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The Development of Overseas Education in the New Era of China

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ABSTRACT

The development of overseas education in the new era of China can be divided into four stages, each of which has different characteristics. The achievements of the development of China's overseas education are as following: first, persisting in the overall idea of "supporting study abroad, encouraging return home and freedom of coming and going"; second, the number of students of overseas education keeps rising; third, the selection of overseas education is gradually diversified. The future development trend of overseas education is shown as: the return boom is in the ascendant; the "domestic overseas education" is gradually developing; and China's international education ushers in the climax.

1. The Development of Overseas Education in the New Era

1.1 The Recovery Period of Overseas Education 1978-1988

1.1.1 Overview of Overseas Education

The Third Plenary Session of the tenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China marked the arrival of the new era in China, at which the resolution on "the restoration of Comrade Deng Xiaoping's post" was adopted. Deng Xiaoping proposed that we should do well in education and science and technology, and think that education and science and technology are the breakthrough of development and opening up. After the Third Plenary Session of the tenth Central Committee, he repeatedly mentioned that to rapidly improve China's

higher education, "we must absorb the world's advanced things and make foreign things serve China." To send overseas students out, invite people to give lectures"^[1]. After listening to the report on the work of Tsinghua University, Deng Xiaoping made an instruction to expand the sending of overseas students: "we are in favor of the increase of the number of overseas students. We should send thousands of students. On the one hand, we should strive to improve our university level. On the other hand, we should send people out to study. This is one of the important ways to speed up the cultivation of talented personnel and improve the level of education of our country."^[2]

Deng Xiaoping's decision on sending overseas students was not only influenced by his early experience of studying abroad, but also came from his correct judgment of the situation of domestic and abroad. He realized that talented personnel is indispensable for the construction of our

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country, and that to make progress in science and technology, we must achieve foreign exchange and opening up in education. Although at that time China was waiting for prosperity and the state's foreign exchange reserves were very limited, he thought it was worthwhile to send overseas students sponsored by the government.

In December 1978, the first 52 visiting scholars sponsored by the government arrived in the United States, becoming the first batch of overseas students after China's opening up and development, opening up the development of overseas education in the new era.

After the recovery of overseas education, China's overseas education basically shows a steady growth trend at this stage. For example, in 1979, there were 1277 people sent by the government to study abroad. In 1980, there were 1862 people sent by the government to study abroad. In 1981, the number exceeded 2000, reaching 2925. By 1985, the number of people sent by the government to study abroad had exceeded 3000, reaching 3246^[3].

Overseas education sent by employers was also an important way in this stage, which showed a more rapid growth trend. In 1987, the number of overseas students sent by the government was 3707, and the number of overseas students sent by the employers was 6569; in 1988, the number of overseas students sent by the government was 3786, and the number of overseas students sent by the employers to study abroad was 3535; in 1990, the number of overseas students sent by the government was 2792, and the number of overseas students sent by the employers was 5500^[4].

At the same time, studying abroad at one's own expense gradually developed. "*Provisional regulations on the work of students studying abroad*" clearly put forward that studying abroad at one's own expense is a channel for training talented personal for national construction and should be supported. For those who study abroad at their own expense, they should be treated as if they were sent abroad by the government, treated equally in politics, and cared for and cherished. Before 1978, the number of people studying abroad at their own expense was almost zero. After 1979, more than 1000 students applied to study at their own expense every year.

In December 1984, "*the Interim Provisions on studying abroad at one's own expense*" issued by the State Council stipulated that any individual citizen who has obtained foreign exchange subsidy or foreign scholarship through proper and legal procedures and has successfully obtained the admission permit can study abroad at one's own expense, regardless of the limitation of education background, age and working years. In the late 1980s, the upsurge of studying abroad at one's own expense kept

developing. According to the annual report "*New Open Doors Data*" published by the International Education Association in 1988, China became the country with the largest number of overseas students in the world in 1987, with a total of 42481.

In the process of the continuous development of overseas education, the scale of overseas study expanded rapidly. At the same time, there are problems such as the late return of overseas students sent by the government, the blindness of sending overseas students, and the chaos of the market for overseas study. These problems lead to the deficit of overseas study, imbalance of age, imbalance of discipline distribution, and the decline of the quality of overseas students. In front of these problems, Chinese government adjusted the policy of overseas education in time, formulated relevant laws and regulations, and ensured the steady development of overseas education.

1.1.2 Overseas Education Policy and Organization

In view of the situation that all wastes are waiting for prosperity in the early stage of China's development and opening-up, therefore, in the period of China's overseas education recovery, the national policy of overseas education is to "open more channels and send more students". The overseas education was sponsored by the government. After returning to China, the students will be uniformly distributed by the government. In principle, graduate students and advanced students need to return to the original units.

In order to encourage the development of overseas education, in the early stage, the policy of studying abroad was relatively loose. On January 1, 1981, seven departments, including the Ministry of education and the Ministry of foreign affairs, approved and transmitted "*the request for instructions on studying abroad at one's own expense*" and "*the Interim Provisions on studying abroad at one's own expense*", recognizing that studying abroad at one's own expense is a legal way to go abroad. In July of the same year, the State Council approved and transmitted "*the notice on the report of the working conference on the management of overseas students*" issued by the Ministry of education and other six departments, pointing out that the policy of sending overseas students by the government is still "strive to send more students", but at the same time, it requires "highlight the key points, make overall arrangements and ensure the quality", and for the first time, it clearly proposes that employers can also send overseas students, so as to diversified the Channel of dispatching. On December 13, 1986, the State Council approved the Circular of the State Education Commission "*on the In-*

terim Provisions on the work of overseas students”, which stipulated that the policy of China’s overseas study work at that time was “dispatch as needed, guarantee the quality and integrate study with application”.

With the continuous development of overseas education, in the middle and late 1980s, because of the problems of overseas education, China adjusted the policy of studying abroad in time, and strengthened the construction of policies and regulations of overseas education. On August 21, 1987, the State Education Commission and the Ministry of Public Security jointly issued “*the notice on the prohibition of organizations and individuals at home and abroad from enrolling students studying abroad at their own expense in China without authorization*”, stipulating that those who meet the requirements of the state should be supported. However, “no organization or individual at home or abroad is allowed to undertake the business of ‘contacting and arranging to study abroad at their own expense’ in China”^[5]. Relevant domestic organizations may establish non-profit and service-oriented overseas education consulting institutions to provide overseas study consulting services to Chinese citizens. On December 30th of the same year, the notice “*on further implementing the work of the central government’s personnel studying abroad*” emphasized that the principle of “less and better” should be adhered to for public students studying abroad. The overseas students sent by government should not be excessively concentrated in some countries, and declared that the students studying abroad sent by government have the obligation to return to China on schedule.

In consideration of those problems in overseas education, the policy of overseas education in China was tightened. While continuing to implement the policy of “dispatch as needed, guarantee the quality and integrate study with application”, the principle of “learning from other country according needs, less and better, fixed person and orientation, striving for quality and return” is emphasized.

Since 1991, the government set limitation to the number of visiting scholars sent by government and adopt the method of “limit application, expert evaluation and excellent admission”. As for studying abroad at one’s own expense, the State Education Commission stipulates that after five years of graduation of undergraduate or graduate students, one can apply for studying abroad at one’s own expense only with the consent of the unit they belong to and the approval of the Education Commission of the local province, autonomous region or municipality directly under the central government. On January 25, 1990, the State Education Commission issued the notice “*on the supplementary provisions on self-funded study abroad for the personnel with college degree or above*”, to carry

out qualification examination to the ones who is studying abroad at one’s own expense with college degree or above, and collect the higher education training fee from them”^[6].

In order to help and manage overseas education better, China established Service Overseas Student Service Center on April 1, 1989. The Department of overseas education was set up by the State Education Commission, which is mainly responsible for the related services of overseas education, returning after study and studying in China, as well as international exchange and cooperation in education.

In terms of international education in China, China held a working conference on international students, from January 8th to 19th, 1979. This is the second National Conference on international education in China since the founding of the People’s Republic of China. The meeting decided on the policy of receiving international students from China: adhere to the standards, select the best students, create conditions and gradually increase.

1.1.3 Characteristics of the Development of Overseas Education

(1) High Age of Overseas Students

After the development and opening up, six of the first 52 Chinese students studying in the United States were women. They were all teaching and research backbones. They were all sent abroad as visiting scholars. The average age was 41 years old. It can be seen that the average age of overseas students in the recovery period of overseas education in China is relatively high.

After 1979, the average age of overseas students in China gradually declined. For example, in 1980, most of the overseas students were graduate students and research scholars. In 1981, most of them were university teachers, scientific and technological personnel. In 1982, they were young and middle-aged backbone teachers and discipline leaders for short-term study, and they were properly selected to study for doctoral and master’s degrees. The age of the overseas students gradually declined. In the 1980s, most of the overseas students went abroad to study for master’s or doctor’s degrees. But, by the early 1990s, some senior high school graduates began to study for undergraduate courses^[7].

(2) Natural Sciences and Applied Disciplines Were Popular

At that time, the policy of sending overseas students was: learning from other country according needs, less and better. Overseas education was mainly focused on Natural Science and gave priority to emerging science and technology disciplines and marginal disciplines. Among

the first 52 people to the United States, 29 of them were major in science, 18 in engineering, 2 in medicine and 1 in agriculture. It can be seen that at that time, the importance on science rather than literature was emphasized. Through the plan for the discipline arrangement of overseas students at that time, we can see the limitations of that era. It was parochial to separate the humanities from the natural sciences and despise the humanities, which even affected the overall cognition of our society to the humanities.

After 1979, natural sciences and applied disciplines were still popular, taking the overseas students in 1981 as an example, of the 3416 students studying abroad, 3076 were majoring in natural science, accounting for 90%, while only 186 of them were majoring in social science, accounting for 5.4%, and 154 others, accounting for 4.6%.

(3) Sending by Government Is the Main Mode of Overseas Education

During the development period of overseas education in China, there are mainly three modes of overseas education: sending by government, sending by employers and self funded overseas study. Among them, the national government sent 2800 people to study abroad on average every year, and totally 37253 people from 1979 to 1991^[8]. From 1978 to 1984, the total number of people who went abroad at their own expense was about 7000; from 1985 to 1988, the number was 16000; in 1989, the total number of people who obtained visas at their own expense was 7898; in 1990, the total number of people who went abroad at their own expense was 18000^[9]. From the data above, it can be seen that at this stage, the main mode of overseas education was sending by government, and at the same time, studying abroad at one's own expense began to develop.

1.2 The Stable Period of the Development of Overseas Education 1992-1999

1.2.1 Overview of Overseas Education

After a brief adjustment in the early 1990s, China's overseas education entered a relatively stable period. Although at the end of the last stage, there were many overseas students failed to return as scheduled, and many people began to question the effect of overseas education, but the Chinese government decided to continue to develop the overseas education. In 1992, Deng Xiaoping's "South tour speech" not only set off a new upsurge of China's development and opening up, but also pointed out the direction for the adjustment of overseas education. In the same year, China put forward the 12 words policy of overseas education: "supporting study abroad, encouraging return home and freedom of coming and going". This policy had

a wide influence on the development of overseas education, promoted the development of overseas education, encouraged citizens to study abroad and receive education, and also expressed the hope of overseas students returning to China as soon as possible and making contributions to the motherland. Under the situation of deepening development and expanding opening-up, China's overseas education was further improved according to the guiding ideology of establishing a socialist market economy system, and gradually developed in the direction of socialization and legalization, with "trans century talents" and "top talents" as the development goals of this stage of overseas education.

The continuous development of overseas education is not only benefited from the determination and policy support of China's in-depth development and opening-up, but also assisted by the international situation and the talent and economic strategies of foreign countries. In the 1990s, the international situation was stable. Many countries adhered to the strategy of peaceful development, which provided a stable international environment for overseas education. At the same time, the developed countries, represented by the United States, are competing for excellent talents in the international talent market, and they also see the economic benefits of overseas education. They regarded overseas education as a "smokeless market" for economic growth. Under the stimulation of economic interests, many countries began to hold the banner of education internationalization and implemented free overseas education policy, which further promoted the development of China's overseas education.

After a short period of adjustment in the last stage, the total number of all kinds of overseas students in China increased, there was 6540 overseas students in 1992, 10742 in 1993, 19071 in 1994, 20381 in 1995, 20900 in 1996, and 22410 in 1997. In 1998, there were 17622 students studying abroad^[10].

1.2.2 Overseas Education Policy and Organization

Sticking on the general policy of "supporting study abroad, encouraging return home and freedom of coming and going", the management system of students' selection of overseas education supported by government has implemented a series of development, which is based on "learning from other country according needs, less and better, fixed person and orientation, striving for quality and return".

The selection also abandoned the method of sending candidates recommended by the unit, and changed to the policy of selecting the best through the national exam-

ination, and implementing individual application, expert review, equal competition, selecting the best, signed dispatch, liquidated damages under the macro guidance of the government plan.

The issuance of “*the notice on issues related to studying abroad at one’s own expense*” clarified the rights and obligations of students studying abroad. The notice also stipulated that students at or above the college level with public funds and personnel with college degree or above (including direct or non-direct relatives of Returned Overseas Chinese, etc.) can apply for studying abroad at one’s own expense after serving in China for a certain period of time or paying for higher education and training fees^[11].

This limited the number of people who choose to study abroad at their own expense, to a certain extent, and avoided brain drain and student’s detention abroad. In addition, in order to further support self-funded overseas education, China opened an intermediary market for self-funded overseas education for the first time, which is an “educational service agency”^[12], in order to help more self funded overseas students to choose and apply foreign universities, and at the same time, to implement certain early warning and supervision on the self funded overseas education agency market.

In terms of the policy of returning to China, the policy system of encouraging returning to China is also constantly improving in the continuous development. In 1992, the State Council issued “*the notice on issues related to overseas students*”, which deal with the extension and replacement of overseas students’ passports. Since then, the work of overseas education in China has changed from passive to active, showing a new situation. China’s policy “encouraging overseas students to serve the country in various forms”, and has launched “Chunhui” and other plans to attract returned personnel, which has achieved remarkable results.

In 1995, the establishment of China Scholarship Fund regulated the enrollment, selection and management system of overseas students and those who came to China, and gradually put overseas education in China on the track of legalization. The establishment of China Scholarship Fund further standardized the management of overseas students funded by the government. The establishment of this institution changed the state-funded overseas education into fund support, adopted the common practice of “contract dispatch, liquidated damages” in other countries, and managed overseas education by legal means.

1.2.3 Characteristics of the Development of Overseas Education

(1) The Rate of Overseas Students Sending by Govern-

ment Descended

The number of overseas students sending by government was 2489 in 1992, 2938 in 1993, 2071 in 1994, 2154 in 1995, 1905 in 1996, 2110 in 1997 and 2639 in 1998, In 1999, the number of overseas students sending by government was 2661, and in 2000, the number of students sent by the government was 2808^[13].

Table 1. Number of overseas students funded by government and by their own expense in 1992-2000

Year	Total number of overseas students	Students funded by government	Students funded by their own expense	Rate of students funded by their own expense
1992	6540	2489	4051	61.94
1993	10742	2938	7804	72.64
1994	19071	2071	17000	89.14
1995	20381	2154	18227	89.43
1996	20900	1905	18995	90.88
1997	22410	2110	20300	90.58
1998	17622	2639	14983	85.02
1999	23749	2661	21088	88.97
2000	38989	2808	36181	92.79

Although the number of overseas students funded by government in China is steadily increasing, the proportion of them in all overseas students is greatly reduced, which shows that a large part of the students in this stage of China’s overseas education are going abroad at their own expense. In 1981, 93% of all kinds of overseas students were sent by the government (including those sent by science institutes and provincial and municipal ministries). By the year 2000, the proportion of government-sponsored overseas students had dropped to 7.2%^[14].

(2) The Selection of Major Meets the Needs of Country

From the perspective of the major selection of students sent by the government, in this stage, the government gave a lot of support to the national key disciplines and disciplines that are urgently needed in the construction and development, with science, agriculture, medicine, industry and other categories as the main fields, as well as humanities and social sciences. The former accounts for 85% and the latter accounts for 15%, among which the applied engineering is about 40% and the agronomy is about 20%^[15]. At this stage, the structure and proportion of overseas students’ major selection are in line with the actual needs of China’s economic construction at the end of the last century, which is conducive to the development of China’s national economy and the optimization of the economic structure.

(3) Importing Countries Are Concentrated in European and American

From the perspective of the regions sent by the government to study abroad, the proportion of students went to America, Western Europe and Oceania was about 50%, that of central and Eastern Europe was about 20%, that of Asia was about 15%, and that of Latin America and Africa was about 15%^[16]. The main purpose of studying abroad was to learn advanced science and technology and management experience of foreign countries. In this respect, America and Western Europe were the most representative countries. Therefore, it was advisable to take these regions as the main sending places.

1.3 The Outbreak Stage of Overseas Education 2000-2011

1.3.1 Overview of Overseas Education

Since the beginning of the new century, China's overseas education has developed vigorously, and the internationalization of China's higher education entered a stage of explosive growth. Under the promotion of the project of "National construction of high level university graduate programs supported by government", China adhered to the overall idea of "supporting study abroad, encouraging return home and freedom of coming and going". China's overseas education at this stage put forward the goal of "three first-class", aiming to select first-class students, send them to first-class schools, learn from first-class tutors, and strive to cultivate high-level and creative talents. This goal mean the shift of the focus and the promotion overseas education.

At this stage, the vigorous development of China's overseas education could not be separated from the safe international situation and the promotion of China's international status. On December 11, 2001, China formally joined the world trade organization, marking that China's market-oriented development was officially in line with the world market economy and participated in world competition. At the same time of economic integration with the world, China's education was also gradually integrated with the world market. After China's accession to the WTO, there was a significant increase in overseas education. The United States, the United Kingdom and other countries further relaxed the conditions for accepting students abroad, and the visa pass rate reached the highest in history, generally more than 80%.

Under the stimulation of the above factors, many people regard overseas education as a necessary means to improve their competitiveness, and the number of Chinese overseas students increased explosively. In 2000, there were 39000 people studying abroad in China, 84000 in 2001, 125000 in 2002, 117300 in 2003, 114700 in 2004,

118500 in 2005, 133800 in 2006, 144000 in 2007, 179800 in 2008^[17], 229000 in 2009, 282700 in 2010 and 339700 in 2011. According to the statistics of UNESCO in 2006, the number of overseas students from China accounts for 14% of the global total. China has become the largest source of international students. In 2010, China surpassed India to become the country with the largest number of students studying in the United States.

With the increase of the number of students studying abroad in China, especially the number of students studying at their own expense, the huge market for overseas education led to the large-scale expansion and development of intermediary institutions for studying abroad. In 1999, China issued "*the detailed rules for the implementation of the regulations on the administration of the intermediary service for studying abroad at one's own expense (for Trial Implementation)*". However, there were still many problems in the study abroad market, and at this stage, there was no further legal policy to regulate the intermediary market for studying abroad. Although most of the agents for overseas education played an important role in promoting the overseas education in China, there were many problems in the service quality of the market, such as the lack of legal qualifications of some agencies, the poor qualifications of the overseas colleges and universities that recommend students to enter, the distribution of false advertisements by the agencies, the forgery of application materials for applicants, and arbitrary charges. These behaviors had a very bad impact on the market of overseas education in China, and even cause economic and time losses to the students who study abroad at their own expense.

1.3.2 Overseas Education Policy and Organization

At this stage, China further relaxed the restrictions on overseas education at one's own expense, and canceled the "higher education training fee" and personnel qualification review of personnel applying for studying abroad at one's own expense.

In order to further attract overseas students and scarce talents coming back to China, China has issued and established a series of policies and fund support to attract overseas high-level talents to return to China, including "*the opinions on encouraging overseas high-level talents to return to China*" issued in 2000, "*the administrative measures for overseas students' entrepreneurship park*" implemented in 2001, and "*One million talents project in the new century*" established in 2002. In the same year, "*the National Science Fund for Distinguished Young Scholars*" was established by the National Natural Science Foundation of China. In 2003, the department of returned

overseas students was established, and in 2007, “*several opinions on Further Strengthening the work of attracting excellent overseas talents*” and plans such as “Yangtze River scholars” were adopted.

Since 2003, in order to solve the illegal phenomenon of some intermediaries for overseas education and the false propaganda and illegal enrollment of foreign institutions in China, the Ministry of education set up an early warning system for studying abroad, and regulatory information network for overseas education, published the list of projects for cooperation between the self funded study abroad intermediary service institutions and foreign colleges and universities recorded by the provincial and municipal education departments, and gave a notice of early warning of the intermediaries of foreign recruitment agencies, illegal colleges and universities. From 2003 to 2011, the Ministry of Education issued 50 overseas study warnings, which effectively protected the rights and interests of self funded overseas students and standardized the market of overseas study education in China.

In addition, at this stage, China also established websites such as “China study abroad website” and “National study abroad network”, and established the magazine of “Shenzhou scholars”; established the Research Institute of studying abroad, and established the professional journal “study on studying abroad”, which further improved and standardized overseas education, and provided support and help for the vast number of overseas students.

1.3.3 Characteristics of the Development of Overseas Education

(1) Explosive Growth in the Number of Overseas Students

After China’s accession to the WTO in 2001, the number of Chinese overseas students has increased dramatically. In 2000, the number of Chinese students studying abroad was 39000, while in the year of China’s accession to the WTO, the number of Chinese students studying abroad jumped to 84000, increased by 115.38%. In 2011, the number of Chinese students studying abroad was 339700, accounting for 14% of the number of overseas students in the world in that year, eight times of the number of people studying abroad in 2000, close to 340000 of the total number of people studying abroad from 1978 to 2000.

(2) Overseas Education at One’S Own Expense Becomes the Absolute Main Force

From 2001 to 2011, the total number of Chinese overseas students was 1.9113 million, overseas education at one’s own expense accounting for 91.3% of the total, reaching 1.7457 million. From the 1980s to the end of the 1990s, only a few thousand Chinese went abroad to study

in one year, and most of them were public funded students. After entering the 21st century, the number of students sent by government to study abroad has only increased slightly, while the number of students studying abroad at their own expense has increased significantly. From 2000 to 2011, the total number of overseas students in China was 19113000, and the number of self funded students accounted for 91.3%, reaching 1745700. Since 2001, the proportion of students studying at their own expense has reached 90.48%, in 2002, 93.63% and in 2003, 93.00%.

Table 2. The Number of Overseas Students Sent by Government and at One’s Own Expense 2000-2011^[18]

Year	Total number of overseas students	Overseas students sent by government	Overseas students sent by employs	Overseas students at one’s own expense	The rate of overseas students at one’s own expense
2000	39000	3000	4000	32000	82.05%
2001	84000	3000	5000	76000	90.48%
2002	125000	3500	4500	117000	93.60%
2003	117300	3500	4600	109200	93.00%
2004	114700	3500	6900	104300	90.93%
2005	118500	4000	8000	106500	89.87%
2006	134000	5600	7700	120700	90.07%
2007	144000	8900	6100	129000	89.58%
2008	179800	11400	6800	161600	89.88%
2009	229300	12000	7200	210100	91.63%
2010	284700	12000	12700	260000	91.32%
2011	339700	12800	12100	314800	92.67%

(3) Popularization of Overseas Education

According to the survey on the social needs and training quality of Chinese university graduates conducted by Mycos, since 2009, more than 85% of the cost of overseas education of students after graduation comes from their parents. Related to this survey, the proportion of working class families who study abroad at their own expense is increasing. In the second half of 2009, only 2% came from ordinary working class families, while in 2010, about 34% came from ordinary working class families^[19].

(4) Young Age of Overseas Students

The number of Chinese overseas students increased from 860 in 1978 to 118000 in 2000, 118600 in 2004 and 144500 in 2007. However, the proportion of overseas students in the total number of college students, graduate students and full-time teachers decreased from 1.87% in 2000, 0.55% in 2004 and 0.51% in 2007.

According to the statistics of the U.S. Department of homeland security, only 65 middle school students in China came to the United States with private passports in the 2005-2006 academic year, and 6725 Chinese went

to the United States to study in the 2010-2011 academic year. The number of overseas students going out to middle school has increased 100 times in five years^[20]. In addition to the United States, there are many Chinese students pouring into secondary schools in Canada, European countries and Australia.

1.4 The Rational Stage of Overseas Education 2012-2019

1.4.1 Overview of Overseas Education

In order to summarize the development status and characteristics of China's overseas education and promote the development of overseas education, in 2012, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Center for China & Globalization began to publish "China's Study Abroad" year by year, summarizing various indicators of China's overseas education, providing help for parents and overseas students to make rational choices, and objectively analyzing the achievements and shortcomings of China's overseas education. It is the compass for the development of overseas education in China. Under the summary and guidance of "China's Study Abroad", China's overseas education has entered a rational development stage. At this stage, one of the major characteristics of China's overseas education is diversification, which is not only reflected in the diversification of destinations and majors, but also in the diversification of ways of studying abroad.

According to China's Study Abroad (2017), as of 2016, China is still the most important source country of overseas students in the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, South Korea, the United Kingdom and other countries. In this stage, the number of Chinese students studying abroad is increasing. In 2012, the total number of all kinds of students studying abroad was 399600, 413900 in 2013, 459800 in 2014, 523700 in 2015, 544500 in 2016 and 608400 in 2017^[21].

With the tightening of work and immigration policies in the UK and the US, the number of Chinese students studying in the UK and the US has declined and the growth rate has declined. At the same time in 2016-2017, China received 442773 international students, which increased by 11.4%^[22], becoming one of the main growth poles of receiving international students of higher education in the world in recent three years.

1.4.2 Overseas Education Policy and Organization

At the National Conference on overseas education held in December 2014, general secretary Xi Jinping made important instructions, emphasizing that the work of over-

seas education should adapt to the general trend of national development and the overall situation of Party and state work, plan overseas education of studying abroad and coming to China as a whole, make comprehensive use of two kinds of resources of overseas education, cultivate more talents, and strive to create a new situation in overseas education, so as to realize "Two centenary goals". Striving for the goal and realizing the Chinese dream, and make new and greater contributions to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation^[23]. On the basis of the general principle of "supporting study abroad, encouraging return home and freedom of coming and going", general secretary Xi Jinping added "producing a marked effect", which instructed the overseas students to make contributions to the China dream, and regard both local talents and returnees as equally important.

At this stage, the safety of overseas students has become the focus of the organization and management of overseas education. The "Zhang Yingying incident" brought the safety of overseas students to the public's vision. The younger age of overseas students in China has deepened the importance of safety issues. According to the data of the Consular Department of the Ministry of foreign affairs, "the number of consular protection and assistance cases handled by Chinese embassies and consular centers abroad of the Ministry of foreign affairs has accelerated, the total number of cases has increased from 36800 in 2012 to more than 100000 in 2016, and the number of overseas students involved has also increased from 932 in 2014 to 6185 in 2015"^[24].

1.4.3 Characteristics of the Development of Overseas Education

Table 3. The number of overseas students sent by government and at one's own expense 2012-2018^[25]

Year	Total number of overseas students	Overseas students sent by government	Overseas students sent by employs	Overseas students at one's own expense	The rate of overseas students at one's own expense
2012	399600	15300	9800	374500	93.71%
2013	413900	16300	13300	384300	92.84%
2014	459800	21300	15500	423000	91.99%
2015	523700	25900	16000	481800	91.99%
2016	544500	30000	16300	498200	91.49%
2017	608400	31200	35900	541300	88.97%
2018	662100	30200	35600	596300	90.06%

(1) The Growth Rate of Overseas Education Slows Down

Due to the changes in the international situation, the

quality of overseas education, the security of studying abroad, and the influence of the rapid development of international schools and Sino foreign cooperation schools, domestic parents and students studying abroad have begun to treat overseas education rationally, and the growth rate of overseas education in China has slowed down at this stage. According to China's Study Abroad (2016), the number of Chinese overseas students increased at an average annual growth rate of 18.9% from 2000 to 2012. However, the growth rate slowed down after 2013. In 2014, the number of overseas students increased by 11.1%, in 2015, by 13%, and in 2016, by 3.97%, about 9 percentage points lower than that in 2015.

(2) Diversified Destinations for Overseas Education

Throughout the whole stage of the situation of overseas education, it presents a new situation different from the previous years: the election of Trump as president of the United States and Brexit and other events have a strong impact on the two traditional destinations of overseas study, leading to the decline of the growth rate of the number of overseas students in the United Kingdom and the United States. At this stage, while continuing choosing to the United States, Britain, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, France, Russia and other countries, Chinese students are paying more and more attention to Malaysia, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Ireland, Poland, India, Argentina, medium-sized developed countries and emerging developed countries, which are gradually becoming a new trend of overseas education destinations. According to *China's Study Abroad* (2017), school reputation and application success rate are the two issues that Chinese overseas students are most concerned about when making choices, followed by the location of the school.

(3) Diversified Major Selection

At this stage, overseas students also show a diversified tendency in their major selection, including engineering science, engineering technology, computer and information science, mathematics and statistics, social science, business administration, foreign language and literature, education, and business administration. It can be seen that in terms of major selection, Chinese overseas students no longer attached importance to science rather than literature, but tend to diversify according to their interests.

2. Achievements in the Development of Overseas Education

2.1 Stick to the Policy of "Supporting Study Abroad, Encouraging Return Home and Freedom of Coming and Going"

In October 1980, "the report on the working conference

on the management of overseas students" made clear the policy of "highlighting the key points, take into consideration both needs of the state and the interests of the collectives, try to send more on the premise of ensuring quality, and maintain a relatively stable number of dispatched in recent years".

In December 1986, "the Interim Provisions on the work of overseas students" put forward the policy of "dispatch as needed, guarantee the quality and integrate study with application".

In August 1992, "the notice on issues related to overseas students" clearly stated that "supporting study abroad, encouraging return home and freedom of coming and going" was the general policy of China's overseas education work. Since then, this policy has become the overall policy of the development of overseas education in China.

In October 21th, 2013, when Xi Jinping delivered a speech at the 100th anniversary celebration conference of the association of European and American students, he put forward the policy of "supporting study abroad, encouraging return home and freedom of coming and going, and producing a marked effect", highlighting "producing a marked effect". The above policy proposed by Xi Jinping is more than the previous "supporting study abroad, encouraging return home and freedom of coming and going", which was put forward in the decision of the CPC Central Committee "on the issue of establishing a socialist market economic system" in the third Plenary Session of the 14th CPC Central Committee, which was held in November 1993. For the work of studying abroad. The new policy highlights the key points of overseas education and add the touch for overseas education.

2.2 The Number of Overseas Students Keeps Rising

From 1978 to 2017, the total number of Chinese overseas students reached 5.1311 million.

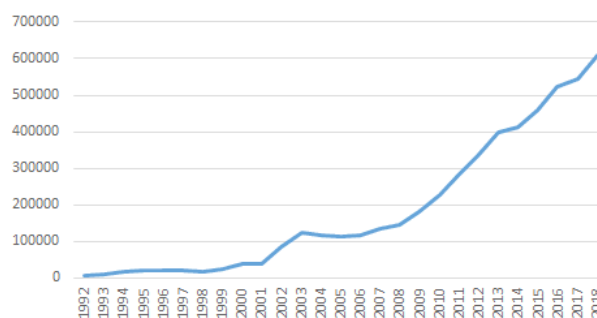


Figure 1. Line chart of the number of Chinese overseas students 1978-2018^[26]

2.3 The Choice of Overseas Education Is Gradually Diversified

The diversified trend of the development of overseas education in China is not only reflected in the diversification of destination, but also in the diversification of majors and ways of overseas education.

In the early stage of the development of China's overseas education, the destination of studying abroad was the United States. In the 1980s and 1990s, the destinations of Chinese students studying abroad were the United States, Canada, Britain, France, Germany and other developed countries in Europe and America as well as Japan. After entering the new century, the choice of China's overseas study destination has gradually diversified. According to the statistics of the Ministry of education's overseas education service center in 2005, China's overseas students are widely distributed in all continents, of which 32.1% choose America, 27.9% choose Europe, 25.2% choose Asia, 14.2% choose Oceania^[27].

Since the 21st century, the major of overseas students has changed from science and engineering to economic management and humanities. In 2005, a survey of returnees in China showed that 46% of them majored in science and engineering, 27% in economics or business administration, 12% in law or other humanities, 9% in medical and health, and 6% in other majors^[28]. According to the 2017 *China's Study Abroad*, the proportion of Chinese overseas students choosing engineering science, engineering technology, computer and information science, mathematics and statistics, and social science declined, while the number of students choosing foreign language, literature, education, and business administration majors kept growing^[29].

At the beginning of the development of overseas education in China, overseas education sent by government and employs were the only ways. Since the beginning of studying abroad at one's own expense, the number of people studying increased dramatically. In the 21st century, with the development of education globalization, many international schools have been opened in China, the way of "domestic overseas education" started to grow.

3. The Development Trend of Overseas Education

3.1 The Return Boom Is on the Rise

With the development of overseas education in China, the number of students studying abroad is increasing, but the phenomenon of "deficit" is gradually emerging. After entering the rational stage of the development of overseas

education, the upsurge of returning home is in the ascendant.

Due to the increasingly fierce competition for international talents and the relatively backward situation of China's higher education, the "high output" and "low input" of Chinese international students have resulted. The phenomenon of "deficit" in overseas education in China was manifested in the following aspects: the number of studying abroad was larger than that of studying in China, and the proportion of international students in Colleges and universities was relatively low; a large number of high-quality students studying science and engineering stay abroad, while most of the international students come to China mainly focus on arts, and the quality is relatively low.

From 1978 to 1996, the total number of overseas students in China was about 270000, with a total return rate of 33%. Among them, the return rate of overseas students sent by the government was 84%, the return rate of overseas students sent by employs was 56%, and the return rate of self funded students is 3%. In 2000, the total return rate of Chinese overseas students was less than 38%. In 2006, the return rate of Chinese overseas students was 31%. In 2008, the return rate was only 28%. We can see the seriousness of the "deficit" phenomenon of overseas education in China. However, this phenomenon has changed after entering the rational stage of the development of overseas education. The return rate reached 79.33% in 2014 and 78.11% in 2015. The proportion of people going abroad / returning home in this year dropped from 3.15:1 in 2006 to 1.28:1 in 2015.

In 2016, there were 4325000 returned students in China, the rate was more than 80%. It can be seen that although the number gap still exists, the gap between the number of returnees and the number of students studying abroad has slowed down, and the upsurge of returning students is in the ascendant.

3.2 The Gradually Development of "Domestic Overseas Education"

With the development of education globalization, the rapid development of international schools and Sino foreign cooperation schools has provided a new direction for the development of overseas education in China. Therefore, through studying in international schools, receiving national education and increasing access to world-famous schools, it has become a new way of "domestic overseas education". By the end of 2017, there were about 550 English international schools in China, making it one of the countries with the largest number of international schools in the world.

China's international schools first appeared in the middle of the 20th century, which was founded mainly to solve the problem of school attendance for the children of embassy staffs. In 1995, the Chinese government allowed foreign-funded institutions and foreign personnel to run their own schools, so a large number of international schools emerged in this period, including Jingxi international school, Beijing Shunyi International School, Yaozhong international school, Harrow international school, etc. In principle, these international schools can only accept the children of foreigners living in China, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan personnel at the beginning of construction. However, with the development of international schools, the desire of parents and students for international education, and a series of problems caused by the phenomenon of studying abroad at a younger age, international schools have gradually become one of the choices of Chinese parents and students. At first, these national schools only recruit foreign students or students with foreign green cards, then gradually liberalized the enrollment policy and started to recruit Chinese students, pushing "domestic overseas education" to a climax.

3.3 The Climax of International Students Coming to China

Table 4. The number of international students coming to China 1999-2018^[30]

Year	Number
1999	29179
2000	52150
2001	44463
2002	85829
2003	77715
2004	110842
2005	141087
2006	162659
2007	159503
2008	223499
2010	256090
2011	292611
2012	328330
2013	356499
2014	377054
2015	397635
2016	442773
2017	489200
2018	492185

Due to the late development of overseas education in China, the number of international students coming to China is still far lower than that of students go abroad. As the policy of The Belt and Road Initiative continues to grow, the number of international students coming to China has grown. A large proportion of them come from Korea, Laos, Thailand, Pakistan, Indonesia, India and African countries. According to the 2017 China overseas education development report, in 2016, the number of international students coming to China reached 443000, an increase of 11.3% compared with 2015 and 299% compared with 111000 in 2004.

This is not only a chance for Chinese culture and Chinese to go world wild, but also a support for "The Belt and Road Initiative", and it can further promote China's economic development and international influence.

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