

THE EVOLUTION OF THE “CHINESE NATION”: DISHARMONY IN THE COEXISTENCE OF ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Dr. Geeta Kochhar

Jawaharlal Nehru University

In present-day China, ethnic communities have become more conscious of their relationship with the state and their status within it. This has created a disharmony of coexistence in relation to the set parameters of China's territorial boundaries, posing challenges to a unified “Chinese Nation.” This paper looks at the concept and evolution of the notion of ‘Chinese Nation’ (Zhōnghuá Mínzú 中华民族) as a unified entity to represent various ethnic communities at a time when China is confronted with questions of identity and whom it represents. As China's leader President Xi Jinping promotes the tag ‘China Dream’ to consolidate the unity of the nation, dissenting voices within continue to seek their own localised identities, a desire that can challenge the very existence of the Chinese Nation.

Today's world is interconnected yet divided by visible and invisible boundaries. Visible boundaries are those that have been defined by land, sea, and air, though ambiguously. Invisible boundaries are those in the process of being defined in cyber space. Hence, as connections exist, communities within a particular boundary have become more conscious of their relationship with the state and their status within it. In particular, countries that have a multiplicity of communities coexisting within the set parameters of a boundary face greater challenges of sustaining a unified nation. These examples have recently become prominent. This paper looks at China as such a case, which has all along advocated the notion of “Chinese Nation” (Zhōnghuá Mínzú 中华民族) as a unified entity to represent various communities. However, even with the phenomenal growth of its economy, communities within it have started to question their status in this nation-state. This has created a disharmony of coexistence of ethnic

communities, and China is consequently confronted with issues of what the Chinese nation is and whom it represents. Does the People's Republic of China with the Communist Party as the sole ruling authority represent all 56 nationalities? Are there strong dissenting voices? What is the broader framework of 'Greater China' and who are the represented entities of this political ideological pursuit? Can the dominating Han nationality remain the main representative of China? More importantly, within the Han community, are there voices of fragmentation and a demand for a separate state? As the leader President Xi Jinping advocates the tag 'China Dream' to consolidate the unity of the nation, dissenting voices within continue to seek their own localized identities, which is a desire that can challenge the very existence of the "Chinese Nation."

Evolution of the Term "Chinese Nation"

Before expounding upon the evolution of the term "Chinese Nation," it is essential to have a basic understanding of terms such as "state," "nation," and "nation-state." The term "state" in a broad sense relates to a body of government, which is more a political terminology. The term "nation" is more associated with the people living in the politically defined state, a specifically referring to the notion that the people living together have shared belief of being connected to each other. However, "nation-state" linked people with shared culture and common language. Benedict Anderson, in his book, *Imagined Communities*, pointed out that a nation is a socially constructed community, imagined by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group.¹ Hence, it is to be explored whether the people and communities in China perceive themselves as a part of China as a nation or if there are differing opinions.

The term "Chinese Nation" dates back to the early twentieth century. In 1902, the term "Chinese Nation" was first used by Liang Qichao in the article, "General Development Trends of Academic Ideology in China," published in the journal *Xīn Mǐn Cóng Bào*.² Later in 1905, Liang Qichao used the term "Chinese Nation" more than seven times in his article "Observations Concerning the Chinese Nation in History (Zhōnghuá Mǐnzú)," referring to Han nationality as the main nationality and the inheritor of the

1 Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 6-7.

2 Jin Chongji, "The Formation of the Chinese Nation," *Qiushi Journal*, 2 no. 1, (2010).

Yánhuáng (炎黄). Hence, it was Liang Qichao who had defined the notion of China from simply being an old civilization to a modern territorial nation-state.³

The term “Chinese Nation” (*Zhōnghuá Mínzú* 中华民族) was then propagated by Zou Rong, a revolutionary of the anti-Qing and anti-Manchu, to link the Han race to the Chinese Nation, see Chart I. In his book *The Revolutionary Army* (*Gémìngjūn* 革命军) published in 1903, he divided the entire “Yellow Race” into two sub-categories: the Siberian Race and the Chinese Race. While the Siberian race included the Mongols, Manchus, Turks, Hungarians, and other people in Europe, the Chinese race was further divided into two categories: the Chinese (specifically referring to the Han Race), and those who were Koreans, Tibetans, and other East Asians. In this sense, Zou Rong only looked at the Han race as representing the entire Chinese Nation. The term “Chinese Nation,” hence, denoted the racial-kinship bond of the Chinese and their ties to the land.⁴

Later, Zhang Binglin (also known as Zhang Taiyan), who was a philologist and a philosopher, used a similar correlation to relate Han nationality with the Chinese Nation. In his arguments in 1907, he explained the terms Hua, Xia, and Han, whereby he defined Hua as land, with Xia and Han denoting race. He pointed out that as per the Chinese dictionary, “the people of the Middle Kingdom” (*Zhōngguórén* 中国人) were known as Xia. By correlating the terms Xia and Han, he justified his argument that the Han nationality (*Hànzú* 汉族) was equivalent to the Chinese Nation (*Zhōnghuá Mínzú* 中华民族).⁵

However, Yang Du, a political reformer, expounded on a systematic exploration of the term “Chinese Nation” in his article, “Theory of Gold and Iron Doctorine (*Jīntiě zhǔyǐ shuō* 金铁主义说),” published in 1907.⁶ He argued that the Chinese Nation was not related to one ethnic nationality, but was a geographic and cultural concept. He stated that the monarch was an agent of the nation and a representation of all people, thereby refuting the distinction between the Manchus and the Han Chinese.⁷ While all these

3 Zhao Suisheng, *A Nation-state by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 45.

4 Zou Rong in Frank Dikötter, “Race in China: The Construction of the Han” in *China Inside Out: Contemporary Chinese Nationalism and Transnationalism*, eds., Pal Nyiri Joana and Breidenbach (Budapest and New York: central European University Press, 2005), 190.

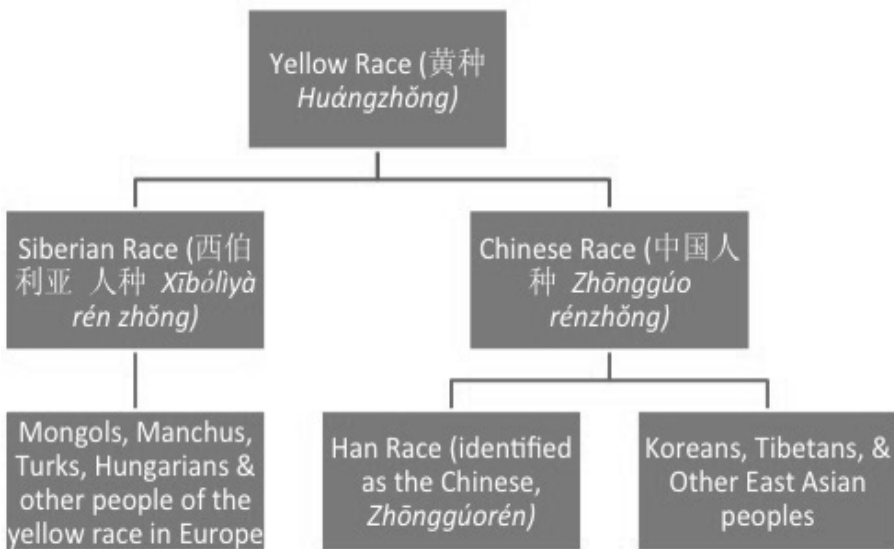
5 Frank Dikötter ed., *The Construction of Racial Identities in China and Japan: Historical and Contemporary Perspective* (UK: C. Hurst & Co., 1997), 50.

6 Jin Chongji, “The Formation of the Chinese Nation.”

7 Wang Hui, “Zhang Taiyan’s Concept of the Individual and Modern Chinese Identity,” in *Becoming*

discourses existed in the early twentieth century to define the Chinese Nation, John Fitzgerald, a professor at La Trobe University, opines that, traditionally, Chinese people had a custom of referring to their historical community by the names of dynasties (such as Qin, Han, Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing) rather than by country, implying that there was no concrete concept of a nation existing till that time.⁸

CHART I Zou Rong's Classification of Races



Source: Zou Rong *The Revolutionary Army* (1903) in Frank Dikötter, "Race in China: The Construction of the Han" in *China Inside Out: Contemporary Chinese Nationalism and Transnationalism* eds. Pal Nyiri Joana and Breidenbach (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2005), 190.

Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond, ed. Wen Hsin-yeh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 258.

- 8 John Fitzgerald, "The Nationless State: The Search for a Nation in Modern Chinese Nationalism" in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed., Jonathan Unger (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), 57. Quoted in Zhao Suisheng, *A Nation-state by Construction: Dynamics of Modern Chinese Nationalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 45.

The term was widely used after 1912, when the President of the New Republic, Yuan Shikai, espoused the concept of the “Chinese Nation” that was later expanded by Sun Yat-sen. The abdication of the Qing Emperor led to controversy over the status of Tibet’s and Mongolia, as they owed no allegiance to the New Republic even when the Qing territories were formally handed over. Tibet and Mongolia’s position was rejected by the new Chinese state, both by the Republic of China and later by the PRC. Sun Yat-sen reinterpreted the term to have broader reach and to include Han (Hàn 汉, the red), Manchus (Mǎn 满, the yellow), Mongolian (Měng 蒙, the blue), Hui (Huí 回, the white)⁹, and Tibetans (Zàng 藏, the black). He put forth the concept of the “Republic of Five Nationalities” (or Five Races under One Union, Wǔ zú gōnghé / Wǔ zú hé wèi yī tǐ 五族共和 / 五族合为一体). Sun Yat-sen in his famous *Three Principles of the People* (*Sān mǐn Zhǔyì* 三民主义) proposed the idea of unity of the nation based on blood ties. He wrote:

The greatest force is common blood. The Chinese belong to the Yellow race because they come from the blood stock of the Yellow race. The blood of the ancestors is transmitted by heredity down through the race, making blood kinship a powerful force.¹⁰

Historically, the Chinese have had a very strong concept of “insider” and “outsider.” Those under the domain of the central state’s territories were distinguished from those outside. Apart from the “civilized” people, such as the *Xia* within the territories, the peripheral communities were viewed as barbarians: *Yi* (*Dōngyí* 东夷) in the east, *Rong* (*Xīróng* 西戎) in the west, *Dì* (*Běidí* 北狄) in the north, and the *Man* (*Nánmán* 南蛮) in the south. Hence, the five nationalities incorporated in the concept of the “Republic of Five Nationalities” was an inclusion of barbarians in the Chinese state, while the exclusion from the majority and dominating nationality continued. The term

9 This refers to the Turkish people living in the western part of China and representing the Muslim community. In the present day, they are the Uighur nationality.

10 Sun Yat-sen, *Three Principles of the People* (1932), 9, quoted in Elena Barabantseva, *Overseas Chinese Ethnic Minorities and Nationalism: De-centering China* (London & New York: Routledge, 2011), 30.

is different from “*Huáxià*” (华夏),¹¹ Han people (*Hànrén* 汉人),¹² and Tang people (*Tángrén* 唐人),¹³ descendants of the Yellow Emperor (*Yánhuáng Zǐsūn* 炎黄子孙).¹⁴ By the 1980s, the use of the term Hua people (*Huárén* 华人)¹⁵ was a representative term for the majority nationality. This led to a debate over what the representative nationality of China (*Gúozú* 国族) was.

Jin Chongji, in an article written in the authoritative magazine *Seeking Truth* (*Qíushì* 求是), argues that the Chinese Nation is formed over a long historical period and now represents all the people of various ethnic groups in China, and even the overseas Chinese diaspora who identify with the Chinese nation. This course of development can be divided into two phases: the earlier phase of gradual evolution that took thousands of years; and a gradual process of identification of all ethnic nationalities with the Chinese Nation in modern history to struggle against foreign aggressors.¹⁶ Hence, ethnicity as a factor was placed at the heart of the unity of the nation.

Nationalism and “Greater China”; Defining the “Chinese Nation”

The vision of a “Chinese Nation” was reinterpreted in the concept of “Greater China” (*Dà Zhōnghuá Qū* 大中华区). This concept did not originate in China, but was propagated by Western scholars. In 1934, the American geographer George Cressey used the term “Greater China,” a geographic extension of the Chinese Empire that included China proper (18 provinces directly under the central administrative bureaucracy, consisting of a mostly Han population) and Outer China (also called ‘dependencies’; ethnic

11 *Huá* means “illustrious,” for the beautiful clothing of the Chinese people; and *Xià* means “grand” to signify the ceremonial etiquettes of China. *Huáxià* referred to a confederation of tribes existing on the banks of the Yellow River, the descendants of which were later the Han ethnic group. They represented a more civilized society in contrast to the barbarians. *Huáxià* was a term used collectively to represent the three successive dynasties of the Xià, Shāng, and Zhōu, in which three different ethnic groups or tribes ruled China that were merged later.

12 Han Wendi and Han Jingdi were the main rulers of the Han dynasty, who made Han into one of the most prosperous dynastic rule. As Han is still the majority ethnic group in China, many Chinese are referred to as Han people.

13 The Tang was arguably the most prosperous and flourishing dynasty. The reign of Zhengguan at the peak of the Tang dynasty was a result of ethnic intermixing. Hence, overseas Chinese communities in Chinatowns are generally referred to as Tang people.

14 The Yellow River is regarded as the cradle of Chinese civilization. In Chinese mythology, the Yan and Yellow Emperor belonged to two tribes and were responsible for assimilating the two cultures.

15 Refer to the overseas Chinese living in the peripheral regions of Mainland China.

16 Chongji, “The Formation of the Chinese Nation.”

minority areas of Manchuria, Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, and Tibet that were under Chinese state suzerainty).¹⁷ Later in 1940, Owen Lattimore redefined it to incorporate “China with the Great Wall” (China proper) and six “frontier zones” (Manchukuo, Outer Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, Chinese Turkestan, Tibet proper, and the Tibet-Chinese frontier provinces of Qinghai and Xikang).¹⁸ The assimilationist vision stressed the organic entity of all the people living within the political boundaries of China and also the fusion of non-Han groups into a broader Chinese Nation with the Han nationality remaining dominant.¹⁹ This vision conceptualizes unity based on biological factors rather than territorial boundaries. Hence, racial discourse was the underlining factor to define the “Chinese Nation” in modern times whether in Western or Chinese scholarship.

In late 1970, the term “Greater China” reappeared with a different definition to promote economic linkages with Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, Singapore, and the Chinese mainland.²⁰ Thereafter, the emphasis was put on creating a Chinese community with international linkages as a united group. Subsequently, the underlining factors of “Chinese Nation” were envisaged to assimilate all nationalities in the concept of “Greater China” with ethnic and racial affiliations becoming transnational.

The concept of nationalism is related to a feeling of oneness in relation to the territorial limitations of a nation-state, whereby the construction of the “people” of the state distinguish them from the members of another political community.²¹ The discourse takes territorial boundaries as politically defining factors for the rise of nationalist sentiments. In modern times, of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies, this simple formulation of nationalist sentiments based on the nation-state concept is being challenged with issues relating to citizenship, inclusion, and exclusion within a state. This is also due to the fact that sovereign borders no longer exist as rigid boundaries dividing people across nations. The fluid nature of territory is contested and networks beyond territories play bigger roles in linking communities based on race, ethnicity, clan, etc.

Kang Youwei (1858-1927), the leader of monarchist reformers, was

17 Harry Harding, “The Concept of ‘Greater China’: Themes, Variations, and Reservations,” *The China Quarterly* 136 (1993): 662.

18 Ibid.

19 Dikötter, “Race in China,” 180.

20 Harding, “The Concept of ‘Greater China,’” 663.

21 Elena Barabantseva, *Overseas Chinese, Ethnic Minorities and Nationalism: De-centering China* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 5.

the first to formulate the modern ideology of Chinese nationalism and nation-state under the Qing dynasty with the stress on common ancestry and race. The 1909 nationality law reflected this importance of blood and introduced the principle of *jus sanguinis*.²² While Kang Youwei was only referring to the “Yellow race,” the later antimonarchist, especially Sun Yat-sen, used it in terms of a nation with the inclusion of overseas Chinese.²³ The same idea of ethnic linkages of the Chinese Nation became the link to forging a feeling of oneness.

However, the deep-rooted sense of distinguishing barbarians with the civilized Han nationality defines the parameters of individual identity. Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* encapsulates this idea of nationalism that transcends national boundaries to link communities as homogenous entities.²⁴ The imagination of the self attached to a particular community creates the notion of identity whereby the insider is clearly delinked with the outsider. In China’s case, the invoking of this identity was primarily based on the politically defined boundaries of the nation-state, while the Manchu, Tibetan, and Turkish groups fell under the category of ‘outsiders.’ These communities never perceived themselves in the same way as the Han, but there was a factor of alienation even when the territorial nation-state system redefined their existence as elements under a unified political body.

Identity Issues in the Reform Period – Post 1978

The state apparatus has defined minorities based on ethno-racial linkages, but there also exists categories whereby individuals have their own ethnic self-identification. Most minority communities lived in a subservient way within the institutional structures as their voices did not have strong support. However, increasing globalization and access to technology along with relatively better living standards have aroused the consciousness of their own cultural identity. The demands for an independent cultural identity are more prominent, as the conditions provide them the opportunity to link

22 See Pal Nyiri on the history of China-Overseas Chinese relations cited in *China Inside Out: Contemporary Chinese Nationalism and Transnationalism*, eds. Pal Nyiri Joana and Breidenbach (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2005), 148.

23 See Pal Nyiri on the history of China-Overseas Chinese relations cited in *China Inside Out: Contemporary Chinese Nationalism and Transnationalism*, eds. Pal Nyiri Joana and Breidenbach (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2005), 149.

24 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

it to the idea of racism. The issue of identity has also gained supranational mobilization because of transnational actors of multiple nationalities and ethnicity. It has connected them with overseas ethnic populations to help drive the movement.

Prasenjit Duara, a historian of China, looks at the incorporation of minorities in the territorial nation-state narrative, which was dominant before 1980. However, since then a new cultural narrative has led to deterritorialization and the minorities link themselves with newly defined constituencies that have foreign linkages.²⁵ In modern times, the idea of rights has also undergone a transformation. In the nation-building project, the state implicitly gives certain rights to its citizens, like the right to free speech, in exchange for assimilation or incorporation within the territorial nation-state. In the case of China, these rights have been placed under a very broad category of “collective rights of citizens.” When the minority communities demand individual rights like the right to freedom of religion or freedom of expression, these demands often clash with the politically defined national rights granted to the citizens of China. This is because it challenges the Chinese Communist Party ideology, which underplays the role of religion in a state. Although in recent decades the Chinese state has made it clear that it allows all religions to co-exist, religious followers need to do so without explicitly challenging the state.

Even if a state has well-defined and fixed boundaries with a clear sense of territory, the issue is whether the people or groups within the territory have national loyalties associated with the territorial state or not. Scholars also talk of “multi-ethnicity” within the Han nationality, whereby regional dialects and ethnic regions segregate them from one another. The difference in food, dialect, and local gods based on region is why Dikötter considers “Han” to be an artificial construct.²⁶ Hence, within the Han nationality variations exist based on regional affiliations. These in the reform era have become more prominent as the local economies make efforts to grow based on overseas investments and remittances. The *guānxi* relations²⁷ attracted money inflow based on linkages to particular communities where differences of regions and loyalties to territorial groups play a significant role.

25 Prasenjit Duara, “The Legacy of Empires and Nations in East Asia” in *China Inside Out: Contemporary Chinese Nationalism and Transnationalism*, eds. Pal Nyiri Joana and Breidenbach (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2005), 37.

26 Dikötter, “Race in China,” 114.

27 *Guanxi* relations refer to relationship networks for business in China, which are mostly based on clan networks and regional ties.

In January 1994, a group of Chinese scholars from Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong even suggested an idea of a “Federal Republic of China.”²⁸ The proposed draft of the formulated constitution announced in San Francisco called for making a free, democratic Federal Republic of China composed of Autonomous States (including Taiwan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, and Guangxi), Special Regions (Hong Kong and Macau), and the rest as Provinces and Cities of China. Yan Jiaqi defined the notion of federation as having the characteristics of a confederation, which would consist of two kinds of republics: Loose Republics (Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia) and Close Republics.²⁹ While on the one hand, the idea was based on ethnic affiliations based on identity; on the other, it incorporated the desire of local economies to have autonomous decision making powers. Although the idea was never formalized it nonetheless strongly reflected the desires of local culture, local religion, and local languages as a significant factor in building *guānxi* and strengthening relations over and above the unified notion of Han nationality.

Voices of Discontent within China

The March-April 2008 Tibetan uprising, followed by the July 2009 violent clashes between Uyghurs and Han in Urumqi, Xinjiang province, sparked debate within and outside China over the People’s Republic’s policy towards ethnic minorities. Although the Western world greatly sympathized with the minority nationalities, the nationalist sentiments were a total rejection of such actions, arguing ethnic minorities were creating divisions in the Chinese state. Given the incredibly rapid growth of the Chinese economy, what are the reasons behind dissatisfaction among the minority nationalities?

Many tensions arise due to the enhanced migration of the Han population to minority areas. As the Han population is seen as the threat to local culture and language, there is greater animosity among the local communities and the Han population. While historically the Han population was viewed as the “insider” and the main representative nationality of China, the minority communities believe that in the PRC, whereby politically the regions are assimilated, the Han population is the real “outsider” in

28 “Draft Constitution for a Federal China-Gives Referendum to Tibet,” *Central Tibetan Administration Website*, accessed October 23 2007, www.tibet.com/China/drchcon.html.

29 “Yan Jiaqi, Dissident Essay on Tibet: Towards the Federal Republic of China,” *Free Tibet Website*, accessed October 23 2007, www.freetibet.org/info/file/file21.html.

their regions. The tensions arise due to state policies in which minority communities perceive themselves as unprivileged and subordinate, and the Han population is viewed as the privileged group. The state policy of standardizing language and culture by migrating and amalgamating the Han population in huge numbers into minority community-dominated regions has created greater divide among nationalities.

Although in recent decades there has been a greater focus on developing the minority nationality dominated regions, the minority population remains deeply dissatisfied. One of the factors behind this is that China's economic development has been uneven. The western region, where most of the minority groups are concentrated, lags behind the eastern area concentrated along the coast. Although there has been improvement in the lives of the majority of the population, the minority-dominant areas have increasingly become active in raising dissent against the Communist state. With the spate of events in 2008 and 2009, the Chinese government immediately identified economic development as the central task of ethnic regions. The September 2009 White Paper on Ethnic Policy stated that "the state is convinced that quickening the economic and social development of minority communities and minority areas is the fundamental solution to China's ethnic issues."³⁰ In relation to this, the official media launched propaganda against the anti-China forces operating from outside. It puts the blame of discontent by the ethnic minorities on the forces existing beyond Chinese territories, rather than recognizing that the communities within the territories also demand recognition of their identity along with equal citizenship status.

The recent self-immolation protests of Tibetan monks against Communist rule highlight the fact that the ethnic minorities within China, although assimilated within the political boundaries of the PRC, are not able to enjoy religious and cultural freedom. These issues have been suppressed under the state concept of racial affinities and blood ties of minority nationalities within the PRC. But the transnational linkage of these communities, which was a tool of state nationalism, has become a strong support for raising dissent and awareness at international forums. Hence, in this sense, the concept of the Chinese Nation that was used by the Chinese state to stifle feelings and affinity with the PRC has become a double edged sword. The linkages endorsed by the Chinese state in order to

30 Elena Barabantseva, *Overseas Chinese, Ethnic Minorities and Nationalism: De-centering China* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 161.

promote local economies have transcended beyond economic development objectives to create awareness of the exclusion of communities within the state parameters.

Moreover, the linkages of the Han nationality with overseas Chinese communities are also bringing the issues of language and regional affinities to greater prominence. For example, in Guangdong province, a debate is unfolding over the protection of the Cantonese dialect while the Standard Chinese (*Pǔtōnghuà* 普通话) continues to be the officially approved language for public purposes. The Cantonese communities have started to view the propagation of *Pǔtōnghuà* as suppression of the Cantonese language, which may gradually fall out of use. Hence, the local governments are being pressurized to run TV news broadcasts, serials, and basic teaching programs in schools encouraging the local language. These issues reaffirm the idea of China becoming a federal state, where local power centers would want to play an autonomous and decisive role in local economies and promote local culture.

Conclusion

The leadership of Xi Jinping as the President of the PRC has advocated for realizing the “China Dream.” As discussion over what constitutes the China Dream continues, various interpretations link it to the rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation. This concept transcends the political boundaries of the PRC and links it to communities based on racial affinities. The emergence of the concept can be traced back to the pre-liberation era. However, the Chinese Revolutionary period tried to bring about the unity of all 56 nationalities of the PRC in fighting together against foreign forces.

Although China has made great strides in economic development, the issue of ethnic minorities has become significant. The reason for this also lies in the historic conceptualization of differentiating the *Xià* (civilized) with the *Yí* (barbarians). As the peripheral communities and those outside the core state were viewed as “outsiders,” assimilation remains a political subject, rather than actual recognition by the communities as a unified entity. In the reform era, transnational linkages and technologies have provided adequate avenues for minority communities to raise issues of suppression, exclusion, and citizenship. The demand for inclusion as “equal citizens and equal treatment” has actually intensified.

In addition, the dominant Han nationality is creating overseas

networks that are supplementing the feelings of local identities and cultures. In order to promote local economies, the idea of Greater China and cultural linkages based on the Chinese Nation were promoted by the state, but these ties have gone beyond sub-national economic development agendas and are fermenting a sense of federalism. Yet, the Chinese Nation remains a binding force linking communities within and outside China as “Chinese.” **Y**