

# On the historical significance of May 4th New Culture Movement

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**Abstract:** The May 4th Movement in the modern history of China is a great historical event of multiple significance. The May 4th Movement was an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal movement, a young students' patriotic movement, and also a profound cultural revolution movement, it is a sign of cultural awakening of the Chinese nation, and the starting point for the development of new culture. From the viewpoint of cultural development, as a cultural revolution movement, the May 4th Movement not only promoted the innovation of Chinese cultural expression forms, and more important it led to cognitive changes of Chinese traditional culture, and the end of Confucianism rule, for up to half a century the dispute of "substance and function" temporarily drew a stop sign. The movement also opened the door to China's cultural openness, Injected fresh blood to the transformation of the Chinese culture. Correct evaluation of the May Fourth New Culture movement properties and merits and demerits is of great significance, it doesn't not only concern the merits of historical events evaluation and the evaluation and judgment of 20th century Chinese history, but also more concerns the future development direction of Chinese culture and the choice of route.

**Keywords:** May Fourth Movement, New Culture Movement, Appraisal, Cultural Powerhouse

## 1. Introduction

As we look back on 20th century China, a magnificent historical tapestry unfolds, with the May Fourth Movement standing out as an indelible chapter due to its unique historical status and profound influence. As a monumental event in the modern history of the Chinese nation, the May Fourth Movement not only signifies the awakening of an era but also marks the beginning of a new era in Chinese history. Starting with its outbreak in 1919, together with the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the convening of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1978, these three significant historical milestones collectively depict the great transformation of the Chinese nation from slumber to awakening, and from humiliation to self-strengthening.

## 2. The multiple historical significances of the May Fourth Movement

The 20th century holds special significance in the modern history of the Chinese nation. Looking back on the century, there are undoubtedly many historical events and moments worth cherishing and remembering, but three of these moments are particularly noteworthy and should be recorded in the annals of modern Chinese history: first, the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement in 1919; second, the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949; and third, the convening of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1978. The special significance of these three moments lies in the following reasons: the eruption of the May Fourth Movement was a historical marker of China truly waking up from a long slumber; the founding of the People's Republic of China was a historical marker of the Chinese people truly standing up; and the convening of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th

Central Committee of the Communist Party of China marked a new historical beginning for the Chinese nation to rise and become strong again.

For the history of 20th century China, the May Fourth Movement holds multiple historical significances. On one hand, the May Fourth Movement is a historical marker of the Chinese nation awakening from its slumber and truly coming to life. The Opium War of 1840 marked the beginning of modern Chinese history. Prior to 1840, China's feudal mode of production, and the feudal economic and political rule based on this mode of production, were already in a state of turmoil and on the brink of collapse. Before 1840, the world had undergone the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century, as well as the independence wars of the North American colonies and the French bourgeois revolution. Countries such as Britain, France, and the United States had successively entered the era of large industry, with social productivity and material wealth achieving unprecedented increases. As pointed out in "The Communist Manifesto," the bourgeoisie, in less than a hundred years of class rule, created more productive forces than all the previous centuries combined. With the establishment of the capitalist ruling position and the development of the capitalist economy, the capitalist powers began the historical process of "subordinating uncivilized and semi-civilized countries to civilized countries, subordinating peasant nations to bourgeois nations, and subordinating the East to the historical process" [1]. In 1840, China was at a historical moment of deepening internal troubles and impending external dangers. Faced with such a historical situation, apart from a few intellectual elites of the old system like Wei Yuan and Gong Zi Zhen, who had a keen sense of the impending crisis and called for change, most Chinese people were not only indifferent to the increasingly severe poverty and weakness, ignorant of the rapidly developing world, and completely unaware of the impending danger, but some people were still indulging in the memory and reminiscence of the Kangxi and Qianlong prosperity, intoxicated with the confidence and pride in the great country and the long-standing civilization. The Opium War of 1840 blasted open the closed doors formed by the prohibition of territorial boundaries and maritime prohibitions. What flowed in through the open national gates was not only opium and goods but also the eastern winds and the gradual spread of Western learning, awakening the Chinese people from their slumber amidst the humiliation. This awakening went through a historical process from partial to comprehensive, from spontaneous to conscious. In this process of gradually awakening, the Chinese people's understanding of the strong ships and powerful guns, opium, and goods from the Western world, their cognition of the eastern winds and Western learning, and their understanding of Chinese society itself gradually deepened and evolved. The period from the Opium War of 1840 as the starting point to the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 can be seen as the first stage of China awakening from slumber. In this stage, while the Chinese people felt humiliated and angry about the invasion and power of the Western powers, they also began to recognize and reflect on the gap between themselves and the West, and on this basis, they unconsciously sprouted the consciousness of catching up with the West. The failure of the Opium War forced some Chinese people to start looking to the West, but unfortunately, people's focus was only on the level of artifacts. For most Chinese people, the intuitive feeling was that the fundamental reason why China was defeated again and again in front of foreign powers was that their technology was inferior, and they thought very little about the issues of their own system and cultural concepts, or even did not want to think about them at all. In this stage, although some Chinese people who began to awaken felt the necessity to learn from the West and to carry out reforms, the dominant view among social elites was still "Chinese learning as the essence, Western learning for practical use," and "learning from the barbarians to control the barbarians." The Sino-Japanese War of 1895 made the Chinese people further realize that their failure was not only due to inferior technology but also due to inferior systems and cultural concepts. The failure of the Sino-Japanese War and the reflection on the failure yielded two results: one was the outbreak of the Xin Hai Revolution and the overthrow of the feudal monarchy; the other was the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement. The May Fourth Movement was both an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal movement and a far-reaching New Culture Movement. The Xin Hai Revolution and the May Fourth Movement are two historical events with symbolic and nodal significance in 20th century China. They are not only the inevitable historical development of the Chinese people's awakening but also a sign of comprehensive awakening.

On the other hand, the May Fourth Movement marks a new starting point in the historical development of 20th century China. If we regard the history of 20th century China as a century during which the Chinese nation awoke, stood up, and then began to rise and be rejuvenated, we also have reasons to confirm the May

Fourth Movement as the foundation and starting point for the last 80 years of 20th century Chinese history. Historians consider the May Fourth Movement the beginning of modern Chinese history, and there are ample reasons for this. The May Fourth Movement was the intersection and turning point between the old and new Chinese democratic revolutions; since then, China entered a new phase of the New Democratic Revolution and the Socialist Revolution. The old democratic revolution in China has gone through many historical stages such as the "Opium War, Taiping Rebellion, First Sino-Japanese War, Hundred Days' Reform, Boxer Rebellion, and Xin Hai Revolution" [2], which, although having significant and valuable meaning for the development of modern Chinese history, also left people with memories of failure and painful historical lessons. In the process of the New Democratic Revolution and the Socialist Revolution, although there have been many crises and twists, success and victory were ultimately achieved. Why could the May Fourth Movement become the intersection and turning point of the old and new Chinese democratic revolutions, and a historical turning point from continuous failure to victory? The most important reason is undoubtedly closely related to the introduction of Marxism and the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The most important significance of the May Fourth Movement lies in the fact that it laid the ideological and cultural foundation for the historical development of the Chinese nation in the last 80 years of the 20th century. After the May Fourth Movement, Marxism was introduced to China, from the establishment of the Communist Party of China to the founding of the People's Republic of China, and then to the beginning of reform and opening up; this series of historical nodes connected to form a historical chain, which obviously cannot be simply regarded as a coincidental arrangement in time, but is a historical inevitability determined by its internal causal relationships. Without the ideological liberation and cultural enlightenment prepared by the May Fourth Movement, there would be no dissemination and rooting of Marxism in China, no birth of the Communist Party of China, and no victory and development of the New Democratic Revolution and Socialist Revolution led by the Communist Party of China.

### 3. May Fourth's influence on Chinese cultural evolution

The occurrence of the May Fourth Movement was not a historical accident or coincidence, but had its profound inevitability. The May Fourth Movement was both an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolutionary movement and a new cultural movement of ideological emancipation and cultural awareness; there is an inseparable internal connection between these two movements. As Comrade Mao Zedong once pointed out, the May Fourth Movement as a cultural innovation movement is merely a manifestation of the Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism [2]. That is to say, the May Fourth Movement, as a new cultural movement, is the inevitable result and manifestation of the in-depth development of the Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution. The May Fourth Movement was a turning point in the process of China's anti-imperialist and anti-feudal democratic revolution, and also a directional turning point in the process of cultural development. As a great cultural innovation movement, its impact on the cultural development of the Chinese nation is profound and multifaceted.

Firstly, the vernacular literature movement, which originated from the May Fourth Movement, has propelled the transformation of modern Chinese cultural expression and the innovation of popularization and massification of culture. Before the May Fourth Movement, the basic mode of cultural expression in China was classical Chinese, which is also the expression method that was ridiculed by the advocates of vernacular literature in the May Fourth Movement as "Zhi hu Zhe ye". Although the expression of classical Chinese is concise and meaningful, and gives people a sense of rhythm and formal beauty, its obvious characteristics of standardization and formalization are not only not easy for the general public to master, but also not conducive to the expression and communication of the public's thoughts and emotions. Moreover, the standardization and formalization of classical Chinese also hinder the accurate and free expression of scientific theories and people's thoughts and emotions. The cultural innovation advocated and promoted by the May Fourth Movement, from classical Chinese to vernacular literature, although it only achieved a kind of cultural expression form innovation, and there are still some objections to this today. However, it cannot be denied that this innovation in the way of cultural expression has achieved the de-aristocratization and de-eight-legged-arterialization, and is closer to the life of the general public, which is conducive to cultural dialogue and exchange. It can be said that its role in promoting the development and dissemination of modern science and technology, and in promoting the innovation and diversification of

cultural forms, has an important significance and value that cannot be ignored. It goes without saying that although the vernacularization and popularization of cultural expression have been criticized from time to time, its basic trend has never been fundamentally reversed, and this fact itself is an innovation in the way of cultural expression, with strong vitality.

Secondly, the May Fourth New Culture Movement signifies that the Chinese nation's cultural reflection and cultural awareness have reached a new height. The "new" of the May Fourth New Culture Movement, its significance and value are not only demonstrated in the innovation of cultural expression forms but are more importantly manifested in the significant transformation of the perception of traditional Chinese culture. The 5,000-year history of Chinese civilization is profound and extensive, but for more than 2,000 years since the reign of Emperor Wu of Han, the Confucianism and Confucian culture centered on the teachings of Confucius and Mencius have dominated Chinese culture. Confucianism and Confucian culture are not only the dominant ideology of Chinese feudal society but can even be regarded as a symbol of traditional Chinese culture. The long-term preeminence of Confucianism was not an inevitable result of human will but an internal necessity of historical development. The fundamental reason why Confucianism has continued uninterrupted and unshaken in its dominant position in Chinese feudal society is that the ethical values represented by the "Three Bonds and Five Constants" are both an inevitable product of the feudal society and suitable for the needs of the generation and development of the feudal economic foundation. Confucianism and Confucian culture were once a culture with historical inevitability and advanced nature, which can be proven by their long-term leading position in development. However, just as the agricultural civilization and feudal system have historical nature, Confucianism and Confucian culture also have a historical nature. When the agricultural civilization came to the end of history and the feudal system declined, Confucianism and Confucian culture, which were suitable for the needs of agricultural civilization and the feudal system, no longer had historical inevitability and advanced nature. The role of culture in history has a duality; it can be a positive one that promotes social history or a conservative one that hinders social history. Moreover, the more brilliant a culture has been in human history, the greater the conservative and obstructive role it plays in the transition from an old civilization to a new one, from an old social system to a new social system. An undeniable fact is that those nations that have created peaks of civilization and culture rarely see a second or third cultural peak. A nation's culture, especially one that has created brilliant memories, when it has been integrated into the blood of a nation and accumulated into a stable cultural psychological structure, it is usually difficult to achieve self-transcendence in culture. It should be said that Confucianism and Confucian culture are indispensable to the brilliance of China's agricultural civilization stage, but they are also responsible for China's slumber and backwardness in modern times. As mentioned earlier, after the Opium War, although China began to awaken from its slumber, its awakening was only preliminary because the cultural concept and cognition of "Chinese essence and Western application" still showed that the cultural awareness of most Chinese people lacked the necessary height. The May Fourth Movement, as a new cultural movement, has significant importance in that it loudly put forward the slogan "Down with the Confucian shop," directing the spearhead of criticism at the core of Confucianism and Confucian culture—the Three Bonds and Five Constants, as well as the ritual and legal system based on them, putting an end to the debate between essence and application that had troubled the Chinese people for half a century. The "new" of the May Fourth New Culture Movement is primarily manifested in that it bids farewell to the old era of Confucianism's supremacy and the concept of Chinese essence with Western application, raising the cultural awareness of the Chinese people to a new height.

Thirdly, the May Fourth New Culture Movement further opened the door to learning from the West, injecting fresh vitality into the innovation of Chinese culture. Before the May Fourth Movement, although the powerful ships and artillery of Western powers had initially opened the tightly closed doors of Chinese culture, the dominant thinking and cognition in Chinese society at that time was to use Western methods while maintaining Chinese essence. The cultural openness was not conscious but forced; the purpose of cultural openness was not to innovate and develop its own culture, but to "learn from the barbarians' superior techniques to control the barbarians." Therefore, the cultural openness before the May Fourth Movement was not only one-sided and limited but also far from reaching the height of cultural consciousness. The May Fourth New Culture Movement made it possible for Chinese culture to be open, and in the vision of the

pioneers of the May Fourth New Culture Movement, Western learning and Western trends were no longer seen as a flood and beast. Learning from advanced Western culture and achieving the transformation and innovation of Chinese national culture gradually became the cultural consensus of advanced Chinese people. It should be pointed out that the May Fourth Movement was not only a time node for significant changes and transformations in the Chinese understanding of the relationship between Chinese and Western learning but also an important time node for profound changes and differentiation in the Chinese understanding of Western learning and Western trends. Before the May Fourth New Culture Movement, what Chinese people recognized as Western learning and Western trends was only the culture of capitalism or liberalism formed in the modern West with freedom, equality, democracy, science, and rationality as its content, and they knew very little or nothing at all about another kind of Western culture represented by Marxism. Under the influence of the October Revolution in Russia, with the May Fourth New Culture Movement as an opportunity and carrier, there was a significant change in the Chinese people's contact with and understanding of Western learning and Western trends. In the Chinese people's vision, Western learning and Western trends are no longer only pointing to Western capitalist culture but also include Marxism, which belongs to the category of Western culture and was introduced through the Russian channel.

Taking the May Fourth Movement as a temporal milestone, the Chinese people's learning from Western culture has made progress in at least two aspects: On the one hand, they have introduced and absorbed the cultural values with progressive significance that represent the important achievements of the development of modern Western capitalist civilization. Before the May Fourth New Culture Movement, the Chinese people's understanding of Western civilization and culture was mainly focused on the material civilization and culture carried by goods and powerful ships and artillery. Since the May Fourth Movement, the Chinese have paid more attention to cultural values such as freedom, equality, democracy, science, and rationality, which can better reflect the essence and core of capitalist culture. The most important achievement of the May Fourth New Culture Movement was to make the Chinese people aware of "Mr. Democracy" and "Mr. Science," planting the seeds of democracy and science in the land of China. On the other hand, the May Fourth New Culture Movement introduced new theories and ideas of Marxism to China, which at least helped and accelerated the spread of Marxism in China. After the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement, in July 1921, the Communist Party of China, which takes Marxist scientific theory as its guiding ideology and theoretical foundation, was born. This cannot be seen as a coincidence in time, but is an inevitable historical event with internal causal connections. The role of the May Fourth New Culture Movement in the spread of Marxism in China and the birth of the Communist Party of China is obvious. In a sense, the May Fourth New Culture Movement prepared an indispensable ideological and cultural environment and conditions for the birth of the Communist Party of China. The spread of Marxism in China and the birth of the Communist Party of China have great significance in modern Chinese history. It has not only become the watershed or turning point between the old and new stages of the Chinese bourgeois democratic revolution but also the turning point from repeated defeats to frequent victories in the Chinese revolution. The May Fourth New Culture Movement is a sign that the Chinese nation has truly achieved cultural consciousness and is also the starting point for the Chinese nation to gradually stand up.

#### **4. May Fourth Movement: understanding and assessment**

Although nearly 100 years have passed since the May Fourth Movement, it has not faded from people's memory. The charm of the May Fourth Movement still exists, its spirit is still alive, and the movement continues to live in our real life. The May Fourth Movement was a youth patriotic movement and a culturally innovative movement of great historical significance. It should be said that in the history of 20th century China, the basic judgment of the nature of the May Fourth Movement has been widely recognized and agreed upon by the majority of Chinese people. However, in recent years, there seems to have been some worrying and vigilant reversals. Some people, under the banner of restoring "national studies," defending traditional Chinese culture, and opposing cultural nihilism, have launched wave after wave of so-called re-evaluations against the direction, nature, role, and impact of the May Fourth New Culture Movement in the name of cultural reflection and criticism. Some people believe that the May Fourth New Culture Movement, which put forward the slogan of "smashing the Confucian shop," took a comprehensive critical and wholesale negative attitude towards Confucianism and Confucian culture, which is a kind of

historical nihilism and cultural nihilism. The blow and destruction to traditional Chinese culture are devastating and disastrous, leading to the collapse of the traditional Chinese cultural system, blocking the passage of cultural heritage of the Chinese nation, and causing the Chinese nation to lose confidence and identity in its own culture.

So, how should we correctly view and scientifically evaluate the historical status and significance of the May Fourth New Culture Movement? Has it brought about destruction and disaster to the development of the Chinese national culture, or is it an opportunity and hope for revitalization? Has it interrupted the circulation of the cultural blood of the Chinese nation, or has it added a source of vitality to the development of the Chinese nation? Has its role and influence on the development of 20th-century Chinese history been positive or negative? Has it been a positive energy driving progress or a negative effect causing destruction? This is an extremely significant and important issue because it is not only related to the evaluation of the rights and wrongs of historical events, the evaluation of the figures in the May Fourth New Culture Movement, and the evaluation and judgment of 20th-century Chinese history, but also to the future development path of Chinese history and the direction of cultural development.

It is undeniable that the May Fourth New Culture Movement, as a historical event or movement, like other historical movements in human history, is subject to the constraints of its historical conditions and environment, and inevitably has some historical limitations and one-sidedness. The pioneers of the May Fourth New Culture Movement, whether in their reflection and criticism of traditional Chinese culture or in their attitude towards Western culture, have expressed some radical words and have been suspected of overcorrecting. However, we must not deny its revolutionary and progressive nature, change its correct direction of cultural development, in the name of so-called re-thinking and re-evaluating, because of such or such shortcomings and biases of the May Fourth New Culture Movement. It is particularly necessary to point out that people need to be highly vigilant against some people who oppose historical nihilism and cultural nihilism, but in fact, they are retrogressing in culture, regressing, and opposing cultural innovation and innovation. To a certain extent, the May Fourth New Culture Movement does have a tendency and manifestation of historical nihilism and cultural nihilism, but it should not be absolutely denied, but should be historically and dialectically grasped and analyzed.

Viewing from the common patterns of the development of human social history, historical nihilism and cultural nihilism are not uncommon. However, they usually occur during historical periods when the social system is undergoing change and the social culture is in transition. Moreover, in most cases, the forces that exhibit emotions or tendencies of historical and cultural nihilism mostly belong to the side that demands social and cultural change. Both historical nihilism and cultural nihilism, all forms of nihilistic attitudes and positions, are theoretically undesirable. The profound reasons are not only that any historical existence has its reasons and justifications for its emergence and existence, but also that the development and evolution of social history do not start from zero, but manifest as a unity of discontinuity and continuity. However, it should also be seen that both historical nihilism and cultural nihilism, under certain specific historical conditions, are not only inevitable and understandable, but also have positive and progressive significances. This is because they often express the revolutionary desire for change in an over-correcting, radical, and one-sided manner. The nihilistic tendencies shown by humanists during the European Renaissance in their criticism of the feudal system and Christian culture, and the nihilistic tendencies shown by the pioneers of the May Fourth New Culture Movement in their criticism of Confucianism and Confucian culture, belong to this category. Of course, not all forms of nihilism contain positive and reasonable factors. People who theoretically belong to the same nihilistic camp have different positions, represent different interests, and negate different objects, thus there are distinctions between the revolutionary, conservative, and reactionary factions. At present in China, some people who criticize and deny the May Fourth New Culture Movement by attacking some radical words and views under the banner of opposing historical and cultural nihilism are also a manifestation of historical and cultural nihilism. However, because of the nature of the targets they point at, there is a certain difference between this historical and cultural nihilism and the tendencies of historical and cultural nihilism of the pioneers of the May Fourth New Culture Movement. What the deniers of the May Fourth New Culture Movement sing is nothing more than a dirge expressing mourning for the old culture that has passed away.

Correctly evaluating the May Fourth New Culture Movement is of great significance for assessing the history of 20th-century China. The evaluation of the May Fourth New Culture Movement cannot be separated from the overall situation and basic trends of 20th-century Chinese history, nor can it be merely confined to certain individual ideological tendencies and historical episodes for abstract debates and speculations. This is not only because the May Fourth New Culture Movement is the starting point and beginning of modern Chinese history, but also because there is an inextricable and inseparable relationship between the May Fourth New Culture Movement and the development of Chinese history in the century that followed. Without understanding the May Fourth New Culture Movement, it is impossible to correctly grasp and interpret the development of 20th-century Chinese history. Similarly, without the development of 20th-century Chinese history, it is impossible to correctly recognize and evaluate the historical significance of the May Fourth New Culture Movement. This is an issue of two interdependent and mutually causal aspects. In the nearly century since the May Fourth New Culture Movement, although China's historical development has also experienced many difficulties and hardships, twists and disasters, in terms of the overall trend of historical development, development and progress are its main aspects, and advancement and ascent are its basic trends and trajectory. The nearly century after the May Fourth New Culture Movement is a history of the Chinese nation waking up, standing up, and moving towards a rise, which is a history that is both tragic and praiseworthy, and is a history that no one can deny, shining with brilliance, and generally upward and progressive. Comparing the Chinese history before and after the May Fourth New Culture Movement as a temporal node, it can be said to be a world-turned-upside-down, with a new look. So, what has driven and influenced such significant development and progress in the history of 20th-century China? Although Marxists are not cultural determinists and historical development has its own inevitability, an undeniable factor is that the cultural achievements of the May Fourth New Culture Movement have had an undeniable and indisputable influence on the history of 20th-century China. The history of 20th-century China is inseparable from the influence of Marxism and the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and the rooting of Marxism in China is inseparable from the history of the Communist Party of China. This is not only a simple logical link but also has ample historical basis.

Correctly evaluating the May Fourth New Culture Movement is also of great significance for grasping the correct direction of China's historical and cultural development. Whether to hold a positive and affirmative evaluation of the May Fourth New Culture Movement or a critical and negative one is not just an academic debate. It is also related not only to the evaluation of 20th-century Chinese history but also to the future direction of Chinese cultural development, specifically to the path choices for building a strong cultural nation. To a certain extent, the debate over the nature and merits and demerits of the May Fourth New Culture Movement essentially involves the direction and route of the future development of Chinese culture. To build a modern socialist power, it is necessary to build a modern socialist cultural power. A cultural power not only constitutes an important part of a modern power but more importantly, it also provides spiritual support for the construction of a modern power. So, to achieve the goal of building a cultural power, should we follow the path of cultural innovation opened up by the pioneers of the May Fourth New Culture Movement, under the guidance of Marx's historical and cultural views, and adhere to the path of cultural openness, cultural innovation, and cultural creativity? Or should we abandon the path opened up by the May Fourth New Culture Movement and take the so-called path of Confucianism's return and the revitalization of the new Confucianism? This is obviously not just an academic issue but also an important issue related to the future and destiny of the Chinese nation. Culture is essentially practical and therefore historical, and because culture is practical and historical, it needs continuous innovation and renewal. Regardless of what mistakes and historical limitations the pioneers of the May Fourth New Culture Movement may have made, the direction of the path of cultural innovation they opened up is correct, which has been confirmed by the history of 20th-century China. As long as we continue to move forward along this path, the correctness of its direction will continue to be confirmed.

## 5. Conclusion

The May Fourth Movement, as a milestone event in the history of 20th century China, not only signifies the beginning of national awakening and cultural innovation but also acts as a catalyst for profound social change in China. Guided by the patriotic fervor of the youth, it stimulated deep national reflection on

tradition and modernity, East and West, and propelled China's transformation from feudal constraints to a modern nation-state. The democratic and scientific spirit advocated by the May Fourth Movement, along with the critical inheritance of traditional culture and selective absorption of Western civilization, laid a solid foundation for the cultural development and intellectual progress in China.

Today, we look back on the May Fourth Movement, not only to commemorate that magnificent period of history but also to draw wisdom and strength from it to continue to promote cultural development and innovation. The May Fourth Movement teaches us that culture is not rigid and unchanging; instead, it must continually advance through criticism and self-renewal. Faced with the challenges and opportunities of globalization, we should embrace an open mindset, inherit and carry forward the spirit of the May Fourth Movement, foster the prosperous development of Chinese culture, and contribute to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The historical significance of the May Fourth Movement lies not only in its profound impact on China but also in showing us the path towards cultural consciousness, confidence, and self-strengthening.

## 6. References

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