

Enhancing the Effectiveness and Optimizing the Pathways of Chinese Literature's Overseas Dissemination: A 5W Communication Model Analysis Based on the Experiences of Japan and South Korea

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Abstract

The overseas dissemination of Chinese literature has achieved a certain level of breakthrough in terms of cross-border communication scale. However, how to attain deep acceptance and value recognition in cross-cultural contexts remains a noteworthy issue. Japan and South Korea, as fellow members of the Northeast Asian cultural sphere, have accumulated practical experience in the cross-border dissemination of their literatures, which holds academic reference value for further research on the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature. Based on this, this paper employs literature analysis and case analysis to outline the practical characteristics and several challenges encountered in the overseas dissemination of Japanese and Korean literatures. It then examines the existing foundations of Chinese literature's overseas dissemination across institutional, industrial, cultural, technological, and market dimensions, as well as certain shortcomings in areas such as original content supply, translation and introduction systems, copyright protection mechanisms, and cross-cultural acceptance. Using Lasswell's 5W communication model as the analytical framework, this paper proposes several strategic directions from the five dimensions of communicator, content, channel, audience, and effect. The aim is to provide theoretical references for enhancing the effectiveness and deepening the development of Chinese literature's overseas dissemination, thereby contributing to the improvement of its international communication efficiency and cross-cultural influence.

Keywords

Chinese Literature, Overseas Dissemination, Reference to Japanese and

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of deepening globalization and digitalization, changes in the overseas communication effectiveness of Chinese literature have become a notable concern in the study of cross-cultural transmission of Chinese culture and its international influence. Communication effectiveness refers not only to the cross-border dissemination scale and market reach of literary works, but also encompasses audience reception, the transmission of cultural meaning, and the long-term cultural influence arising from it. In 2024, the overseas market revenue of China's online literature industry reached approximately 4.815 billion RMB, a year-on-year increase of 10.68%; the total number of cross-border literary works reached approximately 750,900 titles, a year-on-year increase of 7.92% (*Release of the 2024 Annual Report on the Development of Chinese Internet Literature, 2025*). Looking at current practices, although the cross-border dissemination of contemporary Chinese literature has made certain progress, several noteworthy issues remain in the process of cross-cultural communication (Jiang & Lu, 2025). At the level of translation and introduction models, the practice of translating Chinese literature into foreign languages has entered a new phase alongside changes in China's international cultural influence, yet cultural differences and linguistic transformation factors continue to exert certain effects (Chen & Xu, 2025). At the level of communication systems, there remain several areas for development in the construction of an autonomous communication system for the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature, and a multimodal communication network has yet to take full shape (Jiang & Lu, 2025).

Japan and South Korea, both located within the Northeast Asian cultural sphere, have accumulated certain practical experience in cross-border literary communication. This experience provides reference for research on the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature. This study selects Japan and South Korea as the core comparative objects primarily on the basis of multiple commonalities among the three countries in the context of cross-border literary communication. China, Japan, and South Korea share the Northeast Asian Confucian cultural sphere, with a certain degree of similarity in values and aesthetic orientations. Consequently, the three countries face similar cultural discount issues in cross-cultural communication—that is, how to transform narrative logic and value connotations rooted in an East Asian cultural context into content that is comprehensible and acceptable to global audiences. In terms of developmental trajectory, Japan and South Korea gradually came to value outward cultural communication following their respective periods of economic growth. Their overseas literary dissemination has shifted from an initial phase of simply exporting works toward

exploring and expressing universal human concerns. This trajectory shares similarities with the transitional phase of Chinese literature's overseas dissemination, which is moving from "Chinese literature going global" toward "Chinese literature gaining in-depth acceptance". "Going global" refers to achieving cross-border physical dissemination of literary works through channels such as translation, publication, and distribution. "Gaining in-depth acceptance", in contrast, denotes breaking through cultural boundaries to achieve deep comprehension and value recognition among overseas audiences—meaning that readers, while overcoming language barriers and grasping the cultural connotations of a work, also come to recognize the values conveyed within it, thereby generating cross-cultural resonance. Moreover, the three countries face similar technological environments and market dynamics with respect to the impact of digital technologies on content production, the cross-media transformation of literary IP, and the international presence of online literature. However, China, Japan, and South Korea exhibit structural differences in the operational logic of their cultural industries, the structure of market actors, and their respective contexts of international communication. Thus, drawing on the experiences of Japan and South Korea requires grounding such reference in the actual conditions of Chinese literary communication, accompanied by adaptive adjustments and innovative transformations.

Existing research on the overseas dissemination of Japanese and Korean literature has mostly focused on single dimensions such as institutional support, genre-specific text creation, and the operation of translation agencies, with relatively few systematic analyses of their communication mechanisms from the perspective of communication theory, thereby presenting certain limitations in providing theoretical and practical references. On the basis of reviewing the practical characteristics of overseas literary dissemination in Japan and South Korea, this paper analyzes the existing foundations and several realistic challenges of Chinese literature's overseas dissemination. It introduces Lasswell's "5W" communication model as an analytical framework and explores systematic pathways for the optimization and upgrading of Chinese literature's overseas dissemination from five dimensions: coordination of communicators, adaptation of content, integration of channels, segmentation of audiences, and evaluation of communication effects. The aim is to provide theoretical references and practical ideas for enhancing the international cultural influence and cross-cultural communication effectiveness of Chinese literature.

2. Analysis of the Overseas Dissemination of Japanese and Korean Literary Works

In recent years, the communication reach and influence of Japanese and Korean literature in the international market have shown a steady upward trend. Japanese writer Asako Yuzuki's novel *Butter*, following its launch in the United Kingdom in February 2024, sold 280,000 copies within one year, surpassing the 270,000 copies sold upon its initial release in Japan (Liu, 2025), thus demonstrating a high

level of overseas market acceptance. Korean writer Han Kang's winning of the Nobel Prize in Literature broke new ground as the first ever such award for Korean literature, while also propelling Korean literature to greater global attention and recognition. The international development of Japanese and Korean literature is not accidental; rather, it represents a comprehensive manifestation of both countries' sustained and ongoing efforts to promote outward cultural communication as part of their cultural industry development.

2.1. Core Characteristics of the Overseas Dissemination of Japanese Literature

2.1.1. Institutional Planning and Coordinated Support

Following the collapse of the bubble economy, Japan experienced a trend of industrial transformation and slowing economic growth, making the search for new development directions a notable concern at the time. Against this backdrop, literature, as an integral part of Japan's "content industry" system, is closely related to the overall development of the cultural industry. Literary publishing serves as a foundational component of the content industry, and its overseas dissemination is not only an aspect of the internationalization of the cultural industry but also a factor linked to changes in cultural influence.

Japan's efforts in the overseas dissemination of literature have undergone a gradual process of deepening. In 1996, Japan established institutional arrangements related to the cultural industry, incorporating cross-border literary communication into the overall framework of cultural development. Since the beginning of the 21st century, with the advancement of the internationalization of the content industry, the overseas dissemination of Japan's literary publishing sector has received more systematic support. Against this background, Japan has established several specialized institutions and carried out corresponding dedicated programs. Taking the Japan Foundation as an example, the Foundation has created routine channels for the overseas dissemination of literature through means such as translation and publication grants, overseas book donations, and participation in international book fairs. As of May 2022, the Foundation had supported the overseas publication of over 50 language editions, totaling 806 Japan-themed books. Among the disciplinary categories of translated publications supported overseas between 2006 and 2022, literature accounted for approximately 60.6% (Wu, 2023). In addition, Japan's legal framework has undergone corresponding adjustments, with the enactment of laws and regulations covering scenarios such as literary adaptation and digital dissemination, including the Basic Act on the Promotion of Culture and the Arts, the Copyright Act, and the Content Promotion Act. These laws and regulations are to some extent aligned with the copyright protection needs arising in contexts such as digital distribution, cross-border licensing, and IP adaptation.

2.1.2. Operational Model of Industrial Coordination

One of the characteristic features of Japan's cultural market is the interconnected

mode of operation among different segments of the industrial chain. Under the media mix framework, Japanese literary works are not confined to the publishing sector but are also integrated into the industrial chains of various media, including animation, film and television, and gaming. Through the overlapping of audiences and the diffusion of communication across different media, this system facilitates the multi-channel development of IP value. Taking light novels as an example, this genre has, since its emergence, maintained a close symbiotic relationship with the animation industry. Publishing houses have established routine collaborative mechanisms with animation production companies and copyright agencies, enabling light novels with certain market potential to be adapted into different media formats such as animated series and theatrical films. Leveraging the audience base and brand recognition that the animation genre has accumulated in global markets, this mechanism can, to a certain extent, drive overseas sales and cultural influence of the original novels, thereby creating a coordinated operational relationship of “content production-media transformation-market consumption”. This process encourages literary IP to exhibit changes in brand effect and audience loyalty as it moves across media. Relying on such market-driven operational mechanisms, Japanese literature extends the cultural influence of individual works into an output capacity at the industrial level, demonstrating a shift from the dissemination of single texts to the coordinated dissemination across multiple media.

2.1.3. Application and Practice of Digital Technologies

The continued advancement of cross-border dissemination of literary works has been, to some extent, concurrent with information technology innovation and the rapid spread of the Internet. In 2013, Japan put forward the concept of “Society 5.0” (a super-smart society). Building on this, Japan’s cultural industries have gradually developed a full-chain operational system covering content production, multi-channel distribution, and audience reception, leveraging technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data.

Zhang Wenying (2025b) has reviewed the practices related to the application of technology to literary dissemination in Japan, summarizing several pathways and examples [6]: 1) In terms of sharing public cultural resources and facilitating cross-border dissemination, Japan has carried out systematic digitization of literary classics and ancient texts. Taking the domestic non-profit digital library “Aozora Bunko” as an example, this platform hosts a large collection of classic literary texts that have entered the public domain, offering features such as text downloads and smart audio reading, thereby lowering the barriers for readers to access and consume literary works. 2) The application of immersive interactive technologies, particularly VR, has had a certain impact on readers’ modes of literary experience. Several public literary museums in Japan, including the Odawara Literature Museum and the Musashino Literature Museum, have launched VR panoramic tour services, which not only enhance the sense of immersion and engagement in reading but also help deepen readers’ understanding of the works. 3) Social media has, to some extent, changed the mode of communication between

authors and readers. Taking the domestic Japanese user-generated web literature platform “Shōsetsuka ni Narō” as an example, the platform not only provides readers with a free and finely categorized repository of works but also fosters an interactive ecosystem based on real-time comments and feedback on creative writing, thereby increasing the level of activity within literary communities.

2.2. Core Characteristics of the Overseas Dissemination of Korean Literature

2.2.1. Institutional Design and Resource Coordination

The ability of Korean literary works to achieve a certain degree of overseas dissemination is related to the country’s institutional design and resource coordination. Following the Asian financial crisis, South Korea established its comprehensive institutional framework for cultural industry development in 1998, becoming the second country after Japan to incorporate cultural industry development into its national development framework. Under this framework, a series of policy documents were successively introduced, including the 21st Century Cultural Industry Conception, the Cultural Industry Development Promotion Plan, the Five-Year Plan for Cultural Industry Development, and the Cultural Industry Blueprint 21. At the same time, laws such as the Copyright Act and the Basic Act on the Promotion of the Cultural Industry were revised, thereby providing the institutional and legal foundations for cross-border literary communication. In terms of financial investment, in 2002, South Korea raised approximately 500 million USD for cultural industry projects through channels such as national budgets, investment portfolios, and special funds (Wang, 2010), offering financial support to related fields. In addition, the establishment of dedicated funds such as the Arts and Culture Promotion Fund, the Cultural Industry Promotion Fund, and the Publishing Industry Promotion Fund has provided sustained sources of funding for the translation, overseas promotion, and copyright trading of Korean literature. These institutional and financial arrangements have shown a certain correlation with the actual outcomes of cross-border literary communication: according to relevant data, in the first quarter of 2018 alone, 1,361 Korean literary works were published in 39 languages (Guo, 2019).

2.2.2. Implementation by Specialized Institutions

In the process of cross-border dissemination of Korean literature, a multi-layered collaborative mechanism involving government-level, public institutional, and private sector actors has gradually taken shape. Among these, the Literature Translation Institute of Korea (LTI Korea) serves as the core public implementing agency, responsible for translation grants, translator training, overseas publishing coordination, international promotion, and copyright collaboration. To support the talent base for literary translation, the LTI Korea operates a translation academy that offers systematic translator training programs and has established special literary translation awards to incentivize outstanding translators. To facilitate communication among translators, authors, and overseas publishers, the LTI Ko-

rea has built several interactive platforms, including organizing translation seminar programs at overseas universities, hosting global reader response sharing sessions, and convening the annual International Conference on Korean Literature Translation and Publishing in Seoul since 2002 (Guo, 2019), thereby providing regular opportunities for relevant exchanges. The LTI Korea also collaborates with private organizations such as the Daesan Foundation to provide financial support for related projects. In terms of changes in the scale of funded works, before 2013, approximately 50 to 60 works received grants and were published overseas each year. After 2014, the number of annual funded publications exceeded 100. By 2020, funding had expanded to 26 languages, covering 170 works (Cao, 2022), and the overseas recognition of Korean literature subsequently increased. This operational model—based on an institutional framework, executed by specialized public agencies, and involving private sector participation—has shown a certain correlation with the sustained advancement of Korean literature’s cross-border dissemination.

2.2.3. Universalistic Expression of Narrative Content

While grounded in Korea’s cultural identity, Korean literary works pay considerable attention to universal social issues, using real-world concerns and emotional resonance as entry points, and have demonstrated certain effectiveness in cross-cultural communication. At the creative level, Korean literary works delve deeply into the collision between traditional Korean culture and modern society, while incorporating globally shared social issues such as gender equality, class struggles, family ethics, and social trauma into their narrative cores. For example, *Kim Ji-young, Born 1982* portrays women’s lived hardships and gender bias, while *The Crucible* exposes institutional injustice and the operation of power. These works retain distinctly Korean cultural markers while also evoking a degree of emotional resonance among readers from different cultural backgrounds. In terms of form, Korean literature blends modern narrative techniques with popular aesthetic sensibilities. Through delicate prose and authentic scene depictions, the reading barrier is lowered, giving the works themselves a strong mass communication attribute. This creative direction—rooted in local cultural identity while focusing on social realities—has enabled Korean literary works to gain relatively broad attention in cross-cultural contexts, resulting on the one hand in cultural value in terms of communication, and on the other hand in an overseas readership base and corresponding market responses.

2.2.4. Synergistic Effects between Popular Culture and Literary Dissemination

There exists a certain interactive relationship between Korean literary works and the global dissemination of Korean popular culture, manifesting as a two-way linkage in which popular culture drives literary dissemination and literature, in turn, enriches popular culture. Several popular Korean dramas—such as “Silenced”, “Hope” (also known as So-won), and “Kim Ji-young, Born 1982”—are

adaptations of Korean literary works. After these dramas were broadcast overseas, the overseas sales of the original novels experienced corresponding growth. At the same time, recommendations of domestic literary works by K-pop idols and Korean film and television stars have been associated with increased overseas attention to those works. For instance, the Korean drama “Goblin” featured *Perhaps the Stars Will Take Away Your Sorrows*, the drama “Encounter” featured *Looking at You Like Looking at a Flower*, and BTS member Min Yoongi (RM) recommended *Almond*. As noted, “Hallyu exposure has driven growth in book sales, and the scope of interest among Hallyu fans has expanded from cultural products themselves to the content behind those products” (Ye, 2024). On the other hand, the Korean social culture and national emotions conveyed by quality literary works add cultural depth to local popular culture. This two-way interaction between literature and popular culture has enabled Korean literature to achieve both scale and mass acceptance in its overseas dissemination process.

2.3. Realistic Challenges in the Overseas Dissemination of Japanese and Korean Literary Works

Although the overseas dissemination of Japanese and Korean literature has developed into a systematic mode of operation, it nonetheless exhibits a certain degree of complexity in the process of global communication.

At the content level, the outward dissemination of Japanese and Korean literature displays a pronounced pattern of genre distribution. The overseas output of Japanese literature is dominated by genre-specific works such as light novels and mystery fiction. These works are characterized by their everyday-life orientation, strong readability, and low barriers to entry (Yu, 2024), making them easily accessible to overseas readerships. At the same time, the connection between such works and mainstream or elite literary systems remains relatively limited, positioning them more towards the popular side of the literary field. This content structure has, to some extent, shaped the perception of Japanese literature as a whole among overseas readers. The outward output of the Korean publishing market shows a similar content tendency, with a relatively high proportion of popular works. According to the Yes 24 annual report, in 2023, the number of essay publications in Korea exceeded 4200 titles, doubling from a decade earlier, while deeper categories such as non-fiction and translated literature have experienced slow development over the long term. The Korea Herald has also published articles pointing out this issue, arguing that the imbalance in domestic content supply has weakened the content foundation for its outward dissemination (Wen, 2025).

At the communication level, the digital dissemination practices of both countries tend to focus largely on text migration and superficial adaptation, leaving room for further development in localized narrative and refined operation. Although Japanese literature contains no shortage of works with certain artistic value, its global communication effectiveness remains relatively limited. According to statistics from the Japanese publishing industry, Japanese literature accounts for approxi-

mately 1.8% of the world literary market (Zhang, 2022). To maintain market activity, Korean web literature has adopted a high-frequency update model. To some extent, this practice enhances sustained reader engagement, but due to the relatively lagging editorial review process, it has also led to a certain degree of formulaic features in the genre structure of the content, with the length of works correspondingly extended. Furthermore, in a cultural environment that pursues fast consumption, works that can instantly satisfy reader demands have gradually become the mainstream of web literature. Readers have a relatively limited acceptance of texts with complex narrative structures and higher cognitive costs. At the same time, the real-time feedback mechanism of platforms tends to guide authors to respond more actively to market demands, thereby reducing uncertainty in the creative process. This creates an observable cycle: authors pay attention to market reactions, reader preferences influence creative direction, themes and content tend to converge, readers may experience aesthetic fatigue over prolonged exposure, and authors, on this basis, further adjust their creative strategies to meet market expectations (3C (Sanwenyu), 2020).

In addition, in the digital environment, cross-border piracy is a relatively common phenomenon. There remains a gap between the progress made in building relevant copyright protection mechanisms and the needs of piracy response, which has had a certain impact on the commercial value of intellectual property (IP) and the operation of the digital content industry. Taking the Korean webtoon industry as an example, its sales revenue in 2020 was approximately 1.538 trillion KRW, of which estimated losses due to illegal piracy exceeded half, amounting to about 548.8 billion KRW. Although some domestic platforms have protected approximately 300 billion KRW worth of content assets within five years through anti-piracy tracking systems, the industry still faces certain limitations in copyright protection (International Digital Publishing Industry Development Report Research Group et al., 2023). According to a survey by the Japan Digital Comic Association (ABJ), there are approximately 900 websites engaged in piracy of Japanese manga. In June 2025 alone, cross-border visits to these sites reached about 2.8 billion from 123 countries and regions, with estimated annual losses of approximately 8.5 trillion JPY (Zhang, 2026). These figures indicate that cross-border piracy has already reached a large scale in terms of both coverage and impact.

Furthermore, the outward dissemination of Japanese and Korean literature exhibits a certain unevenness in regional distribution, with relatively limited investment in the translation, introduction, and promotion of works in non-English-speaking regions. Taking the Penguin Classics series published by South Korea's Woongjin ThinkBig as an example, the series comprises 109 volumes, of which European literature accounts for 80 volumes, North American literature 22 volumes, and Asian literature only 4 volumes. Similarly, of the 234 volumes in the World Literary Complete Works series published by Mineumsa, European literature accounts for 153 volumes, North American literature 44 volumes, and Asian literature 17 volumes (Cheng, 2021). These data reflect that both countries tend

to allocate translation resources predominantly to European and American literature, with correspondingly lower investment and less depth of dissemination in non-English markets.

The factors mentioned above are, to some extent, associated with the developmental trajectory of the global influence of Japanese and Korean literature.

3. Analysis of the Current State of Overseas Dissemination of Chinese Literature

3.1. Development Foundations

The experiences and limitations observed in the cross-border dissemination of Japanese and Korean literature offer both practical reference points and cautionary considerations for Chinese literature, which is currently in a phase of accelerated large-scale dissemination. While the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature is built upon multi-dimensional developmental foundations, it is also accompanied by certain structural factors.

3.1.1. Institutional Environment and Foundations for International Cooperation

The sustained operation of relevant cultural development plans and people-to-people exchange mechanisms between China and other countries has created a set of institutional conditions and resource supports for the overseas dissemination of literature. Relevant agencies at various levels, through the establishment of translation grant programs, support for international publishing cooperation, and the creation of literary exchange platforms, have provided financial and channel assistance to authors, translators, and publishing houses. The advancement of cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative has strengthened cultural exchanges with countries along the routes, opening up new possibilities for Chinese literature to expand into overseas markets and build a diversified communication network.

3.1.2. Foundations for International Cooperation and Industrial Integration

In the context of globalization, international literary exchanges and cooperation have become increasingly close. Collaborative efforts among Chinese and foreign publishers, literary agencies, and translator teams have become more routine, providing Chinese literature with professional channels for overseas promotion. The integration of literature with industries such as film and television, animation, gaming, and cultural tourism has deepened, facilitating the full industrial chain development of literary IP. This manifests as a model of “one creation, multiple monetizations”, which is related to changes in the commercial value and communication impact of literary works.

3.1.3. Accumulation of Content Resources

China’s continuously developing civilization over several millennia has provided a rich reservoir of content resources for the overseas dissemination of literature.

From the classical poetic tradition to the humanistic themes and contemporary expressions of modern and contemporary literature, a multi-layered and stylistically diverse literary system has emerged. This deep cultural heritage and varied creative ecosystem endow Chinese literature with a certain degree of cultural distinctiveness and communication potential, providing a content-level foundation for cross-cultural communication.

3.1.4. Support from the Application of Digital Technologies

The development of digital technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and new media platforms has expanded the boundaries of cross-border literary dissemination. Short-form video platforms, overseas social media platforms, and international streaming services have become derivative communication vehicles for literary IP, facilitating the transformation of texts into multimodal formats such as comics, audiobooks, and short dramas. This reduces communication costs while enhancing communication efficiency.

3.1.5. Overseas Audience Base and Market Space

Alongside changes in China's international influence, overseas interest in Chinese culture and social realities has grown. In 2022, the overseas market size of Chinese online literature exceeded 3 billion RMB, with the Asian market accounting for approximately 55% (*Release of the 2024 Annual Report on the Development of Chinese Internet Literature, 2025*). As of 2025, the foreign-language editions of the Three-Body Problem series have sold approximately 6.5 million copies, with translation rights licensed in 42 languages (*The 10th Anniversary of The Three-Body Problem Overseas Influence Conference Held in Zhengzhou, 2025*). The continued expansion of the overseas audience has created certain foundational conditions for Chinese literature to further enter international markets.

3.2. Challenges Encountered

3.2.1. Room for Improvement in the Supply of Original Works and Narrative Innovation

At present, the translation and introduction of Chinese classic literature largely focuses on a small number of well-known authors, leaving further room for the discovery and promotion of outstanding contemporary works. The narrative modes of some works tend to be relatively uniform, making it difficult to evoke deep emotional resonance among overseas audiences in cross-cultural contexts. The writer Xu Kun has noted that the overseas translation and introduction of her works often occur in a fragmented manner, and that the translation and publication of her full-length novels are, to some extent, subject to market factors. Overseas publishers, guided by market considerations, tend to favor established authors who already have a market foundation, while their investment in cultivating and discovering emerging writers and newer contemporary works remains relatively limited (*The Translation and Introduction of Chinese Literature Abroad Is Poised for Takeoff, 2010*). Although the Three-Body Problem series stands out as

a prominent case in the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature, it also reflects the fact that most quality works reflecting contemporary China receive relatively limited communication opportunities, and the existing translation and introduction system still has scope for further support of emerging and diverse works. On the domestic creative front, a certain imbalance is also observable. While Chinese online literature is produced in large volume, it exhibits a tendency toward formulaic patterns, with most works adopting a standardized “genre + tag” mode of production, and the number of quality works that possess intellectual depth and evoke deep emotional resonance is relatively limited.

3.2.2. Level of Improvement Needed in the Translation and Introduction System and Communication Mechanisms

Translation is an important link in the cross-cultural communication of literature. The state of translation capacity is, to some extent, related to the progress of the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature. On the one hand, the total number of translators in China has increased by approximately 1.44 million compared with a decade ago, a growth of nearly 40%. However, the number of highly skilled and specialized translators for Chinese-to-foreign language translation, as well as for less-commonly spoken languages, remains relatively limited (*2022 China Translation Talent Development Report, 2024*). On the other hand, although China has implemented several grant programs, it has yet to form a coordinated operational model that runs through the entire chain of translation, publication, and overseas promotion. Compared with the systematic support system provided by the Literature Translation Institute of Korea, there is still further room for development in terms of systematization. Data show that in 2024, the number of Chinese-language books added to the permanent collections of overseas library systems decreased by 1,648 titles compared with 2023, marking the eighth consecutive year of decline in the number of Chinese-language titles accessioned since 2017 (Liu, 2024). This phenomenon also reflects, to some extent, the conditions regarding the effective connection between quality content and target audiences overseas.

3.2.3. Copyright Protection in the Context of Digital Technology Development

On the one hand, overseas piracy and unauthorized use of works are prevalent. Statistics from Webnovel, the overseas platform of China Literature Limited (Yuewen), indicate that an estimated 83.3% of the platform’s top 100 translated works are affected by piracy, with the average monthly advertising revenue of some related websites estimated to exceed tens of millions of US dollars. Based on this, it is estimated that unauthorized translation and dissemination activities outside China cause economic losses of up to hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the Chinese online literature industry (Dou & Ji, 2020). A considerable number of overseas websites translate and repost Chinese literary works without authorization. In the process of cross-border rights enforcement, legal disparities between

different jurisdictions are significant, making enforcement costly and time-consuming, with variations in the severity of sanctions. At the same time, there is room for improvement in domestic copyright protection mechanisms, and certain aspects of legal norms for the protection of copyright in cross-border digital literary dissemination remain uncovered. On the other hand, the rapid iteration of technologies such as generative AI has also had a certain impact on the original literary ecosystem. AI-generated content often exhibits a degree of homogenization and shallowness, diluting, to some extent, the humanistic connotations and artistic value of literary works. Algorithmic recommendation mechanisms may narrow the scope of audiences' reading. Platforms continuously push similar content based on users' historical reading preferences, leading readers' information environments to become increasingly homogeneous, thereby shrinking the range of reading channels and topics. Relevant data from 2025 show that the average single-session reading time of young users in digital reading scenarios has declined year-on-year, with reading behavior exhibiting a pronounced trend toward entertainment-oriented and superficial consumption. The traffic-driven logic has, to a certain extent, constrained the communication space for in-depth, quality content (Peng, 2026).

3.2.4. Factors Related to Cultural Differences and Audience Reception

Differences between Chinese and Western cultures in terms of values, modes of thinking, and aesthetic preferences have a certain relationship with audience reception in the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature. The historical allusions, traditional philosophical ideas, and folk cultural connotations embedded in Chinese literary works often require a native cultural context to be fully understood, and may lead to comprehension biases in cross-cultural communication, thereby generating a certain degree of cultural discount. This issue is also evident in widely disseminated works that have reached overseas audiences. According to audience surveys on the *Three-Body Problem* series conducted overseas, some readers reported difficulties such as "the logic of thinking is hard to follow", "lack of knowledge about Chinese history and culture makes some plots difficult to understand", and "the cultural content is too profound" (*"Three-Body Problem" IP Overseas Observation Report Unveiled*, 2024). These were cited as obstacles in the reading process, reflecting, to some extent, the relationship between cultural differences and the reception of Chinese literature in overseas dissemination.

4. Exploring Innovative Pathways for the Overseas Dissemination of Chinese Literature Based on the 5W Model

The cross-cultural nature of overseas literary dissemination involves not only linguistic transfer and information transmission but also the reconstruction of cultural meaning, the formation of audience cognition, and the establishment of value recognition. This process requires an analytical framework capable of covering the entire communication process while integrating multiple influencing

factors across institutional, industrial, cultural, and technological dimensions. Among existing communication theories, Lasswell's 5W model provides a viable analytical foundation. This model constructs a closed analytical loop—from communicator (Who), content (Says What), channel (In Which Channel), audience (To Whom), to effect (With What Effect)—with the core elements of the communication process as its logical thread. This framework can incorporate influencing factors dispersed across different levels into a unified system, and it also establishes a clear logical correspondence between the preceding review of Japanese and Korean experiences and the subsequent discussion of pathway optimization, thereby helping to avoid fragmentation in the analytical process.

In the analytical framework of this study, the five dimensions of the 5W model correspond respectively to the key stages of the entire cross-cultural literary communication process, each assuming distinct and complementary explanatory functions. As the starting point of the communication process, the communicator dimension is primarily used to analyze the role positioning and collaborative interactions among various actors in the communication chain. As the core carrier of cross-cultural communication, the content dimension helps to examine the narrative expression strategies and value transmission modes of literary texts in cross-cultural contexts. As the intermediary connecting content and audience, the channel dimension is mainly used to analyze the synergistic interactions among different media forms and their impact on communication effectiveness. As the receiving end and starting point of feedback in the communication process, the audience dimension provides an analytical perspective for exploring segmented reception models based on levels of cultural familiarity and regional differences. As the concluding stage of the communication process, the effect dimension helps to assess the inherent limitations of existing evaluation systems and lays an analytical foundation for constructing a multi-layered evaluation framework that balances quantitative scale and qualitative recognition.

Thus, this model runs through the entire process of analysis and pathway exploration in this study. The following sections, proceeding from the five dimensions above, will discuss several potential pathways for enhancing the overseas communication effectiveness of Chinese literature.

4.1. Communicator: Building a Collaborative Operational System among Multiple Agents

The dissemination practices of Japan and South Korea indicate that the overall effectiveness of overseas literary communication is not determined by a single actor, but is rather closely related to the division of labor and collaboration among institutional designers, market entities, specialized agencies, and creators. From the perspective of adjusting the actor-level dimensions in the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature, constructing a diversified communication ecosystem centered on a collaborative mechanism constitutes an analytical perspective worth attention.

South Korea's institutional explorations offer certain referential experience. Korea established a dedicated Literature Translation Institute to coordinate translation grants, translator training, overseas publishing liaison, and international promotion, which has resulted in an increase in the number of annually funded publications from 50 - 60 to over 100, with a continuously expanding language coverage. On this basis, it can be argued that a certain degree of integration of existing funding systems—for example, by promoting information sharing and collaborative management across multiple departments—could help reduce redundant funding and institutional fragmentation. Furthermore, leveraging existing platforms such as the Chinese Writers Association's "Sailing Plan" to gradually form routine collaborative mechanisms covering translation funding, translator training, copyright licensing, and international promotion may, to some extent, achieve the centralized allocation of limited resources.

Japan presents a different operational model at the level of market actor functioning. Japanese publishing houses have established routine collaborative mechanisms with animation companies, enabling genres such as light novels to enter overseas markets through diverse forms including anime and games. This case suggests that if publishing houses shift from simple copyright output toward deeper localized operation, it may help enhance the visibility and acceptance of works in international markets. On this basis, cooperation between Chinese publishing houses and major overseas publishers could be further strengthened—for example, by entrusting professional agencies with copyright output, exploring the layout of overseas communication networks, and appropriately participating in IP derivative development.

At the creator level, through participation in writer residency programs, international literary festivals, and exchanges with overseas readers, creators have the opportunity to shorten the distance between themselves and their audiences, gain more direct awareness of overseas market demands and feedback, and thereby gradually incorporate cross-cultural awareness into the creative process. At the translator level, establishing a professional training mechanism for translation and introduction also holds potential value—for example, through translation workshops, international translation competitions, Sinologist exchange programs, and methods combining human proofreading with AI translation, so as to enhance the professional competence of translation personnel. These different levels of practice collectively point toward a collaborative configuration involving institutional coordination, market-oriented operation by publishers, deep engagement by creators, and professional support by translators.

4.2. Content: Presenting the Cultural Core and Achieving Cross-Cultural Adaptation

One factor contributing to the relative success of Japanese and Korean literature in overseas dissemination lies in their handling of communication content. Japan has leveraged the linkage between genre literature and the animation and gaming

industry chains to create a large-scale cross-border communication pathway. Korea, by presenting social issues with cross-cultural universality, has elicited a degree of emotional response among readers from different cultural backgrounds. At the same time, the literary dissemination practices of Japan and Korea also exhibit phenomena such as content rigidity, thematic homogenization, and superficial expression. These experiences suggest that while a genre-based pathway can rapidly expand the scale of dissemination, a lack of sustained infusion of cultural core content may easily lead to a one-dimensional perception of a country's literary landscape among overseas readers. Similarly, while focusing on universal themes can lower the threshold of reception, excessive catering to market preferences may weaken literary diversity and intellectual depth. On this basis, adjustments to Chinese literature's content strategy might be understood as a process of seeking a dynamic balance between preserving the cultural core and responding to global issues.

On the one hand, Japan's experience with the linkage between genre literature and multi-media industry chains offers a referential pathway, though its tendency toward content rigidity also warrants attention. Among Chinese genre works such as online literature and science fiction, successful cases like *The Three-Body Problem* and *Lord of the Mysteries* demonstrate the potential of a full-chain development model encompassing "literature-film & television-animation-gaming". Such models help achieve a multiplier effect in communication resources. In this process, integrating Chinese cultural elements and intellectual connotations into genre-based narratives may help maintain the depth of cultural expression while enhancing communication efficiency, thereby avoiding the weakening of the cultural core that may result from one-sided pursuit of market returns.

On the other hand, Korea's strategy of focusing on universal social issues also provides reference value, though the problem of thematic homogenization should not be overlooked. Those themes in Chinese literature that are rooted in contemporary Chinese development practices while also possessing cross-cultural universality—such as urban-rural transition, intergenerational conflict, ecological issues, and technological ethics—may constitute content resources worth exploring. Transforming these locally grounded yet universally relevant themes into perceptible and discussable narrative content across different cultural contexts can help overseas readers develop a multi-dimensional understanding of Chinese society and culture.

Furthermore, in light of the insufficient investment by Japan and Korea in content dissemination targeting non-English-speaking regions, China's differentiated regional content strategy also merits discussion. At the level of text adaptation, appropriately adjusting narrative rhythm and modes of expression according to the cultural context and reading habits of target regions can help reduce potential misinterpretation of cultural imagery. At the level of content selection, focusing on fantasy and xianxia works for the Southeast Asian market while prioritizing science fiction and suspense works for the European and American markets may

help create a regionally differentiated content communication landscape. At the same time, joint creation between Chinese and foreign creators can also be considered as an exploratory direction, attempting to combine Chinese cultural elements with the emotional needs of overseas audiences in hopes of generating a certain resonance between cultural expression and reception.

4.3. Channels: Integrated Multi-Channel Layout and System Construction

The channel practices of Japanese and Korean overseas literary dissemination exhibit several characteristics. Japan made an early directional shift from physical publishing to digital platforms, while Korea leveraged the spillover effects of its popular culture to create a two-way interaction between literature and popular culture. At the same time, both countries exhibit certain structural imbalances, such as relatively limited investment in translation into non-English languages. Based on these observations, adjustments to China's channel strategy for literary dissemination could consider traditional channels as the foundation, digital channels as a key support, and cross-sectoral channels as a supplementary complement, thereby forming a multi-dimensional communication network layout.

At the traditional channel level, the sustained investment of Japan and Korea in physical publishing and international book fairs provides reference for China, though their uneven regional distribution also warrants attention. Physical publishing, as a foundational link in cross-cultural literary communication, has core pathways that include deepening international publishing cooperation, advancing high-quality multi-lingual translation and introduction, and using international book fair platforms to expand offline communication channels in non-English markets.

At the digital channel level, Japan's shift from physical publishing to digital platforms and Korea's practice of leveraging social media to amplify communication effects offer certain experiential references for the overseas dissemination of Chinese digital literature. The overseas user base of Chinese online literature has exceeded several hundred million, with digital platforms playing a relatively important role. How to optimize operational models to enhance user stickiness and the communication effectiveness of cultural content is a direction worth further observation. Specifically, the practices of platforms such as WebNovel and GoodNovel in multi-lingual translation and localized operation demonstrate certain reference value. The algorithmic distribution mechanisms of social media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube can also be utilized as communication channels—for example, by generating topic interest through lightweight content formats such as short video adaptations and author interviews. In addition, the continuous iteration of AI translation technology provides new technical conditions for multi-lingual content supply, making the construction of a dynamically updated multi-lingual digital content repository a possible pathway. At the same time, a certain balance needs to be maintained between the expansion of digital

channels and the quality control of content, in order to avoid the erosion of literary depth and diversity under a traffic-driven logic.

At the cross-sectoral channel level, Korea's communication model of bidirectional empowerment between literature and popular culture offers certain reference value, though the potential impact of excessive commercialization on the intrinsic value of literature also deserves attention. The deep integration of Chinese literature with industries such as film and television, animation, gaming, and cultural tourism constitutes a "literary IP + cross-media derivative" communication model. This model transforms abstract textual content into concrete sensory experiences, potentially lowering the barrier to cross-cultural understanding, and thereby demonstrates corresponding communication effects and development potential. In 2025, the web novel *The King's Avatar* collaborated with Switzerland Tourism to launch a themed literary tourism route, attracting a considerable number of overseas fans to visit the destinations, thereby transforming literary reading into cross-cultural tourism consumption (He, 2025). Meanwhile, *Dao Gui Yi Xian* (a Chinese fantasy web novel) collaborated with Universal Studios Singapore to create a Halloween-themed adventure house, using physical space as a medium to expose overseas audiences to Eastern fantasy narratives in an immersive environment (Zhang, 2025a). These cases provide practical models worthy of reference for the cross-sectoral dissemination of Chinese literature.

4.4. Audience: Segmented Audience Positioning and Interactive Model Construction

The audience strategies for Japanese and Korean overseas literary dissemination show a trend of shifting from "generalized promotion" to "segmented penetration". Japan, using subcultural forms such as light novels and anime as entry points, accumulated a relatively stable fan base among overseas youth at an early stage and gradually expanded to broader audiences. Korea, leveraging the organizational and communication capacities of K-pop fan communities, transformed the act of idol recommendations of literary works into a phenomenon of fan-driven spontaneous dissemination. For Chinese literature, moving from cross-border dissemination to deep cross-cultural acceptance necessitates further refining the relatively broad concept of the "overseas market" into differentiated levels of receiving subjects.

Drawing on the audience strategies of Japan and Korea that penetrate specific segments, Chinese literature can adopt differentiated content arrangements based on audiences' level of familiarity with Chinese culture. For example, for core audiences such as Sinologists, university researchers, and overseas Chinese, academic interpretation and exploration of cultural connotations may be more appropriate. Approaches such as specialized seminars and close reading can help deepen their cognitive understanding and cultural identification with the works. For potential audiences with only preliminary interest, lightweight and visual content formats—such as comic adaptations, short video interpretations, and audio-

book excerpts—may lower the reception threshold, serving the purpose of cultural introduction and interest stimulation. This segmented arrangement helps achieve differentiated communication goals across audience groups with varying levels of cultural familiarity.

Drawing on the experience of spontaneous dissemination by Korean fan communities, interactive participation can, to some extent, facilitate the transformation of audiences from passive receivers into active disseminators. A shift from a one-way communication structure to a bidirectional “communication-feedback-co-creation” cycle is a trend worth attention. On the one hand, the use of immersive technologies such as VR and AR has the potential to reconstruct literary scenes, enhancing the audience’s embodied experience and stimulating their willingness to create. On the other hand, spontaneous communication formed by audiences through user-generated content (UGC), online shared reading communities, and comment sharing also shows certain potential. Communication actors can also use data analysis of audience preferences to dynamically adjust content strategies, thereby improving the match between content and audiences. Taking the overseas promotion of Jin Yong’s martial arts novels as an example, building a virtual “martial arts world” VR experience hall could spark readers’ interest in reading through immersive scenes. At the same time, creating a wiki page for collaborative creation by overseas readers, supporting them in writing character biographies and creating fan illustrations, and incorporating outstanding works into official peripheral derivative plans could create content feedback and supplementation.

Furthermore, differentiated communication strategies according to the cultural contexts and reading habits of different regions also merit attention. For the Asian market, given cultural affinities, works with closely related cultural backgrounds may have a higher degree of alignment. For example, recommending works by writers such as Yu Hua and Su Tong that reflect family emotions to Japanese and Korean readers, and organizing literary dialogue activities between China, Japan, and Korea that engage with the attention paid to family ethics issues in Japanese and Korean societies, could be a viable pathway. For countries along the Belt and Road, promoting literary works that reflect cooperation, exchange, and cultural integration between China and those countries according to local cultural needs may help foster cultural exchange.

4.5. Effect: Construction and Application of a Multi-Dimensional Evaluation System

Communication effect is a key indicator for evaluating the effectiveness of overseas literary dissemination and an important basis for optimizing communication strategies. China, Japan, and Korea currently commonly use short-term quantitative data to assess communication effectiveness. Although this approach can quickly present the market performance of dissemination, it struggles to reflect the deeper level of cultural acceptance. It may also lead to the shallowness and

homogenization of communication content, thereby constraining the long-term cultural influence of literary dissemination.

As the goal of literary dissemination shifts from cross-border physical transmission to deep cross-cultural acceptance, the need to establish a more systematic and comprehensive evaluation mechanism is becoming increasingly apparent. Based on the logic of communication effect generation—from surface to deep levels—a multi-dimensional evaluation matrix encompassing market reach, reader engagement, institutional adoption, and cultural response merits attention. Market reach is the foundational level of communication effect, reflecting the pervasiveness of works across different regions. It can be measured through indicators such as the number of multi-lingual copyright licenses, the shelf presence in physical bookstores, and the reading time on digital platforms. Second, reader engagement directly reflects the audience's active reception of and emotional connection to the works. It can be assessed through comment interaction rates, the volume of user-generated content, and the level of activity in fan communities. Institutional adoption serves as an important indicator of professional recognition of a work and can be measured by the number of works added to overseas library collections, the citation rate in university curricula, and the frequency of citations in academic literature. Cultural response represents the concentrated manifestation of cross-cultural influence and can be examined through the volume of coverage in mainstream media, the number of international literary awards received, and the quantity of cross-media adaptations. This framework retains quantitative market data while also incorporating qualitative cultural indicators, potentially offering a more comprehensive picture of the overall effectiveness of overseas literary dissemination.

At the same time, the establishment of a dynamic monitoring and two-way feedback mechanism can provide a reference for adjusting communication strategies. A real-time monitoring system built with big data technologies can track reader behavior, emotional feedback, and channel performance, helping to identify comprehension barriers potentially caused by cultural discount, and subsequently adjust content and distribution strategies accordingly. For example, if a historical novel shows a high abandonment rate due to insufficient background knowledge, the monitoring system could trigger pop-up annotations or accompanying audio explanations, reducing reading difficulty through such micro-adjustments, thereby forming a feedback loop of “monitoring-intervention-quality improvement”.

Drawing on Korea's experience of extending communication effects through popular culture, the transformation and extension of effects also constitute a dimension worth attention. Communication effects are reflected not only in the extent to which works are read but also in the cultural identification they generate and their extension into other domains. Therefore, when further analyzing communication effects, the relationship between audience identification and subsequent communication behaviors deserves examination. Cultivating overseas fan

communities of Chinese literature, organizing China-foreign cultural exchange events, and developing cross-cultural literary IP can all be regarded as potential extension pathways. Taking the dissemination of Chinese online literature in Southeast Asia as an example, offline themed events spontaneously organized by local fan communities could potentially connect identification at the level of digital reading with broader value recognition. These events may also extend to themed tourism routes integrating culture and travel. This chain of “online literature dissemination-fan loyalty-cultural tourism consumption” provides a sustainable driving force for the communication process and expands communication effects from short-term market data into long-term cultural influence.

5. Conclusion

The institutional planning and related arrangements for the overseas dissemination of literature developed by Japan and South Korea offer certain practical references for further research on the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature. The common issues that have emerged in their development processes also serve as aspects warranting attention in the dissemination of Chinese literature. Based on the existing foundations and current realities of Chinese literature’s overseas dissemination, this paper has discussed potential strategic directions from five dimensions—communicator, content, channel, audience, and effect—which may be regarded as an analytical attempt to advance the study of cross-border dissemination and cross-cultural reception of Chinese literature.

At the same time, this study has several limitations. First, in terms of case selection, the analysis focuses primarily on genre literature and online literature, which have a relatively high degree of marketization, while offering limited examination of the cross-border dissemination practices and reception mechanisms of other literary forms such as serious literature and classical literature. Furthermore, the empirical materials in this study are drawn mainly from industry development reports, commercial platform statistics, and publicly available documents, with relatively insufficient qualitative data on the reception process of overseas audiences. In addition, the study has not yet fully explored literary dissemination practices in emerging markets. These limitations suggest that the communication pathways and observations proposed in this paper may not be equally applicable to all literary genres or all regional markets. Future research will build on this foundation by further expanding the scope of case coverage and the types of data sources, with a view to enhancing the generalizability and specificity of the research findings.

The core connotation of cross-border literary dissemination is not limited to one-way cultural transmission; rather, it manifests as cross-linguistic and cross-regional cultural exchange and dialogue. Nor is it equivalent to a static, fixed communication model; instead, it is a dynamic process that adapts to changing times and different contextual conditions. Against the backdrop of digital and intelligent transformation, the iteration of generative AI, big data, and immersive inter-

active technologies offers new possibilities for literary communication while also raising certain issues that require attention. How to maintain a humanistic focus in the application of technology and how to grasp the fundamental direction of communication through dynamic adaptation are questions worthy of continued exploration in research on the overseas dissemination of Chinese literature. Furthermore, in the context of globalization, whether China, Japan, and South Korea—three countries sharing the Northeast Asian cultural sphere—can jointly address copyright issues in the digital environment through regional collaboration and cross-border copyright cooperation remains a topic for further investigation. The global dissemination of Chinese literature still holds space for continued research and practical exploration.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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