

## Study on the Construction of Chinese Harmonious Culture and Its Methodology

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### Abstract

This thesis talks about Chinese harmonious culture in three aspects. The first aspect is the contents, characteristics and functions of Chinese harmonious culture. The second aspect is to discuss two basic theory recourse of Chinese harmonious culture, one is its traditional culture theory, and another is the western culture theory. The third aspect is to analyze the method which China government should pay more attention to their progress of promote culture development.

**Key words:** Chinese; Harmonious; Culture; Development

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### INTRODUCTION

The proposition of Chinese harmonious culture has its own background, the first is domestic background, and the second is international background. The most obvious element of the domestic background is the proposition of “harmonious society” (WoErpei, 1993, p.16). According to the report of the 17<sup>th</sup> National Congress of CPC, the period China has experienced now is a significant transition period. At this stage, the income gap has been widened; various interest relations have become increasingly complex. The contradiction between Chinese

desire for participating in political life and the discordant of transformation of the old and new political system gives rise to the conflicts in the society. In the year 2006, on the 6<sup>th</sup> plenum of the 16<sup>th</sup> CPC committee, President Hu Jintao has put forward the slogan of harmonious society. This means the Party and the government has detected the conflict elements in the social structure, China wants to eliminate the negative factors and accelerate social economic development. Culture as a content of the social construction has been considered to be developed more harmonious. As for the international background, the most remarkable feature is the multicultural integration (Colletti, 1972, p.185). Economic globalization brings China not only with new capital and opportunities to develop market but also multicultural conflict. The structure of cultural transmission and cultural consumption has been significant changed; Western values and lifestyle have been accepted by most of Chinese. However the cultural identity of west or east still exist in China and make troubles to the individuals’ life. The proposition of Chinese harmonious culture means to envisage the conflictions between all the culture elements and solve the problems to make the more harmonious society. At present, the construction of Chinese harmonious culture has become a main theme of the age. Research on Chinese harmonious is the need of developing Marxism cultural theory and it is also an important practical problem for the modern China. Firstly, study on Chinese harmonious culture can shape culture characters and realize cultural self-harmony. Deepen the research on harmonious culture can develop Chinese core value system and mainstream ideology, can coordinate the relation between the dominant culture and subculture, and also can coordinate the relation between national culture and foreign culture (Marx, 1995, p.23). Secondly, study on Chinese harmonious culture can realize the modernization of Chinese traditional culture. Chinese traditional culture has thousands of years of history and contains inexhaustible resources of harmonious culture.

To construct Chinese harmonious culture, China should absorb the excellent elements from its traditional culture and make efforts on innovation.

## 1. THE ESSENCE OF HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

“The Twelfth Five-Year” periods of social transformation have brought new opportunities and new conditions for building the socialism harmonious society. The proposition of harmonious society is the latest achievements of Marxism development in China. The systematical studies of the harmonious thoughts can help us accurately grasp to the complicated and diversified international situation, deal with several of challenges and the risks from international environment and realize socialism modernization. It can be concluded as two parts, the first part is about the essence of Chinese harmonious society, the second part is the strategy to construct harmonious society (Marx, 1995, p.289). The Essence of Chinese Harmonious Society is also an important problem which should be solved necessary. Above all the basic content of Chinese harmonious society should be clarified. The embryonic stage of harmonious society is different from other stages, the term “harmonious society” has been put forward by President Hu Jintao on the sixth plenary session of the Communist Party of China, however, on the sixth congress, there were several elements of harmonious society, and we could find out six obvious marks. The first mark just like the report on the congress said:

We should unite with the people of all social strata who help to make the motherland prosperous and strong, encouraging their pioneering spirit, protecting their legitimate rights and interests and commending the outstanding ones in an effort to create a situation in which all people are well positioned, do their best and live in harmony.

The second obvious symbol we could easily find in the report is:

In accordance with the development objectives up to 2010, the centenary of the Party and that of New China, as proposed at the Fifteenth National Congress, we need to concentrate on building a well-off society of a higher standard in an all-round way to the benefit of well over one billion people in this period. We will further develop the economy, improve democracy, advance science and education, enrich culture, foster social harmony and upgrade the texture of life for the people. (Marx, 1995, p.56)

The third “harmonious” we could find is:

The capability of sustainable development will be steadily enhanced. The ecological environment will be improved. The efficiency of using resources will be increased significantly. We will enhance harmony between man and nature to push the whole society onto a path to civilized development featuring the growth of production, an affluent life and a sound ecosystem.

The fourth “harmonious” we could find is:

Adhering to the Four Cardinal Principles, we must go on steadily and surely with political restructuring, extend socialist

democracy and improve the socialist legal system in order to build a socialist country under the rule of law and consolidate and develop the political situation characterized by democracy, solidarity, liveliness, stability and harmony. (Rousseau, 1962, p.108)

The fifth “harmonious” is: “We are ready to work with the international community to boost world diversification, promote a harmonious coexistence of diverse forces and maintain stability in the international community.” The sixth “harmonious” is: “Maintain social stability. To accomplish the heavy tasks of reform and development, we must have a harmonious and stable social climate for a long time to come.” These six “harmonious” first appeared in the literature of Chinese Communist Party which marks “harmonious” has been written into the annals of history. In the the third plenary session of the sixteenth communist party of China, the scientific outlook on development is raised. One important thought that runs through this thought is the efforts to achieve the harmony of man and nature. We can conclude that the proposition of scientific outlook and harmonious society can meet the requirements of the reform and development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, reflect people’s common aspiration and fundamental interests. In the sixteenth of four plenary sessions, the conception of “harmonious society” had been formally put forward. At the meeting, President Hu Jitao had clearly pointed out the major task of building a harmonious social society. At the same time, President Hu proposed the principles of building a harmonious society (Rousseau, 1962, p128). From then on, the term “harmonious society” had gone fully into the vision of Chinese academic field.

## 2. THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE TERM “HARMONIOUS SOCIETY”

What is a harmonious society then? The harmonious society we want to build now is different from building the harmony in the primitive society, slave society or feudal society. Harmonious society is a benign state of social development, is a state of harmony between different social levels, fractions and groups. A harmonious society should be full of creativity, with the aim to construct social development and perfect social management system, and possesses the ability of order and stability. It can be concluded that the contents of “harmonious society” should include four portions. The first is the harmonious between different social elements. In this sense, this means that human society is an organic integrity composed of politics, economy and culture. In a harmonious society, the relation between politics, economy and culture must be harmony, not only this, each system should also have a harmonious elements. For an example, the internal elements of economy such as production, accumulation, distribution and consumption, must be fully understood and well

controlled. So we should further implement the scientific outlook on development, make overall plans and take all factors into consideration, so as to give strong impetus to sound and rapid social and economic development. When we confront with the internal elements of politics, we should properly handle the relation between party and government, nation and individual, democracy and laws, deepen reform of the political system, uphold the rule of law as a basic strategy, and unnervingly develop socialist democracy. When we concern about the internal culture elements, we should promote Chinese traditional culture, construct a socialist core value system, and advocate the diversity of cultural development.

The second portion is the harmony of human. The society is made up of human's practice; the harmony of human is the prerequisite and foundation of society. I suppose the harmony of man means there is no fundamental conflict of interests between society members, rights and obligations can be processed equally, dependent on each other, development mutually. However there are many problems exist in the modern Chinese society such as the contradiction between productivity and production, individual interests and collective interests, local interests and total interests, immediate interests and long term interests, so that people's livelihood should be continuously improved, interests of all the aspects should be handled timely (Marx, 1995, p.245). The third portion should be the harmony between human and nature. Natural world is the material basis and necessary requirement of human's survival. Nature has been internalized in the life of human by their social practice and with the time going, the relation between human and nature would be harmony and unity. Basically speaking, the relations between human and nature are both opposite and unified. On one side, human is the existence of nature, the existing and development of human cannot independent from nature, on the other side, human is also the product of society, so that the relation between human and nature is confronted with contradiction all the time, and it has been considered as the relation of plunder and being looted. Human regarded themselves as the supreme legislator, satisfy them and bring up their subjectivity by destroying the rule of nature, however, all of them would be punished by nature's revenge. To sum up, the harmony of society exists in the process of utilizing natural resources, promoting social productivity (Rousseau, 1998, p.88). In order to achieve the harmony status between human and nature, we should firstly establish the thought of treating nature amiably not arbitrary, and the development and utilization of nature should be civilized not be predatory. Secondly, human should adhere to the sustainable development strategy. We should protect the nature balance when we develop nature resources and make it more harmony between social system and natural ecosystems.

The last portion of "harmonious society" is the explanation of the harmony between human and society.

To build socialism harmonious society, China should be both adhere to the all round development of people and the all round development of society. Human development in all round is the fundament precondition and internal impetus, it is also the measurement to mark the degree of civilization and progress of society. At present stage, inefficient development of human gives rise to the disharmony phenomenon, makes troubles to the building socialism that is why Chinese should raise the level of human's material life and spiritual life, improve the ideological and moral quality (Marx, 1995, p.342). At the social level, there are many problems still to be resolved, such as lack of coordination between the development of economy and society, the gap of income between urban and rural, high tuition and difficulty in going to college, difficult to receive medical treatment, difficult in building the old-age pension and all the issues could bring a big challenge to the construction of harmonious society.

### 3. ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF CHINESE HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

The essential feature of Chinese harmonious society can be concluded as three characteristics, the first is democracy and rule of law, the second is social fairness and justice, the third is social stable and orderly. Democracy and rule of law as the first characteristic which needs to state means the socialism democracy has been given a full play, the basic strategy for the rule of law has been effectively implement, human's basic rights have been guaranteed, this feature of harmonious society has surpassed all the view of harmony in any time of history and attributed new social spirit to Chinese socialism. From my point of view, democracy and rule of law are the fundamental principles and important operating mechanism (Marx, 1995, p.341). To develop socialist democratic politics and construct the socialist political civilization can ensure people's autonomy; realize people's fundamental interests. Democracy and the rule by law are mutual connection which can be not separated. Democracy is the foundation of the rule of law, rule of law is the route and guarantee to achieve democracy. At this extent, Chinese face with a problem to combine democracy and rule by law together, this is not only a theory problem but also a practice problem. Fairness and justice as the second characteristic means the interests of all the aspects are properly coordinated; contradictions among the people have been solved correctly. Individuals obtain fair opportunity, justice distribution, fair rights and fair process when participate in the political, economical and social affairs. Socialism harmonious society means utilizing the principles of fairness and justice to coordinate the interests and relationship between individuals and collectives. The problem now for China is how to make fairness and justice come true, and there are still many

social development obstacles such as tuition fee problem, housing problem, and medical system problem (Marx, 1995, p.269). All these problems make the damage to the interests of vulnerable groups, stir up feelings of dissatisfaction among the mass, and give rise to mass incidents and emergency incidents. To carry out social fairness and justice is a process of long-term efforts which also should be compatible with the development of Chinese productivity. In order to realize the fairness and justice of society, China should improve the market economic system, all kinds of democratic system, social security system and public fiscal system, only in this way, can make a harmonious society for Chinese, truly achieve the fair treatment between individuals. Stable and orderly as the third characteristic of harmonious society means there are perfect social organization mechanisms, improved social management, good social order, and people live or work in peace and contentment. To build a harmonious society, there must be a stable environment which contains the stable of politics, economy, social order and which can relate directly to individuals' live and work in peace and content, to consolidate the ruling position of the party, to national long-term stability and unity, to build well-off society in an all-around way. However, there are many problems exist in the operational procedure, such as the market all over the country are swamped with fake and poor quality products, urban housing prices have skyrocketed, criminal rate to rise. So we should rearrange social management resources, promote the innovation of social management system, cultivate the social members to share the same value, establish a sound system of social insurance, social assistance, social welfare. Only in this way can we ensure the stable of the harmonious society and guarantee nation's long term stability.

#### 4. THE STRATEGY OF CONSTRUCTING HARMONIOUS SOCIETY

There are two basic principles of constructing harmonious society, the first principle is "people-oriented", and the second principle is "resolving social conflicts".

People-Oriented concept means the nation should represent the basic interest of the broadest masses; the government should adhere to the individuals' dominant position in the process of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics. Individuals are the masters of the country, the fundamental force to promote the development of enterprise in various social system so that they have right to share the fruits of development. The government must always put people first. Serving the people wholeheartedly is the fundamental purpose of the Party, and its every endeavor is for the well-being of the people. Party and the government must always make sure that the aim and outcome of all the work of the Party and the state are to realize, safeguard and expand

the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people. The party must respect the principal position of the people in the country's political life, give play to their creativity, protect their rights and interests, take the path of prosperity for all and promote their all-round development, to ensure that development is for the people, by the people and with the people sharing in its fruits. Another basic principle is to solve social conflicts. To build a harmonious society, China should eliminate the conflict elements. Firstly, the government should promote the reform of urban and rural dual system. The contradictions in this system have become the biggest obstacle in the process of build harmonious society. The government should phase out the current household registration management system, establish and implement urban and rural household registration unity system. Secondly, the government should deepen reform of the distribution system, increase the income level of low-income people, and narrow the gap between the rich and poor and to eliminate poverty and achieve common prosperity. Thirdly, the government should develop national education because the equality of education is the fundamental guarantee of social justice. The government should adhere to the party's education policy, cultivate the students in all-round development, optimize the education structure, and promote coordinated development of education in different levels. There are still many works to do on this topic, especially the concrete method of build Chinese harmonious society, the relationship between Chinese traditional culture and modern harmony, the development tendency of Chinese harmonious society, the relation between Chinese harmonious society and harmonious world, and so on. If there is chance I also do some research on the political philosophy of Chinese harmonious society.

However, there are still many problems to be solved, such as follows:

- (a) What is the essence of Chinese harmonious culture?
- (b) What cultural thoughts can China inherit from both Chinese and western traditional culture?
- (c) What is Marx's harmonious theory?
- (d) How to develop Chinese cultural industry?
- (e) What is the development barrier for Chinese harmonious culture?

To solve these problems, it should be first to suppose Chinese harmonious culture is a complex system of social ideas which core value is harmonious. It contains many levels; the first level is consisting of ideas, conception and consciousness. The second level contains institution, morality and custom. The third level consists of concrete products of culture include various books, sciences and artistic work. I consider the first level of Chinese harmonious culture reflects the spirits of culture; it can play a leading role in the construction of Chinese culture. The second level is the manifestation of the core value; it is the medium of the first level and the



second level and can reflect the transition process from ideas to practice. And the third level is the results of the transition, which directly gets along with individuals and spread the core value. It is manifested that, it is not only to elucidate the conception of Chinese harmonious culture but also to do some philosophy research on its concept. For example, after the investigation in the view of subjectivity, objectivity and intermediary of Chinese harmonious culture, the essence of the harmony society can be clearly demonstrated. The subjectivity of Chinese harmonious culture is not all the individual in China; it should be confined to thinkers, politicians, and academics. We can call them plan makers, and their main mission is to create new terms and new thoughts which can reconcile social contradictions, distract individuals' attention and guide individuals to live according to the regulations drew by the government. Although Chinese Individuals are participant of culture creation, the manner and the method they have participated in creating culture are depending on the plan makers' design. As for the objectivity of Chinese harmonious culture, I suppose the basic character is universality which means the entire individual including Chinese or foreigners are the audience of Chinese harmonious culture. The plan makers would like all the individuals around the world to accept China's culture and value. The intermedium of Chinese harmonious culture is the important condition for establishing the relation of subjectivity and objectivity and also a basic element of Chinese harmonious culture. We can describe it as a carrier for the relation of subjectivity and objective. There are two types of intermedium, the first is solid intermedium, the second is soft intermedium. Solid intermedium refers to all the materials tool which is created in the progress of culture construction including various stationery commodities, cultural and education facilities, radio, magazines, television, network and so on. The soft inter medium refers to all kinds of procedures, methods, rules, conceptions, categories which can improve or confine the development of subject-object relation.

Secondly, there are several basic features of Chinese harmonious culture. The first feature is the guidance of Marxism. Marxism theory is the guiding thought of China and the fundamental element of constructing Chinese harmonious culture. Chinese party and government believe the Marx's materialistic dialectics can help them discover the truth of culture. They want to use Marx's method to build a socialist culture with Chinese characteristic. The second feature is inheriting and carrying forward Chinese traditional culture. Chinese government recently pays more attention to their traditional culture, they find there are a lot of harmonious elements exist in the traditional thought such as the theory that man is an integral part of nature. The third feature is absorbing world's advanced culture. Chinese government believes the development of Chinese harmonious culture cannot independent of world

culture, especially the technology and science theory in the world advanced culture and the policy of reform and opening up should continue to adhere by all the individuals in China.

Thirdly, the functions of Chinese harmonious culture are also very important. I conclude that the first function is to enhance national cohesion. The purpose of building a harmonious culture is to lay the foundation to establish the core value system of socialism. It means to build Chinese culture under the guidance of Marxism, and to build a socialist nation which can share the same value. Chinese government wants to use harmonious culture to strengthen the ideological dominance, try to create several new thoughts which can help with the economy development and social stability, and to proclaim to the world that they are friendly and never seek expansion or hegemony. The second function of building Chinese harmonious culture is to normalize social practices. Chinese harmonious culture is a kind of moral culture, Chinese government try to cultivate the individuals with their new harmonious thought in a moral way, and associate social obligations with morality. The concrete way to cultivate all individuals is "ideological and political education" which is the most prevalent method of teaching. In China each university must possess a department of "ideological and political education" system and in all the enterprise and public institution, there must be a party organization. All these institutions can provide an organizational guarantee to the ideological education. The third is integrative function. The social performance of Chinese harmonious culture is seeking common ground while reserving differences. With the social development, many social problems will come into being, and most of them cannot be resolved in a short time. The government wishes to cultivate their people a harmonious mind, to alleviate the conflict of social contradictions.

The fundamental theories of Chinese harmonious culture are the next problem we should face. In this part, there are two sections, the first section is the harmonious thoughts of Chinese traditional culture, and the second section is the harmonious thought in western culture. The harmonious elements existing in Chinese traditional culture especially in the view of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism should be found out. These three schools have their own thoughts of harmony, for example, Confucius said: "The serious problem is not the insufficient of resources or poverty, but the inequality distribution and instability." (不患寡而患不均, 不患贫而患不安) Mencius have said: "We should treat the kid and the old with whom we do not familiar just like treat our own family members." (老吾老以及人之老, 幼吾幼以及人之幼) Lao Zi as a philosopher of Taoism said: "The government should guide their citizen to produce healthy and delicious food, to make beautiful clothes, to live in peace and contentment and to cultivate their own culture." (甘其食, 美其服, 安其居, 乐其俗)

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## CONCLUSION

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Though the essence of building Chinese harmonious culture is to strengthen the construction of Chinese ideology and there exist many disharmonies in Chinese harmonious culture, the slogan of harmonious culture can reflect the party's resolution to build a harmonious society, and the decision of harmonious culture construction suit to Chinese national conditions. That's why people still try to find out an efficient way to improve the construction of Chinese harmonious culture.

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