

## Research on People's Livelihood Concept of Socialism With Chinese Characteristics

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### Abstract

According to 18<sup>th</sup> Communist Party Congress Report spirit of China, strengthening the construction of Socialist people's livelihood is a major social issue which needs to be solved urgently at present. As a major part of the construction of the concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics, constructing people's livelihood needs to absorb classical Marxist concept of people's livelihood, summarize the development course and experience in constructing people's livelihood of Chinese characteristic socialism, and clarify the basic provisions of the people's livelihood idea of socialism with Chinese characteristics theoretically, so as to construct the socialist core value concept of people's livelihood.

**Key words:** 18<sup>th</sup> Communist party congress report spirit; People's livelihood concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics; Socialist core value concept

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### INTRODUCTION

Reform and opening up in contemporary society has made certain achievements, with national economic strength

and personal living standards been significantly improved. However, under this circumstance, the Communist Party has put forward the "people's livelihood" issues in the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress.

In strengthening social development, we must give high priority to ensuring and improving the people's wellbeing. To improve people's material and cultural lives is the fundamental purpose of reform and opening up and socialist modernization. We should bring as much benefit as possible to the people, resolve as many difficulties as possible for them, and solve the most pressing and real problems of the greatest concern to them. We should keep making progress in ensuring that all the people enjoy their rights to education, employment, medical and old-age care, and housing so that they will lead a better life. (Hu, 2012).

This prompted many questions: Why presents problems of people's livelihood when contemporary economy of China has developed? What kind of people's livelihood of socialism with Chinese characteristics should China construct? At present, what are the difficulties encountered by the people's livelihood? To answer these questions, the first thing to do is to clarify people's livelihood concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Studying on the socialism characteristic people's livelihood concept is a basic theoretical research. The research should start from classical Marxist thought of people's livelihood, interconnect people's livelihood concept with Chinese characteristics and of classical Marxist, then analyze historical evolution of people's livelihood concept, and on this basis, put forward basic content, logical arguments of people's livelihood characteristics and analysis of the basic principles contained in the concept of people's livelihood of Marxism. Through the answers to the above questions, give initial exploration of contemporary Chinese characteristics of the socialist concept of people's livelihood, so as to provide theoretical references for the contemporary people's livelihood concept of Socialism with Chinese characteristics.

## 1. PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOOD CONCEPT OF MAXISM AND CONTEMPORARY ENLIGHTENMENTS

Although Marx did not give a clear definition of the concept on people's livelihood, concerning and resolving people's livelihood issues is the core theme of his theory. Marx's thinking on people's livelihood is through discarding the concept defined by his predecessors. Re-understanding the concept of people's livelihood, Marx's solution to people's livelihood issues is completed in a historical development and social type transformation way, namely by capitalist private ownership transformation to socialism and communism to finally solve major issues of people's livelihood.

### 1.1 The Highest Goal of the People's Livelihood Is the Liberation of Mankind

Freedom is a concept of the highest level, and all human behavioral goals are summed up to realize the freedom of human beings. In the history of human thoughts, there are millions of ways to explore the problem of freedom, and different philosophers and thinkers have given different paths. However, Marx has proposed a distinctive way. He defined this path as "communism". Therefore, we can briefly summarize that, Marx's livelihood aims is to be achieved through the establishment of communism. We can judge, according to the communist rules, people's livelihood is related to labor. Labor is the first activity of human survival, so the problem of people's livelihood is reflected firstly on labor practice. Solving people's livelihood issues proposed by Marx, means that how to free labor, under the conditions of capitalist private ownership. After Marx's investigation of the production mode of capitalism, Marx found that alienated labor is the first issue of the people's livelihood. To solve this problem, through the modification of the system drawbacks itself cannot be achieved, but through fundamentally break the root causes of alienated labor. The root is private ownership of capitalism. Therefore, people's livelihood issues proposed by Marx will eventually be implemented in sublation of private ownership and the establishment of communism.

### 1.2 Historical Materialism Principles to Solve the Problems of People's Livelihood

People's livelihood issues concerned by Marx are survival issues in the specific stage of the capitalism development in nineteenth Century. The survival issues arise from people's food and clothing. In the *German Ideology*, Marx first proposed the basic principles of solving the problems of human existence, which is the principle of historical materialism. "We only know one science, the historical science." (Marx & Engels, 1960) According to this principle, the human survival predicament is mainly a historical existence question. Philosophers and thinkers in the past are also concerned about people's livelihood

issues, but they are more concerned about an abstract theme of people's freedom. For instance, in "*Critique of Hegel's Philosophy Principle of Law*", Marx first criticized setting religion as a path of human liberation, and pointed out: "criticism of heaven changed into judgment of the world" (Marx & Engels, 1972). Also, he criticized the way of Feuerbach's abstract materialism path. In Marx's view, the issue of people's livelihood is first rooted in the first event of human history, which is undoubtedly the social production activity. Therefore, solving the problem of people's livelihood in social production activity has become the fundamental difference between Marx and other thinkers. That is to say, Marx's solution to the problem of people's livelihood is realized through the laws of social history and social criticism. This is Marx's historical materialism principle to solve the problems of people's livelihood.

### 1.3 Contemporary Enlightenments of Maxism People's Livelihood Concept

Through the analysis of Marx's concept of people's livelihood above, we can come to the preliminary conclusion that Marx's concept of people's livelihood has provided a few enlightenments for the construction of contemporary Socialist People's livelihood concept with Chinese Characteristics.

#### 1.3.1 People's Livelihood Is the Ultimate Concern of the Communist Party of China

The ultimate goal of the Communist Party of China is communism, which is consistent with Marxism doctrine. Therefore, the people's livelihood is the ultimate realization of communism. Of course, the current goal of building socialism with Chinese characteristics was not direct completion of communism, but to focus on the current situation, which is in the primary stage of socialism and under specific historical conditions. Therefore, the 18th Communist Party Congress Report proposed to set "build well-off society" as specific objectives. However, this specific goal does not mean the final solution to people's livelihood, while the ultimate goal of Chinese people's livelihood is still communist proposed by Marx.

#### 1.3.2 People's livelihood Is the Realistic Basis of the State Power Stability

From personal point of view, livelihood issues relate to the broad masses of the people's life problems. However, from national macro point of view, livelihood issues concern the national regime stability problems. Marx was standing in the position of the broad masses of the proletariat to criticize the capitalist society. He suggested that critical capitalism must be the first to establish proletarian political power. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a necessary stage to criticize the capitalist society and establish the communist society. Therefore, at present, solving the problems of people's livelihood is bound to be conducive to the stability of state power.

### **1.3.3 Solving People's Livelihood Issues Appropriately Must Be Under the Basic Principles of Historical Materialism**

Solving people's livelihood issues of socialism with Chinese characteristics can not rely on other means, such as religion, artistic ways, but to get concrete answers from the reality of economic production. Starting from the basic principles of historical materialism, we can see that the solution to the problem of people's livelihood must adhere to the combination of economic development and distributive justice. How to play the role of macro-control by the state in the social mode of production is the fundamental requirement of historical materialism to solve the problems of people's livelihood.

## **2. THREE SECTIONS OF PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOOD CONCEPT OF SOCIALISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS**

Since the reform and opening up, the Communist Party of China has experienced three sections in the process of exploring the concept of people's livelihood. The three sections are completed with the establishment of the theory system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

### **2.1 Poverty Is Not Socialism: People's Livelihood Concept in Deng Xiaoping's Theory**

From Planned Economic System to Reform and Opening up, Chinese people's understanding of the essence of socialism has undergone major changes. In the transformation of mind emancipation and realistic thinking, Deng Xiaoping, as the representative of the Chinese people, becomes conscious that the concept of people's livelihood in Chinese society should come out from the thought of class struggle, from a practical point of view rather than dogma, and from the existing objective reality instead of beyond Conservatism and book worship. Deng has proposed that "poverty is not socialism". "In the development of socialism, we must develop the productive forces, and the poverty is not socialism. We insist on socialism, to build socialism superior to capitalism. We must first get rid of poverty." (Deng, 1993). At the same time, Deng put forward the thesis of "taking economic construction as the center". Transferring the central task of the party and the state to the construction of material productivity is not only an inheritance of Marx's thoughts intention, a respect of the basic condition of the development of material productivity, but also the creation of a new situation in exploring the socialist road. Concretely, to go on the road of socialism in a backward agricultural country and to realize the ideal, the first thing to do is improve economic development and realize the comprehensive modernization of China. Therefore, at the beginning of the socialist concept of people's livelihood is mainly reflected as being aware that the economic

construction is the foundation of the state and social life, and only the reality of economic progress can really represent the superiority of socialist system.

### **2.2 On Behalf of the Interests of the People: People's Livelihood Concept in "Three Represents" Thoughts**

With the deepening of reform and opening up of Chinese society, social differentiation has gradually become more vivid. As the ruling party in the new historical period, the legitimacy of China Communist Party is mainly embodied in that "always represent the development of advanced productive forces, represents the orientation of advanced culture, and always represents the fundamental interests of the people". Therefore, the characteristics of people's livelihood concept in this historical stage mainly reflected in that any force which can promote social productivity and progress, adhere to all advanced culture and system achievements, and accord with the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people, can become the basis and reference to deepen reform, promote the development of the market economy and promote social progress.

As a solution to the problem of people's livelihood, "Three Represents" is on the basis of the construction of china Communist Party. That is to say, the solution of the people's livelihood problems is consistent with the construction of the party itself. The party can not have its own particular interests, and the construction of the party is also the construction of people's livelihood. From the point of view, if the party deviates from the interests of people's broad masses, it certainly is not conducive to solve the livelihood problems. If there is a split between the party's interests and the interests of the people, the essential nature of the party will be changed. As the validity of the proletariat, the China Communist Party's basic mission is to start from the immediate interests of the broad masses of the people. Leaving the fundamental principle, the party will lose its inherent nature, and the problems of people's livelihood cannot be appropriately solved. In a word, in the important thoughts of "Three Representatives", the solution of people's livelihood is achieved through strengthening the construction of the party itself.

### **2.3 People Oriented: The Concept of People's Livelihood in Scientific Outlook on Development**

People's livelihood problems proposed in the scientific outlook on development mainly includes two aspects. The first one is: Under the background of the current global economic crisis, how to achieve economic growth in order to guarantee people's increasing lives requirements? The other one is how to continue economic growth in the context of the ecological environment and resource crisis? Livelihood issues are mainly implemented on the above two issues. For the first question, the Party advocates changing the way of economic growth, and adjusting the

structure of economic growth. For the second problem, the key lies in constructing socialist ecological civilization. In solving the above two problems, we adhere to the basic principle of people-oriented.

Under the new historical conditions, to improve people's livelihood of socialism with Chinese characteristics, is to pursue the overall interests of the society and the people, and to find a good balance between the capital market and the Socialist People's livelihood, so as to give full play to the function of capital, talents, resources, information under the condition of market economy, pay attention to social fairness and justice, and also achieve the realization of effective supply of public products. This is an inevitable problem to achieve distribution of social fairness and justice in building a harmonious society. The overall interests of society and the people is the basis to judge whether people's livelihood of socialism with Chinese characteristics is good or not in this historical period. At the same time, in development methods, scientific development and sustainable development methods should be adopted instead of resources-relied development, for the long-term future of the Chinese society.

### **3. GENERAL PROVISIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOOD IN CHINA**

At present, on the one hand, we should continue to develop the economy, at the same time, we should realize the fair distribution of the economic results since the reform and opening up to meet the needs of the people and people's livelihood. Therefore, the reality of people's livelihood must be thoroughly investigated. The encountered problems include: social economic growth has met challenges; social distribution is still lacking fairness and justice of scale; the polarization between the rich and the poor has not been resolved reasonably; social security, medical, education, housing and other issues still have not been solved appropriately; the market economy malpractice still exists, and the operation mechanism needs to be further improved. Based on these practical problems, the general provisions of people's livelihood concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics have been analyzed.

#### **3.1 Conditions of People's Livelihood Concept With Characteristics**

The prerequisite conditions of the people's livelihood with Chinese characteristics are the realistic national conditions in every historical period of China. People's livelihood in the primary stage of socialism is focused on the improvement of material life and productivity level. People's livelihood under the socialist market economy is to improve the system construction, system reform,

in order to adapt to the times and social progress. The concept of people's livelihood with Chinese characteristics needs to be under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The purpose and task of the Communist Party of China are dedicated to serving the people, in order to achieve national rejuvenation and prosperity. People's livelihood concept with Chinese characteristics stems from the background of Chinese traditional culture, traditional people-oriented thought and Chinese people's practical reason for focusing on earthly life affects the composition of people's livelihood concept. Chinese people's livelihood ideas should be established on the basis of unique cultural tradition and ethics order, in the conflicts and choices between individual and group interests. Chinese ethics emphasizes that maximizing overall interests is the fundamental guarantee for the individual interests, with overall interests being absolute priority. Traditional Chinese ethical order also emphasizes that if individuals can be fully developed in a society, then the social mechanism is good, while a certain degree of individual differences should be admitted.

#### **3.2 Essential Provision of People's Livelihood Concept With Characteristics**

People's livelihood concept with characteristics is the specific, timely, and nationalization presentation of people's livelihood proposed by Marx. People's livelihood concept with Chinese characteristics focuses on how to combine Marxism with China's specific social situation, age, and ethnic characteristics. In China's current stage of history, the essential provision of people's livelihood with Chinese characteristics is to improve people's material life happiness to the level of well-off society, establish and perfect the system, construct equity and justice for the society, so as to let the people live a dignified life. Starting from the actual situation of Chinese society, develop the use and discard the useless of traditional people's livelihood concept is in line with the Chinese traditional culture, is the realistic choice at this stage of obtaining general people's livelihood.

#### **3.3 Departmental Regulations of People's Livelihood Concept With Characteristics**

Characteristics of people's livelihood are concretely embodied in specific aspects of education, health care, housing, social security etc.. Specifically, education should reflect educational fairness and quality, give each individual the equal opportunity and right of being educated, and construct a more reasonable personnel training mechanism and the overall social environment. Under the guiding principle of developing the country through science and education, the education system should be perfected step by step, so as to find appropriate balance between the capital market and intelligent education. Medical care should also find a balance between the capital market and humanistic care, for example, the ethical relationship between doctors

and patients should be carefully dealt with to resolve the conflicts between the medical industry market interests and humanitarian principles. Housing should meet the basic needs of the people, gradually increase the per capita housing area based on China's social development, and reasonably balance relationship between the nature of the property and the nature of the housing. Finally, through the national government's macroeconomic regulation and control behavior, establish a sound social security system from multi position, and promote the harmonious and stable development of the whole society.

#### 4. VALUE BASIS OF THE SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S LIVELIHOOD WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

To solve the problems of people's livelihood with Chinese characteristics, in addition to some specific guiding principles and specific measures above, some useful thoughts basis should also be constructed in the values beneficial to the solution of people's livelihood issues, which means to carry out the socialist core values through. Specifically, it includes the following aspects.

(a) Marx's guiding ideology is the academic theoretical basis of people's livelihood with characteristics. Marx doctrine is the fundamental guiding ideology of China, and is the banner and soul of socialist ideology. The Communist Party of China adheres to the close combination of basic Marxism principles with the concrete practice, resulting in the formation of the Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and "Three Represents" Important Thoughts, the formation of the Scientific Development Concept, Socialist Harmonious Society and other major strategic thinking. These theoretical achievements are the presentations of Marx doctrine in China. The guiding ideology of Marxism is the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the formation of the theoretical basis. If the guiding position of Marxism is shaken, the theory foundation with Chinese socialism characteristics will be shaken, and people's determination and confidence of solidarity consistent walk on the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, will also be shaken. China must follow the Marx doctrine of the people's livelihood concept, and put it into the concrete implementation of the socialist construction with Chinese characteristics.

(b) The common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the core values of people's livelihood concept. Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, taking the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the common ideal of the people of all ethnic groups in China at this stage. The common ideal has linked aims of the Party in the primary stage of socialism,

the state development, national revitalization and personal happiness closely together, has combined the common aspiration of all classes and communities closely together, and constitutes an ideal dimension of people's livelihood idea of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Livelihood is not only a matter of material life, but also a matter of spiritual life. Through this common ideal, the metaphysical spirit rules of people's livelihood concept with characteristics are established. On political, moral and spiritual levels, all the people are united to rally wisdom and strength to overcome difficulties, to create a better future has become an integral part of contemporary people's livelihood concept with Chinese characteristics.

(c) Patriotism as the core of the national spirit and reform and innovation as the core spirit of the times is the spiritual and cultural source of people's livelihood concept. Livelihood issues are linked to the fate of the country. Therefore, to solve the problems of people's livelihood should be rooted in the highest interests of the country. The issues of people's livelihood could get reasonable solutions only in the dignity of the country. Therefore, this requires the broad masses of the people to stick to patriotism and national spirit. This spirit itself also constitutes the spiritual elements of people's livelihood. As the core of the great national spirit, patriotism has been deeply integrated into national consciousness, national character, and national temperament, and become the value orientation for people of all ethnic groups. As the core spirit of the times, reform and innovation is the theoretical character of keeping Marxism in pace with the times, and has deeply rooted into all aspects of China's economic, political, cultural and social construction, has become a strong spiritual force for the people of all ethnic groups and constantly create a new situation in the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

(d) Socialist concept of honor and disgrace is the characteristic of the people's livelihood concept of moral life. With "Eight Honors and Eight Shames" as the main content, the socialist concept of honor and disgrace is the concrete of the socialist core value system, and summarizes the most basic value orientation and behavior criterion of contemporary Chinese society. Livelihood issues are reflected in the moral field. Only when the whole society has established a moral code of social life, could the maximum efficiency of the political, economic, cultural and social life be achieved. People's livelihood includes the promotion of people's moral quality. Socialist concept of honor and disgrace clearly pointed out that under the condition of the socialist market economy, what should be adhered to, promoted, opposed and resisted. Thus has provided the basic value principles and norms of behavior for all members of society to judge behavior of gains and losses, making a moral choice, and determine the value orientation.

Only propagating the socialist concept of honor and disgrace in the whole society, could be the guiding position of Marx doctrine be further strengthened and consolidated, and problems of people's livelihood issues of socialism with Chinese characteristics be effectively solved.

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