

## Article

*2024 International Conference on Art and Design, Education, Media and Social Sciences (DEMSS 2024)***Focusing on the Unique Features Along the Yellow River, Creating a New Era Cultural Identity**Heying Zhang <sup>1,\*</sup><sup>1</sup> University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

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**Abstract:** The Yellow River, ever-flowing and unceasing, spans the vast territory of China, its surging waters nourishing the people along its banks and nurturing the Chinese nation for thousands of years, profoundly enriching Chinese civilization. The culture of the Yellow River is an integral part of Chinese civilization. Deeply exploring the millennia-old culture rooted in the Yellow River, protecting, inheriting, and utilizing it well is of great significance for continuing historical and cultural traditions and building a strong socialist cultural nation.

**Keywords:** Yellow River culture; cultural heritage; cultural innovation; cultural tourism

**1. Linking Yellow River Cultural Heritage to Create a New City Identity**

With the transformation of social demands, the form of cities changes continuously along with the long river of history, forming urban memories of a generation. However, in the fast-paced urban construction, we have continuously weakened this urban memory, leading to a discontinuity in urban memory, and some cultural roots hidden in cities may be submerged in the long river of history with the process of urban modernization. Under the important historical task of comprehensively building a moderately prosperous society, urban construction and development often overlook the continuation of urban memory, tilting the focus of development towards economic construction. Under the historical task of strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community, a national community can only be called a national community if it establishes a legal subject status and a cultural social status[1].

Lanzhou, with its geographical advantages, has become a key town on the Silk Road. Political powers in historical periods have always attached great importance to the urban development of Lanzhou, thus creating this famous Silk Road city known as the "Golden City"[2]. Lanzhou is also one of China's important immigrant cities, which not only gathers the customs and cultures of buildings from all over the country but also retains the local characteristics of Lanzhou. However, facing the reality of tight urban space, dense population, and high development intensity in the central urban area of Lanzhou, planning should mainly focus on improving quality. Through the construction of high-quality environments, Lanzhou's attractiveness to talents nationwide can be enhanced[3]. Lanzhou's urban development is facing the issue of discontinuity in urban memory; therefore, the continuation of Lanzhou's urban memory is an indispensable part of future urban construction and development.

The key to understanding the connection between the city of Lanzhou and the Yellow River culture lies in a bridge - the Lanzhou Zhongshan Bridge. Originally known as the

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"Lanzhou Yellow River Iron Bridge," Lanzhou Zhongshan Bridge was completed in 1909 and is the oldest existing steel bridge over the Yellow River, known as the "First Bridge over the Yellow River." For over a hundred years, as a landmark building in Lanzhou, Zhongshan Bridge has been continuously endowed with meaning. As an excellent historical building, Zhongshan Bridge has become a "National Key Cultural Relic Protection Unit," and as the main venue for various celebrations such as the "Beijing Olympic Torch Relay" and the "70th Anniversary of National Day," it signifies the noble meaning of human civilization and politics. Of course, it is also an important "check-in spot" for current urban tourism and a city card. On the popular TikTok new media platform, the historical and cultural value of Zhongshan Bridge has gained broader attention and dissemination, making it a popular scenic spot nationwide[4]. Lanzhou citizens have a devout affection for Zhongshan Bridge and cannot tolerate the behavior of "vulgar internet celebrities" videos with Zhongshan Bridge as the background that affect the city's image[5].

It can be seen that Zhongshan Bridge is not only regarded as a unique existence that conveys the spirit and temperament of the city but also serves as a symbol carrying rich meanings and is widely used as text content in self-media. In real space, Zhongshan Bridge connects with other buildings and natural objects to form a physical space: as the core scenic area, it, together with Baita Mountain Park, Binhe Road, urban sculptures, parks, and other cultural and natural landscapes, forms a 42-kilometer-long Yellow River Scenery Line scenic area. In this way, Zhongshan Bridge becomes an arena of action where people, events, objects, information, technology, and power intersect, and meanings are continuously produced.

## **2. Integrating Cultural and Tourism Resources along the Yellow River to Create a New Tourism Identity**

As an important province in the Yellow River basin, inheriting and promoting the Yellow River culture and telling the stories of the Yellow River is the mission and responsibility of the people in the Yellow River basin. In recent years, cities along the Yellow River have deeply explored the contemporary value of the Yellow River culture, conducted comprehensive surveys and identification of Yellow River cultural resources, strengthened the census of Yellow River cultural heritage resources, and organized a series of activities to make the Yellow River culture vibrant and spread the stories of the Yellow River in the new era to the world.

Focusing on Lanzhou city, in recent years, Lanzhou has taken the Yellow River cultural experience corridor as the axis to link the cultural and tourism resources along the line, striving to shape new advantages and highlights in the development of Yellow River ecological culture tourism. By taking the creation of ecological tourism areas as a starting point and based on the rich Yellow River ecological and cultural resources, Lanzhou has vigorously developed leisure tourism, formed a high-quality supply of Yellow River ecological tourism products, and carefully cultivated and promoted the Yellow River ecological tourism brand. It has also coordinated the construction of high-quality cultural and tourism projects along the Yellow River and the creation of ecological tourism products, launching a batch of Yellow River ecological tourism routes with distinctive themes and reasonable layouts. Among them, landscapes such as Lanzhou Zhongshan Bridge and Baita Mountain Park have formed a unique "Yellow River Scenery Line" scenic area with the charm of the northwest.

Lanzhou is the only provincial capital city that the Yellow River passes through, located in a long and narrow valley that extends from east to west, sandwiched between two mountains in the north and south. Entering the new century, the Lanzhou municipal government has opened a city-level riverside road along the north and south banks of the Yellow River, starting from Xiliugou in the Xigu Industrial Zone in the west to Sangyuan Gorge in the Chengguan District in the east, with a total length of more than 50 kilometers, making it the longest city-level riverside road in the country. The road is praised as a

green corridor and Lanzhou's "Bund" due to its wide and straight surface, with flower beds and nurseries scattered on both sides. The road is adorned with many exquisite sculptures such as the Yellow River Mother, Journey to the West, and Silk Road Ancient Path, as well as dozens of attractions of various sizes, including Zhongshan Iron Bridge, Baita Mountain Park, Waterwheel Expo Park, Yinhai Wetland Park, Baiyun Temple, Water Mosque, Lanzhou Stele Forest, and Marathon Theme Park.

The Lanzhou Marathon event on the Yellow River Scenery Line is a dazzling card at present. The "Lan Ma" is currently the only marathon event in China that runs around the Yellow River. The 42.195-kilometer race course offers scenery that makes the trip worthwhile for all participants, enjoying the Yellow River and the iron bridge, and appreciating the unique charm of the "Golden City" Lanzhou. Run a marathon and fall in love with a city. "Lan Ma" has also become another image representative of Lanzhou, in addition to a book, a bridge, and a bowl of noodles.

A city, a sport, a spirit. Today's "Lan Ma" continues to improve in event quality and expand in scale, with the number of participants increasing from the initial 10,000 to 40,000, and it has been upgraded to a "double gold event," becoming a beautiful card for Lanzhou's external exchanges and image display. The Lan Ma race course is set in the beautiful "Yellow River Scenery Line," with undulating mountains and flowing water along the coast. The Yellow River culture and the spirit of the marathon perfectly blend by the beautiful mother river, also making "Lan Ma" a unique sports event in the northwest region.

### **3. Telling the Stories of Yellow River Culture to Create a Card of Cultural Innovation**

The General Secretary pointed out: "We should promote the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese civilization, activate its vitality, and let Chinese civilization, along with the diverse civilizations created by people of various countries, provide the correct spiritual guidance for humanity." The concept of "two innovations" in Chinese excellent traditional culture is based on the new characteristics and requirements of the times. "Creative transformation" emphasizes the modern expression of excellent traditional culture with contemporary value in terms of form, carrier, and dissemination channels, while "innovative development" emphasizes the supplementation, expansion, and improvement of Chinese excellent traditional culture in connotation, endowing it with new era connotations.

As an important part of Chinese civilization, Yellow River culture holds an important position in the strategy of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. [1] According to the "two innovations" policy, the dissemination of Yellow River culture should actively respond to the Z generation, practice innovation in discourse expression, complete the creative transformation of Yellow River culture, coordinate the dissemination of Yellow River culture with contemporary social development, and promote the media activation and sustainable development of Yellow River culture.

To meet the user needs of the Z generation, the dissemination of Yellow River culture must innovate in expression methods and adopt a diversified expression to expand the field of discourse expression. Taking Bilibili, where the Z generation gathers, as an example, there is a high recognition of classic culture and high-quality content. Works such as "National Treasure," "I'm Fixing Cultural Relics in the Forbidden City," "China in Books," "If National Treasures Could Talk," "Aerial China," and "Planet Earth" all have high popularity and data volume on Bilibili. The "Dance Millennium," co-produced by Henan TV and Bilibili, uses a "traditional culture + trendy expression" approach, integrating real scenes with modern technology, allowing viewers to immerse themselves in the professional presentation of top dancers. It also uses the form of film and television to assist in narration, embed traditional cultural elements, and tell moving Chinese stories through dance. After "Dance Millennium" became a hit, Bilibili encouraged UP masters

to create secondary works based on the program content, extending the communication chain of the program and expanding its communication range.

In the era of integrated communication, the dissemination of Yellow River culture must not only innovate in expression methods but also break through the boundaries of various communication fields to achieve full-field communication. [6] This requires three-dimensional communication according to the characteristics of different fields in the communication field. For example, the "Chinese Festival" series was first broadcast on television media. After attracting widespread attention on social media, subsequent programs expanded their broadcasting platforms and added online live broadcasting, covering different groups. "The Wonderful Journey of Dragon Boat Festival" cut the essence "Lo Shen Fu" into short videos suitable for communication before official broadcast and put them on different short video platforms in advance, creating user reception expectations before broadcasting. After the program was broadcast, it was re-edited, split into short programs, and disseminated, forming the third round of communication. During and between the broadcast periods, the program interacted with users on the Weibo platform, collected user feedback, and enhanced user stickiness. Multi-round radiation communication, cross-platform integrated communication, and the expansion of content communication time and field have increased the influence and popularity of the work.

In discourse practice, the dissemination of Yellow River culture should actively approach young users, express in the language of young groups, and attract young users' attention. Taking the dissemination of Sanxingdui culture as an example. In 2021, when the Sanxingdui site was excavated again, mainstream media continued to follow up and report, launching a series of integrated media products. Mainstream media adopted a young and networked discourse expression method in the reporting of Sanxingdui cultural relics. For example, Xinhua Net Weibo posted the message "I heard that there will be 'new people' in our Sanxingdui family!" and matched the original Sanxingdui cultural relics with "monologues" in Sichuan dialect, describing their "voices" facing the imminent excavation of new cultural relics. Chuan Guan News, Sichuan Cultural Relics Archaeological Research Institute, and Sanxingdui Museum jointly produced the Sichuan dialect electronic music song MV "Why Am I So Good-looking (Sanxingdui)". In terms of sound effects, it was adapted and filled with lyrics on the basis of pop music, matched with electronic accompaniment and rap form, and visually borrowed the video type of Bilibili, creating a "twitching" effect with high-frequency repetition of pictures, forming a unique audio-visual effect. Mainstream media adopted personification and regionalization in the discourse expression of Sanxingdui reporting. Personification helps the media image transformation of Sanxingdui cultural relics, and the use of Sichuan dialect adds a sense of intimacy and interest. This discourse expression fits the "cute culture" discourse expression of the Z generation and is conducive to the dissemination of cultural products.

The dissemination of Yellow River culture should also actively approach young users, adopt the discourse expression that young users like, attract young users to participate in the dissemination and cultural product creation, stimulate the emotional resonance of young users, guide the values of young users, and thus achieve cultural identity and discourse identity, forming a discourse community.

#### 4. Conclusion

The Yellow River culture possesses profound historical significance and continues to hold deep research value in contemporary society. Exploring the cultural characteristics along the Yellow River and studying the historical roots embedded within it are of great importance for cultural heritage and cultural innovation. A crucial part of cultural heritage is the dissemination of the cultural discourse system, which bears an extraordinary responsibility for the people of Generation Z. As the most active group among internet users, Generation Z is the most noteworthy demographic on online communication platforms. The ultimate goal of Yellow River culture dissemination is to activate the culture,

awaken young people's love and support for it, and accelerate its innovative transmission and creative development. Therefore, in the dissemination of Yellow River culture, it is essential to start from the characteristics of internet usage and employ discourse expressions that are acceptable and enjoyable to all. By creating a community of discourse, we can transform more people from recipients and supporters of Yellow River culture into its inheritors and creators.

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