

# A Consistency Analysis between the Distinctive Development of Various Ethnic Groups and the Construction of the Chinese National Community

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## Abstract

The ethnic groups in China possess distinct uniqueness; on one hand, each ethnic group has its own unique ethnic culture. On the other hand, all ethnic groups share common cultural characteristics, which also form the basis of the Chinese nation. With the development of society, whether the national unity of the Chinese nation is consistent with the unique development of each ethnic group is an important direction of current research. This article analyzes the compositional characteristics of the Chinese nation, and on this basis, studies the consistent relationship between the 56 ethnic groups that constitute the Chinese nation and the Chinese nation community. Through the analysis of literature and secondary data, this article found that the structural characteristics of the Chinese nation reflect its ethnic relations. In modern China, the distinctive development of each ethnic group is consistent with, and even promotes, the construction of the Chinese national community. The significance of this article lies in analyzing the consistency between the distinctive development of various ethnic groups and the construction of the Chinese national community through historical documents and empirical data, providing a reference perspective for promoting national unity and strengthening the construction of the Chinese

**Keywords:** Pluralism and Unity, Distinctive Development, National Unity, Chinese National Community, Chinese Nation

## Introduction

Su Bingqi (Su, n.d., 2018) said that the origin of Chinese culture is the myriad stars in the sky. It is these stars that together form the Chinese nation and give rise to the diversity of Chinese national culture, and the people of all ethnic groups in China are the creators of this diverse culture. Although the cultures of various ethnic groups in China are different, there are certain connections between them. The formation of the Chinese nation has dual coordinates of time and space (Fei, 2017). Among the many cultural sites discovered in present-day Yunnan, the

Yangshao Culture, Ma Livestock Culture and Qijia Culture in the northwestern Moshe, Qiaohai area, the middle reaches of the Jinsha River and the middle and upper reaches of the Yellow River have many similarities, especially pottery, stone tools, architecture, tombs, etc. Judging from archaeological discoveries, Chinese culture is mutually inclusive and integrated. It can be seen that the Chinese nation is not only a collection of multiple ethnic groups, but also a whole that living together in harmony and have formed a diverse unity.

#### *Exchanges and Interactions among Various Ethnic Groups in History*

The formation of the pluralistic unity of the Chinese nation is directly and inextricably linked to the long-term exchanges and interactions among various ethnic groups. The mobility and migration of people, the development of commercial and trade activities, the collision and integration of various cultures, the intermarriage between various ethnic groups, etc. are all true evidence of the continuous exchanges and interactions between ethnic groups.

Population mobility is an important form of interaction and exchanges between ethnic groups. One of the important roles played in population mobility is ethnic migration. Ethnic migration involves relocating people from one place to another, and its impact on inter-ethnic communication and interaction is most direct. The main reasons for this kind of migration are wars, famines and the policies implemented by various dynasties. For example, “the Westward Migration” in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties was due to successive years of famine, which resulted in many refugees in Shanxi. These refugees traveled to the frontiers in order to survive. Another example is that the Han Dynasty began to implement the policy of farming in the southwest region. This policy moved a large number of people from other regions to the southwest region. In the Yuan Dynasty, to consolidate its rule, the Yuan government began to implement the farming system in Huguang, Sichuan, and Yunnan. During the Ming Dynasty, in order to build border areas, the government moved residents living in central China to border areas for construction, which prompted a large number of inland residents to migrate to the Yunnan-Guizhou region in the southwest. This kind of ethnic migration accelerates mutual understanding among ethnic groups and promotes other forms of exchanges and interactions between ethnic groups.

As ethnic migration brings about population mobility, inter-ethnic commercial activities have become more frequent. In the commercial activities of exchanging what is needed, inter-ethnic exchanges have become more in-depth, which is of great significance to ethnic mutual trust and harmonious development. The “Silk Road” during the Han Dynasty, the mutual trade between residents of the Tang Dynasty and border areas, and the “Ancient Tea Horse Road” between Sichuan, Tibet, and Yunnan all greatly promoted the exchanges between the Central Plains and the border areas and even the various ethnic groups outside the region. Friendly exchanges lay the foundation for the formation of ethnic relations based on mutual understanding and equal exchanges.

In the exchange and interaction between ethnic groups, cultural exchange is a factor that cannot be ignored. Cultural exchanges and integration between ethnic groups are completed in population mobility and various economic and social activities. The absorption and integration of cultures often occur in a bidirectional manner. There is the phenomenon of “Sinicization”, where ethnic minorities assimilate Han Chinese culture (Jenco, 2019; Langlois, 1980), and concurrently, there are instances where minority cultures contribute fresh

elements to Han Chinese culture. Additionally, there is a mutual exchange and development among various ethnic minorities. In the ethnography of Guizhou written by Luo Raodian, it is recorded that the ethnic minorities in the areas along the ancient salt road of Sichuan were influenced by the Han people and many of them could communicate in Chinese and they were no different from the Han people (Luo, 1847). Not only that, but the local Han people have also introduced many ethnic minority language words into their daily speech.

Intermarriage is another important factor that promotes ethnic exchanges. In ancient China, marriage was one of the important forms of maintaining friendly ethnic relations and peaceful exchanges. Through the policy of marriage, closer blood ties have been established between ethnic groups. Driven by this relationship, the two ethnic groups have closer and more frequent exchanges, and the relationship between the two ethnic groups has become more solid and friendly. In addition to this kind of political marriage, inter-ethnic marriages among ordinary people have also become a link between the two ethnic groups.

Furthermore, resource complementarity also links ethnic groups together. Complementary resources also connect ethnic groups. For example, as far back as the Shang and Zhou dynasties, the copper, tin, gold, silver, and other metal ores needed in the Central Plains had to be purchased from Yunnan, where ethnic minorities live. After the Song and Yuan dynasties, Yunnan's output of non-ferrous metals such as copper and tin accounts for most of China's total. The technology, human resource and funds needed for industrial and agricultural development are precisely what Yunnan lacks and can only be obtained from the mainland. In this way, through the mutual complementation of resources, the Han people in the Central Plains and the various ethnic minorities in Yunnan are closely linked.

#### *Ethnic Relations in the People's Republic of China*

Influenced by Marxism, the Communist Party of China takes ethnic equality as its basic principle when dealing with ethnic relations. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China has made efforts among all ethnic groups to establish equal and united ethnic relations. The first Constitution of the People's Republic of China adopted by the First National People's Congress in 1954 emphasized: "All ethnic groups of the People's Republic of China are equal. The state shall protect the lawful rights and interests of all ethnic minorities and uphold and promote relations of equality, unity, mutual assistance and harmony among all ethnic groups. Discrimination against and oppression of any ethnic group are prohibited; any act that undermines the unity of ethnic groups or creates divisions among them is prohibited" (Constitution of the People's Republic of China, n.d.). Equality and unity among ethnic groups have, for the first time, officially become the fundamental principles of China's ethnic relations in legal form. On the basis of this principle, China has carried out a number of activities and measures such as ethnic identification, regional ethnic autonomy, and socialist transformation of ethnic areas. Through a series of measures, China has basically eliminated ethnic discrimination and oppression left over from history.

To ensure equal unity among all ethnic groups, after the founding of the People's Republic, China formulated various policies and measures to ensure the equal status of ethnic minorities. Based on the distribution of ethnic groups in China and the characteristics of each ethnic group, a system of regional ethnic autonomy will be implemented in areas where ethnic groups live more concentratedly. The Law of the People's Republic of China on Regional

Ethnic Autonomy was passed in 1984 to safeguard the implementation of this policy and ensure ethnic equality. In addition, the central government has implemented policies and measures in various aspects such as the economy, society, culture, education, and religion to support the development of ethnic minorities. It actively protects the traditional culture of ethnic minorities and ensures their rights to participate in and manage national affairs.

Based on the foundation of ethnic equality and unity, there is a continuous strengthening of mutual exchanges and communication among the various ethnic groups in China, gradually deepening their understanding of each other. In such a harmonious atmosphere, friendly relationships characterized by mutual respect have been formed among the different ethnic groups. In the 1950s, China carried out ethnic identification work and determined the ethnic composition of each ethnic group. Based on this, it formulated corresponding policies in various aspects such as ethnic languages, customs and habits, culture and education, and religious beliefs. These traditional ethnic cultures have been protected and respected. Not only that, in the educational process, school curricula have incorporated courses related to ethnic minorities, enabling a broader understanding, respect, and preservation of ethnic cultures among a greater number of people.

In 1951, the Government Affairs Council of the Central People's Government issued directives and launched a nationwide campaign to abolish discriminatory and insulting names associated with ethnic minorities (Compilation of literature on ethnic issues (1921.7-1949.9) , n.d.). In 1954, it was stated in the constitution that the languages, customs, and religious beliefs of ethnic minorities should be respected (Constitution of the People's Republic of China, n.d.).

The state stipulates that government agencies at all levels in ethnic minority areas should use their own ethnic languages in addition to Mandarin. Press and publication units in ethnic minority areas should use their own ethnic languages for news reporting and book publishing. In ethnic minority regions, bilingual education is widely implemented in schools. This series of practices serves to protect and inherit ethnic languages and scripts.

Regarding respecting and protecting ethnic customs and habits, the state encourages all ethnic groups to still maintain their own ethnic festivals and help ethnic minorities inherit and carry forward their ethnic traditional virtues. In response to this situation, the government has proposed a basic policy of respecting and protecting the freedom of religious belief of ethnic minorities, fully respecting the religious habits of ethnic minority compatriots. In 2005, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) once again reiterated the basic policy of respecting the culture of ethnic minorities in its decision to further strengthen ethnic work and accelerate the economic and social development of ethnic minorities and ethnic areas.

As a unified multi-ethnic country, the common goal of the Chinese nation in the future is to achieve common prosperity and realized the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation with the joint efforts of all ethnic groups. Due to geographical, historical, and other reasons, there is a big gap between ethnic minorities and the Han people in economic, social, ideological, and other aspects. Some ethnic groups were still in primitive or slave-based societies even in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China. To help the development of

ethnic minorities and gradually narrow the gap with areas inhabited by Han people, in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Communist Party of China (CPC) implemented the policy of tax reduction and exemption in ethnic minority areas and increased fiscal expenditures to reduce the economic burden of ethnic minorities and promote their economic development. It also increased investment in infrastructure in ethnic minority areas will be tilted toward ethnic minority areas in the arrangement of key projects. In 1988, Deng Xiaoping proposed the strategic thinking of "two overall situations". In the late 1990s, the central government began to implement the western development strategy based on China's actual situation at that time. The implementation of the Western Development Strategy has gradually narrowed the differences between the western region and the eastern region. Ethnic minority areas have made great improvements in infrastructure construction such as transportation, communications, and energy. Great progress has also been made in education, medical and health care. Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, China has vigorously carried out targeted poverty alleviation work. By the end of 2020, 100 million people had been lifted out of poverty through targeted poverty alleviation policies and the joint efforts of people of all ethnic groups.

### **Diversity and Inclusiveness of the Chinese Nation**

#### *Diversity of the Chinese nation*

After extensive archaeological and in-depth research on the origins of the Chinese nation, it can be affirmed that the Chinese nation is a nation with diverse origins. So far, more than 7,000 Neolithic sites have been discovered in China, and these cultural sites are distributed across the country (Zhang, 1991). Based on the interconnectedness of cultures, Su Bingqi divided these cultural sites into six major regions: the middle reaches of the Yellow River, the lower reaches of the Yellow River, the middle reaches of the Yangtze River, the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, the Poyang Lake-Pearl River Delta, and the north. In the subsequent development, these distinct cultural regions gradually gave rise to ethnic groups with their own characteristics. These ethnic groups further evolved into different ethnic groups, becoming the origins of various ethnic groups in China.

Many ethnic origins with different cultural characteristics have formed a large number of ethnic groups after a long period of development. The Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period were a tumultuous period in Chinese history. During this period, various feudal lords separated themselves and competed for territory. Wars between various ethnic groups in the Central Plains and surrounding ethnic groups occurred one after another. During this period, many groups disappeared or merged into other groups, and many ethnic groups differentiated into different groups. The ethnic groups that appeared during this period include: Shanrong, Quanrong, Luhunzhirong, Lirong, Lurong, Chidi, Baidi, Changdi, Baipu, Yangyue, Huaiyi, Dongyi, Manshi, there are Donghu, Shanrong, Qian, Linhu, Loufan, Dalirong, etc.

During the Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties, there were also many various ethnic groups in China. After the conquests of the Qin and Han Dynasties and the establishment of a unified country, these groups seemed to be short-lived and then gradually integrated into the Han nationality. From the Sui, Tang, Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms to the Song, Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties, China's political landscape was basically centered around the Han dynasty in the Central Plains, with various ethnic minority regimes on the

periphery. The ethnic groups in this period roughly included the Turks, Goryeo, Baekje, Silla, Bohai, Mohe, Waju, Khitan, Xi, Xianbei, Tiele, Uighur, Xueyantuo, Gas, Tubo, Tuyuhun, Qiang, and Annan during the Sui and Tang Dynasties. , Champa, Nanman, Wuman, Baiman, Jurchen, Dangxiang, Tubo and Bai people during the Yuan Dynasty, as well as Arabs, Persians, Kipchaks and Kangli people who immigrated from the Western Regions. These ethnic groups were either absorbed by the Han, moved to other areas, and gradually merged with other ethnic groups, or disappeared or formed new ethnic groups. The names of these ethnic groups can no longer be found today. To this day, the names of these ethnic groups cannot be found in daily life.

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, China's ethnic relations were generally friendly, and exchanges among various ethnic groups became more frequent. During this period, some members of ethnic minorities intermarried with the Han Chinese and assimilated into the Han ethnicity, while members of other ethnic groups retained their distinct characteristics. This gradually formed an ethnic pattern similar to the contemporary ethnic composition.

Since its origin, the Chinese nation has shown diverse characteristics. Different regions and different river basins have different characteristics in the formation of culture, and their cultural styles are very different. Taking language as an example, China's fifty-six ethnic groups belong to five language families, encompassing over 70 different languages. Nearly 30 of these languages are still in use today, along with their respective writing systems. Religious belief is also an obvious example. In China, the religions believed in by various ethnic groups include Taoism, which originated from the local area, and there are also foreign religious sects, such as Mahayana Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Catholicism. In history, there were also ethnic groups that believed in Shamanism, Nestorianism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Benboism, Dongbaism, etc. Various aspects of culture such as customs, literature and art also show different characteristics.

#### *Inclusiveness of the Chinese Nation*

All development occurs through the continuous process of identifying problems and refining solutions. The development of a nation and its culture is also inseparable from the nation's self-criticism and self-correction. Of course, getting rid of old and backward things is not an easy task for a person, a nation, or a culture. It means denying oneself and acknowledging one's own shortcomings, which requires great courage.

The Chinese nation has a long history of civilization, and its strong vitality stems from the courage to face its own problems and the willingness to acknowledge shortcomings. "Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government" records that during battles against nomadic tribes, King Wu Ling of Zhao realized that his original tactics were ineffective against the cavalry of the nomadic people. So, undeterred by the ridicule of others, King Wu Ling of Zhao began to study the military tactics of the nomadic people. Soon, the military strength of the Zhao state significantly improved, leading to a series of victories in battles against other states. There are many similar examples in the history of the development of the Chinese nation. Whether the Han people learn from the ethnic minorities, the ethnic minorities learn from the Han people, or the ethnic minorities learn from each other, it reflects that all ethnic groups in China have a very positive attitude towards their own shortcomings.

For the development of a nation and national culture, the courage to face up to problems and admit shortcomings is the most basic prerequisite. Under such a premise, people must have eyes for discovering beautiful things, be able to view diverse cultures with a positive attitude and be able to discover outstanding elements in other cultures.

The history of China's development is a vivid history of mutual learning between national cultures. All nationalities learn from each other's strengths and weaknesses, and jointly create a Chinese civilization that is in harmony with each other. In the years of historical changes, ethnic minorities have learned from the Han people's advanced farming and production technologies, their thoughts and state-governing strategies, and the Han people have learned from the ethnic minorities' singing, dancing, music, textile technology, and combat skills. Cultural mutual learning has never stopped in the history of the development of the Chinese nation. To this day, we can still see this kind of national mutual learning everywhere. For example, cheongsam, campstool, Huqin, Hu cakes, as well as language, art and other aspects are the results of mutual learning between nations.

### **Coexistence Model of Pluralism and Unity**

Due to the diversity issues brought about by globalization, many scholars have discussed the contradiction between unity and plurality (Buonfino, 2004; Enroth, 2010; Sunstein, 1990; Çevik, 2024; Nedzinskaitė-Mitkė & Stasiulis, 2022). Many scholars believe that pluralism and unity are two opposing forms. However, China's ethnics existence model shows different characteristics from this view. In 1988, Fei Xiaotong (or Fei Hsiao-tung) first proposed the concept of "Plurality and Unity in the Configuration of the Chinese" (Fei, 1988) in his speech at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. This concept is based on the facts of the historical development of the Chinese nation and long-term thinking and research on Chinese ethnic issues. It provides an accurate overview of the interactions and exchanges among various ethnic groups in China, holding significant importance for the study of ethnic issues and the implementation of ethnic affairs.

From the historical development of China's ethnic groups, each ethnicity exhibits distinctive characteristics in terms of origin, formation, developmental processes, culture, and other aspects. However, over thousands of years of interaction and mutual exchange, they have learned from and influenced each other, gradually forming interdependent, mutually influential, and collectively developing ethnic relations and structures. Fei Xiaotong (1988) explained his understanding of the Chinese nation in his works. He believed that the Chinese nation as a conscious national entity emerged from the confrontation between China and Western powers in the past hundred years, but as a single nation formed over thousands of years of history. The process of the formation of the Chinese nation is a dynamic interchange, where elements merge and interact reciprocally. It is characterized by a mutual incorporation of diverse ethnic groups, where each component retains its individuality, yet contributes to the overall unity.

China's unique ethnic structure of plurality and unity was formed in the long historical development, in which "plurality" refers to 56 ethnic groups. In fact, "plurality" is not just an expression of the number of ethnic groups. Since each ethnic group has its own characteristics, from this perspective, "plurality" also emphasizes the differences and diversity of ethnic groups. "Unity" refers to the precise overview of the Chinese nation as an

indivisible and unified whole. The pattern of pluralism and unity is a true reflection of the formation, development, exchanges, mutual learning, integration, and coexistence of China's various ethnic groups over thousands of years. All the ethnic groups living in China have long-established genetic and cultural connections through their production, daily life, and interactions (Zheng, 2019).

As Fei Xiaotong stated, the Chinese nation is a collective entity that has evolved from being "natural existence" to becoming "self-aware". It has experienced a rather lengthy development of various ethnic groups' "natural existence" and the combination of "self-awareness" in the unique historical context of modern China. In other words, the pluralistic and unified Chinese nation has gradually developed with the Chinese civilization of more than 5,000 years. The exchanges and conflicts between various tribes in the pre-Qin period laid the foundation for the "Tian Xia Tong Yi" ("Tian Xia Tong Yi" meaning unification). Qin unified the six kingdoms and achieved the first territorial unification in the history of the Chinese nation. At the same time, the Great Wall of Qin separated the Central Plains from the Xiongnu, providing conditions for the emergence of the Han nationality.

The formation of the Han nationality is an important stage in the formation of the Chinese nation. It has created a cohesive core in the pattern of pluralism and unity (Fei, 1989). From the Wei and Jin Dynasties until the fall of China's feudal dynasty, various ethnic minorities continued to inject fresh blood into the Han people during their divisions and mergers with the Han people in the Central Plains. The Han people also enriched the various ethnic minorities in the great mixing and integration. In modern China, under the invasion of Western powers, the recognition of the "Chinese nation" gradually emerged. Liang Qichao, a renowned modern Chinese politician, thinker, and literary figure, is also a significant figure in the Chinese New Culture Movement. In his work *An Introduction to Chinese History*, he writes about "the Nation of China" (Liang, 1989). In 1902, Liang Qichao proposed the concept of "Chinese nation" for the first time. Since then, the Chinese nation as a complete ethnic group has gradually been accepted and deeply rooted in the hearts of the people in China.

### **The Distinctive Development of Various Ethnic Groups**

China has a vast territory, complex geography and natural environment, and each ethnic group has its own advantages and characteristics. Yunnan is rich in mineral resources such as copper, tin, gold, and silver. Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region is the main producer of new clean energy such as wind power and solar energy. Xinjiang is rich in light and heat, forests, minerals, and other resources, and it is known as the "hometown of melons and fruits".

In addition to the unique characteristics of resource storage, China also has special national phenomena. Cross-border ethnic groups are this special ethnic phenomenon. These ethnic groups integrate the cultural characteristics of the Chinese nation and other countries and form their own ethnic characteristics.

Exploring the advantages and distinctive features of each ethnic group, transforming them into favorable factors for promoting ethnic development, not only achieves the development of each ethnic group but also contributes to the overall enhancement of China's comprehensive national strength and the construction of the Chinese national community. This, in turn, adds momentum to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.



Rationally develop and use natural resources, increase the proportion of new clean energy in energy use, and research more efficient and energy-saving means. There are many ethnic groups in China. After long historical process, different ethnic groups of China eventually settled among each other, with compact communities here and there. Ethnic minorities are relatively concentrated in the northwest and southwest regions. The areas inhabited by these ethnic minorities are extremely rich in natural resources. First of all, traditional mineral resources are mostly concentrated in Yunnan, Guizhou, Xinjiang and other regions. They include conventional resources such as coal and iron, as well as rare metal minerals such as gold, silver, and tin.

Secondly, China's northwest and southwest regions have natural advantages in developing and utilizing new energy. According to geographical characteristics, the northwest and southwest regions of China are vast and sparsely populated. These areas have higher latitudes, longer sunshine hours, and a large amount of wind resources, water resources, and geothermal resources. They have conditions suitable for the development and use of new types of clean energy. Effectively utilizing these new types of clean energy plays a crucial role in promoting the harmonious development of both environmental sustainability and the economy. This is significant for the development of ethnic minority regions as well as the overall progress of China.

Make full and effective use of the favorable ecological environment in ethnic minority areas, making waters lucid and mountains lush that are invaluable assets. Ethnic minority areas of China are not only rich in mineral and energy resources, but also have a large number of high-quality agricultural and forestry resources, as well as beautiful natural scenery and a good ecological environment. Due to characteristics such as long hours of sunlight, abundant heat, and significant diurnal temperature variations, the ethnic minority areas in the northwest of China have many well-known agricultural products, such as Hami melons from Hami in Xinjiang, seedless grapes from Turpan, Korla fragrant pears, Sanhong apples from Qinghai, and wolfberries from Ningxia. The natural landscapes in these areas are also abundant and unparalleled.

Developing these ecological resources in multiple ways, transforming a good ecological environment into high-quality economic products, and using the Internet and e-commerce platforms to promote high-quality products with ethnic characteristics are effective means of using ethnic characteristics to develop the economy of ethnic minorities in modern society. Moreover, building a tourist and leisure destination based on a good ecological environment and natural scenery, and developing experiential activities on this basis will be conducive to the joint development of the ecology and economy of China's ethnic areas.

The unique national culture of an ethnic group is an irreplaceable advantage possessed by ethnic minorities. Creating cultural products with ethnic minority characteristics can, on the one hand, transform culture into economic benefits. On the other hand, it also achieves the purpose of inheriting traditional culture and maintaining the diversity of Chinese culture. China is a multi-ethnic country. In the process of their own formation and development, each ethnic group has gradually formed its own ethnic culture with its own unique mark due to the influence of different natural environments, geographical factors, and historical conditions.

Protecting and developing these cultural imprints can become a new highlight for the economic development of ethnic minorities.

Historical relics are the most precious part of the development process of various ethnic groups. Ancient city ruins, the “Ancient Tea Horse Road”, religious temples, ancient villages, etc. are all extremely valuable cultural tourism resources. Ethnic handicrafts are another realistic manifestation of ethnic culture. Each handicraft contains the unique culture of the ethnic groups. Transforming handicrafts into commodities and developing these handicrafts into tourism experiences can promote the economy development of ethnic minorities. In addition, characteristic ethnic villages and ethnic activities are also a favorable factor for the development of tourism economy in ethnic areas.

Cross-border ethnic groups in China can take advantage of its natural geographical location to strengthen trade with neighboring countries, thereby stimulating economic vitality, and promoting economic development. Many ethnic minorities in China are distributed in border areas, and some of them form the characteristics of the same ethnic group but different countries. These ethnic groups have become cross-border ethnic groups. These ethnic groups have basically the same cultural characteristics as the same ethnic groups in other countries, making it easier to communicate and accept each other. Fully leveraging the characteristics of cross-border ethnic groups and strengthening economic and trade exchanges between countries positively contributes to the development of both the Chinese economy and the economies of neighboring countries.

### **A Consistency Analysis between the Distinctive Development of Various Ethnic Groups and the Construction of the Chinese National Community**

#### *The Consistency of Historical Destiny*

The consistency of historical destiny is one of the manifestations of the consistency between the development of each ethnic group’s characteristics and the construction of the Chinese nation’s community. All ethnic groups in China developed under the same or similar historical background and have the same desire to pursue a happy life. Although the various ethnic groups in China were born and formed at different times and have their own characteristics in geographical location, culture, development process and other factors, the ethnic groups are not isolated from each other. From the history of China, it is not difficult to observe that, whether in economics, culture, or politics, there has been close interaction and engagement among the various ethnic groups in China. This has gradually formed a harmonious coexistence of ethnic groups. Indeed, the people of various ethnic groups in China have collectively experienced the changes in history and society, giving rise to the present Chinese nation. In other words, people of all ethnic groups share the same historical destiny.

In the long development history of the Chinese nation, although different ethnic groups were formed and lived in different regions and times, each ethnic group did not exist in isolation. Whether it was business activities, cultural exchanges or inter-ethnic marriages, ethnic groups were connected with each other through different ways or channels. This connection unities all ethnic groups into an integrated whole that influences each other. When one or several ethnic groups develop rapidly, other ethnic groups connected with this, or these ethnic groups will also develop accordingly. In ancient China, the Han's production technology developed the fastest, and the Han's advanced technology was introduced to other ethnic

minorities through personnel mobility, economic and trade activities, and inter-ethnic marriages, such as well digging, copper smelting, farmland irrigation, papermaking, and gunpowder making. Due to the use of the Han nationality's advanced technology, the productivity of these ethnic minorities was greatly improved, thereby promoting their own development. The exchanges and interactions among China's ethnic groups are not limited to technology but involve all aspects of social life. These connections that permeate all aspects of social life make the people of China's ethnic groups a community with a shared future that promotes each other and develops together. In China's development process, the development of one ethnic group will drive or influence the development of other ethnic groups, and people of all ethnic groups jointly create China's historical destiny.

The invasions China suffered in modern times have brought the destinies of various ethnic groups more closely together. The Opium War that broke out in 1840 marked the beginning of the Chinese nation's suffering from invasion. Without exception, all people of all ethnic groups in China suffered from enslavement by Western invaders. Faced with an unprecedented national crisis, people of all ethnic groups put aside their past grudges and united to fight the enemy. In 1871, during the war against the Tsarist Russian invasion of the Ili region of China, the Uyghur, Kazakh, Hui, Mongol, and Xibe peoples fought side by side, bravely resisting the enemy together. In 1875, the British army launched an armed invasion of western Yunnan, and the Jingpo, Dai, Achang, Hui and other ethnic groups drove them out of the country. The British army invaded Tibet twice in 1888 and 1904, attempting to bring Tibet under its rule, but the Tibetan compatriots resisted tenaciously. Additionally, the Gaoshan people of Taiwan, alongside their Han compatriots, jointly resisted the invading enemy during Japan's occupation of Taiwan. The united resistance of people from all ethnic groups against foreign invaders clearly demonstrates that the Chinese nation is a community of shared destiny.

In current China, this consistency is even more prominent. As individual ethnic groups, each ethnic group has the desire for accelerated development. At the same time, as members of the Chinese nation, they share the common goal of realizing the great "Chinese dream". Changes in the members of any ethnic group will affect changes in other ethnic groups, and the development of any ethnic group will affect the development of the entire Chinese nation. The construction of the country cannot be separated from the efforts of every ethnic group. The development of any ethnic group will promote the development of the Chinese nation, and the lagging behind of any ethnic group will affect the progress of the entire Chinese nation. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the common achievement of all ethnic groups and their common task. As a unified entity, the prosperity and development of the country requires the joint efforts of every ethnic group and its members. The fruits of national development will be shared by every member.

#### *Alignment of Economic Interests*

Alignment of economic interests is another manifestation of consistency. The development of various ethnic groups will promote the overall development of the Chinese nation, and vice versa. As mentioned before, the Chinese nation is a community with a shared future, and the development of each nation will play a positive role in the overall development of the Chinese nation. The development of ethnic minorities, especially, can significantly elevate the overall development level of China. The improvement of China's comprehensive national strength

and the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation are inseparable from the efforts and contributions of every nation. Due to various reasons such as history and society, the development speed and level of ethnic minorities lag that of the Han people. This is detrimental to China's overall development. Promoting the development of ethnic minorities can promote the development of the entire Chinese nation. From this perspective, it can be seen that ethnic minorities are consistent with the construction of the Chinese nation community in economic terms by developing their own characteristics and advantages.

Ethnic minorities are concentrated in China's northwest, southwest and northeast regions, which are rich in natural and cultural resources. For example, copper and tungsten in Jiangxi, lead, zinc and antimony in Hunan, titanium in Sichuan, bauxite and tin in Yunnan, mercury in Guizhou, etc. Areas inhabited by ethnic minorities are also rich in new energy sources, such as solar energy in Inner Mongolia and geothermal resources in the southwest. Distinctive ethnic culture is another irreplaceable advantage possessed by ethnic minorities. Ethnic villages with distinctive features, ancient city ruins, historic trade routes, religious temples, and handicrafts are all unique cultural resources of ethnic minorities. After proper development and utilization, they can become favorable factors for the economic development of ethnic minorities and ethnic regions.

Compared with other regions in China, the economies of ethnic minorities and ethnic regions are relatively backward. Developing distinctive economies tailored to ethnic minorities can uplift their income and living standards and fostering overall development in ethnic minority regions. At the same time, fully tapping the potential of ethnic minority economies and developing them will add new economic growth points to the country's overall economic development and inject new vitality into the country's economic development. From the perspective of economic development, the distinctive development of each ethnic group is consistent with the overall development interests of the Chinese nation and the country. Individual development and progress will directly promote overall development and progress. The economic consistency between the distinctive development of ethnic and the construction of the Chinese nation is not only reflected in the impact of the development of ethnic minorities on the overall development of the country, but also in the support of national development for the development of ethnic minorities. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China's national GDP has increased from less than 70 billion yuan to 12,605.82 billion yuan in 2023. As the world's second-largest economy, China's significant overall economic development serves as a powerful guarantee and support for the development of ethnic minorities. The most direct support is financial support. Around 2000, China launched the Western Development Strategy, which has received strong support from national financial funds for large-scale infrastructure construction, such as the West-to-East Power Transmission Project, the West-to-East Gas Transmission Project, and the Baihe tan Hydropower Station, as well as improvements in culture, education, medical care, and ecology. Technical support is an important support. For example, through the "Internet +" model, characteristic products from ethnic minorities and ethnic regions can be sold nationwide. This broadens the market for ethnic characteristic products, thereby increasing the income of ethnic minorities. Talent support cannot be ignored either. In order to cultivate talents among ethnic minorities, the country has continuously increased its investment in education for ethnic minorities and ethnic regions. It can be said that the development of the

country has driven the development of ethnic minorities and ethnic regions. The better the country develops, the greater the role it plays in promoting ethnic minorities.

### *Cultural Background Consistency*

A shared cultural background is also a manifestation of the consistency between the two. Over the course of thousands of years of national development and ethnic interactions, various ethnic groups have forged a national culture that is both distinct from one another and yet shares a common essence. The origins of Chinese culture are diverse, so each ethnic group has its own unique cultural characteristics. It is this characteristic that makes Chinese civilization richer and more diverse. At the same time, with the exchanges between ethnic groups, all ethnic groups in China learn from each other, draw on each other's strengths, and gradually absorb each other's excellence, slowly forming a nation with common ideas and common consciousness. The community has become the Chinese nation with a common historical and cultural heritage. Chinese culture is essentially the result of the continuous collection, integration, precipitation, and innovation of cultures from various ethnic groups. It is highly inclusive.

Cultural exchange and integration between ethnic groups are completed through population mobility and various economic, social and other activities. The absorption and integration of cultures are often bidirectional. There is the phenomenon of "Sinicization," where ethnic minorities adopt Han culture, as well as cases where ethnic minority cultures contribute fresh elements to Han culture. Additionally, there's mutual learning and development among different ethnic minorities. The Kucha music and dance that was popular during the Tang Dynasty was a type of music and dance from the Western Regions. As the Kucha music and dance continued to develop and mature, it also had an important influence on the Han culture. The "Erren tai" which is very popular in the Northwest region is the product of the combination of Mongolian and Han cultures. The "chuba" commonly seen in Tibetan life today is a modification of the Tibetan robe by borrowing elements of Han clothing. These cultural imprints can clearly show that the culture of the Chinese nation is a fusion of the traditional cultures and characteristics of different ethnic groups. Although each ethnic group in the Chinese nation has its own cultural characteristics, there are also inseparable common and consistent cultural factors.

Relying on culture, the Chinese nation has common cultural symbols and national spirit in the diverse ethnic cultures. Confucianism, as the most influential ideology in Chinese culture, is not only of great significance to the Han people but is also the most respected philosophy by other ethnic minorities. For example, diligence, thrift, self-reliance, hard work, etc., which are often mentioned in the Chinese national spirit, are not exclusive to a certain nation, but a consensus recognized by all members of the Chinese nation.

After thousands of years of development and evolution, the culture of the Chinese nation has shown the characteristics of coexistence of diversity and unity. The 56 ethnic groups have their own unique cultures that are different from other ethnic groups, but also have cultural essences that are consistent with each other. Today's traditional Chinese culture is the cultural achievement created jointly by the 56 ethnic groups. It is the accumulation of the wisdom of the people of all ethnic groups in China. It is also a realistic reflection of the 56

ethnic groups learning from each other, drawing on each other's experience, developing together and making progress together.

### **Conclusion**

This article analyzes the compositional characteristics of the Chinese nation, and on this basis, studies the consistent relationship between the 56 ethnic groups that constitute the Chinese nation and the Chinese nation community. China is a unified multi-ethnic country with a large land area, complex geography and thousands of years of culture and history. China has many ethnic groups and is widely distributed. It mainly presents the characteristics of “large-scale coexistence, small-scale clustering” and mainly concentrated in the northeast, northwest, and southwest border areas. The areas where ethnic minorities have settled are mostly in the inland areas of China. Most ethnic minorities are backward and poor. Due to historical reasons, some ethnic groups have formed cross-border ethnic groups that span two or three countries.

Due to the influence of historical, social, economic interests and other conditions, the ethnic relations among ethnic groups of China are very complex. Historically, the separation and reunification between ethnic groups has been uncertain. In the 1950s, Fei Xiaotong put forward the view of “the pluralistic unity of the Chinese nation”. He believes that each ethnic group in China has its own characteristics in terms of origin, formation, development process, culture, and other aspects. However, through thousands of years of exchanges and interactions, these ethnic groups have gradually formed inter-ethnic relations and structures that are interdependent, mutually influenced, and developed together. This national community is the Chinese nation.

In China's Plurality and unity ethnic structure, “Plurality” refers to 56 ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has its own characteristics. From this point of view, “Plurality” is not just an expression of the number of ethnic groups, it also emphasizes Characteristics and diversity of ethnic groups. “Unit” refers to the precise overview of the Chinese nation as an indivisible and unified whole. The pattern of plurality and unity is a true reflection of the formation, development, exchanges, mutual learning, integration, and coexistence of each ethnic groups of China over thousands of years.

The structural characteristics of the Chinese nation reflect its ethnic relations. Exchanges and interactions among ethnic groups have created the diversity and inclusiveness of the Chinese nation. Guided by the principles of acceptance and inclusivity, ethnic groups continuously learn from each other, complementing strengths and offsetting weaknesses, thereby promoting the development of their own respective ethnicities. This process leads to the formation of a distinctive ethnic culture with unique characteristics. The diversity and inclusiveness of the Chinese nation enable China's 56 ethnic groups to retain their own characteristics while living in harmony.

In modern China, the development of each ethnic group should make full use of their respective characteristics and advantages. As part of diverse cultures, the development of ethnic groups must also pay attention to the protection and inheritance of excellent ethnic culture. It is worth noting that protecting, inheriting, and utilizing unique ethnic culture does not conflict with building a Chinese national community. On the contrary, the distinctive

development of each ethnic group is consistent with, and even promotes, the construction of the Chinese national community. Because the two are inseparable and mutually reinforcing. Respecting ethnic minorities can also enhance their sense of identity with the nation and promote the formation of national cohesion. This is also the important significance of building a community of the Chinese nation.

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