

**Upholding Cultural Subjectivity Amid the
Dynamic Interplay of World Cultures:
The Spiritual Cornerstone of China's
Path to Modernization**

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Preface

Culture constitutes the soul of a country and its people.

Cultural subjectivity embodies the historical memory and spiritual essence of a country and its people, serving as the cornerstone for sustaining national identity and social stability. It is the foundational prerequisite for cultural consciousness, confidence, independence, and self-strengthening, as well as the spiritual anchor that embodies the unique characteristics of a civilization amid the profound transformations of the global landscape.

The cultural subjectivity of the Chinese nation is deeply rooted in an extensive historical lineage and a magnificent trajectory of evolution. From its roots in ancient agrarian traditions to the rich intermingling of diverse ethnic cultures and the extensive influence of foreign exchanges, Chinese cultural subjectivity has evolved continually, making enduring contributions to human civilization. However, since modern times, the Chinese nation has suffered aggression from Western powers, resulting in severe disruption of its cultural subjectivity. The country endured intense humiliation, the people were subjected to great pain, and the Chinese civilization was plunged into darkness. Yet, the roots of Chinese culture were never severed. Countless patriots relentlessly sought the path to national revival.

It was not until the birth of the Communist Party of China (CPC) that a decisive turning point was reached. Guided by Marxism, the CPC has creatively transformed and innovatively developed the best of Chinese traditional culture, inherited promoted the revolutionary culture, and cultivated and strengthened an advanced socialist culture, thereby reshaping and consolidating Chinese cultural subjectivity.

Since entering the New Era, Chinese cultural subjectivity has been endowed with richer connotations and greater missions. It has revitalized Chinese culture, playing a crucial role in guiding the country, enhancing cohesion, fostering creativity, and expanding influence, thereby highlighting its rich heritage and contemporary value.

This strong sense of cultural subjectivity equips the Communist Party of China with the powerful cultural resources for leading the times, provides the Chinese nation and its people with a firm cultural foundation for national identity, and imbues Chinese civilization with distinct character in its interplay and mutual learning with other civilizations. Chinese culture is increasingly characterized by distinct Chinese features, style, and ethos.

The consolidation of cultural subjectivity holds far-reaching global significance.

—Empowering us to cultivate cultural confidence in the inheritance of our civilization, remain vigilant against misguided ideologies like cultural nihilism, and ensure the continuous flourishing of Chinese culture through upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground.

—Strengthening our cultural fortitude to stand against hegemonism, uphold our cultural integrity, and strive for a fair, just, and rational international order.

—Enabling us to break free from the misconception that "modernization equates Westernization" and independently choose our path toward modernization.

—Allowing us to embrace a cultural stance of respect for civilizational diversity, advance exchange and mutual learning among cultures, thereby enriching the global tapestry of human civilization.

—Helping us forge a cultural consensus on the common values for all humanity to collectively address various global challenges and work together to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

Moving from a world where "each appreciates its own beauty" to one where "all share in the beauty of others," cultural subjectivity, amid the dynamic interplay of cultures, strengthens the spiritual cornerstone for engagement, exchange, and integration among diverse cultures, collectively creating a bright future of peaceful development for human civilization.

Chapter One

Awakening of Chinese Cultural Subjectivity

Cultural subjectivity reflects a country and a nation's self-awareness of their own culture and their initiative in shaping it through innovation and creativity.^① Regardless of historical changes, external pressures, or the impact of modernization, China has consistently maintained its cultural subjectivity, forging a path of cultural confidence and self-strengthening with the courage to uphold fundamental principles and break new ground, alongside an open and inclusive outlook.

I. Cultural Subjectivity: Foundation of Cultural Confidence

Subjectivity is the defining attribute of humans as subjects engaged in objective activities. It encompasses the characteristics of human consciousness, initiative, autonomy, and creativity, which develop through interaction with the object. Cultural subjectivity refers to the unique values and spiritual characteristics that a country or its people demonstrate through cultural inheritance, innovation, and development. It is a state of existence that distinguishes it from other countries or peoples, possessing distinct cultural characteristics and a clear value stance.

"Cultural subjectivity is an indispensable cornerstone in the process of modernization:

Awakening Cultural Consciousness: Cultural consciousness refers to the awareness and self-reflection regarding the origin, formation process, and development trends of one's own culture. In the evolution of modernization, without cultural consciousness, a nation will become a spiritual wanderer caught between tradition and modernity. Rooted in cultural subjectivity, cultural consciousness serves as a beacon in the vast river of civilization, guiding modernization toward a brilliant destination that is humane and soulful.

Shaping Cultural Confidence: As the foundation of cultural confidence, cultural subjectivity carries the spiritual genes of a nation, encoding the continuity of civilization. True confidence stems from a clear understanding of one's own culture, drawing strength from its unique values and inherent spirit. Only with the strength of true confidence can a nation transcend cultural subservience, anxiety, and inferiority, achieving spiritual independence and autonomy, and drive the continuity of civilization and contemporary innovation with confident composure and immense power.

Forging Cultural Independence: Mere imitation cannot bring about national revitalization, nor can passive adherence to global currents earn genuine respect on the world

^① Study Outline on Xi Jinping Thought on Culture, Learning Press & People's Publishing House, 2023, p. 44.

stage. Only by firmly upholding cultural subjectivity can a nation maintain unwavering resolve and self-confidence amid the dynamic interplay of global cultures, resisting assimilation, alienation, or marginalization. Only in this way can a nation achieve independence in steering its cultural development, creating its cultural products, and expressing its cultural values, thereby solidifying a deep-rooted cultural foundation and spiritual roots, and standing proudly among the nations of the world.

Strengthening Cultural Resilience: The ability to strengthen the culture is essential to the revitalization of a nation and its people. Only by upholding cultural subjectivity can a nation's unique cultural character serve as a guiding beacon, cutting through the uncertainties of time and illuminating the path of cultural development. It is the well-spring of cultural innovation and creativity, providing society with an inexhaustible spiritual drive to forge ahead. Amid global civilizational interactions and clashes, cultural subjectivity enables equal and inclusive exchange and mutual learning, ultimately advancing the common progress of humanity.

II. Chinese Cultural Subjectivity: Historical Evolution and Contemporary Elevation

China is one of the four great ancient civilizations of the world. With a rich history and a brilliant culture, the Chinese nation has made remarkable contributions to the progress of human civilization. The continuity of Chinese civilization has nurtured and shaped a distinct cultural subjectivity.

However, since modern times, China has been reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal state, resulting in a severe impact on its cultural subjectivity. The Communist Party of China integrated the basic tenets of Marxism with China's fine traditional culture, reshaping and reinforcing cultural subjectivity through upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground. This revitalization has enabled China's ancient civilization to retain its spiritual essence while unleashing new creative vitality in the modern era, laying a solid cultural foundation for advancing Chinese modernization and achieving national rejuvenation.

1. Chinese Cultural Subjectivity Nurtured and Shaped by Five Millennia of Civilization

China boasts a long and illustrious history, as well as an extensive and profound civilization.

Chinese civilization is the only great, uninterrupted civilization that continues to this day in the form of a state. This unequivocally affirms the cultural identity and robust vitality of Chinese civilization as it has responded to challenges and broken new ground through self-development.^① Throughout its historical evolution, Chinese civilization

^① Xi Jinping, "Speech at the Meeting on Cultural Inheritance and Development," *Qiushi Journal*, 2023 (17).

has cultivated a distinct value system, cultural essence, and spiritual identity that define how the Chinese people perceive the world, society, and life, setting it apart from other nations and civilizations.

Research from the national project on tracing the origins of Chinese Civilization reveals that Chinese civilization emerged as a native cultural entity within a relatively independent geographical and sociocultural environment. Chinese civilization has traversed a historical course spanning 10,000 years of foundational development, 8,000 years since its origins, 6,000 years of acceleration, over 5,000 years since entering the civilizational stage, 4,300 years since the rise of the Central Plains, 4,000 years of dynastic establishment, 3,000 years of monarchical consolidation, and more than 2,200 years since the formation of a unified multi-ethnic state.^①

During its formation and development, diverse regional civilizations flourished, competing and borrowing from one another, ultimately contributing to shared cultural gene. Examples include the enduring worship of loongs, the deep legacy of jade culture, and the evolution of Chinese writing system, with today's script tracing its origins back to Shang dynasty oracle bone inscriptions and bronze script.

The best of traditional Chinese culture, as the crystallization of wisdom and the essence of Chinese civilization, is the root and soul of the Chinese people. As early as the Shang (approximately 1600 BCE – 1046 BCE) and Zhou (approximately 1046 BCE – 256 BCE) dynasties, the ancient Chinese people "awakened to humanistic morality, developed an inherent consciousness of transcendence, and formed their cultural identity, which they continuously renewed."^② Traditional Chinese culture, especially the formation and development of its core ideology and culture, has experienced several historical periods: the contentions of a hundred schools of thought in the pre-Qin period, the prosperity of Confucian classics in the Han dynasties, the popularity of metaphysics during the Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties, the parallelism of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in the Sui and Tang Dynasties, and the development of Neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming Dynasties.^③ All these have left behind a vast and invaluable heritage, including the humanistic principle of literature conveying the Way and transforming people, social ideals of pursuing the common good for all and achieving universal peace; values of dedicating oneself to self-cultivation, family management, state governance, and peace for all and shouldering one's duties to secure the future of the nation; aspirations of embracing the world with virtue and cultivating integrity; economic principles of enriching the people and improving their lives and pursuing the greater good and shared interests; ecological ideas of promoting harmony between humanity and nature and the coexistence of all living things; the innovative consciousness of reform and renewal, keeping pace with the times; philosophical thoughts of seeking truth from facts and combining knowledge with action; the mindset of un-

① Wang Wei, "Continuity of Chinese Civilization from an Archaeological Perspective," *Qishi Journal*, 2025 (3).

② Li Wentang, "The 'Second Integration' and the Reconstruction of Cultural Subjectivity," *Social Sciences in China*, 2024 (7).

③ *Selected Readings from the Works of Xi Jinping, Volume I*, People's Publishing House, 2023, p. 276.

derstanding multiple perspectives and seeking harmony through the middle way; and communication approaches of acting in good faith and being friendly to others.

2. The Challenges and Defense of Chinese Cultural Subjectivity since Modern Times

Since modern times, China has gradually been reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. Facing a crisis of national survival, Chinese cultural subjectivity experienced unprecedented disruption.

The Western powers forced China's doors open through the Opium War. Alongside military aggression, political domination, and economic exploitation, Western culture steadily permeated Chinese society. Through a series of unequal treaties, Western powers secured unrestricted missionary rights in China, enabling cultural infiltration and ideological indoctrination that profoundly impacted the Chinese people's spiritual world, steadily eroding Chinese cultural subjectivity.

China's reflection on its backwardness and vulnerability to foreign aggression gradually deepened from the material level and institutional level to the cultural level. After the First Opium War, thinkers represented by Wei Yuan began to open their eyes to the world, learn Western knowledge, and propose the idea of "learning the advanced techniques of the barbarians to control the barbarians." Zhang Zhidong advocated "Chinese learning as substance, Western learning for application," which became the guiding ideology of the Westernization Movement. The defeat of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) proved that the path of only learning Western techniques was not viable. Reformers, represented by Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, initiated the Reform Movement of 1898, pushing for a constitutional monarchy. However, their efforts ultimately ended in failure. Around 1915, progressive Chinese intellectuals launched the New Culture Movement, fiercely critiquing traditional Chinese culture, particularly Confucianism. The movement dealt a heavy blow to feudal ethical doctrines that had long suppressed free thought and individual autonomy, while simultaneously advancing the spread of democratic and scientific ideas across China. However, faced with the profound and pressing challenge of reconstructing cultural subjectivity, both the "Chinese learning as substance, Western learning for application" approach and the "total Westernization" theory proved fundamentally flawed in principle and unsuccessful in practice. Their failure stemmed from an inability to grasp the inherent laws governing cultural vitality.^①

Despite challenges to traditional Chinese culture and a crisis in cultural subjectivity, its foundational roots remained unbroken. While acknowledging the obvious advantages of Western civilization in terms of material objects and institutions, some insightful Chinese individuals did not completely lose confidence in their own traditional culture and consistently defended Chinese cultural subjectivity. For example, Li Dazhao op-

^① Li Wentang, "The 'Second Integration' and the Reconstruction of Cultural Subjectivity," *Social Sciences in China*, 2024 (7).

posed completely transplanting Western civilization to China, arguing that "speaking fairly, Eastern and Western civilizations have their strengths and weaknesses, and we should not arbitrarily judge which is superior or inferior." Liang Shuming believed that the suppression of Eastern culture was temporary and that it would not only be revived in China but also spread globally. During this period, China had not yet found advanced and scientific ideological guidance and therefore had not yet found the correct path to consolidate Chinese cultural subjectivity.

3. Reshaping and Consolidating Chinese Cultural Subjectivity through "the Second Integration"

With the salvoes of Russia's October Revolution in 1917, Marxism-Leninism was brought to China. Throughout its leadership in the socialist revolution, construction, and reform, the Communist Party of China has steadfastly integrated the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and the best of its traditional culture (the "Two Integrations"), thus reshaping and solidifying Chinese cultural subjectivity.

The "two integrations," particularly the "second integration," have forged a new and organically unified cultural entity. Marxism has given a new lease of life to Chinese civilization with its truthfulness, driving its renewal and modern transformation. At the same time, the best of Chinese traditional culture has strengthened the cultural vitality of Marxism, propelling its ongoing adaptation to the Chinese context and contemporary advancements. Through the "second integration," Marxism has been adapted to Chinese context, while the best of Chinese traditional culture has been modernized, giving rise to a new cultural form for Chinese modernization.

The "two integrations," especially the "second integration," have played a crucial role in reshaping and solidifying Chinese cultural subjectivity. This subjectivity has been forged through the creative transformation and innovative development of the best of Chinese traditional culture, the inheritance of revolutionary culture, and the development of advanced socialist culture, while simultaneously learning from the outstanding achievements of all civilizations.

The reshaping and consolidation of Chinese cultural subjectivity have resolved the longstanding ideological debate over "the relations between China and the West, as well as the interplay between ancient and modern civilizations." Since modern times, this debate has revolved around how to treat traditional Chinese culture and Western culture, leading to various competing ideological perspectives. These include the "Eastern Culture Theory" championed by Gu Hongming and Liang Qichao, the "Complete Westernization Theory" put forward by Hu Shi and Chen Xujing, and the "Civilization Harmonization Theory" proposed by Du Yaquan. Yet none of these approaches succeeded in revitalizing Chinese culture.

Since the reform and opening up, with the increasing infiltration of Western ideologies into China, cultural nihilism, historical nihilism, and the Westernization trend have become rampant, attempting to negate Chinese cultural subjectivity and erode the cul-

tural confidence of the Chinese people. At the same time, extreme cultural conservatism, which stubbornly clings to rigid traditionalism, has also quietly gained momentum.

The "second integration" marks another emancipation of the mind, allowing China to fully utilize the valuable resources of the best of its traditional culture to explore forward-looking theoretical and institutional innovations within a broader cultural space. By adhering to principles such as drawing from tradition for modern application, adapting foreign elements to Chinese needs, making dialectical choices, and refining the old to create the new, China has seamlessly bridged tradition and modernity, ensuring historical continuity while forging a new cultural identity.

The reshaping and consolidation of Chinese cultural subjectivity have elevated China's historical and cultural confidence to unprecedented heights. The cultural mindset of the Chinese people has undergone a fundamental transformation from inferiority and anxiety to conscious confidence, once again strengthening the cultural backbone of the Chinese nation. Today, with indomitable spirit and full confidence, China is forging ahead on a new journey of Chinese modernization to build a strong country and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Chapter Two

Cultural Subjectivity: Revitalizing Chinese Culture

Culture concerns the foundation and future of a nation. The Communist Party of China has always attached great importance to its leadership over culture and endeavors to build a socialist ideology that has strong appeal and cohesion. Culture can shape people's thoughts and behaviors through its subtle influence, inspire people's enthusiasm for making progress, and become an important spiritual force for the country's economic and social development.

I. Playing a Guiding Role in Inspiring Strong Spiritual Power

Culture embodies a wealth of moral principles, values, and behavioral norms, subtly shaping people's thoughts and actions while fostering an intrinsic motivation to be good and strive for progress. It serves as a vital spiritual force in advancing coordinated economic and social development.

1. Nurturing Powerful Cultural Spirit with the Core Socialist Values

The rejuvenation of a nation depends not only on strong material strength but also on profound spiritual power. Without a rich and deeply cultivated inner world among its people or a continuously strengthening national spirit, no country and its people can stand proudly on the world stage. In China, the core socialist values align with the society of socialism with Chinese characteristics, guiding the formation of people's ideology, morality, and social conduct, and acting as a driving force behind the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

We must cultivate, disseminate, and practice the core socialist values, making them a shared pursuit of values and an unconscious code of conduct in daily life. Only in this way can we elevate the spirit of the entire population and foster an increasingly powerful spiritual force for societal advancement.

At the Jinggangshan Revolutionary Museum in Jiangxi province, stepping into the "Red Army Cave" or gazing at the flickering light of the Octagonal Pavilion evokes an immersive experience, transporting visitors back to the era of revolutionary war, where heroes fought courageously despite hunger and hardship. Across the interplay of time and space, revolutionary legacies take root in the hearts of people, becoming the spiritual cornerstone of a shared national identity.

Guided by the core socialist values, China has launched widespread cultural and ethical education campaigns. New Era Civilization Practice Centers have flourished across

the country, bringing the Chinese Communist Party's innovative theories into daily life of ordinary people. National cultural parks, such as the Great Wall, the Grand Canal, the Long March, the Yellow River, and the Yangtze River, preserve historical continuity while fostering cultural confidence. These transformations have profoundly reshaped the landscape of spiritual civilization, elevating public moral awareness and strengthening the fabric of society.

China remains steadfast in its commitment to forging a socialist ideology imbued with strong cohesion and leadership. Under the guidance of the core socialist values, it continues to shape the essence of Chinese identity, its spirit, values, and strength. In Guizhou, university students engage in theatrical performances to reflect on shared national value pursuit. In Diqing, Yunnan, the "Gesang Flower Young Docents" initiative inspires a deeper sense of national identity and pride among youth. As patriotism takes root and a new generation is nurtured, these ideals subtly permeate their consciousness, flowing through the veins of the people, ingrained in their very souls.

Across the vast land, this spiritual strength has become an inseparable part of the national fabric, uniting people in a common cultural home. Just as towering skyscrapers now define China's modern landscape, the grand edifice of the Chinese national spirit rises with equal majesty, standing firm and unwavering.

2. Guiding Comprehensive and Coordinated Economic and Social Development with Culture

Material and spiritual civilization encapsulate the entirety of humanity's understanding and transformation of the world. The power of spirit and culture silently permeates economic, political, and social forces, serving as an "accelerator" for economic development, a "beacon" for political civilization, and an "adhesive" for social harmony.

China emphasizes the coordination between material and spiritual civilization, pursuing both material abundance and cultural enrichment. Since entering the New Era, China's economic strength has achieved a historic leap, shifting the focus of people's aspirations for a better life from quantity to quality. To achieve high-quality development, culture plays a crucial role as a foundational support. High-quality cultural supply can enhance people's sense of cultural fulfillment and happiness. China's Cultural Development Plan for the 14th Five-Year Plan Period (2021-2025) highlights the necessity to "give full play to the role of culture in activating development momentum, improving development quality, and promoting the optimization and upgrading of economic structure."

Suzhou is known as an "earthly paradise." With its orderly city gates, crisscrossing streets and alleys, and intersecting waterways, the city's historical and cultural heritage endures despite the passage of time: Kunqu opera, guqin music, Song brocade, kesi tapestry, the traditional architectural craftsmanship of Xiangshan School, the Suzhou Dragon Boat Festival customs, Biluochun tea, and more, collectively shaping a magnificent humanistic landscape. Suzhou has emerged as a vivid exemplar of humanistic eco-

nomics in the New Era. Culture expands urban development space and creates new economic growth opportunities. Suzhou's profound cultural heritage and meticulous craftsmanship have historically produced the famed Su-style handicrafts and products, and today, they foster a large number of high-end industries, reinforcing Suzhou's reputation as a hub of industry, innovation, and openness.

Fundamentally speaking, culture is determined by the economy, and economic strength provides the material platform for cultural strength to play its role. However, any economy cannot be separated from the support of culture: culture endows economic development with profound humanistic value.^①

China boasts a growing portfolio of globally significant agricultural heritage systems, including the Qingting rice-fish co-cultivation in Zhejiang, the Pu'er ancient tea plantations and tea culture in Yunnan, and the Aohan Banner dryland farming system in Inner Mongolia. From the farming practices of rice-fish co-culture and dryland terraces to the rural landscapes of villages, dwellings, ancient trees, and deep alleys; from the ecological concept of "taking with moderation and using with thrift" to the village rules and folk agreements of prioritizing reading and farming and mutual assistance among neighbors, the Chinese nation has cultivated an agricultural culture of "timeliness, appropriateness, adherence to rules, and harmony" over thousands of years to guide agricultural production. All these are important contributions of Chinese agricultural civilization to the world, demonstrating the unique charm of Chinese civilization.

Today, customs that have lasted for thousands of years are advancing with the times in an imperceptible way, and the culture full of national spirit and vitality subtly integrates with people's production and life. In China's governance practice, the guiding role of culture is becoming increasingly prominent.

II. Enhancing Cohesion to Fortify Shared Cultural Identity

As a country or a people strengthen their cultural subjectivity, they inevitably foster a powerful cohesive force. The shared identity of the Chinese nation, the common patriotic spirit that binds it together, and the collective aspiration for progress unite all Chinese people into a tightly knit and forward-striving strong community.

1. Shared Cultural Identity: the Chinese Nation

The Chinese national community embodies a collective civilization consciousness, historical memory, identity recognition, and shared struggles and aspirations among all ethnic groups within the larger family of the Chinese nation. Over thousands of years of interaction, exchange, and integration among various ethnic groups, a conscious national entity of the Chinese nation has progressively formed. In the modern times,

^① Xi Jinping, *Zhejiang, China: A New Vision for Development*, Zhejiang Publishing United Group and Zhejiang People's Publishing House, 2007, p. 149.

through collective resistance against imperialist aggression, the Chinese nation has ultimately evolved from an ethnic entity to a self-sustaining national entity.

The concept of a community where all ethnic groups in China share weal and woe, honor and disgrace, life and death, and destiny together reflects the integration and unity of the Community of the Chinese Nation in fundamental interests, national dignity, national security, and prosperity and development, creating the distinct symbols of this Community.

In Ning'er County, Pu'er City, Yunnan Province, a remarkable monument, the Ethnic Unity Oath Stele, stands in the Ethnic Unity Park. On New Year's Day in 1951, over 1,000 people from 26 ethnic groups held a pledging ceremony and erected the stele with the inscription: "With one heart and one purpose, we shall stand united to the end and strive to build an equal, free, and happy family under the leadership of the Communist Party of China!" For over 70 years, the local people have kept their oath, closely followed the Communist Party of China, and contributed to national unity and the prosperity and development of the border areas.

Yumai Township, Lhunze County, Xizang is located on the southern slopes of the Himalayas. For many years, it was known as the "three-person township" because it was inhabited by only three residents: Sangjie Quba and his daughters, Zhoigar and Yangzom. Under extremely harsh natural conditions, they firmly guarded the frontier of the motherland. The former "three-person township" has now expanded to 67 households with over 200 residents, all leading prosperous lives, with the national flag proudly flying atop every home.

Across China, vibrant cultural expressions flourish in public squares and streets, where residents engage in joyful performances, Peking Opera alongside Qin Opera, the erhu blending with hand drums, the Uyghur Meshrep, Xizang Guozhuang dance, Tajik Eagle dance, and dynamic modern street dance. People from diverse ethnic backgrounds live together and learn from each other, fostering an atmosphere of harmony and happiness.

2. Common Spiritual Bond: Patriotism

Patriotism is the deepest and most enduring emotion in the world, and it is the source of a person's morality and the foundation of his achievements.^① The spirit of patriotism is deeply rooted in the hearts of the Chinese people. It is the spiritual gene of the Chinese nation, maintaining the unity of the multi-ethnic groups on the land of China and inspiring generations of Chinese people to unremittingly strive for the development and prosperity of their motherland.

On October 1, 1949, Du Lan, then the principal of Hou Kong Middle School in Macao, braved enormous pressure to raise a five-star red flag sewn by herself over the school. For 76 years, Hou Kong Middle School has upheld the tradition of daily flag-

^① Xi Jinping, *Speech at a Symposium with Faculty and Students of Peking University*, People's Publishing House, 2018, p. 11.

raising ceremonies, passing the spirit of patriotism from generation to generation under the national flag. In 2019, Macao primary school students wrote affectionately in a letter to President Xi Jinping, saying, "The motherland is like a mother. When we encounter difficulties, she will open her warm embrace to care for and protect us. Motherland is our strong backing."

Since entering the New Era, as China's cultural identity continues to solidify, patriotism derives strength from the rich and unique historical and cultural traditions of the Chinese nation, radiating new vitality across all sectors of society.

Scientists embody the patriotic spirit at the heart of their profession, striving for new heights in scientific exploration. Educators act as active disseminators of the shared ideals of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the Chinese Dream. Artists and writers promote the Chinese spirit through impactful works that unite and inspire the nation. In classrooms, stories of patriotism are seamlessly woven into lessons, planting the seeds of love for the motherland deep in the hearts of future generations.

China actively leverages its remarkable achievements in reform and development, major historical event commemorations, patriotic education sites, traditional festivals, and national memorial ceremonies to enhance collective patriotic sentiment and awareness of the people and actively promote the spirit of patriotism. Patriotism continues to strengthen the convictions, moral resolve, and conscious actions of the entire Chinese people.

3. Shared Aspiration: Achieving the Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation

Achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream of the Chinese nation since modern times. This shared aspiration embodies the overall interests of the nation and its people.

China is a large family with 56 ethnic groups and a population of over 1.4 billion. Its diverse ethnic composition and massive population give rise to a powerful centripetal force through cultural subjectivity, fostering a strong sense of identity among the people toward their nation and country and a powerful spiritual momentum toward a shared aspiration: achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

China's transformation unfolds rapidly on its journey toward national rejuvenation. Shenzhou, Tiangong, Beidou, Chang'e, Zhurong, and Xihe soar through the vast universe. The world's fastest railways, longest bridges, and busiest ports continue to break world records. New Farmers initiative injects fresh vitality into rural revitalization, Generation Z achieves accelerated speeds on their journey of entrepreneurship, and master craftsmen top the champion's podium in global competitions. Inspired by the shared aspiration, China in the New Era presents a vibrant and bustling picture of relentless endeavor.

In 2021, as the Communist Party of China marked its centennial anniversary, China announced that all 98.99 million of its rural impoverished population had been lifted

out of poverty. This marked the completion of the historical tasks of poverty alleviation and building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, thus achieving its First Centenary Goal. This accomplishment marked a significant milestone in the nation's journey toward great rejuvenation.

China has now embarked on its Second Centennial Goal, advancing steadfastly toward the grand vision of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Committed to "building cultural confidence and strength and securing new successes in developing socialist culture," China aims to become "a nation with a strong socialist culture" by 2035, a goal that sets the cultural coordinates and anchors the civilizational direction for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

III. Fostering Creativity to Drive High-Level Cultural Development

The consolidation and development of cultural subjectivity have deeply activated the intrinsic heritage of Chinese civilization, injecting new vitality into its modern transformation. Through dialogue with history, engagement with the people, and resonance with contemporary times, the creative transformation and innovative development of the best of Chinese traditional culture, the flourishing of new popular arts, and the continuous emergence of "Culture+" industries stand as vivid manifestations of China's consolidation of cultural subjectivity and advancement of Chinese civilization.

1. Advancing Traditional Culture in a Contemporary Context

Traditional culture is the spiritual lifeline of a nation, embodying the historical memory and collective wisdom of its people. Extensive, profound, and inclusive, the best of Chinese traditional culture bridges the past and the future through creative transformation and innovative development. It seeks the broadest common ground in the pursuit of a better life, awakening the shared sentiments and emotional resonance deeply rooted in the hearts of over 1.4 billion Chinese people.

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, a series of national cultural institutions embodying the essence of traditional culture have been established, becoming defining symbols of China's cultural prominence. The majestic Beijing Central Axis, running north to south, is flanked by three prominent new cultural landmarks of Beijing in a tripartite configuration: the Museum of the Communist Party of China, designed in the shape of the Chinese character "工" (gong, meaning "work"); the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Museum, resembling a treasure pavilion suspended in midair; and the Chinese Academy of History, distinguished by the large seal-script character "史" (shi, meaning "history") adorning its façade. Further north, at the foot of the Yanshan Mountains, lies the central headquarters of the China National Archives of Publications and Culture, which houses China's cultural treasures under the philosophy: "Preserving wisdom in renowned mountains, passing it on to future genera-

tions."

Rooted in tradition yet transcending it, Chinese culture seamlessly merges with contemporary life, radiating vigorous vitality as it responds to modern needs. The Palace Museum exemplifies this fusion by revitalizing artifacts, launching digital exhibitions such as the *Panorama of Rivers and Mountains*, and creating a series of cultural and creative products that transform fine traditional culture into an accessible aesthetic for the public. With exquisite choreography and stage design, dances such as *Tang Palace Night Banquet* and *The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting* vividly present the court music and dance of the Tang Dynasty, as well as the landscape paintings of the Song Dynasty. Their national tours have been sold out for every performance, generating phenomenal buzz across the country.

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is a vital part of the best of Chinese traditional culture. Across China, regions are exploring innovative pathways for preserving cultural heritage, integrating intangible cultural heritage (ICH) resources with tourism. Visitors can experience traditional ICH arts, such as paper-cutting and embroidery, while appreciating the scenic beauty. Some ancient towns and villages have developed ICH cultural districts featuring artisan studios of ICH inheritors, ICH exhibition halls, and ICH immersive workshops, igniting a renewed enthusiasm for "Chinese beauty" and "Oriental charm."

From archaeological sites that uncover the origins of civilization to the vibrant inheritance of colorful intangible cultural heritages, from the restoration of millennia-old architecture to the preservation and renovation of historical and cultural cities, China's rich cultural heritage continues to flourish through innovative adaptation. Its artistic splendor and national treasures have captivated audiences worldwide, earning widespread admiration, particularly among the younger generation.

2. Creating a New Model of Shared Cultural Creation and Appreciation

Culture is a collective spiritual wealth created by the people. Every artistic movement reflects the evolving zeitgeist of its era. Today, as China achieves historic economic growth, accelerates urbanization, and enhances the cultural literacy of its vast population, new technologies such as big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence are reshaping the cultural landscape. This transformation has fueled the rise of new mass arts, where ordinary people actively participate in creation, dissemination, and shared cultural experiences. With an increasing number of individuals engaged in cultural innovation and exchange, a dynamic ecosystem of universal participation and shared development has taken shape.

In the New Era, the people-centered approach to artistic creation has been vividly realized. The people are not only the subjects of literature and the arts, but also their authors; not only the recipients, but also the creators. Delivery couriers write poems, such as "People Who Chase Time"; migrant workers open poetry shops; and countless ama-

teur creators display their talents and daily lives on platforms like Douyin, Kuaishou, and Xiaohongshu. Cultural and sports events, such as the "Village Spring Festival Gala" and the "Village Super Football League," showcase a vibrant grassroots cultural and sports activities rooted in the local community. Literature and artistic works are evolving from being created by a few and appreciated by many to being created and appreciated by all.

The rapid rise of new mass arts has given rise to a thriving cultural industry, with fields such as online literature, audiovisual media, digital animation, and esports experiencing explosive growth. Leveraging the internet and digital technologies, companies like Tencent and ByteDance have established a comprehensive industry chain spanning creation, distribution, and consumption through a dual-drive approach of "content + technology." Digital innovations such as livestreamed sales by ICH inheritors and popular science media have emerged as new forms of mass communication. Data shows that in 2024, China's online audiovisual industry reached a market size of 1.2226 trillion yuan, with 750,000 enterprises operating in the sector, marking a historic high.^①

The value of new mass arts in the current era lies in the synergy between technological revolution and cultural self-awareness. As 5G, AI, and the metaverse reshape artistic production models, new mass arts, with their vitality and broad popular base, expand the boundaries of traditional mass literature and art, fulfilling people's spiritual and cultural needs, while also disseminating Chinese culture. This evolution has paved the way for a cultural development model that fosters the coexistence of tradition and modernity, as well as dialogue between local and global cultures.

3. Creating New "Culture+" Industries

Culture serves as a vital pillar supporting high-quality development. With the explosive growth of the cultural industry, emerging "Culture+" models have begun to flourish, fostering cross-sector integration between culture and various industries. This evolution not only disrupts conventional industry boundaries but also generates new drivers for economic growth.

China's high-quality economic development has provided strong support for the "Culture+" initiative, amplifying its synergistic effects. The transition from "Made in China" to "Created in China" has driven the transformation and upgrading of industries such as electronic information, communications, software, logistics, finance, and education, creating new avenues for cultural resource development. Leading internet companies, such as Tencent, ByteDance, and Alibaba, have evolved from technology platform operators and service providers into comprehensive cultural and tech enterprises.

The integration of industries has become a strategic priority for Chinese policymak-

^① <http://www.news.cn/20250326/cbd048a24d0742e9b8ed5fc883aa18c1/c.html>.

"China's online audiovisual user base reaches 1.091 billion," *Xinhuanet*, March 26, 2025. <http://www.news.cn/20250326/cbd048a24d0742e9b8ed5fc883aa18c1/c.html>.

ers, with successive policy documents fostering a favorable environment for the "Culture+" initiative. In early 2025, the government released the Measures for Further Cultivating New Growth Points to Promote Cultural and Tourism Consumption, aiming to harness cultural empowerment and tourism-driven growth while deepening the "Cultural Tourism + Industries" and "Industries + Cultural Tourism" models to enhance product supply and diversify consumption scenarios.

Against the backdrop of industrial integration, culture is expanding beyond traditional domains, such as art, journalism, film, and television, as well as publishing, into innovative sectors, thereby vigorously accelerating industrial transformation and structural optimization. For instance, Xi'an's Great Tang All Day Mall integrates Tang-style architecture, folk performances, and specialty cuisine to create immersive nighttime tourism experiences. Meanwhile, the "Culture + Technology" model, exemplified by digital art exhibitions and cloud-based performances, has broadened access to artistic treasures while offering new avenues for cultural heritage protection and preservation. Similarly, the "Culture + Finance" model has addressed funding challenges by establishing cultural investment funds and financial services tailored to cultural enterprises, fostering the industry's growth and prosperity.

From traditional, singular business models to diverse, cross-sector development, the "Culture+" initiative reveals an important direction for the upgrading and development of cultural industries, further stimulating economic vitality and unleashing consumption potential. As China's cultural subjectivity continues to strengthen, the country is poised to generate even more innovations in cultural development.

IV. Expanding Cultural Influence to Showcase National Soft Power

In an era of deepening globalization, the interconnectivity and interdependence among nations continue to grow. China remains committed to the principles of consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits in global governance, establishing platforms for dialogue among civilizations, advancing cultural exchanges and dissemination, and actively expanding its cultural influence. By presenting a true, multi-dimensional, and panoramic view of China internationally, it enhances global understanding of Chinese culture, values, and development path, contributing Chinese wisdom and Chinese strength to the pursuit of world peace, development, and the progress of human civilization.

1. Establishing Platforms for Dialogue among Civilizations

In today's world, where deepening globalization is intertwined with rising risks of conflicts among civilizations, the global governance system is undergoing accelerated transformation. The rise of unilateralism and populism continues to fuel crises of cultural identity. As old and new challenges intertwine and complex contradictions emerge,

humanity faces unprecedented challenges. China remains committed to establishing an inclusive platform for dialogue among civilizations based on equality, mutual learning, and exchange, breaking down barriers to cultural interplay and advancing a new model of international relations rooted in mutual respect, fairness, justice, and win-win cooperation.

More than 2,000 years ago, the Silk Road facilitated trade and cultural exchanges between the East and the West. Today, China is committed to transforming the Belt and Road into a road connecting different civilizations, having signed cooperation agreements with over 150 countries and 30 international organizations. It has successfully hosted three Belt and Road Forums for International Cooperation and established over 30 multilateral cooperation mechanisms across key fields, including energy, taxation, environmental protection, disaster relief, think tanks, and media, facilitating extensive cultural exchanges and the integration of civilizations among participating nations.

In recent years, China has convened the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations, delivering a strong message in support of exchange and mutual learning among civilizations. The High-level Dialogue between the Communist Party of China and World Political Parties drew leaders from over 500 parties and political organizations across 150 countries, and it explicitly put forward the Global Civilization Initiative. In addition, the Nishan World Civilization Forum has been held ten times in Confucius's hometown, bringing together international guests to discuss the principles of harmonious coexistence and mutual prosperity among civilizations. In June 2024, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution proposed by China, designating June 10 as the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations.

The value of dialogue among civilizations extends far beyond cultural exchange. It serves as a crucial bridge for overcoming cultural barriers and rebuilding trust in the international community. China consistently upholds the stance of the harmonious development of civilizations, firmly rejecting erroneous narratives such as the "clash of civilizations" and the notion of "civilization superiority." By championing dialogues, fostering mutual respect, and promoting the integration of civilizations, China is generating a positive global response and enduring resonance, contributing wisdom and strength to international cultural exchange and long-term world peace.

2. Constructing China's Discourse and Narrative System

Constructing a distinct Chinese discourse and narrative system is a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing national cultural soft power and securing a moral high ground in global affairs. Constructing a discourse system with Chinese characteristics, style, and ethos is not only a process of demonstrating cultural subjectivity but also a means of continuously enhancing China's international discourse power, allowing it to play an even more influential role in the international community.

China focuses on its further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization, exchanging ideas and exploring the path to jointly achieve moderniza-

tion with countries around the world. In December 2024, the Understanding China International Conference was held in Guangzhou, bringing together more than 600 participants from China and abroad. Through over 60 events, attendees gained in-depth insights into Chinese modernization. Discussions centered on key themes, including China's economic development, social transformation, and cultural heritage, conveying China's voice to the world.

In recent years, China has been actively promoting the construction of its international communication capacity to present an image of China that is credible, amiable, and respectable. Chinese publishing institutions have increased their efforts in publishing, translating and distributing internationally a series of books, including *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, which conveys the innovative theories of the Communist Party of China and the practical experience of Chinese modernization. Meanwhile, Chinese media continue to advance the global, regional, and audience-specific expression of China's stories and voices, comprehensively enhancing the effectiveness of international communication through diverse, targeted, and multidimensional strategies. Films such as *The Wandering Earth* and *Ne Zha 2: The Devil's Fury*, which perfectly blend cultural artistry with technological innovation, have been globally released, sparking a wave of enthusiasm among international audiences.

Emotional resonance is key to touching hearts, and shared values ensure far-reaching influence. In today's world, more countries are paying close attention to Chinese culture and studying Chinese civilization. China is reshaping the Western-centric narrative in global cultural communication. By using platforms to proactively set agendas, China is shifting from being interpreted by others to self-expression. By using Chinese theories to interpret Chinese practices and refining theories through practical experience, China is deepening the world's understanding of its governance philosophy and development path, allowing compelling and insightful Chinese stories to foster empathy and resonance with global audiences.

3. Promoting International People-to-People Exchanges

People-to-people exchange serves as a vital bridge for enhancing mutual understanding and friendship among people of different countries, as well as an important way to expand the global reach of cultural influence. China continues to deepen international people-to-people exchanges, striving to build bridges of language connectivity, mutual understanding, and trust, as well as mutual learning among civilizations, thereby developing a framework that combines Chinese characteristics with a global perspective.

As of 2024, China had established 499 Confucius Institutes and 764 Confucius Classrooms across 161 countries and regions, with a cumulative enrollment of nearly 20 million students. The cultural activities hosted by overseas Chinese cultural centers, such as calligraphy, Tai Chi, martial arts, and traditional Chinese medicine, have been widely welcomed. Foreign participants not only learn Chinese language but also gain insights into China's history, culture, and social development, becoming ambassadors of

friendly exchanges between China and their countries.

Since its launch in 2001, the "Happy Chinese New Year" cultural program, organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, has been held annually for 25 consecutive years. This year will see the debut of its "Intangible Cultural Heritage New Year" edition, featuring nearly 500 performances and exhibitions across more than 100 countries and regions. On January 19, 2025, a flash mob performance titled "Happy Chinese New Year: Celebrating the Chinese New Year Together" and cultural experience activities were held in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. The event featured wonderful performances such as Chinese folk music, singing and dancing, lion dance, and martial arts, immersing local audiences in the unique charm of Chinese traditional culture and the joyful festive atmosphere of the Chinese New Year.

The implementation of a 240-hour visa-free transit policy, along with measures such as lowering the minimum tax refund threshold and increasing the number of duty-free shops, has further fueled the growing trend from "China Travel" to "China Shopping." From Beijing's Xiushui Street to Yiwu International Trade City, from Hainan's duty-free shops to Shenzhen's Huaqiangbei, an increasing number of foreign tourists are visiting China specifically for shopping. Data shows that during the 2025 May Day holiday, China's consumer-related industries recorded a 15.2% year-on-year increase in sales revenue, while inbound and outbound foreign traveler numbers surged 43.1%, with inbound tourism revenue rising nearly 90%. The phrase "Bring an empty suitcase to China" has become a practical tip circulating on overseas social platforms. Institutional opening-up measures are being transformed into a tangible appeal for international visitors.

Through decades of practice, China has demonstrated that a model of exchange rooted in culture and people-to-people bonds not only enhances national image but also contributes wisdom to global governance through the principle of civilization coexistence. At this pivotal historical juncture, China approaches the world with an open and inclusive stance, collaborating with all nations to build a better future for humanity.

Chapter Three

Global Significance of Consolidating Cultural Subjectivity

The consolidation of cultural subjectivity is reshaping the fundamental logic of the evolution of human civilization in the 21st century. It not only fosters cultural confidence in inheriting civilization and safeguards the diversity of the gene pool of human civilizations, but also provides a model for Global South countries to achieve modernization independently. Furthermore, it not only dismantles the monopoly of discourse held by cultural hegemony but also promotes the building of a community with a shared future for mankind based on the common values of all humanity.

I. Fostering a Cultural Character That Values Inheritance and Innovation

In the tide of modernization, the traditional cultures of some countries have been influenced by erroneous ideologies such as cultural nihilism and extreme cultural conservatism, leading to disruptions in the inheritance of civilization, crises of cultural identity, and weakness in cultural innovation, which in turn weaken their cultural subjectivity.

Cultural nihilism adopts a contemptuous and nihilistic attitude toward national culture and historical heritage, negating cultural subjectivity. The loss of cultural subjectivity often begins with blind worship or the utilitarian adoption of dominant cultures, manifesting as cultural compromise under geopolitical or economic pressures, using external standards to measure the value of local culture, and self-alienating into a comical performer to please others. A country that loses its cultural confidence will ultimately become a clown on the world stage of exchange among civilizations.

Extreme cultural conservatism, on the other hand, rigidly adheres to tradition, obstructing the innovative development of cultural subjectivity. When cultural subjectivity stagnates and refuses to resonate with the times, it not only stifles the vitality of cultural renewal but also eliminates the possibility of dialogue with diverse global civilizations, ultimately causing cultural vitality to wither in isolation.

China's approach to traditional culture, "promote the creative transformation and development of the best of the traditional Chinese culture," not only reflects its stance but also serves as a valuable reference for other nations in handling their traditional cultures. Consolidating cultural subjectivity requires a balance of upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground, safeguarding the spiritual roots of the nation while adopting an open and inclusive attitude toward other advanced cultures. Nations should approach their cultural achievements with a stance of inheritance and development, grasping the generative logic and practical value of culture in the evolution of globalization, and realizing the modern renewal of their indigenous cultures based on un-

derstanding the laws of cultural development.

II. Enhancing Cultural Confidence to Oppose Hegemonism

Certain countries have long pursued cultural hegemony, using their cultural values as the standard to denigrate and even interfere with other cultures. Through cultural infiltration and other means, they aim to influence and reshape the ideologies and social structures of other nations, ultimately achieving cultural dominance and political control.

At its core, cultural hegemony is a form of cultural imperialism. The underlying logic of theories such as the "clash of civilizations," "civilizational hierarchy," "universal values," and "Western civilization centrism" is steeped in the ideological trap of cultural imperialism. The narrative logic of cultural imperialism dismantles and shatters the narrative structures of other nations' historical development and destinies, fabricating and tampering with them to undermine the foundation of other countries' national identities.

Economic and military hegemony often collude with cultural hegemony, jointly undermining fairness and justice worldwide. Certain hegemonic powers are obsessed with the belief that might makes right, their own country comes first, and power equals justice. They brandish the big stick of sanctions and tariffs everywhere, frequently resorting to maximum pressure and bullying against other countries, undermining the international order, and putting human civilization at risk of regressing to a world governed by the law of the jungle where the weak are prey to the strong. Submitting to hegemony is akin to drinking poison to quench one's thirst or "feeding the tiger with one's flesh"; it does not bring peace but instead fuels greed and emboldens hegemonic behavior.

Faced with "tariff extortion," China has demonstrated its resolve to uphold justice and resist hegemony, relying on institutional strength, economic resilience, and cultural confidence to uphold international moral integrity. Nations must stand together on the right side of history, strengthening their resolve, integrity, and confidence to oppose hegemony, unilateralism, and coercion, and resolutely safeguard international fairness and justice. This will improve the global governance system and jointly promote the development and progress of human civilization.

III. Injecting Cultural Strength into the Modernization Drive

Following the Age of Exploration in the 15th century, some Western countries completed their primitive capital accumulation through internal exploitation and external colonization. They took the lead in completing capitalist industrialization through the Industrial Revolution and entered the ranks of developed nations. Modernization first

emerged in Western capitalist countries, with the majority of developed countries located in Europe and North America, or those significantly influenced by Western civilization. This has led to the common misconception that equates modernization with Westernization, and modernity with Western civilization.^① "Western civilization equates modern civilization" is a carefully constructed historical illusion, and "the single-linear historical view that all countries will ultimately converge on the Western institutional model" is a deliberately created discursive trap. Some late-developing countries often "equate modernization with Westernization" in their modernization process, falling into the deep pit of "moving towards modernization = severing ties with tradition = losing cultural subjectivity," thereby forfeiting their right to speak and their cultural confidence on their development issues, and ultimately becoming vassals of other nations.

As China advances toward modernization, it has actively learned from the West, drawing upon and absorbing all fine achievements of human civilization. However, in this process, China has not become dependent, mindlessly copied, or severed historical connections. In addition, it has drawn nourishment from its rich traditional culture, maintaining its cultural subjectivity and thus achieving the twin miracles of rapid economic development and long-term social stability. This has enabled China to forge a path of modernization that suits its national conditions and create a new form of human civilization.

China's path to modernization provides significant insights for countries in the Global South seeking to achieve modernization while maintaining their independence. Modernization is neither the exclusive privilege of a select few nations nor a rigid binary choice. It cannot be reduced to a simplistic process of uniformity or mere copying and pasting. For any nation embarking on modernization, adherence to universal modernization principles must be balanced with an approach rooted in national conditions and cultural characteristics.

IV. Embracing a Cultural Stance of Respect for Civilizational Diversity

The diversity of civilizations is a fundamental characteristic of the world. Just as biodiversity sustains life in nature, the diversity of civilizations embodies the very vitality of human existence on this planet. In recent years, the rise of anti-globalization sentiments has extended beyond politics and economics to the realm of culture, resulting in overlapping, multifaceted divergences and conflicts that have intensified cultural competition and clashes.

The world is home to over 200 countries and regions, more than 2,500 distinct ethnic groups, and a diverse array of religions. Distinct historical trajectories, national contexts, ethnic traditions, and social customs have nurtured diverse civilizations. Every civi-

^① Xi Jinping, "Building China's Strength and Advancing Its Rejuvenation Through Modernization Drive," *Qiushi Journal*, 2025 (1).

lization is deeply rooted in its native cultural soil, possessing unique attributes, strengths, and advantages. Recognizing and respecting the diversity of human civilization is essential for seeking common ground amid differences and universal harmony through diversity. Only through this approach can we replace estrangement with exchange, clashes with mutual learning, and superiority with coexistence. Only in this approach can we eliminate the root causes of international conflicts and forge a future of shared prosperity.

China is committed to making contributions to the advancement of human civilization. It has proposed the Global Civilization Initiative, advocating for the respect of diversity among civilizations, the promotion of common human values, the importance of cultural heritage and innovation, and the strengthening of international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation.

Civilization exchange and mutual learning serve as bridges connecting humanity's past, present, and future. Every dialogue between civilizations deepens our understanding of diversity, and every cultural integration enriches our interpretation of the common values of humanity.^① To consolidate cultural subjectivity and uphold the diversity of civilization, it is essential to enhance mutual exchange, learning, and adaptation, rather than isolation, exclusion, or replacement. Only in this way can the garden of world civilizations bloom in full colors and vitality.

V. Forging Cultural Consensus on Shared Values for All Humanity

In the current era, human society has made remarkable progress in economics, science, technology, and culture. However, at the same time, new challenges and complex conflicts are emerging and intertwining across the globe, plunging civilization into a crisis marked by sluggish economic growth, escalating political turmoil, and recurring cultural disputes. Humanity once again stands at a crossroads, facing critical choices about its future direction.

"Peace, development, equity, justice, democracy, and freedom are common values shared by all humanity. They embody the common ground among different civilizations in both their interpretation and realization, and help to unite the will and strength of all peoples in addressing global challenges and advancing the collective interests of humankind. Peace and development are the common endeavors of all peoples; fairness and justice are their collective aspirations; and democracy and freedom are their universal pursuits. Although nations differ in their histories, cultures, institutions, and levels of development, the awakening of cultural subjectivity has inspired people in all nations to universally pursue these common values of humanity.

These common values transcend geographical, ethnic, and racial distinctions, as well

^① Research Group of the School of Philosophy of Renmin University of China, "The Construction of Cultural Subjectivity and Civilization Mutual Learning," *China Higher Education Social Sciences*, 2025 (3).

as ideological, social, and developmental differences. They represent the broadest common ground of globally recognized principles, aligning with historical trends and contemporary imperatives. They provide a guiding framework for building a better world together, an intellectual foundation for reforming the global governance system, strategic solutions for addressing common challenges, and a cultural consensus that strengthens collective efforts to forge a community with a shared future for humankind.

Conclusion

In the vast starry sky of human civilization, Chinese culture, imbued with a distinct subjectivity, shines like a radiant star, traversing the long river of history, illuminating the path of the present, and guiding the direction of the future. It carries the wisdom and aspirations of the Chinese nation across five millennia, weathering storms and hardships, growing ever more resilient, and thriving with renewed vitality in the New Era.

The culture subjectivity of the Chinese nation is the wellspring of national confidence. From the nurturing, origins, and flourishing of Chinese civilization, to the perseverance amid the tribulations and dimming of cultural brilliance in modern times, and onward to the unprecedented revitalization and consolidation in the New Era, the cultural subjectivity of the Chinese nation has remained a resilient bond, unwaveringly binding the Chinese nation together and serving as the foundation upon which the Chinese people stand proudly on the world stage. In the grand journey of Chinese modernization, this subjectivity gives a new lease of life to Chinese culture, serving as a powerful spiritual force that drives the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The current era is characterized by rapid and profound transformations, most notably the collective rise of the Global South. The shared march of these countries toward modernization is a defining event in world history, and an unprecedented feat in the advancement of human civilization. In the face of the dynamic interplay of global cultures, strengthening cultural subjectivity serves not only as the spiritual cornerstone of China's path to modernization but also offers valuable insights for countries in the Global South as they collectively strive for modernization.

The diversity of civilizations is the backdrop of the world. Looking ahead, let us uphold tradition with steadfastness, embrace innovation through exchange, and, amid the waves of globalization, compose a harmonious symphony of cultural exchange and mutual learning. As cultures shine together, they will weave a vibrant and colorful tapestry of human civilization.

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