

The Contemporary Value and Optimization Paths for Cultivating the Sense of Chinese National Community among College Students in Yunnan under the "Belt and Road" Initiative Strategy

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Abstract: Under the grand blueprint of the "Belt and Road" Initiative, universities in Yunnan shoulder the important mission of promoting ethnic cultural exchanges and enhancing international cooperation and mutual understanding. Against this strategic backdrop, strengthening the cultivation of a sense of Chinese national community among university students holds significant ideological, cultural, and social value. To this end, universities in Yunnan should deeply trace the long historical context, firmly ground themselves in the current era, and further optimize cultivation pathways and enhance cultivation effectiveness on the basis of continuing to consolidate the roles of the "first classroom" in knowledge transmission and value guidance, as well as the "second classroom" in practical training and ability enhancement.

1. Introduction

As a frontier province in China, Yunnan has been a place where numerous ethnic groups have thrived, and various cultures have blended, interacted, and collided since ancient times. It is also an important node on the ancient Southern Silk Road. Today, against the backdrop of globalization, Yunnan serves as a crucial link and indispensable bridge connecting China with South Asia and Southeast Asia in the context of the current "Belt and Road" Initiative. While enjoying greater opportunities for economic and social development and deepening its opening-up to the outside world, Yunnan also faces new challenges in ideological education. Under such circumstances, universities in Yunnan should draw inspiration from history and ground themselves in the present, guiding students to internalize the sense of Chinese national community as their belief and externalize it into actions, so that they can grow into builders and successors capable of shouldering the great responsibility of national rejuvenation.

2. The Contemporary Value of Cultivating a Strong Sense of Chinese National Community in the Context of the "Belt and Road" Initiative

2.1 Ideological Value

As an important front for ideological and political education, universities shoulder the mission of nurturing and solidifying a strong sense of Chinese national community among young students. Against the backdrop of the "Belt and Road" Initiative, cultures from various countries and ethnic groups are blending and interacting with unprecedented breadth and speed through multiple channels and means. While this cultural convergence and clash have promoted the coexistence and mutual prosperity of diverse cultures, they have also provided opportunities for some malicious forces. The three evil forces of ethnic separatism, religious extremism, and violent terrorism have intensified their ideological infiltration into university students, attempting to undermine China's stability and weaken the centripetal force and cohesion of the Chinese nation. University students, who are at a crucial stage in shaping their outlooks on life, values, and the world, are prone to losing their way under cultural shocks and the influence of such infiltrations.

The cultivation of a sense of community helps strengthen the identification of students from various ethnic groups with the pluralistic and integrated pattern of the Chinese nation, enhance mutual understanding and respect among different ethnic groups, and erect a mental protective barrier for young students, thereby building a solid fortress for the security and stability of China's socialist construction. Therefore, universities should further enhance their efforts in nurturing a sense of Chinese national community among students. Through systematic, scientific, and effective guidance, they should assist young students in solidifying their sense of Chinese national community, deeply grasping the historical context and national spirit of the Chinese nation, and deepening their identification with the Chinese nation and socialism with Chinese characteristics. This will help them form correct political views and values, and strengthen their sense of national pride and identity. By guiding contemporary college students to internalize the sense of Chinese national community as their beliefs and pursuits, and externalize it into actions and practices, universities can enable them to consistently uphold the principles of ethnic unity, equality, mutual assistance, and harmony in their daily studies, lives, and future work, becoming unifiers of ethnic friendship, defenders of ethnic interests, and builders of the Chinese national community.

2.2 Cultural Value

Throughout the long history of the development of the Chinese nation, people of all ethnic groups have jointly written and created a splendid historical culture.[2] They have not only produced various cultural heritages that shine brilliantly alongside each other but also forged, through long-term exchanges and integration, a national spirit that is inclusive and embraces diversity. This spirit is manifested in the respect and absorption of foreign cultures, as well as in the tolerance and understanding of internal differences. It serves as an inexhaustible driving force for the continuous vitality and prosperity of the Chinese nation. It can be seen that both the "Belt and Road" Initiative and the "Chinese National Community" align with the traditional Chinese cultural concept of "shared joys and sorrows, interdependence like lips and teeth," embodying the cultural values of "harmony in diversity" and "mutual appreciation for beauty." They represent the shared cultural treasure and spiritual homeland of the Chinese nation and constitute the core part of the excellent traditional Chinese culture that university students should inherit and carry forward. This spirit will constantly inspire young students to engage in the construction of the motherland and cultural exchanges in the new era with a more inclusive mindset and an open-hearted attitude, contributing their own strength to the building of a community with a shared future for the Chinese nation.

2.3 Social Value

As a crucial land passage and western bridgehead opening up to South and Southeast Asia, the "Belt and Road" Initiative has provided significant opportunities and a vast arena for Yunnan's economic and social development. Driven by this initiative, Yunnan has gradually improved its modern infrastructure and witnessed remarkable advancements in various industries such as culture, tourism, healthcare, and education, with its strategic passage value continuously highlighted. These developments have benefited compatriots from all ethnic groups, enhancing their pride and identification with the country and nation, as well as strengthening the centripetal force and cohesion among different ethnic groups. In the process of cultivating a sense of Chinese national community among university students, it is essential to consider the new trends, characteristics, and realities of Yunnan's economic and social development, placing the cultivation perspective within the overall development framework of the "Belt and Road" Initiative. As an important talent pool for the "Belt and Road" construction and a core force serving the regions along the route in the future, university students' education on the consciousness of a community with a shared future for the nation plays an irreplaceable role and holds significant social value in regional cooperation, economic and social development, and international image building in Yunnan and its surrounding areas. Strengthening the cultivation of this consciousness among university students will, on the one hand, better guide them to choose careers in border area construction, forming an endogenous driving force for promoting high-quality economic development in Yunnan and its neighboring regions; on the other hand, it will also help them become windows showcasing China's harmonious development and inclusive and friendly image of multi-ethnic coexistence in future international exchanges, enhancing understanding and identification of South and Southeast Asian countries with China's policies, promoting mutually beneficial cooperation and friendly exchanges among countries along the "Belt and Road," and contributing China's strength to building a community with a shared future for mankind.

3. Current Situation of Cultivating the Sense of Chinese National Community in Yunnan's Higher Education Institutions

Yunnan, located in the southwestern border region of China, is the province with the largest number of ethnic minorities in the country, comprising 25 ethnic groups. Therefore, fostering a strong sense of the Chinese national community among university students in Yunnan is of particular importance. In recent years, Yunnan Province has made significant efforts to promote education on solidifying the sense of the Chinese national community as a crucial measure to fully implement the fundamental task of cultivating talent with moral integrity. This initiative aims to take root, blossom, and bear fruit in the hearts of teachers and students. As of now, the province has established 1,065 provincial-level demonstration schools for ethnic unity and progress education, 102 demonstration schools for excellent ethnic cultural education, and nine institutions have been named as "National Model Collectives for Ethnic Unity and Progress." [3] During the process of implementing education on the sense of the Chinese national community in Yunnan's higher education institutions, universities have fully utilized both "first-classroom" (formal curriculum) and "second-classroom" (extracurricular activities) approaches, forming a comprehensive and diversified cultivation pathway.

3.1 "First-Classroom" Leading the Way.

Universities in Yunnan have taken ideological and political education classes as the main educational platform, integrating teaching contents such as ethnic policies, ethnic theories, and ethnic cultures into curriculum-based ideological and political education. They have completed a series of

tasks in discipline construction, curriculum development, and textbook compilation. Among them, the Ethnology program at Yunnan University has been selected as a national "Double First-Class" construction discipline; Yunnan Minzu University offers interdisciplinary courses such as "Ethnic Language Information Processing" and "Comparative Studies of Cross-Border Ethnic Cultures"; Yunnan Normal University, drawing on the red cultural resources of the Southwest Associated University, continuously improves its ideological and political education curriculum system through a model of "historical memory + contemporary reflection + future outlook"; One school actively builds a curriculum system on "solidifying the sense of the Chinese national community" by establishing specialized teaching and research groups and constructing a curriculum library consisting of "core courses + main courses + extended courses"; Dehong Teachers College has meticulously developed 23 local ethnic cultural textbooks, among which six textbooks, including National, Provincial, Prefectural, and Institutional Conditions, as Well as the Folk Customs of Dehong Prefecture, have been awarded as outstanding textbooks in Yunnan's higher education institutions.

3.2 "Second-Classroom" Extension.

Universities in Yunnan have actively utilized a variety of teaching and practical activities to continuously improve the cultural construction of education on the sense of the Chinese national community, creating a comprehensive educational environment. For example, eight universities, including Kunming University of Science and Technology, jointly launched a series of educational activities on solidifying the sense of the Chinese national community, integrating the shared image of the Chinese nation and symbols of Chinese culture into campus culture; institutions such as Yunnan Normal University have expanded "second-classroom" resources by leveraging 20 practical education bases, including the former site of the Southwest Associated University; Yunnan Arts University has taken root in the Yunnan region, venturing into rural areas in Dali, Chuxiong, Wenshan, and other places to carry out a series of public welfare activities on aesthetic education in rural areas, organically integrating ethnic culture, ecological civilization construction, and artistic design to support rural revitalization; additionally, multiple universities have actively conducted educational practices, creating a batch of rich and diverse practical education brand projects and activities, such as "Ethnic Unity Camp" and "Hearts Oriented Toward Beijing, Supporting the Core."

4. Optimized Pathways for Cultivating the Sense of Chinese National Community among University Students in Yunnan under the Background of the "Belt and Road" Initiative

With strong support and high attention from the government, universities in Yunnan have leveraged their unique geographical advantages and profound cultural heritage to actively explore cultivation models with regional characteristics, achieving fruitful results in the field of solidifying the sense of the Chinese national community. Against the grand backdrop of the "Belt and Road" Initiative, universities in Yunnan should further integrate their current development status and local characteristics, enhancing the relevance of content, innovation in methods, technological empowerment, and resource integration in cultivating the sense of the Chinese national community. Building on the continued leading role of the "first classroom" and the extended role of the "second classroom," they should continuously optimize cultivation pathways and improve cultivation quality.

4.1 Updating Cultivation Content in Line with Actual Conditions

Firstly, the content of cultivating the sense of the Chinese national community in Yunnan's universities should be aligned with the current economic and social development in Yunnan. Since the implementation of the "Belt and Road" Initiative, under the guidance of the state, people of all

ethnic groups in Yunnan have actively developed characteristic industries by fully leveraging the ecological resources and ethnic advantages of the southwest region. The smooth advancement of the "Belt and Road" Initiative has provided Yunnan with broader development opportunities and endowed the sense of the Chinese national community with richer practical connotations. This requires universities to adopt an international perspective and a developmental outlook when constructing cultivation content. They should establish a "three-dimensional educational coordinate system" by integrating dimensions such as ecological civilization, cultural identity, and regional cooperation, focusing on the overall vision of prosperity and development advocated by the "Belt and Road" Initiative. For example, from the dimension of ecological civilization, ecological civilization theories can be integrated into professional knowledge to instill the value concept of "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets" in students. By offering interdisciplinary courses, universities can cultivate compound talents with a sustainable development perspective. From the dimension of cultural identity, elective courses can be offered from perspectives such as "intangible cultural heritage revitalization," "decoding ethnic cultural genes," and "shaping ethnic brands" to enhance students' sense of national pride and cultural identity. From the dimension of regional cooperation, through the construction of course clusters such as "cross-border cooperation practices," universities can cultivate open-minded talents familiar with international conventions and capable of cross-cultural communication, thereby better fulfilling Yunnan's central radiating role towards countries in South and Southeast Asia.

Secondly, the content of cultivating the sense of the Chinese national community in Yunnan's universities should be integrated with students' life planning. The "Belt and Road" Initiative offers more opportunities for the personal development of students in Yunnan. By solidifying the sense of the Chinese national community, students' personal destinies can be linked with the destiny of the country and the nation. Against the backdrop of the opportunities presented by the "Belt and Road" Initiative, students' life planning can exhibit three major characteristics: 1) internationalization of career choices; 2) communalization of value identification; 3) diversification of development paths. During the process of cultivating the sense of the Chinese national community, universities should comprehensively consider students' cognitive patterns, emotional needs, and behavioral characteristics. By establishing a cultivation framework that integrates "national strategy-industry demands-personal development," universities can create a series of cultivation resources such as the "Introduction to Career Development" course, "Practical Projects for Cultivating Sentiments of Serving the Border Regions," and the "Cross-Border Career Decision-Making Simulation" system. These resources aim to help students understand the empowering effects of national strategies on individual career development and guide them to align their personal aspirations for success with the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

4.2 Enriching Forms to Enhance Teaching Effectiveness

Firstly, actively utilize new media courses such as flipped classrooms, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), and micro-lectures to create distinctive teaching styles and innovative teaching forms. Taking flipped classrooms as an example, the learning process of ideological and political education within courses can be optimized through "time-space flipping"; a problem-oriented and student-centered ideological and political education community can be constructed through "role flipping"; and a comprehensive evaluation system comprising "process evaluation - developmental evaluation - value-added evaluation" can be established through "evaluation flipping" to better assess and consider the cultivation effects of education on the sense of the Chinese national community among students.

Secondly, ideological education cannot be separated from carriers[4]. The cultivation process of

the sense of the Chinese national community should emphasize the integration of on-campus and off-campus resources to create a teaching form that combines theory and practice. For instance, cooperation can be established with institutions such as ethnic museums and ethnic unity demonstration villages to set up practical teaching sites, where students can be organized for visits and discussions. Intangible cultural heritage inheritors from ethnic minorities can be hired as off-campus counselors. Support can be provided for students to carry out cultural inheritance activities through student organizations. Relevant scholars from neighboring countries and well-known social figures can be invited to deliver lectures on campus. Activities such as summer camps can be organized to facilitate mutual exchanges and learning between students from China and Southeast Asian countries. Additionally, public activities such as prize-winning essay contests, knowledge competitions, quiz games, and science popularization short video collections can be held through campus publicity platforms to further create an all-encompassing atmosphere for cultivating the sense of the Chinese national community that integrates ideology, sociality, and practicality.

4.3 Deepening Technological Empowerment in Cultivation Methods

Firstly, comprehensive technological means can be employed to enhance the learning experience. In the context of the new era, the waves of educational informatization, ubiquitous education, and interactive education are surging forward. The favorable development trend of educational technology provides a broader platform for the development of education on the Chinese national community. Universities should focus on further integrating educational resources from multiple platforms and channels, and strive to create a three-dimensional cultivation model of "technological empowerment - scenario reconstruction - experience upgrading." For instance, leveraging technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality, teaching scenarios can be constructed to simulate real-life situations of education on the community of the Chinese nation. By seamlessly connecting physical and digital spaces, a smart learning ecosystem that coordinates "humans - machines - environments" can be established. This promotes the education on the sense of the community of the Chinese nation to present a new landscape of intelligence, immersion, and ubiquity, thereby further enhancing cultivation effectiveness.

Secondly, technological means can be integrated throughout the entire learning process, including before, during, and after class. Before class, technologies such as AI and big data can be utilized to conduct precise analyses of students' learning backgrounds, abilities, and creditworthiness, thereby creating accurate "learner profiles." Based on students' different characteristics and learning abilities, learning resources can be precisely tailored and delivered, helping to achieve targeted learning and improve learning outcomes. During class, visual means such as "real-time teaching effectiveness monitoring dashboards" can be established to visually present and analyze students' completion rates and participation levels. Additionally, an "online learning early warning system" can be developed to provide timely after-class interventions for students who are "falling behind" during the learning process.

4.4 Highlighting Characteristics and Jointly Building Cultivation Resources

Firstly, in the process of constructing cultivation resources, it is essential to base on reality and highlight distinctive features. On one hand, Yunnan's rich ethnic cultural resources and unique geographical advantages provide exceptional conditions for cultivating the sense of the Chinese national community. Universities in Yunnan should deeply explore historical resources of interactions, exchanges, and integrations among various ethnic groups in Yunnan. For instance, they can compile stories of ethnic unity along the Ancient Tea Horse Road and transform them into vivid educational materials. On the other hand, over the past decade since the implementation of the "Belt and Road"

Initiative, numerous inspiring cases have emerged among different ethnic groups that are worth learning from and emulating. Universities should adeptly tap into educational resources related to the sense of the Chinese national community from the perspectives of the "Belt and Road" Initiative and Yunnan's provincial conditions to enrich the resource pool for cultivating the sense of the Chinese national community in Yunnan, effectively enhancing the pertinence and effectiveness of education.

Secondly, the construction of educational resources should emphasize the exploration of excellent cultural resources from neighboring countries along the route. For example, universities can collaborate with higher education institutions and research organizations in South and Southeast Asian countries to collect cultural resources such as languages, arts, cultural festivals, and traditional crafts from countries along the "Belt and Road" and establish a multilingual "Digital Resource Library of Ethnic Cultures along the Belt and Road." By drawing on the strengths and discarding the weaknesses, the "Belt and Road" Initiative can serve as a bridge to connect the "Chinese National Community" with the "Global Community of Shared Future," promoting mutual appreciation and understanding among different ethnic civilizations worldwide and driving the common prosperity and development of global cultures. During the process of resource construction, universities can also enhance the quality of digital educational resources through institutional collaborations, such as jointly developing a "Digital Resource Package for Community Consciousness Education." Additionally, they can follow the example of the "Youth Learning Platform" and collaboratively establish an educational website titled "Strengthening the Sense of the Chinese National Community," where each university contributes a set of learning topics for students to regularly engage with.

5. Conclusion

Fostering a strong sense of community among the Chinese nation is the core task of Yunnan's universities, given their location in the border regions and their mission to cultivate virtue and nurture talent. Against the backdrop of the ongoing advancement of the "Belt and Road" initiative, Yunnan's universities have developed a distinctive educational model that integrates both traditional and innovative teaching methods, thereby establishing a unique system for nurturing students. In the future, it will be essential to continuously update the content of these educational programs, innovate teaching methods, leverage technological advancements, and integrate specialized resources. Only by doing so can we help young students internalize this sense of community and translate it into practical actions, thereby contributing their youthful energy to the development of the border regions and the rejuvenation of the nation.

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