

The Application of Sinicized Marxism on Chinese Cultural Selection and Development in the Context of Modern Society

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Abstract

China has over a thousand years of culture and civilization. The culture was first adapted to the pattern of feudal society, and then evolved to reach a stable form. After the opium war, China was faced with frustrations and changes. During a period of dramatic change in international politics in the early 20th century, China (in the condition of a semi-feudal and semi-colonial political system) was finally pushed to walk along the road of Marxism. Moving into the 21st century, as the level of freedom and openness of China's society increases, various kinds of thoughts and ideologies are entering China. Moreover, in these conditions in which society's productivity is greatly improved and the people's living standard has been developed into a certain level, their needs in terms of spirituality and culture are also increasing. To rely solely on Chinese traditional culture, the product of a feudal society, is not the best way to lead China to a solution. There is no doubt that "the modernization of Chinese traditional culture" is a rational choice. The objective of this article is to explain: what is Sinicized Marxism; how the Sinicized Marxism helps China on cultural selection and modernization.

Keywords: The theories of the Sinicized Marxism, Chinese traditional culture, Cultural Modernization

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การประยุกต์ใช้ทฤษฎีมาร์กซิสม์แบบจีนในการคัดสรร ทางวัฒนธรรมและการพัฒนาวัฒนธรรมจีนให้เข้ากับ บริบทของสังคมสมัยใหม่

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บทคัดย่อ

ประเทศจีนมีวัฒนธรรมและอารยธรรมอันยาวนานมากกว่าพันปี วัฒนธรรมเหล่านั้นได้ถูกปรับให้เข้ากับรูปแบบของสังคมศักดินาและกลายเป็นรูปแบบทางวัฒนธรรมที่มั่นคง ภายหลังเหตุการณ์สงครามฝิ่น ประเทศจีนต้องเผชิญกับปัญหาและการเปลี่ยนแปลงมากมาย ท่ามกลางสถานการณ์การเมืองระหว่างประเทศที่รุนแรงในยุคต้นศตวรรษที่ 20 ประเทศจีน (ซึ่งในขณะนั้นอยู่ในระบบการปกครองแบบกึ่งศักดินากึ่งอาณานิคม) สุดท้ายก็ถูกกดดันให้เดินไปตามวิถีแห่งลัทธิมาร์กซ ก้าวเข้าสู่ศตวรรษที่ 21 ในขณะที่สังคมจีนเพิ่มระดับความมั่งคั่งและเป็นประเทศสังคมเปิดมากขึ้น เหล่าวัฒนธรรมและอุดมคติจากภายนอกก็ถาโถมเข้าสู่ประเทศจีน นอกจากนี้ ด้วยเงื่อนไขทางสังคมที่กระบวนการผลิตของสังคมถูกพัฒนาขึ้นจากเดิม รวมทั้งคุณภาพชีวิตของประชากร(ทางด้านวัตถุ) ถูกพัฒนาให้ดีขึ้นในระดับหนึ่ง ดังนั้น ระดับความต้องการของประชากรในด้านจิตวิญญาณและวัฒนธรรมจึงเพิ่มมากขึ้น เมื่อเป็นเช่นนี้ การอาศัยเพียงวัฒนธรรมจีนดั้งเดิม (ซึ่งเป็นผลผลิตจากสังคมศักดินา) ในการตอบสนองความต้องการเหล่านั้นจึงไม่ใช่ทางที่ดีที่สุดที่จะนำพาประเทศจีนไปสู่การแก้ปัญหาในสถานการณ์เช่นนี้ “ทฤษฎีมาร์กซิสม์ที่ถูกเปลี่ยนไปตามลักษณะเฉพาะของจีน” เป็นตัวเลือกที่สมเหตุสมผลอย่างไม่ต้องสงสัย เมื่อกล่าวถึงการปรับวัฒนธรรมจีนดั้งเดิมให้เหมาะสมตามสมัยปัจจุบันแล้ว ทฤษฎีมาร์กซิสม์ที่ถูกเปลี่ยนไปตามลักษณะเฉพาะของจีนนั้นมีบทบาทสำคัญในเรื่องนี้มาก วัตถุประสงค์ของบทความเรื่องนี้คือการอธิบายว่า “ทฤษฎีมาร์กซิสม์ที่ถูกเปลี่ยนไปตามลักษณะเฉพาะของจีน” คืออะไร และทฤษฎีดังกล่าวมีส่วนช่วยประเทศจีนในเรื่องการคัดสรรทางวัฒนธรรมและการปรับเปลี่ยนทางวัฒนธรรมให้เข้ากับบริบทของสังคมสมัยใหม่ได้อย่างไร

คำสำคัญ: ทฤษฎีมาร์กซิสม์แบบจีน วัฒนธรรมจีนดั้งเดิม การปรับเปลี่ยนให้ทันสมัยทางวัฒนธรรม

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The theories of Sinicized Marxism are the products of the integration between the principles of Marxism and the specific conditions of Chinese revolutions and constructions (Li Anzeng, 2009). The current president of China, Xi Jinping, said: “the Chinese communists are emphatic Marxists. Our Party’s guiding ideology is Marxism-Leninism, the thoughts of Mao Zedong and the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics ... Chinese traditional culture has a long and profound history, the processes of the formation and the development of Chinese have generated various kinds of Chinese thought and culture. This reflects the Chinese people’s spiritual pursuit, so that, the core content of it has become the fundamental of Chinese culture’s genes”(Xi Jinping, 2015). According to the president’s speech, it is clear why China has to modify Marxism by sinicization, and this process will lead to the results, “the theories of Sinicized Marxism”.

The theories of Sinicized Marxism are the result of the integration between the principles of Marxism and the specific conditions of the Chinese. They comprise the experiences of using Marxism in China, which contain the process of affirmation, negation of the affirmation, and negation of the negation. This kind of process will always occur as long as Marxism is still growing in Chinese lands. It is the result of using Marxism in Chinese revolutions and constructions which is reflected in the form of quantitative changes gradually transformed to qualitative changes (Tan Peiwen&Tang Zhihua, 2006). It emphasizes the modernization of Marxism; the essential point is the achievement of the theories of Sinicized Marxism in the revolution and construction of contemporary socialism, and its guiding significance in socialism’s revolution and construction in the future. In the 21st century, as the level of freedom and openness of China’s society is increasing, various kinds of thoughts and ideologies are flourishing in China. Among the various trends of

thought in China, (Marxism) Doctrinarism, Confucian Conservatism and Liberalism are the most powerful. These 3 ideologies contain their own historical and realistic basis, and value concerned orientations. However, these 3 ideologies are not suitable for the national conditions of China. Based on the major issues of China's national conditions, these 3 ideologies lack a systematic theoretical system and China's realistic insight. If these 3 ideologies became parts of the mainstream consciousness, they would cause some serious impact on Chinese traditional culture. In this situation, the theories of Sinicized Marxism could be the best choice for the solution. In the case of (Marxism) Doctrinarism, the theories of Sinicized Marxism promote the thoughts of Mao Zedong: "the victory of China's revolutionary struggle has to rely on Chinese comrades (Chinese Marxists) to understand China's situation ... expose the errors and the disadvantages that (Marxist) doctrinaires did to revolutionary cause, and criticize some Red army who feel safe to follow a stereotypical routine and have blind faith in bookish Marxism without doing practical investigation" (Mao Zedong, 1993). In the case of Liberalism, the theories of Sinicized Marxism promote the ability "to modify western things but no westernization". It means the construction of a Chinese socialist cultural system should take its own path, insist on the subjectivity of Chinese culture, but not follow others' steps. In the case of Confucian Conservatism, the theories of Sinicized Marxism propose that Confucianism should be integrated with Marxism, and the results of that process should become a part of the contemporary Chinese cultural system. Moreover, some parts of Confucian thought should be modernized. According to the concepts described above, it can be seen that the theories of Sinicized Marxism not only play complementary roles to those ideologies in Chinese socialist revolution and construction, but also help in retaining the essence of Chinese excellent traditional culture. On the other hand,

Chinese traditional culture is also an original component of Sinicized Marxism's theories. At the beginning of Marxism in China, Chinese Marxists integrated the principles of Marxism with some Chinese traditional cultural aspects. This could help the Chinese people to more easily accept Marxism, and could help in promoting Marxism in China. Obviously, this process also forms the origin of Sinicized Marxism's theories.

In a situation in which cultural globalization has brought various ideologies and multiculturalism into China, "the modernization of traditional culture" is no doubt the best choice to maintain the vitality of Chinese traditional culture. "The modernization of traditional culture" is a complex process of modern culture's formation, development, transformation and international interaction. It is a complex process of cultural elements that include creation, selection, communication and interactional withdrawal. It is through international interactions that many countries catch up, achieve and maintain the world's leading position (China Center for Modernization Research, 2010). Its essence is the transformation of traditional culture to modern culture. The modernization of Chinese traditional culture includes 3 aspects of meaning: 1) to bring foreign culture in and modify it; 2) a modern conversion of traditional culture, and 3) the modernization of cultural concepts. Hereon, the theories of Sinicized Marxism are not only the key to traditional culture's modernization, but are themselves also able to reflect the process of "cultural modernization".

During the period of dramatic political change in international politics in the early 20th century, China (in the condition of a semi-feudal and semi-colonial political system) needed to establish her own cultural system, rather than relying on the capitalist countries. The complex historical background of China determined that Chinese people should walk along the path to Marxism. From the geographical

dimension, Marxism is a foreign ideology, which criticizes on capitalism. Although, along the process of Marxism implementation or the Marxism Sinicization, China had to experience 2 failures: 1) the failure on seize power during the Great Revolution (1927), and 2) the Cultural Revolution (1966). However, the Chinese Communist Party still believed in Sinicized Marxism and used it to lead the Chinese people to the victory of the revolution and set up a socialist culture with Chinese characteristics. This shows us the first aspect of cultural modernization's meaning, **“to bring foreign culture in and modify it”**.

While Chinese traditional culture was not able to support the needs of the construction of socialist modernization, and the implication of the entire western culture would finally make China become “the follower”. In this situation, **“the modern conversion of traditional culture”** was the solution for China. “The modern conversion of traditional culture” is a selective reference. It is the process of absorption of western advanced culture, and the modification of traditional culture with advanced culture. Huang Kaifeng believes that the process of traditional culture's modernization is the continuous absorption of Sinicized Marxism's achievements, and the achievement of transformational creation (Huang Kaifeng, 2010).

“The modernization of cultural concepts” is mainly reflected in 3 aspects of the transformation of traditional cultural concepts to modern cultural concepts: 1) from material culture to a combination of material culture and spiritual culture; 2) from a closed social system to an open social system, and 3) from single development to diversified developments.

In the conditions in which society's productivity is greatly improved, and the people's living standard (material dimension) is developed to a certain level, people's need for spirituality and culture is increasing. To rely solely on Chinese traditional culture

will not allow the achievement of spiritual and cultural constructions and modernization. This will be the mission of Sinicized Marxism's theories to provide theoretical guidance and support.

Modern Chinese history (1840-1949) is an example of a painful history which the closed social system gave to China. This history has proved that a closed social system could lead to a lagging culture. The only solution is to open up. In Sinicized Marxism's theories, there is a clear view point that we must firmly follow the path of Sinicized socialism; we take neither the old closed way, nor the wrong way, which is to entirely change ourselves to follow others (Xi Jinping, 2014).

According to Chinese history, Confucian culture acts as a ruling position, or "governance ideology". It is the dominant aspect of Chinese traditional culture. However, this kind of culture cannot really adapt to the characteristics of cultural globalization, or "diversification". Cultural diversity contains both advantages and disadvantages. If we cannot correctly utilize cultural diversity, it could lead to the value differentiation, the confusion of the social moral standard, or to social conflict. The scientific nature of Marxism has posed the criticism that there are general rules of science which are relevant to the social and natural world; there should be compatibility and complementarity between different cultures. This gene in Sinicized Marxism's theories shows that Sinicized Marxism could be the solution to the problems in Chinese cultural modernization.

Since the opium war, the main point of China's social transformation and construction has been the transformation and modernization of culture. In moving forward with the sinicization of Marxism, China has basically achieved the traditional cultural modernization, which is the inevitable mission of this era. In this case, Sinicized Marxism's theories are the rational choice. They not only provide the way to continue the development for Chinese traditional culture, but the

theories themselves also contain the essence of Chinese traditional culture. This characteristic makes them easier to integrate with Chinese traditional culture, and strengthens the vitality of Chinese traditional culture. It enables Chinese traditional culture to properly integrate with other ideologies which have been brought by cultural globalization. This helps China to overcome the challenge and take the opportunity of development which has been brought by cultural globalization.

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