

Historical Traceability of the Chinese Nation Community and the Path of Its Modernization

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Abstract

The Chinese nation community, as a term frequently mentioned in the field of social sciences in recent years, originated in the Pre-Qin period, took its initial shape during the Qin, Han, Tang and Song dynasties, and was basically formed in the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. It inherits the essence of outstanding traditional Chinese culture. Looking back at history, since the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, remarkable achievements have been made in the construction of the Chinese nation community. A wealth of important experiences and valuable ideas regarding the governance of ethnic affairs have been accumulated. From dealing with ethnic affairs in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, to the socialized development of ethnic work since the reform and opening-up, then to the modernization of ethnic affairs governance, the path of governance with Chinese characteristics, and to strengthening the sense of community for the Chinese nation empowered by digital technology, we have been constantly moving forward on the path of the modernization construction of the Chinese nation community. Amid the profound changes unseen in a century, it is necessary to continuously promote the construction of the Chinese nation community from a holistic perspective, enhance cohesion, and ultimately realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.



Full Text Article



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Introduction

The historian Benedetto Croce put forward that the important ideas that have survived in the long course of history cannot be severed from the present reality. Instead, these ideas will integrate into reality in a new way and exert their efficacy. Based on this view, the histories of all countries and ethnic groups around the world serve as the bonds connecting the past and the present, providing the sources for the development of countries and ethnic groups. For the Chinese nation, the Chinese

nation community is rooted in the profound history of the Chinese nation and inherits the ideological essence of outstanding traditional Chinese culture, thus providing a powerful impetus for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Looking back on history, since the reform and opening-up, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, remarkable achievements have been made in the construction of the Chinese nation community. A large number of important experiences and valuable ideas regarding the governance of ethnic affairs have been accumulated, and it has gradually embarked on the path of modernization. On the path of modernization, the Party and the state have introduced a series of measures and policies and adopted a comprehensive governance approach, shifting from government management to multi-party participation in society, with the aim of achieving common prosperity for all ethnic groups and strengthening the sense of community for the Chinese nation.

China's modernization construction model of the Chinese nation community is closely related to the history and experience of the Chinese nation. Therefore, from the perspective of historical narrative, this article traces the historical journey of the Chinese nation community in order to better understand the development logic of the Chinese nation community. And based on the ethnic governance model and precious experience with Chinese characteristics, it analyzes the modernization construction path of the Chinese nation community, consolidates the sense of the Chinese nation community, and provides relevant theoretical basis and practical reference for consistently promoting the construction practice of the Chinese nation community in the new era.

The proposition of the "Chinese nation community"

The Chinese nation community is a unified entity formed by the Chinese nation throughout its long historical journey. Nowadays, it refers to the diverse unity of the 56 ethnic groups in China, highlighting the state in which these 56 ethnic groups exist in the form of a community. The Chinese nation community itself has evolved over the long history of the Chinese nation. However, the specific term "Chinese nation community" was put forward in the academic circle relatively recently, and it didn't become a professional academic term until after the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

In the 1980s, some scholars analyzed the evolutionary forms of the Chinese nation community and believed that there were mainly two forms: war and peace. The term "Chinese nation community" began to become a relatively stable academic term in 2011, but at that time, it did not yet have a specific meaning. In May 2014, General Secretary Xi Jinping first officially mentioned the sense of the Chinese nation community at the Second Central Work Symposium on Xinjiang, which then attracted the attention of numerous scholars. In September of the same year, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out at the Central Conference on Ethnic Affairs that it was necessary to solidify the ideological foundation of the Chinese nation community. Since then, the "Chinese nation community" has been incorporated into the academic discourse system and endowed with rich political connotations, thus becoming an important academic concept. In recent years, scholars have carried out a large number of studies on issues such as strengthening the sense of the Chinese nation community and the construction of the Chinese nation community, and have achieved a series of results. As a result, the concept of the Chinese nation community has emerged more and

more frequently. In 2017, the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was held, and the phrase "strengthening the sense of the Chinese nation community" was written into the Party Constitution. Since then, the concept of the Chinese nation community has become an important carrier for uniting people of all ethnic groups and strengthening the sense of the Chinese nation community.

Historical Traceability of the Chinese nation community

The Pre-Qin Period: Gestation

During the period of the "Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors" in ancient times, tribal communities bonded by blood ties came into being. There were frequent economic transactions and wars among different tribes, which not only expanded the living space of the tribes but also promoted exchanges and integrations among them. During the Xia, Shang, and Zhou Dynasties, the vassal states fought against each other. Small tribes were gradually annexed, and eventually, larger and more concentrated ethnic communities were formed, known as the Huaxia ethnic group. During this period, although the production methods, living habits, and ritual systems in the Central Plains region dominated by the Huaxia ethnic group were relatively advanced and there were certain differences from the surrounding ethnic groups, with the increasingly frequent economic exchanges, the interactions between the Huaxia ethnic group and the surrounding ethnic groups also became closer day by day. During the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, the Huaxia ethnic group had gradually integrated with the surrounding ethnic groups. People from the surrounding ethnic groups continuously migrated to the Central Plains region and took the initiative to learn the culture, lifestyle, and rituals of the Huaxia ethnic group. Thus, with the Huaxia ethnic group as the core and the continuous integration of the surrounding ethnic groups, the embryonic form of the Chinese nation community was gestated.

The Period from the Qin and Han Dynasties to the Tang and Song Dynasties: Initial Formation

The Qin and Han dynasties opened up the path for the development of a unified multi-ethnic country in China. During this period, measures such as implementing imperial centralization, unifying weights and measures as well as scripts, and advocating the policy of "banning all other schools of thought and respecting only Confucianism" were carried out, which provided preconditions for the formation of the Chinese nation community. During the Western Han Dynasty, the Han Dynasty launched military campaigns against the Xiongnu in the north and sent envoys to the Western Regions. The living territory of the Chinese nation gradually expanded, which promoted economic and cultural exchanges between the Chinese nation and the surrounding ethnic groups. The mutual wars among different ethnic groups were precisely an important way for the formation of the Chinese nation community. As the Han Dynasty grew stronger, the terms "Han people" and "Han ethnic group" gradually replaced the previous designations for the people and ethnic groups in previous dynasties, and the name of the Han ethnic group was thus established. The Han ethnic group gradually became the core of the Chinese nation community and radiated outwards, embracing other ethnic groups and forming a big family of the Chinese nation with the

Han ethnic group at the center. During the Wei, Jin, and the Southern and Northern Dynasties, the political power changed hands many times, and wars and unrest were frequent. This drove the nomadic ethnic groups to move closer to the Han ethnic group. They took the initiative to learn Chinese culture, Huaxia rituals, and undergo the baptism of Confucian thought. During the Southern and Northern Dynasties, both the Han ethnic group and ethnic minorities regarded themselves as inheritors of Chinese culture, which also reflected from the side the recognition of China by various ethnic groups and was an important manifestation of the development of the Chinese nation community. During the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the political power tended to be stable and returned to the form of a unified empire, which promoted peaceful exchanges among different ethnic groups. The rulers of the Tang Dynasty were inclusive in their minds and believed that there was no essential difference between the Han people and ethnic minorities and that they were originally one family. They put forward the proposition of jointly governing the world. During the Northern and Southern Song Dynasties, contradictions between the Han ethnic group and ethnic minorities in the north continued. Thinkers began to replace the concept of grand unification with the concept of orthodoxy. However, the people of the Liao Dynasty believed that they had always belonged to the Chinese nation. Such differences in concepts were precisely important characteristics during the period of the division of the multi-ethnic country and were also the inevitable result of the feudal dynasties' efforts to maintain their rule. From the Qin and Han Dynasties to the Tang and Song Dynasties, the Chinese nation was constantly in a state of dispersion and connection, which was an important period for the formation of the Chinese nation community.

The Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties: Basically Formed

During the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, the situation of grand unification was restored. The rulers at that time recognized the existence of various ethnic groups, and the concept of the Chinese nation community gradually took shape. The Yuan Dynasty was a unified regime established by the Mongolian ethnic group. During the Yuan Dynasty, the rulers did not distinguish between the Han people and ethnic minorities, which reflected the concept of the Chinese nation community from the side. Meanwhile, the rulers of the Yuan Dynasty implemented the policy of multi-ethnic composition of officials, continuously expanded the territory, and promoted economic and cultural exchanges among different ethnic groups, which played an important role in ethnic integration. During the Ming Dynasty, the rulers emphasized that the Han people and ethnic minorities were one family, breaking the traditional view of opposition and recognizing the status of the Yuan Dynasty (the Mongolian ethnic group) after it entered and ruled the Central Plains. When the Ming Dynasty was replaced by the Qing Dynasty, many people held a negative attitude towards the Qing Dynasty established by the Manchu ethnic group. In this context, the rulers of the Qing Dynasty in successive generations continuously promoted the awakening of the consciousness of the Chinese nation community and gradually broke the shackles of the opposition between the Han people and ethnic minorities. Faced with the numerical superiority of the Han people, on the one hand, the rulers used political power to suppress, and on the other hand, they publicized the idea that the people of all ethnic groups were one family, blurring the boundaries among various ethnic groups. It can be said that the Qing Dynasty was a crucial period for facilitating the formation of the

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Chinese nation community. During this period, the regions where people of all ethnic groups lived and carried out activities were basically the same as those today. Since then, the Chinese nation community has been basically formed. Throughout the long history, various ethnic groups influenced each other in wars, migrations and exchanges, breaking the original boundaries of geography, culture, language and so on. Eventually, an inseparable Chinese nation community was formed in the Qing Dynasty.

The Modernization Construction Path of the Chinese Nation Community

Looking back on history, since its founding, the Communist Party of China has always been concerned about the development of the Chinese nation community and has been committed to promoting its construction. During the construction process, the Communist Party of China has inherited and innovated the quintessential ideas in Chinese history, continuously accelerated the pace of independent exploration, accumulated a wealth of important experiences and valuable ideas regarding ethnic affairs governance, and gradually embarked on the path of modernization. On the path of modernization, the Communist Party of China has introduced a series of measures and policies, adopted a composite governance approach, shifting from government management to multi-party participation in society, with the aim of achieving common prosperity for all ethnic groups and strengthening the sense of community for the Chinese nation.

The Construction of Ethnic Affairs in the Early Days of New China

After the founding of China, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, large-scale investigations into the history of ethnic minorities were carried out. Many ethnologists entered the living areas of ethnic minorities to record and sort out information on their humanities, history, languages, organizational structures and other aspects, and on this basis, identify ethnic identities. This investigation is of great significance to the cause of national unity in China. After each ethnic minority established its ethnic identity, it was able to achieve regional autonomy, enter socialism on an equal footing, and integrate into New China. In order to strengthen the cohesion among all ethnic groups, the Communist Party of China established ethnic colleges and universities to promote the connection between the country and various ethnic groups. From 1950 to 1952, the government organized visiting and inspection groups to extend greetings to the people of ethnic minorities, aiming to eliminate ethnic grudges and promote national unity.

The Socialized Development of Ethnic Work since the Reform and Opening - up

After the reform and opening - up, the socialist market - oriented economic system was established. On the one hand, it has greatly liberated social productive forces. Resources have been reasonably circulated and allocated. Economic and cultural exchanges have broken ethnic barriers, promoted in - depth exchanges among all ethnic groups, and contributed to the development of the Chinese nation community. On the other hand, the socialist market - oriented economic system has also brought relatively large social competitive pressure, giving rise to new problems in the governance of ethnic affairs. During this period, there emerged in the academic community the trend of thought that the government should reduce its participation and that society should develop independently. However, this trend of thought does not conform to the reality of Chinese society. With the improvement of the economic level, the general public's expectations for a better life have risen accordingly, and the spiritual and cultural demands have increased, requiring more new and

rich content products and services. Against this background, in some individual areas, there have been situations of weak grass - roots construction. Phenomena such as religious extremism have emerged, which have greatly affected national unity and social stability. This also reminds us from the side that China's socialist construction must be combined with the specific reality. To solve the above - mentioned problems, the "socialization of ethnic work" emerged as the times require, alleviating the crisis of the complication of ethnic affairs.

Modernization of ethnic affairs governance

The state and society in China should be in a relationship of mutual promotion and common strength. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the government has proposed the modernization strategy of national governance. This is a goal put forward by the Party in response to the current situation of the rapid development of China's economy and the rising expectations of the people for a better life. The focus of governance modernization is to give play to the power of multiple social subjects, but the Party still plays a leading role. Therefore, it is necessary to continuously strengthen the organizational and leading role of the Party, and taking the leadership of the Party and the joint participation of multiple social subjects as an important feature of governance modernization.

In addition, as an important part of the modernization of national governance, ethnic affairs governance should also emphasize the combination of Party leadership and multiple subjects, strengthen the education of the "Five Identifications", promote the common language, etc. In ethnic minority areas, precise poverty alleviation and equalization of public services should be achieved, economic and cultural exchanges among all ethnic groups should be promoted, the socialization of ethnic work should be continuously promoted, the education of the sense of community of the Chinese nation should be strengthened, and ethnic cohesion should be strengthened throughout the whole society to promote national unity.

The governance path with Chinese characteristics promotes the construction of the Chinese nation community

Firstly, adhere to the people-centered approach. While focusing on economic development, attention should also be paid to the political demands of ethnic minorities. In the process of ethnic affairs governance in China, great importance has always been attached to the various development rights of ethnic minorities, and continuous efforts have been made to promote the modernization development process in ethnic minority areas. Through poverty alleviation and paired assistance, people of all ethnic groups can equally enjoy the resources and dividends of the country. From an individual perspective, people of ethnic minorities have rights such as the right to free development and competition. However, from an organizational perspective, the overall economic level of the social strata where most ethnic minority people are located is relatively low. And the government is unable to provide targeted assistance and support to these minority groups, resulting in the continuous marginalization of these groups and the inability to realize many of their rights. Therefore, composite governance has become crucial. Through composite governance, people of all ethnic groups can exercise the same rights and step onto the path of modernization together.

Secondly, commonality and diversity coexist. On the one hand, ensuring the cohesion and integrity of the Chinese nation is an important guarantee for realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. On the other hand, embracing the differences among various ethnic groups can enhance the sense of belonging of all ethnic groups to the Chinese nation community. And the current prosperity and development of China's 56 ethnic groups have also verified the importance of the coexistence of commonality and diversity.

Thirdly, closely combine policies with practice. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Communist Party of China has introduced a series of policies to support the economic development of all ethnic groups. Meanwhile, in the practice of building the Chinese nation community, the Communist Party of China has continuously accumulated experience and improved the level of ethnic affairs governance, making China's ethnic work both continuous and in line with the trend of modernization.

Digital empowerment helps to strengthen the sense of the Chinese nation community

An important manifestation of modernization is the rapid development of digital technology. Firstly, digital technology promotes the construction of integrated media platforms, enhancing the efficiency and level of information dissemination in ethnic minority areas. In terms of public opinion guidance, integrated media platforms can enrich the forms of information dissemination and better lead the ideology in the Internet world. In terms of livelihood services, integrated media platforms can meet the in-depth needs of people of all ethnic groups for spiritual and cultural content and drive the development of industries in ethnic minority areas, thus accelerating the pace of poverty alleviation. Secondly, with the help of digital technology, it is possible to strengthen the sense of presence in communication scenarios, promote the diversification of communication forms, conduct symbolic construction of the culture in ethnic minority areas, and enhance the sense of identity of ethnic minority areas with Chinese culture. In addition, through digital empowerment, ethnic minority areas can achieve a virtuous cycle of capital, technology and content, strengthen public opinion guidance, and establish connections and exchanges with the economic and cultural development of ethnic minority areas, thereby strengthening the sense of community for the Chinese nation.

Conclusion

The Chinese nation community is rooted in the profound history of the Chinese nation and inherits the ideological essence of outstanding traditional Chinese culture. Since the reform and opening - up, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, the construction of the Chinese nation community has achieved great success, accumulated numerous important experiences and precious ideas regarding ethnic affairs governance, and has gradually embarked on the path of modernization. At present, in the context of the great changes unseen in a century, more attention needs to be paid to the precious experiences of the Communist Party of China in the modernization process of the Chinese nation community. From a holistic perspective, the construction of the Chinese nation community should be continuously promoted. On the one hand, ethnic issues should be resolved with the concept of complexity based on the overall national strategic layout. On the other hand, ethnic integration in history, culture and other aspects should be carried out from the perspective of the community as a whole, thereby enhancing the national identity of all ethnic groups. In addition, the leader in resolving ethnic issues in China has always been the Communist Party. In the construction of the Chinese nation community, the leadership of the Communist Party of China should be adhered to, multiple social subjects should be mobilized to participate, and the construction path with Chinese characteristics should be followed to enhance national cohesion and ultimately achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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