

Mutual cultural consciousness between “*Ge*” and “*Ju*”: Fei Hsiao-tung’s cultural perspective on the pattern of unity in diversity and the community of a shared future for mankind



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Abstract

Facing the new era, we should re-examine and understand the theory of “the pattern of unity in diversity of the Chinese nation” put forward by Fei Hsiao-tung from the historical and cultural perspectives, which will bring us many new insights. The Chinese national consciousness of unity can be understood as “*Ge*” (格), while “*Ju*” (局) as “layout” and “distribution”, which means in the same spatial scope and form of “*Ge*”, how the units within the Chinese nation are laid out and distributed. Under such “*Ge*” and “*Ju*” viewpoints, people and goods, nature and society, culture and technology, China and the world, can be connected and integrated so that a reciprocal community with “being together” could possibly come true at last, and cultural self-consciousness, consciousness of the others’ cultures and mutual cultural consciousness are inevitable. On this basis, it is meaningful to discuss the ultimate goal and state of construction of a community with a shared future for mankind and the world of “Great Harmony”.

Keywords Diversity and unity · *Ge* and *Ju* · Cultural self-consciousness · Consciousness of the others’ cultures · Mutual cultural consciousness

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Introduction

Since ethnology and anthropology were introduced into China from the West, their theories and methods had been mostly constructed and interpreted in the Western discourse system and socio-cultural context for a long time. More and more social sciences researchers began to realize that those theories and methods would show “unacclimatized” symptoms after crossing the seas to China. Therefore, the localization of social sciences based on China’s actual social, historical and cultural context was undoubtedly the most appropriate response to this challenge. In fact, the older generation scholars of social sciences represented by Fei Hsiao-tung and Lin Yaohua have devoted their whole lives to thinking about the theoretical construction of Chinese native social sciences. In particular, many original concepts and theories, including the theory of “the pattern of unity in diversity of the Chinese nation”, studied and put forward by Fei Hsiao-tung in the process of promoting the reconstruction of Chinese sociology in his later years are still of great value.

“Ge”: the perspective for understanding the “unity” of national consciousness

The theory of “the pattern of unity in diversity of the Chinese nation” was initially put forward by Fei Hsiao-tung in 1988, the first ever theory founded by Chinese scholars and aimed at solving China’s ethnic problems. Judging by the name of this theory, “the pattern of unity in diversity of the Chinese nation” is an attributive-structured phrase, which emphasizes the modified part of speech, that is, “the pattern of unity in diversity”. In his paper, the main purpose of this theory highlights the pattern of “unity in diversity” by expounding “diversity” and “unity” respectively. The concept of “the Chinese nation”, which caused controversy in the academic circles in the past many years, is defined simply by the sentence “referring to 1.1 billion people with national identity in China’s territory”, so as to “avoid lengthy explanations of some fundamental concepts” (Fei 2009). Therefore, his paper is mainly about the explanation and definition of “the pattern of unity in diversity”.

The word “pattern” (*Ge Ju*, 格局) can be understood in two perspectives as the Chinese character shows, “*Ge*” (格) and “*Ju*” (局). “*Ge*” is used to describe the spatial structure and form of objects. It is most appropriate to define the “Chinese nation” as a “unity” in space of nature and geography by “*Ge*”. As Fei pointed out in his paper, “Any nation has its specific living space. The living space of the Chinese nation is in a vast land territory in the east of Asia, starting from the Pamirs in the west to the islands off the west coast of the Pacific Ocean in the east. There are vast deserts in the north, seas in the southeast and mountains in

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the southwest. This land territory is a geographical unit surrounded by natural barriers with a well-structured system inside, which is called ‘the world’ because it was believed as the only land where human beings could live by ancient Chinese inhabitants, and it is also called ‘the land within the four seas’ because it is surrounded by the seas. Although this concept is outdated, what will not be outdated is that this geographically self-contained land territory has always been the living space of the Chinese nation. National pattern seems always to reflect the geographical and ecological structure of the territory, including the Chinese nation. The territory inhabited by the Chinese nation is a slope that tilts from west to east, and the height drops step by step. In the west is the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, known as ‘the Roof of the World’, with an altitude of more than 4000 m, which is connected to the Hengduan Mountains in the southeast. The terrain drops to the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, Loess Plateau and Inner Mongolia Plateau at an altitude of 1,000–2,000 m. There are the Tarim basin, the Sichuan basin and other basins between the plateaus and the mountains. Further east are hilly areas below 1000 m above sea level and plains below 200 m above sea level. It drops significantly from west to east with three steps, and spans 30 latitudes from north to south. The temperature and humidity disparities result in different ecological environments, constituting both severe obstacles and rich opportunities for human development. It is in this natural framework that the Chinese nation was born (Fei 2009).” He began with the description of the natural geographical scope and appearance of the land where the Chinese nation inhabited from the perspective of space. Based on this description, he explained the “unity” of the Chinese nation in terms of the natural geographical space, and the great challenges and possibilities brought by such a “unified” natural geographical space to the cultural development of the Chinese nation, that is, the development of the people and culture. In this sense, as the saying goes, “custom varies from place to place”, a cultural type is closely related to its natural geographical space and ecological environment. The saying popular in Yunnan where 25 ethnic minorities live that “the Yi and Miao ethnicities live on hills, the Zhuang and Dai at water heads, and the Han and Hui on streets”, vividly demonstrates that the survival and development of different ethnicities with different cultures are closely related to their ecological environment. For example, most of the Hani ethnicity live at hillsides with limited land, water and other resources. In order to survive and develop, the world-famous “Hani Terrace Fields” were built, which is not only a model of agricultural irrigation, but also an important cultural symbol showing the Hani’s adaptability to the local condition, and the idea of “harmony between man and nature” and the local ethnic identity as well.¹ However, the innate conditions of the Chinese nation living in a “unified” continuous natural geographical space have nurtured similarities in natural attribute and identities in socio-cultural attribute of individuals in the Chinese nation. These are also the multiple and profound impacts exerted by the natural ecological environment which existed

¹ This material comes from the interview materials of the field work made by the author in Xishuangbanna, Yunnan Province in December 2015.

before human beings, on human body, social structure, cultural concepts and so on. From this point of view, no matter an individual, a group, an ethnicity or the whole Chinese nation, the unity of human, human society and nature, and their mutual constructive relations are the important perspective for understanding the relationship between individuals, groups and even regions.

Generally speaking, the development of the Chinese nation from a nation-in-itself into a self-conscious one is another perspective for understanding the pattern of “unity”. First of all, the Chinese nation is a national-entity-in-itself formed in the past thousands of years. The so-called “in-itself” refers to its natural existence. And this natural existence takes a long course to come into being, during which many factors such as production and life, war, trade, disaster-caused migration, religious communication and so on, caused massive migration. In this process, the contact and exchange between different ethnicities led to the convergence of original different cultures, resulting in the mixture, connection, integration, division and extinction of cultures, in which people interacted and communicated with each other. In fact, in this process, since people were separated from each other and aware of the existence of this separation, they should be also “self-consciousness”. The so-called “self-consciousness” should be understood as “the consciousness of oneself”, that is, being able to perceive and recognize one’s own existence, so “self-consciousness” often comes from the encounter between self and others. With others as a frame of reference, the existence of self and its similarities and differences with this frame of reference would be clear. Therefore, we can basically identify the historical process in which “in-itself” emerged earlier than “self-consciousness”, that is, ethnic units (in-itself) first existed, then the national-entity-in-itself of the Chinese nation came into being after the contact, integration (self-consciousness) and development of these ethnic units. Fei also pointed out in the paper, “As a self-conscious national entity, the Chinese nation has emerged in the confrontation with the Western powers in the past 100 years (Fei 2009).” It is obvious that the national-entity-in-itself of the Chinese nation became self-conscious after coming across the others from the West. Therefore, the Chinese nation gradually became a national entity in the process during which it developed from a nation-in-itself into a self-conscious one. It should be noted that “the Chinese nation” is a national entity, not a concept of political category, nor the product of “self-consciousness” in the confrontation with the Western powers in modern times. Because the Chinese nation itself is a national-entity-in-itself formed in the historical process, rather than in the self-consciousness after the modern times. In other words, you can’t deny the existence of self before you are conscious of it. Moreover, the Chinese nation is a unified multi-ethnic composition of all ethnicities in China. However, it is not mechanically pieced together, but formed on the historical basis of constant contact, integration and development of all ethnicities. Therefore, the Chinese nation cannot be merely understood as a political concept, but one of history and ethnology (Xu 2008).

In terms of ethnicities, the process from the unification of ethnicities to the unity of the nation is another perspective for understanding “unity”. In the long journey of development, all ethnicities in China have been interdependent, sharing a common future, and thriving together on the land of China (Shi 2015), resulting in the basic

fact that China is a unified multi-ethnic country, highly identifying with the political power, social structure and cultural concepts of the Chinese nation.

In history, ethnicities living in the same natural geographical space usually completed the unification among or within each other before seeking unification with ethnicities in another natural geographical space. The Yuan Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty, as the two examples of the few ethnic minority regimes ruling the Central Plains of China in history, went through a similar journey. The Yuan Dynasty was established on the basis of the unification of Mongolian tribes, while the Qing Dynasty on the basis of the unification of the Nvzhen (Chinese for Jurchen) tribes. Both Mongolian tribes and Nvzhen tribes lived in the northern frontier and north-east China for generations. In the same large natural geographical space, they unified different small natural spaces occupied by various sub-groups by means of warfare, and then accelerated the convergence and integration of these sub-groups. When these ethnicities completed internal unification, they sent their troops southward to wage wars against the Han ethnicity for the ruling of the Central Plains. The Qing Dynasty followed suit from Nurhachi's unification of the Nvzhen tribes, to Abahai's strength integration after the unification, and Emperor Shunzhi's expedition to conquer the Central Plains ruled by the Ming Dynasty. After conquering the Han, it went from the unification of ethnicities to the unification of the natural geographical space of the country. It first accelerated the exchange and integration of socio-cultures and formed a socio-cultural community as such. When it came to consolidate the unified natural geographical space created and passed down by his forefathers, Emperor Kangxi took a series of measures to strengthen the autocratic imperial power first (eliminating the powerful minister Ao Bai), and then the centralization of power (pacifying the three warlords' rebellion), and completed the reunification of the motherland (reunifying Taiwan), and finally stabilized the northern frontier (pacifying the Junggar rebellion) and the border (signing the *Treaty of Nerchensk* with Russia). In this process, the Qing Dynasty completed several rounds of ethnic integration in order to achieve the possibility that the country would eventually become "united" as shown below:

Measures	Integrated groups	Objectives
Wiping out the gang led by Ao Bai	Within Manchu aristocrats	Strengthening autocracy
Pacifying the three warlords' rebellion	Between the Manchu and Han ethnicities	Strengthening the centralization of power Consolidating the southern frontier
Reunifying Taiwan	Between the Manchu and Han ethnicities	Stabilizing the southeast frontier
Pacifying the rebellion of Junggar	Between the Manchu and Mongolians	Stabilizing the northern frontier
Signing the <i>Treaty of Nerchensk</i>	Between the Qing Dynasty and Tsarist Russia	Identifying the border of Northeast China

It can also be seen from the above table that Emperor Kangxi's main goal was to ensure a stable territory boundary, so as to stabilize the common natural geographical

space where the Chinese nation actually inhabited (*Ge*), and the national politics and ideology based on the power operation system (another *Ge*). The stability of the former was necessary for the communication and integration of ethnicities and the establishment of “unity”. The spatial unification and the interaction, reciprocity and integration between scattered ethnicities acted as both cause and effect. The stability of the latter was inevitable for the communication and integration of ethnicities and the establishment of “unity”. In this inevitable trend, the concept of “unity” formed by the interaction, reciprocity and integration of ethnicities was strengthened and gradually abstracted into a key element of Chinese national culture which was of higher value than that of ethnicities. This unity was not only the unity of politics and political power, but also the all-round integration of multiple elements such as economy, culture and transportation. Ultimately, this unity and integration still needed a unified and stable power operation system as the cornerstone.

The regimes of different ethnicities learned from each other for politics, traded with each other for economical development and communicated with each other for cultural exchange, resulting in the conditions and possibilities to establish a socio-cultural community. This is another perspective for understanding “unity”. The regimes of ethnicities sometimes warred against each other, sometimes coexisted peacefully; sometimes went into conflicts, sometimes traded reciprocally and exchanged culturally. For example, from a political point of view, the Liao, Xia and Jin dynasties all accepted the political system of the Central Plains, as a result, the advanced political system in the Central Plains spread afar, showing the obvious extensibility and convergence of political system. Economically, the Liao, Jin and Xia further developed the northern, northeastern and northwestern regions based on the advanced agricultural and handicraft technologies in the Central Plains. All these dynasties traded with each other through border markets. Their emissaries exchanged gifts, many of which were complementary materials and played a role in economic exchanges, while their delegations did large-scale exchanges and traded along their journey. This pattern of both communication and barrier not only enabled each dynasty to develop its own characteristic economy, but also improved its productivity through mutual communication. In terms of social governance, the Liao, Xia and Jin gradually changed their political system from single ethnic governance to multi-ethnic governance, and benefited from the assistance of Han scholars by following the system and culture of the Central Plains and learning the concept of multi-ethnic governance. Culturally, the three ethnic minority dynasties completed the feudalization process one after another. While ruling and influencing other ethnicities, they adopted a close contact with the Han ethnicity, which put them under the influence of Chinese culture and customs. Although ethnic confrontation was prominent in this period, the communication, learning from each other and integration among ethnicities were the mainstream. It was also in this mainstream that the national consciousness of “China” emerged. The national consciousness and the concept of “unity” was later firmly established due to the following four factors: the cultural concept of “family, nation and the world”, which means that the harmony of the world is achieved by the good governance of nation, while the latter is achieved by the running of family; the social order of “ritual and music”; the economic system of “commercial tribute”, supported by corresponding military

policies and actions (Shi 2015). Therefore, the concept of “unity” is not only “being together” in the sense of natural geographical space, but also the “unity” of “being together” gradually formed by integrating and penetrating each other in multiple dimensions and meanings at the socio-cultural level through the continuous flow of people, goods and the transmission of cultural representations, which is the logic of reciprocity.

***Ju*: the perspective for understanding the dimensions of “diversity”**

Fei Hsiao-tung explained the meaning of “diversity” in a lot of space in his paper expounding the theory of “the pattern of unity in diversity of the Chinese nation”. “*Ju*” can be understood as layout and distribution, that is, in the same spatial scope and form of “*Ge*”, how ethnic units within the Chinese nation were distributed and laid out. This may provide a way to understand the concept of “diversity”. “Diversity” is relative to the so-called “monism”. Fei cited many archaeological discoveries, demonstrating that “people who have been separated for a long time must develop their own cultures to adapt to such different natural environments” in this “unified” living space, because of its vast area, complex terrains and diverse landscapes. These archaeological discoveries can basically deny the “monistic origin theory” of the Chinese nation, and its “foreign origin theory” as well, which lays a foundation for the discussion of “pluralistic” cultural patterns and the “local origin theory” of the Chinese nation. In particular, the archaeological discovery that there were many cultural areas in this “unified” living space in the Neolithic Age, “can be used as a starting point to understand the unity in diversity pattern of the Chinese nation (Fei 2009).”

With Fei Hsiao-tung’s enumeration of various cultural areas in that period, it is not difficult to find that different cultures in various cultural areas converged with each other and competed, collided, replaced, merged and developed thereafter, regional characteristics of cultures thus emerged in this process. Different cultures formed in the same region had similar characteristics and individualities, which are the embodiment of “unity” based on multi-cultures and the possible representation of “diversity” in the “unified” regional space. The “diversity” reflected in the regional space was more often reflected in the local area. As Fei pointed out, since the unification of Qin Dynasty, the Central Plains had basically been developed into a united entity based on the existing “diversified” nations, formed after implementing a series of measures aimed at promoting unification in the economic, political, social and cultural fields, such as “carts on the same track, books in the same language, establishing counties and defining weights and measurements”. This united entity itself is also an entity built on diversity in “unity” in a defined local space. In the same time, the nomads in the north was getting integrated and unified. Fei made more efforts to discuss the ecology-based local unity of the Central Plains and the nomads in the North. In addition to the obvious “unified” natural geographical environment, ethnicities in local areas derived corresponding production and livelihood methods, that is, they had the possibility of integration while being diversified. Similarly, after the northern and the Central Plains regions were unified into one

entity, the logic of reciprocity between the two regions began to generate the possibility of integration through reciprocal trade and exchange of needed goods. In other words, diverse ethnicities and their cultures within a local area formed a local entity of unity in diversity by way of this possibility of integration. Such an entity itself is also called another level of “diversity”, which formed an entity of unity in diversity in a larger area by way of the possibility of integration with other entities. Here we can draw a basic conclusion, that is, diversity and unity are hierarchical, and they embed and construct each other at different levels.

In fact, Fei Hsiao-tung discussed in detail the interaction between the Han and other ethnicities in the Central Plains in the section “Great Mixing and Integration of Ethnicities in the Central Plains” (Fei 2009). In the previous and subsequent sections, he also pointed out the formation of unity in diversity in the so-called local area and even larger area, in addition to the two basic conditions of relying on the same living space and the diversity of ethnicities within the region, the essential driving forces also lie in the mobility and interaction of ethnicities within and between regions, the circulation and exchange of goods and the establishment of commodity trade circulation system based on them. In a certain sense, it can be said that the evolution from diversity to unity depends on the establishment of reciprocal relationship.

Within the ethnicities, the Han ethnicity played a central role in the formation of unity in diversity in local areas or the formation of unity in diversity of the Chinese nation. Fei Hsiao-tung repeatedly pointed out the unquestionable and irreplaceable role of Han ethnicity in the development history of the Chinese nation. According to the historical data and documents about the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties, the establishment of the key role of Han ethnicity was mainly due to the continuous expansion of regions and cultural areas under the social and historical conditions when its productivity was more developed than that of other ethnicities and regions. Moreover, northern ethnicities brought new blood to the Han. Since the Song Dynasty, the Khitan, Nvzhen, Mongolian, Hui and Manchu ethnicities had migrated to the agricultural areas of the Central Plains on a large scale for livelihood, regime change, policy governance, trade, religious spread and other factors, resulting in continuous population growth. Similarly, the Han ethnicity was integrated into other ethnicities due to irresistible forces such as war or natural disasters. Biologically speaking, the Han ethnicity and many ethnic minorities were converged and mixed with each other, and there was no “pure blood” in pedigree; culturally speaking, the Han ethnicity and many ethnic minorities accepted and merged with each other, and there was no “pure orthodoxy” in Chinese culture. No matter from which perspective, the communication and integration between the Han ethnicity and ethnic minorities played a key role in establishing the pattern of unity in diversity of the Chinese nation.

However, it should be mentioned that the Han ethnicity played a leading role in the long journey of Chinese national identity and cohesion, but the linkage role of ethnic minorities was also indispensable. It was the “hybrid” and not the “purebred” ethnicities and their cultures, that is, in the fringe of ethnicities and ethnic cultures rather than the core part of the Han ethnicity and ethnic minority cultures, that played an important role as a linkage in the establishment of unity in diversity of

local areas and the whole Chinese nation. The core part of ethnicities and their cultures was the fundamental reason why one group was different from other groups. The weakening of the core part means that typical characteristics of ethnicities and their cultures faded, which was exactly what the establishment and consolidation of unity in diversity of local areas and the whole Chinese nation needed. It was necessary to weaken the strength of powerful ethnicities and their cultures, and form an inclusive one. Otherwise, it would be difficult to establish and maintain the unity in diversity of local areas and the whole Chinese nation, on the contrary, these areas would face the possibility of forced assimilation (Yang 2017). The reasons, mechanism and process for the establishment of the unity in diversity of local areas and the whole Chinese nation were very complicated. Therefore, we should pay attention not only to the core role of the Han and its culture, and the great impetus of ethnic minorities and their cultures, but also to the important and even key linkage role of the fringe part of ethnicities and their cultures. Fei also described in detail the southward expansion of the Han and the ethnic mobility in the west to highlight that the Han played a key role in the contact and interaction with other ethnicities. In his narrative, this contact and interaction depended more on economic complementation and cultural integration. So far, the discussions on the ethnic interaction in the east, west, north and south regions with the Han in the Central Plains as the core have been completed.

What we can see from the above is not only the mutual embedding and construction of diversity and unity, but also the inevitability of the existence of unity in diversity. This inevitability is actually associated with the living space of natural geography. Fei Hsiao-tung once pointed out that both man and society belong to the natural world. From the perspective of this natural world in-itself, unity in diversity is also hierarchical, consistent with the relationship between the whole and part in philosophy. Man, the basic research object of anthropology, is composed of different organs, tissues and systems as far as its biological attributes are concerned. The composition, structure, function, operation and growth of each organ, tissue and system may be different. This multi-element cooperation within the body constitutes the unity of man, allowing man to survive. As far as his cultural attributes are concerned, man has experienced or is experiencing the enculturation and acculturation of different cultural factors in different cultural spaces, so that the diversified cultural characteristics are attached to this man's ideologies, words, habits and deeds, while being integrated into the overall socio-cultural expression of the whole person. Similarly, as individuals, people are diversified existence in their groups because of their different biological and cultural attributes, while their groups generated by blood, geography, industry and interest, such as family, hometown association, work and study group, hobby group, etc., are a unified existence against this diversity. By analogy, with the continuous extension of space, the existence of diversity and unity is hierarchical, that is, the existence of unity at this level constitutes the existence of diversity at the upper level, and they co-exist and interact with each other. In addition to the relationship between diversity and unity, there is also the relationship between diversities within unity. In a microscopic view, this relationship between diversities becomes a unity, and this possibility of being self-contained and independent is one of the prerequisites of cultural consciousness, that is, culture in-itself.

In a macro view, this relationship between diversities constitutes a higher level of unity, and the possibility of cooperation and communication is another prerequisite of cultural consciousness, that is, the encounter with others. Culture in-itself is the respective existence of one's own culture and others' culture, and the encounter with others is a vivid expression of cultural intersection, exchange and integration.

Under the background of cultural transformation, cultural exchange and collision among different regions, ethnicities and countries are becoming more and more frequent. What kind of lifestyle is suitable for people to live in harmony across regions, ethnicities and borders and protect cultural diversity is a challenge that human society should face in the process of cultural interaction. The premise of answering this question lies in comprehensively grasping local cultures along the route of "the Belt and Road Initiative" by using anthropological ethnographic methods. On this basis, how to build one's own subjective cultural consciousness and corresponding cultural representations based on cultural self-consciousness, and how to understand, present and protect the multi-facet and multi-form cultures along the route with the mindset of "enjoying one's own culture, appreciating others' culture, sharing the culture together, unifying in the culture", which is full of cultural self-consciousness and self-confidence, will be the focus of anthropologists' research and attention.

Pattern(*Ge Ju*): the perspective for understanding Chinese consciousness and cultural transformation

"Diversity" and "unity", as a kind of "pattern", is the representation of a structural state. Fei Hsiao-tung cited a lot of archaeological discoveries and historical data to describe the diachronic objective existence of "diversity" and "unity". After thoroughly reading and studying Fei Hsiao-tung's works, you will probably find that his academic thinking basically follows the context of "seeking knowledge from reality" proposed by himself, that is, seeking "knowledge" from the discovered "reality", which should also be a basic exploring method of anthropology.

The diversity of Chinese culture is an objective reality, mainly manifested in the diversity of ethnic cultures: 56 ethnicities have their own unique cultural traditions; and in the diversity of regional cultures: China has a vast territory where each region has its own unique culture. In terms of marriage custom, the Hani ethnicity weep at marriage, the Mosuo people follow male-leaving marriage (walking marriage), and the Lisu, Bai, Bouyei and Miao ethnicities more or less maintain the custom of bride kidnapping but symbolically. The different marriage customs in different regions demonstrate the diversity of Chinese ethnic cultures. The unity of Chinese culture has four implications: firstly, Chinese culture is not the total of the cultures of 56 ethnicities, but an organic cultural entity formed by the convergence and integration of the cultures of ethnicities and regions during the thousands of years of development. Secondly, the homogenization and unification of ethnicities and regions in the long-term cultural interaction generated a Chinese cultural model with common values as orientation, which also reflects the unity of Chinese culture. Thirdly, ethnicities and regions identify with not only their own ethnic or regional culture, but also Chinese culture. Of the two identities, that of Chinese culture is essential and primary,

while that of the culture of their own is secondary. Finally, ethnicities and regions identify with the mainstream unified language and character, which also reflects the unity of Chinese culture (He 2010). The Han ethnicity played a key role in establishing the pattern of unity in diversity, which has developed continuously for more than 2000 years and integrated many other ethnicities. Han was one of the diversified ethnic units, and spread all over the country and went deep into ethnic minority areas. Chinese gradually became the common language of many other ethnicities, thus forming a network with dots and lines, showing the characteristics of density in the east and sparsity in the west. This network is exactly the skeleton framework of the pattern of unity in diversity. The cohesion of Han made diversity into unity, thus forming the Chinese nation, a high-level identified nation. The pattern of unity in diversity of the Chinese nation is the inevitable result of the historical development of ethnicities under specific conditions in China. During thousands of years of close contacts, 56 ethnicities with common historical mission and cultural tradition have formed a complex nation, the Chinese nation, which will inevitably form an interdependent, inseparable, reciprocal and symbiotic tradition within the Han ethnicity, between the Han and ethnic minorities and among ethnic minorities (Ma 2010).

Scholars in many disciplines in China have discussed the Chinese nation and regional civilizations. Su Bingqi once put forward the “regional typical theory” (Su 2016). This concept emphasizes on the various civilizations and cultures that appeared respectively, and the “multi-origins” like stars in the sky, and the secondary and recurring cultures generated by the mutual influence of multi-origins, and emphasizes on the diversity of culture, which was unified with Chinese civilization in the historical context. On this basis, Fei Hsiao-tung put forward the theory of “unity in diversity”, taking into account the social structure and the interaction between ethnicities, and unifying the diverse cultural and social structure and the interaction between ethnicities, that is, the unity of culture, society and people. Zhao Xudong and Zhu Honghui made further examination on this theoretical context and logic, and creatively put forward the concept of “cultural belt”,² similar to Su Bingqi’s “regional typical”, but actually not. The concept of regional typical system lays emphasis on region and the culture system, and its change can only be found within region before being further found between regions. Cultural belt affects the surrounding region from lines, a radiation from lines to planes in fact. This kind of cultural belt is also similar to the “lined-up sugar-coated haws theory” put forward by Fei Hsiao-tung. It can also be said that the cultural belt theory is the abstract inheritance, promotion and development of the “lined-up sugar-coated haws theory” academically. What the two theories have in common is that they both pay great attention to the important role of line in regional connectivity and cultural representation

² It should be noted that the “cultural belt”, as an academic term, was used earlier in literature, history and archeology. In order to render it with more powerful explanation and practicality in research, the authors tried to interpret it in the perspectives of anthropology and sociology while reviewing relevant literature on the “cultural belt”. The authors hold that the “cultural belt” is an important representation of elements, such as nature, society, culture, people and goods, which integrate and run through a region as the result of the connection among dots, lines, and planes, from which the process and trend of the dynamic, ways, state and changes of the cultural flow and interaction in this region can be seen.

transmission. The difference is that Fei emphasizes this role after the formation of the line, while Zhao and Zhu are microscopically aware of the promotion of people, goods and many cultural representations along the line to the formation of the line in the transmission process and how this transmission integrates the region with the help of the line.

The construction of Chinese consciousness is the integral component of the topic when discussing “diversity” or “unity” in the past or present. It is a practice of cultural transformation to look at the changes of our subjective concepts from the perspective of the world. Chinese consciousness is a kind of cultural self-consciousness of the holistic existence of Chinese culture with multi-dimensions, multi-perspectives, inclusiveness, historicity and reality. From the perspective of space alone, either Chinese consciousness and the local society or Chinese consciousness and the surrounding socio-culture, or a space that expands further beyond with China as the center, there exists the concept of the world that matured very early in Chinese culture and influenced the imagination of the world to come. The presentation of China must be unfolded in one of these three different levels of the world, by doing so, the scattered locality and allopatry thus becomes a part of Chinese consciousness and is explained (Zhao 2012). In fact, the process of understanding these three worlds can be viewed as the development process of Chinese socio-culture from a barbarian society with low productivity to a society dominated by etiquette and customs (an agricultural society), to a commercial society (a society in which agriculture and commerce developed simultaneously), and to a capital society (a monetary society), and also as a process of transformation and integration from the Chinese Central Plains culture, to the mountain culture, frontier culture and marine culture. Without the logic of “reciprocity” contained and embodied in this process, it is hard to imagine how diversity becomes unity, how the “cultural belt” of points, lines and planes is formed, and even more difficult to imagine how China can enter the world business system and world society with the help of various cultures including people, goods, technology and culture and their representations. Such reciprocity helps people and goods, nature and society, culture and technology, China and the world to connect and integrate, and makes it possible to achieve a “mutually beneficial community” of “being together”.

Conclusion: cultural self-consciousness and mutual cultural consciousness

Fei Hsiao-tung visited Mongolian Oroqen, Hezhe and other ethnicities in 1980s and 1990s, and found that the original ecological culture of ethnic minorities was facing extinction. He was so concerned about it that he advocated the cultural vision of “harmony in diversity”. Later, after years of reflections, he put forward the famous “sixteen-character proverb” (“各美其美, 美人之美, 美美与共, 天下大同”), that is, “enjoying one’s own culture, appreciating others’ cultures, sharing the cultures together, unifying in the cultures”. His concerns lie in the respect and protection of the culture of vulnerable ethnicities, and called on all sectors of society to pay attention to it. In regard to the conservation of ethnic folk art heritage, he even advocated

recording the original materials of ethnic minorities with their own characters or symbols, striving to restore their own style instead of translating them roughly according to others' taste. Later, this concept was broadened and became a Chinese wisdom in recognizing and getting along with others when facing the world. (Ji 2017).

This proverb is hierarchical and logical. "Enjoying one's own culture" means that everyone, every group, every ethnicity and every culture can realize the in-itself of its own culture and have full cultural self-consciousness based on this in-itself, that is, recognizing the context, merits and demerits of their own culture and identifying them as the knowledge and norm for survival and living. This may be a low-level self-consciousness of recognizing and identifying one's own state. In this era when it is not difficult to advocate individuality and identify with oneself, such self-consciousness seems to be easy to achieve, and such self-knowledge and self-consciousness of one's own culture can be achieved only by an individual's or a group's self-esteem, self-confidence and self-esteem stimulated by self-abasement.

However, most human beings in the past lived in their relatively closed spaces. Although different countries and different nations never stopped their exchanges with each other in history, right now the whole world is becoming a small global village due to easy transportation, rapid spread of media and internet. Every nation and every country become residents of this small global village, and neighbors who may see one another anytime in the global economic market and various international events. If these residents want to live together in harmony, they must learn to understand and respect each other (Fang 2007). Such understanding and respect needs to be based on a clear and accurate cognition of the culture and society in which the other is involved. Such cognition is consciousness of the others' cultures. The practice of enjoying one's own culture and appreciating others' cultures is a social process of constant interaction, in which cultural self-consciousness and consciousness of the others' cultures become gradually clear and finally the state and mentality. In other words, this process contains three stages: firstly, the basic consciousness and identification of one's own culture; secondly, the consciousness and understanding of others' cultures in the process of interaction and reciprocity with others by means of transportation and communication technologies; thirdly, the high-level of cultural self-consciousness achieved by reflecting on one's own through others, and the high-level consciousness of the others' cultures achieved by identifying others at the same time. This process of continuous interaction and complementation is also in line with the basic law of continuous leap in man's understanding.

The state of sharing the cultures together has been actually achieved to some extent in fact and form. It is reflected not only in the fact that every individual, group and nation in-itself and their cultures inhabit in a common natural geographical space for a long time, but also in the fact that the whole humanistic world is so inclusive that it can also include the occurrence and transformation of all kinds of people, ideas, behaviors and cultures. However, the state of sharing the cultures together mentioned by Fei Hsiao-tung is not limited to "sharing together" in fact and form, but a very important stage, which can only be realized on the basis of the full interaction and integration of the former two stages of "enjoying one's own culture" and "appreciating others' cultures". Without enjoying one's own culture, it

is impossible to appreciate others' cultures. Without cultural self-consciousness and consciousness of the others' cultures based on these two stages, it is also impossible to achieve real and substantial cultural integration and sharing.

When discussing the pattern of unity in diversity of the Chinese nation, Fei Hsiao-tung mentioned the transformation from Chinese nation-in-itself to a self-conscious one. In fact, the achievement of sharing the cultures together is closely related to this transformation. "Sharing together" actually implies "unity", that is to say, each individual, group, ethnicity and their cultures, cultural self-consciousness and consciousness of the others' cultures are in a state of "sharing together" in form and essence instead of being connected loosely.

"Sharing together" implies in three aspects. Firstly, each individual, group, ethnicity and their cultures live together for a long time, which is a "structure" of the "unity" of the living space and state due to the in-itself of socio-culture, the in-itself of each individual, group and ethnicity in the natural sense. Secondly, each individual, group, ethnicity and their cultures live together for a long time, but they are different from each other, showing a "distribution" of the "diversity" of socio-culture, which is the in-itself of each individual, group and ethnic culture. Thirdly, each individual, group, ethnicity and their cultures gradually become a substantial and closely related "unity" based on cultural self-consciousness and consciousness of the others' cultures with the evolution of history and through continuous exchange and reciprocity in the above-mentioned "structure" (*Ge*) and "distribution" (*Ju*). This "unity" not only inherits the "structure" and "distribution" formed by the in-itself of culture, but also is a "unity" of socio-cultural community formed by cultural self-consciousness and consciousness of the others' cultures, and a "diversity" of "sharing the cultures together" within it. This is a process of the generation of cultural self-consciousness based on the in-itself of nature and culture and the encounter with cultural others. Compared with the previous transformation from the unity in natural geographical space to the unity in socio-culture and history, this "unity" has realized the transformation from the diversity of respective survival of various groups, ethnicities and their socio-cultures to the diversity of integration and symbiosis of various groups, ethnicities and their socio-cultures.

In other words, in the transformation process from the in-itself of nature and culture to cultural self-consciousness of individuals, groups and ethnicities, the reciprocal integration among individuals, groups and ethnicities promotes a higher-level in-itself of nature and culture and cultural self-consciousness of groups and ethnicities with a wider scope, and realizes consciousness of the others' cultures and mutual cultural consciousness in this process. On the basis of the full completion of these transformations, it is possible for the Chinese nation and other nations in the world to achieve transformation from the in-itself of nature and culture to consciousness of the others' cultures, cultural self-consciousness, and mutual cultural consciousness, and to build each other into a community with a shared future for mankind and achieve the ultimate goal and state of "unifying in the cultures".

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