony of the reunification of the motherland	Cjinese National flag; People's Liberation Army; bronze tripod

2005	Song “Peaceful China”	Pray for China	Four generations of state leaders of New China
2006	Song “Happy Family”	Praise for the peace and security of the country	Four generations of state leaders of New China
2007	Song “Reward and repay”	On January 1, 2006, China exempted farmers from agricultural tax. The song expresses the gratitude of the Chinese people towards the Party and government.	Four generations of state leaders of New China; The Great Wall
2008	Song “The Chinese Grand Stage”	Expressing pride as a Chinese person	Four generations of state leaders of New China; Tian'anmen Square
2008	Poetry recitation and song singing: “The Snow is merciless, but Chinese people has Love.”	At the beginning of 2008, there were severe ice disasters in southern China. The show expresses the belief of unity, fighting against the ice.	Chinese national leaders: Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, Xin Jinping, Li Keqiang.
2008	National Flag Handover Ceremony “Heaven and Earth Symphony”	The flag bearer of the Tian'anmen National Flag squad presented a national flag to the representatives of the space heroes and wished the space heroes a successful completion of their mission.	Chinese National flag; national flag team flag bearer; space hero representative
2010	Song “Towards Revival”	60th birthday of the founding of New China	Four generations of state leaders of New China; The Great Wall; The Yellow River

2010	Song “Long live the Motherland”	60th birthday of the founding of New China	Chinese National flag; People's Liberation Army; Tian'anmen Square
2011	Song "Brighter Flags"	Celebrating the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Party	Huabiao in front of Tiananmen Square; The Great Wall
2012	Song “My Chinese Heart”	Salute to the 30 Years of Spring Festival Gala	The Great Wall
2014	Song “Heaven Glory in China”	Blessing China	The Great Wall; Tian'anmen Square; The Yangtze River; Yellow River
2015	Song “Give My Heart to You”	Expressing the love of Chinese people for their motherland	Chinese national leader Xi Jinping
2016	Song “Glory”	Expressing the heroic sentiment of patriotism	Five Generations of Chinese National Leaders; National Flag of New China
2016	Song “Iron blooded loyalty”	Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War	Chinese National flag; Tiananmen Square; The large-scale military parade; the Chinese People's Liberation Army
2017	Song “When That Day Comes”	Commemorating the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Red Army's Long March; Salute to the Old Red Army and praise the	Chinese People's Liberation Army Flag; Three Armies Honor Guard

		spirit of the Long March	
2017	11 Aerospace Heroes Press Hand Model Ceremony: Song singing "Country"	The year 2016 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of China's space industry	Chinese National flag; The Great Wall; Aerospace Heroes
2018	Song "Our New Era"	On October 18, 2017, Chairman Xi Jinping pointed out in the report of the 19th NCCPC that "socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era"	Chinese National flag; the magnificent mountains and rivers of the motherland
2019	Song "With the Motherland"	Celebrating the 70th anniversary of the motherland's birthday	Chinese National flag
2020	Song "Dear Motherland"	Celebrating the 70th anniversary of the motherland's birthday	Chinese National flag; The Great Wall
2021	Song "Sing a mountain song for the party to listen to"	Celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CPC	The flag of the CPC
2021	Song "Rest Assured, Motherland"	Pay tribute to the Chinese border guards	CPC Party flag, national flag, military flag; China's border line; National Emblem, Tiananmen, ornamental column HuaBiao; The

			People's Liberation Army
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Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)



Figure 54. Song “Glory” in the 2016 Gala. Images: Five Generations of Chinese National Leaders; National Flag of New China. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 55. Eleven Aerospace Heroes Press Hand Model Ceremony. After that, Hong Kong actor Jackie Chan led university students from both sides of the Taiwan Strait and ethnic minority actors to sing "The Nation". The five-star red flag is hanging in the center of the stage. Source: Screenshots by the author from CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 56. Tian'anmen Square (2008) Ornamental Column HuaBiao (2011) Source: Screenshots by the author from CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 57. Chinese People's Liberation Army Flag in Song "When That Day Comes" (2017). The CPC Flag in the song "Sing a mountain song for the party to listen to." Source: Screenshots by the author from CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 58. The Great Wall (2012) in the song “My Chinese Heart”. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

3.1.3 Image presentation of the Chinese National Culture

The Chinese nation has a long history and splendid culture. Chinese civilization is the only brilliant civilization in human history that has lasted for over 5000 years and has not been interrupted to this day. The various material and intangible cultural heritages, including the Yangtze River, Yellow River, Silk Road, Chinese cultural relics and treasures, Chinese martial arts, Chinese landscapes, Chinese calligraphy and painting, Chinese music and dance, and Chinese cultural classics, as well as the Chinese philosophical wisdom, traditional aesthetics, Chinese thought, and Chinese spirit reflected in these cultural heritages, have become an inexhaustible cultural resource treasure trove for the Gala content production and artistic creation.

"Chinese national community" has a pluralistic modernity, both a politically significant nation-state and a culturally significant civilization state. It is not only a political community formed in modern China since the mid to late 19th century under the crisis of being bullied by Western powers, but also a historical and cultural community that continues the thousands of years of tradition in pre-modern China. "From the perspective of cultural anthropology, the Chinese nation mainly refers to the community of compatriots of various ethnic groups who have lived in the land of China since ancient times and present times, as well as people who express the historical and cultural identity of the Chinese nation. Historical and cultural identity is

important for overseas Chinese to belong to the Chinese nation" (Shen Guiping and Shen Chunyang, 2022:6).

Since the report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012 proposed to promote the construction of a socialist cultural power solidly, the Gala has actively responded to the policy call of the national government, deeply explored the rich historical and cultural context and symbolic resources contained in Chinese culture, and creatively transformed them, presenting vivid art to summon Chinese people all over the world to recognize and love Chinese culture's historical and cultural identity, to reconstruct its identity as a "Chinese."

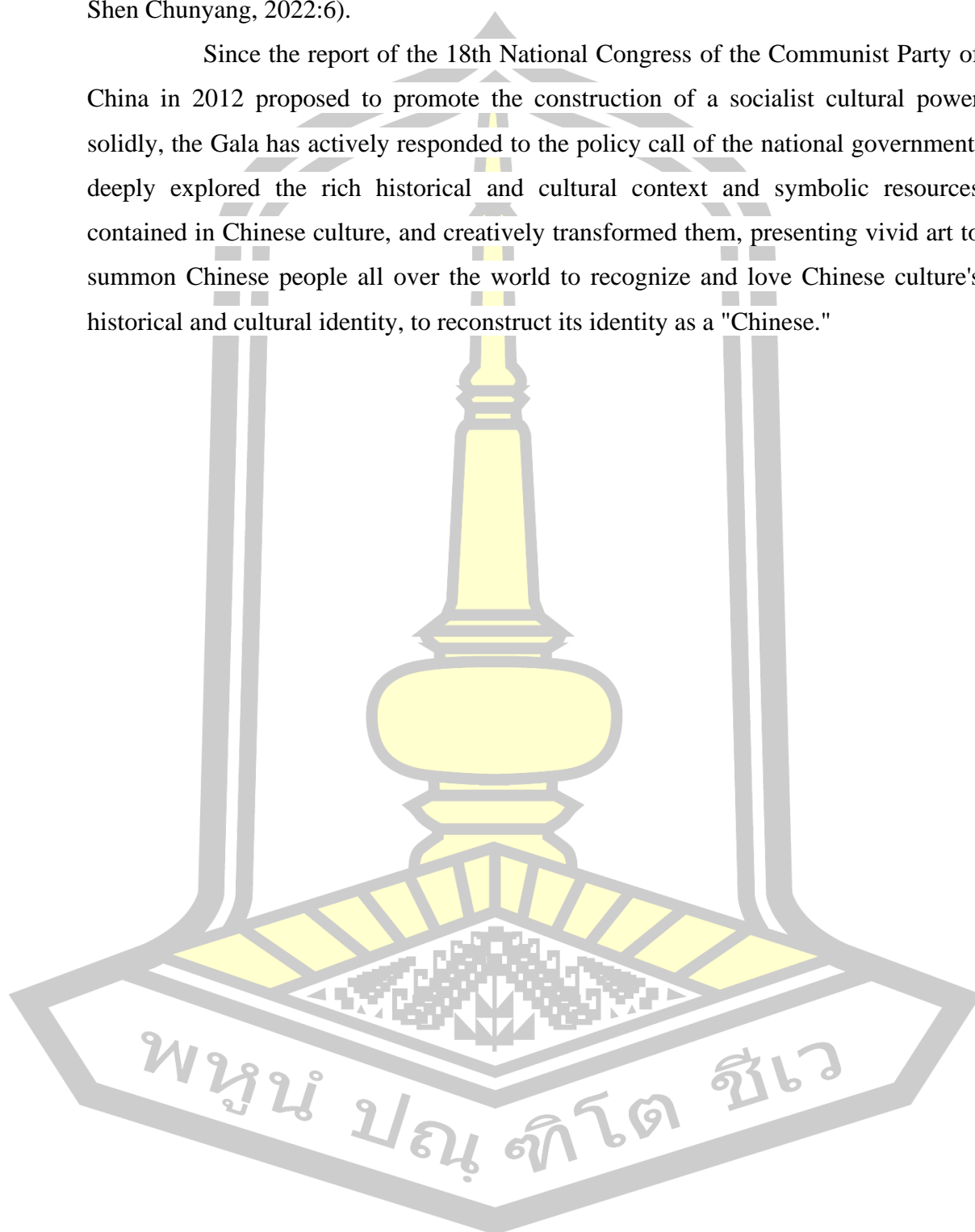




Figure 59. Special Program “Symbols of China” in 2014 Gala. Chinese Cultural Symbols: Mount Tai, Panda, Chinese farming civilization, Terracotta Warriors, the Great Wall, Temple of Heaven, Stone Lion, God VI, Chinese character "Chun", 2014 Horse Year. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)



Figure 60. “Yellow River and Yangtze River”(2022). Singers from Mainland China, Hongkong, Macao and Taiwan China. The Yangtze River and the Yellow River are the symbols of Chinese history and culture. Source: Screenshots by the author from CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

3.2 Star Image: The Ideological Reproduction of the Gala

3.2.1 From "Making Star" to "Borrowing Star": Cultural Production Strategy of the Gala in the Context of Chinese Media Market Transformation

In the 1980s, due to the advantages of new television media and the cultural market was still in the cultivation stage during the early stages of reform and opening up, the Spring Festival Gala formed a monopolistic advantage with innovative artistic program production. Its star-making ability has been widely recognized. Celebrities such as Zhang Mingmin, Fei Xiang, Mao Amin, Wei Wei, Song Zuying, and Yang Liping became well-known in Chinese households in the 1980s, all of which rose to fame through the Spring Festival Gala as a platform. Since the 1990s, with the deepening of reform and opening up and the establishment of the socialist market economy system, the market-oriented system reform in the media field has given rise to the vigorous development of consumerism culture and the formation of consumer society. Popular culture has become explicit representations of the bizarre cultural industry.

Since 2000, with the rapid development of network media, the explosion of entertainment reality shows on provincial satellite TV, coupled with the widespread use of mobile phones, and the improvement of the audience's awareness of interaction and participation in media entertainment culture, some grassroots singers with music dreams quickly accumulated popularity through online dissemination or TV talent shows, gaining a large number of fans. Hunan TV has been the first to launch the "Super Girl" popular entertainment talent show, pioneering the domestic television entertainment variety show. Li Yuchun, the "National Champion of the Year" of Super Girl in 2005, appeared on the cover of Time magazine's Asian edition in October of the same year. Faced with the endless market competition of entertainment variety shows on local and provincial TV stations, CCTV launched "Star Avenue" in October 2004. Adhering to the principle of "people's self-entertainment," highlighting public participation and entertainment, "Star Avenue" strives to provide a stage for ordinary workers from all over the country and industries to sing and showcase themselves. It has also become an essential platform for selecting actors and programs for the Gala.

Since 2009, the Web 2.0 era characterized by social media platforms has empowered many grassroots groups, and network subcultures have emerged in an endless stream. More and more ordinary people with unique skills and extraordinary talents come to the public's vision through TV variety shows and short video social media platforms such as Douyin, creating one myth after another from grassroots to stars.

The CCTV Spring Festival Gala is happy to invite or borrow celebrities and grassroots with market appeal and a solid public base to appear in the Gala. This is done for political and market considerations. The Gala aims to leverage the popularity of celebrities to increase viewership and better connect with young people and the general public. As a national cultural festival and ideological machine, the mainstream culture represented by the Gala will inevitably incorporate and reproduce popular culture and network subcultures to firmly grasp the cultural leadership of the mainstream culture represented by the Gala.

3.2.2 Market Stars Appearing in the Gala: The Result of Resource Exchange under the Mutual Demand of Both Sides

For Chinese pop culture market celebrities, appearing on the stage of CCTV Spring Festival Gala will not earn them substantial commercial performance rewards. On the contrary, the Gala, with its powerful national level cultural engineering and political resources, hardly pays any performance fees to celebrities, only symbolically providing some labor subsidies to actors. In the 1980s, actors performed voluntarily and received no compensation; In the 1990s, the Gala symbolically paid actors a small subsidy, usually a few hundred yuan; Since 2000, the biggest celebrity in the Gala can only receive a labor subsidy of no more than 3000 yuan, which can be described as "zero compensation" compared to the appearance fees that celebrities often get in the millions or tens of millions on other commercial platforms.

However, for popular celebrities, having the opportunity to appreciate and perform at the CCTV Spring Festival Gala is of great significance to them. On the one hand, being able to appear on the stage of the Gala means that the star's professional ability and character cultivation have been recognized by the official authorities, which is a recognition of the star's "virtue and talent" honor; On the other hand, by

appearing on the Gala, celebrities can enhance their political and cultural capital, and subsequently enhance their economic and social capital. The Chinese cultural consumption market is very large, with popular stars like crucian carp crossing the river, but there are not many who can appear on the stage of the Gala. The success of obtaining the opportunity to participate in the Gala is influenced by many factors, such as the social identity of the celebrity, their own market appeal, their image positioning, their compatibility with the theme of the evening, their coordination with other programs in the evening, and their attitude towards cooperation with CCTV.

As far as the Gala is concerned, it is an inevitable choice and requirement for the national ideological reproduction of the Gala to integrate stars with different identities and images into the program and give full play to the political or cultural functions assumed by the stars' images in the program with maximum validity. Through the reproduction of star images, the Gala can not only guide young people to CCTV with the help of the market appeal of stars but also enhance young people's attention to the Spring Festival Gala. In addition, the subculture in which market stars participate can be incorporated to reduce its possible impact on national mainstream culture to firmly control the content production of star programs so that the image of stars can better serve the expression of national ideology.

3.2.3 From "Wild Wolf Disco" to "Chinese New Year Disco": The Gala's Ideological Reproduction of Network Subculture and Self-identity Reconstruction

(1) "Wild Wolf Disco": The Internet song that swept across China in 2019

The famous rap song "Wild Wolf Disco" in China in the second half of 2019 was written and composed by Northeast rapper Dong Baoshi (Gem) and performed in the second season of the entertainment variety show "China New Rap." On TikTok, the broadcast volume of "Wild Wolf Disco" exceeded 4 billion; on Weibo, the reading volume of topics related to "Wild Wolf Disco" exceeded 100 million, and the discussion volume exceeded 50,000. At the same time, "Wild Wolf Disco" is one of the top three singles in the 2019 Chinese hip-hop music genre rankings and one of the top ten most popular Chinese language singles selected by Douban Music. Due to his high popularity on popular rap charts on QQ Music, NetEase Cloud Music, and Kuwo Music, many stars such as Chen Weiting, Yang Mi, Tengger, and other Internet celebrities have covered this song.

(2) Three reasons for the popularity of "Wild Wolf Disco"

Firstly, from a cultural perspective, "Wild Wolf Disco" collages the retro and romantic pop culture scenery of the 1980s and 1990s with a "garlic flavored vaporwave" music style, successfully stimulating the audience's nostalgia and emotional resonance.

Bad Cantonese hooks, straightforward lyrics with unfashionable, and dialect rap with northeast accent, these are the characteristics of Dong Baoshi's "Wild Wolf Disco". The emphasis on atmosphere in "Wild Wolf Disco" lies not only in selecting "vaporwave music" as the carrier of the text, but also in extracting and using the internal logic of this music, in an irregular collage way, collecting the complex experiences of the Chinese people from the 1980s to the early 21st century. The fragmented imagery replaced the linear flow of time, and specific historical facts were intentionally evaporated, ultimately leaving behind a seemingly referential yet indescribable atmosphere of the times (Jiang Yi, 2020:52). "Wild Wolf Disco" brings together popular hits ("gesturing a Aaron Kwok on your chest"), classic movies ("feeling like Tony Leung, playing *Infernal Affairs*" and "007 on the dance floor"), aesthetic trends ("big back hair" and "right hand bolt gloves"), and vintage objects ("Beeper").

Secondly, from the perspective of online rap culture reflecting social reality, "Wild Wolf Disco" ensures the "political correctness" of the work by suspending reality through collective revelry and downplaying the "pain" and sad emotions of the times.

"Wild Wolf Disco" selects the "Ding Ting" (An entertaining hall for singing and dancing Disco) as the narrative space. "Di Ting" was an essential component of Chinese social space in the 1990s and accurately characterized the cultural atmosphere of this stage. The "Di Ting" retains the hustle and bustle of China's rapid social development stage but thoroughly filters out the pains and losses of the social transformation period. In this space, all anxiety is suspended (Jiang Yi, 2020:54). For the Northeast region, the suspending reality effect played by "Di Ting" is particularly significant. At the same time as "Di Ting" blossomed everywhere, it was a moment of crisis when the "laid-off wave" severely hit Northeast China. Many young people were idle, wandering in the gaps of social space after experiencing

economic system reform. "Pain" became the keyword in Northeast society during this period. Disco temporarily deviates from daily thinking and enters a state of collective madness. "Song playing, dance dancing, pretending to know nothing" summarizes the significance of the suspended reality provided by the "Disco" and also highlights Dong Baoshi's "dystopian" narrative strategy of diluting the melancholic atmosphere of "Wild Wolf Disco" (Jiang Yi, 2020:55).

Thirdly, the media dissemination of the song "Wild Wolf Disco" has successfully attracted the attention of official mainstream media by utilizing a diverse and multi-level dissemination matrix of mobile internet social media and short video platforms to form a phenomenon of popular online rap culture.

Even before the airing of "China's New Rap Season 2", "Wild Wolf Disco" had already gained considerable fame on short video platforms, which is why Dong Baoshi entered the resurrection competition as the first-place winner in online voting. The short video platform represented by Tiktok is changing the ecology of the music market. The return of short video platforms to the mainstream market has become a typical path for songs to become popular and even create celebrities. Although record distribution and talent shows are still the backbone of the market, their Discourse power is weakening. The delivery of short video platforms is dominated by traffic, and users are more directly involved in the choices of the music market. The music industry chain is undergoing a "bottom-up" transformation. From the brainwashing divine music "Learn the Cat's Cry", "Take You on a Trip" to the Tu Hi divine music "Wild Wolf Disco" and "Desert Camel", they all went to the music broadcast platform and social network platform through the way of Tiktok out of the circle, and entered variety shows and TV parties.

(3) From "Wild Wolf Disco" to "Chinese New Year Disco"

"Wild Wolf Disco," the most popular internet song of 2019, appeared at the New Year's Eve Gala of six major provincial TV stations from 2019 to 2020. The table below shows that major provincial TV stations have slightly different adaptations and interpretations of "Wild Wolf Disco," overall, it is a consumerist popular carnival culture with typical pop culture characteristics.

Table 18. "Wild Wolf Disco" Appears at Six Provincial TV Stations' Yuan dan Gala

Time	Platform	Method	Lineup	Style
Dec.31.2019 7:30 pm	Hunnan TV	Global live streaming	Yang Mi, Tengger, Wang Chenyi	Nostalgic, carnivorous, ambiguous, self-deprecating
Dec.31.2019 7:30 pm	Jiangsu TV	Global live streaming	Chen Weiting, Dong Baoshi	Nostalgic, retro, carnival
Dec.31.2019 7:30 pm	Shanghai Oriental TV	Global live streaming	Zhou Shen and Li Keqin	Nostalgic and inspirational
Dec.31.2019 7:30 pm	Beijing TV Jointed with Hebei TV and Helongjiang TV	recorded broadcasting	Dong Baoshi	Nostalgic and joking

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)



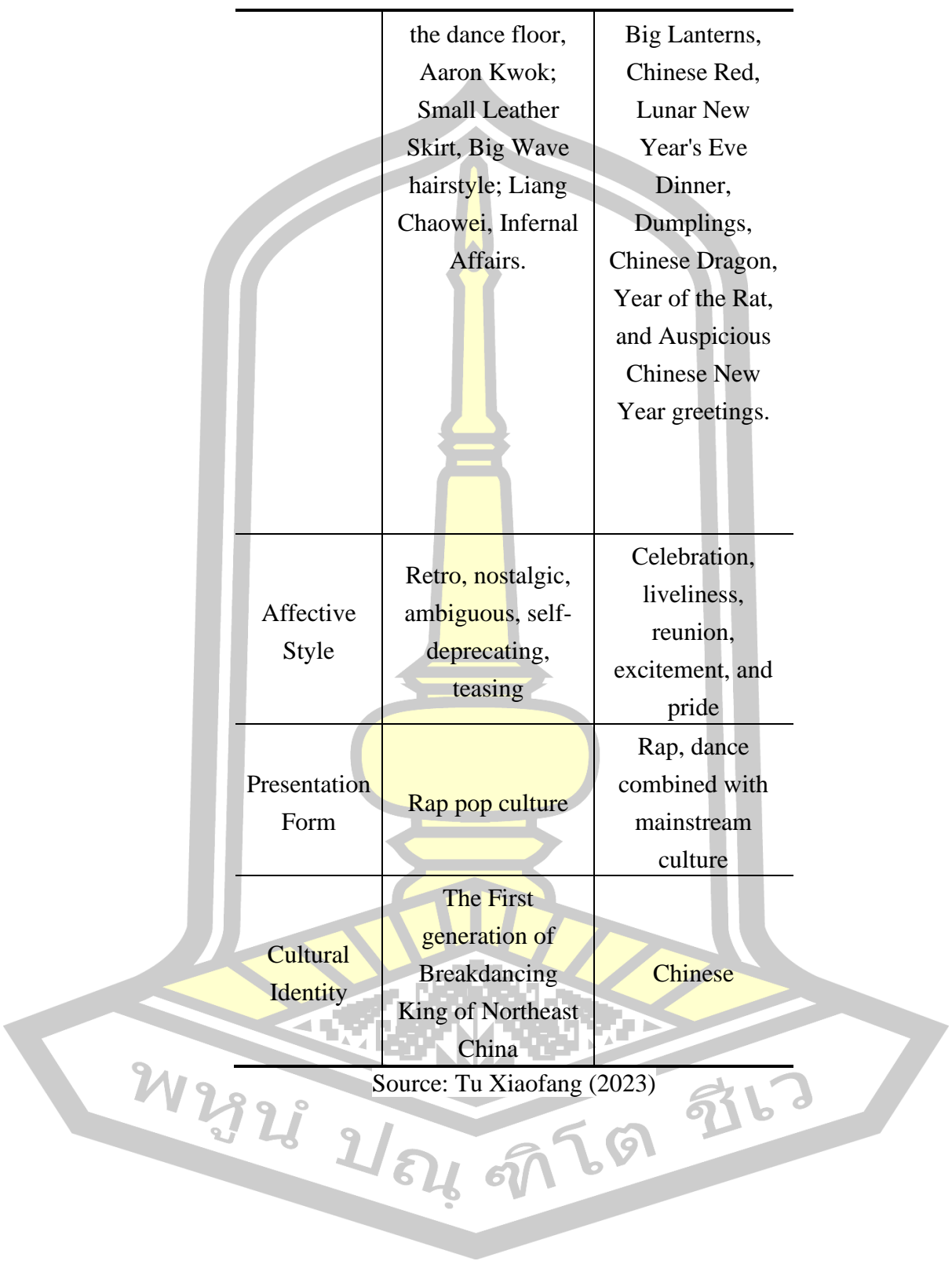
Figure 61. Six Chinese Provincial Satellite TV Performed "Wild Wolf Disco"

Source: Baidu (Access: January 20, 2023)

In 2020, Dong Baoshi became the first rap singer to appear on the CCTV Spring Festival Gala stage. At the request of the Gala production team, Dong Baoshi adapted the "Wild Wolf Disco" into the "Chinese New Year Disco," which is more suitable for the stage and atmosphere of the Gala. The arrangement has not changed much but still maintains a free, unrestrained, passionate, and dynamic style. The lyrics have undergone significant changes, except for the lyrics that depict the signature dance moves: "Draw a dragon with me on the left, and on your right, draw a rainbow; come on, draw a rainbow with me on the left, and on your right, draw a dragon again." In addition, the theme presented by the lyrics has transformed from the rich "Disco" pop culture of the Northeast region in the 1980s and 1990s to the enormous development achievements of China's economy and society since the reform and opening up, as well as the joy and pride of Chinese people towards a happy life.

Table 19. Comparison of Cultural Connotation of Lyrics Between Two Songs

	"Wild Wolf Disco"	"Chinese New Year Disco"
Song Theme	Representing the popular culture of "Di Ting" with rich local characteristics in Northeast China in the 1980s and 1990s	Expressing the tremendous development achievements of China's economy and society since the reform and opening up, as well as the joy and pride of the Chinese people
Culture Element	Collage of popular cultural elements from the 1980s and 1990s:	Chinese Social Life and Folk Culture in the New Era:
	<p>"Di Ting" elements: late-night bar, bungee jumping, DJ, light balls.</p> <p>Northeast China cultural elements: The first generation of Thunder Brothers in Northeast China, leather coats.</p> <p>Pop culture: Big back hairstyle, Beeper, 007 on</p>	<p>Modern Chinese lifestyle elements: high-speed rail, domestic cars, domestic clothing, 5G, internet, food delivery, express delivery, WeChat red envelopes, short video live streaming.</p> <p>Spring Festival Folk Elements:</p>



	the dance floor, Aaron Kwok; Small Leather Skirt, Big Wave hairstyle; Liang Chaowei, Infernal Affairs.	Big Lanterns, Chinese Red, Lunar New Year's Eve Dinner, Dumplings, Chinese Dragon, Year of the Rat, and Auspicious Chinese New Year greetings.
Affective Style	Retro, nostalgic, ambiguous, self- deprecating, teasing	Celebration, liveliness, reunion, excitement, and pride
Presentation Form	Rap pop culture	Rap, dance combined with mainstream culture
Cultural Identity	The First generation of Breakdancing King of Northeast China	Chinese

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)



Figure 62. "Chinese New Year Disco" Performed in the 2020 CCTV Spring Festival Gala. Performers: Zhang Yixing, Dong Baoshi, and Chen Weiting (Hong Kong, China) Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

Unlike the encoding of celebrities by provincial-level satellite TV, the personal characteristics and styles of the three celebrities were downplayed entirely on the Gala stage, replaced by highlighting their shared identity as "Chinese people." The body of celebrities has become an important carrier and venue for expressing the grand ideology of the state. It is worth noting that at the end of "Chinese New Year Disco," there is a rather severe and emotional recitation: "Always remind yourself (Chen Weiting) and never forget that no matter where you go (Zhang Yixing), you will always be (Dong Baoshi) - Chinese! (Three people combined)". This passage of recitation has a strong political ideology, and through the personal appeals of three influential celebrities with market appeal, it calls for the "Chinese identity" of Chinese people around the world. Thus, the popular subculture representative of online rap in China in 2019, "Wild Wolf Disco," was successfully incorporated into the Gala and reproduced as a mainstream song that can express and summon Chinese identity.

3.2.4 The Presentation and Discourse Expression of Market Star Images in the Gala

Many talents show singers who have debuted through television talent shows can still maintain high market appeal and good reputation after enduring long-term tests of their professional skills, experience, and moral character in fierce market competition. Such market celebrities not only have the opportunity to perform in the Gala, but often join more than once. In the table below, I have compiled three typical celebrity singers from mainland China who have become frequent guests of the Gala.

Table 20. Programs by Three Typical Mainland Chinese Star Singers in the Gala

Star Singer	Popularity Mode	Positioning	Program	Theme and Presentation
Li Yuchun	In 2005, won the national championship of the “Super Girl” competition on Hunan TV.	Having a neutral beauty Pursuing true self, cool, and personality.	Splendid (2015)	Intangible cultural heritage programs. Show the four traditional Chinese famous embroidery
			Mother River of Happiness (2020)	Poverty Alleviation theme song. Eulogize the national spirit of self-improvement
			Landscape Costume (2021)	MILO technology was used to

Jike Junyi	Third place in the finals of “the Voice of China” on Zhejiang Satellite TV in 2012	From Sichuan Yi ethnicity, fashion, international		shoot, blending the beauty of Chinese clothing with landscape and nature.
			Sense of Time (2022)	Praise the new era and better life
			"Happy Missing" and "Love each other" (2016)	Express the good feelings of human beings
			"Deep Love and Long Friendship"(2017)	Old revolutionary song. It shows the deep feeling between the Chinese Red Army and the Yi ethnic people.
			"Yingshan Hong" (2019)	Old revolutionary song. Express the deep feeling of Jinggangshan

Tan Weiwei	In 2006, she won the champion of Hunan TV's "Super Girl" in Chengdu and the runner-up of the national finals.	Proficient in music major		people to the Red Army.
			"Dance With True Love" (2022)	Express the passion of youth and the joy of struggle
			"Huayin Laoqiang Shouts Out" (2016)	Intangible cultural heritage program.
			"Don't Forget Your Original Aspiration" (2017)	Main melody song
			"A New Starting Point of Happiness" (2018)	Main melody song Celebrating a Better Life
			"The River of Life" (2020)	Main melody song
			"The Bell of Spring" (2022)	Welcome the arrival of spring

Source: Tu Xiaofang (2023)

From the perspective of the image of the talent show singers themselves and the songs they sing, the songs arranged for them to perform in the Gala often involve three types:

(1) Songs that focus on promoting Chinese culture. Some are intangible cultural heritage songs related to excellent traditional culture, such as Li Yuchun's "Splendid" (2015) and Tan Weiwei's "Huayin Laoqiang Shouts Out" (2016). Some

express the beauty of Chinese clothing and the beauty of Chinese nature and mountains and rivers, such as the creative fashion show "Landscape Costume" (2021).

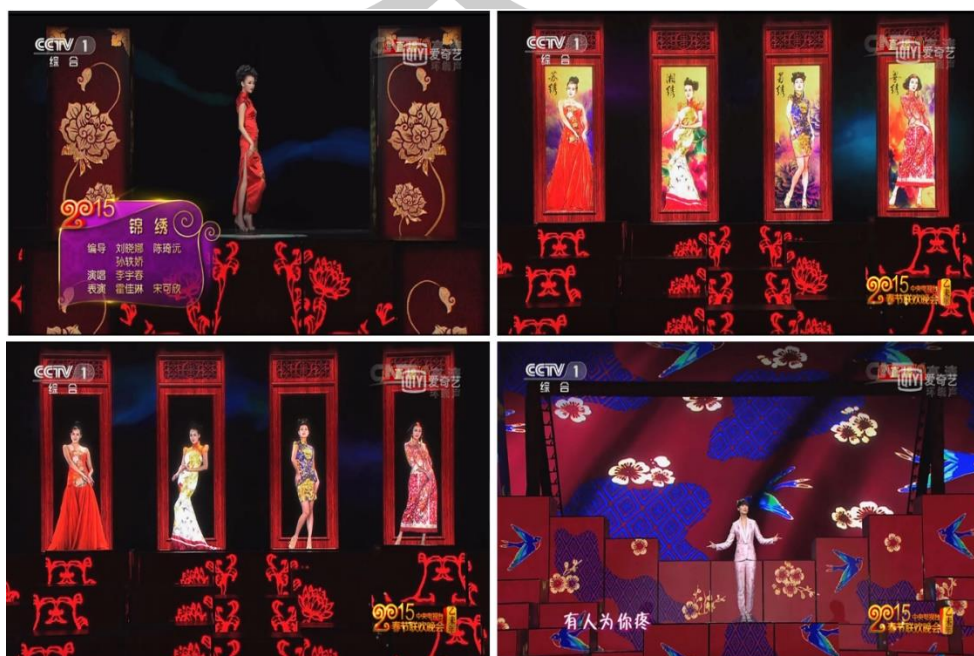


Figure 63. Li Yuchun sang "Splendid" in an intangible cultural heritage program (2015).

Showcasing the Four Traditional Embroideries of China: Su Embroidery, Xiang Embroidery, Shu Embroidery, and Yue Embroidery.

Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

(2) Modern rendition of traditional revolutionary songs. Such as Jike Junyi's "Deep Love and Long Friendship" (2017) and "Yingshan Hong" (2019). Daliangshan in Sichuan was added as a sub-venue for the western region of the Gala in 2017, where Jike Junyi, a member of the Yi ethnic group from Daliangshan, dressed in traditional Yi attire and performed "Deep Friendship and Long Friendship." Her fresh interpretation breathed new life into ancient songs, while simultaneously conveying the grand themes of revolutionary history, national unity, and the deep bond between the military and civilians. The cultural and physical wonders of the Torch Festival of the Yi people, as well as Jike Junyi wearing traditional ethnic minority costumes, served as an excellent showcase of the rich diversity of Chinese

culture to the audience. Through her performance, Jike Junyi's image transformed into that of revolution, ethnic minorities, and culture. Another Gala venue in 2019 was the revolutionary holy land of Jinggangshan in Ji'an, Jiangxi, where Jike Junyi was once again selected to express the revolutionary discourse of the Spring Festival Gala.



Figure 64. Jike Junyi Sang Revolutionary Song "Deep Love and Long Friendship" (2017 Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023))



Figure 65. Jike Junyi Sang Revolutionary Song "Yingshan Hong" (2019) Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

(3) Songs that feature the "main melody," which combines contemporary social life with national policies implemented by the government and Party. Some of these songs celebrate the remarkable achievements of poverty alleviation and pay tribute to the national spirit of self-improvement, such as Li Yuchun's "Happy Mother

River" (2020) and Tan Weiwei's "River of Life" (2020). Others express love and admiration for the New Era and the joys of a happy life, as exemplified by "Sense of the Times" (2022), "Never Forget Your Original Aspiration" (2017), "New Starting Point of Happiness" (2018), and "Dance of True Love" (2022). Lastly, some songs express the excitement of spring and the desire for a bright future, such as "The Bell of Spring" (2022).



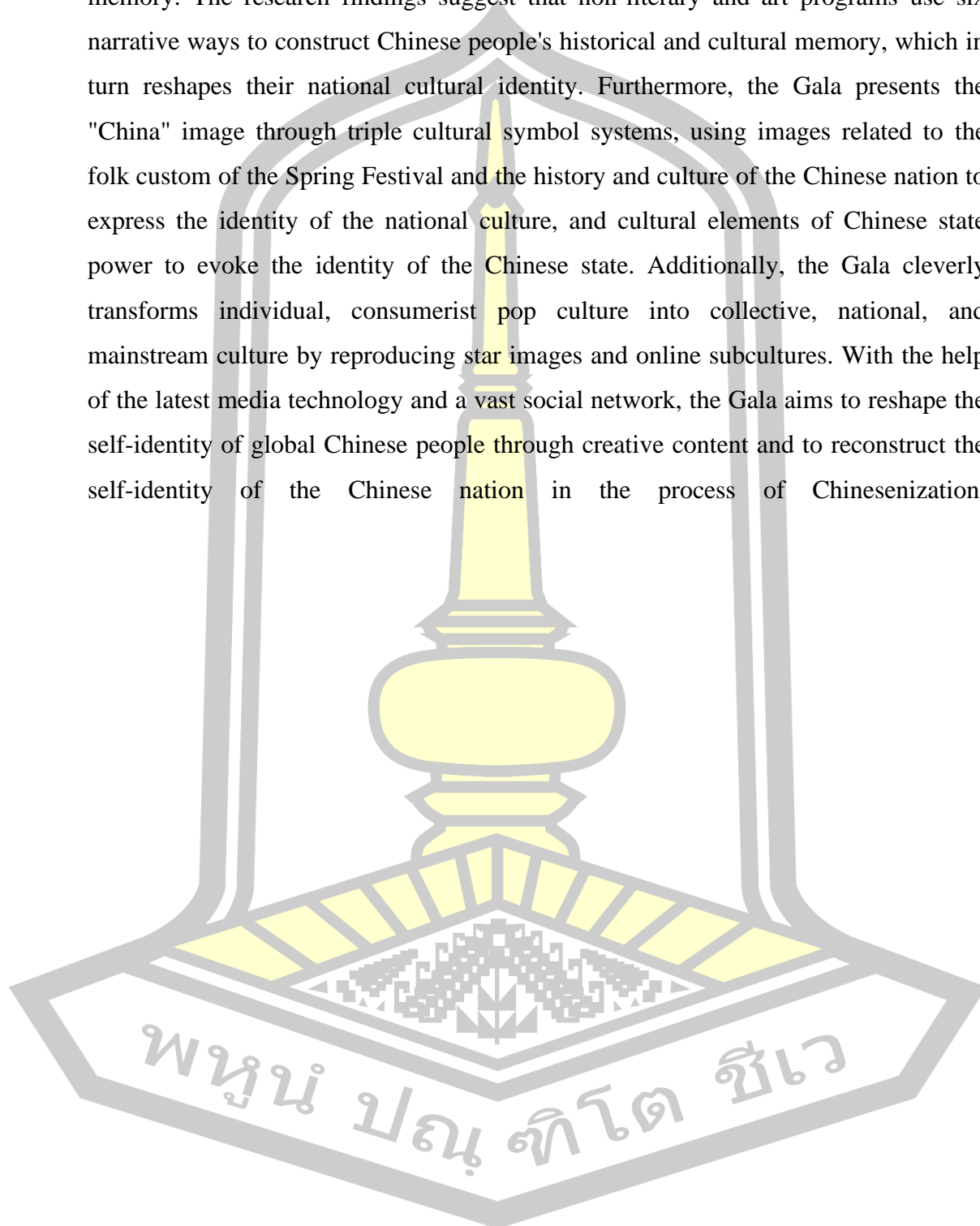
Figure 66. Tan Weiwei sang "The Bell of Spring" with Sun Nan before midnight (2022). The song expresses the joy of welcoming spring. Source: Screenshots by the author from the show video of CCTV.com (Access: January 20, 2023)

Although market celebrities have a considerable fan market due to their personalities and unique images and temperaments, they usually have little opportunity to showcase their self and rebellious side on the Gala stage. Whether it is the rap culture led by online rappers or the idol worship represented by TV talent shows, the Gala incorporates online popular culture and reproduces the symbolic image of market celebrities to serve the political and cultural demands of the "state" and "nation" in the Gala, thereby completing the discourse expression of its national ideology and reconstructing the "Chinese" identity of Chinese people worldwide.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the author explores the reconstruction of Chinese national self-identity through the Gala in the process of Chinesenization. Part one provides a theoretical discussion of the national self-identity, which serves as a foundation for the fourth chapter. In the second part, the study focuses on a specific program type of

the Gala - non-literary and art category - to examine the construction of cultural memory. The research findings suggest that non-literary and art programs use six narrative ways to construct Chinese people's historical and cultural memory, which in turn reshapes their national cultural identity. Furthermore, the Gala presents the "China" image through triple cultural symbol systems, using images related to the folk custom of the Spring Festival and the history and culture of the Chinese nation to express the identity of the national culture, and cultural elements of Chinese state power to evoke the identity of the Chinese state. Additionally, the Gala cleverly transforms individual, consumerist pop culture into collective, national, and mainstream culture by reproducing star images and online subcultures. With the help of the latest media technology and a vast social network, the Gala aims to reshape the self-identity of global Chinese people through creative content and to reconstruct the self-identity of the Chinese nation in the process of Chinesization.



CHAPTER V

Summary, Discussion, and Suggestion

"The CCTV Spring Festival Gala of China: National Self-Identity Construction in the Context of Chinesenization" is basic research using an interdisciplinary qualitative research method. From the phenomenon of "The CCTV Spring Festival Gala in China," this research has studied the academic issues of national self-identity, media construction, imagined community, and Chinesenization and obtained new knowledge. This research used two methods of information collection: Field Work via the Internet and Literature Research. The researcher's summary, discussion, and suggestions are as follows.

1. Summary of Research Results

This research consists of three essential objectives: 1) To study the historical development of the Gala in the 40 years (1983-2022). 2) To study the CCTV Spring Festival Gala and the Chinese national community. 3) To study the Gala's reconstruction of national self-identity in the process of Chinesenization.

1.1 Historical Development of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala in Forty Years

By sorting out the origin and historical development of the Spring Festival, the social and historical process of the traditional Spring Festival is divided into four stages: 1) the Chinese dynastic period (2000 BC - the end of the Qing Dynasty). At this stage, the Spring Festival, the most critical folk festival with the broadest mass base, plays a vital role in uniting families and society and forming social and cultural identity. 2) The Republic of China period (1912-1949). At this stage, the government of the Republic of China switched to the Gregorian calendar, which is commonly used worldwide, and implemented a "dual-track system." The Gregorian calendar on January 1 as "New Year's Day", the first lunar month called "Spring Festival". 3) The period of socialist construction in New China (1949-1978). The Chinese government still follows a "dual track" approach. Traditional folk customs were destroyed in the later period under the influence of the Cultural Revolution. 4) In the new era of China's reform and opening up, Spring Festival folklore has been restored and has

become the most crucial folk resource for CCTV Spring Festival Gala to obtain collective cultural identity.

On this basis, this study analyzed the social foundation of the birth of CCTV Spring Festival Gala: 1) Television replaced newspapers and radio during Mao Zedong's era as a new media tool actively utilized by the Chinese government. 2) The people's desire for new lively and relaxed forms of literature and art in the new era. 3) Under the new historical conditions, the Chinese government has a political demand to build social identity and promote the mainstream discourse of "reform and opening up"

The analysis of the cultural connotations and historical changes of the Spring Festival, as well as the social foundation of the formation of the Spring Festival Gala, has laid a cognitive foundation for the study of the media cultural practice activities of the Spring Festival Gala over the past 40 years in the third section, providing a historical perspective.

Then this study summarized the forty-year development process of the Gala into four stages based on the interaction between the Gala and Chinese modern society: the first stage (1983-1992), during which the Gala emerged as a "new folk custom"; The second stage (1993-2002) is the golden development period for the Gala to construct socialist market economy and consumerism discourse under the background of media marketization transformation; The third stage (2003-2011) is a period of imbalance and adjustment in the value pursuit of the Gala in the context of China's "peaceful rise" and the enhancement of China's "cultural soft power" strategy in the new century; The fourth stage (2012-2022) is a period of cultural innovation and development in which the Gala strengthens the sense of Chinese national community in the context of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation.

By studying the comprehensive interaction process between the Gala and Chinese social politics, economy, culture, and media technology in four different stages, this research proposed that the media discourse construction of the Gala in 40 years has successively experienced the theme changes of "reform and opening up"(1983-1992) -- "socialist market economy and consumerism"(1993-2002) -- "Scientific outlook on development and building a harmonious socialist society"(2003-2011) -- "Realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the

Chinese nation(2012-2022)." However, what is unchanged is that the media practice of the Gala in 40 years is essentially a process of Chinesenization with political and cultural significance.

1.2 The CCTV Spring Festival Gala and the Chinese national community

This research has utilized the works of historians and ethnologists to gain insights about the Chinese national community. Unlike a "nation-state," the Chinese nation is more like a "civilization-state," with two distinct features: a historical and cultural community as defined by cultural anthropology, and a citizen community as described by political science. This analysis helps us understand why the Chinese National Community encompasses both overseas and foreign Chinese and underscores the importance of the Chinese government's efforts to revive traditional culture. Doing so can evoke a sense of identity among overseas Chinese groups through a shared history and culture.

This study examined the changes in the composition of the "Chinese National Community" over time and the adjustments made by the Chinese government to its ethnic and overseas Chinese policies. Over the past century, the Chinese government's ethnic policies have evolved from Sun Yat-sen's concept of "state-nation" that aimed to integrate "Han, Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibet" to Chiang Kai-shek's belief that the Chinese nation is only Han, and finally, to the Chinese Communist Party's construction of "the pluralistic unity of the Chinese nation" where all 56 ethnic groups are considered as one. Similarly, the policies towards overseas Chinese have undergone significant changes, from "Qi min" to "Qiao min," from "Hua Qiao" (Overseas Chinese) to "Hua Ren" (foreign Chinese), and finally, to the re-Chinesenization policy adopted after the reform and opening up era. In the current era of Xi Jinping in China, it is emphasized that the Chinese nation is a community of individuals with a shared history and culture, which includes all sons and daughters of the Chinese nation, including compatriots of all ethnic groups in the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan, and overseas and foreign Chinese.

This study provides a deeper understanding of the Chinese national community, its evolution, and historical significance and lays the foundation for further research on the reconstruction of the Chinese National Community through the

CCTV Spring Festival Gala. It also provides an insightful perspective for historical observation.

Based on media practices and discourse production of the Gala, this study identifies two ways the Gala reconstructs the imagined community of the "Chinese nation." Firstly, it constructs a shared time and unity space. Secondly, it anchors the image presentation and discourse expression of the constituent parts of the "community" within the mainstream ideological categories of "state" and "nation."

The research found that ethnic minority programs express ethnic unity, Chinese culture's unity in diversity, and national unity. The richness and uniqueness of ethnic minorities on the Spring Festival Gala stage would be weakened, and the unity and belonging to the big family would be more substantial. The study also found that the Gala transforms private emotions such as love, friendship, and kinship into public emotions. It creates an emotional space more suitable for expressing "family-state" feelings on the matrix of pop songs by combining Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwanese pop songs. The Gala transforms children's affection for their mothers into the love of Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan wanderers for their motherland. It turns personal friendship into mutual help and concerted efforts between Hong Kong, Macao, and mainland compatriots. It also transforms love into an expression of kinship. All three groups express their recognition of Chinese culture in the program. Overseas Chinese programs expressing homesickness and Chinese cultural identity are relatively majority.

1.3 The Gala's Re-construction of National Self-identity in the Process of Chinesenization.

Non-literary and art programs have a unique annual nature. Their theme is based on significant events in the past year and is determined by the audience's social cognition and social memory. At the end of the year, during the Gala, these events are presented vividly, evoking the "family-state" emotion of the Chinese people and echoing the social collective memory formed by the audience's interaction with the media throughout the year. This annual memory becomes a part of the historical memory, forming a vertical time dimension. The Gala reinforces and strengthens the public's social and cultural memory through continuous repetition, review, and

traceability, completing a single national historical and cultural narrative in the mainstream.

This research looks at how the Gala, through non-literary and art programs, helps to create historical and cultural memories that form the national cultural identity of the Chinese people worldwide. The research found that non-literary programs use six types of narrative discourse to construct historical and cultural memory and reshape the national cultural identity of the Chinese people.

Firstly, the media coronation of national moral models is used to promote socialist core values. Secondly, non-literary programs highlight the achievements of modernization construction by comparing the present with the past to stimulate the Chinese people's national pride and identification with the current regime. Thirdly, non-literary programs revisit historical moments through anniversaries of the Party and the country to summon high recognition of the national spirit of all Chinese people. Fourthly, political ceremonies express ethnic solidarity and national unity. Fifthly, disasters and trauma are portrayed to strengthen the Chinese nation's sense of community. Sixthly, cultural programs such as "National Treasure Comes Home" are specially planned to stimulate Chinese people's identification with national culture.

The Gala aims to recreate and showcase the image of the Chinese "nation" and "state" through three cultural symbolic systems. The Gala seeks to identify national culture by presenting images of Chinese New Year folklore, as well as the history and culture of the Chinese nation. The image presentation about Chinese state power is used to invoke the identity of the state apparatus. The Gala cleverly transforms individual and consumerist pop culture into collective, national mainstream culture by reproducing star images and internet sub-cultures. All this help to reconstruct the self-identity of the Chinese nation.

2. Discussion

The research title is "The CCTV Spring Festival Gala of China: National Self-Identity Construction in the Context of Chinesenization." The researcher has gained an understanding of the "CCTV Spring Festival Gala of China" phenomenon and its impact on national self-identity construction. The academic issue at hand is the construction of national self-identity, and relevant critical concepts include the

imagined community, national self-identity, Chinesization, and the invention of tradition.

Benedict Anderson (1983), in his book "The Imagined Community: The Origin and Spread of Nationalism," considers the nation, national identity, and nationalism as a "special cultural artifact" and defines the nation as "an imagined political community." This subjectivist definition cleverly sidesteps the search for the "objective characteristics" of a nation and points to the "cognitive" aspect of collective identity - "imagination" is not a "fabrication" but a cognitive process essential to the formation of any group identity, so the name "imagined community" does not refer to the product of some "false consciousness." It is a kind of social psychological "social fact." The researcher used this concept to describe and explain the political and cultural significance of the Chinese government's positive cultural production and media construction through the Gala. However, the "imagined community" constructed by the Gala is the "Chinese national community," which differs from the modern Western nation-state political community. It is a political and cultural community with multiple modern characteristics, which is formed across ethnic, regional, and national boundaries and has a wide range, numerous groups, and rich connotations.

In his book "Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age," Anthony Giddens (1991) proposed a new framework for explaining the relationship between modernity and the self. He argued that the globalization trend of modern institutions profoundly impacts individual behavior, resulting in a transformation of daily life. As a result, individuals adopt a reflexive planning approach to maintain and achieve self-identity through a modifiable narrative.

In his book "National Identity," Anthony D. Smith (1991) explored the origins of national identity and constructed the ethno-symbolism system. He criticized both modern and proto-nationalism, arguing that national identity is not purely an artificial product or rooted in the blood of a nation. Instead, it is rooted in the history and culture of an ethnic group, providing individuals with an identity. Anthony Smith refuted the "extinction theory" and "decay theory" of national identity in the face of globalization. He remains optimistic about the future of national identity, as global cultural and political diversity has redefined and consolidated the concept and form of

the nation-state. It has become difficult to form a super-national identity, and national identity will continue to play an essential role in the future process of globalization.

The researcher used the concept of “national self-identity” to study the cultural and political impact that the Chinese government's media cultural construction through the Gala will have on the Chinese nation and state. In this study, the "national self-identity" of the Gala audience is not spontaneous and conscious. The Chinese government needs to build an "image community" through the innovative content construction of the Gala to reconstruct a unified Chinese identity. Specifically, this concept emphasizes the use of the Spring Festival Gala as an ideological tool to form the national identity of each member of the "community" through the active discourse construction of "ethnic unity," "national unity," "social harmony" and "Chinese cultural diversity and unity."

The researcher drew the concept of “invention of the tradition” from Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1974) to explain the birth of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala based on the traditional Spring Festival folklore. However, the newly invented "new folk " of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala is a creative invention different from the traditional one, with rich connotations and multiple modernities in modern society.

Also, the researcher drew the concept of “Chinesenization”to explain the historical development of the CCTV Spring Festival Gala in the past 40 years and the essential function of media culture practice, that is, the Gala summons Chinese people all over the world to identify with the Chinese national community and to identify with their own Chinese identity through active media production and construction. In particular, the program production in the past 20 years after the Spring Festival Gala has reflected an apparent cultural turn, that is, vigorously excavating excellent traditional Chinese culture and combining it with the latest media technology, constructing media wonders of Chinese culture to complete the construction of the identity of the Chinese nation, and showing the world that the Chinese nation is a nation of ethnic unity, national unity, and cultural diversity.

After analyzing "The CCTV Spring Festival Gala of China" phenomenon, the researcher discovered new academic findings and theoretical issues related to the concepts.

2.1 Discussion on the Research Text: The CCTV Spring Festival Gala

The research on the Gala started gaining attention in the 1990s and significantly increased after 2000. Initially, scholars of literature and art, including Geng Wenting, analyzed the content and structure of the Gala in detail; however, they often overlooked the political, economic, and other factors that influenced the program's production. Some researchers have critically analyzed the Gala from a cultural perspective and revealed its underlying ideology as a tool for state power practice and ideological control. Scholars such as Zhao bin (1998), Lv Xinyu (2003, 2006), Pan Zhichang (2007), Wang Xiaoyu (2005), and Panzhongdang (2010) have shed light on this aspect.

Chen Lu (2012:14) believes that previous studies of the Gala have a common major flaw - the need for more analysis on the evolution of the Spring Festival Gala. Shi Libin (2014:5-6) disagreed with Pan Zhichang's sharp criticism and argued that the Gala has become a "field" of meaningful struggle and negotiation, representing various social forces, ideas, and demands, and the audience is not entirely passive.

In contrast to Pan Zhichang and other scholars who criticized the interference of national ideology in the Gala, Qi Lin and others affirmed the positive construction of national ideology through the Gala. They revealed that such media production and construction may significantly impact the audience's or national identity. Emphasizing and affirming the role of media in forming social integration and control in the time dimension and providing "identity power" is influenced by the "communication ritual view."

Academic research on media rituals in China has increased significantly since 2009 and has been widely used in the CCTV Spring Festival Gala study. These studies regard CCTV Spring Festival Gala as a sacred media ritual, focusing on the dimensions of constructing national identity cultural identity, shaping social memory and collective memory, and constructing a "narrative community" (Jin Yuping, 2010; Shao et al., 2010; Xing Yan-hui, 2013; Ouyang et al., 2018; Zeng et al., 2019; Wang Qiang, 2020).

The studies on the Spring Festival Gala can be viewed from two angles: cultural criticism and media ritual. Both angles are based on the concept of an "imagined community" proposed by Benedict Anderson and believe that the Gala

builds a national cultural ceremony by using the folk tradition of the Spring Festival to construct the community imagination of "all sons and daughters of the Chinese nation at home and overseas"(this imagined community is also called the Chinese national community). However, there are three critical problems that need to be addressed in these studies:

1) The existing Spring Festival Gala studies have not discussed the connotation, extension, and historical composition changes of the Chinese national community, which cannot form a profound understanding of the Chinese national community and cannot stand in a more extended historical period to study the history of the evolution of the Chinese national community. Therefore, it cannot provide essential knowledge and a starting point for in-depth research on the construction of the community by the Spring Festival Gala.

2) Under the new historical conditions of reform and opening up, how can the Gala, as a kind of media culture, reconstruct the Chinese national community through the reproduction of media content and the creative presentation of TV technology? What role and function does the Gala play in this process? What is the significance of its media practice? These problems should be discussed in the previous Spring Festival Gala research.

3) A more international perspective is required in previous studies. These studies have failed to analyze the development of the Gala, the CCTV, China's social, economic, and cultural development, and the Chinese government's United Front policy in the context of globalization.

In response to the above problems, this research has the following innovations based on existing research:

2.1.1 To adopt an interdisciplinary qualitative research method to study the re-construction of the Chinese national community by the Gala.

By integrating the disciplines of history, ethnology, media study, and cultural study, this research studied the CCTV Spring Festival Gala and the Chinese National Community. It is an innovation in research methods.

This research used the relevant studies of historians and ethnologists to understand the Chinese national community deeply. This research found that the "imagined community" proposed by Benedict Anderson is a nation-state community

in the political sense, while the Chinese national community is a cross-ethnic, cross-regional, cross-territorial, and cross-nationality compatible cultural and political community. The pluralistic modernity of this kind of community is closely related to China's historical development and socialist construction practice, especially China's modernization construction practice and media construction practice since the new period of reform and opening. This combing can help us understand the connotation, extension, and historical composition changes of the Chinese national community, lay a foundation for further research on the reconstruction of the Chinese National Community by the CCTV Spring Festival Gala, and provide an historical observation perspective.

2.1.2 To use the concept of "Chinesenization" to summarize and explain the cultural and political significance of Gala's 40-year media cultural practice in modern society.

By analyzing the 40-year development history of the Spring Festival Gala, this study found that the program expression forms, TV production technologies, and mainstream discourse construction in different development stages of the Spring Festival Gala will change with the actual needs of the social times. However, the essence of the development and media practice of Gala, as a medium for social control by the Chinese government and an ideological state apparatus, would remain unchanged—a process of "Chinesenization" with cultural and political significance. It reveals the influence of media practice activities of the Gala on people's identity.

Moreover, this study takes the concept of "Chinesenization" as the research context to integrate the domestic and international communication of the Gala, integrate the national identity and cultural identity of the community of the Chinese nation at home and overseas, integrate the domestic governance and international governance of the Chinese government, and reveal the flexibility and innovation of the Chinese government in implementing state control and constructing transnational nationalism through the Spring Festival Gala.

2.2 Conceptual Discussion: Self-identity, National self-identity, and Media Construction

2.2.1 Self-identity and National Self-identity in Globalization and Chinesenization.

In the era of globalization, nation-states are faced with severe challenges to the construction of individual self-identity. On the one hand, the rapid development of new media and social media has broken the restrictions of space, region, and national boundaries. On the other hand, with the intensification of global social mobility, the transnational and trans-regional flow of immigrants is frequent. All these pose significant challenges to the identity construction of the modern nation-state. How to establish an effective community integration mechanism to accommodate the scale of a multi-ethnic society has become the core issue of political and social order construction in any multi-ethnic country. Today's popularity of the idea of community can be seen as a reaction to the crisis of solidarity and belonging caused and exacerbated by globalization "(Gerard Delanty. 2003:1-2). Therefore, the construction of national identity has become a modern problem faced by every country in the era of globalization.

This research studied the CCTV Spring Festival Gala's reconstruction of the self-identity of the "Chinese national community" in the process of Chinesization. That is to study how the Gala reconstructs an imagined community of "Chinese nation" across ethnicities, regions, and nations and to reconstruct the self-identity of "all Chinese people at home and overseas". It is a study with an international perspective and also provides a vivid Chinese case study.

Liu Yanling (2015:64-65) divided research on immigrant identity into three main types: 1) From the perspective of the country of residence, that is, whether immigrants have integrated or assimilated into the social and cultural context of the country of residence, this is the most common and traditional research paradigm. 2) Since the 1990s, the transnational perspective has been where researchers not only focus on the integration or adaptation of immigrants into the social and cultural context of their host countries but also emphasize their intricate connections with their ancestral countries. 3) A global perspective, in which researchers emphasize the "diaspora consciousness" and "de-regionalized" network of immigrants. Liu Yanling (2015:69-70) believed that as globalization deepens, nation-states have not disappeared, and the control of national identity by the state continues, even strengthening in some aspects. contemporary governments of immigrant exporting countries often compete for the recognition bias of their overseas immigrants through

various means such as emotional appeals, economic preferential policies, and political mobilization.

In 2018, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council pointed out in its report on the protection of the rights and interests of overseas Chinese that among the more than 60 million overseas Chinese, there were over 6 million overseas Chinese and over 50 million foreign Chinese. Since reform and opening up, the Chinese government has always attached importance to the unity of the overseas Chinese groups, which is an integral part of the Chinese nation community.

This study adopted a transnational perspective, took the "Chineseization" process promoted by the Chinese government as the research background, and studied how the CCTV Spring Festival Gala reconstructs the self-identity of Chinese people around the world, especially the overseas Chinese and foreign Chinese who has shared the Chinese historical and cultural identity.

2.2.2 Media Production as Technology of Power of Nation State.

The evolution of human media technology has undergone three stages, starting from oral communication to text and print, and finally to electronic communication. The emergence of new media technology has revolutionized social relations, paving the way for self-driven progress and development. The use of new communication technologies is dependent on various factors such as productivity levels, political and economic factors, and the promotion of class forces and specific economic policies. Technology serves as a catalyst in shaping society, coordinating, and constructing it. The media plays a crucial role in maintaining public social life, shaping social reality, and controlling social normality. They provide various standards, patterns, and specifications, making it easier for society to conform to a certain way of life. The relationship between media and social and cultural models is not a one-way street, but rather a mutual construction and mutual causation. Today's social model is realized through various media technologies, and the media is instrumental in shaping social image and social memory. The media's influence on nation is undeniable, and it is essential to understand how it shapes our lives and affects our self-identity.

National self-identity is not spontaneous; it needs to be constructed with the help of media. Through the active media construction of the CCTV Spring

Festival Gala, the Chinese government implemented its process of Chinesization. On the one hand, the Gala uses the images and cultures of ethnic minority groups, Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan compatriots, and overseas Chinese to reconstruct media images of the Chinese national community to summon all Chinese people to identify with the Chinese national community; On the other hand, by continuously enhancing cultural consciousness and self-confidence, the Gala vigorously explores the aesthetics of Chinese history, Chinese philosophy, and medieval spirit nurtured by excellent traditional Chinese culture and adopts the latest media technology to present and disseminate. Therefore, the CCTV Spring Festival Gala constructs the self-identity of the Chinese nation with innovative media technology and media culture, as well as the self-identity of Chinese people all over the world.

2.3 The CCTV Spring Festival Gala as a New folk custom and a new media culture

The Chinese people have a distinct understanding of their relationship with heaven, earth, ancestors, and gods. This understanding forms the basis of their identity as individuals, families, and society in traditional China. In modern times, CCTV has utilized new media to create the Spring Festival Gala, which draws upon the cultural resources of the Spring Festival. The Gala transforms an individual's identification with family and ancestors in traditional society into an identification with nation and state in modern society. This represents the first level of understanding of the new folk custom.

Since 2003, China has been actively involved in globalization following its peaceful rise. The Chinese government has adopted a dual vision of domestic and international perspectives as the fundamental starting point for strategic development. This research has shown that the Gala has undergone a significant "cultural shift" in the last two decades and has made concerted efforts to revive traditional Chinese culture. In addition, Chinese media has been actively promoting the "go out" strategy to expand its influence on the global stage. The Ministry of Culture, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council, Confucius Institutes, and the Gala are all leveraging social media platforms and cultural exchange activities to create a multi-level social network that connects all Chinese people, irrespective of their origin, ethnicity, or location. Through 40 years of creative media cultural practice, the Gala

reconstructs the Chinese national community within and outside China, which gathers 56 multi-ethnic groups, compatriots from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan regions, and overseas and foreign Chinese. In this process of Chinesenization, the Gala reconstructs the self-identity of the Chinese nation. This represents a new understanding of the new folk custom.

Therefore, the researcher proposes that the CCTV Spring Festival Gala is considered a new folk custom, not because it has changed the traditional activities of Chinese people during the New Year. Instead, through cultural reproduction in media, it has implemented a process of national self-identity formation for Chinese people inside and outside China. The Gala is not just a comprehensive literary and artistic program that all Chinese people watch on the traditional New Year's Eve. It is also an innovative, practical scheme the Chinese government gives in response to the challenges of national self-identity and community construction caused by globalization. It is a brand-new folk custom and a brand-new media culture.

3. Suggestion

3.1 Suggestion to Academic Circle

This study prefers to regard the Gala as a national cultural ceremony with a sense of ritual. From a broader historical perspective, this study used interdisciplinary qualitative research methods to reveal the essence of the media practice process of the Gala in the past 40 years -- Chinesenization and studied the cultural and political significance of the Gala as an important national project to the Chinese government and Chinese society in the long historical and cultural process. It provides a new perspective on the literary and artistic program of the Gala. More importantly, it has become a powerful media tool for the Chinese Communist Party and government to carry out the "cultural united front" at home and abroad widely.

The research perspective and viewpoints of this study can also be used to explore other influential artistic programs or media programs, such as the Vienna New Year concert, Japan's Red and white song festival, the American football Super Bowl, or CCTV's "News broadcast," Hunan TV's "the Overseas Chinese Spring Festival Gala" and so on.

3.2 Suggestion to Chinese Societies

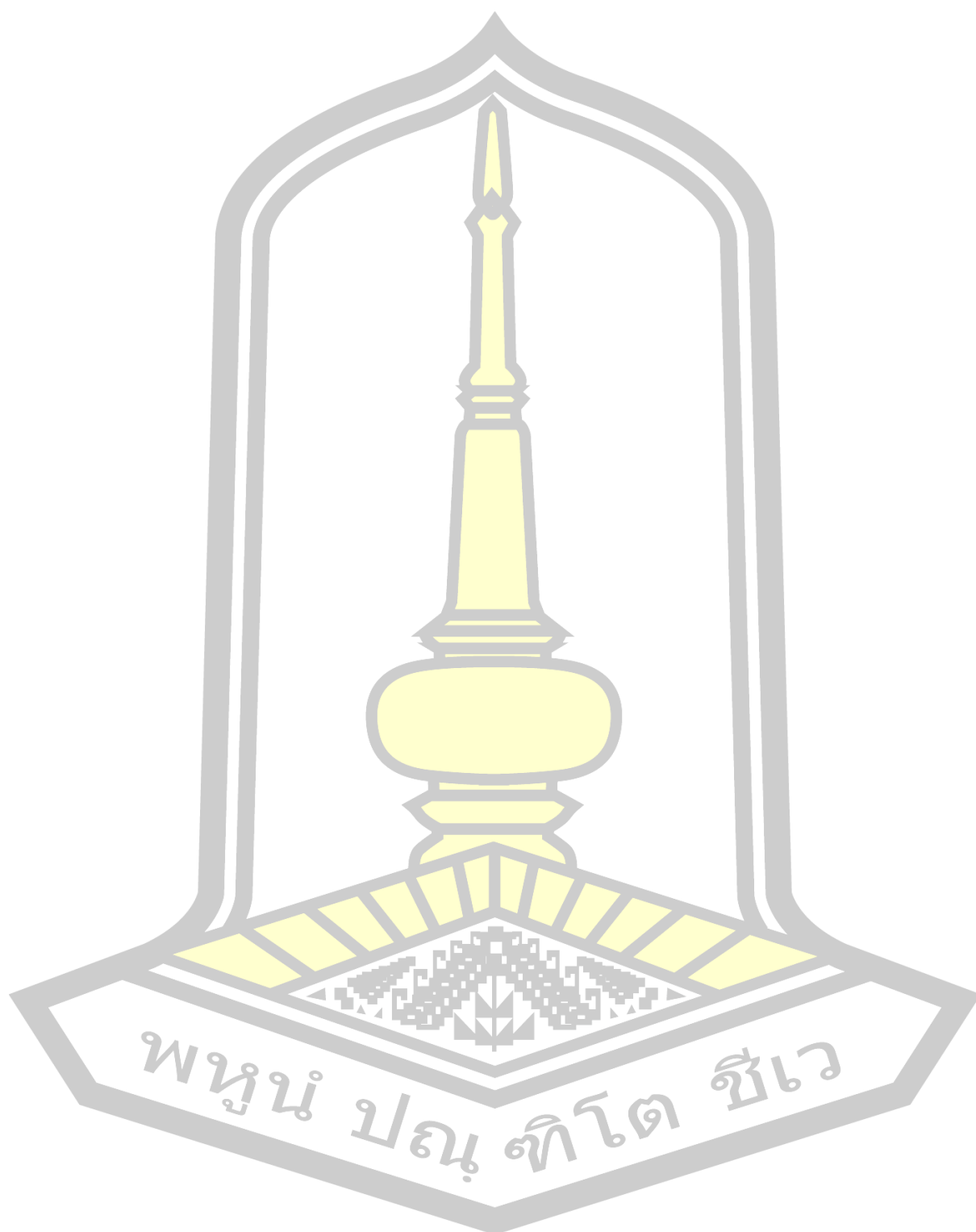
From a long historical perspective, this study combed the social changes in China in the past 40 years and the Chinese government's media control and media governance through the Gala, revealing the essential cultural function of the Gala in the process of the Chinese government's continuous pursuit of better domestic and international development since the reform and opening. As China increasingly projects its influence on the international stage, the role of "culture" cannot be ignored. The national media represented by the Gala should create more creative cultural programs with a high degree of cultural confidence and consciousness and connect Chinese people worldwide, even foreigners who love Chinese culture, with continuous cultural production. At the same time, other provincial and local satellite TV's New Year's Eve party and Mid-Autumn Festival party can learn from the practice of the CCTV's Spring Festival Gala, face the domestic and international markets with a broader perspective, and play their roles in construction of national self-identity and innovative development of Chinese national culture.

3.3 Suggestion to New research projects

From the perspective of state ideological control and media producers, this study studies the construction of national self-identity by the CCTV Spring Festival Gala in the context of Chinesenization. Through a comprehensive and detailed investigation of the development process of the Gala in the past 40 years, this research explores the significance of the media production of the Gala to the Chinese government in the past 40 years. This study uses the concept of national self-identity to explain this meaning. The study uses a broad historical perspective to outline the transition from traditional society to modern society, from the Spring Festival folklore to the Spring Festival Gala, and how the Gala, as an invented tradition, plays its role in the reconstruction of national community and national identity under the new historical conditions. This research is interdisciplinary qualitative research and basic research.

From the audience's perspective, researchers can also use quantitative research methods through surveys, interviews, and other methods to calculate how different groups react to the same cultural symbol of the Spring Festival Gala and what factors affect the audience's acceptance and understanding of the text. These were not covered in this study, but later researchers can try.

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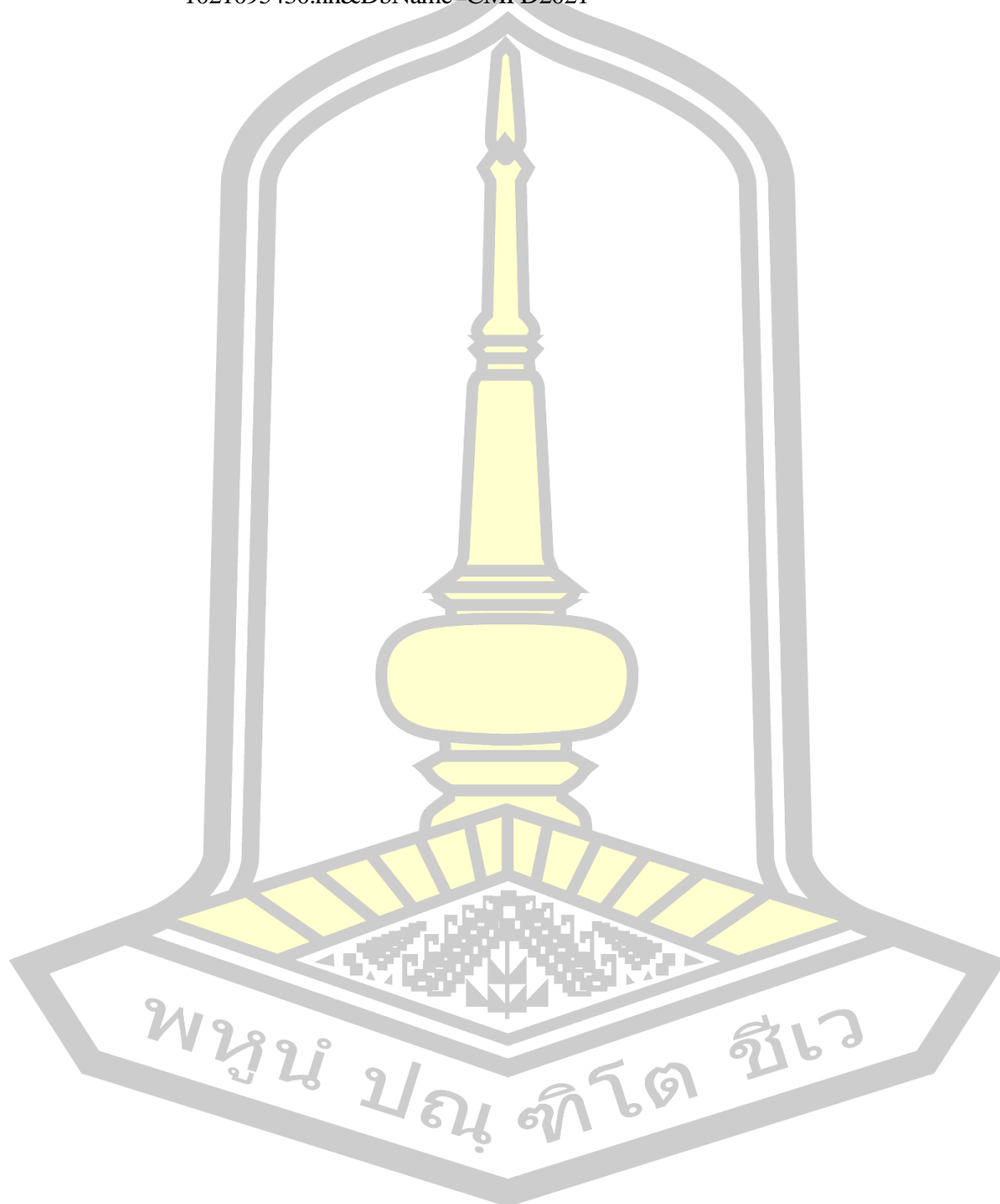
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