

# Cultural Hybridity of Traditional Festivals in Macao: The Fusion and Change of Chinese and western Festival Cultures

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**Abstract:** This paper focuses on the phenomenon of cultural hybridity in traditional festivals in Macao, and deeply discusses the integration and change of Chinese and western festival cultures in Macao. By analyzing the origin, development and present situation of traditional festivals in Macao, this paper reveals the mutual infiltration and influence of Chinese and western cultures in festival activities. It is found that traditional festivals in Macao not only retain the essence of Chinese traditional culture, but also incorporate elements of western culture, forming a unique cultural landscape. This paper aims to provide a new perspective for understanding the multicultural coexistence in Macao and provide reference for cultural integration in other regions.

**Keywords:** Macao; Traditional Festivals; Cultural Hybridity; Chinese and Western Integration; Cultural Changes

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## 1.Introduction

Macao, a special administrative region in the south of China, has been an important window for cultural exchanges between China and the West since ancient times. Its unique geographical location and historical background make Macao a model of multicultural coexistence. In the traditional festivals in Macao, the integration and changes of Chinese and western cultures are particularly remarkable. These festivals not only carry rich cultural connotations, but also reflect Macao society's tolerance and acceptance of multiculturalism. The purpose of this paper is to explore the integration and changes of Chinese and Western festival cultures in Macao by analyzing the cultural hybridity of traditional festivals in Macao, and to provide a new perspective for understanding the multicultural coexistence in Macao.

## 2.The Origin and Development of Traditional Festivals in Macau

### 2.1 Inheritance of Chinese traditional festivals

As a Chinese-dominated society, Chinese traditional festivals occupy an important position in Macao's cultural life. Traditional festivals such as Spring Festival, Tomb-Sweeping Day, Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival have a deep mass base in Macao. These festivals not only retain the essence of Chinese traditional culture, such as posting Spring Festival couplets, setting off firecrackers, eating New Year's Eve, enjoying the moon and other customs, but also incorporate the local characteristics of Macao, forming a unique festival culture. Take the Spring Festival as an example. The celebration of the Spring Festival in Macao begins on the 16th day of the last lunar month and lasts until the 15th day of the first lunar month. During this period, the family will make preparations such as cleaning, buying new year's goods and buying new

clothes. On New Year's Eve, family members get together and enjoy a sumptuous New Year's Eve dinner, and then go to the flower market to choose new year's flowers, which means good luck. In addition, Macao's Spring Festival celebrations also include traditional customs such as dragon and lion dancing, setting off firecrackers and visiting temple fairs, which not only add festive atmosphere to the festival, but also inherit the essence of Chinese traditional culture <sup>[1]</sup>.

## **2.2 Introduction of Western Festival Culture**

With the arrival of Portuguese colonists, western festival culture gradually took root in Macao. Western festivals, such as Christmas, Easter and Halloween, have gradually been accepted and integrated into the local culture in Macao. The introduction of these western festivals not only enriches the festival culture in Macao, but also promotes the exchange and integration of Chinese and western cultures. Take Christmas as an example. Although Christmas is not a traditional festival in Macao, there are extensive celebrations in Macao. Every year on Christmas Eve, the major shopping malls, hotels and restaurants in Macao will be newly decorated, creating a strong festive atmosphere. In addition, many charities will organize Christmas parties to send warmth and care to the disadvantaged groups. These activities not only reflect the characteristics of western festival culture, but also show the tolerance and acceptance of Macao society to multiculturalism.

## **3. Cultural hybridity in traditional festivals in Macao**

### **3.1 Overlap and integration of festival dates**

In Macao, the dates of some traditional Chinese and Western festivals are similar or the same, which provides natural conditions for cultural mixing. For example, the dates of festivals such as Tomb-Sweeping Day and Easter, Mazu's birthday and Easter are similar, which makes these festivals in Macao present the characteristics of combining Chinese and Western. Take Tomb-Sweeping Day and Easter as an example. Tomb-Sweeping Day is a traditional festival of sacrifice in China. People will go to the cemetery to sweep graves and worship their ancestors. Easter is an important festival in the west to commemorate the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Macao, the celebrations of these two festivals are often intertwined. During their stay in Tomb-Sweeping Day, many families will go to the cemetery to visit graves, and at the same time, they will also attend the Easter Mass in the church to express their memory of their ancestors and their reverence for life <sup>[2]</sup>. This overlap and integration of festival dates not only enriches the connotation of festival activities, but also promotes the exchange and understanding between Chinese and Western cultures.

### **3.2 Mutual Infiltration of Festival Customs**

In the traditional festivals in Macao, the mutual penetration of Chinese and western festival customs is particularly obvious. Some Chinese traditional festivals incorporate elements of western culture, while some western festivals also absorb the essence of Chinese traditional culture. Taking the Spring Festival as an example, Macao's Spring Festival celebrations not only retain the customs of Chinese traditional culture, such as posting Spring Festival couplets, setting off firecrackers and eating New Year's Eve, but also incorporate elements of western culture. For example, some families will put up Christmas trees and decorate lanterns and ribbons during the Spring Festival to create a strong festive atmosphere. In addition, some merchants will launch Chinese and Western Spring Festival promotions to attract customers. These activities not only show the integration and changes of Chinese and western cultures, but also reflect the tolerance and acceptance of multi-culture in Macao society. Similarly, in western festivals, elements of Chinese traditional culture are not uncommon. For example, during the Christmas period, some businesses will launch Christmas gifts with Chinese characteristics, such as Chinese knots and blessing ornaments. In addition, some charities will organize Christmas parties that combine Chinese and Western culture, and invite Chinese and Western guests to participate together to enhance mutual understanding and friendship.

### **3.3 Innovation and Development of Festival Culture**

In traditional festivals in Macao, the phenomenon of cultural hybridity is not only reflected in the mutual penetration of festival dates and customs, but also in the innovation and development of festival culture. With the changes of the times and the development of society, Macao's traditional festival culture constantly absorbs new elements and ideas, forming a unique cultural landscape. Take Mazu Birthday as an example. Mazu Birthday is one of the most distinctive traditional festivals in Macao, which originated from the reverence of local fishermen for Mazu. In the long river of history, Mazu's birthday has gradually developed into a grand festival integrating sacrifice, folk performances and cultural exchanges. Today's Mazu

birthday activities not only retain traditional sacrificial ceremonies and folk performances, such as dragon and lion dances and Cantonese opera, but also incorporate elements of modern culture, such as concerts and art exhibitions. These innovations and developments not only enrich the connotation of Mazu's birthday, but also attract more tourists and audiences to participate in it.

## **4. An analysis of the causes of the cultural hybridity of traditional festivals in Macao**

### **4.1 The promotion of historical background**

Macao, a special administrative region on the South China Sea coast of China, has been an important bridge and window for cultural exchanges between China and the West since ancient times. Its unique geographical location has made Macao a hub for trade and cultural exchanges between the East and the West in history. Since the mid-Ming Dynasty, the Portuguese gradually settled in Macao in the name of trade, and brought advanced western science and technology, art, religion and life-style, thus opening the deep blending and collision of Chinese and western cultures in this land of Macao. With the passage of time, Chinese and western cultures did not simply coexist in Macao, but experienced a complex process from initial contact to gradual integration, and then formed a unique cultural landscape. The Catholic culture, European architectural style, eating habits and festival celebrations brought by the Portuguese have infiltrated and influenced each other with Macao's traditional Chinese culture, Buddhist and Taoist beliefs, Lingnan architectural style and traditional festival customs. For example, the Mazu Tempel in Macao is built adjacent to the Catholic Church, which reflects the pluralistic coexistence of religious beliefs; The Portuguese-style architecture in Macao incorporates Chinese elements, such as Chinese roof and window lattice design, which shows the integration and innovation of architectural styles. The promotion of this historical background provides a profound soil and important conditions for the phenomenon of cultural hybridity in traditional festivals in Macao. In the traditional festivals in Macao, whether it is Chinese traditional festivals such as Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival, or Western festivals such as Christmas and Easter, they all present the characteristics of combining Chinese and Western. On the festival date, Chinese and western festivals are sometimes similar or overlapping, which provides time convenience for cultural integration; In festival customs, Chinese and western festival elements are intertwined, such as putting a Christmas tree during the Spring Festival and tasting Portuguese moon cakes in the Mid-Autumn Festival, which reflects the mutual penetration of customs; In festival culture, Chinese and western festival concepts learn from each other, such as emphasizing common values such as family reunion and gratitude and dedication, which promotes the deep integration of culture<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **4.2 Driven by social needs**

With the continuous development and changes of Macao society, people's living standards are improving day by day, and the demand for spiritual and cultural life is also showing a diversified and personalized trend. Although the traditional Chinese festival culture carries rich historical connotations and national feelings, in modern society, its forms of expression and celebration methods have been difficult to meet people's growing cultural needs. Especially the younger generation, they are more pursuing novel, unique and creative festival experiences, and their interest and acceptance of western culture are also increasing. Therefore, it is an inevitable trend for Macao to introduce western festival culture and enrich the connotation of festival activities. The introduction of western festival culture has not only brought brand-new festival ideas and celebration methods to Macao, such as the romantic atmosphere of Christmas and the funny taste of Halloween, but also promoted the exchange and integration of Chinese and western cultures and met people's diverse cultural needs. At the same time, the commercial operation mode of western festival culture has also brought new development opportunities for Macao's tourism and related industries. Driven by this social demand, Chinese and Western festival cultures have gradually merged and changed in Macao. On the one hand, traditional festivals in Macao began to incorporate western elements, such as western music performances during the Spring Festival and Portuguese dances during the Mid-Autumn Festival. On the other hand, western festivals have also found suitable soil in Macao, such as charity sale during Christmas and treasure hunt during Easter. These integrations and innovations not only enrich the cultural connotation of Macao's festivals, but also improve the quality of people's festival experience.

### **4.3 Promotion of cultural exchange**

As an international city, Macao has increasingly frequent cultural exchanges with other parts of the world. The promotion of

this cultural exchange provides an important opportunity and a broad platform for the phenomenon of cultural hybridity in traditional festivals in Macao. Through cultural exchanges with other parts of the world, Macao not only has the opportunity to introduce western festival culture, but also learn from the experience of festival activities in other regions to enrich its own festival cultural connotation<sup>[4]</sup>. For example, cultural exchanges between Macao and Portuguese-speaking countries such as Portugal and Brazil have brought more Portuguese-speaking cultural elements into Macao's festivals, such as Portuguese dance, music and food. At the same time, Macao also has increasingly close cultural exchanges with other Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea and Southeast Asia, and the festival customs and celebration methods in these areas have also had an impact on Macao's festival culture. In addition, Macao also actively participates in international cultural exchange activities, such as the World Expo and Cultural Festival, and shows its traditional festival culture to people all over the world, thus enhancing the international influence of Chinese culture.

In the process of cultural exchange, Macao is not only a receiver, but also a disseminator. Macao has spread its traditional festival culture, such as Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival, to all parts of the world, so that more people can understand and experience the charm of Chinese culture. At the same time, Macao has also organically combined Chinese and Western cultural elements by innovating the form and content of festival activities, and created a festival cultural brand with Macao characteristics, such as the Macau International Fireworks Competition Display and the Macau Food Festival, which attracted tourists and audiences from all over the world to participate. The promotion of this cultural exchange not only enriches the connotation of Macao's festival culture, but also promotes the integration and change of Chinese and Western festival cultures in Macao. Through cultural exchanges, Macao has become a model of multicultural coexistence, showing the inclusiveness and openness of Chinese culture. At the same time, cultural exchange has also promoted the harmonious, stable and sustainable development of Macao society and laid a solid foundation for Macao's long-term prosperity.

## **5.The influence and significance of the cultural mixture of traditional festivals in Macao**

### **5.1 Promote cultural diversity and inclusiveness.**

Cultural hybridity in traditional festivals in Macao is like a bridge, which greatly promotes the vigorous development of cultural diversity and inclusiveness. In Macao, Chinese and western festival cultures are not mutually exclusive, but are skillfully integrated to draw a unique cultural picture together. During the Spring Festival, in addition to the traditional dragon and lion dances and Spring Festival couplets, you can also see western-style floats parade interspersed among them; During Christmas, while feeling the romantic atmosphere in the west, you can also taste Christmas food with Chinese flavor. This coexistence and harmony of multiculturalism in the same time and space breaks down the barriers between cultures, so that people from different cultural backgrounds can find resonance and fun in it. It enriches people's spiritual world, enables people to get in touch with broader and richer cultural elements, and broadens cultural horizons. At the same time, the presentation of cultural diversity has also enhanced social cohesion and centripetal force, and different cultural groups have jointly built a harmonious and inclusive social environment through mutual appreciation and respect. Cultural hybridity in traditional festivals in Macao is like a bridge, which greatly promotes the vigorous development of cultural diversity and inclusiveness. In Macao, Chinese and western festival cultures are not mutually exclusive, but are skillfully integrated to draw a unique cultural picture together. During the Spring Festival, in addition to the traditional dragon and lion dances and Spring Festival couplets, you can also see western-style floats parade interspersed among them; During Christmas, while feeling the romantic atmosphere in the west, you can also taste Christmas food with Chinese flavor. This coexistence and harmony of multiculturalism in the same time and space breaks down the barriers between cultures, so that people from different cultural backgrounds can find resonance and fun in it. It enriches people's spiritual world, enables people to get in touch with broader and richer cultural elements, and broadens cultural horizons. At the same time, the presentation of cultural diversity has also enhanced social cohesion and centripetal force, and different cultural groups have jointly built a harmonious and inclusive social environment through mutual appreciation and respect.

### **5.2 Enhance cultural identity and sense of belonging**

Cultural hybridity in traditional festivals in Macao is like a bond, which closely enhances people's sense of cultural identity and belonging. When people participate in Chinese and western festivals, they can not only immerse themselves in the

profound heritage of Chinese traditional culture, such as the reunion implication of Mid-Autumn Festival and eating moon cakes, but also appreciate the unique charm of western culture, such as the interesting experience of looking for eggs at Easter. The nourishment of this dual culture makes people deeply feel their close connection with the multiculturalism in this land. Both Macao residents born and bred and tourists from all over the world can find emotional sustenance in this atmosphere of cultural integration. The enhancement of cultural identity and sense of belonging, like a solid cornerstone, provides strong support for the harmonious, stable and sustainable development of society and makes people love this land full of cultural vitality more.

### **5.3 Promote cultural inheritance and innovation**

Cultural hybridity in traditional festivals in Macao is just like a powerful driving force, which has effectively promoted the development of cultural inheritance and innovation. In the process of integrating Chinese and western festival cultures, traditional festival activities in Macao constantly absorb new elements and concepts and glow with vitality<sup>[5]</sup>. On the one hand, it provides a new way and carrier for the inheritance of Chinese traditional culture, so that ancient customs can be continued and carried forward in modern society; On the other hand, the integration of western culture has also inspired innovation and spawned many novel and unique festival forms and contents. For example, western music and dance elements are integrated into traditional festival performances to create a unique art form. This kind of cultural inheritance and innovative development not only protects the roots of Chinese traditional culture, but also makes the culture prosper with the times, injecting a steady stream of vitality into the cultural development of Macao.

## **6. Conclusion**

By analyzing the cultural hybridity of traditional festivals in Macao, this paper discusses the integration and changes of Chinese and western festival cultures in Macao. It is found that traditional festivals in Macao not only retain the essence of Chinese traditional culture, but also incorporate elements of western culture, forming a unique cultural landscape. This phenomenon of cultural hybridity not only promotes the development of cultural diversity and inclusiveness, but also enhances people's sense of cultural identity and belonging and promotes the development of cultural inheritance and innovation. Future research can further explore the deep mechanism and cultural connotation of cultural hybridity in Macao's traditional festivals, and the influence of this cultural hybridity on Macao's social and cultural development. At the same time, we can also make a comparative study of the phenomenon of cultural mixing of traditional festivals in Macao and other regions, so as to provide a broader perspective and reference for understanding the coexistence of multiculturalism. In addition, with the progress of science and technology and the development of society, future research can also make use of new technical means such as big data and artificial intelligence to conduct a more in-depth analysis and research on the phenomenon of cultural hybridity of traditional festivals in Macao.

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## **Conflict of Interests**

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