

# Exploring the Concept of “Build a Community of a Shared Future for Mankind” in International Diplomacy: A Prehistoric Mythological Perspective

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According to the historical records of prehistoric civilisation in China and the existing theories of prehistoric history within the academic community, it can be inferred that all human civilisations on Earth have their origins in the period following the Great Flood, during which human civilisation was rebuilt. Furthermore, there are notable parallels between the figure of “Nuwa” in Chinese prehistoric civilisation and that of “Noah” in Western accounts. By treating the prehistoric flood event as a research approach in historical compilation, scholars can extract valuable insights into “building a community of a shared future for mankind” and use it as a symbol of global diplomatic relations. This approach can foster common values of mutual learning and exchange among nations, ultimately creating a more promising future for developing a new form of human civilisation.

*Keywords:* building a community of a shared future for mankind, international diplomacy, prehistoric mythology, Nuwa, Noah

## Introduction

In history studies, scholars have delved into the origins of human civilisation, particularly the Great Flood. This catastrophic event, which led to the rebuilding of civilisation, parallels the mythical accounts of “Nuwa” in Chinese prehistoric civilisation and “Noah” in Western accounts (Peng & Cui, 2012, pp. 27-32). By treating the flood event as a research approach, historians can gain valuable insights into the theme of “Building a Community With a Shared Future for Mankind” (Xi, 2017). This concept can act as a symbolic bond in global diplomatic relations, promoting shared values of mutual learning and exchange among nations (Faizullaev & Cornut, 2017, pp. 578-604). It lays the foundation for a more promising future for developing a new form of human civilisation.

The prehistoric mythological interpretation of “Building a Community of a Shared Future for Mankind” offers valuable insights into the concept’s underlying principles (Starova, 2023). It emphasises the importance of unity, cooperation, and collective well-being, echoing the themes found in ancient myths that have survived for generations. By embracing this interpretation, we can understand the concept’s potential to foster positive change in international relations and pave the way towards a more peaceful and prosperous future for all.

### **Construct a Chinese Discourse on “Building a Community of a Shared Future”**

Shi Xu (2022, 69+71+80+102) argues that “constructing a new paradigm [of Chinese discourse] should facilitate international dialogue” and requires “excavating, drawing on, and innovating Chinese cultural and academic traditions,” adopting a worldview of “universal harmony,” and “balancing both ontological and global perspectives.”

The discourse surrounding “Building a Community of a Share Future” offers a nuanced and sophisticated framework for understanding global interconnectedness and cooperation. This notion, as articulated by prominent leader Xi Jinping (2023), posits that humanity is increasingly intertwined in a shared destiny, where the actions and challenges one group faces have far-reaching implications for others.

Historically, civilisations have been characterised by a complex web of interactions and mutual dependencies, a testament to the enduring nature of human interconnectedness. The prehistoric era, for instance, is replete with examples of shared experiences and collective memories that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries. Flood myths, in particular, are a powerful reminder of our shared vulnerabilities and resilience in the face of adversity.

In the contemporary global landscape, the interconnectedness of nations and peoples has reached unprecedented levels. Globalisation has accelerated the pace of integration, bringing about a new era of interdependence where common interests and challenges abound. Against this backdrop, the discourse on a human fate community gains salience, offering a compelling vision for collective action and cooperation.

Central to this discourse is the recognition of diversity and equality among civilisations. It eschews a uniform or monolithic approach, emphasising the rich tapestry of cultural and historical experiences that inform our understanding of the world. This pluralistic perspective underscores the importance of dialogue and mutual understanding as the cornerstones of international relations.

The discourse on “Building a Community of a Share Future” represents a significant evolution in our understanding of global relations and cooperation. It calls for a fundamental shift in perspective that recognises humanity’s inherent interconnectedness and the imperative of collective action in addressing global challenges. As we move forward, the academic and professional communities must continue to engage with and contribute to this vital conversation, shaping a more inclusive and sustainable future for all.

### **Chinese Prehistoric Records**

According to Chinese prehistoric records, there were three supreme figures: Tian Huang Shi (天皇氏), Di Huang Shi (地皇氏), and Ren Huang Shi (人皇氏). These figures were known as the King of the Universe, the King of Earth, and the Creator of Man (Ouyang, 1999, p. 157).

The Universe came into existence approximately 15 billion years ago, and our planet Earth emerged from its formation about 4.6 billion years ago. During this early period, natural transformations occurred, characterised by constant seismic and volcanic activities that shaped the landscape. Gradually, life emerged, starting with simple bacteria and other microorganisms. Over time, these primitive life forms evolved into more complex forms, leading to the appearance of plants and animals.

Then, there emerges the Cave Man (巢氏) and Fire-Use Man (燧人氏) (Ouyang, 1999, p. 157).

One significant event in the early history of humans was the advent of bipedalism approximately 70 million years ago. This allowed our ancestors to free their hands for tasks like toolmaking and hunting, paving the way

for further advancements. Another significant period was marked by the emergence of Cave Man about seven million years ago.

Following the Ice Age, anatomically modern humans began to spread. This period was characterised by rapid cultural and technological development. Fire became crucial for cooking and warmth approximately 1.9 million years ago. Language also developed, allowing for the exchange of complex ideas and the development of culture.

After the appearance of the Fire-Use Man, or Sui Ren Shi (燧人氏), Fuxi (伏羲) and Nuwa (女媧) appeared. The ancient Chinese pronunciation for “伏羲” is “Beksxia”, so in some records, it is also known as “庖犧” (Ouyang, 1999, p. 157).

Fuxi and Nuwa are two pivotal figures in Chinese mythology, renowned as the progenitors and founders of human civilisation. According to legend, Fuxi was born in the Huaxia country and led the Huaxia tribe. His innovations, including the Eight Trigrams and written characters, were inspired by his observations of natural phenomena, establishing a foundation for social order and civilisation. As a result, he is revered as the father of civilisation and the creator of human beings. However, according to some other historical records, Fuxi preceded Emperor Huangdi, indicating that he does not solely belong to the Huaxia clan. Fuxi can be considered as the ancestor of all human beings. Furthermore, Fuxi and Nuwa existed before the Great Flood.

Nuwa is his wife, the Chinese mythological figure known as the creator goddess. She is renowned for her heroic efforts to restore order to the world. She ensured that humans could exist peacefully by moulding five-coloured stones to patch the sky, calming floods, killing fierce beasts, and establishing the four pillars with broken great tortoises. Nuwa and Fuxi are worshipped as the ancestors and guardians of humanity.

Fuxi and Nuwa, as essential figures in Chinese mythology, embody the genesis and growth of human civilisation and wisdom. Their accomplishments also reflect people’s comprehension and exploration of nature and society. The Fuxi and Nuwa Periods were times of great innovation. They created the Homo sapiens emerging about 300,000 years ago. They became skilled hunters, and toolmakers were the first humans to bury their dead with ceremony.

The appearance of Homo sapiens marked a significant turning point in world history. This event was followed by meaningful changes, including the emergence of Shen Nong (Leader of Agriculture). This title does not refer to a deity but a knowledgeable individual who possessed agricultural knowledge from earlier civilisations’ supreme beings. This individual taught humans how to cultivate plants, leading to revolutionary changes in lifestyles and the inception of farming societies. It is essential to clarify that this “leader” was not a divine figure but a man of exceptional intelligence and agricultural expertise. His contributions to humanity were immense, paving the way for further technological and societal advancements.

The Great Flood occurred around 29000, and the Kunlun Civilisation and Agriculture developed between 28000 B.C.E. and 12000 B.C.E. During this time, four ancient civilisations emerged: the Sumerian (3000 B.C.E.), Egyptian (3000 B.C.E.), Chinese (2000 B.C.E.), and Indian civilisations (1500 B.C.E.). These civilisations were the first to develop cities, writing systems, and complex social structures.

After thoroughly examining the mythologies of numerous ancient civilisations, the researcher has discovered striking parallels between the ancient Chinese culture and those of ancient Sumerian and Egyptian civilisations. These similarities suggest a close connection between these three civilisations, concluding that the four major ancient civilisations may not have emerged at the same time as previously believed but instead shared a common origin.

### Nuwa and Noah: The Ark as the Symbol of Universal Human Connection

The prehistoric excellent flood story is well-documented across multiple civilisations. The Book of Genesis in the Bible recounts the story of Noah building the ark, globally renowned as one of the most famous legends of the great flood (Liu, 2006, pp. 15-32). Ancient Greek mythology includes a legend of the great flood called Deucalion's Flood. The sole survivors were Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha, who constructed an ark, survived the flood and became the ancestors of mankind. Other civilisations, such as ancient Egypt, ancient India, China, and Native Americans, also have legends about the great flood.

In ancient Egypt, a legend called the Deluge of Nekhen is linked to the Egyptian creation god Nun. It is said that he caused floods and reshaped the world. Additionally, in ancient India, there is a famous legend about Manu, who was commanded by the gods to build an ark before the flood and ultimately saved himself and his people from the catastrophe. Native American legends and myths frequently feature the great flood as a common theme. For instance, in the Mayan civilisation, the great flood is seen as part of the end of the world, while in Aztec civilisation, there are also mythical stories about the great flood.

Furthermore, the Epic of Gilgamesh portrays the great flood as a destructive disaster that wiped out almost all living things. Before the flood arrives, God sends a messenger, Utnapishtim, to warn humanity to prepare for the coming catastrophe. Utnapishtim, a shepherd, uses his wisdom and courage to save many people. He advises others to build an ark, placing animals and family members on it to avoid the impending flood. When the flood comes, Utnapishtim pilots the ark and safely floats with all people and animals for 15 days. Finally, as the flood gradually recedes, Utnapishtim docks the ark on a mountaintop, becoming a significant event in human history.

Moreover, Chinese legends about Nuwa patching the sky and controlling the water describe how the great flood brought disaster to humanity and how Nuwa tried to stop the water (Wang & Sun, 2023, pp. 135-149+175-176; Yang, 2018, pp. 57-66+155). According to archaeological excavations of cultural relics and artefacts, as well as painted pottery designs that provide information about prehistoric humans struggling against floods and worshipping fertility, its historical and cultural roots can be traced back to the genetic inheritance of female worship in a primitive matriarchal society.

The *Huainanzi* (《淮南子》, Liu, Western Han Dynasty):

四極廢，九州裂，天不兼覆，地不周載，猛獸食顛民，鷲鳥攫老弱，於是女媧煉五色石以補蒼天，斷鼇足以立四極，殺黑龍以濟冀州，積蘆灰以止淫水。蒼天補，四極正，淫水涸，冀州平，狡蟲死，顛民生。[It is documented the period in history when the four pillars collapsed and the nine provinces split, leading to a situation where the sky could not fully cover, and the earth could not fully support it. In this environment, fierce animals preyed on the simple populace, while formidable birds targeted the elderly and the vulnerable. In response, Nuwa, the divine craftswoman, acted. She melted five-coloured stones to repair the sky, amputated the legs of turtles to re-establish the four pillars, slew the black dragon to rescue Jizhou, and piled up reed ash to quell the raging floodwaters. As a result, the sky was restored, the four pillars were rectified, the floodwaters receded, Jizhou stabilised, cunning creatures perished, and the simple populace survived. This narrative portrays how Nuwa employed strategies like sky patching, four-pillar establishment through turtle amputation, dragon slaying for Jizhou's salvation, and flood cessation through reed ash accumulation to manage the catastrophic deluge effectively.]

In addition to the story of Nuwa's sky patching, the *Huainanzi* also contains other accounts regarding the great flood. For instance, another passage in *Huainanzi—Lianmingxun* (《淮南子 覽冥訓》, Liu, Western Han Dynasty) recounts:

往古之時，四極廢，九州裂，天不兼覆，地不周載。火熾焱而不滅，水浩洋而不息。猛獸食顛民，鷲鳥攫老弱。於是女媧煉五色石以補蒼天，斷鼈足以立四極，殺黑龍以濟冀州，積蘆灰以止淫水。 [In ancient times, when the four pillars collapsed and the nine provinces split, the sky did not cover, and the earth did not carry. The fire burned continuously without extinguishing, and the floodwaters flowed unceasingly. Ferocious beasts preyed on the simple populace, while formidable birds targeted the elderly and the vulnerable. Consequently, Nuwa melted five-coloured stones to repair the sky, amputated the legs of turtles to re-establish the four pillars, slew the black dragon to rescue Jizhou, and piled up reed ash to quell the raging floodwaters.]

This passage underscores the peril posed to humanity by fierce animals and birds. It details how Nuwa averted disaster using methods like sky patching, four-pillar establishment through turtle amputation, dragon slaying for Jizhou’s salvation, and flood cessation through reed ash accumulation.

The Great Flood event is documented in Chinese historical records, yet the ark symbol is not mentioned. It is imperative to recognise that Liu An, the King of the Western Han Dynasty, authored *Huainanzi*. He did not produce this work singularly; instead, he and his guests co-authored it. It is said that the Huainan King assembled thousands of individuals who specialise in philosophy and sorcery, and these individuals cannot all be the authors of *Huainanzi*. There is a clear assertion that it was Liu An, the Huainan King, who delved into morality and benevolence with Su Fei, Li Shang, Zuo Wu, Tian You, Lei Bai, Mao Bai, Wu Bai, Jin Chang, and seven other individuals, along with various eminent scholars. Together, they collaboratively wrote this text.

The narration of *Huainanzi* exhibits a geographically Chinese-centred perspective due to the inclusion of “Jizhou”, which is situated in modern-day Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, the northern part of Henan Province and parts of Liaoning and Inner Mongolia.

Beginning with the Xia Dynasty, where Yu the Great successfully harnessed the unruly waters and established the location of the Nine Provinces, there exists a significant five-thousand-year gap in recorded history leading up to the Han Dynasty. This indicates that the concept of floods was prevalent in ancient times, even before the Xia Dynasty. However, precise details regarding the prehistoric floods experienced by Fuxi and Nuwa remain elusive, as these events occurred probably over 29,000 years ago. The absence of detailed accounts from this period highlights the challenges in reconstructing prehistoric events and emphasises the importance of ongoing research (J. Y. Guo & L. X. Guo, 2020, pp. 52-64+220).

It is essential to consider that Emperor Qin Shihuang eliminated nearly all works penned by prior scholars, leading to a scarcity of knowledge about the prehistoric era. Consequently, the geographical awareness of this period was highly vague and diffuse. Subsequent scholars may have unquestioningly accepted these stories as authentic accounts within Chinese territory.

With recent advancements in human molecular genetics, it has become evident that prehistoric individuals outlived contemporary humans. Nuwa’s emergence is estimated at approximately 300000 B.C.E., followed by the Great Flood at 29000 B.C.E. Hence, the Chinese narrative reflects a territorial mindset. Notably, the Great Flood was a global event that necessitates a re-evaluation from a worldwide perspective.

By combing through diverse Eastern and Western sources, it can be inferred that Nuwa and Fuxi saved numerous humans and creatures during the Great Flood and transported them to the Kunlun Mountains (potentially corresponding to today’s Caucasus mountains). Furthermore, the character “冀” (Ji) embodies the concept of “Hope”, leading to the potential interpretation of “冀州” (Jizhou) as the “State of Hope”. The etymology of the character “Ji” in bone oracle inscriptions reveals a resemblance to “crawling amphibians”.

Assuming, rather than an “Ark”, it could be a mobilising island supported by substantial amphibian animals aiding its movement on the water.

Despite the diverse myths and legends surrounding prehistoric civilisation across different cultures, it is evident that all human beings have been affected by a global, even catastrophic, event. The foundation for establishing an international consensus lies in bridging these mythical narratives, identifying commonalities, and reevaluating the value and significance of “building a community of shared future” from a transcultural communication perspective (Jia & Wang, 2023, pp. 6-26).

### Conclusion

The discovery of Nuwa’s connection with Noah is a positive step towards achieving common values among nations. This connection can serve as a foundation for mutual understanding and respect, facilitating more significant progress in maintaining peace and stability, upholding independent sovereignty, advocating multilateralism, and advancing global governance. By building upon these shared values, nations can overcome differences and work towards common goals, promoting international peace and development (Yang, 2014).

Searching for commonalities among world mythical narratives offers a powerful tool for promoting global cooperation in diplomacy. Building upon the concept of a “community of human destiny”, this approach complements political efforts and echoes the ancient Chinese governance philosophy, which should be revitalised in the modern era. Understanding and appreciating the shared cultural roots of mythical narratives can foster mutual understanding and cooperation among nations, leading to a more peaceful and prosperous world.

By building upon shared values, nations can better understand and respect each other, leading to more significant progress in maintaining peace and stability, upholding independent sovereignty, advocating multilateralism, and advancing global governance.

Specifically, shared values can foster trust and cooperation among nations. In maintaining peace and stability, these values encourage countries to adopt more proactive measures to prevent and resolve conflicts, thereby preserving regional peace and stability. In upholding independent sovereignty, they urge nations to choose the development paths that suit them and reject any interference or coercion. In advocating multilateralism, they motivate countries to engage more actively in international affairs and address global challenges through multilateral cooperation. In advancing global governance, they facilitate collaboration among nations and contribute to improving and developing the global governance system.

Therefore, identifying shared values is a crucial prerequisite for achieving diplomatic cooperation. Only through enhanced communication and collaboration can nations better understand each other’s positions and concerns, enabling them to better respond to global challenges and promote peace and development.

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