Cultural Contents and Digital Integration
- A Review of Projects on the Digitization of Chinese Cultural Heritage

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Dr. Ling Chen is an associate professor at Tsinghua University. She received her B.A. in Design and her M.A. in media art from Tsinghua University and Tsukuba University, and a Ph.D. in architecture from Tokyo University.

Dr. Chen's main research activities are in the areas of Digital Culture Content Design and the Virtual Presentation of Cultural Heritage. From 1999 to 2000, she directed a project in Japan sponsored by IPA and METI, entitled "An Excursion to West Lake - Beyond Time and Space", "The China Cultural Heritage Network/CCHN" funded by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2005. In addition, she worked as an art director from 2002 to 2004 directed several prototypes for the City of Beijing's "Virtual Olympic Museum" project. Other projects that she has been involved in have included research on the "Gion Festival" in ancient Kyoto and “Traditional Dongba’s Shu ceremony.” in Yunnan.
Digital Media Lab:

Media Arts
Interactive Content Design
Virtual Presentation of Cultural Heritage

Digital Media Lab 2004
Cultural Contents and Digital Integration
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1 Digital Technology – as a medium of cultural contents
2 The Function of Interaction in the Digitization of Cultural Heritage
3 Traditional Media in a Virtual World

Future’s Research Plan

Experience the Ecological Environment of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage in a Virtual World
The Era of Multi-Media & Multi-Culture

诗画同源

poetry and painting share the same source
- a poem is a painting without visible shape, and a painting is poetry put into form

“CAVE”, Computer graphic installation, Jeffrey Shaw, 1996

“Water Series”, Ink painting, Ma Yuan, Song Dynasty
1 Digital Technology – as a medium of cultural contents

1.1 An Excursion to West Lake - beyond time and space, 2000

1.2 Traditional Shadow Play in Huaxian, Shanxi, 2006
1. Digital Technology – as a medium of cultural contents

1.1 An Excursion to West Lake - beyond time and space

-- a project sponsored by MMCA (Multimedia Contents Association of Japan). 1999--2000
★This project received the First-Prize of The New Talent Awards for the 14th Multimedia Grand Prix. Japan, 2000
1.2 Traditional Shadow Play in Huaxian, Shanxi
2 The Function of Interaction in Cultural Contents

2.1 Zhuxianzhen New Year Prints
2.2 The Design of Time and Space in West Lake Project
2.3 The Five Animal Exercise
2.1 Zhuxianzhen New Year Prints
2 The Function of Interaction in Cultural Contents

The Interface of online game, 2005
2.2 The Design of Time and Space in West Lake Project

The Su Causeway in Song dynasty and present time.

The collection of the poems
2 The Function of Interaction in Cultural Contents

QTVR
2.3 The Five Animal Exercise
- a prototype for Virtual Olympiv Museum/VOM

VOM is a co-operative project among Beihang University, Tsinghua University, Beijing University of Physical Education -- a prototype sponsored by the City of Beijing, 2003-2004
How can someone behave like a monkey and dance in a woodland setting?

How can he/she share the feelings of an eagle soaring into the sky?
The Five Animal Exercises painted on a piece of silk West Han Dynasty (206BC-AD25)
2 The Function of Interaction in Cultural Contents
3 Traditional Media in a Virtual World

3.1 The Presentation of Ancient Chinese Philosophy and Ideas in the project of West Lake

3.2 The Representation of Ancient Chinese Archery Competition - a prototype for the Virtual Olympic Museum
3.1 The Presentation of Ancient Chinese Philosophy and Ideas in the project of West Lake

The Interfaces
3 Traditional Media in the Virtual World
3.2 The Representation of Ancient Chinese Archery Competition
3 Traditional Media in the Virtual World

3.2 The Representation of Ancient Chinese Archery Competition
Future’s Research Plan

Experience the Ecological Environment of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage in a Virtual Space
New Years Prints in the Town of Zhuxianzhen

The Lost Valley of Shangli-La in a Virtual World

Experience the Ecological Environment of Chinese Intangible Cultural Heritage in a Virtual World
Zhuxianzhen New Year Prints

Zhuxianzhen is a small town near the city of Kaifeng. During the Northern Song Dynasty, Kaifeng was the capital of China. At the beginning of the Qing dynasty. The population of the town was over 300,000, and there were three hundred workshops there that produced as many as one million New Years Prints each year. In fact, the art of New Years Print has played an important role in the growth of Zhuxianzhen's economy.

These prints were usually displayed on the front doors of houses in the days leading up to the Chinese New Year. Their purpose, in addition to decoration, was to promote good luck in the coming year and to ward off evil spirits. The figures that most commonly appear in the Zhuxianzhen Prints are the town’s local heroes, like Qinqiong and Zhongkui. As the chosen guardians of the home, their presence reflects the superstitions and religious beliefs of the local people of the time.

A unique feature of the Zhuxianzhen Prints, and one that makes them stand out from all other Chinese New Years Prints is the source of the pigments used were made from Chinese medicine, as you can see from the list below:

- **Black** (charcoal), **Red** (brazil wood), **Yellow** (the flowers of the black pagoda tree), **Green** (the seeds of sunflowers), **Gold** (brass powder)

We plan to use the Qing dynasty’s Men Shen Hui as a virtual site for this project. Men Shen Hui means ‘a gathering of the guardians of the door. All the information I have provided above will be visualized with the use of digital technology.
In 1933, James Hilton’s novel "Lost Horizon" appeared and almost immediately became an international bestseller. It inspired the successful film adaptation of Hilton’s story. In time, the term "Shangri-La," the name Hilton gave to the mystical, harmonious valley in his novel, later became a common English noun meaning any earthly paradise.

It has been said that this novel was inspired by an article in the National Geographic. The author of the article, whose name was Joseph Rock, was an Austrian-American ethnologist and botanist who spent more then twenty years studying the flora, the people, and the language of a village near the city of Lijiang in Yunnan Province.
This area is a place traditionally inhabited by the Dongba people, whose religion is based on man’s relationship to nature and its numerous implications. According to Dongba mythology, "Nature" and "Man" are said to be half-brothers with the same father and different mothers. Nature is controlled by "Shu", a race of nagas (mythical human/snake-like creatures).

Until the 1930s, the tradition of "Ji Shu" was at the center of the Dongba's daily lives. Many villages had shrines and other places of worship that were dedicated to these "Shu." Not surprisingly, in those days, **73% of the land was covered by woodlands and 53% by virgin forests.**

The project of "The Lost Valley of Shangli-La in a Virtual Space" will represent the religion and the lifestyles of the Dongba in their former natural paradise based on the background of social, nature, economy and culture. A Ecological Environment that fostered this intangible art form in a virtual space which users can experience as part of their own heritage.