



# Cultural Integration Between China and Malaysia in the Context of “Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)”—Taking “Oriental Resonance” as an Example

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## Abstract

With the aim of facilitating the amalgamation and mutual enrichment of traditional Chinese and Malaysian cultural elements, we developed a Web-based Interactive Artwork named "Oriental Resonance". This work is rooted in the traditional contexts of Malaysian and Chinese cultures, ingeniously integrating both natural and synthesized sounds from these nations with representative visual patterns. In this digital media project, we adopted an interdisciplinary approach, merging graphic design, digital media, and computer technology. As an exemplar of cultural integration, "Oriental Resonance" not only preserves the rich traditions of China and Malaysia but also significantly contributes to the continuation and innovation of the shared cultural heritage along the Silk Road. This research structurally expands the tangible achievements in cultural exchange under the "Belt and Road Initiative", fostering unity and collaboration between diverse cultures. It provides new opportunities for humanistic exchanges between participating nations, promoting the co-existence and integration of multiple cultures.

## Keywords

Belt and Road Initiative, Cultural Integration, Web-based Interactive Artwork, Sensory experiences, Interdisciplinary approach

## 1. Introduction

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which amalgamates the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", is a visionary project proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping aimed at fostering cooperation initiatives. The BRI transcends mere economic cooperation, embodying a profound avenue for civilizational and cultural exchanges and mutual appreciation (Haoguang Liang et al., 2019). Artistic mutual learning, serving as a cross-cultural dialogue medium, significantly contributes to cultural dissemination. The historical ties and cultural stories between China and Malaysia have been revitalized through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), offering unique opportunities for their traditional cultures. Various table text styles are provided as prescribed. The formatter must create components following the given criteria.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which amalgamates the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", is a visionary project proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping aimed at fostering cooperation initiatives. The BRI transcends mere economic cooperation, embodying a profound avenue for civilizational and cultural exchanges and mutual appreciation (Haoguang Liang et al., 2019). Artistic mutual learning, serving as a

cross-cultural dialogue medium, significantly contributes to cultural dissemination. The historical bonds and cultural narratives shared between China and Malaysia have been rejuvenated under the auspices of the BRI, presenting unprecedented opportunities for the traditional cultures of these nations.

In this context, the works of individuals like Liu Qinglun, a laureate of the Global Outstanding Young Leaders Award and a Malaysian artist, exemplify the fusion of traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting with Western theoretical perspectives. His "Vigor of Spring and Autumn" series, which creatively employs wild cursive calligraphy with motifs of water and stone, and the interplay between emptiness and substance on rice paper, highlights the enchantment of Chinese ink art, garnering acclaim both domestically and on the international stage (Minger Fang et al., 2019). Furthermore, the partnership between Yang Songyao of Malaysia and Su Su of China in founding the brand 1983Asia illustrates a deep exploration into Asian cultural customs. Their design philosophy, which integrates oriental motifs with contemporary fashion trends, has significantly contributed to the cultural symbiosis between China and Malaysia.

Existing research has effectively highlighted the cultural characteristics of China and Malaysia, yet it falls short of eliciting a comprehensive sensory experience. Consequently, we employed a sensory-driven approach, gathering a wealth of natural and man-made sounds from extensive field studies in both countries. We distilled traditional visual symbols used by artisans and, using sound as an emotional bridge, created the Web-based Interactive Artwork "Oriental Resonance". We aim to deepen the depth of cultural exchange and enhance its impact and emotional resonance among participants. This method seeks not only to convey the cultural knowledge of China and Malaysia but also, through enhanced sensory engagement, to foster empathy and emotional connections among participants, thereby bridging cultural divides. This approach aids in promoting deeper mutual respect and appreciation between the cultures of China and Malaysia, thereby enriching participants' experiences and facilitating more meaningful cross-cultural dialogue.

## 2. Developing "Oriental Resonance" as a Web-based Interactive Artwork

In response to the "BRI", we launched the China-Malaysia Traditional Cultural Visual Creation Workshop, aimed at involving third-year undergraduate students from China and Malaysia in innovative expressions of cultural integration. The project development was systematically divided into four phases. Initially, we conducted three-month field studies in both countries to collect sounds reflecting the iconic cultures of China and Malaysia. By applying advanced algorithms, filters, and waveform analysis, we created a detailed sound map (Jacqueline Walker et al., 2007). This system innovatively translates sound variations into dynamic visual particle effects. Integrating this system with traditional visual elements from both cultures, we developed an interactive web-based art project. This platform allows users to engage through multiple senses in the creative process, experiencing the charm of multicultural integration (Weipeng Guan et al., 2019).

### 2.1 Sound Sampling

Sound, as a profound sociocultural phenomenon, plays a pivotal role in constructing and conveying national cultural identities, values, and historical memories, thereby reinforcing national consciousness and facilitating the preservation of cultural heritage. To investigate sounds that most representatively capture the essence of Chinese and Malaysian cultures, we employed Ethnographic Interviews to engage with elderly ethnic musicians from both China and Malaysia, complemented by questionnaire surveys. During a three-month transnational visit, we collected invaluable firsthand data. Judging from the survey data, Chinese artists believe that Erhu and Guzheng best represent the sounds of their country's culture, while Malaysian artists believe that Rebana Ubi and Kompang best represent the sounds of their country's culture, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Survey overview of the most representative musical instruments of Chinese and Malaysian cultures**

Item	China	Malaysia
1.Participants	10	10
2.Main Instruments Played	Erhu,Guzheng,Di,Pipa,Xiao,Gu	Sapeh,Gamelan,Gambus,Rebana Ubi, Kompang
3.Instruments Best Representing Culture	Erhu, Guzheng	Rebana Ubi, Kompang

Upon completing the sound collection, we selected natural and instrumental sounds to develop a sound map. For the Malaysian segment, we chose Rebana Ubi and Kompang, focusing on harmonious tones to highlight the ambient tone of Malay culture, with the grand theme orchestrated by the traditional strings of the Gambus (Kinzer, Joseph et al., 2017). In the Chinese segment, the traditional Chinese instruments Xiao and Dizi were selected to represent the culture, emphasizing the lyrical and soft atmosphere. The sounds of the Guzheng and Guqin, long and sonorous yet forceful, serve as classical melodies, embodying the cultural melody (Yang Mu, 1993). This interplay of yin and yang, strength and softness, marks the starting point of a collision between different cultural sounds. To bridge the musical gap between the two nations, we incorporated natural sounds from both countries, thereby creating a piece with cultural fusion characteristics. Given that natural sounds are roots in humanity's primal spiritual pursuits and both Malaysia and China boast diverse terrains, the sounds of water streams in Anhui's Hongcun and the Malacca Strait in Malaysia were recorded to capture the unique soundscapes of different natural terrains, as shown in figure 1.

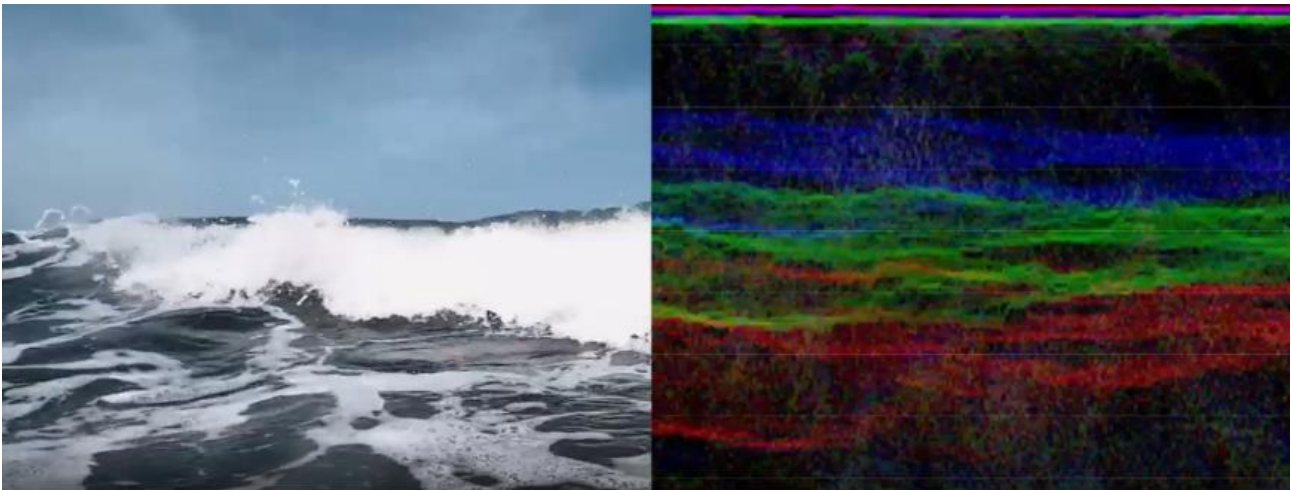


Figure 1. Real-time sampling of sound samples from the Malacca Strait, Malaysia.

## 2.2 The Establishment of a Sound Map

In the sound segment, we utilized the "mode object" in Max/MSP to create a Sound Map that blends the intersections of two cultures, thereby forming customized melodies (Jean-François Charles, 2008). For the Malaysian melody, by employing the "preset object" to select appropriate filters and phase vocoders, we altered the classical timbres and frequencies of the Malaysian large drum Rebana Ubi and hand drum Kompang, thus creating a dynamic ensemble of pulsating drum sounds, as depicted in Figure 2. The Malaysian main melody was modified using "freeze" and "reverb" effects to change its original tonal base, and different "bang" triggers were used to activate pre-chosen melodic segments from the "preset", ensuring that each entry into the soundscape plays distinct melodic pieces, creating a unique South Asian ambiance. For the part representing Chinese cultural sounds, the flute and Xiao, instruments characteristic of Chinese.

## 2.3 The Construction of a Visual Interaction System

In constructing the visual interaction system, we collaborated with the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in China and Dasein Academy in Malaysia on a transnational university cooperation project, hosting a Sino-Malaysian traditional cultural visual creation workshop. This workshop involved third-year undergraduate students majoring in visual communication from both countries, with 12 participants from China and 18 from Malaysia, totaling 30 students. These students chose representative imagery from their respective countries as sources for graphic elements; for instance, a portion of Chinese students selected the traditional longevity peach patterns and the magpie as representative elements, while the majority of Malaysian students opted for sea water and the national flower, Hibiscus, for redesign as depicted in Figure 3. This initiative was further elevated to resonate closely with the "BRI", emphasizing the promotion of cultural exchange and mutual understanding through the creative fusion of symbolic elements from both nations. By integrating these culturally significant symbols into a cohesive visual interaction system, the project

not only showcases the rich cultural heritages of China and Malaysia but also exemplifies the spirit of connectivity and cooperation that the "BRI" seeks to foster among participating countries.

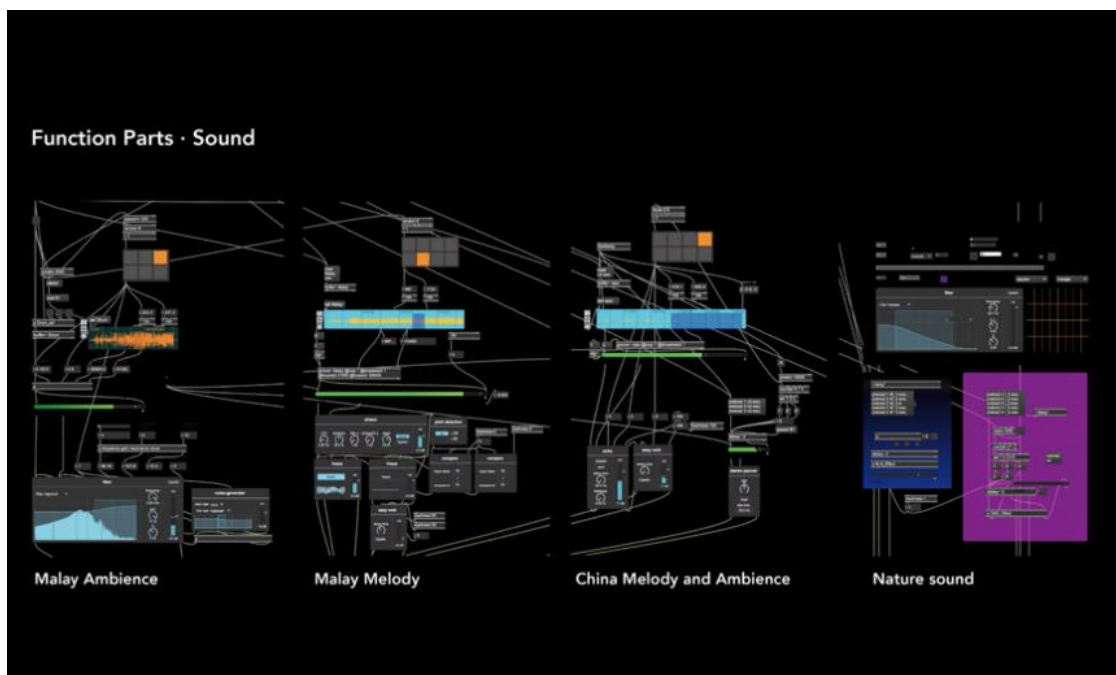


Figure 2. Establishment of the Sound Map.

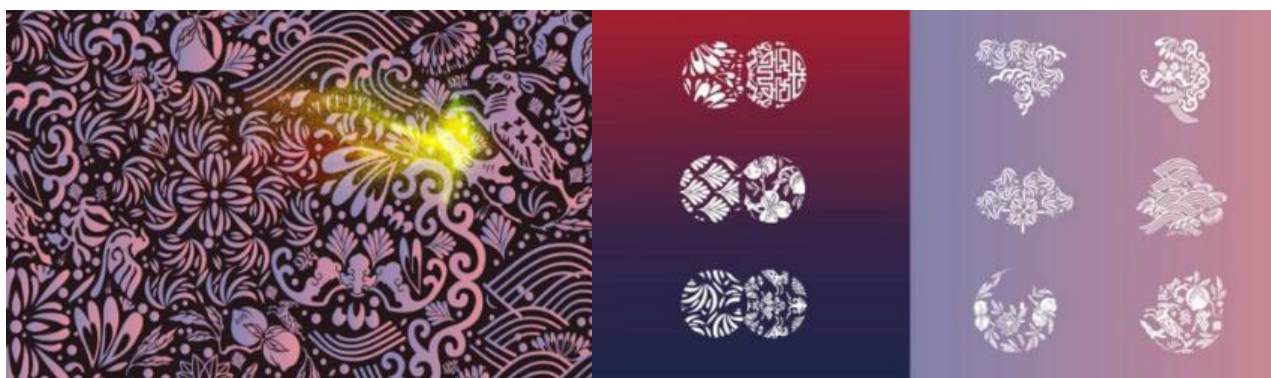


Figure 3. Visual imagery elements collaboratively created by Chinese and Malaysian students.

## 2.4 The Establishment of a Particle Manipulation System

In the development of the particle manipulation system, we utilized cultural visual elements created by students from China and Malaysia. By capturing the color values of the pixels of these visual elements, and calculating the current cursor movement position and window size, this information was relayed to the sound component, allowing participants to select different melodies, as depicted in Figure 4. Simultaneously, we employed a Jitter particle architecture that enables the cursor particle system to be influenced by melody sounds (Jens Krüger et al., 2005). Integrating the aforementioned data, the cursor position was used to determine the following points within the particle system. Furthermore, within the jitter.gen object, a particle acceleration and force distribution system was constructed, influenced by sound frequency and volume changes. As a result, as the cursor moves, particles display various types of dispersion visual forms. By continuously adjusting the color saturation of each pixel, the color of the particles is altered, thereby creating real-time particle artworks that resemble the forms of cultural visual elements, as depicted in Figure 5.

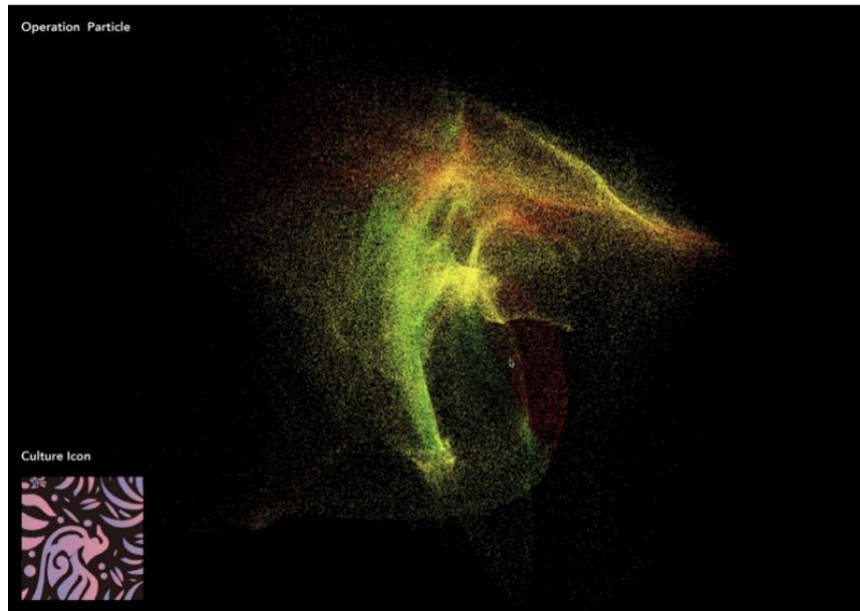


Figure 4. Interaction between particles and visual elements.

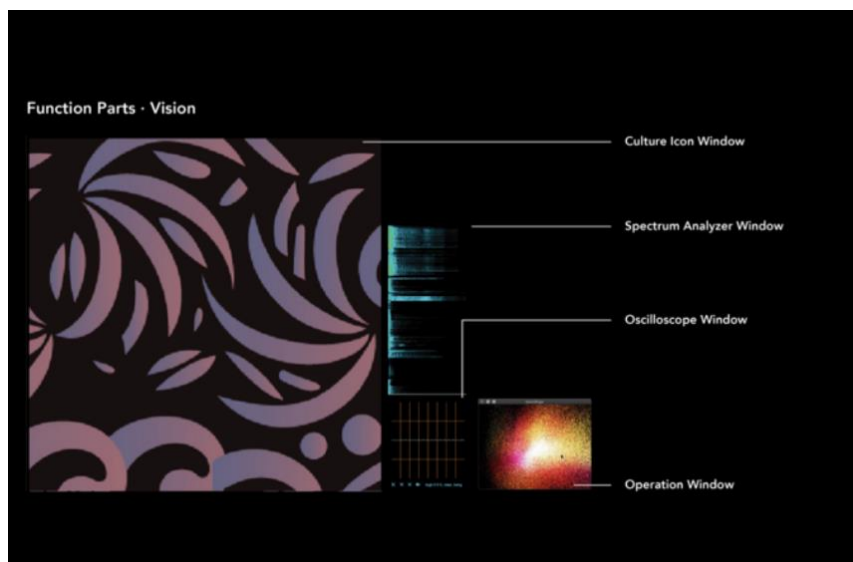


Figure 5. User Interface.

### 3. Conclusion

Supported by the "BRI", the "Oriental Resonance" project illustrates the innovative capacity of digital media to bridge cultural differences between China and Malaysia and enhance cross-cultural understanding between the two nations. This project underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, integrating fields such as digital media, computer technology, and graphic design, to forge a new mode of cultural expression that resonates within the South-east Asian region. Our exploration of blending natural and synthesized sounds, together with the development of a visual interaction system incorporating culturally significant symbols, not only showcases the diversity of Chinese and Malaysian cultures but also promotes a dialogue that transcends geographical and linguistic barriers. The establishment of our Sino-Malaysian traditional cultural visual creation workshop further broadens this dialogue, allowing individuals to interact with the artwork in a way that highlights the dynamic nature of cultural exchange.

The successful implementation of "Oriental Resonance" is viewed as a model demonstrating how technology can serve as a pathway for cultural integration, thereby carving new avenues for the preservation and innovation of

traditional cultures in the digital era. It aids in achieving the lofty goals of the BRI by fostering unity, cooperation, and mutual respect among different cultures. As a specific example of the fusion of art and technology to explore cultural diversity, "Oriental Resonance" demonstrates how the creative industries can facilitate building bridges between nations, encourage individuals from different countries to incorporate their own cultural elements into the realm of artistic creation.

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