

# Research on the Synergistic Practice of Consolidating the Awareness of the Chinese Nation Community and the Dynamic Inheritance of Intangible Cultural Heritage among Cross-border Ethnic Groups in Yunnan

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**Abstract:** The intangible cultural heritage of cross-border ethnic groups in Yunnan is rich and diverse, drawing on the strengths of various cultures. Its uniqueness forms a solid foundation for cultural border defense and plays an irreplaceable role in the identity recognition of cross-border ethnic groups. This paper studies and analyzes the coupling logic between the forging of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community and the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage among cross-border ethnic groups in Yunnan. It deeply examines typical cases such as the Water-Splashing Festival of the Dai people, the Hani Rice Terraces, and the Mawnong Zongge of the Jingpo people, and proposes multi-dimensional collaborative paths of "ethnic memory, co-construction and sharing, and value recognition", multi-field collaborative paths of "education, technology, and industry", and multi-level collaborative paths of "micro, meso, and macro", providing theoretical references and practical inspirations for the cultural inheritance and ethnic unity and progress in border ethnic areas in the new era.

**Keywords:** Strengthening the awareness of the Chinese nation as a community; intangible cultural heritage; cross-border ethnic groups; living transmission; collaborative path

## 1. Introduction

The Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China proposed to stimulate the cultural innovation and creativity of the entire nation and to promote the prosperity of socialist culture, thus pointing out the direction for the protection of intangible cultural heritage<sup>[1]</sup>. Intangible cultural heritage, as an important part of Chinese excellent traditional culture, has profound significance for preserving historical heritage, strengthening cultural confidence, promoting cultural exchanges and mutual learning, and building a socialist cultural power. It is an important bond for consolidating the sense of community among the Chinese nation<sup>[2]</sup>. Yunnan is located in the southwestern border area and is adjacent to Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar. Its 4,060-kilometer border line connects 16 ethnic groups crossing borders, including the Dai, Jingpo, Lisu, Lahu, Wa, Hani, Brown, Achang, Nu, Dulong, Miao, Yao, Zhuang, Buyi, Yi, Hui, and Hui. The total population exceeds 12 million (Table 1). Yunnan possesses rich and distinctive ethnic intangible cultural heritage resources, accounting for 46% of the total intangible cultural heritage in Yunnan Province. These resources form a profound foundation for cultural border control and play an irreplaceable role in the identity recognition of cross-border ethnic groups, promoting their collaboration, and having special research value in strengthening the sense of community among the Chinese nation in border areas.

*Table 1 Distribution and Population Statistics of Ethnic Groups Crossing the Border in Yunnan*

Ethnic	Main Distribution Areas in Yunnan	Data from the Seventh National Population Census (in ten thousand)
Dai	Xishuangbanna, Dehong, Gengma, Menglian, Pu'er, Lincang	125.9
Hani	Honghe, Pu'er, Xishuangbanna, Yuxi, Mojiang, Jiangcheng	163.3
Jingpo	Dehong (Yingjiang, Longchuan, Ruili, etc.), Nujiang, Lincang	16.3
Lisu	Nujiang, Diqing, Lijiang, Baoshan, Dehong, Lincang, Pu'er	66.8
Lahu	Lancang, Menglian, Lincang, Gengma, Pu'er, Xishuangbanna	47.5
Wa	Cangyuan, Ximeng, Menglian, Lancang, Gengma, Yongde, Zhenkang	40.9
Bulang	Menghai, Lancang, Shuangjiang, Yongde, Zhenkang, Yunxian	12
De'ang	Dehong, Baoshan, Lincang	2.2
A chang	Dehong (Longchuan, Lianghe), Baoshan, Tengchong	4.4
Nu	Gongshan, Fugong, Lushui, Lanping in Nujiang	3.6
Delong	Gongshan in Nujiang	0.7
Yi	Chuxiong, Honghe, Wenshan, Pu'er, Dali, Kunming, Qujing	507.1
Zhuang	Wenshan (Guangnan, Funing, Qiubei, etc.), Honghe, Qujing	121
Buyi	Luoping, Shizong, Fuyuan, Wenshan, Honghe	4.2
Miao	Wenshan, Honghe, Zhaotong, Qujing, Kunming, Chuxiong, Pu'er	125.3
Yao	Hekou, Jinping, Malipo, Funing, Mengla, Honghe	20.1

## 2. Coupling Logic of Consolidating the Sense of Community of the Chinese Nation with the Dynamic Inheritance of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Firstly, from a value perspective, the two share a consistent goal. The objective of cultivating a strong sense of the Chinese nation as a community is to enhance the recognition of the great motherland, the Chinese nation, Chinese culture, the Communist Party of China, and socialism with Chinese characteristics among all ethnic groups<sup>[3]</sup>. Meanwhile, the goal of the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage is to protect and pass on the outstanding traditional cultures of all ethnic groups. Fundamentally, the core aim of both is to maintain national unity, promote ethnic harmony, and achieve cultural prosperity<sup>[4]</sup>. This consistency in goals determines that the two can form a value consensus and achieve resonance.

Secondly, from a functional perspective, the two exhibit structural complementarity. The strengthening of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community places emphasis on political identity and national construction, whereas the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage focuses on cultural protection and social cohesion<sup>[5]</sup>. The former offers direction and institutional guarantees for the latter, while the latter provides cultural nourishment and emotional support for the former. Their functions are complementary and jointly contribute to the development and stability of ethnic regions.

Thirdly, from a process perspective, the two demonstrate dynamic synergy. Both the strengthening of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community and the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage are long-term historical processes that require synergy in dynamic development. As the economy and society progress, the survival environment of intangible cultural heritage is constantly evolving, and the means and methods of strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community also need to be innovated. The two need to continuously adjust in practice and form a

positive interaction. For instance, in the digital age, it is essential to use digital technology to protect and inherit intangible cultural heritage and also to promote Chinese culture through digital platforms to enhance national identity.

Finally, from the perspective of the main body, both involve multi - participation. Forging a strong sense of the Chinese nation as a community and ensuring the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) demand the joint participation of multiple subjects, including the government, the market, society, and the public. The government takes the lead by formulating policies, providing funds, and establishing platforms; the market functions in resource allocation, promoting the industrial development of ICH; society plays a coordinating role by organizing various inheritance activities; and the public serves as the principal, being both inheritors and beneficiaries. The collaborative participation of multiple subjects has established a pattern in which the government guides, society participates, the market allocates resources, and the public benefits.

### **3. Case Studies on the Synergistic Practice of Strengthening the Awareness of the Chinese Nation Community and the Dynamic Inheritance of Intangible Cultural Heritage among Cross-border Ethnic Groups in Yunnan**

#### ***3.1 Joint Construction of Festivals and the Shaping of Shared Cultural Memory of the Chinese Nation***

Traditional festivals serve as significant markers of a nation's culture and effective carriers for forging a strong sense of the Chinese nation as a community with a shared future. They are also important symbols of a nation's culture and effective vehicles for fostering a strong sense of community within the Chinese nation. The traditional festivals of cross - border ethnic groups in Yunnan are distinguished by strong participation, a sense of ritual, and rich cultural connotations. Through the joint celebration of festivals, a shared cultural memory of the Chinese nation can be cultivated. For example, the Water - Splashing Festival of the Dai people is the most important traditional festival of the Dai ethnic group and one of the most influential festivals among cross - border ethnic groups in Yunnan. The Water - Splashing Festival originated from the Buddha - bathing ceremony in the Brahmanism of India and was introduced to the Dai region with the spread of Theravada Buddhism. After a long - term development and evolution, it has become a comprehensive festival that integrates religious sacrifices, folk activities, and artistic performances. In 2006, the Water - Splashing Festival of the Dai people was included in the first batch of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List. In recent years, Yunnan Province has carried out creative transformation and innovative development of the Water - Splashing Festival, turning it from a single - ethnic festival into a Chinese cultural festival shared by multiple ethnic groups.

During the Water - Splashing Festival in the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, a variety of activities, including dragon boat races, high - rocket launches, market fairs, and water - splashing revelries, are organized. These activities attract the participation of people from neighboring ethnic groups, such as the Han, Hani, Bulang, and Lahu. The prefectural government has further integrated the Water - Splashing Festival with the development of the tourism industry, successfully creating a well - known "Water - Splashing Festival" cultural tourism brand. This brand attracts more than a million domestic and foreign tourists annually. The cultural connotation of the Water - Splashing Festival has been re - interpreted. Traditional ceremonies like bathing the Buddha and sprinkling water for blessings now carry the meaning of "washing away the old and welcoming the new", which is in line with the Chinese nation's cultural tradition of bidding farewell to the old and ushering in the new. The "water" culture in the Water - Splashing Festival is interpreted as the philosophical wisdom of the Chinese nation, emphasizing that water is the supreme good and can embrace all things. Through the joint celebration, construction, and sharing of the festival, the Dai people's sense of national identity and identification with the Chinese nation have been strengthened. In the border areas between China and Myanmar, the Water - Splashing Festival also serves to promote cross - border ethnic cultural exchanges and maintain border stability.

#### ***3.2 The Construction of a Community of Intangible Cultural Heritage Skills and Ethnic Economic Development***

The intangible cultural heritage of traditional craftsmanship represents a significant livelihood means for cross - border ethnic groups. By promoting industrial development, a community for ethnic

economic development can be established, thereby attaining a win - win situation for cultural inheritance and economic growth. For example, the Hani Rice Terraces, which combine the status of World Cultural Heritage, Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System, and World Heritage Irrigation Structures, stand as a model for the protection of the intangible cultural heritage of cross - border ethnic groups in Yunnan. The Hani Rice Terraces are a remarkable achievement of agricultural civilization crafted by the Hani people over thousands of years. They cover an area of approximately 66,700 hectares and are distributed across four counties in Honghe Prefecture, namely Yuanyang, Honghe, Jinping, and Lüchun. In 2013, the Honghe Hani Rice Terraces were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, becoming China's 45th World Heritage Site. The Hani Rice Terraces are not only a spectacular natural landscape but also an ecological cultural system characterized by the "harmonious coexistence of four elements" of forests, villages, terraces, and water systems, along with rich intangible cultural heritage including Hani agricultural techniques, festival customs, and religious beliefs.

During the process of protection and inheritance, Honghe Prefecture has explored a path of coordinated development of the "Three Heritages". First, a cross - departmental coordination mechanism was established to integrate the functions of culture, agriculture, tourism, and environmental protection, thereby forming a joint force for protection. Second, the "rice - fish - duck" integrated farming model was implemented. This model not only maintained traditional farming methods but also increased economic benefits and farmers' income. Third, tourism related to terraced fields was developed. Products such as Hani terraced field sightseeing, agricultural experience, and homestay services were introduced, enabling villagers to benefit from the protection efforts. Finally, a mechanism for inheriting intangible cultural heritage was established to cultivate inheritors of terraced field farming techniques, ensuring the inter - generational transmission of traditional knowledge. The coordinated development model of the "Three Heritages" has achieved remarkable results. On one hand, the Hani terraced fields have been effectively protected, the ecological environment has continuously improved, and traditional farming culture has been passed down. On the other hand, the income of local people has significantly increased, leading to poverty alleviation and prosperity. More importantly, the Hani terraced fields have become an important window to showcase the charm of Chinese culture, which enhances the cultural confidence and national identity of all ethnic groups. The successful practice of the Hani terraced fields demonstrates that the protection of intangible cultural heritage, economic development, and ecological protection can mutually promote each other and jointly contribute to the construction of the Chinese nation community.

### ***3.3 Traditional Song and Dance Transmission and Cultivation of the Emotion of Identification with the Chinese Nation***

Traditional songs and dances serve as crucial means for cross - border ethnic groups to convey their emotions. Through the activities of inheritance and learning, the sense of identification with the Chinese nation can be cultivated, and the national cohesion can be strengthened. For example, the Jingpo people's Muna Zongge, which means "everyone dances", is the most magnificent traditional festival of the Jingpo people. It is a collective ritual activity where the Jingpo people worship their ancestors, ward off evil spirits, pray for blessings, and celebrate the harvest. Muna Zongge is well - known for its large - scale grandeur, solemn ceremony, and high - level participation. It is praised as the "Dance of Heaven" and the "Dance of Ten Thousand People". In 2006, the Jingpo people's Muna Zongge was listed in the first batch of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

Longchuan County in Dehong Prefecture stands as the primary area where the Munaongzongge dance is passed down. On the 15th day of the first lunar month each year, the Jingpo people, attired in their festive finery, dance along the ancestral migration route under the guidance of the Naoshuang (the leading dancer), presenting a grand and spectacular scene. In recent years, the Munaongzongge dance has gone beyond the boundaries of a single ethnic group and evolved into a cultural event involving multiple ethnic groups. Dehong Prefecture has transformed the Munaongzongge dance into a cultural tourism brand and hosts the International Munaongzongge Festival, drawing both domestic and international tourists as well as people from neighboring ethnic groups to take part. The Munaongzongge dance possesses unique value in cultivating a sense of the Chinese nation as a community. Firstly, the collective characteristic of the Munaongzongge dance reinforces the collective identity of the participants. With tens of thousands of people dancing in unison to the same rhythm and steps, individuals merge into the collective, generating a strong sense of belonging and cohesion. Secondly, the ritualistic implications of the Munaongzongge dance heighten cultural identity. Elements such as ancestor worship, migration memory, and reverence for nature in the dance lie at the core of

Jingpo cultural identity and also symbolize the diversity of Chinese culture. Thirdly, the openness of the Munaongzongge dance facilitates ethnic interaction. The involvement of multiple ethnic groups in the Munaongzongge dance eliminates ethnic barriers, deepens mutual understanding, and forms a sense of community where "you are in me and I am in you."

#### **4. Synergistic Pathways for Strengthening the Awareness of the Chinese Nation as a Community and the Dynamic Inheritance of Intangible Cultural Heritage among Cross-border Ethnic Groups in Yunnan**

Based on the above analysis and in light of the actual situation of cross-border ethnic groups in Yunnan, this study proposes multi-dimensional, multi-field, and multi-level synergistic pathways for strengthening the awareness of the Chinese nation as a community and the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

##### ***4.1 A multi-dimensional collaborative path that integrates ethnic memory, shared construction and sharing, and value recognition***

First, delve into ethnic memories and strengthen cultural roots. Ethnic memory serves as the cornerstone of national identity and the starting point for cultivating a strong sense of the Chinese nation community. It is essential to thoroughly explore the historical memories, cultural symbols, and value concepts embedded in the intangible cultural heritage of cross-border ethnic groups, sort out the historical context of exchanges and integration among different ethnic groups, and construct a shared historical narrative. Specifically, efforts should be made to collect and organize the oral history, ancient books and documents, and traditional skills of cross-border ethnic groups, and establish an archive database for intangible cultural heritage; conduct research on the origins of cross-border ethnic groups to clarify the historical links between each ethnic group and the Chinese nation; and explore the elements of the sense of the Chinese nation community within intangible cultural heritage projects, such as the historical stories of various ethnic groups jointly resisting foreign aggression and jointly developing and building border areas. Through the exploration and organization of ethnic memories, cross-border ethnic groups can recognize the origin relationship between their own culture and Chinese culture, thereby enhancing cultural identity.

Second, promote co-construction and sharing to build an interwoven pattern. Co-construction and sharing are crucial links in forging a strong sense of the Chinese nation as a community and an important means to ensure the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). We should break down ethnic barriers and encourage all ethnic groups to jointly participate in and benefit from ICH protection and inheritance. This can be accomplished by establishing a multi-ethnic joint application mechanism for ICH, encouraging ICH projects with shared characteristics to apply jointly; organizing cultural festivals and events with multi-ethnic participation, such as multi-ethnic gatherings and ICH performances; promoting the cross-ethnic dissemination of ICH skills and encouraging people of different ethnic groups to learn the traditional skills of other ethnic groups; and establishing a multi-ethnic cooperation mechanism for ICH protection to jointly conduct research, protection, and inheritance work. Through co-construction and sharing, we can form a cultural interwoven pattern where "you are in me and I am in you", strengthening the emotional connections among all ethnic groups.

Third, achieve value recognition and strengthen the sense of community. Value recognition serves as the core for strengthening the sense of community of the Chinese nation and is also the ultimate objective of the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. Based on ethnic memory, co-construction, and sharing, guide cross-border ethnic groups to elevate their ethnic identity to the identity of the Chinese nation and their cultural identity to the identity of Chinese culture. Incorporate the content of the sense of community of the Chinese nation into intangible cultural heritage education, enabling inheritors to recognize that inheriting intangible cultural heritage is not merely about inheriting ethnic culture but also about inheriting Chinese culture. In the dissemination of intangible cultural heritage, emphasize the integrity of Chinese culture, highlighting the commonalities and complementarities of the cultures of all ethnic groups. In the innovation of intangible cultural heritage, reflect the spirit of the times, integrate the core socialist values into the creation of intangible cultural heritage, and endow traditional skills with new contemporary connotations. Through the cultivation of value recognition, ultimately attain the goal of strengthening the sense of community of the Chinese nation.

#### ***4.2 A multi-domain collaborative path covering education, technology and industry***

First, in the field of education, a system for the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage through education should be established. Education is a fundamental project for cultural inheritance and an important means to enhance the awareness of the Chinese nation as a community with a shared future. A comprehensive system for the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage through education, which combines schools, society, and families, should be established. In school education, intangible cultural heritage should be integrated into the national education system. Local teaching materials on the intangible cultural heritage of cross - border ethnic groups should be compiled, and intangible cultural heritage should be introduced into schools to enable young people to understand the excellent traditional cultures of their own and other ethnic groups. In social education, intangible cultural heritage learning centers and experience centers should be set up, and training and experience activities on intangible cultural heritage for the public should be organized. In family education, families should be encouraged to pass on traditional skills and cultivate the reserve force for the inheritance of intangible cultural heritage. Meanwhile, ethnic unity education should be incorporated into intangible cultural heritage education, so that those being educated can strengthen their awareness of the Chinese nation as a community with a shared future while learning skills.

Second, within the realm of technology, we ought to promote the digital protection of intangible cultural heritage. Digital technology offers novel means for the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage and also broadens new channels for fostering a strong sense of community among the Chinese nation. We should expedite the digital collection, storage, dissemination, and application of the intangible cultural heritage of cross - border ethnic groups. Specifically, this encompasses: establishing a digital resource library for the intangible cultural heritage of cross - border ethnic groups in Yunnan, systematically documenting and digitally preserving intangible cultural heritage projects; developing immersive intangible cultural heritage experience projects by leveraging virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies; disseminating intangible cultural heritage content via online platforms to enhance the reach and influence of Chinese culture; and utilizing artificial intelligence technology to support intangible cultural heritage research and innovation, such as pattern recognition and skill simulation.

Third, within the industrial sector, it is essential to achieve the creative transformation of intangible cultural heritage. Industrialized development serves as a crucial pathway for the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage and is also a significant measure to promote economic development in ethnic regions and strengthen the material foundation of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community. It is necessary to facilitate the in - depth integration of intangible cultural heritage with tourism, cultural and creative industries, and rural revitalization<sup>[6]</sup>. Specific measures are as follows: developing intangible cultural heritage tourism and creating tourism products such as intangible cultural heritage experiences and intangible cultural heritage study tours; promoting the development of intangible cultural heritage - related cultural and creative products by combining traditional techniques with modern design to develop market - competitive cultural and creative products; implementing the "intangible cultural heritage + rural revitalization" strategy, establishing intangible cultural heritage workshops, and enabling rural residents to increase their income and achieve prosperity through traditional techniques; cultivating intangible cultural heritage brands and creating intangible cultural heritage IPs with Yunnan characteristics. Through industrialized development, intangible cultural heritage can be integrated into modern life, enhancing its inheritance vitality, while simultaneously promoting economic and social development in ethnic regions and strengthening the material foundation of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community.

#### ***4.3 A multi-level coordinated path that takes into account micro, meso and macro perspectives***

First, at the micro - level, it is necessary to stimulate the vitality of individual inheritance. Inheritors are the core subjects of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) inheritance and also the micro - foundation for forging a strong sense of community among the Chinese nation. It is essential to refine the system for identifying inheritors, expand the ranks of inheritors, particularly by cultivating young inheritors. Moreover, it is crucial to enhance the treatment of inheritors, establish a subsidy system for them, and improve their living conditions. Additionally, efforts should be made to boost the capabilities of inheritors through skills training and theoretical learning, and strengthen their cultural confidence and inheritance abilities. Furthermore, it is important to leverage the exemplary role of inheritors, influencing and leading the surrounding people through their words and deeds. Meanwhile, it is necessary to guide inheritors to establish a correct view of the country and the nation, recognizing that

inheriting ICH is not only a personal endeavor but also a part of national cultural construction, thus enhancing their sense of responsibility and mission.

Second, at the meso - level, the protective function of communities ought to be enhanced. Communities serve as the crucial foundation for the survival of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and are the fundamental units for cultivating a strong sense of the Chinese nation as a community. The leading role of villages and communities in ICH protection needs to be fully utilized, and a community - based ICH protection mechanism should be set up<sup>[7]</sup>. The cultural ecology that ICH relies on for its survival must be safeguarded, and the overall appearance of traditional villages and streets should be preserved. Community cultural activities, like traditional festivals and folk activities, should be organized to boost community cohesion. Ethnic unity within communities should be promoted, and a multi - ethnic interwoven community structure should be established. Through community protection, ICH can be reintegrated into daily life, and the sense of the Chinese nation as a community can be deeply rooted at the grassroots level.

Third, at the macro level, improve the institutional guarantee system. The system is the long - term and fundamental guarantee. It is necessary to improve the legal and regulatory system, clarify the special policies for the protection of cross - border ethnic intangible cultural heritage. It is also necessary to establish a cross - departmental coordination mechanism, integrate the resources of departments such as culture, ethnic and religious affairs, education, and tourism to form a working synergy. Additionally, it is essential to increase financial input, set up special funds for the protection of cross - border ethnic intangible cultural heritage, and support key project construction. Moreover, it is required to establish a cross - border cooperation mechanism, carry out intangible cultural heritage protection cooperation with neighboring countries, and jointly protect cross - border shared intangible cultural heritage projects. Finally, it is necessary to incorporate intangible cultural heritage protection into the overall plan for economic and social development, and combine it with major strategies such as rural revitalization, enriching border areas and the people, and creating ethnic unity and progress. Through system guarantees, a solid foundation is provided for the coordinated advancement of the consolidation of the consciousness of the Chinese nation as a community and the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage.

## 5. Conclusion

The collaborative practice of cultivating a strong sense of the Chinese nation community and the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage among cross - border ethnic groups in Yunnan is a crucial part of ethnic work in the new era and an indispensable aspect of building a culturally strong country. By thoroughly analyzing the coupling logic between the two and summarizing the practical explorations in Yunnan, a multi - dimensional, multi - field, and multi - level collaborative pathway can be established, which can offer valuable references for cultural inheritance and the cause of ethnic unity and progress in border ethnic areas. We should adhere to the concept of prioritizing protection, safeguarding the entirety, and considering people, objects, and life, so as to maintain the authenticity and integrity of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). We should insist on creative transformation and innovative development to promote the integration of ICH into modern life. We should focus on the people to ensure that the achievements of ICH protection benefit all ethnic groups. We should promote exchanges and mutual learning to make the ICH of cross - border ethnic groups an important calling card for Chinese culture to go global. Through the in - depth integration of the dynamic inheritance of ICH and the enhancement of the awareness of the Chinese nation as a community, the cross - border ethnic groups in Yunnan will surely bloom more gloriously in the garden of Chinese culture and contribute the strength of border ethnic groups to realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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