CHAPTER – 2

CHINESE CONCEPTS OF NATION, NATIONALISM
AND NATIONALITIES

The central argument of this chapter is that China has its own specific concepts of nation, nationalities and nationalism. These concepts are based on Confucian culturalism. There is a continuity between the older forms of Confucian culturalism and its modern expressions even as Confucian culturalism has of necessity seen transformed through sets of historical experiences. Yet, the notion that Confucian culturalism explains the rise of the Chinese nation state has been contested by the culturalism to nationalism thesis.

The core elements of this culturalism to nationalism thesis were that culturalism waned due to Western pressure and gave way to the rise of nationalism. In fact, culturalism failed the Chinese state. Therefore, it was necessary to look for a new ideology to reinvent the Chinese state. That ideology was nationalism. Thus, cultural Confucianism dissipated to give way to nationalism. Therefore, the Chinese state was equal to a Western nation state.

To understand the nature of Chinese nationalism today the chapter questions how far this culturalism to nationalism debate is tenable. It argues that culturalism to nationalism debate has certain pitfalls. The argument for the movement from culturalism to nationalism fails to explain the term nation which is, in fact, a concept at the core of any meaning of nationalism. The problem of the

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thesis also lies in posing culturalism as contrary to nationalism and by arguing that culturalism had to dissipate for nationalism to emerge.

This study of Chinese nationalism will reveal an essential continuation between the culturalism of the imperial period and the contemporary Chinese nationalism. In other words, it will argue that culturalism did not collapse with the coming of nationalism. Nationalism or the Chinese form of it existed before the coming of the West but its meaning was different. In fact, traditional societies had their own distinctive features that gave them their identity and bound them for centuries. For China, one unifying factor was the power and resilience of the state. Another factor was the use of the common script by all Han Chinese that facilitated communication and participation in the national culture. Yet, another binding factor was the rise of centralized monetary system. But, most of all, as suggested by James W. Watson, were the common rites, ceremonies, manners and general deportment based on Confucianism, as evident in the word li in Confucian philosophy. In Confucian philosophy li meant following correct forms of behaviour and in so doing one becomes civilized and is, therefore, a Chinese. This Confucian notion of li forged a common identity among the Chinese and bound them for centuries. This explains how such a mammoth, flourishing civilization

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characterized by unity and continuity managed to exist until today. This also explains that culturalism was actually an assertion of Chinese ethnicity, as it emphasized the cultural distinctions separating Chinese from others and the importance of maintaining those distinctions. These cultural distinctions characterised the Chinese state.

The chapter further argues that certain features of a nation state system were present in the imperial Chinese State. These features of a nation state demonstrate that characteristics, which are intrinsic to the modern West, were also present in the civilizations of the East. This, however, does not mean that the Chinese State was similar to the Western nation state. Since the historical experiences of the Chinese State were different from those of Western state, the Chinese state had a different political tradition. Therefore, China followed a different trajectory of development. However, since the Chinese imperial state possessed certain characteristics of a modern nation state, it was not culturalism that lay at the root of the Chinese failure. Rather, the divergence in the objectives of the Western and Eastern states was the root cause of the collapse of China. In other words, culturalism did not fail the Chinese state. The new mercantile states of the West failed to evolve a dialogue with the Chinese State based on Confucian tradition. This indicates that the concepts derived from different historical experiences are rarely a comfortable fit in entirely other historical and cultural contexts. Therefore, viewing the Chinese State from the prism of a civilizational state would provide us with a different set of explanations about the Chinese concept of the state. The chapter, thus, posits China as a civilizational state and explains Chinese understanding of nation today.

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The concept of a civilizational state carried the notion that culturalism though different from nationalism, was not incompatible. In other words, nationalism did not replace culturalism but culturalism has permeated the notion of nationalism in China today. The ti-yong dichotomy that characterizes Chinese politics even today bears testimony of the relevance of culturalism in China. As Levenson described ti-yong, “the way to stay Chinese was to stay Chinese in all aspects of culture (the ti) whereas the utility of Western learning (the Yong) would be used for Chinese development.”8 Deng Xiaoping’s socialism with Chinese characteristics essentially underlines this ti-yong philosophy of accepting economic reforms and opening up to bring about economic modernization of China, yet maintaining political control to prevent China from going the capitalist way. The ti-yong dichotomy also indicated that the causes of decline of Chinese power were sought in the lack of wealth and power or fuqiang rather than faults in the Chinese cultural tradition. This was the reason behind appropriating the concept of fuqiang by reformists, revolutionaries and later Communists in order to save China.

The chapter finally concludes that Chinese nationalism is the product of its own historical experiences of culturalism, imperialism and Marxism-Leninism. None of the factors alone explains the rise of nationalism in China today. Therefore, what exists in China today is an amalgam of culturalism and nationalism that gives a completely new twist to the meanings of nation, nationalities and nationalism.

Features of Nation State in the Imperial Chinese State

Finding features of modern nation state in the imperial state of China is not to argue that the Chinese State was equivalent to a nation state. But, the effort here

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has been made to state that first, China did not turn into a nation state only with the coming of the West. Second, the characteristics of nation state did not prevent China from Western intrusion.

At the end of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) in Europe which involved a prolonged conflict between the Church and the monarchy, power shifted to the monarchy and gradually led to the establishment of a system of states. States came to be defined by\(^9\):

- A territory, ideally with defined boundaries.
- A population (with or without a national or common identity).
- A governing authority.
- Recognition of each state’s sovereign right to its territory, peoples and resources.

The transition from monarchial to nation states was spearheaded by the French Revolution (1789). A series of nationalist revolutions in the first quarter of the 18\(^{th}\) century provided the ideology of the 19\(^{th}\) century nationalism. As the new states took shape the appeal of political and religious universality declined and people ceased to look outside the local environment for artistic and social standards.\(^10\) The rise of vernacular languages and the consciousness of the collective identity of those bound by languages and territory provided the framework within which affiliative identities and ideologies began to play a greater role, providing fertile growth for the rise of nationalism.\(^11\) In fact, shared characteristics of language, literature, culture, race and religion reinforced this

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\(^{10}\) Barry B Hughes, *Continuity and Change in World Politics: Competing Perspectives* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997), p. 269.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
collective identity. Thus, the new European state was not only a state with people, territory and government but a nation state where people were bound by shared historical memories, common customs and institutions, a sense of homogeneity and mutual interest. If we juxtapose this understanding of the characteristics of the nation state with the Chinese imperial state, we find certain similarities with features of the modern nation state.

In 221 BC with the establishment of Qin dynasty, China was unified under one centralized political authority. This centralized political system prevailed both at the center and at the local level. Emperor was the supreme ruler and combined in him the posts of executive, legislative and judiciary. Under the authority of the emperor, the highest-ranking officials were the chancellor or the Prime Minister in charge of administration, the grand Marshall in charge of the military and the Chief of Censorate in charge of monitoring the bureaucracy. Next in line were the senior ministers entrusted with different administrative functions. Below them were junior officials in various ranks. These were all paid government officials whose positions were appointed and not hereditary. Max Weber pointed out that such elaborate organizational structure were typical of a bureaucracy which only developed in a modern state. China had already developed as early as the Qin dynasty.

At the local level, small principalities were all brought under the direct rule of the center. The local administration was divided into two levels, the prefecture (jun) and the county (xian). This organizational set up existed with in some

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13 See, Zhengyuan Fu, *Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics*. 
variations until Qing times. The continuous presence and maintenance of the organizational set up is indicative of entrenchment of political tradition in Chinese history. Bureaucratic entrenchment and control was maintained through the civil-service examination, which was unique to the Chinese imperial administrative system. Based on merit and aimed at attracting the best talent into the service of the state, it was meant to create a class of loyal subjects and strengthen and preserve the autocratic tradition. The ‘avoidance principle’ instituted in the Sui dynasty made the bureaucracy less partisan by prohibiting the appointment of local officials to officer with jurisdiction over their native places. ‘Job rotation’ further prevented the formation of powerful cliques in government organs or in local regions and retirement prevented the creation of pressure groups in the capital since retirement meant that the officials had to leave the capital and return to their native place. Therefore, as Zheng Yuan Fu writes, the “Chinese traditional imperial state bureaucracy had all the features of the modern bureaucracy”. If strong central bureaucracy is one of the attributes of a nation-state, the Chinese imperial state possessed it in ample measure.

Secondly, following Benedict Anderson’s argument that print-capitalism strengthened vernacular languages and that printing standardized languages and aided in the development of a centralized state, then the Chinese from the Qin times possessed a unified written language that buttressed the centralized notion of the state. The emphasis on the written rather than the spoken language was due to great differences between the Chinese dialects spoken in different parts of the

14 Ibid., p. 98.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., p. 86.
The common written language enabled readers to simply pronounce the characters in their own dialects. This existence of a single written language became the basis of a unified education system and thus a culture that was shared across the state. However, since the Chinese writing system involved characters and was not based on phonetics, it meant learning tens of thousands of distinct characters. It was hard to learn and hence few people managed to learn it. Therefore, the written language, while it evolved a unified character, remained confined to a close network of the “literati”. Naturally, it meant ideas could not be disseminated to the entire populace. But, this gap was bridged by two kinds of developments. First was the development of vernacular fiction traceable to pre-Tang and Tang times (618-907 AD). It involved an oral tradition of story-telling and the popular venue for such activity was the urban or suburban market place. As Gamer writes, “this was the focal point of the Chinese community, the hub of often multi-cultural commercial transactions, the meeting point of all walks of life from travelers, to merchants, farmers, public officials, prostitutions, entertainers”. Thus, vernacular fiction provided a bridge “between literati and a much-broader illiterate or semi-illiterate audience”. The content of this vernacular fiction was drawn from Chinese history. Therefore, history or common ancestry became a source of collective identity.

19 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 367.
The second development that bridged the gap emanated from the strength of the bureaucracy.\(^{25}\) By the end of the 1st century BC the total population of China was 59,594,978 ruled by a bureaucracy comprised of 130,385 officials in the central and prefectural government. Thus, the proportion was 1:346.9 person. By the late Qing period, the government bureaucracy consisted of some 40,000 ranking civil officials supervising more than 1.2 million junior clerks and 500,000 runners. The reach of the bureaucracy had an impact on the entire population. Such a large bureaucracy also acted as a vehicle for the spread of imperial ideas. This bound the entire population to the national culture. In other words, the bureaucracy served as a propaganda machine for the emperor that was the warp and woof of cultural unity across the state.\(^{26}\)

The centralized bureaucratic imperial structure, a unified written language, unified education system all seem to suggest that the Chinese State possessed the features of a nation-state. Since the Chinese imperial state was imbued with modern nation-state characteristics, it demonstrated culturalism to nationalism thesis is untenable. However, these features did not make China a modern nation state. Historical development of China did not follow the Western path and this imparted a different characteristic to the Chinese state. In fact, as Philip Huang pointed out that borrowing analytical concepts entirely from Western derived schemes, and attempting in one way or another to force Chinese history into Western classic models gives a faulty understanding of the subject.\(^{27}\) Therefore,

\(^{25}\) Figures are drawn from Zheng Yuan Fu, *Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics*, p. 75-79.

\(^{26}\) See Tu Wei-ming, ET. Al eds., *The Confucian World Observed: A contemporary Discussion of Confucian Humanism in East Asia* (Hawaii: Hawaii University Press, 1993), p. 61. The chapter on Confucian and education states that the examination system set the standard of national culture that penetrated the local level, thus providing a very heterogeneous country a common culture.

instead of pointing to the culturalism factor that accounted for the failure of the Chinese state, it would be pragmatic to adopt a different tool to understand the Chinese state. In fact, viewing the Chinese state from the prism of a civilizational state will provide a more useful paradigm to understand the Chinese state.\(^28\)

**China as a Civilizational State**

The word civilization implies a distinct constellation of socio-cultural and political framework since early times. The civilization contains the objective elements of language, history, religion, customs and institutions as well as the subjective element of self-identification of the people. China represented one of the earliest civilizations of the world. Its civilizational influence spread to a vast area enveloping almost whole of East Asia. This civilization was underscored by Confucian philosophy. The Confucian philosophy was reflected in the Chinese notion of territory, centralized government structure, sovereignty and loyalty of the people.\(^29\) These notions, in fact, constitute the notion of a modern state and these features were present in China but with Chinese characteristics. The idea of China as a civilizational state can be understood under the following heads.

- Confucianism & notion of territory
- Confucianism & notion of sovereignty and state power
- Confucianism & notion of morality/ ethics
- Confucianism & China’s political tradition

\(^28\) The need to view China as a civilizational state has been suggested by Stein Tonnesson and Hans Antlov in their edited book *Asian Forms of the Nation* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press Ltd., 1996).


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Confucianism & notion of territory

The history of Chinese civilization began with the growth of the Chinese state around the Wei River, a tributary of the Yellow river. The river-based civilization acquired a central area which subsequently expanded southward to incorporate the Yangtze River during the Zhou dynasty. The subsequent establishment of Qin dynasty marked a significant shift from state to empire. It may be noted that when the Zhou dynasty overthrew the Shang dynasty, the former gave away the conquered lands as fiefs to members or close allies of their own family. Thereby, the Chinese world was divided into several political entities. This period in China is often marked as the age of feudalism and there has been fierce debate among scholars, both Marxist and non-Marxist, whether the Zhou period marked the feudal period. But this system of independent principalities came to an end with the creation of a new system of centralized administration under the Qin dynasty. This system of centralized bureaucratic rule became the norm for later dynasties. The Chinese Emperor claimed the status of the Son of Heaven and the ruler of "everything under heaven". As the son of heaven, "he was the mediator between heaven and earth" and thus was responsible for maintaining harmony in the universe. Thus, the concept of son of heaven appropriated to itself the rights and duties of a universal king who would lead, guide and protect the 'world'. To the Chinese, the notion of 'world' was linked geographically to those areas where Chinese culture spread and was assimilated. Therefore, the Chinese world comprised of Manchuria in the northeast, Inner and Outer

Mongolia in the north, Tibet in the southwest, Xinjiang in the northwest over which the Chinese state exercised a relatively direct rule. The tribute paying states of Siam, Burma and Nepal were included in the Sinic world on the basis of their acculturation of Chinese culture as were Korea, Japan and Vietnam. Within this partially conceived geographical ‘world’, notions of civilization took on a universal definition. The Son of Heaven was responsible not only for the security of the Chinese State but also for ‘civilization’ defined as a whole. Therefore, implicit in the concept of the Son of Heaven was a definition of the state as a civilizational state. This civilizational state subsumed universal cultural values with no fixed boundaries. Therefore, Confucian culture transcended China as political entity and spread to the neighbouring areas. By virtue of the rich development of its institutions, system of thoughts, language and culture, China set itself up as a civilizational model for neighbouring areas. This notion of civilizational state stood in contrast to the Western state which had fixed political boundaries, rested on specific national characteristics and after the separation of Church and state no longer espoused universal notions of authority.

Confucianism and notions of sovereignty and state power

During the Han dynasty (2nd century BC) Confucianism became a pliable tool for maintenance of the political authority of the emperor and the state over the populace. It may be noted that Confucius (551 BC- 479 BC) formulated his philosophical thoughts at a time when China was in the throes of war and anarchy. So his prescription to end anarchy defined the Chinese standards of civilization. At the heart of Confucianism is a fundamental humanistic ideal, essentially aimed at

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32 This discussion is drawn from my M.Phil. Dissertation: The China Threat: A Historical Analysis, 1998.
creating an ethical and moral structure of human relations. Therefore, the Confucian philosophy envisioned an ordered relationship from top to bottom in a hierarchical pattern. At the top was an Emperor in whom all power was concentrated and whose purpose was to maintain order under Heaven. The absolute power of the Emperor was constrained by the virtue required of so powerful a ruler. The notion of virtue was derived from Confucius' view of human behaviour, the innate goodness of the individual and the need to cultivate this to create the 'superior man'. The superior man signified a man of virtue to whom the responsibility of the realm could be entrusted and in whom the power of the state could be vested. As long as emperor retained virtue retained power or the mandate of heaven and the legitimacy to rule. For Confucius 'rule of man' took precedence over the 'rule of law'. Later addition about arguments for absolute power by Xunzi only built on fears of anarchy to reinforce the Confucian theory of the state and extend the absolute power of the emperor absolutely.

Confucianism and notion of ethics and morality

Tu Wei-ming has argued, “Confucius was more than a code of social ethics, it is a religion with a considerable spiritual dimension, but it is unlike other religions”. Confucian ethics is wholistic in approach. There was no separation between the social and the political realm. If the family the microcosm where Confucian ethics found its germ, the ethical structure of the family was quickly applied to the larger social world and then to the relationship between the social and the political matrix as well. Therefore, the sense of the sacred that was attached to family relations was extended to all social and political relations

33 See, Marc Mancall, China at the Center.
34 Zhengyuan Fu, Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics, p. 32.
35 Tu Wei-ming, Confucian World Observed, p. 10.
resulting in a comprehensive ethics that judged both state and society by the same parameters.

Confucius thus did not talk of human relation with God but laid down certain ethical principles to be used by the people in their daily interactions. One of the central concepts in Confucian thought was “Jen” or benevolence. “Jen” is a comprehensive notion; it included the respect for social hierarchy, human compassion and displaying perfect virtue in personal interaction. Confucius regarded that if the father demonstrated “Jen”, then in return he will get “li” or respect from his family. This idea was extended to the state. If the government displayed “Jen” to its people, then the people will be obedient to the ruler. In other words, harmony in the universe could only prevail, if it began from home. Therefore, state in China could be viewed as the family writ large.\(^{36}\) This idea of “Jen” was imbued in the principle of the Mandate of Heaven. If “Jen” or sacred was not embodied in the ruler, then he lost the mandate to rule and a new dynasty was needed to give a sense of the sacred to the power structure of the society.\(^{37}\) Therefore, the Chinese state was not defined by power but power maintained through ethics. This sacredness, which is all-pervasive in Confucian ideology, rendered the Chinese state a moral ethical order.

**Confucianism and China’s political tradition**

Confucian philosophy became the state ideology from the Han dynasty (221 BC) to the Qing dynasty (1911). It delineated the fundamental notions of the political tradition of China. The fundamental and significant characteristic of

\(^{36}\) Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian World Observed*, p. 116.

Chinese political tradition was autocracy.\textsuperscript{38} This autocracy was established when China was unified under one centralized political authority in 221 BC. Scholars have attributed this period to the end of feudalism in China. However, there is considerable debate over the timing and meaning of feudalism and over the path Chinese society followed in the course of history.\textsuperscript{39} In fact, the debate is primarily between the essentialists and the structuralists. The former viewed feudalism in Eastern and Western societies empirically to explain it in the Chinese context. The latter analyzed the structures of feudalism in the East and the West and explained the structural effects it had on the society. Without going into the details of the debate, it is sufficient here to point out that prior to 221 BC, the Zhou dynasty established a political system which was pyramidal in structure. Authority over various vassal states was delegated to royal kin and generals. The titles and posts were hereditary. These features made Zhou rule feudal akin to European feudalism. However, the “Son of Heaven” concept which developed under the Zhou made the Chinese political structure less feudalistic. Under the “Son of Heaven” concept all land and all people belonged to the king and land could not be transferred without the permission of the king. But certain features of feudalism disintegrated with the establishment of the Qin dynasty which unified China under a centralized bureaucratic rule. Zhengyuan Fu argued that this transformation was brought about from above and drastically changed state-society relations, resulting in the subordination of society to the state.\textsuperscript{40} He further argued that since there was subordination of society under the state, Chinese imperial ideology emphasized a

\textsuperscript{38} This argument is drawn from Zhengyuan Fu, \textit{Autocratic Traditions and Chinese Politics}.


\textsuperscript{40} Zhengyuan Fu, \textit{Autocratic Tradition and Chinese Politics}, p. 1.
preference for the public rather than the private. The public realm was that of the state while the private was linked to the individual. In the Confucian thinking the private interest was denigrated while the public interest was upheld. Therefore, the state was conceived as omnipotent explaining why all major reforms in Chinese history had the underlying goal of strengthening the state.

Equally important to note is that this autocratic tradition was encapsulated in the moralistic principles of Confucianism. For instance, the concept of the Mandate of Heaven (tianming) essentially reflected the ethical and moralistic principles behind autocratic state power. The Chinese empire was called “tianxia” meaning all under heaven; Chinese emperor was called “tianzi”, meaning the son of heaven; the imperial dynasty was called “tianchao” or heavenly dynasty and ordinary people were called “tianchao zimin”, meaning subjects under the heavenly dynasty. This ethical and moralistic principle inculcated a sense of cultural identity than political identity. This cultural identity built on Confucian philosophy determined China as a civilizational state. In this context, it may be pointed out that countries may possess similar political institutions and practices and yet have different political traditions. It is the political tradition that actually determines socio-political changes. The Chinese political tradition underscored by Confucian philosophy shaped the Chinese identity as essentially a civilizational identity. This notion of a civilizational state rendered a cultural rather than political identity to the Chinese State. Chang Pao-min writes that since spatially there was

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41 Ibid., p. 103.
42 Ibid.
only one unified China that was co-terminus with Chinese civilization, cultural identity was indistinguishable from political identity. Therefore, it also explains why the Chinese people did not show loyalty to a specific dynasty. This promoted a kind of "cultural rather than political nationalism".  

Traditional orientations regarding the self, the group and the cosmos have played a major part in the modern evolution of Chinese society as T.A. Metzger writes. He points out that "the vital attitudes and values which lie largely below the level of consciousness are not susceptible to diffusion", rejecting the idea that Chinese modernization was based on refutation of Confucianism.

The reasons for the collapse of China in the wake of Western intrusion should be sought not in Chinese culturalism but in the different and opposing cultural and political traditions of China and the West. China failed to match the superior military technology of the West and thus succumbed to it. But to trace the reason for China's failure in its lack of scientific and technological know-how would be reductionist. In fact, it was the differing notions of power that lay at the root of the Chinese collapse. As Lucian Pye argued, "in different times and places people have thought of power in very different ways, and it is precisely these differences that are the governing factors in determining this diverse paths of political development".  

China's Notion of Power

The notion of power emanates from the objectives of the state. The objectives of the Chinese State and the Western nation-state diverged and this

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divergence shaped different nations of power. In the 18th century when Europeans knocked on the door of China, Europe was no more a backward continent. Mercantilism was just heading into the age of industrial capitalism. This brought in its sweep a revolutionary change in the economy, polity, society and culture of Europe. Europe was no longer a civilization in isolation, its power politics no longer confined to its continent. With new scientific technical breakthroughs, better guns and armaments, entrepreneurial capabilities and missionary zeal it was all set to stamp its civilization on the rest of the world.

When Europe encountered China, it found the Chinese civilization nowhere close to what Marco Polo had described in the 13th century. China seemed decadent, stagnant and ignorant of scientific developments. While Europe at this time was indeed powerful and advanced by virtue of its scientific and technical know how and material prosperity. "The European came to view scientific and technical achievements not only as the very attributes that set Europe off from all other civilizations, past and present, but as the most meaningful gauges by which non-Western societies might be evaluated, classified and ranked." In the process, Europe's political organization, institutions and Christian religion were also projected as different and superior than the "other". Therefore, the Europeans branded the "other" as inferior and uncivilized. They took upon themselves the task of civilizing the Eastern world and spread enlightenment. In fact, Europe at this time grew into an aggressive and interventionist power, motivated to expand and conquer to sustain its economic growth and individual progress. The "other" represented by the Chinese civilizational state grounded on the Confucian notions of power fell victim to this European imperialism.

There are two groups of opinion on Confucian notions of power. One view is that the Chinese strategic tradition is uniquely anti-militarist. According to this view, Chinese tradition demonstrates a “preference for stratagem, minimal violence and defensive wars of maneuver”.\textsuperscript{47} This view is based on the Confucian philosophy where the strength of the state is contingent upon the virtuous rule than rule by force. The other view comes from Alastair Johnston who argues that Chinese strategic culture embodies an essentially real politik view, which he refers to as the parabellum paradigm. He claims that Chinese strategic culture does not differ from the Western views of the role of force in the international system.\textsuperscript{48} Nonetheless, Confucian notions of virtue rather than force were an important part of the Chinese State policy. As argued by Arthur Waldron, “China is simply too big, and its population too numerous, to be ruled by force alone. An army of a size that is reliable is not large enough to coerce all of China; and an army large enough to coerce all of China will not be reliable. Not that force is irrelevant. Far from it, still the Confucian notion of a leadership based on virtue turns out to make a lot of sense under such conditions”.\textsuperscript{49} Therefore, definitions of power in Chinese society was not simply based on military strength but to a large extent determined by cultural and ethical conditions. In fact, as Lucian Pye holds, “nearly all of the Asian cultures treated power as some form of ritual, that is, they developed early


\textsuperscript{48} Alastair Iain Johnston, \textit{Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture And Grand Strategy In Chinese History}.

the idea that the correct performance of ritual produced the highest type of power". 50

Confucian philosophy regarded all men including the emperor subject to the will of the heaven. It safeguarded the natural order by commanding adherence of all men to the five fundamental relationships: those between the ruler and the subject, father and son, husband and wife and older and older and younger brother and friend and friend. When this pattern of relationship was respected and understood, peace and order prevailed in the state. Therefore, "stability and order which were the highest virtues in the cosmological continuum were secured through maintenance of hierarchy and performance of rituals". 51 Externally, the five Confucian relationships often provided the vocabulary for Tributary relationships among states.

The Tribute system was reflective of China's accommodative Confucian philosophy where the powers instead of competing with each other coexisted peacefully. Tribute system was a hierarchical system where China assumed the role of the elder brother while the smaller powers assumed the position of younger brothers, paying homage to China in the form of periodic tribute. 52 No doubt China by virtue of its superior political, economic and social system assumed the role of the head of the family. The tribute system was in fact, a sophisticated system where stark issues of economic and security issues were couched in the language of aesthetic and moral principles. Unlike the Western system of international system where relationships among states were essentially competitive and

50 See, Lucian W. Pye, Asian Power And Politics.
conflictual, Chinese tribute system was primarily ceremonial and ritualistic rather than exploitative.\textsuperscript{53} Nevertheless, when Tribute relations failed China did adopt force as evident in its relationship with the nomadic herds who invaded China from the northwest in the greater part of the Chinese imperial history.

Such a civilizational state, with its distinctive way of engagement with the neighbouring powers was confronted with an entirely new civilization of the West in the 18th and 19th centuries. This was a civilization that valued mercantilist initiative and diplomatic and military interactions based on economic need and justified by a body of international law developed around just these notions. In the 1840s, the Chinese State, which was already in the throes of socio-economic crisis and dynastic decline, could not meet the challenge of Western intrusion and thus succumbed to it.

Since the civilizational state was knocked down by Western military might, the post-Opium War period saw a frantic search for solutions among the Chinese literati and officials to regain Chinese power. As Fred Drake aptly wrote, "China now competed for survival in a world of states which looked not to morality or virtue for legitimacy but rather to industrial and military power".\textsuperscript{54} However, since China envisaged itself as a cultural power rather than a military power, it sought a cultural strategy to resolve the cultural crisis- the strategy of self-strengthening. It may be noted that Japan which also faced a military threat from Europe when Commodore Perry knocked at her door, responded with a policy of systematic military strengthening to cope with the external threat. Japan embarked upon major institutional changes but China attempted to restore the old order and preserve Chinese culture. In fact, starting from self-strengthening movement of 1861-1894,

\textsuperscript{53} Marc Mancall, \textit{China at the Centre}, p. 15.

the Reform Movement of 1898, the May Fourth Movement of 1919, we find that
the principal motive of the Chinese state was that of reviving China’s power. 
Fuqiang or Wealth and Power became the dominant theme in the Chinese quest for
national greatness.

Predominance of the Fuqiang Concept in Chinese Nationalism

Scholars like Tu Wei-ming hold the view that that the “rhetoric of wealth
and power supplanted the language of morality in the early 19th century”. The
case of wealth and power or fuqiang is traceable to the self-strengthening
movement a movement launched in China to borrow practical knowledge from the
West in order to build a stronger China. The notion of fuqiang was in effect an
attempt to lay the dilemma of ti-yong (Chinese learning for substance and Western
learning for function). The Western learning served the function of China’s quest
for wealth and power. This attainment of wealth and power would thus save the
Chinese State.

There was considerable debate on how to achieve this new strength. While
this debate went on, a new source of information helped to refocus the scholar-
officials on Western borrowing. In 1864, the maritime customs published export-
import figures from the treaty ports and these showed that China almost always
had a trade deficit. The Chinese scholars-officials realized that this imbalance in
trade was the real cause for country’s drain of wealth and the resulting
impoverishment and weakness of China. To arrest China’s decline the scholars-
officials realized the need to promote commercial activities. Since China could not

55 Tu Wei-ming, Confucian World Observed, p.11
56 Wellington K. K. Chan, “Government, Merchants and Industry to 1911”, in Denis Twitchett
and John K. Fairbank (eds.), The Cambridge History Of China, Vol. II, Late Ch’ing, 1800-

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stop Western products from entering China, it could produce more and more of indigenous goods for both domestic and foreign markets and thus discourage imports. “Once the link between wealth and power was established in this way, the pursuit of wealth became the motive for a new programme of self-strengthening.”

To provide ideological respectability, the proponents of this idea turned to the legalist strain of Confucianism which favoured maximizing state wealth and power. By recycling the old slogan, *fu-qiang* (wealth and power) several scholar-officials produced a new literature during the 1880s: Ma Chien-chung’s *Fu-min shuo* (Discussion on the wealth of the people), Ch’en Chih’s *Fu-Kuo ts’e* (Policies on enriching the state), Wang K’ang-nien’s *Lun Chung-Kuo ch’iu fu-ch’iang ich’ou ihsing chih-fa* (Feasible path towards China’s search for wealth and power). These texts lay the ground for the notion of *fuqiang* to germinate. Since the question of saving the Chinese State was the primary goal, it meant, in effect, saving Chinese identity or Chineseness, which represented the sum total of the cultural tradition and historical consciousness, underscored by Confucianism.

In fact, the notion of *fuqiang* also shaped the parameters of the modernization of China. Therefore, post-Mao China’s socialism with Chinese characteristics was also essentially meant to introduce economic changes and liberalization but maintain political control. This political control would, in fact, sustain the Chinese characteristics, while the economic reform would engender national power and wealth.

The *fuqiang* concept was in essence a cultural and political response to the Western challenge. Since this Western challenge created a crisis for the Chinese

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57 Ibid. p. 417.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
imperial state, there emerged a legitimacy crisis. Following Habermas this legitimacy crisis was "directly an identity crisis". This quest for identity led China to adopt the notion of wealth and power and this wealth and power in turn engender legitimacy to the Chinese State. Interestingly, the quest for wealth and power also underscores Chinese nationalism today. Deng Xiaoping's 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' carried the message that while China would follow the socialist path, it would also allow its people to get rich. Getting rich was no longer condemnable and Deng in effect adjusted socialism with the Chinese conditions and saw the need for open door policy and vigorous reform strategy to make China equal or superior to the Western countries. Therefore, the quest for wealth and power represents a facet of Chinese nationalism. It gives the semblance of national quest, a common agenda for unity and identity. This in turn renders legitimacy to the CCP's rule in China.

**Marxist Impact on Nationalism**

The meaning of Chinese nationalism, nation and nationalities was impacted upon by Marxian ideology. In Marxism, there is no place for nationalism.\(^60\) The Marxists regarded nationalism as a relic of bourgeoisie society and therefore, should be destroyed. Therefore, the triumph of Communism essentially meant the defeat of the bourgeoisie ideology of nationalism, withering of the state and disappearance of hostility between states, together with the nations themselves.\(^61\)

In China, the Marxist appeal increased in the aftermath of May Fourth Movement that knocked down the Chinese tradition. Marxian philosophy also took

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root in China in the context of colonialism. Colonialism and anti-imperialism were basic forces behind shaping Chinese Marxism and, therefore, the Marxian definition of nationalism should be understood from this anti-imperialist perspective and nation building aspect. Mao Zedong deviated from original Marxism in many important ways. This deviation was informed by the specific condition of Chinese society where capitalism had not developed sufficiently to give way to socialism. Secondly, this deviation is Mao’s own understanding of history and tradition.

Since China did not witness capitalist development, socialism could not be ushered in according to Marxist thinking. But Mao emphasized that the general fact of exploitation is in itself a necessary and sufficient condition for the creation of a proletariat. The fact of exploitation allowed Mao to skip the historical stage of development from capitalism to socialism. Since all history was essentially a history of class struggle, according to Marx, in China the class struggle was effected between the imperialist oppressive nations represented by bourgeoisie and oppressed nations represented by the proletariat. Therefore, the unit of class analysis was the nation itself. John Fitzgerald used the term “class nation” to understand the notion of nation in China. In the first stage of the Chinese revolution, the imperialist bourgeoisie class was to be destroyed for the construction of socialist state based on the proletariat class. Incipient in this notion of class-nation is the idea of saving the nation. Saving the nation, therefore, meant the increase in the nation’s wealth and power. This goal of wealth and power rested on resolving the dilemma between ti-yong formula. Mao’s resolution of the

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dilemma lay in the process of assimilation of both Western and Eastern ideas. However, Mao regarded complete Westernization as erroneous. As Mao said, “we should not gulp any of this foreign material down uncritically, but must treat it as we do our food--first chewing it, then submitting it to the working of the stomach and intestines with their juices and secretions, and separating it into nutrient to be absorbed and waste matter to be discarded- before it can nourish us”. This statement further suggests that Mao’s conception of history had a vital role in shaping his idea of nation. He wrote, “China’s present new politics and new economy have developed out of her old politics and old economy, and her present new culture, too, has developed out of her old culture, therefore we must respect our own history and must not lop it off. However, respect for history means giving it its proper place as a science, respecting its dialectical development, and not eulogizing the past at the expense of the present or praising every drop of feudal poison”. What emerges from his writing is that he stressed the importance of past traditions in order to shape future development. Mao followed this rule in his application of Marxism in China. Thus, he says, “We must unify appropriately the general truth of Marxism and the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, i.e., we must adopt the national form before we can find Marxism useful and should never subjectively or mechanically apply it...China’s culture should have its own form, the national form”. In doing this, he sinified Marxism and the very act of sinification was a step toward promoting Chinese nationalism.

65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
Further, the concept of *fuqiang* also ran through Chinese Marxism. However, to Mao augumenting national wealth and power was not merely concerned with fending off foreign intrusion but he viewed national wealth as meant to alleviate the poverty of the Chinese population.\(^67\) Thus, the fuqiang concept had a dual purpose—one, to prevent foreign intrusion and bring liberation. Second, to correct the economic situation by equitable distribution of wealth. Therefore, Mao Zedong thought and the Chinese Communist revolution was a response to Western imperialism. This anti-imperialist note rendered Chinese Communism a nationalist tone. This anti-imperialism in Mao’s thoughts also informs the validity of the CPC to write off the notion of self-determination for the minorities that was initially promised.

The CPC’s stand fell in line with the early Republicans who coined the term *zhong hua minzu* (Chinese nation) to include the Manchus as well as other ethnic groups formerly governed by the Qing. This was done to ensure the survival of China as anti-Manchuiism threatened to fragment the Chinese State. Therefore, in 1912, Sun Yatsen proclaimed the forging of the ethnic groups (i.e., the Han, the Manchus, the Mongols, the Tibetans and the Hui) into one nation. Sun and the new Republic also used the term ‘gonghe’ or Commonwealth of the five ethnic groups to describe the new identity of the Republican State.\(^68\) In 1931, under the influence of the Soviet Union, the Chinese Communist Party adopted Leninist policies promising minorities self-determination and even secession to enlist the support against the nationalists.\(^69\) However, such promises were soon abandoned in the

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\(^68\) Wang Ke-wen, *Modern China*, p.IX.

greater interest of the unity of the nation. In 1953, the CPC classified its population into 56 nationalities of which 55 were minority nationalities. Therefore, what ultimately prevailed was the creation of unified nation on the basis of the Qing imperial state. This Chinese State adopted the concept of state nationalism in place of ethnic nationalism.

Chinese Definition of Nation

For nationalism the Chinese have various terms—minzu zhuyi, guomin zhuyi, guojia zhuyi.70 The use of minzu zhuyi is however, the more common. The word ‘minzu’ came from Meji Japan and it first appeared in 1895 in Chinese literature in the second number of Qiang Xuebo (strength learning Gazette), a Reformist Magazine.71 Murata cautions the reader that between 1895 to around 1900 the word minzu was not connected to the political reforms in China rather it was limited to nationalism or political situation overseas.72 It was, however, Liang Qichao who had consciously introduced the new word ‘minzu’. The word ‘minzu’ was combination of two meanings, people (min) and the race (zu).

It may be noted that initially minzu was understood in connection with race.73 The idea of race was introduced into the word minzu by Yan Fu in his introduction of Social Darwinism to China.74 Drawing from the Darwinist idea of natural selection on the survival of the fittest, Yan explained that in the modern world the competition for existence took the form of struggle among nations.

72 Ibid., p. 359.
73 Ibid., p. 363.
West was leading in the struggle due to its free society and democratic institutions.\textsuperscript{75} China, in order to progress should adopt Western systems and values. While Yan Fu did not talk about Han-Manchu antagonism based on race, the later reformists appropriated his notions in giving a racial twist to the Chinese concept of nation. His idea precipitated a debate between the Constitutionalists and Revolutionists on the definition of the Chinese nation. The Constitutionalists represented by Liang Qichao, stood for preserving the Qing dynasty to steer the reform programme in China. This stand was premised on the belief that state was the principle unit in the competition among nations and was also a crucial agent for social progress in the Darwinist evolutionary process.\textsuperscript{76} Therefore, individual should stand behind the state, that is, the Qing state for survival. This view was opposed by the revolutionaries like Wang Jingwei and Zhang Binglin. They propagated the idea of anti-Manchuism and stressed that competition in the present world “existed among national societies formed on the basis of ethnic homogeneity”.\textsuperscript{77} Therefore, the Han predominance provided the rationale for establishing the Han nation by overthrowing the Manchus. Thus the notion of nation based on rights came to be shaped in the political opposition between the two groups.\textsuperscript{78}

The ideology of the revolutionaries appealed to the Chinese more than that of the Constitutionalists and the Constitutionalists were discredited with the failure of the Hundred Days Reform of 1898 initiated under the Qing government. The Qing government, which failed to confront the infliction of Western humiliation on

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., p.321
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., p. 322
\textsuperscript{78} Murata Yujiro, “A Discourse on the ‘Chinese Nation’ in Modern China”, p. 364.
China, also came to be regarded as anti-national. This spurred the rise of anti-Manchuism among Chinese revolutionaries. Sun Yatsen (*Sun Zhongshan*), an ardent revolutionary, founded in Honolulu his first revolutionary organization the *Xingzhonghui* (Revive China Society) in 1894.\(^7^9\) Its main objective was the expulsion of the Manchus and the establishment of a Republic in China. This anti-Manchuism shaped the notion of nation and it was primarily seen as based on the Han race (*Han minzu*). In 1905 Sun Yatsen established *Tung Meng Hui* (Together Sworn Society) in Tokyo, the Manifesto of which carried four clear slogans:

- Drive away the Tartars
- Recover China for the Chinese
- Establish a Republic
- Equalize the land ownership.\(^8^0\)

The slogans clearly targeted the Manchus and the salvation of China was seen in the end of Manchu rule. In his *Sanmin Zhuyi* Sun Yatsen, the principal exponent of racial nationalism emphatically pointed out that:

> The greatest force is common blood. Chinese belong to the yellow race because they come from the bloodstock of the yellow race. The blood of ancestors is transmitted by heredity down through the race, making blood kinship a powerful force.\(^8^1\)

Therefore, the ‘Yellow race’ of the Han Chinese actually became a handy tool around which forces of nationalism could coalesce. It served as a unifying ideology against anti-national forces that is the Manchus. Frank Dikotter argued that the reformers and the revolutionaries of 19\(^{th}\) century China came to be influenced by

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Herbert Spencer concept of 'group selection'. They came to believe that individuals of a race should unite in order to survive in the struggle for existence. Apart from Spencer, the reformers also came to be influenced by Neo-Lamarckism, which emphasized the effect of environment on human genetic development. This Neo-Lamarckism "offered a flexible vision of evolution which closely suited the political agenda of the reformers, as human progress in the realm of politics was seen to be conducive to the racial improvement of the species."

With the overthrow of the Manchus, anti-Manchuism or the race factor lost its appeal. More than that, the period also coincided with the separatist tendencies in Tibet and Mongolia. By 1913, Tibet enjoyed de-facto independence. This brought forth the question of self-determination of the ethnic minorities. A little later, with the end of World War I, Woodrow Wilson's principle of self-determination impacted on colonial movements worldwide. These developments dawned upon the revolutionaries like Sun Yatsen that a united force of all races was necessary to repel foreign forces. Moreover, the establishment of the Republic did not mean the end of foreign domination. China was still under the foreign spheres of influence. This plight of China led Sun Yatsen to call China as "a colony of the powers" which he described as hypocolony (ci zhi mindi). Therefore, the slogan of anti-Manchuism was redundant and was replaced by that of anti-imperialism. This change is evident from the Manifesto of the First National Kuomintang Congress (January 30, 1924) which stated that,

Before 1911...the function of the Nationalist movement was, on the one hand, to free the Chinese people from the Manchu rule, and on the other

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82 Frank Dikotter, Race in China.
83 Ibid.
84 Murata Yujiro, "A Discourse on the 'Chinese Nation' in Modern China", p. 364.
hand, to prevent the partition of China by the Powers. The first object, namely, the overthrowing of the Manchu rule, was accomplished by the revolution of 1911. But the imperialistic powers have still kept a dominant influence in China... The motto in the present struggle for national liberation is "Anti-imperialism", because the downfall of imperialism in China will enable the mass of the people to organize, to consolidate, and to continue the nationalist struggle.86

This change in thought gave a new orientation to the meaning of minzu.87 The same Manifesto of 1924 also said:

The second aspect of the Doctrine of Nationalism is racial equality. Before 1911 the Manchus alone were rulers of China. This autocratic position of the Manchus was brought to an end by the Revolution, and it was replaced by a policy of cooperation among all races in China on the basis of equality.88

Sun Yatsen subsequently claimed that China was made up of five main nationalities (minzu): the Han Chinese, the Manchus, the Mongols, the Tibetans and the Hui (Muslims). But race as the basis of Chinese identity was not excluded, for the Han remained the dominant ethnie. In this context, Sun Yatsen resembled Liang Qichao who talked about daminzu zhuyi (great nationalism) and xiaominzu zhuyi (small nationalism).89 The former represented state nationalism that included all the while the latter meant Han race. Liang Qichao's daminzu or guojia minzu zhuyi (state nationalism) seems to echo the idea of culturalism that was essentially meant to include all the disparate groups under one nation.

Chinese Definition of Nationalities

The problem of defining the nation also made controversial the definition of the concept of nationality in China. Interestingly, in China while minzu also

87 Discussed in Murata Yujiro, “A Discourse on the ‘Chinese Nation’ in Modern China”.
meant nationality, a distinction was drawn by adding a prefix, shaoshu, to minzu. Shaoshu minzu meant numerically small nationalities or minorities constituting 8.04% of the total population in China. The Han were simply called Hanzu comprising 91.96% of the total population. The White Paper of the PRC on minorities goes on to state how minorities were part of the Chinese multiethnic country since the Qin dynasty (221BC). The White Paper (1999) interestingly is silent about the incorporation of the minority population of Xinjiang, Tibet or Mongolia on the basis of military conquest. Rather it eulogizes the role of minorities in the Chinese revolution. It gives the impression that having been rescued from imperialist exploitation, the minorities have voluntarily accepted to be part of China.

Studies on the border and Southern expansion of the Chinese Imperial State reflect upon the military conquest by which the non-Han areas were brought under the Chinese rule. However, Chinese historians have not adequately addressed and investigated the mechanisms by which China expanded from the Yellow River to almost half of East Asia. Further, a glance at the recent Chinese writings on minority nationalities demonstrates that no where do questions of ethnicism and ethnic nationalism find the slightest treatment. Most articles dwell on the economic development of the minority areas and ways and means through which favourable conditions for mutual exchanges between the Han and minorities could be carried out. Therefore, most definitions of minority or ethnic groups are those arrived at by

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the Chinese government. Yet, a historical analysis of the notion of ethnic minorities and their position lends an important perspective to the concept of minorities in China.\textsuperscript{93}

While the imperial Chinese State did pursue military expeditions in order to incorporate non-Han areas, military coercion was not the general rule. The Chinese State used the rhetoric of culturalism to maintain ideological control over the non-Han people. As James Townsend puts it, “culturalism had always served as an ideology of empire, justifying Chinese rule over non-Chinese peoples as well as non-Chinese rule over the Chinese”.\textsuperscript{94} When the Qing, a non-Han dynasty came to power it emphasized the culturalist point of view and repressed Han nationalism. This led to anti-Manchu sentiments and the role of secret societies, particularly that of the Tiandihui (Heaven and Earth Society), in fomenting anti-Manchuism under the slogan, ‘overthrow the Qing and restore the Ming’ was significant.\textsuperscript{95} The most notable exponent of anti-Manchuism, Wang Fuzhi advocated that the Chinese “must be distinguished absolutely from the barbarians”.\textsuperscript{96} Such anti-Manchu sentiments indicate that the Han in China continued to regard themselves as different and dominant since the notion of ethnicity and or nationality can be traced to the imperial times.\textsuperscript{97} Culturalism also carried the notion of

\textsuperscript{93} The Journal 'Research In Nationalities' contain such articles. Li Rui, “Xi bu Da Kaifa Yu Zi Zhi Jixing Shi Guan Jian” (Developing Chinese Western Regions and Carrying Out Autonomous Authority), \textit{Minzu Wenti Yanjiu (Research In Nationalities)}, D 5, No. 1, 2001. Zhang Xi, “Wu Lun Xi Bu Kaifa Guobo, Zhong, Shaoshu Minzu ji qide boxi wenti” (The Guarantee of Ethnic Legal Rights in the Large-Scale Western Development), \textit{Minzu Wenti Yanjiu (Research In Nationalities)} D5, No. 4, 2001.


\textsuperscript{96} Wang Ke-wen, \textit{Modern China}, p. 11.

Chinese ethnicity. As James Townsend points out "culturalism promoted a Han Chinese culture and others' participation in its practice. In effect, culturalism emphasized and extolled Han ethnicity, permitting an easy shift to cultural or ethnic nationalism, that is political defence of Chinese culture and insistence that the Han Chinese must have their own unified states. Incipient in the notion of culturalism is the Confucian idea of Tianxia or all under Heaven which referred to China. Tianzi referred to Son of Heaven who possessed the authority to rule the entire civilized world. This civilized world indicated the area where the Chinese culture spread and incorporated the barbarians (yi). Therefore, since the Chinese state conceptualized itself as a civilizational state, it overcame the problem of defining nationalities in China. It facilitated the accommodation of all nationalities within itself without raising the question of the principles of national self-determination, an issue that emerges out of the notion of European modernity.

In Europe nationality is equated with citizenship, in China it is equated with a member of an ethnic group that historically is a part of the Chinese nation. Moreover, in the West the notion of minority is described in a negative sense. In Western Social Sciences 'national minority' is generally construed to mean an ethnic group that is in principle an integral part of the larger society, but that does not actually participate to an equal degree in the enjoyment of social goods as do the other members of that society. Therefore, discrimination or hostile tensions between minorities are defining characteristics of a minority. The minorities in imperial China compromise those groups who are non-Han, that is barbarians. The

98 Ibid., p.15.
100 Ibid., p.89.
101 Ibid.
distinction between Han and non-Han was essentially based on stages of economic
development. The Han represented the agricultural based society leading a
sedentary life while the non-Han were largely food gatherers, herders and hunters
leading a nomadic life. When barbarians accepted the Chinese notions of
development they were looked upon as Chinese, though not Han.

Today the White Paper on Minorities (2000) also underlines the principle
of equality and unity among ethnic groups yet allowing them to maintain their
distinctive identity in the form of religion, the spoken and written language,
literary and artistic creations and other cultural pursuits. What this implies is that
‘minority’ is more a cultural concept. It does not denote a separate political
identity. Therefore, the Chinese make no distinction between people (minzu) nation
(minzu), nationality (minzu) and ethnos (minzu). All these terms fall within the
rubric of a civilizational state where the defining characteristic is cultural rather
than political. Further, this notion of minority permeated the 1954 Constitution of
China where the principle of self-government, not separation for minority people,
and hence self-determination rights, were subsumed into the notion of the
civilizational state. The prism of the civilizational state, therefore, allows the
Chinese government to build a cohesive state and address the problem of
separatism and political fundamentalism. Nevertheless, the separatist tendencies of
Tibet and Xinjiang demonstrate the inability of the Chinese state to carve out a
nation on the basis of state nationalism that overlooks and represses the dissenting
voices to the greater purpose of unity and integration.

1951).

However, this state nationalism reflected the dominant ideology of the Han ethnic group. The state nationalism while incorporating the ‘other’ ethnic minorities in its fold, however, failed to reflect their aspirations. This ‘other’ represented by Tibet, Xinjiang, constituted a restive population demanding secession.

It is little wonder that the Chinese state in the present times prefers to call Chinese nationalism as patriotic nationalism (aiguo zhuyi) devoid of dominant Han identity. But since the CPC is basically a Han party, patriotism remains the identity of the Han race not of the ethnic minorities. Chinese nationalism is fragile and the nation building process is yet not complete. The fuqiang concept, although a value-free notion, fails to evoke patriotic response from the ethnic minorities for it does not solve their nationalistic aspirations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Chinese nationalism in present day China is the product of four developments:

- Confucian culturalism
- Western impact and the consequent fuqiang concept
- Marxist-Leninist and Mao Zedong thought
- Dominant Han ideology

While the first three essentially contribute in shaping the contours of Chinese nationalism, the fourth is a constant challenge to Chinese nationalism. In fact, two issues- Tibetan ethnic nationalism, and Xinjiang ethno-religious nationalism have influenced Chinese nationalism since the 1950s. While these two essentially challenge Chinese nationalism, diasporic Chinese nationalism primarily
enhances and complements Chinese nationalism. The three case studies (Tibet, Xinjiang and overseas Chinese) in the following three chapters indicate the influence of sub-nationalism and trans-nationalism on Chinese policy making today and reflects the nature of Chinese nationalism in general.