

Triple challenges and breakthrough paths for the inheritance and innovation of red culture in the new era

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Abstract. Advancing the inheritance and innovation of red culture in the new era is of great significance for fostering a new generation capable of shouldering the responsibilities of the times, strengthening cultural confidence, and contributing to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. This paper examines three major challenges confronting the inheritance and innovation of red culture: the widening generational gap in cultural cognition, the disruptive impact of a fragmented communication ecosystem, and the imbalance between cultural resource preservation and development. In response, it proposes practical approaches from three dimensions: establishing mechanisms for intergenerational dialogue, improving the governance of online communication, and developing an integrated system for preservation-oriented utilization. These approaches are illustrated through representative cases, including the live-action performance *Jinggangshan* and the development of red culture in Anhui Province. The study argues that the effective inheritance of red culture depends on achieving a dynamic balance between preserving its fundamental principles and pursuing creative innovation.

Keywords: red culture, new era, cultural inheritance, cultural innovation

1. Introduction

Red culture constitutes the spiritual symbols and material heritage accumulated by the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China throughout the course of revolution, construction, and reform. It bears the historical memory of national rejuvenation and serves as a fundamental cornerstone of cultural confidence in the new era. In the contemporary context, the inheritance and innovation of red culture are not only pertinent to the intergenerational transmission of mainstream values, but also to the maintenance of its spiritual core's stability and appeal amid the coexistence of diverse cultural discourses and the profound transformation of the communication ecology. Nevertheless, in practice, red culture is confronted with multiple interrelated predicaments, including intergenerational cognitive disconnection, the erosion of in-depth narratives by fragmented communication ecosystems, and the systemic imbalance between

resource preservation and development. These three dilemmas are mutually reinforcing, impeding the effective transformation of red culture from "historical text" to "contemporary practice", thus necessitating systematic diagnosis at the theoretical level and exploration of feasible solutions at the practical level.

In view of the above, this paper aims to systematically analyze the threefold dilemmas confronting the inheritance and innovation of red culture in the new era, along with their underlying mechanisms, and on this basis, to propose targeted practical pathways. The core research question is: How can red culture achieve a dynamic equilibrium between the stability of its spiritual core and the contemporaneity of its expressive forms, so as to effectively address the structural challenges of intergenerational disconnection, communicative distortion, and resource imbalance, while upholding foundational principles and pursuing innovation?

2. Defining the concepts of red culture and the new era

2.1. The connotation of red culture

Red culture refers to the collective material and spiritual achievements created by the Communist Party of China (CPC) while leading the Chinese people throughout the historical processes of revolution, socialist construction, and reform. Guided by Marxism and integrating its principles with China's specific realities, these achievements were formed in the pursuit of national independence, people's liberation, and national prosperity. In terms of its composition, red culture encompasses not only tangible material carriers—such as revolutionary sites, memorial halls, martyrs' cemeteries, and archival documents—but also enduring spiritual values embodied in the Red Boat Spirit, the Jinggangshan Spirit, the Long March Spirit, the Yan'an Spirit, and the Xibaipo Spirit. In addition, it includes artistic representations of revolutionary traditions expressed through literature, film, music, and other cultural forms. Together, these material carriers, spiritual values, and artistic expressions complement one another to constitute the multidimensional significance of red culture.

A proper understanding of the essential characteristics of red culture requires attention to three key dimensions. First, it embodies the unity of historical continuity and contemporary relevance. Although red culture originated within specific historical circumstances of the Chinese revolution, the ideals, convictions, values, and spirit of perseverance it represents transcend particular historical contexts. These values can therefore be continuously revitalized and reinterpreted in response to the needs of different historical periods. Second, it reflects the unity of political leadership and the people's orientation. Red culture is a concentrated expression of the political ideals of the Communist Party of China while remaining deeply rooted in the revolutionary practice of the Chinese people. It represents the shared spiritual legacy forged through the joint efforts of the Party and the people. Third, it demonstrates the unity of national identity and openness. Red culture inherits the essence of China's outstanding traditional culture while achieving creative transformation through its integration with Marxism. At the same time, it has continuously renewed itself by absorbing the intellectual and cultural achievements of successive historical periods throughout socialist construction and reform. The dialectical relationship among these three dimensions provides the fundamental framework for understanding the internal logic of red culture's inheritance and innovation.

2.2. The connotation of the new era

In the report to the *19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, General Secretary Xi Jinping offered a concise and systematic definition of the essential meaning of the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics: "This is an era that builds on the past and ushers in the future, continues to secure great victories for socialism with Chinese characteristics under new historical conditions, achieves the decisive victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and then builds China into a great modern socialist country, enables the people of all ethnic groups to work together in creating a better life and gradually realize common prosperity for all, unites all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation in striving to realize

the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and sees China move closer to the center of the world stage while making greater contributions to humanity".¹

The introduction of the concept of the "new era" signifies more than the designation of a new historical period. It also reflects a fundamental transformation in China's principal social contradiction—from the contradiction between the people's growing material and cultural needs and backward social production to that between the people's ever-growing needs for a better life and unbalanced and inadequate development. This new assessment places higher demands on the inheritance and innovation of red culture. As people's aspirations for a better life increasingly emphasize spiritual and cultural fulfillment, red culture, as a core component of China's mainstream value system, must better align with the requirements of the new era by improving the quality of cultural provision, enriching its forms of expression, and enhancing its communication effectiveness. Meanwhile, the deepening of globalization and the rapid development of information technology have intensified cultural pluralism, making the task of guiding mainstream values more urgent than ever before. This historical context provides the essential backdrop for the present study's analysis of the contemporary challenges facing the inheritance and innovation of red culture.

3. Contemporary challenges to the inheritance and innovation of red culture in the new era

As an integral component of mainstream culture in contemporary China, red culture embodies significant political, economic, cultural, and social value. However, amid China's accelerating social transformation and the growing influence of cultural pluralism under globalization, its inheritance and innovation are confronted with a series of structural challenges.

3.1. The generational gap in cultural cognition

Cultural inheritance is, in essence, a process of intergenerational transmission. Today, however, a fundamental shift is taking place in the principal agents of red culture transmission: those who personally experienced and witnessed the revolutionary period are gradually being replaced by generations with no direct experience or participation in those historical events. The central issue arising from this transition is not merely the loss of historical knowledge, but the gradual attenuation of meaning as collective memory shifts from lived experience to textual and mediated representations.

The older generation inherited red culture through firsthand experience of both the hardships and victories of the revolutionary era. These lived experiences became deeply embedded in their sensory perceptions and emotional memories. As Wenhui Xu, daughter of General Donghai Xu, remarked: "For our generation, our profound attachment to the red nation is engraved in us like a genetic inheritance. Promoting red culture and passing on the revolutionary spirit is a responsibility from which we cannot shrink" [1]. This form of embodied identification represents the most enduring expression of collective memory.

By contrast, the younger generation has grown up during a period of peace and sustained development, separated from the revolutionary era by two or more generations. Their understanding of red culture relies primarily on indirect and fragmented sources, including textbooks, films, television, and social media. This pattern of cultural cognition faces three interconnected challenges. First, without personal experience serving as a source of meaning, the emotional power of revolutionary narratives often fails to resonate with

¹ Report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

individuals' lived experiences. Second, fragmented modes of information consumption make it difficult to develop a systematic and contextual understanding of red culture. Third, within an increasingly pluralistic cultural environment, red culture competes with diverse cultural narratives and is therefore more likely to be perceived as merely one body of knowledge among many, rather than as a value system deserving internalization and personal commitment.

At a deeper level, this generational cognitive divide also reflects shortcomings in prevailing educational approaches. For many years, red culture education has focused primarily on the transmission of factual knowledge, emphasizing the memorization of historical dates, locations, individuals, and events while paying comparatively little attention to helping students establish meaningful connections between revolutionary ideals and contemporary life. When revolutionary aspirations cannot be transformed into personal value commitments, and when the spirit of sacrifice and dedication is no longer understood as an expression of social responsibility, red culture inevitably struggles to maintain meaningful continuity across generations.

3.2. The inherent tension between fragmented communication and in-depth narrative

The inheritance and innovation of red culture in the new era require not only the strengthening of vertical intergenerational transmission so that revolutionary traditions can be passed down across generations, but also the activation of horizontal communication among different social groups, particularly within younger communities. With the rapid advancement of digital technologies, social media platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, Douyin, and Bilibili have become major channels for the dissemination of red culture. While these platforms have created unprecedented opportunities for communication, they have also introduced new contradictions and challenges.

At the surface level, the primary contradiction lies in the mismatch between modes of communication and the nature of the content being communicated. Red culture typically embodies complex historical contexts and profound ideological significance that require sustained narrative development and thoughtful cognitive engagement for their meanings to be fully understood. Internet communication, by contrast, is shaped by the demands of a fast-paced information environment that favors brief, fragmented, and highly accessible content designed to capture immediate attention and maximize rapid dissemination. This "short, fast, and attention-driven" communication logic sits uneasily alongside the need for comprehensive interpretation and systematic presentation that red culture requires. Attempts to force red culture into fragmented communication formats therefore risk oversimplifying its historical significance and ideological depth.

A deeper contradiction arises from the tension between the virtual nature of the Internet and the historical authenticity upon which red culture is founded. The persuasive power of red culture ultimately derives from real historical events. The sacrifices made by revolutionary predecessors and the hardships they endured constitute the irreplaceable moral and spiritual foundation of its enduring influence. However, while the Internet's anonymity and decentralized structure have greatly expanded opportunities for public expression, they have also created fertile ground for the spread of historical nihilism. In January 2025, an internet user surnamed Zhang deliberately fabricated false claims alleging that the Red Army had provided assistance to the Kwantung Army. In April of the same year, another internet user surnamed Deng circulated fabricated statistics concerning the number of Japanese troops eliminated by the armed forces led by the Communist Party of China, thereby attempting to diminish and deny the Party's pivotal role in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. Such misinformation spread rapidly through online platforms, not only creating confusion about revolutionary history but also gradually eroding the collective national memory embodied in red culture. The fundamental problem is that the Internet's increasingly decentralized communication environment places verified historical facts and fabricated narratives in direct competition for

public attention. Owing to its inherently serious subject matter and demand for historical accuracy, red culture often finds itself at a disadvantage within this highly competitive communication landscape.

More fundamentally, these tensions reflect the broader conflict between communicative speed and intellectual depth that characterizes contemporary digital culture. If red culture resists fragmented modes of communication altogether, it risks narrowing its audience and diminishing its social influence. Conversely, if it adapts excessively to the logic of fragmented communication, it may sacrifice the very depth and moral authority that constitute its defining characteristics. Finding an appropriate balance between these competing demands has therefore become one of the central challenges facing the governance of red culture communication in the new era.

3.3. Systemic imbalance between the preservation and development of red cultural resources

Red cultural resources encompass a wide range of tangible heritage, including revolutionary sites, heroic historical narratives, memorial halls, and museums. These physical carriers embody the revolutionary spirit in concrete historical settings and material forms, preserving the memory of China's revolutionary past. However, the broad geographical distribution of these resources, coupled with significant disparities in regional economic and social development, has resulted in a pronounced systemic imbalance between their preservation and utilization.

The most pressing issue on the preservation side is the uneven implementation of graded protection. Taking northern Anhui as an example, among the 711 existing revolutionary sites, only three have been designated as National Key Cultural Relics Protection Units, while as many as 92.3% have not been assigned any officially recognized protection status and are suffering from varying degrees of deterioration [2]. Sites without formal designation often lack dedicated conservation funding and professional technical support. Consequently, many have been left as abandoned residential buildings or have been altered without authorization by local residents, resulting in irreversible losses of historical information. Weak public awareness of red cultural resource preservation is not confined to the relevant administrative authorities but is also widespread among the general public [3]. Red cultural relics preserved in private hands—such as medals, personal correspondence, and weapons—are frequently kept as private possessions or even discarded as scrap due to limited awareness of their historical value, leading to the irreversible loss of valuable historical materials.

On the development side, the most notable shortcomings are the superficial nature of visitor experiences and the extensive, rather than intensive, use of cultural resources. Many revolutionary sites and memorial museums continue to rely on conventional exhibition models centered on viewing artifacts and listening to guided tours. Visitors typically follow predetermined routes and complete "check-in" style visits with limited opportunities for immersive experiences or emotional engagement. Such superficial forms of development not only fail to realize the educational potential of red culture but also weaken its long-term appeal as a cultural tourism resource. More importantly, in pursuit of economic returns, some localities have allowed red tourism attractions to operate beyond their daily carrying capacity, subjecting cultural heritage sites to prolonged overuse and significantly shortening their service life [4].

Fundamentally, the imbalance between preservation and development stems from two major deficiencies. The first is an institutional deficiency characterized by unclear property rights, ambiguous conservation responsibilities, and inadequate financial support. As a result, many red cultural resources remain in a situation where they are utilized but inadequately managed. The second is a lack of public participation. Residents living around revolutionary heritage sites often have few effective channels through which they can participate in preservation efforts. Consequently, they remain passive observers and, in some cases, unintentionally contribute to the deterioration of these cultural resources. This situation suggests that the sustainable

inheritance of red cultural resources requires a transition from a government-centered management model to a collaborative governance framework involving multiple stakeholders.

4. Practical pathways for the inheritance and innovation of red culture in the new era

In response to the three challenges discussed above, the inheritance and innovation of red culture should be advanced through coordinated efforts in three interrelated dimensions: intergenerational communication, communication governance, and resource development. Together, these dimensions can form a systematic framework for addressing the contemporary challenges facing red culture.

4.1. Establishing a two-way empowering mechanism for intergenerational dialogue

Bridging the generational gap in cultural cognition requires moving beyond the traditional one-way model of knowledge transmission toward a mechanism of two-way intergenerational dialogue. Such a mechanism should enable different generations to contribute their respective strengths through mutual interaction, rather than expecting younger generations to remain passive recipients of historical knowledge.

An effective intergenerational dialogue mechanism should accommodate the distinct cognitive patterns and communicative preferences of different age groups. For older generations who personally experienced the revolutionary period or maintain direct emotional ties to it, communication should combine grand historical narratives with emotional resonance. One practical approach is to organize oral history projects on red memories, inviting elderly participants to recount their personal experiences or family stories. Such recollections not only reinforce the historical weight of revolutionary experiences but also preserve irreplaceable historical records. For younger generations raised in the digital era, by contrast, the revolutionary spirit should be translated into concrete and relatable guidance for everyday life. Revolutionary ideals may be interpreted as aspirations for personal development, while the spirit of sacrifice and dedication can be connected to contemporary notions of social responsibility. By embedding the values of red culture within familiar life experiences, younger audiences are more likely to establish meaningful connections with its underlying principles. This process does not diminish the spiritual significance of red culture; rather, it constitutes a reinterpretation of its core values in ways that resonate with contemporary society.

Building a two-way empowering dialogue mechanism also requires creating opportunities for meaningful collaboration across generations. For example, platforms may be established where young people develop short-video scripts based on oral histories provided by older family members, transforming personal and family narratives into audiovisual storytelling while inviting elderly participants to verify historical details throughout the creative process. The value of such collaborative practices lies in their reciprocal benefits: young participants acquire a more tangible understanding of history through creative engagement, while older generations witness the continued vitality of revolutionary narratives within new cultural contexts. Similarly, activities such as intergenerational red heritage study tours and collective readings of revolutionary family letters can foster mutual understanding through shared participation. The essence of intergenerational dialogue is therefore not the unilateral transmission of knowledge from one generation to another, but the fusion of different perspectives through collaborative engagement. Younger generations contribute creativity, technological expertise, and innovative forms of expression, whereas older generations provide historical authenticity and profound spiritual insight. Only through the integration of these complementary strengths can red cultural works achieve both emotional appeal and historical integrity.

At the same time, innovation must always remain grounded in the fundamental principles of red culture. Diverse forms of expression should be encouraged: older generations may continue to preserve the historical solemnity of revolutionary traditions through conventional means, while younger generations may employ emerging technologies and contemporary modes of communication to reinterpret their spiritual essence. Regardless of the medium adopted, however, the core values of red culture must neither be deconstructed nor reduced to entertainment. Meaningful innovation must therefore operate within clearly defined normative boundaries, ensuring that the inheritance of red culture remains faithful to its essential historical and ideological foundations.

4.2. Improving the governance system and incentive mechanisms for online communication

Safeguarding the online space for red culture requires coordinated efforts among government authorities, digital platforms, and content creators. A comprehensive governance framework should be established, integrating three complementary components: content review, institutional incentives, and accountability mechanisms.

At the level of content review, a rigorous and professional review system should be developed to ensure the accuracy and integrity of red culture communication. Government agencies can establish a digital database for tracing the historical origins of red culture by integrating authoritative Party history documents, local historical records, museum collections, and archival materials. Such a database would provide online platforms with reliable historical references, enabling evidence-based content review. At the same time, artificial intelligence technologies can be employed to assist in identifying content that maliciously distorts or falsifies historical facts, thereby improving both the efficiency and accuracy of content moderation.

At the level of institutional incentives, the government should strengthen policy guidance by introducing targeted measures that encourage creators to produce content aligned with the objectives of red culture communication and ensure that short-form videos and other digital media convey appropriate value orientations [5]. Special funding programs may be established to support high-quality productions focusing on revolutionary history, heroic figures, and exemplary role models of the new era through financial subsidies and preferential traffic allocation on digital platforms. Clear regulatory boundaries should also be established by specifying both the "red lines" and the minimum standards governing the production of red culture content. Historical events should not be fabricated or deliberately reinterpreted in ways that undermine their historical authenticity, nor should the deeds of revolutionary heroes and martyrs be trivialized or presented in an entertainment-oriented manner. These clearly defined rules enable creators to innovate within appropriate normative boundaries. Moreover, incentives should extend beyond financial support to include professional guidance. Historians specializing in Party history may be invited to serve as consultants, assisting creators in balancing historical authenticity with effective public communication.

At the level of accountability, red culture productions that exhibit tendencies toward excessive entertainment, ridicule, or historical trivialization should not only be promptly removed from online platforms but should also trigger corresponding accountability procedures for their creators. Digital platforms must likewise bear joint responsibility for failing to fulfill their content review obligations. Where violations occur because of inadequate platform oversight, regulatory authorities should impose penalties proportionate to the scope and social impact of the dissemination while holding relevant review personnel accountable. In addition, online platforms should establish dedicated internal review teams specializing in red culture, replacing reactive post hoc enforcement with regularized and professional content moderation.

The governance of online communication, however, should not rely solely on restrictive measures. Equal emphasis should be placed on positive guidance and constructive content cultivation. Government agencies

can collaborate with leading online platforms to organize initiatives such as digital creation competitions on red culture and short-video campaigns featuring revolutionary stories. By actively encouraging the production and dissemination of high-quality content, positive narratives can gain greater visibility and influence through healthy competition within the digital communication ecosystem.

4.3. Advancing systematic governance through the integration of preservation and development

The preservation and development of red cultural resources should not be viewed as competing objectives but rather as complementary components of an integrated strategy. The non-renewable nature of red cultural heritage makes preservation the fundamental prerequisite, while appropriate development can provide both financial resources and public attention necessary to sustain long-term conservation. The two should therefore reinforce one another within a virtuous cycle.

From the perspective of preservation, a graded and categorized protection system with clearly defined responsibilities should be established. A comprehensive nationwide survey and evaluation of red cultural resources should be conducted to ensure that all sites and relics possessing historical significance receive at least basic legal protection. For officially designated heritage sites, detailed conservation records should be established and accompanied by routine monitoring. Sites that have not yet been formally designated but possess potential historical value should, at a minimum, receive provisional protection through official registration to prevent damage during urban development or infrastructure construction. Preservation efforts should prioritize conservation over new construction by strengthening the restoration and maintenance of memorial facilities and historical sites documenting revolutionary history while avoiding excessive reconstruction that may compromise historical authenticity. At the same time, systematic efforts should be made to recover red cultural relics dispersed among private collections. Through compensated acquisition programs, voluntary donations, and other appropriate mechanisms, valuable historical materials can gradually be incorporated into the public heritage protection system.

From the perspective of development, equal emphasis should be placed on preservation-oriented utilization and the enhancement of visitor experiences. The development of red cultural resources should adhere to three fundamental principles: preservation as the prerequisite, education as the primary objective, and moderation as the guiding standard, while firmly avoiding excessive commercialization. Every development proposal should undergo professional evaluation by cultural heritage authorities and Party history specialists to ensure that the historical authenticity of revolutionary sites remains intact. To improve visitor engagement, technologies such as historical reenactments, immersive exhibitions, and interactive experiences may be adopted, enabling red culture education to move beyond traditional didactic approaches and encouraging visitors to participate actively rather than merely observe passively.

With respect to participatory governance, a collaborative framework should be established in which the government provides overall leadership, society actively participates, and local communities benefit from the outcomes. The government should undertake top-level institutional design by clearly defining the boundaries and guiding principles governing the development of red cultural resources while ensuring, through regular inspections and dynamic evaluations, that development activities remain aligned with the fundamental objective of preserving the revolutionary spirit. Social organizations and private enterprises constitute important drivers of innovation and can integrate red culture with contemporary market demands, allowing revolutionary stories to extend beyond history textbooks and enter everyday cultural life. Residents living near revolutionary heritage sites are among the most authentic custodians of local cultural memory. By providing opportunities such as employment as site interpreters or participation in the development of cultural and creative products, local communities can be transformed from passive bystanders into active guardians of red

cultural heritage, thereby fundamentally strengthening public awareness of heritage preservation. Furthermore, an early warning mechanism based on visitor carrying capacity should be established for red tourism destinations. Daily visitor numbers and reception intensity should be strictly regulated to prevent the pursuit of short-term economic gains at the expense of the long-term preservation and sustainability of red cultural resources.

5. Practical cases: the *Jinggangshan* live-action performance and the development of red culture in Anhui province

5.1. Innovative practices of the *Jinggangshan* live-action performance

The *Jinggangshan* live-action performance is the largest outdoor production themed on red culture in China and, to date, the country's only large-scale live performance dedicated to revolutionary history. Set against the authentic natural landscape of Jinggangshan, the production recreates significant historical events through the integration of real mountain scenery, advanced lighting and sound technologies, and large-scale performances by local participants.

One of its most significant innovations lies in its educational function. By moving beyond conventional didactic approaches, the performance has revitalized red culture education through its unique artistic appeal, stimulating students' enthusiasm for red heritage study tours and injecting new vitality into educational activities. Immersed in the live performance, students no longer encounter revolutionary history merely as distant narratives in textbooks; instead, historical events become vivid emotional experiences that can be seen, heard, and felt. This experiential learning model encourages students to shift from passive recipients of historical knowledge to active explorers of revolutionary history, enabling the Jinggangshan Spirit to resonate more deeply with younger generations through interactive engagement. From the perspective of communication effectiveness, the production successfully responds to young audiences' growing preference for immersive cultural experiences while conveying core values through high-quality cultural products.

The performance has also generated remarkable social benefits. Its widespread popularity has attracted large numbers of visitors, leading to significant improvements in surrounding tourism infrastructure. By establishing a distinctive tourism brand centered on Jinggangshan, the project has promoted both the development of the local tourism industry and the dissemination of red culture. At the same time, red tourism has become an important driver of rural revitalization in the Jinggangshan region. The *Jinggangshan* production has engaged more than 600 local villagers as performers, each of whom receives performance subsidies after every show [6]. This model has created a virtuous cycle in which culture promotes tourism while tourism stimulates rural development. The case demonstrates that preservation-oriented development of red culture can successfully reconcile social benefits with economic returns.

Nevertheless, the *Jinggangshan* model also has clear limitations. Large-scale live performances require substantial financial investment and incur high operating costs, making them difficult to replicate at smaller revolutionary heritage sites. Its broader significance therefore lies not in the specific performance format itself but in its underlying principles: immersive historical experiences, active community participation, and the integration of multiple cultural and tourism industries. These core practices offer valuable lessons that can be adapted to different types of red cultural resources according to local conditions.

5.2. Systematic practices in the inheritance and innovation of red culture in Anhui province

Anhui Province possesses one of China's richest collections of red cultural resources. Since the beginning of the new era, governments at all levels within the province have attached great importance to the preservation of revolutionary heritage and have made substantial progress in the excavation, conservation, documentation, and utilization of red cultural resources [7].

In terms of preservation, Anhui has undertaken the conservation and restoration of key revolutionary heritage sites, including the former headquarters of the New Fourth Army in southern Anhui. The Anhui Provincial Archives has established a specialized digital archive of red historical materials, enabling the systematic digital management and effective preservation of revolutionary records. Furthermore, the province has introduced innovative preservation approaches by integrating red cultural resources with modern technologies. Through the application of Virtual Reality (VR), immersive virtual exhibition halls have been created, allowing visitors to explore revolutionary heritage sites remotely. In March 2025, the Anhui Provincial Cultural Heritage Administration issued the *Notice on Strengthening the Protection and Utilization of Cultural Relics Related to the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression*, which called for comprehensive efforts to enhance the preservation and utilization of wartime cultural relics. The document reaffirmed the principle of "minimum intervention", promoted the formulation of specialized conservation plans for three national revolutionary cultural heritage zones in central Anhui, Huainan, and northern Anhui, and proposed the implementation of a series of major conservation projects to achieve integrated, high-quality protection and utilization.

With respect to development and utilization, Anhui has capitalized on its abundant red cultural resources by establishing a number of major red tourism destinations, including the Memorial Park of the First Communist Party Flag in Anhui and the Former Residence of Caoyuan. These attractions have gradually developed strong regional brands, attracting substantial numbers of tourists and directly contributing to local economic growth. Beginning in 2018, the province also introduced emerging industries through investment promotion initiatives, creating numerous employment opportunities and enabling hundreds of formerly impoverished households to secure jobs within their local communities and overcome poverty. At the same time, the expanding influence of red culture has promoted the integrated development of related sectors—including culture, education, healthcare, and public health—while also contributing to improvements in transportation, water conservancy, and other public infrastructure.

The experience of Anhui demonstrates that the inheritance and innovation of red culture constitute a comprehensive undertaking requiring top-level institutional planning, technological empowerment, and coordinated industrial development. Strategic policy coordination and long-term planning at the provincial level provide the institutional foundation for effective governance. The application of emerging technologies serves as a powerful means of enhancing both the preservation and dissemination of red culture, while the deep integration of red cultural resources with local economic and social development provides the essential conditions for their long-term sustainability. Nevertheless, as Anhui continues to promote the integration of red culture and cultural tourism, it must remain vigilant against the risk of excessive commercialization in certain localities and ensure that the principle of preservation first is consistently upheld throughout implementation at the grassroots level.

6. Contemporary significance of the inheritance and innovation of red culture in the new era

6.1. Fostering a new generation capable of advancing national rejuvenation

Cultivating a new generation capable of shouldering the mission of national rejuvenation depends fundamentally on moral cultivation and value guidance. The spirit of struggle, patriotism, and steadfast ideals embodied in red culture constitute indispensable spiritual resources for nurturing the younger generation in the new era.

The educational function of red culture is primarily realized through three interconnected processes: emotional awakening, exemplary role modeling, and the internalization of values. Through vivid portrayals of revolutionary heroes and their experiences, red culture transforms abstract concepts such as patriotism into concrete and emotionally compelling narratives. By engaging with these heroic stories, young people begin to develop an understanding of fundamental values. Throughout this process, revolutionary figures serve as moral exemplars who provide models of conduct worthy of emulation. Guided by systematic education and practical experience, the revolutionary spirit is gradually internalized as an individual's own value orientation.

China is currently entering a new stage of building a modern socialist country in all respects, a period in which younger generations require strong moral inspiration and spiritual support. Red culture can instill patriotism and the commitment to striving for a better life for the people into the actions of the younger generation, encouraging them to consciously participate in the great endeavor of building a modern socialist country and realizing the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation [8].

6.2. Consolidating the cultural foundation of confidence in Chinese culture

Cultural confidence represents the deepest and most enduring source of spiritual strength for both a nation and its people. Traditional Chinese culture, red culture, and advanced socialist culture together constitute the solid foundation of cultural confidence in socialism with Chinese characteristics. As the distinguished scholar Xianda Chen has observed: "In cultivating cultural confidence, we must attach importance not only to traditional Chinese culture but also to red culture and advanced socialist culture. In carrying forward our cultural heritage, we should never forget two traditions: the outstanding traditional culture of the Chinese nation and the revolutionary tradition created through the blood and sacrifices of the Chinese people during the revolutionary struggle" [9].

The contribution of red culture to cultural confidence can be understood from two perspectives. From a historical perspective, red culture emerged through the Chinese nation's struggles for national survival, liberation, revolution, and socialist development. From the Jinggangshan Spirit and the Long March Spirit to the spirit of the "Two Bombs, One Satellite" program and the spirit of Reform and Opening Up, each revolutionary spirit corresponds to a critical stage in China's historical journey of overcoming immense challenges. Together, these traditions bear witness to the historic transformation led by the Communist Party of China, through which the Chinese nation has progressed from standing up, to becoming prosperous, and ultimately to growing strong. From a contemporary perspective, as globalization deepens and cultural pluralism continues to expand, red culture serves as a central vehicle for mainstream social values. It plays a vital role in fostering social cohesion, strengthening collective identity, and countering historical nihilism by reinforcing an accurate understanding of revolutionary history and national development.

Red culture and cultural confidence are mutually reinforcing. Red culture provides the historical and spiritual foundation upon which cultural confidence is built, while cultural confidence, through effective

mechanisms of inheritance and innovative forms of expression, continuously renews the vitality and contemporary relevance of red culture.

6.3. Strengthening the spiritual driving force for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation

The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation signifies not only national prosperity, ethnic revitalization, and the well-being of the people, but also the renewal of Chinese civilization as a dynamic force on the global stage. Red culture, forged through the Communist Party of China's century-long struggle, embodies a rich spiritual legacy deeply rooted in China's modern history. From the unwavering conviction demonstrated during the Long March to the pursuit of truth in the caves of Yan'an; from the spirit of self-reliance that enabled the successful development of the "Two Bombs, One Satellite" program to the pioneering spirit of Reform and Opening Up; from the determination displayed in the campaign against extreme poverty to the unity and resilience demonstrated during the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, red culture has consistently embodied such values as loyalty, responsibility, solidarity, seeking truth from facts, and pioneering innovation. These enduring qualities have continually served as a source of strength, inspiring the Chinese nation to overcome adversity and advance with determination.

China is now embarking on a new journey toward building a modern socialist country in all respects, and the goal of national rejuvenation has never appeared closer. Yet, as the saying goes, "*The last stretch of a hundred-mile journey is often the hardest*". The closer a nation comes to achieving its objectives, the more it depends upon spiritual strength for sustained progress. The realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation requires not only robust material capabilities but also the support of strong cultural and spiritual resources [10]. The revolutionary spirit and unwavering determination embodied in red culture constitute an essential source of national cohesion and collective motivation. In confronting contemporary challenges—including unbalanced and inadequate development, technological bottlenecks in critical fields, and an increasingly complex international environment—China must continue to draw inspiration from its revolutionary history and transform that spiritual heritage into the courage, confidence, and wisdom necessary to address present-day challenges and sustain long-term national development.

7. Conclusion

The inheritance and innovation of red culture are, in essence, a continuous process of seeking a dynamic balance between preserving fundamental principles and embracing innovation. The three challenges examined in this study ultimately converge on a single central question: How can red culture engage effectively with the new era while remaining faithful to its enduring spiritual essence? Addressing this question requires coordinated efforts on multiple fronts. At the institutional level, it calls for sound top-level policy design and effective governance mechanisms. At the technological level, it demands continuous innovation in communication methods and digital tools. At the cultural level, it depends upon the conscious commitment of all participants involved in preserving, interpreting, and transmitting red culture. Only through the combined efforts of these dimensions can red culture continue to thrive in the new era, fully realize its educational, cultural, and social value, and provide enduring spiritual support for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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