



Discussion on National Spirit Education

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ABSTRACT

National spirit education is an important content of ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities. Currently, national spirit education should follow the development vein of national spirits. The development of the Chinese national spirits follows the development vein from the emergence of national consciousness, to self-denial of the national spirits, to its self-affirmation. Meanwhile, the development vein of the national spirits includes the characteristics of inheritance, times, and development of the national spirits. Thus, all the above constitute the basic teaching content of national spirit education in China.

1. Introduction

National spirits are the sum of the ideological character, value orientation, ideals, beliefs, and moral standard formed in the long-term life and practice of a nation, which is recognized and accepted by the members of the society^[1]. The national spirit education is an important content of the ideological and political education in colleges and universities, and an important part of the quality of talents, playing a role in driving, guiding and ensuring the cultivation, growth and development of talents^[1]. Education is a practical activity of cultivating people, and the first issue of education is what kind of person we want to cultivate. Besides, national spirit education plays an important part in the ideological and political theory course in colleges and universities talent quality

training, playing a role in driving, guiding, supporting and ensuring the cultivation and growth of talents as well as the development of intelligence. Strengthening the national spirit education is helpful to guide students to establish correct ideals and beliefs, stimulate their spiritual impetus to study hard, and shape their sound personality. It is of great significance to cultivate high-quality successors and builders of socialism with Chinese characteristics^[1].

China has made great efforts in the national spirit education and achieved good results. However, currently, the situation of national spirit education in China is still grim and there are still many difficulties and problems^[1]. The content of national spirit education should take the national spirits as the core and foundation. Moreover, Chinese national spirits not only have a unique inheritance,

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responsiveness and development, but also have unique development law and path, which is the foundation of national spirit education.

2. National Spirit Education Is Based on the Inheritance of National Spirits

Mr. Gu Mingyuan pointed out that nationality is the basic characteristic of education, and the educational tradition of a nation has its characteristics just like the cultural tradition of a nation, adapting to the political, economic, cultural, scientific and technological system and development level of the nation^[2]. National spirit education is aimed to lead the Chinese national spirits to transform into the world's national spirits based on national characteristics.

It is a long history to form the national spirits in China. It is in recent years that Chinese people take “nationality” as the subject of consciousness. When the westerners came, they brought a new international order, forming a great pressure on China, and thus making the Chinese people have a strong “self” consciousness, namely, the national consciousness began to emerge. Technically, in 1899, Liang Qichao published the article *Is China's Soul Still There*, and this is the first time to reveal for the Chinese people the important issue of carrying forward and cultivating the national spirits^[3]. With the rise of the May Fourth Movement, the national democratic movement has developed vigorously. Especially with the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, the national spirits have also been elevated to the status of national will^[4]. In January 1924, Dr. Sun Yatsen began talking about the *Three People's Principles*. In the speech, he pointed out that we have lost the national spirits, so our country has been lagging behind day by day, and if we want to restore the status of the nation today, we must first restore the national spirits. With the unprecedented upsurge of the Chinese national spirits during the Anti-Japanese War, the discussion on the national spirits has also entered a new stage. After the founding of the Communist Party of China, on the one hand, our Party put forward the problem of inheriting and carrying forward the Chinese national spirits in the period of revolution and construction. On the other hand, since the reform and opening up, the Chinese national spirits have been carried forward and developed in practice. In the first session of the Thirteenth National People's Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping made a highly concise and clear interpretation of the Chinese national spirits for the first time. The Chinese national spirits are “the great national spirits cultivated, inherited and developed by the Chinese people in the long-term struggle”. This “enduring” Chinese national spirits include “four great spirits”, name-

ly “great creative spirit”, “great struggle spirit”, “great solidarity spirit” and “great dream-pursuing spirit”^[5].

National spirits are not only the soul and core of a nation, but also the source of national vitality. Only by knowing and understanding the inheritance of the formation and development of national spirits, can we deeply understand the historical context of our nation, establish the empathy of the Chinese nation, and cultivate the national identity. We should take Marxism as the guiding ideology, follow the excellent cultural tradition of the Chinese nation, and absorb the advanced Western culture to carry forward and cultivate the national spirit education. From the perspective of Marx and Engels' national spirit and its value, national spirits can promote the development of the country, nation and human society positively, aggressively and progressively, and material and practice are the motivation and origin of things' development. The theory of world history reveals that the objective inevitability of the transformation of human society from regional history to world history, and the methodological principles of correctly handling the relationship between different national spirits^[6].

The national spirits should be rooted in the excellent traditional Chinese culture. The first is to strengthen the patriotism like “everyone is responsible for the rise and fall of the world”, and the social ideal of “the whole world as one community” and “the world of Great Harmony”, which inherit the most powerful spiritual gene of the Chinese nation. The second is pragmatism such as the life attitude of “constantly striving to become stronger as well as self-discipline and social commitment”^[7].

The national spirits should absorb the advanced Western culture. Firstly, Western society has always paid attention to the historical basis of national spirits, which is a good reference for the development of national spirit education. Secondly, from the perspective of cultural spirit, Western universal values such as “freedom, equality and justice” play a positive role in enriching China's national spirit education^[8].

3. National Spirit Education Is Based on the Times of National Spirits

National spirit education is an important content in the ideological and political theory course and we should constantly adjust and update the content, because the national spirit education should give answers to the problems in the development of the society in time, so that the national spirit education can be more targeted and purposeful, to enable students to accurately understand and master the connotation and essence of the national spirits.

The national spirits have gone through their course in the change of the confrontation between themselves and international order, changing gradually from self-denial to self-affirmation, and experiencing a historical dialectical process. In recent years, various changes have taken place at home and abroad, especially the rising number of people infected with COVID-19 in the world in 2020, profoundly affecting many countries, promoting the rise of populism and nationalism at home and abroad, and triggering a series of international relations events such as anti-globalization and geopolitical confrontation at home and abroad. In this domestic and international environment, some people in China show their pure patriotism or slightly radical nationalism. On the one hand, the great achievements and results of New China in the past 70 years have strongly stimulated the Chinese people's loyalty and love for the motherland in the commonly recognized mainstream value system, and this is due to the recognition and identity of the national community from individuals. As a passionate patriotic sentiment, this nationalism with particularly strong charisma and action power can quickly gather all members of the national community to form a synergy or pass-through effect and take action. On the other hand, openly expressed in the cyberspace, this radical nationalist sentiment still appears from time to time with populism and extremism. At the same time, radical nationalism often confronts other social thoughts, and the unstable factors in the online public opinions increase, so we need to pay attention to the above phenomenon^[9]. When a nation is under pressure from outside, it will show the consistency and efficiency of emotion and reaction. Under this situation, we need not only a manifestation of nationalism mixed with anger and discontent, but also need to take more rational practical actions to respond to currently severe "internal and external problems" that Chinese society is facing. How to deal with the domestic nationalist sentiment and guide the people to correctly understand some problems and dilemmas the society is facing has become the urgent task of the current national spirit education.

Generally speaking, the Chinese nationalism thoughts tend to be moderate, although extreme thoughts come up from time to time. However, this also shows that our national spirit has gradually shown a transformation from self-denial to self-affirmation in the development, specifically embodied in the extremely enhanced national self-confidence and the general objective and rational treatment and solution to the problems caused by the external environment. Moreover, firstly, it is embodied in the consistent and efficient collective action. In 2019, in the context of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Peo-

ple's Republic of China, the consciousness of the national community is constantly enhanced, and the national cohesion and centripetal force continue to improve, providing a better environment for the formation of patriotism. With the active guidance of mainstream discourse and the optimization of the people's media literacy, nationalism in 2019 was more rational, and at the same time, collective action also showed higher consistency and efficiency^[9].

Secondly, it is embodied in the struggle with reasons, evidence and restrains. In the face of slander and repression from individual Western countries, domestic nationalist sentiment is more rational and confident compared with the previous reactions. By comparing the data of economic growth, scientific and technological progress, and infrastructure construction, the false labels of "multilateral" and "equality" in trade protectionism, unilateralism, and hegemonism are torn off one by one^[9].

Lastly, it is manifested in the enhancement of inclusiveness and the weakening of exclusivity. In the face of trade frictions and other disputes between China and the United States, nationalist sentiment has been rising but has remained calm and restrained in general. On the one hand, people believe in the government's decision-making and believe that the government can solve disputes. On the other hand, the people are more rational and can understand that these are inevitable problems that China must face in the development, we can win by coping with these problems positively, and boycott blindly or refusing to exchange and open up is not conducive to China's long-term development. It can be seen that nationalist sentiment tends to be objective^[9].

4. National Spirit Education Is Oriented by the Development of National Spirits

The cultivation and promotion of national spirits are the value pursuit and goal guidance to cultivate Chinese with national spirits and facing the world. It is helpful for students to respect and understand the national culture more, and prevent discrimination and opposition by the cultivation of students' quality structure according to the mission of the times. It is also helpful to cultivate college students to become responsible citizens and realize social unity and order, conducive to promoting socialization of the students and social personalization, and improving students' ability to adapt to and serve the society^[10].

Only when the Chinese national spirits can surpass the national consciousness and overcome the crisis of national spirits can the national spirits become a world's historical nation. Moreover, only the world's historical nation can reach the stage of national spirits and complete the spir-

itual course. This requires us to transform our spiritual pattern. The historical process of the transition from national consciousness to national spirits is also the process of gradual integration of China into the whole world. At present, China is facing heavy pressure from the international environment. At the same time, various domestic trends of thoughts are surging, which puts forward various requirements for the current development of national spirits. Therefore, there is an urgent need to transform the national spirits. On the one hand, the success of the transformation of the national spirits does not depend on whether they can adhere to and carry forward their advantages, but whether they can discover and eliminate their defects in time. This is exactly the significance of national spirits and self-consciousness. On the other hand, the national spirits in the evolution need self-examination and self-denial to keep health and smooth evolution. But self-denial requires boldness and foresight. Not every civilization has such courage. Some ancient civilizations tend to bear the heavy cultural burden or be stuck deep in the cultural narcissism to refuse to make progress resulting in stagnant development. In a certain sense, denial is a necessary condition for progress. The result of denial will inevitably bring about self-innovation and the denial without self-innovation is inconceivable. The proposal of some theory, the formation of some trend of thoughts, or the implementation of some reforms are only forms of expression. In essence, they are all bred and generated under the deep restriction of the national spirits, or in other words, it is the self-denial and innovation of the national spirits. Then the result is denying the unreasonable or outdated part of the traditional spirits and bringing forth the new through the old to promote the progress and development of the national spirits. "The Chinese nation is an inclusive and open nation and has been learning from other people's strengths and transforming other people's strengths into our strengths in the long history, so we have formed our national characteristics," General Secretary Xi Jinping said.

"The national spirits must meet two conditions before they can become national spirits. First, they have extensive influence and are accepted by most people. Second, they can promote social development and drive social progress as the spiritual force."^[17] At present, China is facing the historical mission of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The national spirit education can provide solid spiritual support to urge the society to eliminate all possibilities of national spiritual separation and spiritual civil war, enhance national self-confidence and pride, enhance national centripetal force and cohesion, and always meet challenges, endure

tests, overcome difficulties and eliminate risks towards the established goals, thus to become a vigorous nation of self-actualization.

Individual and social development needs the spiritual power provided by the national spirits. China has entered a new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics and has had profound changes in various historical conditions and domestic and foreign environments. The goals of individual and social development have also changed with the changes in the domestic and international environment. The national spirit education provides the society, especially individuals with the spiritual support and motivation for innovation and hard work, to overcome the difficulties on the way forward and solidly promote the realization of personal and social development goals^[11].

The harmonious and stable situation needs the spiritual link provided by the national spirits. The national spirits can guide and urge the overwhelming majority of the people to always adhere to the national interests as the primary choice, thus to correctly treat the various conflicts of interest existing in China, and resolve the conflicts with a positive attitude and promote the development of social unity and harmony. Meanwhile, the national spirits promote the country to proceed from the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people, properly resolve various social conflicts by using policies, systems and laws in line with the principle of fairness and justice, and reasonably integrate various interest relationships, to gradually form a harmonious and stable social mechanism. Therefore, all forces that can be united are united and all positive factors that can be mobilized are mobilized, to realize the original intention and mission of seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenating the Chinese nation.

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