

# Carry Forward the Patriotic Spirit of May 4th to Forge Ahead in the New Era

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## Abstract

The core of the May 4th movement is the spirit of patriotism and the surging power to inspire young college students in the new era to pursue their dreams on the road of national rejuvenation. The inspiration from May 4th includes such expressions as “Never forget why we started out and always follow the party”, “We will pursue the Chinese dream forever”, “Go down to the grassroots and take root among the people”, and “Carry forward the tradition and always strive”, ect. Firm belief, rich knowledge and self-cultivation are the inexhaustible motivation for the young students to be the strivers, pioneers and devotees of the new era.

## Keywords

May 4<sup>th</sup> of 100 years history; patriotic spirit; young college students; motivation.

## 1. The May 4th Spirit: the Precious Spiritual Wealth of Youth

Youth is the future of the motherland, the hope of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and the backbone and inexhaustible force driving the time forward. In the new historical period, how the contemporary youth carry forward the tradition and go ahead the time has become the important proposition for the general youth to ponder about.

Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, delivered an important speech at the ceremony to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the May 4th Movement in Beijing, capital of China, April 30, 2019. 1 The General Secretary spoke highly of the historical achievements and great significance of progress of the May 4th movement, and clearly pointed out that the May 4th spirit is the precious spiritual wealth created by the movement, and its core is the spirit of patriotism. General Secretary said: “For the youth, the best memorial to the May 4th Movement is, under the leadership of the party, to play the role of the strivers, pioneers and devotees going ahead of the new era, and to take the shoulder of the historical mission to let the spirit of the May 4th emit more dazzling light with persistent belief, excellent moral character, rich knowledge and excellent skills with the ethnic groups all over the country.” 2 The fundamental requirement of carrying forward the May 4th spirit in the new era put forward by the General Secretary has injected the surging power of the new era to motivate the whole party and the people of all ethnic groups in China, especially the young college students to realize their dreams on the road of national rejuvenation.

## 2. Profound Enlightenment of the May 4th to the Youth Students

### 2.1. Firm Political Choice: Never Forget Why We Started Out and Always Follow the Party

“Never forget why you started out and always follow the party” is the firm political choice of the young students today. “The cannon-fire of the October Revolution brought Marxism to China.” Since then, under the leadership of the communist party of China, generation after generation of young men have been advancing wave upon wave and endeavoring hard for the

victory of the Chinese revolution, the birth of new China, the rapid development of the socialist construction and the great changes since the reform and opening up. Historical The history repeatedly tells us that only by adhering to the leadership of the communist party of China can the Chinese youth movement undertake all kinds of arduous tasks entrusted by the Times, can they overcome all kinds of risks and challenges and can they ensure that it does not lose its right direction in all kinds of complicated environments. The right conclusion is that “never forget why you started out and always follow the party” is the firm political choice and regretless belief of the young students today.

## **2.2. Striving Goal: Never Stop Pursuing Chinese Dream**

The “China dream” is an important guiding ideology and governance concept proposed by General Secretary Xi Jinping after the 18th national congress of the CPC, which was formally put forward on November 29, 2012. General Secretary Xi defines the “Chinese Dream” as “realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream of the Chinese nation since modern time.” The core goal of the “Chinese dream” is to realize the prosperity of the country, the rejuvenation of the nation and the happiness of the people, and to turn China into a strong modern socialist country with prosperity, democracy, civilization and harmony during the two “100 years” (the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CPC in 2021 and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 2049). The way to achieve this goal is to adhere to the leadership of the CPC, to follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, to carry forward the national spirit and to pool the strength of China. The means of implementation is to promote political, economic, cultural, social and ecological progress together. On October 18, 2017, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed again in the report to the 19th CPC national congress: “Realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream of the Chinese nation since modern time.” The expression of “to realize the Chinese dream, young people will pursue it forever” is a precise portrayal that young Chinese students are carrying on the legacy of their forefathers, devoting themselves to the cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, and striving to realize their patriotic feelings of making their country stronger on the basis of “standing up” and “getting rich.” It is also the goal and constant commitment of contemporary young college students to pursue their dreams and inherit the May 4th spirit of the past century. 3

## **2.3. Compulsory Course for Young Students: Go Down to the Grassroots and Take Root Among the People**

Marxism holds that the masses are the fundamental force in creating social history. Young students today must arm themselves with Xi Jinping’ Thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era and must be motivated by the May 4th spirit of “unity, progress, democracy and science”. They should go deep into the community, connect with the people, understand the society, take root among the people, work with the people, advance with the people, dream with the people and write down their own youth chapter in the great practice of building a great modern socialist country.

## **2.4. Distinctive Feature of Contemporary Young Students: Carry Forward the Tradition and Always Strive**

The May 4th movement is an epoch-making event in China’s modern history and a milestone in the historical process of the Chinese nation’s pursuit of national independence and development and progress since modern time. It has become a firm pursue and distinctive characteristics of the contemporary youth students to inherit to “patriotism, progress, democracy and science” as the main content of “May 4<sup>th</sup>” spirit, adhere to the leadership of the communist party of China, to determine the confidence of the path, theory, system and culture

with Chinese characteristic socialism, and to achieve national prosperity and rejuvenation, and the peoples happiness as a given goal. 4

### **3. Keep Missions in Mind to Be A Striver, Pioneer and Devotee**

The history of the hundred years of the May 4th movement tells us that the persevering and persevering Chinese people have gone through many dark and painful times and made arduous efforts to achieve national independence, freedom and great rejuvenation and even any revolutionary forebears and men of lofty ideals have even laid down their precious lives. In this long process, predecessors also copied the experience and model of other countries, and tried to find the truth of saving the country and people from western countries, but all these efforts failed: Chinese society is still in the dark, and the Chinese people are still living in dire straits. Practice tells us that only by sticking to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics can we achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. This is the only correct path, and it is also a long-term historical mission that requires the continuous struggle of generations of Chinese sons and daughters of all ethnic groups. As a contemporary young college student, how better will they inherit the May 4th spirit of the past century, keep in mind the sacred mission of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and become “a striver, pioneer and devotee in the new era”?

### **4. Firm Belief to Be Strivers for Chinese National Rejuvenation in the New Era**

Faith, in a word, refers to the worship of an idea or religion and the belief in someone or something; in other words, faith is actually a human spiritual sustenance and pursuit! A man cannot live without faith, nor can a nation live without pursuit. An individual has faith, he has a direction forward; a nation has faith, it has a hope. Contemporary young students must firmly believe in Marxism and pursue the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. 5 Only by adhering to the “four self-confidences” and realizing the “four comprehensiveness” can we constantly dust ourselves off and temper our political firmness, and can we build the foundation of faith, complement the calcium of the spirit, and hold the rudder of thought. The belief condenses strength, the mission urges people to forge ahead, and the struggle makes achievements.

### **5. Enrich Knowledge to Be Pioneers for Chinese National Rejuvenation in the New Era**

Knowledge is the summary of previous experience and also the cornerstone of human civilization and progress. Human knowledge is vast, the speed of renewal is dizzying, but our lives and time are short, so what attitudes and methods are important to the learning of knowledge. Some people believe that learning should be as inclusive as possible and the more, the better. Some people stress such principle as “application (knowledge system, social demand, personal development), moderation (stage, basic, professional), timely (past knowledge, latest knowledge, future knowledge).” Others believe that the acquisition of knowledge should follow the four-character principle of “thick, broad, refined and miscellaneous.” “Thick” means “thick foundation”, that is, the basic theoretical knowledge of the subject must be sufficient, solid and stable. “Abundant” means “wide vision”. We should read widely and extensively to expand the scope of knowledge, including foreign advanced knowledge. “Fine” means “professional perfect”, that is, professional knowledge must be fine, thorough and deep, this is a capital to serve the society and get progress. “Miscellaneous” means “knowing-all”. It advocates that students with energy and ability should have a basic understanding of such knowledge as “politics and economy”, “the three religions and the nine schools of thought”, “astronomy and

geography”, “folk customs” and so on. Even they can be encouraged to be a “crossover expert”. At the same time, we should pay more attention to the relationship between learning knowledge and cultivating ability. We must learn to go deep into society and practice deeply, and transform what we have learned into our ability to “accumulate small steps, travel thousands of miles” and to “integrate small streams and become a river and sea” as soon as possible. Only in this way can we abandon the small idea of sparrow and have a big ambition of a large swan; only in this way can we be pioneers of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the new era.

## 6. Cultivate Oneself to Be A Devotee of the Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation

The old saying is “self-cultivated and family regulated to govern the state and then to bring peace to the nation”. It means to cultivate character, to manage the family, to govern the country, to make the world peaceful. Among these four regulations, self-cultivation and family unity are the foundation and conditions, and governance and peace are the goal and the highest state. Today, the family is the “home” of the family, but also the “home” of the country, and in fact, “each family” is connected with “everyone”, ultimately related to the “country”. To realize the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is both a national effort and a family responsibility. General Secretary Xi Jinping said, “Only by realizing the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation can a family’s dream come true.” Most of today’s young college students were born at the end of last century or the beginning of this century, who have the advantages of high cultural quality, wide vision, quick thinking, attention to reality and quick reception of new things, etc., so they take an active attitude to support and actively participate in upholding the leadership of the communist party of China, taking the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and continuing to expand the achievements of reform and opening up. Their consciousness of openness, enterprise, competition, risk, development and growth is increasingly strengthened, so they are the backbone force to “train the socialist builders and successors who develop morally, intellectually, physically, aesthetically and industriously in an all-round way.” However, there is no need to deny that, due to a variety of reasons, some obvious shortcomings of today’s youth students also aroused greater social concern. Such “six abilities” need to be improved as independent learning ability, innovation and entrepreneurship ability, teamwork ability, ability to adapt to society, ability to bear hardships and stand hard work, communication and coordination ability. Some “six consciousnesses” of some people should be further strengthened as political participation, sense of responsibility, overall awareness, awareness of moral development, gratitude and career development planning awareness. Among them, the concept expressed by “Labor is the foundation of life” and “Enhance the concept of labor, do the little things around” should be paid more attention to colleges, families and society. A clear example is that the 2019 national college entrance examination requires candidates to write a speech with “labor view”. Only by strengthening the learning and practice activities of “starting from me, starting from small things”, can we cultivate the broad masses of young students’ lofty aspirations and good character of organic combination, can we achieve the ultimate goal of education and moral education, can the young people become “the strivers, pioneers and devotees of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”.<sup>6</sup>

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