

## Chapter 2

# National Spirit and Spiritual Home

### 1 General Definition and Philosophical Understanding of National Spirit

#### 1.1 *National Identity Crisis and Promotion of National Spirit in the Era of Globalization*

The era that we are experiencing is truly an era transforming from “national history” to “world history”, during which such concepts as “globalization”, “liberalism”, “world citizen”, etc., has become accepted by the mainstream discourse penetrating politics, economy, culture as well as people’s daily life. Any research on “national spirit”, in the context advocating openness and freedom, would unavoidably appear to be attempts to enclose oneself or to move against the trend of times. What needs to be taken note of, however, is the question that when globalization of world economy and world cultures may have brought material benefits and cultural innovations to all nation states, it may also bring huge impacts on and great challenges to the local national cultures, making the question true to all nations of the world: how to preserve their own great cultural traditions when adapting themselves to the mainstream culture of modern society. Behind this question is a crisis of national spirit and national cultural identity in global communication. This is because basically no nation in the world is a copy of any other nation, but a unique cultural community that has forged in the long history of merging national spirit and national existence. A nation needs not only a solid economic basis and strong political cohesion as its basis for survival, but also more importantly a solid national spirit and national culture as the spiritual support and driving force for the national development. If the cultural communication in today’s open atmosphere leads to forgetting one’s own national spirit or national culture, then globalization, when bringing material benefits to people, will inevitably cause loss of spirit and culture that no nations could afford. For example, many nationalities which had developed great cultures in history have lost their traces in today’s world during the

process of “national history”, whereas some more ancient nations are still robust in today’s world, having survived the tests of history under the support of their great national spirit and cultural traditions. A retrospect on history would make us understand that whether in the context of “national history” or “world history”, the intrinsic spirit and cultural traditions of the nation should never be lost; instead, the great culture of the nation should be integrated with the world cultural community, and thus gains a new life in the new era through communication and contacts with other cultures. Therefore, globalization and the national identity crisis will not extinguish the efforts of all nations to further develop and advocate their own national spirits, but may help to waken people’s national consciousness that have remained dormant for long, and will stimulate people’s identification and pursuit of their own national spirit.

Apparently, what globalization brings to us first may be impacts and challenges to the national spirit identity, mainly from three aspects: (1) Due to some problems facing the human kind (such as environment pollution, nuclear threats, etc.), nation states have to concede part of the rights to a greater human community; (2) Global communication calls for a universal cultural spirit and value norms to bolster the right to existence of the “world citizens”; (3) New concepts of “individualism” and “personal responsibility” brought by globalization as well as the new thoughts of “personal right” and “personal freedom” brought by neo-liberalism challenge the traditional “collectivism” and parochial nationalism. The impacts of these three aspects are fatal according to some scholars, who even refer to globalization as the “razor of national spirit.”

We believe that the political, economic, and cultural challenges of globalization on the national spirit do not totally destroy the existence of the national spirit; instead, they give national spirit a new life in the new era. First, when there still exist all kinds of confrontation among human beings, nation states remain the dominant form for people to defend their own rights and remain effective communities for normal existence for people of all nationalities. If the United Nations as an international organization beyond nation states is not able to represent all the nation states’ national interests completely fairly and equally, the national spirit will not disintegrate politically. Second, though global communication has become the overriding trend for modern mankind, it may not totally replace, and indeed may call for, the presence of “locality”. This is because though the living sphere of the modern mankind may be expanding, yet as a being of nature and society, he must live in a limited area, and his thoughts must embody a specific culture. Therefore, “globalization” and “locality” are still interdependent and interchangeable, at present and in the future as well, so the spiritual world of the nationalities will not disappear totally in the wave of globalization. Moreover, in the current trend of economic globalization, cultural diversity is still needed to stimulate new ideas and innovations in science. Economic globalization is possible just because different economic systems and management models can be transplanted among different countries and nations, and different types of culture are related to the spiritual life of the nationalities. The prominence of one culture should not dwarf the existence value of other cultures. The interaction and confrontation among different cultures

may lead to profound integration of world civilization, but in the integration process, the value and nature of the different cultural spirits will not be completely dissolved, but still function as unique parts in the whole system of world culture. There have been times in China's history when "A hundred schools of thoughts contend" in the Spring and Autumn Period, when metaphysics school merged with Buddhism in Wei and Jin Dynasties, and when Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism coexisted, which are clear demonstrations of the possibility of cultural integration characterized by cultural diversity. Lastly, though market economy emphasizes "individualism" and "personal freedom", but one also needs a definite identity to "live in the society," and we cannot do without our own spiritual home in the communication with the world, because without home one is only a drifter without a root, while acknowledgement of the national spirit in fact identifies with the spiritual root that the modern mankind realized self-confirmation and self-transcendence.

## ***1.2 Theoretical Background and Modern Context of National Spirit***

In our academic research of the national spirit, we find that the concept of the national spirit was first raised in the field of philosophy. Montesquieu, an eighteenth century French philosopher, said in *The Spirit of Laws*: "Mankind are influenced by various causes: by the climate, by the religion, by the laws, by the maxims of government, by precedents, morals, and customs; whence is formed a general spirit of nations"(Montesquieu: *The Spirit of Laws*). Some scholars believe that what Montesquieu said about "mankind" here actually refers to all nationalities, and the "general spirit" refers to the "general spirit of a nationality" and the "national spirit". Though the concept and connotation of the national spirit were still not very clear in his work, he did reach the very core part of national spirit.

A little more recently German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder put forward the concept of national spirit in the strict sense of thoughts and academy. Starting from discussion of the general human spirit, he extended to "time spirit" and "national spirit". He argued that the national spirit is the core in the progress of a country or a nation, which is the collective spirit formed and inherited from generation to generation as a result of common language, educational manners, systems, culture and art shared by all members of a specific community because of shared national features, geological conditions and historical traditions. It is the core of culture, generated in the interaction between mankind and the exterior environment. Herder lived in the late eighteenth century Germany, when the German nation suffered from serious political division and cultural depression. The German intellectuals thus held a strong jealousy towards the French culture, and felt very strongly the political division at home. Therefore, Herder put forward "cultural nationalism", which was an attempt to explain nationalities from the perspective of

culture, and advocated national equality and diversity. He argued that every civilization has its own unique spirit—the national spirit—that has created everything and understood everything. He also argued that the national spirit is the core of the national community, and that the national culture is the product of the national spirit. Every nation has its own right to development, and all kinds of flowers should flourish in the great harmonious garden of human civilization, with all cultures inspiring each other and integrating with each other. Herder's advocacy of the national culture and national spirit was not limited to the cultural aspect, however. It was aimed at promoting the political unity of the German nation. At that time and also later, his ideas worked as a positive guidance for the German nationalists to promote political unity through advocating national culture and national spirit (Wang 2003b).

After Herder, the great German classical philosopher Hegel took “national spirit” into his discussion of “absolute spirit” and “world history”. Hegel explained national spirit in details in the world history part of his discussion of objective spirit. He argued that the world history is the history of spiritual conceptions development of all nations, and that reason dominates the development process of the world history, that the state is the undertaker of reason as well as the externalization of spiritual conception, so the world spirit is demonstrated in the totality of all national spirits. As a special demonstration of world spirit, national spirit takes the form of cultural traditions and customs, such as the ethics spirit of Chinese nation represented by Confucius and Mencius, the reason spirit of ancient Greek nation represented by Socrates, Aristotle, the religious spirit of the Middle Ages represented by Thomas Aquinas, and the speculative spirit of the modern German nation represented by Kant and Hegel J.P.

German modern life philosopher Dilthey was the first to criticize Hegel's concept of substantial national spirit, who, in his “Introduction to the Human Sciences”, explained his idea of national spirit through the concept of survival, the different ways of survival, and life unity, arguing: “In an expression of life through all its variety—such as its laws, language and religion—has demonstrated the close ties among peoples, individual life national unity is the soul, the spirit of national, regional, and so some of the terms of the body, such as the mysterious expression out. Only by first understanding the different sides of a nation's life, such as its language, religion and art, and understanding how they influence each other, can we clearly detect and analyze the meaning of such expressions as the national soul, the national spirit and national culture” (Dilthey 2002).

### ***1.3 Human Life Activities and National Spirit***

However, the critique against substantialized national spirit contains an undercurrent of nihilism, regarding national spirit as an inflammatory political discourse invented by nationalists, and that the substantial national spirit has never really existed in history or in reality. In particular, the situation of contemporary

globalization provides some factual basis for the national nihilism. But when we study the true nature of national spirit from the perspective of human life activities, both Hegel's substantial national spirit and modern national nihilism ideas can be fused into a kind of tension to provide understanding in a new theoretical paradigm, that is, the substantial national spirit make it possible for it to go beyond the scope of human life, to be an isolated existence in the pure spiritual world of theory, and can only serve as an empty theoretical contemplation of "ego" consciousness, thus losing spiritual life force of inheritance and transcendence. The national spirit nihilists, on the other hand, apparently ignored the connection between spirit and human life activities, taking national spirit only as theoretical concepts needed by certain ideology, or confounding national spirit with the common sense national consciousness to some extent. If you follow this logic, however, it can be said that no nation may have the cultural spirit and philosophy that have made their own survival possible, because if national spirit can not become the spiritual core of national heritage and development, then philosophy and national culture can only be an idealistic fabrication since they are the exterior expressions of national spirit, which goes against our identification with our own national culture and philosophy, as no one can deny that there has already existed a national cultural tradition before one's coming to the world. Therefore, from the nation's own survival transcendence, we believe that the "spirit" in "national spirit" is not only different from Hegel's "purely abstract concept of entity", but also from the "Mind" or "Consciousness", nor is it a subjective idealistic construction of people, but rather a general life expression of ideals, beliefs and principles after conscious self-reflection—it is not only the individuals' understanding and internalization of their own lives and outside world, but also the whole humanity's condensation and sublimation of its cultural life in social and historical practice.

Human physical life, spiritual life, and social and cultural life constitute a complete human life connection, and in this trinity of life, physical life is the life of man as man, without which the human emotional body, spiritual characteristics and socio-cultural nature cannot be demonstrated, and it is the human body's emotional traits that ensure the individuality and selfness of human survival. For example, the first existentialist philosopher Kierkegaard opposed Hegel's substantial spirit with specific individuals and their inner feelings to replace the abstract existence of rational concept with individual lives; Feuerbach and Marx also criticised Hegel's "rationality free from human bodies". They both highlighted the significance of the human person's spiritual life and the social and cultural life starting from the physical life. However, the physical life of the human spirit is only the starting point and the field of human spirits sublimation, but not the final destination of the spirit of life and socio-cultural life; it makes people aware of their own existence in the world as a unique person, but cannot establish a common association between self and others in the interaction with the outside world; what truly connects him and the world to establish an association of life is the spiritual life and the social and cultural life of their people's lives beyond the realm of the individual, as so to be integrated into a general life. Only in the category of species life can people stand

out from the world of the ordinary beings, and get the meaning of existence by association with spiritual life, social and cultural life and the world.

The concept of species life originated from Feuerbach's anthropologism; according to him, the difference between animals and humans is that "the existence of a single animal is just an animal; while humans exist both as individuals and as a whole humanity," and the existence of species life is the highest essence of humans with emotions. With a more profound philosophical and practical understanding of elucidation Karl Marx wrote in his "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844": "Man is a species-being, not only because he practically and theoretically makes the species—both his own and those of other things—his object, but also—and this is simply another way of saying the same thing—because he looks upon himself as the present, living species, because he looks upon himself as a universal and therefore free being" (Marx 2000). According to Marx, it is man's species consciousness, species essence, and species life that defines this special species life—man—through production practice, and the true life of man is species life, and freedom and self-consciousness are man's species essence, while in the state of alienation, man just has individual consciousness of existence, but not conclusive evidence of the existence of his own species, and can only realize surpassing and returning of species life when demonstrating the overall spiritual life and the social and cultural life.

As a species life with group consciousness, man always lives to show his value of life in a community life. As species consciousness exists, any individual of any nation is not a purely solitary individual, but an important link in the species life of the whole nation, so practices of any individual in that nation is not only just an individual self performance, but also have borne deep imprints by the cultural traditions and national spirit in his consciousness, a national "imprint" that has made personal contacts in every nation possible by using the same national language, having common values and ideals of life, sharing all the responsibilities in the moment of national peril and common suffering, which is a manifestation of a wholistic life integrated by all individuals of that nation.

Based on a common national consciousness, each individual in the nation becomes a life cell that receives life's education as well as gives others the education. This is because as every person lives in the world, he or she cannot avoid the infiltration of the nation's culture through language. In specific life situation, we will consciously or unconsciously externalise the cultural spirit that we understand, thus influencing the life groups with whom we have had interactions. Different from ordinary education, this kind of nation education helps to extend life in traditions, and pass down national spirit in culture. It is in a spirit of national common sense and national life in the national consciousness that the national spirit is formed, which eventually becomes the spiritual power to maintain national culture, national survival hub and support the human life activity. In a sense, this self-generating and self-transcendence spirit is not only the root that makes the nation to survive and develop, but also a demonstration of the national character, which does not only characterize the nature and the human dimensions of national life activities, but also becomes people's emotional home due to its value attributes. This is because the

stimulation and enhancement of individual creativity in the nation comes first from their own identification with and respect of their own national spirit, and when individuals can not easily transcend the limitations of the individual to achieve a successful life, they will have to be integrated into the overall national spirit, in which to find self-confirmation through common forms of self-existence, as well as to gain emotional and spiritual support. Also, in any nation, the nation can become a community of true life only through the consistent inner spirit and conscious and unconscious awareness of everyone in the nation that the enhancement of their living circumstances is closely related to the spirit of nation,. Therefore, in the intrinsic unity of national spirit and national survival, we can explore both the situation of human existence transformation from the national spirit generation, and can also discover the development of national spirit and its rich social historical connotations from the improvement of human lives.

## 2 National Spirit and National Culture

As we distinguish national spirit from national consciousness and national culture as a self-transcendent spiritual life in contrast with national survival, the connections between national spirit and national cultures (especially the nation's traditional cultural spirit) should also be noted. In this regard, the basic consensus reached among researchers is that the national spirit is the soul of the national culture, and the spiritual power of national development and national progress. The reason why the national spirit is the soul of the national culture is that the national spirit is the mainstrain in national cultural history and has been inherited by most people for longest time in national culture. Generally speaking, the national culture is created by a nation in a certain environment as a reflection of the politics and economy. National spirit has extremely rich content and elements: a narrow sense culture (ie, spiritual culture) contains national psychology, ways of thinking, aesthetics, ethics, ideals, beliefs, values, science and technology, literature and art, etc. It is the objectification of national spirit as well as the carrier and reflector of national spirit. Chinese people have created a history of five thousand years of rich culture, both of which reflect the cultural essence of the national spirit, such as social commitment, harmony in diversity, self-improvement, etc., but also contain some cultural dross contrary to the national spirit. National spirit as the soul of the national culture should be the condensation and upgrading of the national culture as the overall demonstration of the life of people on the basis of cultural values created by people.

From the point of view of national culture psychology, national spirit can be described as a kind of social consciousness, reflecting a nation's social existence and social life, and is the most essential and concentrated demonstration of the national culture. It is not, however, a simple self-consciousness of the nation, but a cultural consciousness with specific orientation of ideals, beliefs and values that are gradually developed in the interaction in the national community; it is the totality of

national character, ethics, and values identified and observed by the majority and is forged in the long course of historical development. Because cultural psychology is a special cultural trait internalized, accumulated in the minds of members of the nation demonstrated in attitude towards life, emotions, ethics, ways of thinking, aesthetics and values and other factors, it has a powerful national cohesion effect when the nation's members interact with nature and society (Wang and Ying 2011). A nation cannot unite its forces, form a tradition, or, even less, stand in the world community unless it has noble national character, firm ambition and lofty ideals. The national spirit of the Chinese nation, for example, formed in the history of five thousand years of development, has been the powerful spiritual force for the Chinese nation to move ahead against all difficulties, as well as a strong spiritual support for the Chinese people in the coming years to make greater achievement for the rejuvenation of the nation.

### ***2.1 Symbolized Forms of National Spirit: Material Culture, Spiritual Culture and Symbolic Culture***

In a sense, people are cultural creatures, the only creatures on earth who are capable of both inventing and using symbols to express the connection between their own lives and the world, in the process of which the human spirit as a metaphysical being needs "para-metaphysical" symbols to work as an intermediary to show the implication and meaning of spirit. The national spirit, as the spirit of man written in large letters, also needs a symbolized expression for its function in the survival of the nation so as to produce spiritual motivation for the nation. In our opinion, the symbolized forms of expression of the national spirit mainly include the three aspects of national culture: the material culture, spiritual culture and symbolic culture.

1. Material culture: Any nation survives and realizes self-transcendence by all the spiritual development of certain genes, but it should not be ignored that nation as the actual existence of ethnic community distinguishes itself from other nations not only in the national spirit and national consciousness, but also, more essentially, in its basic characters due to its unique geographical environment. This basic character of the nation is most obvious in the mode of production and material and cultural achievements of the nation's substance, such as improved production tools, scientific and technological inventions, which are crystallization of the nation's collective wisdom. These areas also reflect the physical aspect of the unique national character and national spirit.
2. Spiritual culture: With the division of labor of nationalities in the spirit of the production and material production, aesthetics and ideals of people are generated from the utilitarian material culture to form the spiritual dimension of national culture, which constitutes the nation's cultural psychology and cultural spirit, the most metaphysical aspect in national consciousness, which is also the



spiritual cultural aspect that contains the nation's philosophy, religions, ideologies, artistic psychology, ethics, values and ideals.

3. Symbolic culture: From the different perspective of national spirit, there is an important, often ignored, aspect divorced from the material and spiritual culture but also linked to material-spiritual culture. This aspect is symbolic culture, also referred to as "cultural III" symbolic culture by some scholars. In fact, symbolic culture has long been the study subject for foreign scholars, from the perspective of psychology, philosophy, aesthetics, anthropology. Psychologist Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, philosopher Ernst Cassirer, esthetician Susan Lange, anthropologists like Victor Witter Turner and more—all have studied the symbolic culture and made many important findings. In China, the symbolic culture is essential in daily life without much awareness by its users. For example, the ancient Chinese dragon totem worship originates from the symbolic culture of "dragon as the symbol of righteousness and self-improvement" in Chinese national spirit, while Chinese hieroglyphs are embodiment the cultural characteristics of Chinese nation.

Judging from the perspective of symbolic culture, all man-made symbols, such as language symbols, art symbols and all other symbols, are derived from symbolization of the interaction between members of various nations and tools abstraction, all representing a national cultural heritage and national spirit characteristics. Karl Marx said: "the development of society, to produce such a symbol, but also increasingly produce material suitable for such a symbol, and after the society is trying to get rid of this material, a symbol, if not arbitrary, it requires that a material having a certain performance conditions. For example, the language symbols have their own history, such as phonetic and so on" (Marx and Engels 1979).

Symbolic form of national spirit can not only be divided into three different cultural levels, but can also be divided into two mutually opposing but associated cultural trends. Charles Percy Snow, an English state, such as the British Snow argued that there are two opposing cultures in Western culture: one is culture of sciences characterized by intelligence, the other one is the culture of humanities characterized by ethics, two cultures having a trend to diverge and break, which implies a huge risk that the material and scientific culture and the spiritual and ethical cultures are not in harmony, which could lead to the materialization of modern people and desertification of their spiritual world. Under this cultural context, it is not only reasonable but also necessary to propose to cultivate and promote the national spirit, as the national spirit of the new era calls for promoting the great traditional cultures of the nation in the context of globalization, can promote the national cultural traditions, and learn from foreign cultures, integrating material culture and spiritual culture, science and culture and humanistic culture, traditional culture and modern culture, so as to nurture a new cultural spirit and step out of the current spiritual predicament.

Therefore, it is believed that the contemporary national spirit will realise its self-inheritance and self-transcendence while integrating spiritual culture and

symbolic culture, science cultures and humanities cultures, thus promoting the national culture as well as promoting the national and social progress and development.

## ***2.2 National Spirit and Cultural Tradition***

In any era, advocating and cultivating the national spirit cannot become a monologue of the era divorced from traditions. Traditions are the lifestyle, ways of thinking, values and customs formed in history and functioning in the lives of generations of people. Traditions do not equate cultural classics, and inheriting the great traditions does not equate interpretation and understanding the cultural classics; inheriting the great cultural traditions of the nation should be combining the good part of the nation's traditional spirit with the contemporary historical context in the practice of survival in the modern and contemporary times, thus showing the heritage of traditional spirit. Generally speaking, the cultural traditions pass down basically in three parts, which are "ethics tradition", "political tradition" and "academic tradition". Ethics tradition can be said to be a spiritual tradition, political tradition is a traditional political system, and the academic tradition is the traditional academic system and educational system. Among them, the ethics tradition occupies the center position of political tradition and academic tradition, governing inheritance of the entire national culture and tradition as well as communications with the outside world. In ancient Greece, for example, the ethics tradition is the Logos and the Nous, thus producing the first Western-style democracy and civilian-style academic education, and also becoming the spiritual home of Western thought. The ethics tradition of ancient Chinese culture is the ethic ideas of "Golden Mean and Harmony", "Universal Benevolence", thus producing a nation-governing concept of "self-cultivating, family-regulating, state-ordering, then the land great governed," the "Emperor-Government" political system, and the imperial examination system lasting over a thousand years. With no doubt, the ethics tradition, political tradition and academic tradition constitute a cross section of the internal character of cultural traditions, while from the vertical point of view, the nation's cultural heritage can be divided into "great tradition" and "little tradition", two concepts first proposed by American scholar Robert Redfield. In his view, "Great tradition refers to a cultural tradition of the elites recorded by the writings under their control, while little tradition refers to a cultural tradition represented by the lives of folks or peasants, therefore, the former reflects the culture of the upper and the intelligentsia, mostly the elite culture or refined culture by the thinkers, and religionists, while the latter is the lower culture of the general public" (Chen 1996). If this concept is applied here to study the national spirit and national culture, it can be said that the great tradition refers to the nation's overarching framework of inner spirit, character and external behavioral norms forged in the interaction between the mainstream culture and the elite culture in the historical development of the nation, which is also the main content of the national spirit, often defining the development

and external characterization of the national spirit. In the sense of history, it is the “official history” shining in history books, while in the political sense, it symbolizes the “orthodox” position of the many ancient regimes.

The formation of great tradition is closely related to the nation’s traditional ways of thinking as well as certain social and historical conditions and cultural backgrounds. Once formed and generally accepted, they become thinking habits of the nation, and thus deciding people’s ways and approaches to problems as well as deciding all the social practices and cultural events of the nation’s people. For example, the great tradition as the official culture of China is characterized by Confucianism as its main body, and naturally the traditional Chinese ways of thinking are Confucian way of thinking of “harmonious but different” at the synchronical level to a large extent, which is shown clearly in the formation process of the spirit of Chinese nation. As is known to many people, the agriculture-dominated ancient Chinese society relied heavily on nature to survive, it gradually developed a “nature-ethics” consciousness characterized by integration of heaven, earth, man, and society. This simple “nature-ethics” consciousness can be said to be a germinal Chinese national spirit in the transitional “being-in-itself” to “being-for-itself” period, during which Chinese nation’s identity is connected by the blood tie and geopolitical relations, and thus forming the basic spirit of Chinese cultural tradition and ethics in the long-time education of ethics. With no doubt, the ethical spirit also has a different historical connotations in the development of ancient Chinese society. In pre-Qin period, with the decline of concept of “destiny” and the rise of the concept of “humanity”, Taoism has developed the thoughts of “Tao models itself after nature” as well as “Tao of humanity” should conform to the “Tao of Heaven”. The “Tao of humanity” in Taoism can be said to be the ethics of society originated from the way of nature; though not exactly the same with the Confucian thoughts of “internal saints and external kings” as well as the ethics of “self-cultivating, family-regulating, state-ordering, then the land great governed”, the two have similarities in constructing a harmonious human relations, thus the two thoughts merged together in Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods when wars were still frequent. In Han Dynasty and Tang Dynasty, the humanistic spirits of “virtues” and “harmonious but different” continued to grow in an open, and harmonious living situation, and some ethical thoughts of Pre-Qin period were turned into reality in the social and political aspects. Emperor Hanwu, for example, practiced “Banning All the Other School of Thought, Holding in Esteem for Confucian School” in his early reign, the Confucian School had already integrated the many thoughts of Taoism, School of Yin-yang (Naturalists), Legalism and other schools, an ethical thought with “harmony and golden mean” as its ultimate goal. In late Han Dynasty, Buddhism was introduced to China mingled with native Confucianism and Taoism, and gradually a trend of co-existence of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism appeared, after much confrontation and communication, finally forging the three-dimensional framework of Chinese ethical spirits with “Virtues Personality, Taoist Heart, Buddhist Character” as the core values due to the powerful cohesion of Chinese nation. Meanwhile, the Tang rulers adapted to the requirement of times to build a multicultural value system in the political culture

and ideology with Chinese culture as the main body, which not only enhanced the cohesion of the Chinese nation at that time, but also effectively promoted integration of the various ethnic groups as a good foundation for a “unified multi-ethnic nation” political framework.

After the Song and Ming dynasties, however, with the strengthening of centralized government, ethnic conflicts became increasingly complex, the nation’s spiritual culture wilted down, autocratic monarchy strictly controlled and opposed any thoughts oriented to independence, freedom, progress, and democracy, to the extent that it allowed no room for the existence of any unconforming persons. As a result, after continuous contraction and degradation, the great Chinese ethics were gradually reduced to a conservative, enclosed, and arrogant national consciousness.

It was not until the “modern era” of China, imposed by invasion of Western thoughts, that the ideas of “change” and group consciousness were stimulated due to the introduction of the spirit of modern Western Enlightenment rationality into China. Since the Opium War, Chinese nation has suffered greatly from authoritarian rule at home, and bully from Western powers, so the national spirit drooped. Some far-sighted intellectuals in China, realizing the national crisis and increasingly flagging spirit of the people, began to take action as well as to write, proposing many ideas, such as “the New People”, “Standing Man”, “Saving Hearts”, “Awareness of Ethics”, and “the Last Awareness”, in order to enlighten the public consciousness, inspire the national spirit, create new people of the nation, build a great national spirit, and realize the ultimate goal of making China a strong nation and its people rich. After the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement, Marxism spread in China, bringing the modern Enlightenment thought to the New Cultural Movement in the pursuit of “science” and “democracy” as the dimension of the national spirit; after great revolutions of blood and fire, the Chinese nation has, like the rebirth of a phoenix after nirvana, forged a modern national spirit characterized by pursuit of justice, equality, science, and democracy, as it has gone through great hardship, suffering self-renovation, and self-strengthening on the basis of spiritual genes formed in the ancient times “self-reliance, benevolence, people first, keeping pace with the times” (Zhang 2003).

In contrast to the great tradition, the little tradition is just a small tributary of national culture, often as a symbol of a secular culture and civilian culture. It may be “unofficial history” among folks, or “heresy” opposed by the ruling class, but this kind of tradition often has a more vitality, which in a subtle way quietly spreading among folks, promoting the formation of customs of the nation, intrinsic in the group consciousness of the nation, separated from as well as integrated with the great tradition in the development of the nation, it has become an indispensable part of the national spirit.

The great tradition and the little tradition in the national culture constitute a two-dimensional structure of the national spirit. These two cultural traditions may be against each other, or even mutually dissolving in certain historical periods and specific ethnic geographic area; this is because in particular historical context, the ruling class often tried to blockade and kill the cultural traditions and thoughts as “heresy” that do not conform to its own ideology in order to maintain its “orthodox”

position, such as “Burning Books and Burying Confucian Scholars Alive” in Qin Dynasty, suppression of scientific ideas in the Middle Ages, “Publication Ban” in modern Germany, etc., in which the little traditions have been restricted as the opposing forces of “orthodox”. Under such circumstances, the development of national culture and national spirit experienced hard times; more often in history, however, “great tradition” as orthodox complement and integrate with little tradition, which is also the prerequisite of and driving force behind the continuous improvement of national culture and national spirit as well as national revitalization and development of the country.

### ***2.3 Fusion of the National Spirit Under Different Cultures and Belief Patterns***

It is impossible for a nation with a long history to exist without their own national spirit and cultural traditions, and a country must carry forward the good traditional culture and national spirit to realized the revitalization of the nation. Every nation has its own national character different from other nations, which is forged by the common needs due to living together over history as well as common destiny and ideals, the national spirit being its core and the cultural tradition and customs being its outside feature. So in the forming of all nations in the human history, different types of national culture are formed due to different national spirit.

According to Oswald Spengler, a modern Western culture scholar, a comparative culture rather than the continuous progress of a culture should be the focus when studying the national history or world history, and the whole history of mankind is a cultural arena for all kinds of culture to grow and die without outside interference. He divided all ethnic nationalities in the world into two civilized cultures and primitive cultures, arguing that human history is created by the civilized culture, so “there is no human history not only before the birth of culture, but also after it had completed a final finite form of itself, showing the demise of the last potential that prescribed its lively development and meaningful existence” (Spengler 1991). He also argued that the world history can be divided into eight separate cultural forms in time and space: Egyptian culture, Indian culture, Babylonian culture, Chinese culture, classical culture (Greek and Roman culture), the Islamic culture, the Mexican culture and Western culture. Like living organisms, all cultures experience three unavoidable stages in enlightenment, the development and decline (pre-culture stage, culture stage and civilization stage, the last of which indicates a degradation and demise of culture. All the seven cultural forms before Western culture, for example, have died, only leaving a few relics of civilization in the world history. Though still having some vitality, the Western culture, already in a warring state period, will soon step into decline.

According to modern American scholar Samuel Huntington, the most significant issue of the contemporary world is the clash of civilizations. Civilization,

according to his definition, is an entity of culture, and civilization and culture are involved in the comprehensive way of life of a nation. The main contemporary civilizations according to him include: Chinese civilization, Japanese civilization, Indian civilization, Islamic civilization, Western civilization and Latin civilization. Different from Spengler's division of the cultural patterns of world history, in his idea the Egyptian culture, ancient Greek and Roman culture, the Mexican culture and Babylonian culture have been integrated into other cultures and thus they no longer have independent positions. As each civilization has its own political philosophy and economic model, this has become the source of the contemporary world situation changes and political conflict. Of course, he also talked about the trend of integration of various civilizations and the possibility of a universal civilization. The differences and clashes between civilizations, however, are substantial, which could even bring to the world a catastrophe.

Spengler and Huntington certainly have their reasonable parts in their division of world historical and cultural traditions and contemporary world civilizational place, as civilization and culture are often intertwined. To some extent, history is made up of culture and tradition being inherited as well as civilization that survives and prospers. Culture is the everlasting spirit of national history, while civilization is the crystallization and demonstration of culture in certain nation and in certain time of history. Culture and civilization, on the other hand, both contain a kind of national spirit, which cannot be completely removed even in the era of global exchanges. However, culture itself has an inherent nature of mutual assimilative transformation, so the ancient Greek culture has been merged into modern Western civilization, becoming an implicit but active element spiritual factor. Christian civilization also shines with images of several ancient cultural traditions. Even the vicissitudes of Chinese national culture that has gone through much difficulty in history is embedded with a vein of Buddhism beside the mainstream Confucianism and Taoism. This has brought a "harmonious but different" character to the national spirit constructed on the basis of cultural traditions and contemporary civilization, making it possible to develop new perspective and space in the context of global exchanges.

Thus different types of cultural traditions are also embedded with diversity of the national spirit, and different nations have demonstrated fully the unique charm of their unique spirit and culture during the transformation of national history to world history. However, different national spirits are not completely isolated from each other, they can accommodate each other in various ways.

The primary origin of mutual accommodation of national spirits is the social interaction between nations. Despite its separate living space, way of life and cultural traditions, as a cultural and geographical concept, no nation in the world can completely survive and develop in a self-enclosed, self-satisfied condition; social exchanges between people must be further extended to groups exchanges between nations, mainly in three ways: (1) economic exchanges, (2) the political and military exchanges, (3) cross-cultural exchanges. Of course, these three exchange methods are not independent of each other, but are intrinsically related. In some sense, economic exchanges and political and military exchanges between

nations are external exchanges, both having a strong utilitarian purpose, that in order to realize economic complementarity and political communication, between the various ethnic and political economy on the communication, these two exchanges may either bring a win-win situation to both nations, or bring suppression to a weak nation by a strong nation politically and economically. Compared to the previous two, the cultural exchanges between nations are a kind of intrinsic exchanges. It may be inherent in the economic, political and military exchanges among nations, often occurring in a natural process of interaction and in turn promoting the political and economic exchanges between nations, as well as promoting understanding and development between different nations. The exchanges in ancient times between nations and with the world did not have a strong cultural purpose at first, but rather were subject to immediate needs of survival environment, economic interests and political expansion. For example, the first exchange between ancient Greeks and ancient Egyptians was to exchange necessary life goods, while the exchanges between China and India, Persia and other countries also took cotton and silk as media. Of course, the economic exchange process inevitably involves cultural differences and understanding, which is reflected in language communication, different values, and so on. The cultural channel due to economic exchanges have vastly facilitated the development of almost all nations. Greek language can be attributed to the Phoenicians, while its philosophy to ancient Egyptians. Almost all great philosophers of ancient Greece had experiences of visiting Egypt to study. Jews also obtained human and material resources from Egypt to become an independent nation. Originated in India, Buddhism flourished in China, from where it was further spread to Japan. Japan learns from China not only spiritual concepts but also political institutions, educational concepts and industrial technology in Japan's exchanges with China.

In ancient times with underdeveloped transportation, communication and cultural exchange were very slow, yet with profound impact. Many goals that could not be achieved by economic, political or military means were often achieved in cultural integration. In ancient times, there was one time in the Warring States period that Chinese Han nationality were at odds with the surrounding minorities. Although Emperor Qin Shi Huang unified China, he had to send General Meng Tian to build the Great Wall to prevent the invasion of the Xiongnu people. In the early Han Dynasty, the Xiongnu forces grew stronger; they invaded the weak countries, and often made trouble to the Han border. Han emperor Liu Bang had personally led troops to fight, but was besieged by Xiongnu cavalry in Baideng for seven days and nights. Using a trick proposed by Chen Ping by bribing heavily on a wife of Modu Chanyu the Xiongnu Emperor, Emperor Liu Bang finally got out of danger. Since then, Liu Bang had to adopt a peace-making marriage policy as well as opened the markets at the border to reconcile. During the reign of Emperor Yuan of Han, Lady Wang Zhaojun was sent to Xiongnu to marry the Xiongnu Chanyu in order to establish friendly relations through marriage, who brought with her the Han Chinese culture to Xiongnu, which took a root in the nation, gradually resolving the problem between Chinese Han and Xiongnu with reconciliation, achieving the goal through cultural exchange that military action failed to. After that, China had also

changed hands from Han Chinese to ethnic minorities who invaded and took control of China, but the results of every dynasty change was not that Han people were enslaved and lost their spiritual home, but rather on the contrary, in particular times in history, the ruling minorities were transformed under the Han culture influence of “Harmonious but different”, who actually became successors of Chinese culture, consciously or unconsciously. During this process, some of the best cultural elements of the minorities have gradually melted into the lifeblood of the Chinese culture and become an indispensable part of the spirit of Chinese nation.

Admittedly, cross-cultural exchanges between nations also bring about some impact and challenges to the original national culture and national spirit. First, in the face of political and economical impact from strong nations, the weak nation will produce internal polarization, thus forming cultural conservatism and comprador-ism. Secondly, both the national spirit and national culture have their own kernels and boundaries, and in the exchanges of different cultures, the boundaries of the national spirit and national culture are constantly extended and merged, but the core part, due to its unique content, maintains a relative independence, that is, the part of national spirit and national culture that cannot be communicated and merged with other cultures will not be able to remain lively in the new era; while on the other hand any nation becomes a rootless one if its spiritual core were completely melted and dissolved.

In fact, from the modern history of “Western learning spreading to the East” and revitalization of Chinese classics, we can see that we cannot become Westerner in the cultural and spiritual sense, and it is difficult for us to directly transplant the spirit of Western rationality to the deep soul of our nation. The only consequence of giving up the spirit of Chinese culture could be the loss of Chinese traditional culture and confusion of contemporary humanistic spirit. Without a cultural spirit, we would not have the vitality and creativity, and will not have lofty ideals and the pursuit, but only to achieve sensory and material satisfaction. Therefore, in the context of globalization, we need not only to carry forward and cultivate the national spirit with its own characteristics and national culture, but also to communicate with other nations for their excellent cultural achievement with the idea of “harmonious but different” so as to be part of a harmonious melody in human spiritual garden, rather than limit oneself to the national territory and cultural tradition.

### **3 National Spirit, National Culture and Spiritual Home**

In the long course of human history, the national spirit and national culture constitute the core and soul spiritual home of the nation-state, and in turn they provide inexhaustible vitality for the whole human society with different manifestations. It is because of its own spiritual home and spiritual life that the nation-state is able to form an inner national identity and cohesion by common ideals, beliefs and values



among ethnic groups living in different places; it is because of the link with cultural tradition and national spirit that the regional systems and ethical customs in different places can be integrated into a defence line of a general cultural spirit of the nation-state and are able to resist the risks in politics, military and culture in case of dramatic interior change or even of foreign invasion.

### ***3.1 National Spirit: The Soul and Bond of Spiritual Home***

Since “promoting Chinese culture to build the common spiritual home” was proposed by the report of the 17th National Congress of CPC, the concept of “spiritual home” has aroused much academic interest. Some scholars explore the inherent association between the construction of Marxism in China and the Chinese spiritual home from the perspective of ideology and cultural patterns; some scholars proposed that “we should advocate the spiritual tradition of Chinese culture from the perspective of meaning of human life, to form a life spirit that bridges East and West, past and present, to create a common spiritual home for contemporary Chinese nation” (Hu 2008); some other scholars argue from the perspective of survival theory that “spiritual home is the habitat of human spirit and the spiritual container for human existence. As a meaning world, it is loaded with people’s rational awareness about the significance of their presence, cultural identity, spiritual and emotional sustenance attribution. As for the human existence, the spiritual home has ontological significance” (Pang and Wang 2009). On this basis of this, I think that, theoretically, the “spiritual home” can be understood separately from the “spirit” and “home” on two levels, both of which in turn form an overall idea in the communication and interaction in survival of the national spirit and national culture

From the “spiritual” dimension, the “spiritual home” contains five aspects, namely, the nation’s spiritual life, spiritual living, spiritual culture, humanistic spirit and national spirit. These five aspects form the core of national life identity from outside to inside, from bottom to top.

Spiritual life of the nation is a relative term of the natural life of individuals. Individuals natural life pursues basic survival and reproduction, while the spiritual life comes from natural life but is different from and higher than the natural dimension of natural life, making it possible for members of the nation to go beyond the individual instincts in pursuit of transcendent ideals and beliefs, values and aesthetic experience. It is because of the existence of spiritual life that every nation is a living organism, not only linked through blood and geopolitical relationship, but also more importantly separating the nation as a living organism from the animal groups for the assimilation of the nation’s spiritual life. If the natural life of individuals turns the nation’s members into every independent element, then the spiritual life of the nation is a collection of elements uniting all these scattered elements to possess tremendous energy.

As the surface structure of spiritual home, spiritual living of a nation is also a kind of external manifestation of the nation’s spiritual life. Of course, the transition

from living to life, (although these two words are very much the same in English and German, is divided into two from the perspective of survivalism: life is a root of living and points to a higher spiritual dimension of transcendence, while living is defined at the level of real life). The spiritual vein demonstrating the inner character of the nation is influenced more by the nation's geographical environment and material life. Even in primitive times, every ethnic tribe (uncivilized) would develop some certain spiritual contents to satisfy the inner desire of their own life on the basis of fulfilling basic material needs of life, such as the ancient murals and dances, which, though extremely sketchy and simple, demonstrate certain spiritual impulse and pursuit of the members of the nation, forming a foundation for cultural spirit and national spirit.

The interaction between the spiritual life and spiritual living is the source of spiritual culture and humanistic spirit. In ancient primitive times, all primitive cultures are demonstrated by the most superficial lifestyle; the primitive myth, witchcraft and art, for example, were actually originated from people's primitive faith and historical concept, and it can even be said that myth, witchcraft art and art in fact share the same origin, all originated on the basis of certain national survival experience, historical memory, and the life pursuit, through which primitive people express their preliminary experience of the natural world and spiritual world as well as their preliminary understanding of life. With people's deeper understanding of the laws of nature and social history, myths and witchcraft turned into philosophy, science and religion, while art turned from simple and crude expressions into delicate and profound aesthetic experience.

The transition of the primitive myth, witchcraft and art into a fixed cultural tradition has been a long historical process. In modern popular language, this has been a process of mutual transition of popular cultures and elite cultures. For instance, before Confucius' editing, the "Book of Songs", as a Chinese traditional culture classic, was only a collection of oral folklore songs and poetry, which were just typical direct expressions of the spiritual life of the masses, and could fall into what we would now call "low class" and "popular culture". After Confucius' editing, however, the popular cultural elements in the original poetry were condensed to a specific historical record and spiritual expression, and the transmission from "low class" to "upper class" was thus given a more humanistic spirit, becoming a classic of the elite culture.

From the contemporary spiritual life situation, as we have entered an era of reliance on materials mostly, which Marx described, the popularization and vulgarization of contemporary spiritual life have become an inevitable trend, as described by Zhuangzi through an old man, "He who does his job by a machine must have a plot, and he who has a plot must have a complicated heart" ("Zhuangzi Heaven and Earth"). The contemporary era is an era of "machine, plot, and complicated heart", in the shadow of which our spiritual life begins to depart from loftiness to reject the classics, in the sole pursuit of sensory satisfaction and vulgar culture. Under this circumstance, the richness of the spiritual living is actually masking the dejected spiritual life, the prosperity of material culture actually hides the lost human spirit. The current status of this spiritual life is the important reason

for China's proposal to nurture and promote the national spirit as well as to build the common spiritual home of the Chinese nation.

Only through cultivating and promoting the humanistic spirit and the national spirit to rebuild the new spiritual home can the current plight of the spiritual life be solved. As discussed earlier, the humanistic spirit and national spirit are inner aspects of spiritual home. Having a mutual-dependence relation with the national culture, humanistic spirit comes from the spiritual life of the nation. In traditional Chinese culture, "humanistic" and "culture" were originally from the "Book of Changes"; they are also interrelated. In the "Book of Changes" Ben Gua, for example, "To judge the change of times through observing astronomy, to make the world cultured through observing the humanistic spirit." There is a corresponding relationship between "humanistic culture" and "astronomy" here, the former referring to the historical development process, while the latter referring to the natural law. In addition, "to make the world cultured through observing the humanistic spirit" is the very source of the concept of "culture," on the basis of which the idea of "using culture inside while force outside."

In general, the spiritual culture and humanistic culture of ancient nations originated and developed from the spiritual living of the ethnic group, while the spiritual living of modern nations tend to disintegrate the human spirit, and simply pursues science and technology and life enjoyment. This is what Herbert Marcuse said about one-dimensional society that leads to fragmentation of one-dimensional man and civilization. The cause for this phenomenon is extension of materialization due to the development of science and technology and productivity, and more importantly is that reflection and introspection of the inner spiritual life is neglected in the construction of material civilization. From the perspective of the development of the spiritual culture, East or West, at the origins of the ancient civilization, humanistic spirit and science spirit have always been intertwined with each other. In "Great Learning", "to obtain knowledge by investigating things" is taken as the start of the scholarship and self-cultivation; In "Yi Zhuan" (Ten Wings), it was written that "In the ancient times our Sovereign Fu Xi ruled the world by observing the heaven and earth, the patterns on the animals and birds, and invented the Bagua by making use of the things either around his body or afar, and in this way he knew the ethics of heaven to use on every species on earth." This shows how our ancestors achieved god-like wisdom of virtue through observing all things in the world. The observation of all things in the world could either be internalized as a virtuous humanistic spirit, or externalized as scientific approaches to the world, so Confucianism regards "Acquiring laws by observing things and making utensils by following the rules" as the external demonstration of the virtuous wisdom of saints. But after the Pre-Qin period characterized by "Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought" and Han Dynasty's "dismissing the one hundred schools of thought and only revere Confucianism", the "inquiring" spirit of science to some extent was hidden by the humanistic ideals of "sincerity, righteous heart, self-cultivating, family-regulating, state-ordering, then the land great governed", and after the merging of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism" as one teaching, China's cultural traditions has been characterized by the humanistic spirit dominance of "Virtues

Personality, Taoist Heart, Buddhist Character” over the intellectual scientific approaches.

It is because of the survival experience of national spirit of both being rooted and transcending the cultural traditions and reality of the nation that national spirit, as a mixture of the nation’s group consciousness and the humanistic spirit, has become the a source of national identity and national cohesion, as well as the soul and tie of the spiritual home of the nation.

### ***3.2 Extention of Spiritual Home: Fusion of National Home, Life Home and Ideological Home***

From the aspect of “home”, the common spiritual home of the nation includes three dimensions, namely, “national home, life home and ideological home”. These three dimensions is the basic extension of spiritual home, which interacts with contents at five levels of the nation’s spiritual life, spiritual living, spiritual culture, humanistic spirit and national spirit, together constituting the whole of the common spiritual home of the nation.

National home can be described as a basic carrier of national spirit, a tree over a thousand feet high, yet its leaves always fall to its root. Though possessing transcending and creative characters, the national spirit needs a national home to survive. National home is firstly the nation’s unique geographical and living environment. As Stalin defines nation as having a common language, common economic basis, a common geographical terrain and common cultural awareness and psychological quality, these four standards are also basic characteristics of the national home. Nationality is different from race in that it is not just a simple extension of kinship, but also has the common influence and identity in language, customs and other aspects of culture. Of course, the function of geographical environment as a basic element of national home in the early period and difference in national culture and national spirit due to different geographical environment have been discussed in great detail by Montesquieu and Hegel. Even in contemporary era of globalization when it has been possible for people to change the natural environment in a specific area through technological means, you still can not ignore the potential effects of the geographical environment of the national community.

As a community of national survival, national home is not only a race entity, but also a political entity, a cultural entity and a spiritual entity. As a race identity, the national home is a biological community that is forged by specific natural genes, only indicating the existence of some ethnographic association in the nation’s population. In the sense of a political entity, the national home is what is often called the “nation-state”, although there is an inherent huge gap between nation and state: state is only a purely political community that can unite various communities together by means of political, economic and military force, and in this sense the

state is a powerful and fragile “Leviathan”; many once-great empires were destroyed in the foreign invasions. In contrast, the nation is a weak but strong “reed”; many nationalities still stand strong after many years of warfare. The difference between nation and state lies in that although nation bears certain political function, it is after all based on kinship and culture to maintain its community identity, and even though members of the nationality may join other countries in the political sense, no longer having substantial ties with the original nation-state, they always bear the mark of their nation in their life; a person can easily change his citizenship to become a national or even a political leader of a new country, but he or she could never change their own national character for ever. A modern nation is a “legal-political” community as well as a historical and cultural community (Smith 2002).

Another dimension of common spiritual home extends from the external quality of “national home” to its core, that is, a nation is not only a community sharing the same area, environment, language and cultural consciousness, but also an organism itself, while language and cultural consciousness are branches and flowers out of the organism of “life home”. From the “home life” dimension, members of the nation do not only exist as individuals, but also are certain life links of the organism of nation; an individual without life home is a drop of water taken out of the sea: it may shine with its own beautiful colors in the sun, but will soon be dried. The organism of the entire nation requires all members to have a shared responsibility to promote its new life, growth and development.

We can borrow Karl Marx’s idea to explain the life association of nation as a whole. Marx’s early years were influenced by Feuerbach, and he discussed the relationship between the individual and society using the idea of a living organism. He said, “First, it should be avoided that “society” is again set as something abstract in contrast with the individual. Individuals are social beings. Therefore, the performance of his life, even if not taking direct form of a common life expression that he finishes together with others, is also a demonstration and proof of the social life. The individual life and community life are not totally different, although the existence of individual life is—inevitably—a comparatively special or common community life, while community life is a comparatively special or common individual life” (Marx 2000). Marx here viewed the individual as an individual life, and society as a whole as community life, the two interwoven with each other. From the perspective of phylogenetics, nation is in fact a special unit of society, and Marx’s discussion also applies to the life association between individual members of the nation and the nation as a whole. In this sense, nation as a community and members as individuals are not simply in pure confrontation, but are an organic whole in the overall level of life expression.

Nation’s life garden, as the organic community of the nation, does not confront the individuals with the whole; instead, every member of the nation realizes his or her value of life through interaction with others. That is to say, the community identity and value of nation’s individuals are not achieved through the isolated dead lives of individuals, but through the reproduction of the community by means of overall cooperation among members of the nation, as stated by Karl Marx, “Man is

a special individual, and it was his particularity that makes him an individual, to become a realistic and independent social being, and similarly, he is also the totality, totality of concepts, a being-for-itself that is thought and felt in the society, as he exists in reality not only as a direct demonstration of social existence and realistic enjoyment, but also as the totality of human life” (Marx 2000).

The basic unit of life home is family formed by the individual members of nation; in this sense, the structure of life home is more stable than national home and country. This is because before a person belongs to a nation and state, he or she belongs first to a family; the nationality in the political sense could be changed through migration, and ethnicity could be changed through intermarriage, but the family has always been the direct link of one’s life. In traditional Chinese culture, nation and state are only an expansion of the family. As a nation always originate from an ancient and sacred family, some nations have blood tie among them. For example, the ancestors of some minorities in China are “Miao offsprings of Yellow Emperor”, showing that they and Han people have a common ancestor, some of whose offsprings left the big family to explore the border area, and later became nationalities different from Han people in language and culture due to impact of the natural environment and local customs. After three generations of “Abdication”, Qigong killed Boyi and claimed master of “All Under Heaven as One Family”, which is actually an expansion of family to the entire country. Such ideas in Confucianism as “Under the sky, nothing isn’t the king’s land; the people who lead the lands, no one isn’t the king’s subjects” have further equated political state with an ethical family, taking “self-cultivating, family-regulating, state-ordering, then the land great governed” as the principle of statecraft. Feudal and patriarchal feudal system also reinforces the relationship between family ethics and national systems to some extent, the family, the nation and the country regarded treated as an organic whole. That is why the Chinese Confucian philosophy is referred to as ethical and political philosophy, but is ultimately a “knowledge about life”.

The bond of life home links up individuals, the nation and the state as one. The core of this bond is, however, a kind of culture and thoughts, so in fact life home also includes a home of thoughts. The biggest difference between ideological home and national home or life home is that it is not a tangible material existence, but a cultural and spiritual existence grown out of and living in the life home and national home. A nation or state without thoughts can never stand firm among the nations in the world, while a person or a family without thoughts can never realize their own values merely through reproduction.

The core of ideological home is the nation’s philosophy and religion. Undoubtedly, the reason why a nation can become a community on a political level is the common spiritual home at the base that lays a solid foundation of cultural life for the nation. Of course, from the perspective of expression forms, what helps to form a nation’s spiritual home includes the common language, philosophy, religion and art. As Hegel said: “The mention of the word of Greece will naturally arouse, in the hearts of educated Europeans, especially in the hearts of the Germans, a sense of home” (Hegel 1978). Ancient Greece became the spiritual home of the Europeans because of its philosophy, science and art that have laid the solid foundation for

entire Europe's thoughts and cultures. Basically, each nation's language, philosophy, religion and art are the basic contents of a specific national spirit and national culture. The national spirit as the soul and bond of the spiritual home is demonstrated in forms of language, philosophy, religion and art.

### ***3.3 National Culture: The Soil and Foundation of Spiritual Home***

The spiritual home of a nation can be discussed from two dimensions: "spirit" and "home"; in this sense, spiritual home is the humanistic environment and historical tradition forged in the process of inheriting and development of national spirit. Meanwhile, it can also be explained from the dimension of "culture", on this dimension, the spiritual home of the nation is the cultural core of the national community, and national culture is the soil and foundation of the spiritual home.

Needless to say, as any other forms of culture, the national culture also contains three layers, one of which is the axis layer, the core of the national culture; if this layer of cultural content is gone, then it is hard to say that the nation still has its own unique political status and cultural value. Language culture and conceptual culture are at the axis level. It is followed by a layer of protection, which serves as a self-protective and self-adaptive cultural layer so that the national culture will not easily yield to outside impact when external environment brings about inevitable changes to the national culture; institutional culture and behavioral culture, for example, belong to this protection layer, which can absorb the impact of external factors, and reflects the impact to the axis layer as well as mediate the conflicts between the axis layer and external impacts, helping the national culture to realize self-improvement and keep up with the times. Finally, the presentation layer of the national culture, which is the material demonstration of the nation's development and change under the influence of external environment, such as the development of science and technology, updated production tools, changes in the living environment, etc. These aspects can be summarized as the material layer of material culture or national culture, not only the external display of the national culture, but also casting influence on the inner protection layer and axis layer of the national culture.

The axis layer of the national culture is closely related to national character of the people, and can be said to be the intermediary between the national character and cultural character of the national culture. National character and cultural character, as essential attributes of national culture, are interrelated, because any kind of culture is first a cultural product created by a certain nation before spreading to other nations by way of cultural exchanges. Though we all advocate universal cultural values and ideas, the national character of culture is a basic fact that cannot be denied, and anything universal first develop from the basis of national character. For example, traditional Chinese culture, ancient Greek culture and the Hebrew culture all began first as regional and national cultural values, the values of which

unfolded in the development of history, and gradually have become universal values accepted by other nations.

Similarly, cultural character and national character are also complementary to each other. The reason why a nation is different from the natural ethnic group or tribes is its own unique cultural form as an interior support. Culture itself is an existence that both relies on and transcends nature, a conceptual existence generated from the instincts and consciousness of the ethnic community, reflecting and promoting the life situation of this group. For example, the primitive tribes first only dug out caves to protect themselves from the wild animals and wore animal skins to keep warm, and this can hardly be defined as culture as it is only based on the natural human instinct for survival, and the community can not be called a nationality still, but when people began to realize that animal skins can be used not only to keep warm but also to keep privacy as well as to beautify their bodies, they had already started to form ideology beyond their own natural instincts, at which stage the primitive tribes began to transform into all kinds of nationalities, and the sign of a successful transformation is whether it has formed race and every nation transformed it into a symbol of success lies in whether there is its unique cultural morphogenesis.

In this sense, the concept of race is only an anthropological one, but the concept of nation is inevitably interdependent with cultural character, and what links the nation and its culture is the axis layer of the nation's own culture. From the perspective of universality among various nations, the axis layer is first the national language. In Hebrew mythology, humans were originally using a common language to communicate with each other, and simply because the power of this common language was too strong, God decided to separate it into different human languages. However, from the perspective of phylogenetics, it is inevitable that various nations form their own different languages due to the influence of natural environment, and it is because of the existence of a common language quality that translation among all languages becomes possible.

National language is closely related to each dimension of the spiritual home. The spiritual life, the spiritual living, spiritual culture, humanistic spirit and national spirit are all expressed in a specific national language. As a special form of national culture, language itself forms a unique spiritual home, from where the nation's individual life and group survival derived, and the language we inherit from the ancient times and use every day is creating new discourses every day, the separation and integration of national languages have made the spiritual home of the nation even more beautiful and magnificent. National home, life home and ideological homes possess deeper meaning and unique values due to the development of national languages.

National language has been able to become a national cultural axis layer and build the common spiritual home of the nation because it has an inherent relationship with the nation's conceptual culture (here the reason for using conceptual culture rather than spiritual culture is because in general sense, the spiritual culture is in contrast with material culture, while institutional culture and behavioral culture possess both spiritual and material aspects, so here we further subdivide national



culture into five layers of language, concepts, institutions, behavior, and artifacts, different from a simple dichotomy of spiritual and material) inter-related. Also called the ideology of national culture, the nation's conceptual culture includes philosophy, religion, science, ethics, politics, law, art, customs and other aspects. Though some minority nationalities do not have mature philosophy, religion and science, they all have concepts of a unique philosophy, religion and science, which are often expressed by way of myths and symbolic language. All nations have their own ethics, politics, law, art, customs, which are in the form of metaphysical conceptual culture in ideology, and at the physical level, in the form of institutional culture, behavioral culture and artifacts culture in real life.

As national language, conceptual culture is also in the axis layer of national culture, also serving as culture media between national consciousness and national spirit. As the "ego layer" of national spiritual home, national consciousness is the original core of national culture, which differentiates the nation from other nations, but for the sake of self-identity, self-identification, it is easy for national consciousness to reject other nations' cultural awareness and cultures, thus forming a fortress besieged of culture and politics; most of the conflicts and contradictions between nations in history and at present are caused by conflicts of different national consciousness, and modern radical nationalism is often caused by excessive demonstration of national consciousness. Conceptual culture, as a national cultural axis layer, although also showing the different national cultural characteristics from other nations, the culturally-inherent universality can make the people in the nation use their own conceptual culture to reflect on other nations' cultures, thus finding similarities and differences with them. Moreover, as the Chinese saying goes, "Stones from other hills may serve to polish the jade of this one", a reflection on other cultures can make people of the nation think about the inadequacies of their own national consciousness and culture, making it possible to further improve their cultural and spiritual world. National spirit, as the transcending demonstration of national consciousness and national culture, can absorb traditions and foreign cultures on a higher level and provide a forward-looking value and social ideals for the nation, thus leading people to go beyond their own limitations and present living circumstances to construct a broader and more harmonious spiritual home.

In contrast with the national language and the conceptual culture, the institutional culture and behavioral culture make up the protective layer of national culture. Institutional culture and behavioral culture are closely related to, and can even be said to be the intermediary between, the conceptual culture and artifacts culture of a nation, which need some form of language for expression, as what is described in a Chinese traditional teaching of "words as principles of literati, and actions as examples of the world", so all nations have their own political systems and behavioral patterns based on traditions, which are subject to double influences from nation's conceptual cultures and artifacts culture; when they are at odds with each other, a good institutional culture and behavioral culture can work as mediators to balance the two and to maintain healthy operation of the nation's cultural system. For example, the ancient Chinese patriarchal ideas coordinate well with farming culture and the natural economy, but the development of modern commodity

economy has first changed the nation's artifacts culture, which goes against the far lagging-behind conceptual culture, resulting in China's long deliberation on the cross of "East or West, Old or Modern", not able to find a balance; this requires construction of a good institutional culture and behavioral culture to fill the gap between conceptual culture and artifacts culture.

Generally speaking, institutional culture refers to the totality of all rules and regulations that have been created and adopted in the process of coordinating individuals, groups and social relations in order to adapt to the requirement for survival. Specifically, institutional culture includes all aspects ranging from the political system, education system to ethics system and culture; the ancient China's feudal system and the system of prefectures and counties were pure political systems, and the college system and the private school system were pure education systems. Some systems, however, are interrelated, and bear many functions. For example, the ancient patriarchal clan system and ritual system were both a kind of legal and political system, but also an ethical system, while the imperial examination system was not only a political system, but also an educational system. The cultural aspects composed of various aspects of institutional systems are the main contents of the institutional culture.

In terms of its connotation, institutional culture also includes the rationality of some sort of institutional arrangements and design, the ideology of some institutional arrangements, people's identity with the implementation of the system, value-oriented institutional innovation, and the corresponding institutional forms. In general, the institutional culture is concerned about the implicit tendency and orientation of all kinds of social systems and norms, as well as the inner prescription of social system and its operation on people's thinking and behavioral patterns, which also show relatively stable values, trends and emotional mindset of a nation or state (Rong and Zhang 2006). Placed among the conceptual culture, behavioral culture, and artifacts culture, its main role is to turn the conceptual culture into certain behavioral culture and artifacts culture, as well as mediate the confrontations between behavioral culture, artifacts culture and conceptual culture by changing the system. The Chinese imperial examination system, for example, which prevailed for thousands of years in China's history, worked not only as the intermediary between ancient China's ritual culture, Great Unification political ideas and China's natural economy artifacts culture, which suffered much from Western culture impact on Chinese tradition, and the system was replaced by Western style schools, as the result of the impact on the institutional culture.

As protective layers of national culture, both the institutional culture and behavioral culture play the function of promoting self-identity and self-cohesion of national culture and national spirit. As concrete embodiments of conceptual culture and inner rules of artifacts culture, they actually are in a relatively stable but also changing state. China's ancient imperial examination system, for example, is closely related to the conceptual culture of the Confucian "advocating humanity" and "internal saints and external kings", so Emperor Taizong of Tang said that all talented scholars could be found by means of the imperial examination. From the Sui Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, the imperial examination system prevailed for

thousands of years, with great continuity and stability, but the specific content of the imperial examination system has changed constantly; in the Tang Dynasty, the imperial examination system and the system of hereditary aristocracy competed with each other, resulting in the famous “Niu-Li Factional Struggles”; after the Song and Ming Dynasties, the imperial examination system gained the dominant position, but the content and forms of the examination were constantly changing. Changes in the imperial examination system reflects both the transformation of Chinese traditional conceptual culture and development of social system and artifacts culture.

From the perspective of communicative action, the conceptual culture, institutional culture and behavioral culture constitute a complete cultural system from the inside out. As we all know, China’s “ritual culture” can be said to be not only a conceptual culture but also an institutional culture and behavioral culture, which is the totality of rules of thoughts, systems and practices formed to regulate the political ethical communications among national communities. Originally, “rites” are social consciousness and cultural values of the people formed after their reflection on nature and the human instincts, which would allow people to coordinate the interests between individuals and the collective, between family and the society in social interaction, so that a nation can become a healthy social organism. After the establishment of the concept “ritual culture”, a specific set of rule was needed to make sure it can be maintained as long as possible, so under the influence of Confucianism and feudal ideology, it gradually became the specific ritual system of “three cardinal guides and five constant virtues” that prevailed in China for thousands of years; the ritual system was only a soft and flexible restraint to guide people’s behavior, but it can achieve effects that cannot be achieved by a rigid law, as the external system rules turning into people’s behavioral guides in people’s hearts that they dare not deviate in their daily life. Of course, the ritual system at the beginning played a significant role in straightening out social order and cultivating folk customs, but after that, especially when artifacts culture has been developed to a stage that it no longer is in harmony with traditional concepts, some of the red tape has to some extent curbed the development of social democracy and freedom, which has led to what the intellectuals called “ritual murder”, so in modern times, there had been increasing criticism about the ritual system, the traditional conceptual culture and institutional culture have been questioned, and people’s way of communication has also gradually changed to a new behavioral culture.

Behavioral culture needs to be harmonious with conceptual culture and institutional culture, and more importantly, it unavoidably reflects the development of the nation’s artifacts culture. The so-called artifacts culture refers to the development of production tools, the application of science and technology in real life and in production, the development of people’s means of subsistence as well as all kinds of material conditions to meet the needs of people’s spiritual life, which is divided by some scholars into two categories of “production tools—technology culture” and “household items—Survival landscape culture”, (Rong and Zhang 2006) which specifically includes tools culture, technology culture, food culture, dress culture, architecture culture, etc. From all these aspects can be found the inherent

relationship between the nation's artifacts culture, behavioral culture, institutional culture and conceptual culture. It is very clear that the modern Western civilization colonization is first shown in the great influence of Western architecture and costumes on the Eastern nations. As for the clothing, the Eastern nation-states have all taken "Western suits" as formal dresses except for some minority nationalities which still keep their own national costumes. "Western suits" become popular in the Eastern countries because of changing conceptual culture, and more importantly, because of the fact that the original costume culture cannot keep up the trend of times due to the change in people's behavioral culture. In ancient China, for example, under the system centered around "ritual culture", people would pursue harmony and peacefulness of mind in the interaction with others rather than high production efficiency; especially those literati class people who often sit together to discuss state affairs as well as important principles in life would need a costume culture characterized by big and loose gowns with broad belts, which is also related to ancient China's agricultural civilization and the natural economy means of production, and has resulted in China's dominant costume forms in thousands of years. During the Warring States period, King Wuling of Zhao adopted nationwide the costumes of the northern neighbor nation Xiongnu that were more suitable for soldiers to wear in battle, showing that costume culture not only needs to conform to certain systems and behavioral cultures and be in line with the values of mainstream culture, but also needs to have practical value. In modern times, with the shift from natural economy to commodity economy, people's increasing concern on science and technology and productivity has led to indifference of humanistic concepts, while new technology products and bustling communications also make it difficult for classical costumes to adapt to the changing modern economic civilization; as a result, simple, practical and more fitting clothing has inevitably replaced the old big and loose gowns, symbolic of the natural economy system, so Western suits came to China with the Western gunboats and strong economic and technological system, forming the mainstream of contemporary Chinese clothing culture.

The transformation of costume culture in modern history can help us understand why artifacts culture is at the expression layer national culture, while institutional culture and behavioral culture are at the protective layer. Because artifacts culture is the most susceptible part in all layers of national culture to external influences, and though artifacts culture may be changed, and institutional culture and behavioral culture may be under a great impact, it does not collapse immediately, but is subject to gradual influence starting from the protective layer and then gradually affecting the axis layers of the national culture. For example, in terms of costumes culture and tools culture, there is not much difference in contemporary China, Japan, and South Korea, but one can still feel with intuition the different characteristics of the people in three countries. This is because these three countries share much in artifacts culture and are still very different in institutional culture and behavioral culture, which is very distinctive in people's spiritual characteristics and manners, so from the same tools culture could be found different concepts, institutions and behaviors in different national communities.

Although national culture can be divided into three layers of axial layer, protective layer and expression, or five aspects of language, thoughts, institutions, behavior and artifacts, it does not mean that national culture is a fragmented culture system, but that it is an organic whole itself, which becomes the soil and roots of the spiritual home of the nation through association of the five specific aspects.

All in all, building the spiritual home of the nation needs not only the cultivation of the national language and conceptual culture, but also enrichment and promotion of the institutional culture and behavioral culture, as well as the expression of cultural artifacts, especially in the context of economic globalization where the function of national culture is overwhelmed by science and technology to some extent, resulting in materialization and vulgarization of the spiritual life of modern people. Therefore, we should treat rationally the heritage of classical culture and communications with foreign cultures, to build our spiritual home that complies with our times on the cultural cross of “Chinese or Western, Ancient or Modern”, so that our national spirit and national culture can keep pace with the times and glow with full glory in the new historical circumstances.



<http://www.springer.com/978-981-10-3913-3>

The Chinese National Spirit  
The Core of a Spiritual Home  
Ouyang, K.  
2017, VII, 211 p., Hardcover  
ISBN: 978-981-10-3913-3