

“Poetic” and Skillful Communication: An Exploration of the Cross-Cultural Communication of the Hangzhou Asian Games Based on the DIMIT Model

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Abstract. The Hangzhou Asian Games was a grand event integrating sports and culture. It represented a successful practice of cultural communication and also provides a valuable case for the study of cultural communication. The cross-cultural communication of the Hangzhou Asian Games demonstrated the distinctive features and charm of Chinese culture, expanded the influence of Chinese culture, and promoted cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and Asia as well as the wider world. It also contributed to enhancing China's international image and discourse power. Therefore, taking the Hangzhou Asian Games as an example, this paper explores the cross-cultural communication of media events in international communication. Drawing on the DIMIT model of Eastern semiotics, the study analyzes the event from four dimensions: “discourse,” “image,” “meaning,” and “Tao.” The analysis shows that the skillful use of semiotic elements such as language, imagery, meaning, and philosophical thought embodied the themes of peace, unity, and progress, showcased the achievements of modern technological civilization, and conveyed aesthetic and emotional expressions. The study further offers insights into “skillful communication” in cultural and international communication through media events in the era of intelligent media.

Keywords: DIMIT model, cultural communication, media event, Asian Games.

1. Introduction

In recent years, China's status on the international stage has continued to rise. In order to better gain international discourse power, it is worth exploring how global media events can be used for the media-based self-construction of China's national image, as well as for enhancing China's international appeal and internal cohesion among its people. As a typical media event, the Asian Games and its related publicity serve as a special carrier of cultural communication. They can effectively reduce the cultural discount effect that constrains the global dissemination of local culture, making them an important object of study in cultural communication.

Artificial intelligence has played a positive role in enhancing the communication power of Chinese culture. Specifically, in cross-cultural communication, technology-based localization and customized communication can help eliminate barriers to communication, support the digital inheritance of Chinese culture, and realize its creative transformation and innovative development.

Taking cultural communication in the Hangzhou Asian Games as an example, this paper applies the DIMIT model of Eastern semiotics and conducts an analysis from the four dimensions of “discourse,” “image,” “meaning,” and “Tao.” It aims to derive insights for cultural communication and international communication through media events in the era of intelligent media [1].

2. Reasons for Applying the DIMIT Model

2.1. Overview: Cultural Communication of the Hangzhou Asian Games

Exploring cultural communication in the Hangzhou Asian Games is of great significance for China's cultural communication, international communication, and national image construction in the digital era. The Hangzhou Asian Games expanded the influence of Chinese culture, demonstrated

China's openness and inclusiveness, and promoted cultural exchanges and cooperation between China and Asia as well as the wider world. It also helped China enhance its international image and discourse power. Meanwhile, the remarkable achievements of cultural communication during the Hangzhou Asian Games enriched the diversity and vitality of Asian culture, displayed the shared values and ideals of Asian civilizations, promoted cultural identity and solidarity among Asian countries, and contributed to peace and development in Asia [2].

As a grand event combining sports and culture, the Hangzhou Asian Games involved multiple forms of cultural communication, mainly including the following aspects.

2.1.1. Core Elements and Symbolic Communication

The core elements of the Hangzhou Asian Games, including the emblem, mascots, theme song, and slogan, all reflected the distinctive features and charm of Chinese culture, while presenting Hangzhou's profound historical and cultural heritage as well as its modern urban image [3].

For example, the emblem "Surging Tides" symbolizes the rise and unity of Asia. The mascots "Congcong," "Lianlian," and "Chenchen" respectively represent historical culture, natural and humanistic landscapes, and modern technology. The theme song *The Love We Share* conveys the ideas of "love" and "beauty" in Chinese culture. The slogan "Heart to Heart, @Future" symbolizes the close unity of people across Asia, their heart-to-heart connection, and their joint efforts toward the future. It also expresses the determination to create a new future centered on "intelligence" and "connectivity."

2.1.2. Opening and Closing Ceremonies and Audiovisual Communication

The opening and closing ceremonies of the Asian Games can be described as two audiovisual feasts. They showcased both the essence and innovation of Chinese culture, as well as the diversity and integration of Asian cultures. For example, programs such as *Misty Rain over Jiangnan*, *Elegant Charm of Chinese Style*, and *Ink-Wash Poetry and Painting* at the opening ceremony presented Hangzhou's poetic Jiangnan landscape, Silk Road culture, technological innovation, and humanistic spirit through artistic forms such as poetry, painting, dance, and music. At the same time, these performances incorporated cultural elements from various Asian countries, reflecting exchanges and mutual learning among Asian civilizations.

2.1.3. Cultural Activities and Interactive Communication

The cultural activities held before and during the Hangzhou Asian Games provided a platform for interaction and exchange, enabling members of delegations and visitors from different countries to better understand Chinese culture and Asian culture, while enhancing friendship and mutual understanding. For example, the exhibition "Colorful Asia: Asian Costume Exhibition" at the China National Silk Museum presented the historical changes and mutual influences of clothing across Asia, jointly witnessing the friendship and cultural exchanges among Asian countries.

2.1.4. Intelligent Display and Digital Communication

The Hangzhou Asian Games was also an exhibition of intelligent innovation. By using advanced digital technologies, the organizers created the most "digital" Asian Games in history, enabling more people to watch and participate in the event online and experience its appeal. For example, the Hangzhou Asian Games pioneered the intelligent Asian Games digital engine, the digital torchbearer platform, and the mobile-payment-connected Asian Games. It also achieved 4K ultra-high-definition broadcasting, a new immersive viewing experience, autonomous shuttle systems, drones, and unmanned logistics delivery, thereby demonstrating the achievements of modern technological civilization.

2.2. Classical Foundations: The Theoretical Basis of the DMT Model in Eastern Semiotics

The rules of cultural symbols developed on the basis of Western alphabetic writing constitute a system of symbolic encoding and decoding characterized by linear thinking. By contrast, the highly developed Eastern code model, marked by pictographic writing and imagistic thinking, has shown a

distinctive adaptability in the multimedia era. The wisdom embedded in Eastern semiotics is profound and extensive, much like the natural force by which “grass bends when the wind blows.” The ancient Chinese idea of “semiotics in the broad sense,” which encompasses all things, together with “the idea of holistic communication,” has created for Eastern semiotics a conceptual world that is both boundless in scope and deep in historical origin.

Originating from and represented by the *Book of Changes*, the Eastern symbolic model of encoding and decoding consists of four dimensions: “discourse” (*yan*), “image” (*xiang*), “meaning” (*yi*), and “Tao” (*dao*). It is “a symbolic interpretation model composed of four major elements that change according to the law of the ‘yin-yang sphere’: discourse (‘yan’, Discourse), intuitive image (‘xiang’, Image), psychological consciousness (‘yi’, Meaning & Consciousness), and Tao, which serves as the source of truth, goodness, and beauty and represents their highest unity” [4], as shown in Figure 1. Language, image, psychological consciousness or meaning, and objective reality form an “organic whole.”

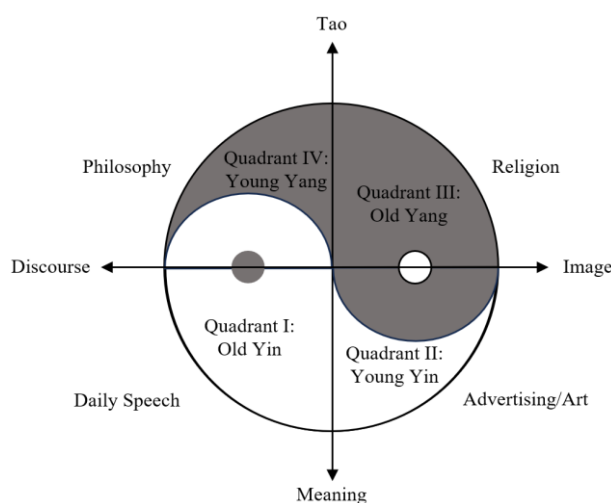


Figure 1. The Eastern symbolic model of encoding and decoding consists of four dimensions

Specifically, “discourse” refers to the linguistic elements of communicative symbols, including written symbols at the visual level and verbal expressions at the auditory level. “Image” refers to the imagistic elements of communicative symbols, including various forms of intuitive visual signs. “Meaning” refers to the semantic elements of communicative symbols, namely the connotations reflected by the symbols. “Tao” refers to the truthfulness of communicative symbols. Here, “truthfulness” does not mean objectivity or precision in the scientific sense, but rather whether the connotations of the symbols correspond to the ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty. Meanwhile, according to the generative principle by which things develop from “old yin” to “young yang,” the lower-left area is named Quadrant I [5].

In summary, the DIMT model is highly compatible with the communication of Eastern culture [6]. By analyzing and explaining cultural symbols from the four perspectives of “discourse,” “image,” “meaning,” and “Tao,” the model allows the expression, symbolism, connotation, and philosophy of cultural symbols to be clarified. From the perspectives of semiotics, communication studies, and philosophy, it can make the authentic essence of traditional culture clear to readers. It can not only guide the cultural communication practices of mainstream media, but the research itself also constitutes an excellent form of cultural communication.

3. DIMT Analysis of Cultural Communication in the Hangzhou Asian Games

3.1. “Discourse” in Asian Games Culture

“Discourse” refers to the linguistic elements of communicative symbols, including written symbols at the visual level and verbal expressions at the auditory level. In its use of linguistic symbols, the Hangzhou Asian Games displayed features of conciseness, interest, and cultural depth [7].

3.1.1. Narration

The narration in the opening ceremony mainly served two functions. First, it introduced the background and sequence of the performances. Second, it added atmosphere and suspense to the programs. The linguistic style of the narration was formal, solemn, and enthusiastic, reflecting the scale and influence of the Asian Games while also expressing welcome and blessings to athletes and audiences from different countries. The content of the narration was concise, clear, and accurate, enabling the audience to understand the themes and purposes of the programs and guiding them to pay attention to key points and highlights.

For example, at the beginning of the opening ceremony, the narration stated: “Today marks the Autumn Equinox in the Chinese lunar calendar. On this day symbolizing harvest and reunion, the Asian Games flame will once again be lit in China.” This sentence not only explained the timing and significance of the opening ceremony, but also foreshadowed its climax, namely the lighting of the main cauldron.

3.1.2. Program Titles

The titles of the artistic performances in the opening ceremony were rich in meaning. First, during the welcome ceremony, the performance *Water in Autumn Glow* highlighted the current season as well as the overall elements and theme of the program: the Autumn Equinox. The short film *Meet in Hangzhou* directly informed the audience that the city of Hangzhou would be introduced next, thus opening the artistic performance section of the ceremony. The following performance, *Elegant Charm of Chinese Style*, pointed to the theme of traditional culture. *Ink-Wash Poetry and Painting* conveyed Chinese elements such as traditional Chinese painting and classical poetry. *Fireworks over Jiangnan* directly highlighted Hangzhou’s fireworks culture. In the eyes of Chinese people, both “fireworks” and “Jiangnan” are symbols of romance. Therefore, while clearly indicating its theme, this title also conveyed a strong artistic atmosphere and romantic sentiment to the audience. *Lights Shining across the Past and Present* reflected the theme of lantern culture, while the phrase “past and present,” symbolizing the nation and history, echoed this theme and fully displayed “China in the lights.”

3.1.3. Musical Symbols

The music of the Asian Games can be divided into two types: music for artistic performances and theme song music. The music used in the artistic performances was mainly based on traditional Chinese musical instruments and ethnic music, combined with modern musical elements. It displayed the elegant charm of Chinese style and the cultural diversity of Asia. For example, in the first part of the artistic performance, *Elegant Charm of Chinese Style*, instruments such as the flute, pipa, and erhu were used to perform classical pieces such as *Jasmine Flower*, *Moonlit Night on the Spring River*, and *High Mountains and Flowing Water*, reflecting the charm and appeal of Chinese music.

The theme song music, by contrast, was mainly based on popular music and combined with the spirit and ideals of the Asian Games, conveying passion and aspiration. For example, the promotional theme song *From Now to the Future* has a catchy melody and concise lyrics, expressing Asian people’s expectations and confidence in the future.

3.2. “Image” in Asian Games Culture

“Image” refers to the imagistic elements of communicative symbols, including various forms of intuitive visual signs. In its use of image symbols, the Hangzhou Asian Games demonstrated characteristics of innovation, diversity, and intelligence [8].

3.2.1. Images of Modern Technological Civilization

The Hangzhou Asian Games used 4K technology for ultra-high-definition broadcasting, VR technology to create immersive viewing experiences, and autonomous shuttle systems to facilitate transportation during the Games. These efforts helped create the most “digital” Asian Games in history and showcased the achievements of modern technological civilization.

The torch of the Asian Games, named “Eternal Flame,” was an intelligent torch equipped with advanced technologies such as rainwater drainage, wind resistance, and rain resistance, demonstrating the innovative capacity of Chinese manufacturing. The venues adopted advanced technologies such as digital twins, 5G, VR, and AI to achieve intelligent management, broadcasting, and services, thereby improving both the viewing experience and the safety of the events.

The digital torch and metaverse platform used the Internet and virtual reality technologies to allow audiences to participate online in the torch relay, event viewing, and competitions, creating an immersive Asian Games experience. In addition, the intelligent high-speed trains and autonomous buses of the Asian Games used high-speed rail and driverless technologies, providing convenient and comfortable transportation options between the Asian Games cities.

3.2.2. Images of Aesthetic and Emotional Expression

Pictorial symbols conveyed the aesthetic features of Chinese culture. For example, during the opening ceremony, the directing team combined digital technology with real-life settings to create poetic and picturesque Jiangnan ink-wash scenes, displaying Hangzhou’s natural scenery and humanistic charm.

One scene featured a lotus pond composed of more than 40,000 LED light points, which echoed the dancers and boats on site and created a dreamlike effect. This scene not only reflected the urban characteristics of Hangzhou, but also symbolized the qualities and virtues associated with the lotus, such as remaining unstained despite growing from the mud, as well as elegance and purity.

In the closing ceremony, lotus flowers and osmanthus flowers were used as the main themes to create a large garden where lotus and osmanthus shone together. The lotus is the most representative flower of Hangzhou in summer, while the osmanthus is the city flower of Hangzhou and also a symbol of the Mid-Autumn Festival. The combination of these two flowers not only displayed the beauty of Hangzhou across the four seasons, but also expressed the Chinese nation’s emotions of reunion and blessing.

In this garden, athletes, volunteers, and performers sang and danced joyfully while bidding farewell with reluctance, presenting touching scenes of parting. Programs such as *Misty Rain over Jiangnan* and *Ink-Wash Poetry and Painting* made full use of images such as Jiangnan and ink-wash painting, together with stage design, to vividly present the aesthetic taste and emotional expression of Chinese culture.

3.3. “Meaning” in Asian Games Culture

“Meaning” refers to the semantic elements of communicative symbols, namely the connotations directly reflected by symbols. In its use of meaning-related symbols, the Hangzhou Asian Games embodied the themes of peace, unity, and progress [9].

3.3.1. The Slogan

The slogan of the Asian Games is “Heart to Heart, @Future.” It embodies the themes of peace, unity, and inclusiveness. It also expresses Asian people’s pursuit and creation of a better future, as well as their confidence and efforts toward progress and development.

“Heart to Heart” expresses friendship and trust among Asian people, as well as their aspiration for peace and cooperation. It also suggests that sports can promote emotional exchange and spiritual communication among people, enhancing mutual understanding and respect.

“@Future” presents Asian people’s pursuit and creation of a better future, as well as their confidence and efforts toward progress and development. It also implies that sports can inspire people’s dreams and passion, and cultivate their spirit of striving and forging ahead.

As a whole, “Heart to Heart, Love Reaches the Future” forms a parallel rhetorical structure and creates a harmonious and elegant linguistic symbol, in line with the aesthetic characteristics of Chinese culture. It also reflects the diversity and inclusiveness of Asian civilizations, as well as support for and contribution to the idea of a community with a shared future for humankind.

3.3.2. The Emblem

The emblem of the Asian Games is “Surging Tides.” It evokes the tide of the Qiantang River and also symbolizes the tide of Asia. It reflects the vitality and innovation of Asian people, as well as their enthusiasm and expectations for the Asian Games.

3.3.3. The Mascots

The mascots of the Asian Games are collectively named “Memories of Jiangnan.” They consist of three robots, representing the cultural features of the Archaeological Ruins of Liangzhu City, the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and West Lake, respectively. At the same time, they embody a sense of technology and futurity, reflecting both the history and modernity of Asian civilization, as well as the pursuit and application of technological innovation.

3.3.4. The Torch

The torch of the Asian Games is named “Eternal Flame.” It adopted advanced technologies such as rainwater drainage, wind resistance, and rain resistance, demonstrating the innovative ability of Chinese manufacturing. It also symbolizes the inheritance and development of the Asian Games, as well as the persistence and transmission of peace and friendship.

3.3.5. The Medals

The medals of the Asian Games are named “Shan Shui.” Their overall design resembles the cross-section of the Liangzhu jade cong, with a round interior and a square exterior. This symbolizes the philosophical idea of the unity of heaven and humanity. It also reflects the long-standing and profound nature of Chinese civilization, while representing the honor and value of the Asian Games.

3.4. “Tao” in Asian Games Culture

“Tao” refers to the truthfulness of communicative symbols. Here, truthfulness does not mean objectivity or precision in the scientific sense. Rather, it concerns whether the connotations of symbols conform to the ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty. In its use of symbols related to “Tao,” the Hangzhou Asian Games reflected the pursuit and practice of truth, goodness, and beauty.

3.4.1. The Truthfulness of Communicative Symbols

“Tao” requires that the connotations of symbols conform to the ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty. The core elements of the Hangzhou Asian Games, such as the torch, medals, and ceremonial costumes, incorporated elements of fine traditional Chinese culture, including oracle bone inscriptions, Liangzhu civilization, and blue-and-white porcelain. These elements displayed the profound, extensive, and enduring vitality of Chinese culture.

3.4.2. The Innovativeness of Communicative Symbols

“Tao” also requires that the forms of symbolic expression adapt to the development of the times. The opening and closing ceremonies of the Hangzhou Asian Games used high-tech methods, such as glasses-free 3D visual effects, AR virtual digital domes, and the digital ignition ceremony. By combining traditional culture with modern technology, they created new visual experiences and a distinctive cultural atmosphere.

3.4.3. The Inclusiveness of Communicative Symbols

“Tao” further requires that the meanings of symbols exist in harmony with diverse cultures. The theme of the Hangzhou Asian Games, “Tides Surging in Asia,” emphasized the shared destiny of Asian countries, whose landscapes are connected and whose cultures interact. It also expressed the aspiration that love may reach the future. The Asian Games mascots, “The Tides,” integrated distinctive animals from various Asian countries, such as pandas, tigers, and elephants, symbolizing friendly cooperation and common development among Asian countries.

In general, this Asian Games offered a profound interpretation of “Tao” in several ways. Through its organization and management, it demonstrated the principles of openness, impartiality, fairness,

and justice. Through participation and experience, it displayed the spirit of striving, perseverance, advancement, and innovation. Through cultural communication and influence, it conveyed the ideals of friendship, mutual assistance, win-win cooperation, and sharing.

At the same time, the symbols of “Tao” also transmitted the fundamental aims of Chinese culture. For example, the theme and slogan of the Asian Games expressed the vision of “promoting peace, unity, and inclusiveness through sports.” The practice and achievements of the Asian Games demonstrated the momentum of “always moving forward.” Its history and future expressed the confidence to “write a new chapter in the glory of Asian civilization.”

4. Future Prospects for Cultural Communication and Research from the Perspective of Eastern Semiotics

4.1. Quadrant I: Rational Persuasion for the “Old Yin” Market

This quadrant is mainly governed by the two elements of “discourse” and “meaning.” It is characterized by everyday discourse and places emphasis on rational persuasion. Therefore, attention should be paid to the “meta-communication” of the discourse system. In recent years, “sales-pitch-style” communication has rarely been seen in cultural communication. Instead, the dominant form has shifted toward “storytelling,” thereby forming a demystified discourse system that is closer to the audience.

Therefore, straightforward and accessible explanations of traditional culture have become the main form of cultural communication for audiences in this quadrant. With the support of digital technology, such explanations can take various forms, such as multilingual translation powered by artificial intelligence, audio narration, illustrations, comics, and animated explanations. These forms can also be combined with written texts. Through rational persuasion, audiences can gain a more intuitive understanding of traditional cultural relics, customs, and other cultural elements. At the same time, storytelling and historical review can be used to introduce the deeper meanings behind culture.

4.2. Quadrant II: Aesthetic Creation for the “Young Yin” Market

This quadrant represents the intersection of “meaning” and “image.” It conducts aesthetic creation through symbols that express intention and places emphasis on artistic communication. Therefore, in the process of cultural communication and cross-cultural communication, mainstream media can incorporate artistic techniques to create an aesthetic audiovisual feast for audiences [10].

For example, Henan TV’s series of festival galas are known for their exquisite stage design, delicate makeup, innovative narratives, and magnificent style. They recall the past during traditional festivals and reflect on the present through audiovisual technology. It can be seen that the popularity of Henan TV’s galas is not only the result of the collision between culture and technology, but also a display of the remarkable charm of traditional culture. More importantly, it reflects the shift in national aesthetics from fast-food culture toward deeper cultural appreciation.

Therefore, cultural and creative activities can also serve as channels of cultural communication that connect with audiences’ aesthetic interests. With the help of artificial intelligence, creative activities with distinctive Chinese cultural characteristics can be developed. For example, technologies such as generative adversarial networks, or GANs, can be used to create artworks and organize art exhibitions. In this way, culture can be communicated through artistic appreciation, and cultural values can become deeply rooted in people’s hearts through aesthetic exchange.

4.3. Quadrant III: Emotional Resonance for the “Old Yang” Market

The third quadrant moves from “image” toward “Tao.” Its corresponding audience belongs to the “Old Yang” market, mainly consisting of middle-aged and elderly people. The content corresponding to this quadrant seeks to reach the depths of the audience’s mind, generating a sense of identification and belonging. It is a form of “religious-style” communication.

In the communication of media events, there is a more “solemn sense of ritual,” which can trigger strong emotional resonance among audiences through the effect of collective memory. Therefore, China’s cultural communication should also begin from emotion and pursue the “warm power” of cultural communication [11].

“Warm power” refers to a shared discourse or symbolic code that melts barriers, expands exchanges, enhances cooperation, and promotes mutual benefit and win-win outcomes in the political, economic, cultural, and social fields. It is also a “skillful strategy” for respect, understanding, support, and cooperation among countries. It carries an empathetic experience that warms people’s hearts, easily generates resonance, and promotes understanding. It is also a form of “skillful communication” that enables audiences in other countries to understand Chinese values and core propositions.

In the process of emotional communication, interactive rituals can be used to generate emotional identification [12]. For example, mainstream media can use artificial intelligence technology to carry out intelligent interactive activities during the warm-up and reporting of media events, attracting audience participation and enhancing their experiential engagement with Chinese culture.

4.4. Quadrant IV: Philosophical Exploration for the “Young Yang” Market

This quadrant is composed of the two elements of “discourse” and “Tao.” It approaches “Tao” through “discourse,” which gives it a philosophical character. It is rooted in humanity’s pursuit of meaning and its spirit of thorough inquiry. Chinese culture has accumulated over five thousand years. It is extensive and profound, marked by the coexistence of many schools of thought and a long historical lineage. The philosophical thinking contained within it needs to be expressed and interpreted through symbols that are open to exploration and rich in depth.

Therefore, cultural communication targeting the “Young Yang” market places greater emphasis on restoring the authenticity of life and returning to the humanistic spirit. Communicators need to use symbolic language to endow profound and weighty culture with spirit and thought [13].

5. Conclusion

Through an analysis from the perspective of Eastern semiotics, it can be seen that fine traditional Chinese culture contains a large number of “metanarratives,” which provide elements of “discourse” and “image” for telling China’s stories well in the new era. Chinese culture is extensive and profound, and China’s high-context culture also lays the foundation of “meaning” and “Tao” for telling China’s stories well in the new era. The support of digital technology further adds diverse modes of communication to this effort.

From this perspective, the creative transformation of fine traditional Chinese culture requires several approaches: excavating the values of Chinese culture and using long-tail thinking to create “deep content”; skillfully embedding culture in technology so that advanced technology empowers modes of presentation; and lowering the posture of cultural communication in order to seek common ground in cultural values [14].

It is necessary to adhere to the standpoint of Chinese culture, refine and display the spiritual symbols and cultural essence of Chinese civilization, and pursue innovation while preserving fundamental principles. In this way, we can search for a form of “skillful communication” full of poetic and pictorial charm, shoulder the responsibility of inheriting Chinese culture amid technological progress and rapid social development, and ensure that it continues to flourish across time.

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