

Seeking China's New Identity : the Myth of Chinese Nationalism

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I . Introduction: Nationalism Used as a Hegemonic Discourse

After the end of the Cold War, 'nationalism' has become a discriminative discourse or label used by the West to describe Chinese political culture, just as they defined all socialist countries' ideologies as 'communism' during the Cold War. The reason can even be traced back to Edward Said's argument in his Orientalism that the East is just the Western imagination concept. So, nationalism has been the convenient concept to portrait the Other for the West. To the West, nationalism has become an important, even mainstream ideology in the third world.

Besides ideology, another significant reason for the overflow of nationalism is culture. Chinese culture is so complicated that it often received conceptualized and symbolized explanations. For an example, 'Guanxi' seems to have been taken as a master key to understand China's political culture. From this point of view, Chinese nationalism is just a myth. What is myth? In this paper, it particular means a kind of conceptualized and symbolized explanation, which imposes identity built

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upon imagination and self-experience on others.

Being aware of this point, some Chinese students attempt to develop what is useful and discard what is useless in the term 'nationalism'. "Only the weak claims nationalism as a way of resistance. The strong needs patriotism and statism rather than nationalism." "When a country is weak and humiliated, patriotism and statism must be transformed into nationalism: when a country gets impressive strength, nationalism must be transformed into patriotism and statism. Why? Because patriotism and statism are spatial and static concept, while nationalism is timing and dynamic. 1)" Meanwhile, some other students are trying to correct the misunderstanding of nationalism, appealing for normalization of nationalism, and claiming that there should be a limit of nationalism.

In fact, it is just shoeing the goose if we reckon on correcting or saving the image of nationalism. The problem lies in nationalism itself. Thus, getting entangled just on nationalism will lead to dim prospects. Treating nationalism historically and dialectically, we can see lots of paradoxes rooted in the discrimination of nationalism. In nature nationalism has degenerated into a hegemonic discourse used by the West.

Although the development of nations in China has a long history, it was usually called race, tribe, etc., except for "nation". As a result of textual research, the word "nation" was translated from the Japanese language. Mr. Wang Tao first introduced the word "nation" in his article The

1) Zhi Yuan: 'The Origination, Development and End of Chinese Nationalism', see

<http://www.mlcool.com/html/01488.htm>

Foreign Affairs is about Learning Others' Advantages in 1882.²⁾ In the West, as most countries are constituted of one unique nation, 'nation' is equivalent to the word 'state'. Britain and France have unified their own nations and established centralized monarchy as early as in the Renaissance. It is French missionary Augustine Barlow who first used the word 'nationalism' in 1789 to describe a kind of social power which was devoted to overthrowing feudalism monarchy. When it was imported to China, "Nationalism" was sometimes translated as "statism".³⁾ In late Qing dynasty, nationalism became a clear-cut stand in campaign against imperialism and feudalism, and thus became the first principle of Dr. Sun Yet San's "Three People's Principles" (San Min Chu I). Different from Mr. Sun's racial nationalism, which emphasized on the domestic fight against the Qing Dynasty, Liang Qichao's nationalism mainly focused on its external functions. In 1901, Mr. Liang released an article, "the Similarities and Differences of the Changes on National Thoughts" in Qing Newspaper, in which he used the word "nationalism": "Nationalism is the fairest 'ism' in the world. It refers to the freedom from being invaded as well as the liberty of not invading other countries. As for our nation, it demands the independence of individual. As for the world, it demands the independence of nation. It will be great if we make clear the boundary of each other now and forever with the concept of nationalism." He also made a comparison on nationalism's development phases between East and West: "Now it is the time that nationalism is

2) Lin Zhibo: 'Don't Misrepresent Nationalism', *Global Times*, Jan. 19 2005; Huang Qing: 'Nationalism Should Have a Limitation', *Global Times* 2005.Jan 24.

3) Some says that 'nation' in the Chinese Language first appears in South Qi Book, but it is only a coincidence, but not equal to the modern concept of nations. Referring to Di Yongjun: 'The item 'nation' First Appears in South Qi Book', *National Studies*, March 2004

evolving into imperialism in Europe and America, and also the time that nationalism is rising in Asia because of imperialism. As to Europe, nationalism sprouted in 18th century and boomed in 19th century, and imperialism dates back to latter 19th century and prospered in 20th century.”⁴⁾

The absence of the concept of nationalism in China comes from China's multinational system and its unique view on history and culture, which also contributes to the misunderstanding of China. For the same reason, China is imposed as a standing of nationalism. As Mr. Feng Youlan ever said: “From the ancient times, Chinese people did put much emphasis on the differences between China (or Huaxia) itself and other ethnic groups. However, it put stress upon cultural difference rather than racial division. Traditionally, Chinese divided all the creatures into three levels: Chinese, uncivilized nations and beasts. Chinese thought that, among the three levels, Chinese themselves were the most civilized, the uncivilized nations took the second place and the beasts were completely ignorant …… It is just the Chinese thinking habit of regarding the world as a whole that makes consciousness of nations less virtual to Chinese.” As a result, “Chinese nation always distinguishes itself from other nations according to cultural differences rather than ethnic views. (Other nations refer to those uncivilized nations called Yi & Di). The Chinese consciousness of nation originates from cultures, but not from political fields. Geographically, China is far from other countries and boasts a splendid ancient civilization. Thus, it's understandable that Chinese people couldn't even

4) Wu Xiufu: ‘Analysis of the Concept of Nationalism’. The article can found at <http://www.htang-idc.com/webfriend/mzzy-1.htm>

imagine that there were other highly civilized nations with totally different life styles from them. Therefore, Chinese tended to despise and resist foreign cultures when engaged with. They didn't mean to exclude foreign cultures, for they supposed all of them are with low taste, even totally rubbish."⁵⁾ This kind of superiority complex is also an excuse for Western scholars to assert that Chinese nationalism is somewhat exclusive.

Zhao Tingyang compared China with the West on the difference of thinking and concepts. He pointed out: "Accepting all the others is Chinese traditional spirit, while the principle of nationalism is just Western thought."⁶⁾ Only the West has the concept of "heresy". However, the Chinese world value has gradually produced magnanimous thoughts of 'the world is whole' and 'no thoughts are heresy', which made it quite impossible for China to cultivate the Western-style categorical nationalism containing a clear boundary. Chinese nationalism is a modern outcome based on the introduction of Western thoughts, or we can say that it is a 'new tradition' generated from the formation of modern nation-states."⁷⁾

Since nationalism is imported Western goods, we should be very cautious when understanding it. Although we translate 'nationalism' as '民族主義' in Chinese, we must be aware that 'ism' in English can't be

5) Liang Qichao: *Collected Works of Liang Qichao*, The 1st brochure, Beijing, Beijing Publishing House, 1999, p.456. p.459

6) Feng Youlan: *'History of Chinese Philosophy'*, translated by Zhao Fusan, Beijing, New World Publishing House, 2004, p.163, p.283

7) Zhao Tingyang: *Tianxia System (All under Heaven): Introduction of the Philosophy of World Institutions*, Nanjing, Jiangsu Higher Education Publishing House, 2005, p.13

translated simply as ‘主義’ in Chinese. The former refers to a representative theory or school of thought, while the latter means a kind of ideology, for instance, Marxism, revisionism and opportunism. These two are vividly different. It can easily lead to confuse if we fail to make clear various ‘isms’ in English. Therefore, emphasis ought to be put on ‘nation’ instead of ‘ism’. Meanwhile, as a discourse, nationalism has its own definition and logic. Anyone who just blindly pursues making corrections to nationalism will easily follow the footsteps of the West and fall into the trap.

During the formation of modern Western international system, the principle of nationalism has been the coagulant in molding national identities. It was a positive slogan in achieving national unification and rejuvenation in Machiavelle and Bismarck times. Hereafter, the West countries started to invade and colonize backward countries, in the process of which the harmful effectiveness of nationalism was increasingly obvious so that it even developed into one of the major causes of two World Wars. After the end of World War II, the Western countries eventually denied nationalism, and granted it with a new name ‘patriotism’. In their eyes, patriotism and nationalism have evolved into one of the symbols to distinguish advanced from backward, similar from alien. This is typically hegemonic logic, which suggests that ‘You live in our history’. Particularly in the United States, “Nationalism is a dirty word despised by the public. People tend to think that it is a kind of self-granted patriotism related to the narrowness and superiority complex in the ‘old world’.”⁸⁾ By the way, the word ‘regime’ has got a derogatory

8) Zhao Tingyang: *Introduction of the Philosophy of World Institutions*, p.51

meaning, e.g. 'regime change'. The United States always uses 'administration' instead of regime when mentioning its own government. Therefore, in the system of hegemonic discourses, nationalism has been imposed with derogatory sense, just like old clothes discarded by developed countries and thrown back to developing countries. Actually, nationalism has different functions in various historical phases. It should be evaluated with historical and dialectical perspectives rather than limited only on nationalism. Nowadays, the world is culture-plural and civilization-diverse, which is quite difficult to be summarized as nationalism. It is better off to say that each nation has its own patriotism.

In all, the pedigree of the Western discourses originally is disgusted with the concept of nationalism. Plus the ignorance and bias of the Western people, they tend to demonstrate more contempt on Chinese nationalism——“Nationalism is just like Joseph's colorful coat in 'Holly Bible', which is not made with one piece of cloth, so it cannot be understood in a simple way. Nationalism is patriotic calling inculcated repeatedly by state power, national identity and sense of cultural pride of Han; it is a mixture of aspiration of establishing a great nation and increasing local selfish departmentalism; it also includes optimism and hating mood of aliens.”⁹⁾ Deifying Chinese nationalism just manifests this kind of contempt.

Originally, the conflicts of Western centralism and the statement of China as an exception lead to the myth of Chinese nationalism. This article will study this myth as a case to find out the reasons of misunderstanding Chinese nationalism in Western discourses.

9) Minxin Pei, “The Paradoxes of American Nationalism”, *Foreign Policy*, May/June, 2003

II. Three Dimensions of Nationalism

It seems easier to prove that there is a limitation of nationalism rather than to affirm it. In 19th century, a politician named Walter Bagehot said: “What is nation? If you don’t ask this question, we all know what it is: but it is a mission impossible to explain or define it immediately.”¹⁰⁾ The same goes with nationalism. This specific property is just the semantic source of deifying nationalism. In addition, there is also knowledgeable origin of deifying nationalism. That is the multilevel understanding of nationalism.

According to the different characteristics of history, present quo and future, people’s understanding of nationalism’s definition, manifestation and phases of development can be described as multilevel. Please refer to Chart I :

Chart I : Multilevel Analysis of Nationalism¹¹⁾

Item	Dimensions	Claim	Definition	Manifestation	Developing Phase
Assimilation	Legitimacy	History	Of nation	National feeling	Nationalization
Alienation	Rationality	Present	By nation	National identity	Modernization

10) Jonathan Unger : “Introduction”, *Chinese Nationalism*, edited by Jonathan Unger, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1996

11) Translators’ preface to John J. Mearsheimer: *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, translated by Wang Yiwei, Tang Xiaosong, Shanghai, Shanghai People Publishing House, 2003, p.7~p.33

Yiwei Wang: “The Dimensions of China’s Peaceful Rise”, *Asia Times*, May 14, 2004.

Fundamentalism	Matching objective	Future	For nation	National will	Internationalization
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To be specific, nationalism has three dimensions:

1. Of nation: corresponding to 'pastism' of theory of knowledge, which puts emphasis on national feeling or emotions based on the identically national experience and common history and culture. It manifests the effect of assimilation by molding collective identity. The collective identity leads to the formation of nation-state, or to say, the nationalization of nationalism is finished, and then it gets the legitimacy at national level.

2. By nation: corresponding to 'presentism' of theory of knowledge. In modern times, Europe experienced the formation of nation-state as well as Enlightenment and Renaissance advocating freedom and human right. Further, it generated the dual tension of collective national identity and personal identity, which can also be seen as alienation of nationalism. The modernization of nationalism was just a process of consummating a free and democratic regime and creating national identity that could embrace both personal rationality and collective missions. Colonized and partially colonized countries also went through the modern process of shaping national identity and rising in the world after gaining their national independence. How to realize a proper balance of traditions and modernity is a great challenge for Colonized and partially colonized countries. Meanwhile, the modernization of the above two kinds of nationalisms shares the similarity of focusing on 'the present' rather than the past. By the way, the various definitions of nationalism and different developing

phases are the objective reasons leading to the West's discrimination of developing countries' nationalism

3. For nation: corresponding to 'futurism' of theory of knowledge. It includes two levels. The first is focusing on that only through being more nationalized, one can be more internationalized. These people even claim to devote their lives to their nations when necessary, which might degenerate into fundamentalism and display the localization of the world. The second is the internationalization of nations that focuses on matching objectives of nationalism, or to say that the purpose of the modernization and nationalization of nations is not to create eternal nationalism, must at last be put "into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe."¹²⁾ With the will of "facing the future and facing the world", we should let nation be internationalized, and then surpassing itself. Just as nowadays globalization and regionalization are not mutually exclusive, the internationalization and localization of nationalism exist at the different countries as well as different developing phases.

Yongnian Zheng summarized the definition of nationalism into three aspects: nation-state, national identity and international status, which just correspond to 'Of nation – by nation – for nation' as well as three phases: 'nationalization – modernization – internationalization'.¹³⁾ Further, nationalism is only the historical product of the Western international

12) Friedrich Engels (1884), "The Origin of Family, Private Property and State".

13) Yongnian Zheng, *Discovering Chinese Nationalism in China.*, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1999, preface x-x i.

system, in which nation-states are major actors. In that, China hasn't formed the concept of 'nation-state' until late Qing Dynasty. Chinese nationalism needs to go through three phases, too:

—Nationalism: in this phase, nationalism affirms itself. It also creates the mental impetus of constituting a unitary nation. Nationalism has both internal and external missions. The internal mission is to a symbol to dominate ideology and strengthen the legitimacy of state power: while the external mission is to protect national independence and unification of the country. However, when more and more nations take nationalism as an excuse to implement domestic autocratic domination and external expansion, nationalism will degenerate into political nationalism (ruling appliance), national selfishness and national supremacy, even national chauvinism. Now, various kinds of ideological or fundamental nationalism exist in the world, which are the major causes for the denial of nationalism by the West.

---Modernization: in this phase, nationalism denies it self, which shows the paradox of tradition and modernity. Because of the Western countries' superiority of earlier development, modernity usually is regarded as equal to Westernity. After the end of the Cold War, many Western scholars joint with Francis Fukuyama advocated "the end of history". So the revival of nationalism naturally contained anti-West elements. Even the European countries came to realize that the word 'West' concealed the meaning of affiliation to the United States. ¹⁴⁾ It is not strange that, more than often, nationalism will evolve into anti-American movement.

14) Zheng Ruoling: "Toward to Rebalancing World: Interview of Former French Defense Minster", *Wenhui Daily*, May 15, 2003

Certainly, the rebound of nationalism also lies on the developing countries' worry of the loss of its own characteristics and independence. Therefore, in this phase, it is of much significance to achieve proper balance and harmonious development of tradition and modernization, localization and Westernization.

——Internationalization: in this phase, nationalism must finish the negation of negation itself. It is easier for developed countries that have various races and nations, e.g. the United States to achieve this goal. On the other hand, it is quite easy to be criticized in the movement of anti-globalization. After the Cold War, nationalism has got a trend of Pan-politics and Pan-civilization, which can be proved by 'Theory of Democratic Peace' and 'Crash of Civilizations'. So the principle of matching objectives must be advocated in this phase. One nation's development should be beneficial to more nations' development, but not do harm to other nations' development.

Corresponding to the above three phases, mature nationalism should have three characteristics, nationalization, modernization and internationalization. For China, nationalization (nationalism still has its particular functions of molding national identity when dealing with territory disputes with other countries), modernization (reform and opening policy creates the tension of tradition and modernity), and internationalization (China's entry of WTO promotes its renaissance), the three missions are parallel. For the United States, its nationalism is trinity of Americanization, Westernization and internationalization. Of course, although it often appears as internationalism, it is national imperialism in fact. It is also the reflection of the thought that the United States has its

own destiny and is exceptional to others. For American, it is patriotism to object, it is hegemonism.

In the existing international system, nation-state is no longer the unitary actor. We need to mold new national identity rather than advocate so-called gentle, rational and open 'new nationalism'. Surpassing nationalism is necessary. Since sovereign countries are the basic actors in international society now, patriotism should be adopted to take place of nationalism.

III. The Western Logic of the Myth of Chinese Nationalism

Corresponding to the three developing phases of nationalism, European scholars tend to explain nationalism through the angle of nationalization. Emphasis is put on the political nationalism: "Nationalism is a kind of theory appeared at the early 19th century...This theory holds that Human beings are naturally divided into different nations, which can be distinguished by people because of some proved characteristics, The mere legitimate form of government is national autonomic government."¹⁵⁾

The national self-determination and independence movement in the 20th century struggled for casting off the yoke of colonialism and the imperialistic pressure, and sought for national liberation and prosperity. It is a flag of molding national identity. Then nationalism's development reached the phase of modernization, or to say constructing a modern state.

15) Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, translated by Zhang Mingming, Beijing, Central Compilation & Translating Press, 2002, p.1.

The third developing phase is globalization. Chinese put more focus on the definition of internationalization when understanding nationalism, constantly strives to become stronger, wooing the goal of rising in the world, the renaissance of Chinese nation, and stressing for a harmonious world. On the contrary, the West likes to understand nationalism according to the phase of nationalization. As a result, “time differences” comes into being on the knowledge of Chinese nationalism as well as the myth of Chinese nationalism.

Generally speaking, there are three sources of the myth of nationalism:

III.1. Source of knowledge

Including both consciousness and unconsciousness. The former is judging the other side according his/her own experience and familiar background, describing the Chinese nationalism in the international system dominant by the Western nation-states. It simply omits the fact that the eastern international system isn't dominant by nation-states. So we can see a vivid Western centralism. David Kang demonstrated this point well in his article “Getting Asia Wrong”.¹⁶⁾ The latter one is a typical view of “Western superiority”. It can be described as “we are philosophy, you are ideology”. Both consciousness and unconsciousness are deeply influenced by the Western bias of bias of Chinese nationalism: “In the Western people's eyes: Chinese nationalism is just reappearance of Yihetuan movement (also known as the Boxer Uprising). It must be contained.”¹⁷⁾

16) David Kang, “Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks”, *International Security*, March 2003, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 57~85.

This also explains why the West can accept Koreannationalism combined with missionary work, but cannot accept the same thing in China after Yihetuan movement.

Superficially, the source of knowledge comes from the dilemma described by Marx: "If you can not express yourself, you are deemed to be expressed by others." This just reflects the West's perplexity of Chinese civilization: "Chinese civilization is difficult for the West to understand. It is almost exclusive to us. At the same time, the Western civilization is also hard for Chinese to understand. The difference is too big. Therefore, any comparison of these two civilizations must be superficial if you want to point out the similarities." "According to the Western logic, it is reasonable if China is split into many countries at late Qing Dynasty. However, looking at the current Chinese map, it is almost the same with the map of Qing Dynasty except that Taiwan is not unified. For the West, it is incredible. To be more specific, they think that China's modern history is abnormal or deviating from the Western logic." It seems quite natural for Chinese to think that their history is continuous since they have experienced Yao, Shun, Yu, Xia, Shang, Zhou, Qin, Han, etc. successively. It also very strange to the West, because their own history has been broken off now and then." 18)

Of course, Chinese can't reproach the Western people's ignorance and bias of China for the reason that people usually tend to compare the

17) Huang Zhangkai: 'TH Dilemma of Chinese Nationalism ', *Lianhe Zaobao*, April 20, 2001

18) Gan Yang: 'Explaining China with the Western Logic: Harsh Nagging', *The 21st Century World Report*, June 27th, 2005.

object of study with the thing they are familiar with, which may lead to the problem of 'mirror image', which assumes that "other leaders, nations and groups have the same motives and aims with the analyst."¹⁹⁾

Being aware of that, Hegel pointed out that China was an extreme exception.²⁰⁾ The logic is ineffective in China. Indeed, paradox exists between the Western centralism and China's exceptionalism.

III. 2. Political source

In April of 2005, Chinese anti-Japanese mood was at its climax. The Western media, e.g. The New York Times, reported that one of the magnificent reasons was the agitation of Chinese government, because the government's rule became more and more dependent on nationalism.²¹⁾ The unspoken words of the media are that since there is no independent civil society in China, the government can control everything of the country, but in fact the government is lack of legitimacy. For the reason that the West always hold ideological bias, and lack of understanding of the phenomenon of "Strong government, weak society" of eastern countries, the trend of misleading Chinese nationalism keeps increasing.

III.3. Globalization Source

19) Mark M. Lowenthal, *Intelligence: From Security to Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 2000), p. 80.

20) Refer to Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, translated by Wang Zhaoshi, Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2001

21) Howard W. French, "By Playing at 'Rage,' China Dramatizes Its Rise", *New York Times*, April 21, 2005.

In “Manifesto of the Communist Party”, Marx and Engels asserted, “In globalization times, the one-sidedness and limitations of nations will decline continuously.” However, in our times, nationalism has become one of the powers to confront globalization. Under the logic of global hegemonic discourses, nationalism even gets abnormal.

The formation of the myth of Chinese nationalism has its own clue besides its source of knowledge, politics and times. Firstly, political nationalism. China is regarded as an abnormal country, which needs nationalism to keep its legitimacy. Especially after the crash of Soviet Union, the West tended to think that ‘Nationalism is the ideological base of a regime in a transforming process from autocracy to democracy.’²²⁾

Secondly, ethnic nationalism. It displays as denial of the existence of Chinese nation, or confusing Chinese nation and Han nation (Chinese nationalism = Han nationalism), or one-sided emphasis on ethnic nationalism. What is worth noticing is that, not only in the West, but also in Korea, Jiawu War of 1895 is renamed as Sino-Japanese War: Chinese Anti-Japanese War is renamed as Chinese-Japanese War. Yuan’s invasion of Korea is renamed as Mongolian invasion, which made it seem that Yuan is not one of Chinese dynasties. The main reason for Korea to do so is that Korean people are reluctant to admit that China is composed of fifty-six ethnic nations, partly because of the influence of the Western national value, and partly coming from their worries of being reduced to Korean nation of China.

Thirdly, cultural nationalism, especially political culture. China is

22) Yongnian Zheng., *ibid*, p. 2.

regarded as lack of personal freedom. And the political appeal is from up to down rather than from down to up. Therefore, the Western people think that the release of the energy of Chinese nationalism is organized and controlled by the government.

Considering China itself, the myth of Chinese nationalism also originates from China's special experience of changing its identity from feud almonarchy to half-colonized country, and then to the renaissance. Actually, China lost its traditional identity after the Opium War of 1840. From then on, China has been continuously seeking its new identity. Zhang Baijia once pointed out sharply, when he talked about the diplomatic heritage of Qing Dynasty, that China's humiliating history after 1840 had left deep brand in Chinese people's hearts, which cannot be blot even for generations. "For China, the real damage is not the overall crash of the old diplomatic regime, but that it was cast away to the lowest level immediately when it just stepped into the international society. It can't find any companions as well as self-defense tools. Staying in the conflicts of the two international systems, the fundamental differences takeaway Chinese psychological balance. Pride and humiliation, hatred and blind faith for foreign countries, learning from and excluding the West, all these complicated feelings are just mixed up among Chinese." ²³⁾

Mr. Yu Yingshi said: "After 1840, China was driven to the road of modernization. Chinese are facing double-level crisis of identity. Firstly, personal identity, or to say how to be a modern Chinese. Secondly,

23) Zhang Baijia: 'Changing Ourselves and Changing the World: An Introduction of the Clue of Chinese Diplomacy in the 20th Century', *Chinese Social Science*, Vol. 1, p.6

national identity. That is, how to be a modern nation-state.”²⁴⁾ Once this process is finished, the ruin of so-called myth of Chinese nationalism is reasonable and predictable. However, the question is: how to create a new identity?

IV. Seeking China's New Identity from 'New Nationalism'?

The arguments on nationalism between Chinese and foreigners have not yet stopped for there are so many differences, meaningful or not. Some Chinese scholars who live under the circumstances of the Western discourses tend to think “Modernization, nationalism and regionalism can be seen as the basic trends in explaining China's foreign relations after the Cold War.” Moreover, “Nationalism has become the leading ideology in driving China to the road of modernization.”²⁵⁾

Some other scholars try to explain the rise of Chinese nationalism from the mutual actions of the domestic side and external side. “Chinese nationalism is not only reaction for its international environment, but also reaction” to the reduction of central power in domestic modernization.”²⁶⁾ Then, they put forward so-called the phenomenon of Chinese new nationalism. “Chinese is becoming more and more assured that the West doesn't want to accept China as an equal member of international society.

24) Yu Yingshi: 'Democracy and Nationalism', the article can be found at

<http://www.confuchina.com/03%20lunlizhengzhi/minzhu%20yu%20minzu.htm>

25) Quansheng Zhao, *Interpreting Chinese Foreign Policy*, Oxford Press, 1996, p.185.

26) Yongnian Zheng., *ibid*, p.21.

Also the West will not admit Chinese power. This is just the base of Chinese new nationalism.”²⁷⁾

Will this new nationalism bring with China's new identity? The key point to answer this question is whether China can find its proper identity and international position during the three developing phases of nationalism, which are nationalization, modernization and internationalization.

From now on, it seems that we should use patriotism to substitute nationalism. After that, we should take renaissance of Chinese traditions and internationalization to replace patriotism, though that patriotism maybe as narrow as nationalism, and internationalization is not very practical.

In today's world, a trend is quite obvious that globalization and regionalization are developing jointly. So we should take the transition of patriotism into account. After all, nations will be abandoned and thrown away into the museum just like the spinning wheel and bronze ware. When identifying China, we should back to the future not the history. All kinds of 'isms' are impetuous and needed to be surpassed. History, present and future are the three dimensions of the creation of China's new identity.

----Historical memory: do we pursue grief or victory? Ex-colonies usually have the characteristics of pursuing grief, while developed countries, especially the United States, like pursuing victory. Disturbance

27) Yongnian Zheng., *ibid*, p.18.

of humiliating memory of Chinese modern history must be avoided when creating Chinese new national identity. We should face the future rather than go back into history.

----Cultural characteristics: Respecting other countries' choices or forcing others to respect your own value? Obviously China who traditionally holds 'He'(peace) culture prefers the former. But the United States with expanding culture prefers the latter one.

----Self-positioning: leading the world or making devotions to the world? American ex-Secretary of State, Colin Powell said: "American particular value is the reason for us to lead the world."²⁸⁾ However, China advocates the great renaissance of Chinese nation, which makes it realize that China should make larger devotions to the world."²⁹⁾

The strong points of Chinese nationalism are its cultural characteristics. The deficiency of Japanese nationalism is its fading of the historical memory. American nationalism has its own weak point of ego-inflation. Creating Chinese new international identity and figure should foster the strengths and circumvent the weakness, in which three aspects must be included: an open and inclusive national spirit, a harmonious national character, and a moderate sense of national pride..

Is the formations of this kind of international identity from down to up

28) <http://www.usinfo.org/USIA/usinfo.state.gov/regional/ea/mgck/archive01/0711powell.htm>

29) Mao Zedong, "In Memory of Sun Yet San", *Selective Works of Mao Zedong* (II), Beijing: People Publishing House, 1986, p.755.

or from up to down? Is it naturally formed or elaborately molded? In the description by the West, Chinese nationalism is from up to down, and is equal to statism. Or we can say that the West takes Chinese nationalism as an ideology rather than national emotions. On the contrary, “why does American nationalism have vitality and continuity? For common people, the leading role of citizens’ free wills——not governmental force——made the national mood more innocent, more attractive and more legitimate. It is almost impossible for people to notice American nationalism because its form of expression is too ordinary.”³⁰⁾ Therefore, the creation of Chinese international identity should be spontaneous, nongovernmental, less political participation, more social participation.

One thing must be pointed out is that, either nationalism or patriotism is “小我 (small ‘i’)”, which naturally has the characteristics of harming others to benefit oneself. Both of them should regress to “大我 (Big ‘I’)”. With the development of economic globalization and regionalization now, we should advocate win-win, multi-win, and erecting the idea of community, but not simply regress to nationalism or promoting narrow patriotism.

Certainly, we are not idealist. We still need to take Chinese national conditions into account. As the largest developing country in the world and a rising world power, China has to achieve modernization and internationalization at the same time and to unite the motherland, accomplishing the whole task at one stroke. Many foreign people agree that ‘China’s peaceful rise is one of the most significant incidents in the 21st century.’ In the future, China’s new international identity will have

30) Minxin Pei, “The Paradoxes of American Nationalism”, *Foreign Policy*, May/June, 2003

the following contents: geared to modernization, the world and the future; trying to turn China into a representative of the developing trend of advanced productive forces, advanced culture and quantity-major people's will in international society. The key point is to bind together the trinity of historical traditions, international trends and world identity.

However, the difficulty is that how the nationalized becomes the internationalized. Lucian Pye pointed out that the development of nationalism must surpass ethnic nations and national destination. Substantial content must be established to stimulate common people's emotions, build norms and rules, and restrict leaders' behavior. However, in contemporary China, there are no holy symbols such as 'Declaration of Independence' of the United States, French "Declaration of Human Rights" as well as American Constitution. Also no systematic behavioral norms exist. Thus Chinese nationalism is very weak. ³¹⁾ Influenced by Pye's opinion, many Chinese scholars pitifully come to notice, "Chinese nationalism has not yet come into being. It doesn't have an independent design of politics, economics, culture, value and ethnics.³²⁾ These scholars' reference frame is undoubtedly Western mature nationalism."

In opposition to this kind of improper underestimation, there is also international media that praises Chinese soft power. The representative opinion is the formulation of the rise of "Chinese Model/Brand". It maintains that China's model can be summarized as "working hard,

31) Lucian Pye: 'Nationalism and Modernization', 21st Century, Feb. 1992

32) Wang Xiaodong: 'Chinese Nationalism in the Western People's Eyes', in Fang Ning, Wang Xiaodong, Song Qiang: *China's Road in the Shadow of Globalization*, Beijing: Chinese Social Science Publishing House, 1999

making innovations and tests, protecting national interests, following in order and advancing step by step.” This model provides a new path for developing countries. Beijing consensus is gradually taking the place of Washington consensus.³³⁾

Thus, we need a ‘Chinese Model/Brand’ accepted by international society rather than the reform of nationalism abandoned by the mainstream of international society. Seeking China’s new identity by so-called Chinese new nationalism is just repeating the tragedy of the myth of Chinese nationalism. Certainly, a lot of arguments exist on ‘Chinese Model’ or ‘Beijing Consensus’. In Joshua’s letter to the author recently, he put forward the concept of ‘Post-Beijing consensus’. He thought that Chinese Model/Brand is a proper developing path considering Chinese national situation and social needs, which aims at perusingf airness and high-quality increase. This new concept is now exercisinggreat influence on the outside world, for it also provides a new path for those nations who are perusing their own road, trying to be an accepted member of international order, and defend their own independence and political choice. China’s new position is to be a responsible great power in the process of establishing a long peaceful, prosperous and harmonious world. China’s proposition of ‘a harmonious world’ is a combination of Chinese traditional culture and ideas of multi-win and win-win. Creation of the national identity is achieved during the process of establishing an ideal world. China’s new identity originates from China and belongs to the whole world.

33) See Joshua Cooper Ramo, “The Beijing Consensus”, *The Foreign Policy Centre*, Spring 2004. See <http://fpc.org.uk/fsblob/244.pdf>

Besides the popularizing and symbolic effect, modernization and internationalization with Chinese characteristics will also be a process of molding new identity and nationalization in new times. The international society cannot agree with this view anymore. So the logic ought to be that development is the key breaking the Western hegemonic discourses of the myth of nationalism depends on China's achievement of sustainable and peaceful rising.³⁴⁾

V. Conclusion and Implication

Generally speaking, the reason for the differences over the evaluation of Chinese nationalism lies in the West emphasizes the legitimacy and nationality, while Chinese focuses on rationality and modernity. On nongovernmental level, matching objectives and internationalization are stressed.

The myth of nationalism is the 'mirror image' of self-identity on one hand. On the other hand, it is just the simplification and symbolization of complicated and greatly different political cultures. The former is unconscious while the latter is conscious. In the Western hegemonic discourse, Chinese nationalism is often related with its socialist ideology as well as its independent and successive Chinese culture. Only China itself can destroy the myth of nationalism not the West. The success of

34) The analysis of the concept of 'Harmonious World', See Yiwei Wang: "Harmonious World Changes the Perspective of International Politics", *Global Times*, Feb 2, 2005

China's peaceful development can finally create China's new international identity.

China is composed of many ethnic nations, which is different from Japan, Korea and other countries that have only one ethnic nation. China is also the origin of eastern civilization. It is quite different from India who has become quite Westernized. That is just the social and historical root of the myth of Chinese nationalism created by the West. One more thing we must be aware is that, not only the Western countries, but also China's neighbors such as Korea, Japan, Mongolia and Vietnam, have much misunderstanding and worries of Chinese nationalism. The countries even refuse to accept the concept of Zhonghua Minzu (Chinese nation). The myth of Chinese nationalism is just one of the examples that the West tries to mislead China. The more serious misleading comes from unconsciousness and ideology, e.g. the argument of China threat even China's rise (Chinese prefers to use China's rejuvenation). The result of deliberate misleading unfortunately turns China into a victim expressed by others. The paradox of the Western centralization and Chinese exceptionalism appears not only in the concept of nationalism, but also in the understanding of China and international discourses per se.

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< 요약문 >

중국의 새로운 정체성을 찾아서: 중국 민족주의의 신화

王 義 桅

민족주의는 서구가 중국인의 국가정서를 진부하게, 패권적으로 설명하는데 활용되고 있다. 본 논문을 통해 저자는 정치적 민족주의, 민족적 민족주의와 문화적 민족주의로 구체화된 중국의 민족주의 신화의 인식론적, 정치적, 세계화적 유래를 분석할 것이다. 저자는 이른바 '새로운 민족주의'의 수정을 통해 새로운 중국의 국가적 정체성의 형성하는 것이 새로운 시기에 중국 민족주의의 신화를 연장시키는 것으로 밖에 간주하고 있다. 저자는 '국가로서, 국가에 의해, 국가를 위해,' 그리고 '국가화 과정-현대화 과정-국제화 과정'이라는 새로운 분석의 틀을 제시하고 있다. 그러면서 미래의 중국의 국가 정체성은 다음과 같은 면모를 갖춰야 할 것이라고 주장하고 있다. 즉, 개방되고 포괄적인 국가정신, 조화로운 국민성, 그리고 온건한 국가적 자부심 등이다. 세계에서 가장 큰 개도국과 부상하고 있는 세계적인 대국으로서 중국은 현대화와 국제화를 동시에 달성해야 하며, 조국통일의 과업을 이루어야 한다. 이 모든 것을 한 번에 이룸으로써 역사적 전통, 국제적 조류와 세계적 정체성의 삼위일체를 구현할 수 있다는 것이다. 영구적인 평화와 공동의 번영을 누릴 수 있는 조화로운 세계를 만들기 위해 중국은 '책임있는 국가'라는 새로운 정체성을 모색하고 있다. 마지막으로 저자는 중국의 평화적인 발전이 중국의 새로운 정체성을 형성시킬 것이며 중국의 민족주의에 대한 모든 신화를 제거하는데 일조할 것이다.

주제어: 민족주의(Nationalism), 국가정체성(national identity), 국민화(nationalization), 현대화(modernization), 국제화(internationalization)