

# *Research on Ethnic Regions in Ancient Books*

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**Abstract:** This study aims to fundamentally understand the relevant connotations of national identity by deconstructing the internal causes of the formation of the diverse unity of the Chinese nation, which contributes to national unity and national unity. The paper adopts the literature analysis method as the main research method, and through the analysis of "Summary of Reading History by Fang Yu", summarizes, integrates and proposes its own argument ideas, forming innovative viewpoints and insights. The formation of the diversified and integrated pattern of the Chinese nation is closely related to the geographical space for the survival of the Chinese nation. The unique geographical unit perfectly combines "agricultural culture" with "nomadic culture", forming a national pattern of "you come and I go, I come and you go, there is you in me, there is me in you".

## **1. Introduction**

At present, academic research on the formation of the diverse and integrated pattern of the Chinese nation has achieved certain research results, laying a theoretical foundation for the future expansion of the depth and breadth of research on the consciousness of the Chinese national community. There are mainly studies such as Feng Runming's "National Spirit in the Context of Globalization" and Zhang Haiyang's "China's Multiculturalism and Chinese Identity". However, these studies are all conducted from a macro perspective, and no one has yet analyzed the environmental factors that form the diversified unity of the Chinese nation from the perspective of ancient literature and classics. The purpose of this study is to explore the formation of the Chinese nation from a geopolitical perspective, in order to contribute to national unity and unity. This article uses the method of literature analysis, based on "Summary of Reading History by Fang Yu", to extract effective information, further summarize, integrate, and propose one's own argument ideas, forming innovative viewpoints and insights. The semi enclosed geographical and natural units and diverse ecological system allow for free communication among the diverse cultural areas of the Chinese nation, while also avoiding the harassment of foreign ethnic groups. In the long process of communication and exchange, a basic pattern of diversified integration of the Chinese nation was formed.

In this vast land of China, various ethnic groups work hard, communicate with each other, and jointly develop and protect this sacred land. At the same time, this land also plays an immeasurable role in the formation of the diverse and integrated pattern of the Chinese nation. "Summary of Reading History by Fang Yu" is a famous geographical work in the early Qing Dynasty of China, which was hailed as the "unparalleled book for thousands of centuries" at that time. The author will start with the recorded mountain and river maps in the book "Summary of Reading History by Fang

Yu" and explain the geographical factors that led to the formation of the diverse and integrated pattern of the Chinese nation.

## 2. Summary of "Summary of Reading History by Fang Yu"

Gu Zuyu is the author of "Summary of Reading History by Fang Yu". The book has a strict structure and logic. It is an indispensable bibliography for the study of historical geography, with a total of 130 volumes. The first nine volumes are "The Situation of Prefectures in the Past Dynasties", which discusses the rise and fall of various dynasties in the Ming Dynasty, as well as the division of travelers, from the legendary era of the origin of the Chinese nation to the author's location. Further research is conducted on the areas where there are errors. Volumes 10 to 123 are the "Thirteen Divisions of the Two Capitals", which are based on the administrative system of the Ming Dynasty and compared with the geographical elements of previous dynasties, providing a complete account of the geographical changes in each region. Volumes 124 to 129 are "Chuandu", which mainly discusses and examines the water systems, lakes, and rivers of China. Volume 130 is "Fenye", which starts from ancient Chinese astronomy and analyzes the shortcomings of historical records of Fenye. In addition, there are 4 volumes of "Map Essentials", which contain maps of various regions.

This article mainly focuses on the "Map Overview", supplemented by the "Thirteen Divisions of the Two Capitals", and analyzes the geographical elements that formed the diversified and integrated pattern of the Chinese nation.

## 3. The Unique Geographical Environment of the Chinese Nation

The Chinese nation exists in a relatively closed geographical unit with a complete internal natural ecological system. It has a variety of geographical elements such as plateaus, plains, hills, and mountains, and its climate conditions include diverse climate types such as tropical, subtropical, and temperate zones. This closed and diverse geographical environment allows the ancestors of the Chinese nation to freely migrate within this closed space and develop and protect this land. Let's take a look at the unique living environment of the ancestors of the Chinese nation through the records in the "Summary".

To the east and south of the land of China is the vast sea. According to the "Summary", "Fu Lianshan faces the north, with a huge sea ring to the east. The so-called Baoshan Belt Sea is a dangerous and obstructed area."<sup>[1]</sup> In the context of relatively backward productivity in ancient China, the era of great navigation has not yet arrived. The boundless sea is undoubtedly a natural barrier, blocking the invasion of foreign enemies, and also restricting the development of the ancestors of the Chinese nation towards the outside world.

The Pamir Plateau to the west of China is like a sword soaring into the clouds. The "Summary" record: "The snow capped mountains and green mountains of Luzhi are thousands of miles high, hundreds of zhang high. Most of them are covered with vines and green onions, and the locals are called Ta'er Tashi Daban."<sup>[2]</sup> This has basically cut off the channels of communication between the Chinese nation and the outside world, leaving only Zhang Qian "hollowed out". The narrow and long Silk Road, like a ribbon, maintains this ancient weak connection between the East and the West. For the core area of the Silk Road - the Hexi Corridor, it is recorded in the "Summary" that "Han Ban Gu referred to the livestock of Liangzhou as the world's abundant resources. The Western Xia gained Liangzhou, so it was able to invade Guanzhong with its material resources, causing great trouble for the Song Dynasty. However, Liangzhou is not unique to the Hexi Corridor, but is indeed the core of Qin and Long."<sup>[3]</sup> Jiayu Pass, located in the Hexi Corridor, is like a guard, guarding the safety of the Chinese land.

There are endless mountains in the southwest of China. According to the "Summary", "If you want to climb Minshan Mountain, you can't get the source of the river. It starts from the west of Sichuan, where mountains and valleys are wide, and Yaya starts to recover. If you walk southwest through Manqing, you will find Minshan Mountain, and the river will never be far away."<sup>[4]</sup> The the Himalayas, the roof of the world, runs across it. In the past, this place was almost a forbidden area for humans, with high mountains that confined the activity areas of the Chinese nation.

To the north of the land of China is the vast desert, a forbidden area for life. According to the "Summary", "The Northern Desert is the land of Youzhou, which controls the desert."<sup>[5]</sup> There are no conditions for ethnic migration here, and there are natural dangers that are difficult to navigate.

The central area of China is a central plain. According to the "Summary", "The fertile land of Zidaliang is surrounded by rivers and mountains on the surface, and thousands of wells are sealed."<sup>[6]</sup> Due to the long-term erosion of the Yellow River, the soil in this area is fertile. The ancestors of the Chinese nation carried out large-scale planting, established cities, and developed writing here. The "Huaxia " living in this area has become the "unity" of the Chinese nation in its pluralistic integration. As Mr. Fei Xiaotong said, "cohesion of the core" has brought the source power of endless growth.

The central plains are surrounded by grasslands, hills, Gobi, and mountain forests. The "Summary" record: "Migration follows water and grass, clothing, skin, and meat", and "grassland, also in the north of Helin."<sup>[7]</sup> Here live the "barbarians", "rong", "barbarians", and "di" in the "five square pattern". The fierce collision between the wild nomadic civilization and the gentle agricultural civilization has had a long-term impact on the formation of the diverse and integrated pattern of the Chinese nation. To form a unique pattern of 'you come and I go, I come and you go, there is you in me, there is me in you' for the Chinese nation.

In ancient society, due to low productivity, the ancestors of the Chinese nation found it difficult to overcome these natural geographical barriers. These geographical barriers are like walls outside family courtyards, tightly binding the footsteps of the Chinese ancestors to this beautiful and fertile land. But from a different perspective, this "watertight" geography also provides shelter for the development of the Chinese nation. In this geographical unit, various ethnic groups rarely encounter invasion and threats from foreign races, and they integrate and assist each other, moving from diversity to unity. Until after 1840, the industrial revolution in the West allowed European and American powers to open the door to China from the sea. Under the attack of Western ships and cannons, although the Chinese nation suffered hardships, the national spirit of "every inch of mountains and rivers, every inch of blood, every 100000 young people, and every 100000 soldiers" erupted, making the consciousness of the Chinese national community even stronger. As Mr. Fei Xiaotong said, "As a conscious national entity, it has emerged from the confrontation between China and western powers in the past century."<sup>[8]</sup>

#### **4. The Formation of the Commonality of the Chinese Nation**

According to the analysis of the contents of the "Summary of Reading History by Fang Yu". We can see that the Lebensraum of the Chinese nation is a relatively closed geographical unit, but this geographical unit contains a diversified living environment, and this unique spatial structure plays an important role in the formation of the Chinese nation's commonality.

The Lebensraum is huge and the environment is diversified. The Central Plains region, centered around the Yellow River Basin, has an area of 710000 square kilometers. On top of the fertile land, a Central Plains cultural area centered around the Wei River Basin and adjacent areas of Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Henan provinces has been formed, covering the entire territory of Shaanxi, Shanxi, Hebei, and Henan. On this vast land, it provides a material foundation for the survival and

development of civilization.<sup>[9]</sup> Secondly, most of this region belongs to the temperate climate type, with distinct four seasons and abundant precipitation, providing necessary climatic conditions for the formation of agricultural civilization. Once again, the flat terrain makes communication between different ethnic groups convenient, making communication and mobility between ethnic groups increasingly frequent, which is a very favorable factor for forming a community of the Chinese nation.

The complementarity of climatic conditions. The living space of the Chinese nation is not only in the Central Plains cultural area (agricultural civilization) where the "Huaxia ethnic group" survive, but also surrounded by nomadic cultural areas that rely on grazing for survival. The ethnic groups in this region are unable to cultivate food due to the lack of geographical environment, and their demand for food can only be purchased from agricultural cultural areas. And what is needed in agricultural cultural areas is horses, which are officially a specialty of nomadic cultural areas. The complementarity of economic needs has led to more frequent contact between the two ethnic groups, and in this trade exchange, the commonality of the Chinese nation has been further strengthened.

A closed environment, like a glass cover, protects the development of Chinese civilization. In ancient times, to the east, south, and southwest of the Chinese nation, there were either the sea or the towering mountains, and no foreign tribes could enter. In the north, except for the three major ethnic groups of Donghu, Sushen, and Fuyu, there were no strong enemies. These three major ethnic groups influence and integrate with each other in the process of Chinese civilization communication, ultimately becoming an important component of the Chinese nation's family. There is only a 4000 kilometer narrow passage in the West that maintains the weak connection of the Silk Road. In history, although there have been several major wars in this region, it has not had a significant impact on the traditional cultural area of the Chinese nation. It was in this semi closed state that ancient Chinese civilization was not subjected to extensive aggression from other civilizations. This enabled the stable survival and rapid development of Chinese civilization, ultimately forming a vast system, profound connotations, and diverse forms of ancient Chinese civilization. Even more unique is that in this semi enclosed geographical unit, various ethnic groups in China have experienced cross ethnic cultural exchanges, such as the Xiongnu, Shule, Rouran, Huihe, Dangxiang, Manchu, etc., who were once active on the land of China. Their cultural subjects were influenced by the Central Plains Cultural Area, which played an immeasurable role in the formation of commonality with the Chinese nation. On the other hand, other civilizations in the world, without the support of such barriers, without exception, have engaged in desperate struggles with foreign peoples, and many civilizations have become dust of history in such battles<sup>[10]</sup>.

## 5. Conclusions

It is precisely the existence of semi enclosed geographical and natural units and diverse ecological systems that enable the multicultural areas of the Chinese nation to freely communicate and be free from external ethnic groups. In the long process of communication and exchange, a basic pattern of diversified integration of the Chinese nation was formed. This pattern will certainly provide an inexhaustible driving force for the development of Chinese path to modernization in the future.

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