

Research on the Development of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics from the Perspective of Four Self-Confidence

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Abstract

The four self-confidences theory is a scientific proposition advocated by general secretary Xi Jinping in the context of profound changes in party conditions, national conditions, and is also the powerful driving force for building socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era. This paper discusses the need of “four self-confidences” in the development, establishment and practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics from three aspects: new situation, new foundation and new path, so as to better promote the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era with “four self-confidences”.

Keywords

Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, New Era, The Four Self-Confidences, Political System and Culture

1. Introduction

On the reports of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, President Xi Jinping called on the whole Party to strengthen confidence in path, guiding theories, political system and culture, not follow the old road of closure and rigidity, nor take the evil road of changing flags; we should maintain our political strength and perseverance, persist in doing things in an active and prosperous way and always adhere to and develop socialism with Chinese characteristics (Xi, 2017). The four self-confidences theory is a scientific proposition advocated by general secretary Xi Jinping in the context of profound changes in party conditions, national conditions, and is also the powerful driving force for building socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era. Today, we are closer to the goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation than at any

time in history. We are more confident and able to achieve this goal than at any time in history. This is the fundamental reason why our party put forward “four self-confidences”. Clarifying why we should be confident, why we can be confident, and how we can be confident is a problem-oriented way to gain a deeper understanding of the important four self-confidences assertions. The important statement of “four self-confidences” creatively expanded the pedigree of “three self-confidences” of socialism with Chinese characteristics put forward by the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, highlighted the cultural foundation, cultural essence and cultural ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and marked our party’s more clear and opened cultural construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Only with a deep understanding of scientific connotation, can we further strengthen the “four self-confidences”, ensure that our country and party advance triumphantly in the right direction, and “show unprecedented bright prospects of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”

2. New Circumstances: Socialism with Chinese Characteristics Need the “Four Self-Confidences”

The trend of history has determined that the “four self-confidences” is an inevitable outcome of the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Started from material life, Marxism proves the historical evolution of politics and spirit from economic basis, dissects the inner contradictions of social movement, points out the conflict and alternation between two social forms and systems of capitalism and socialism, and for the first time reveals the general law of social and historical development. In the 21st century, it’s an irreversible trend that the international communist movement continues to deepen and constantly demonstrate the powerful superiority of socialism. The confrontation between capitalism and socialism will be more intense and complicated, which confirms the twists and turns of the way forward. The irreversibility of the general trend of social development and the meandering of the road are dialectical unity. Socialism with Chinese characteristics is a distinctive symbol of the international communist movement in the 21st century. Socialist China has become an important participant in promoting this general historical trend and a front in the sharp struggle between the two major systems and two forms of society. The general trend of history has determined that socialism with Chinese characteristics can only move forward, continue to practice “inner ability”, enhance their strong cohesion and attraction. China must lead the new development of Marxism in the 21st century with confidence.

The call for “four self-confidences” is an inherent requirement for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. “In today’s world, the international situation is undergoing unprecedented changes, in today’s China, socialism with Chinese characteristics is advancing in an all-round way.” Ideas are rooted in times and theories in practice. Peace and development are the theme of

today's era, but destabilizing factors that affect peace and development still exist. As a major force in maintaining world peace and promoting common development, China needs to take a more active stance, a stronger sense of responsibility and more constructive actions to contribute its share to world development. The current era of political multi-polarization, economic globalization, cultural diversity and network informatization are increasingly prominent. The international environment and the test of the times faced by socialism with Chinese characteristics are still severe. It is necessary to fully integrate the development vision of the world trend, strengthen the independent development stance, broaden the development path of Chinese characteristics, and provide a Chinese plan for building a global community of human destiny. In today's era, civilized exchanges, state cooperation, and non-governmental exchanges have become more and more normal, and the world is more closely connected than ever before. At the same time, the Western countries are constantly accelerating the daily penetration of China's ideology. Marxism's guiding position has encountered certain challenges. It needs to be clearly guided by the mainstream, guarded by solid positions, and clearly resists the wrong trend of thought, thus creating a clean and positive social atmosphere, competing for the right to speak with Chinese flag. Contribute China's strength, provide China's solutions, and raise the banner of China, We must jointly establish "four self-confidences" and enhance our self-confidence in nation and era.

The ruling situation stipulates that "four self-confidences" is an important driving force for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. In the historical process of revolution, construction and reform, the Communist Party of China has transformed itself from a revolutionary party to a ruling party, from partial ruling to national ruling, and constantly strengthened its ruling ability in one after another ruling test, becoming a strong leadership core of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The ruling situation of the new era party has undergone new changes. Forty years of reform and opening up have entered the deep-water zone and attacked the hardship period. The concrete manifestations are that the economic operation pressure increases, the political construction process and the social mass development needs to be further improved and strengthened, the social interest contradictions overlaps, and the ecological civilization construction is becoming more and more urgent, etc., the communist party of China faces a heavy task and severe ruling pressure. Moreover, the great project of Chinese party building is also facing "four major dangers", which affects the overall promotion of the "four comprehensive" strategic layout. In the face of new situations and new problems that have emerged at home and abroad, especially the current Sino-US trade issues, Hong Kong violence, etc., the Chinese Communist Party must strengthen its political resolve, strengthen political deterrence, and seize political opportunities, lead the Chinese people to accelerate development and effectively defuse various risks and challenges. A firm political strategy requires strong political confidence. "Four self-confidences" is not

only political self-confidence, but also national self-confidence. It is an important driving force for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

3. New Foundation: Socialism with Chinese Characteristics Assist the “Four Confidence”

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: “In today’s world, to say which party, which country, and which nation can be confident, then the Communist Party of China, the People’s Republic of China, and the Chinese nation are the most justified and confident.” (Xi, 2016). The greatest confidence we can have stemmed from the eternal brilliance of Marxism, from the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics, from the mighty power of the people and from the comparative advantage of our international perspective.

Comrade Deng Xiaoping once pointed out: “I firmly believe that there will be more people in the world who agree with Marxism, because Marxism is science.” (Xi, 2014). It is under the guidance of Marxism that the Chinese Communist Party led the Chinese people to fulfill the historical task of national independence and national prosperity, and realized the great historical transformation from standing up to being rich and then getting stronger. As General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: “Marxism has always been the guiding ideology of our party and the country. It is a powerful ideological weapon for us to understand the world, grasp the law, pursue the truth, and transform the world.” (Xi, 2018). Moreover, Marxism’s distinct practical character and concern of the times determine that it is a guiding principle and method for advancing with the times. It is because of its deep roots in historical soil and practical practice that it can enhance the theoretical appeal and vitality in the era of constant changes. We can be confident because that we adhere to the belief in Marxism, adhere to the popularization of Marxism in China, and make the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics shine with glory.

Based on the basic national and era conditions, the Communist Party of China has led the Chinese people to create a socialist road with Chinese characteristics and launched the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics that has attracted worldwide attention. From an economic point of view, China has grown from the 11th largest economy in the world at the beginning of reform and opening up to the second largest economy today, and its contribution to the world economy has become increasingly important and has become an important engine for world economic development. From a political point of view, the political system of the people’s democracy has shown greater and greater vitality. A modern political system included with the people’s congress system, multi-party cooperation and political consultation system, ethnic regional autonomy system, and grassroots self-government system has been basically established. Political modernization has achieved remarkable progress. From a cultural point of view, the soft power of the country’s culture has been significantly enhanced, socialist literature and art have prospered, and the prosperity of the socialist cul-

ture with Chinese characteristics has been promoted with cultural self-confidence. From the perspective of social construction, social harmony and civilization have been promoted by pushing social governance modernization and innovating social governance systems and mechanisms. From an ecological point of view, environmental protection and resource conservation have become the normal dependence of economic development, and the harmonious coexistence of man and nature has been upheld. The construction of ecological civilization has increasingly become a key area of government-led, social participation and public support. Road self-confidence is derived from the effectiveness of the socialist road with Chinese characteristics developed in great practice. The theoretical self-confidence stems from the scientificity of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics formed in great practice. The institutional self-confidence stems from the completeness of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics built in great practice. The cultural self-confidence stems from the advanced nature of the socialist culture with Chinese characteristics that is acclimated in great practice.

The masses are the source of strength for the development of the party and the state, and they are the foundation of our confidence. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that the people are real heroes and the people are the fundamental force that determines the future and destiny of the party and the country, and historical greatness must rely on them to create. The road of socialism with Chinese characteristics was pioneered in the great practice by the people. A typical example is the “red handprint” of 18 farmers in Xiaogang Village, Fengyang County which opened the curtain of China’s rural reform. An important foundation of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is historical materialism, which comes from the great practice of people’s production and life, and finally points to the people’s practice. People-oriented is the eternal inner theme of the theoretical system. The greatest feature of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics is to uphold the people’s democracy and ensure the people’s mastery and ensure that they enjoy the most authentic and extensive democratic rights. The creative subject of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics is the broadest masses of the people who created a new situation in the construction of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics. Only when we put the people in the highest position, always serve them wholeheartedly and insist on all for the people, all rely on the people, then the party and the state can have firm people’s support, no matter how the international situation changes and no matter how complicated the domestic development is. No hardships are beyond the reach of hundreds of millions of people work together. It is precisely because of the majestic power of the people that the “four self-confidences” has a more solid foundation and broader space for development.

Compare makes identification, and brings more confidence. The great achievements of socialism with Chinese characteristics have profoundly changed the trend and pattern of world development, especially in the post-financial cri-

sis era, China's sustained and strong economic and social development has formed a stark contrast with the general decline of Western countries. It can be said that the changes from flourish to decadence of the monopoly capital in the United States and the Western and great success of the socialism with Chinese characteristics are becoming the feature of the times. Data arguments are more convincing. China's economy is the main driver of global economic growth. From 1978 to 2018, China's GDP grew at an average annual rate of 9.4%, and its annual contribution to world economic growth was around 18%, second only to the United States. In particular, since 2013, China's contribution to the world economy has remained at around 30%, surpassing that of the United States. In addition, China has become the largest trading partner of 120 countries and regions in the world, contributing to the global employment of millions of people. Moreover, China has become a leader in regional development. The initiatives of the AIIB and the "Belt and Road" have turned from ideals to actions and achieved positive results. China has increasingly become an important force in the process of economic globalization. In contrast, the developed western capitalist countries represented by the United States have successively fallen into the social running state of "economic stagnation, lack of institutional failure, and intensified social conflicts", which have increasingly exposed the drawbacks and limitations of the capitalist social system. In this international perspective of Chinese and Western comparisons, we are more determined that we can be confident and will demonstrate the international influence of socialism with Chinese characteristics with strong national confidence.

4. New Route: Socialism with Chinese Characteristics Fulfill the "Four Confidences"

Road self-confidence is the practical basis of "four self-confidences". We must continue to adhere to the political line of "one center, two basic points" and regard economic construction as the fundamental way to cope with the outstanding problems arising from reform and opening up. We should constantly liberate and develop productive forces, scientifically examine the current situation of productivity and production relations, create favorable conditions, break down all unfavorable factors that hinder the development of productive forces, win the battle against poverty, and build a well-off society in an all-round way. We must seize the main contradictions of our society, regard the people's longing for a better life as the starting point and the foothold of all work, resolutely implement the people-centered development ideology, and enhance the people's sense of happiness in safeguarding and improving people's wellbeing. It is necessary to coordinate and promote the overall layout of the "five in one" and the "four comprehensive" strategic layout, and strengthen the historical height, realistic breadth and future depth of the development of the socialist road with Chinese characteristics in systematic thinking, overall thinking, and dialectical thinking, and embark on a broad road to the socialist modernization, to people's better

life, and to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Theoretical self-confidence is the ideological guidance of “four self-confidences”. We must strengthen our theoretical consciousness, thoroughly study the classic works of Marxism, deeply understand the historical process of Marxism in China, and deeply identify with the theoretical wisdom of socialism with Chinese characteristics. At present, the focus of theoretical self-confidence lies in the in-depth study of Xi Jinping’s thoughts on socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era. It is the collective wisdom of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core since the 18th National Congress, and is the latest theoretical achievement of Marxism in China. Among them, many new expositions of General Secretary Xi Jinping, such as “Chinese Dream”, “Building a Community of shared future for mankind”, “Taking the People as the Center”, etc., highlight the distinctive characteristics of the times in the process of popularization. They are significant innovations to the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and point out the way forward for future development. We must systematically study the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, master its main theoretical achievements and rich connotations, clarify the internal structure and main line of development of the theoretical system, so as to better guide real practice and continue to develop and improve the theoretical system with Chinese characteristics in practice, make the socialist theoretical system maintain its long-lasting vitality and strong explanatory power.

Institutional self-confidence is an important guarantee for “four self-confidences”. We must strengthen institutional development and more clearly recognize that institutional issues are fundamental, long-term, and decisive. We must vigorously develop socialist democracy and adhere to the path of socialist political development with Chinese characteristics. General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out that “China’s socialist democracy is the most extensive, true and effective democracy that safeguards the fundamental interests of the people”. We must innovate and build a scientific institutional system to ensure that the people are the masters of the country on the basis of insisting and promoting the existing democratic system. We must actively promote the organic unity of the party’s leadership, the people being the masters of the country, and the rule of law. We must not separate them apart. The most fundamental of these three is the party’s leadership, which is the greatest advantage of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics. In the process of modernizing state governance, we must deepen the reform of the party and state institutions, steadily push forward the reform of the political system, and effectively promote and optimize the political power structure and institutional arrangements. Improve the operational and executive power of the system, take the function optimization as the starting point, and implement the system utility in a real way, and truly make the system available and feasible.

Cultural self-confidence is the spiritual motivation of “four self-confidences”.

Cultural self-confidence is a more basic, broader and deeper self-confidence. It is a more fundamental, deeper and more lasting force in the development of a country or a nation. We should inherit and carry forward the fine traditional Chinese culture, promote its creative transformation and innovative development, inherit and carry forward the revolutionary culture, enrich the development of socialist advanced culture, and deeply understand the inherent laws of cultural development in a complete cultural development pedigree. We should actively cultivate and practice the core values of socialism, strengthen the ideological and moral construction of the whole people, and inspire and arm people with lofty ideals and beliefs. Adhere to the people-centered creative orientation, promote the reform of the cultural system, push the development of cultural undertakings and cultural industries, and provide favorable conditions for socialist culture to “contend with a hundred schools of thought contend” and “let a hundred flowers bloom” in various ways. The key to cultural self-confidence lies in enhancing the cohesive appeal of socialist ideology. This requires the party to firmly grasp the leadership in ideological work, enlarge and strengthen the mainstream ideological opinion, improve the ideological work ability and innovative working methods in the new media era, and hold the key position of the ideological struggle. To strengthen cultural self-confidence, we should participate in more dialogue of world civilizations, continue to enhance the international influence of Chinese culture, strive to improve the voice of international discourse, and better build the Chinese spirit, Chinese values and Chinese atmosphere.

Adhering to the “four self-confidence” is the internal power to push forward the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and also the fundamental guarantee for building a moderately prosperous society in an all-round way and realizing the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. As long as we stick to the road of self-confidence, theoretical self-confidence, institutional self-confidence and cultural self-confidence with Chinese characteristics, we will have boundless power to realize lofty ideals, face all difficulties and challenges without fear, and unswervingly open up new horizons and create new miracles. As long as we persist in achieving lofty ideals, we will further stimulate Chinese characteristics without slack, unwavering and unbending confidence in socialist road, theoretical system, system and culture.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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