



Cultural Confidence National Rejuvenation

Classic Edition

Chang Qiguang

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Contents

Section I.

<u>Overview of Essence of Chinese Culture</u>	<u>5</u>
I. Essence of 5000-year traditional Chinese culture: An Overview. .6	
II. Chinese Culture: A Great Culture of the World	12

Section II.

<u>“Xin–Dao–De–Shi” Methodology.</u>	<u>23</u>
I. Essence of the “Xin–Dao–De–Shi” Methodology	26
II. Wonders of the “Xin–Dao–De–Shi” Methodology.	44
III. The Practices of Brightening and Purifying Xin.	58
A. The Practice of Brightening Xin	61
1. The vital secret of life	65
2. The fundamental truth of life	79
B. The Practice of Purifying Xin.	111
1. Observation is the basis.	113
2. Self-reflection is the key.	115
3. Guidance is the essence.	119

Section III.

A Higher, Nobler Success 125

I. For Entrepreneurs to Build Lasting Businesses128

II. For Couples to Build a Happy Marriage and Family Life138

III. For the Youth to Pursue a Brighter Future146

IV. For the Elderly to Attain a Fulfilling Retirement152

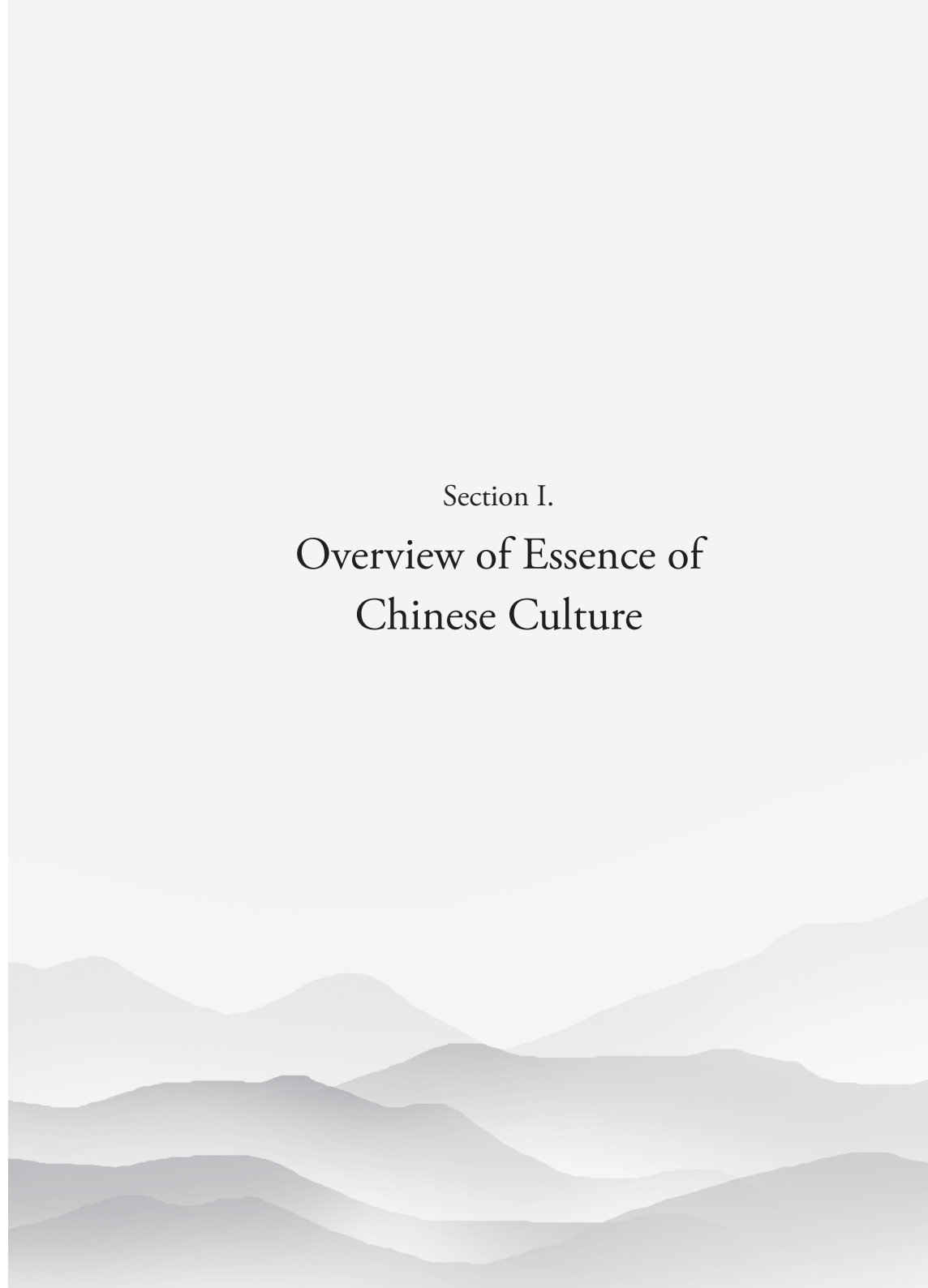
Section IV.

National Rejuvenation and a Community of Shared Future
for Mankind 159

I. The Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation160

II. A Community of Shared Future for Mankind165

Section I.
Overview of Essence of
Chinese Culture



I.

Essence of 5000-year traditional Chinese culture: An Overview

The Chinese people have a time-honored culture. From its mystical ancestors revered as the “sovereigns and emperors”, Chinese history evolved through slave-owning and feudal dynasties (21st century B.C. to 1911) all the way to the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Traditional Chinese culture has traversed over five thousand years, like a river flowing from time immemorial through the present, without ever stopping in its course.

Fuxi, revered as the first of the Three Sovereigns, lived around 8,000 years ago. He is esteemed as the founder of Chinese civilization and is credited with various achievements. Fuxi is widely regarded as the creator of the ancient Chinese script, the

mastermind behind the eight trigrams that became the building blocks of one of the oldest Chinese classics, the *I-Ching* (*The Book of Changes*), the unifier of the ancient Chinese tribes, and a trailblazer of prehistoric Chinese civilization. The subsequent sage rulers, Huangdi (known as the Yellow Emperor) and Yandi (the Fiery Emperor), ruled together, advancing inventions, setting ethical rules, introducing the calendar, creating the traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), and establishing the institutional governance system, thus giving shape to Chinese culture.

Yao, Shun, and Yu, the three sagely kings, summarized the early major achievements of traditional Chinese culture in their “Methodology of Xin.” It teaches that “the Xin (heart-mind) of man is restless and perilous, while the righteous Way is subtle and profound. Being discriminating and concentrated is required for sincerely holding fast to the Mean.” The *Shangshu* (*Classics of History*) records an episode during the meritocratic reign of the three sagely kings when Yao abdicated the throne to Shun (and Shun subsequently to Yu) upon realizing that Shun was the most able ruler. It also includes stories of the Duke of Zhou, renowned for his capable and loyal regency for his young nephew King Cheng. This unparalleled literary masterpiece unveils a magnificent chapter of traditional Chinese culture.

The profound dialectical thoughts of Chinese culture were fully elucidated in the hexagrams and texts of the *I-Ching*, which were contributed by Fuxi, King Wen, and Confucius in succession across several millennia. It contains great aphorisms such as “As

heaven maintains vigor through movements, the Worthy should constantly strive for self-perfection; as earth's condition is receptive devotion, the Worthy should hold the outer world with a broad mind" and "If acts of goodness were not accumulated, one's name could not be established. If acts of evil were not accumulated, one's life could not be destroyed. To someone with a negative Xin, a minor good deed that cannot bring him any recognition is not worthy of his effort; a minor bad deed that cannot bring him much harm is not worthy of correction. Hence, his wickedness grows until it cannot be concealed, and his guilt grows until it cannot be pardoned."

The Yellow Emperor's Cannon of Medicine laid the medical foundation of physiology, pathology, diagnosis, and treatment, commencing the glorious journey of TCM. The founder of Daoism, Laozi, revealed in his masterpiece *Tao Te Ching* that "Free from desire, one can see the Secret of Life. Caught in desire, one can only see its manifestations. Yet the Secret and its manifestations arise from the same source. This source is called the Cosmic Mystery. Reaching from the Mystery into the Deeper Mystery is the Gate to the Secret of All Life" and "To return to their destiny is to find the eternal law, to know the eternal law is enlightenment. Not knowing the eternal law leads to disaster." These precepts have remained enduring, far-reaching, and timeless for over 2,600 years.

The Daoism master Zhuangzi carried forward and promoted the thought of Laozi, advocating the unity of man and nature

through profound discourse, such as "If a mirror is bright, dust cannot settle on it; if dust does settle, the mirror is not bright. If you associate long with virtuous men, you shall have no flaw" and "Let love embrace all things; Heaven and Earth are a single body."

Confucius expounded various philosophies on life and society, and made great achievements with profound and far-reaching impact, such as "A man who understands the Dao in the morning may die with content in the evening" and "If a Worthy person is not grave, he will not call forth any veneration. If he studies, he will not be stubborn. Hold loyalty and integrity as first principles. Have no friends who are not of equal (moral) caliber. When he has faults, he does not fear to mend his ways."

Mencius carried forward and promoted Confucian thought through his various discourses, advocating equal emphasis on benevolence and righteousness and benefiting the world. As Mencius said, "He who has Dao attracts much support. He who loses the Dao finds little support. When the support for him plummets to the lowest point, even his own family will turn against him; when the support for him peaks, the entire country will submit to him" and "Sincerity is the Way of Heaven and aspiring to sincerity is the Way of Man."

Master Wang Yangming created Yangming's Philosophy of Xin (heart-mind) after an enlightenment experience in Longchang. The philosophy promotes ideas such as "The unity of knowledge and action" and "Oneness with everyone and everything under heaven." In addition to Yangming's Philosophy

of Xin (heart-mind), the wisdom of Fuxi and the Yellow Emperor, Emperor Yao and Emperor Shun's Methodology of Xin, the Dao of Laozi and Zhuangzi, and the thought of Confucius and Mencius are the crystallization of traditional Chinese culture, representing the spiritual fruits developed by the Chinese sages through practice.

Traditional Chinese culture is the product of over five thousand years of consolidation and evolution of the legacy of sages and philosophers, and of the confluence and exchanges between the cultures of different ethnicities. As it creates, passes on, and builds on the best in its own culture, the Chinese nation has also been avid learners of the best of other cultures, such as the ancient Indian Buddhist culture, advanced philosophy, and cutting-edge science. Hence, traditional Chinese culture, as inclusive and vibrant as it is unique, is a source of confidence and a spiritual bloodline that runs through each and every Chinese person. Traditional Chinese culture has developed fertile ground for cultivating the Dutiful, the Capable, the Worthy, the Virtuous, and the Sagely, endowing the Chinese nation with a strong and everlasting power. This power is deeply rooted in the cohesion, creativity, and vitality of the Chinese nation.

Throughout the ages, Chinese sages have taken it as their life purpose to explore the truth of the universe and life and develop inner treasures, with their sacred mission "to embody the will of Heaven and Earth, to reveal life's purpose for the people, to carry on the lost teachings for past sages, and to create peace for

generations to come."

Throughout the ages, great Chinese minds have succeeded in making manifest their noble virtues, remarkable talents, and bold vision in state governance, with their noble belief in love for all people and things in the world and harmony among all nations.

The fine traditional Chinese culture is an integral part of Chinese culture. Every son and daughter of the Chinese nation is nurtured by this culture even before taking their first step or uttering their first word. As they grow into responsible members of society, they continue to draw strength from their culture. By applying the wise teachings of Chinese culture, they go on to achieve great things. Having immersed themselves in this culture throughout their lifetime, they believe in it, live by its lessons, share it with others, and contribute to its further development through their own creativity.

Section II.

“Xin–Dao–De–Shi”

Methodology



What is the root cause for differences in quality of life? What is the fountain that inspires meaning in life? What drives one's success to a higher level? All these fundamental questions can find their answers in Xin (heart-mind), as whatever happens in life is a projection and manifestation of a person's inner character. The understanding, realization, and explanation of the wonders of Xin are often what make the profound wonder of Chinese culture.

The main intrinsic difference between people is their level of inner character. Generally, a person's Xin, Dao, De, Shi, quality of life, value of life, level of success, and so forth are all projections and manifestations of their inner character. In everyday society, inner character varies between people, as does their corresponding level of Xin, Dao, De, and Shi. Therefore, a person's quality of life, value of life, level of success, etc., are also different. This book collectively refers to a person's quality of life, value of life, success, and so forth, as their level of success.

This book examines the concept that inner character determines the level of Xin, Dao, De, Shi, and success. It explains the four aspects of the methodology: Xin, Dao, De, and Shi, and reveals the truth of life, including the vital secret, fundamental truth, foremost strategy, and greatest value of life. In addition, it illustrates how to build inner character and improve one's Xin, Dao, De, and Shi, so as to govern actions corresponding to higher levels of Xin, Dao, De, and Shi, which will be returned with the development of corresponding greater inner treasures. By doing so, one can achieve a better quality of life, enhanced value of life,

and greater success. Therefore, this book attempts to answer life questions such as the root cause for differences in quality of life, the source of increased meaning in life, and the driver to a higher level of success. This book collectively refers to a better quality of life, enhanced value of life, greater success, and so forth as achieving a higher level of success.

The vital secret of life is that Xin contains infinite treasures.

The fundamental truth of life is the law of action and reaction.

The foremost strategy of life is to build one's inner character.

The greatest value of life is to enable others to build their inner character.

I.

Essence of the “Xin–Dao–De–Shi” Methodology

Xin (heart-mind) is the source of Dao; Dao is the root of De; De is the origin of Shi. The depth of one’s De determines the quality and quantity of Shi.

Xin is the source of Dao, De, and Shi. Xin determines Dao, which determines De, which in turn determines Shi. Therefore, Xin is the ultimate determinant of Dao, De, and Shi. Conversely, Shi can affect De, which can affect Dao, which in turn can affect Xin. Therefore, Dao, De, and Shi can affect Xin.

What do Xin, Dao, De, and Shi really mean?

Xin dictates the body. Xin is reflected in intention and thoughts, which determine awareness, expression, and conduct,

which in turn determine Shi.

The quality of inner character varies from person to person, resulting in different qualities of Xin, Dao, De, and Shi. For ease of understanding, this book presents the qualities of the inner character and of Xin, Dao, De, and Shi at different levels. For example, the level of inner character is expressed with regard to that of the Sagely, the Worthy, the Mediocre, the Wicked, etc.; Xin, Dao, De, and Shi are explained in terms of Xin of the Virtuous, Xin of the Capable, Shi of the Petty, and Shi of the Wicked. Different levels of inner character correspond to different levels of Xin. In sum, there are generally ten levels of inner character and ten corresponding levels of Xin. The first five levels are Xin of those who generally serve as a force for good to themselves, others, and society at large. These refer to the five positive levels of Xin:

Xin of the Dutiful: down-to-earth, loyal, and responsible;

Xin of the Capable: moral, talented, and aspirational;

Xin of the Worthy: having ample virtue and constantly pursuing self-improvement;

Xin of the Virtuous: benefiting both self and others and caring for all under heaven;

Xin of the Sagely: selflessly loving and nourishing all under heaven.

Conversely, the other five levels are Xin of those who generally fail to be a force for good to themselves, others, and society at large. These are known as the five negative levels of Xin:

Xin of the Mediocre: indolent and muddling along in life;

Xin of the Petty: resentful, jealous, hypocritical, and unfaithful;

Xin of the Malicious: ignoble, mean, and bullying;

Xin of the Wicked: deceitful, shameless, and devilish;

Xin of the Sinful: lawless and committing all manner of crimes.

Each positive level of Xin can be further divided into three tiers, namely the lower, the middle, and the upper. Take the Xin of the Capable as an example. It can be divided into the lower tier, the middle tier, and the upper tier. This way, the five positive levels of Xin can effectively branch into fifteen different tiers. In fact, each of these tiers can be further divided into still more segments. Similarly, the five negative levels can also be divided. This complex and multi-level hierarchy of Xin is arranged based on the degree to which one's inner character is cultivated.

The level of a person's Xin is determined by his innate and acquired inner character. One can elevate his Xin to a higher level by developing, realizing, and eventually acquiring elevated inner character. A higher level of Xin is always within reach, but it requires effort and personal experience to validate it. Just as the Chinese proverb goes, "only by drinking the water can one know whether it is hot or cold." In people with negative Xin, ignorance and greed are more prevalent, leading them to make their own bed. However, by building inner character, they can gradually elevate the level of their Xin and ultimately realize positive Xin.

Dao is the combination of one's vision and morality. The source of Dao is Xin, while Dao is the reflection of Xin. Xin determines Dao. The level of one's Xin therefore determines the level of one's Dao, as well as the level of one's vision and morality.

The five positive levels of Xin manifest themselves as five positive levels of Dao, namely, the Dao of the Dutiful, the Capable, the Worthy, the Virtuous, and the Sagely. The same is true of the negative levels of Xin.

Dao encompasses vision and morality.

In terms of the individual elements of Dao, such as the vision, people with different levels of Dao understand and internalize the law of action and reaction differently. For example, the Dutiful is committed to the tenet of "no pains ('action'), no gains ('reaction')," whereas the Virtuous follows the maxim of "fear not reaping evil fruits ('action') but planting seeds of evil causes ('reaction')."

De is the wholesome or skillful application of Xin (hereinafter simply referred to as "application" or "skillful application"), while lack of De is the foolish or unwholesome application of Xin. The root of De is Dao, and De is the reflection of Dao. Dao determines De. To be specific, the level of Dao determines the level of De, and therefore one's vision and morality determine the depth of one's De.

The five positive levels of Xin manifest themselves as five positive levels of Dao, and in turn apply five positive levels of

Section III.

A Higher, Nobler Success



True success is following the Dao with sound inner character to achieve one's goals of benefiting oneself, others, and society at large, and to lead a joyful, peaceful, fulfilling, and enlightened life. By building inner character, elevating Xin, Dao, De, and Shi, and governing higher levels of actions, one can unlock higher-level inner treasures and achieve greater success.

With higher levels of inner character, one will have higher levels of Xin, Dao, De, and Shi, and govern corresponding higher-level actions. These actions, in turn, unlock treasures in higher-level Xin, Dao, De, and Shi. As a result, individuals gain a higher outlook on life, values, worldview, stronger cultural confidence, and ultimately, nobler success.

Building inner character not only has no negative impact on one's work, study, and life but also enables swift and sustainable elevation of one's Xin, Dao, De, Shi, and their respective elements. For instance, by building inner character, entrepreneurs can build lasting businesses, couples can create a happy marriage and family life, teenagers can unlock a brighter future, and the elderly can have a fulfilling retirement.

In fact, everyone is the "chairman" of their own life, responsible for planning, taking care of, managing, and building it. By building inner character, one can plan, take care of, manage, and build their life at a higher level and achieve nobler success. Whether they are individual business owners, corporate employees, or members of society, they can all refer to and adopt the methods outlined in chapters such as "For Entrepreneurs to

Build Lasting Businesses" to build their inner character while also constantly empowering others to do the same. By doing so, one can establish good connections with more people and make greater contributions to society, benefiting people's Xin. Life as such is meaningful, respectable, dignified, and noble. Those who do so will certainly enjoy better career prospects and make a bigger difference in life. It is all but natural that they will be trusted and loved by their superiors, parents, and spouse. Those who fail to do so, on the contrary, will win no one's trust and love.

I.

For Entrepreneurs to Build Lasting Businesses

Entrepreneurs are engines of economic growth, job creation, and social improvement. When entrepreneurs build their inner character, elevate their Xin, Dao, De, and Shi, and strengthen their cultural confidence, they can establish a higher-level corporate culture, forge higher-level entrepreneurship, and elevate their vision and morality that benefit society and serve the people, thereby achieving higher success. Entrepreneurs can benefit from embracing Chinese culture and leveraging their positive inner character to inspire and motivate their employees and customers. By doing so, they can create a ripple effect that extends beyond the workplace and positively impacts the families and friends of those they interact with. As a result, their businesses can not only

create high-quality products for the betterment of society but also become a trusted platform for the welfare of people. In this way, entrepreneurs can have a positive impact on an increasing number of people and establish heart-to-heart connections with them, laying a strong foundation for building a successful and enduring business that lasts for generations.

Businesses exist to meet customers' needs through the products or services they provide. Having said that, entrepreneurs may have different understandings of what customers truly need depending on their level of Xin, Dao, De, and Shi. In general, Dutiful entrepreneurs focus on meeting a specific, tangible need; Capable entrepreneurs seek to constantly innovate in their products and services to meet and anticipate the customers' material needs; Worthy entrepreneurs go beyond the customers' material needs by addressing some spiritual needs of both their customers and employees; Virtuous entrepreneurs create intangible value that promotes spiritual growth for their customers and employees alike in addition to meeting the customers' material needs; and Sagely entrepreneurs view their enterprise as a platform to enlighten and nurture, helping customers and employees consistently elevate their Xin, Dao, De, and Shi. This approach enables them to not only provide high-quality products and services to meet the customers' tangible needs but also to create greater intangible value that fulfills higher-level spiritual aspirations of their customers and employees.

In fact, when customers seek a product or service, they aren't merely looking to fulfill a specific, tangible need; they also seek to fulfill an emotional, if not spiritual, need. As entrepreneurs provide products and services, they have the opportunity to cultivate a corporate culture that enhances the levels of Xin, Dao, De, and Shi, thus delivering products with higher level of intangible value that meet people's spiritual needs. By building their own inner character as well as that of their employees and customers, entrepreneurs can contribute to a cause that benefits people's spiritual world. In doing so, entrepreneurs can establish strong connections with their employees and customers, like a thick book rather than a thin piece of paper, earning their trust, support, endorsement, and respect. As a result, they and their companies become integral parts of the lives of employees, customers, and society at large, laying a solid foundation for a business that can endure for generations.

Entrepreneurs who build their own inner character and help their customers and employees do the same ultimately empower more individuals to build their inner character. These entrepreneurs are often referred to as "3.0 Entrepreneurs."

Compared with entrepreneurs focusing on Shi, a 1.0 Entrepreneur focusing on De, a 2.0 Entrepreneur focusing on Dao, and a 3.0 Entrepreneur working on Xin, a 3.0 Entrepreneur can build a 3.0 Team, develop a 3.0 Strategy, and offer 3.0 Products. He not only addresses the specific, tangible needs of customers but also caters to their higher-level spiritual needs, as

well as the needs of employees, by helping them elevate their Xin, Dao, De, and Shi. In this way, Entrepreneurs can maximize the value they create for customers and employees, transforming their company into a 3.0 Company. Any 3.0 Entrepreneur can do their part to benefit people, regardless of whether they are Capable or simply Dutiful on the scale of personal spiritual development.

By continuously elevating their Xin, Dao, De, and Shi, entrepreneurs are better equipped to comprehend business value at a higher level. They can lead innovative business philosophies, elevate commercial value, and construct a brand new business civilization for mankind. While most companies focus on meeting their customers' material needs, an increasing number of 3.0 Entrepreneurs are building 3.0 Companies that create products with both tangible and intangible value. These products not only fulfill people's material aspirations but also cater to their spiritual pursuits. By doing so, these entrepreneurs can provide maximum value to their customers. Similarly, as employees and customers elevate their inner character and build positive, lasting, heart-to-heart connections with the entrepreneur, employees take ownership of their work, and customers become loyal patrons. Together, they form an inexhaustible drive for the sustainable development of the companies. Hence, by changing the way business is conducted, 3.0 Entrepreneurs are creating new business philosophies, elevating commercial value, building a brand new business civilization, and transforming companies into vehicles

Section IV.

National Rejuvenation and
a Community of Shared Future
for Mankind



I.

The Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation

Xin is the source of culture, and culture is the manifestation of Xin. The quality of one's inner character determines their level of Xin, Dao, De, and Shi. As the inner character of the Chinese nation becomes nobler, its Xin, Dao, De, and Shi ascend to greater heights. Consequently, its actions become more elevated, and it becomes increasingly adept at unlocking its inner treasures. With loftier values, life philosophies, and worldviews, the Chinese nation's cultural confidence strengthens. These, in turn, lead to a more robust civilization, a more flourishing culture, and a more splendid rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Chinese culture embodies a virtuous and enlightening

outlook on life, values, and worldview. It is a representation of Xin, inner treasures, and self-transcendence of the Chinese nation. The Chinese people should build their inner character, and continually improve their Xin, Dao, De, and Shi. This enables them to govern higher-level actions and unlock greater inner treasures. As a result, they will be able to continuously boost cultural confidence, showcase the charm of culture and civilization, better rise to the occasion and answer the call of the times. By doing so, they can make significant contributions to the realization of the Chinese nation's great rejuvenation.

The strength of a country lies in the strength of its nation, which is rooted in a strong culture that emanates from the heart of its people. If the Chinese people continue to elevate their Xin, Dao, De, and Shi, they can improve the overall quality of the Chinese nation, further promote integrity, strengthen the nation's perseverance, and uplift the national ethos. Therefore, no challenge will be insurmountable if the Chinese people unite in solidarity and work tenaciously toward the same goal. A great people with such confidence in their culture and identity will be unstoppable in their pursuit of national rejuvenation.

Throughout its over 5,000 years of history, the Chinese nation has created a splendid and enduring culture. Peace and commitment have always been ingrained in its spiritual DNA, contributing significantly to the progress of human civilization. In terms of innovation alone, China was home to 175 out of the

300 most important scientific inventions and discoveries before the 1500s, exceeding Europe by a long shot. Throughout history, China has never been an invader, not even when the mighty Middle Kingdom accounted for one-third of global output centuries ago.

Napoleon once saw China as a “sleeping lion.” Today, that lion is awake. Facts have fully proved that China has always brought peace, win-win situations, morality and justice, and light to the world. In the past, present, and future, China has played and will continue to play a role as a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development, and a defender of the international order.

Historian Arnold Toynbee once remarked that China is the most qualified and likely to create a new civilization for human society in the future. Chinese culture espouses ceaselessly pursuing self-improvement and embracing the world with virtue, values harmony, and seeks common ground while respecting differences. It emphasizes self-restraint, humility, and equal treatment of others, pursues independence and peaceful coexistence, and advocates world unity. These values represent the great cultural traditions of the Chinese nation. “Long Live the Great Unity of the World’s Peoples” is inscribed on a placard hanging on the Gate of Tiananmen since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. It reflects the shared aspirations of every Chinese person. For this reason, the Chinese

people will remain unwavering in their determination to achieve national rejuvenation and make new and greater contributions to safeguarding world peace, promoting the development of all countries, supporting multilateralism, innovating in international partnerships, and propelling humankind toward a brighter future.

The Chinese Dream is closely connected to the dreams of all peoples, and achieving this dream requires a peaceful international environment and a stable global order. Mutually beneficial development is essential for both China and the rest of the world. China can only thrive when the world prospers, and a thriving China will contribute to making the world a better place. China is moving toward achieving its dream of national rejuvenation for the benefit of not just itself but the many peoples of the world. It will undoubtedly make significant contributions to the progress of human civilization.

The national policy of Reform and Opening Up over the past four decades has brought about remarkable achievements, demonstrating the strength of Chinese culture. In particular, breakthroughs have been achieved in numerous sectors since the Eighteenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012, bringing about sweeping changes. Today, we are closer, more confident, and more capable than ever before of realizing the goal of national rejuvenation. However, the great cause of national rejuvenation will inevitably face many risks and challenges. Therefore, it is even more necessary for the Chinese people to elevate their Xin, Dao, De, and Shi, continuously



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