

Pathways for Combining the Fundamental Principles of Marxism with Outstanding Traditional Chinese Culture

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Abstract

In a diversified era, achieving the creative transformation and innovative development of outstanding traditional Chinese culture necessitates combining the fundamental principles of Marxism with China's excellent cultural heritage. As a scientific worldview and methodology, Marxism provides powerful theoretical tools for the development of human society. Outstanding traditional Chinese culture is our invaluable treasure, encompassing concepts such as the unity of knowledge and action, harmony between humanity and nature, and the philosophy of people-oriented governance. These ideas share intrinsic connections with Marxist principles. In the context of the new era, adopting scientific measures to achieve an organic combination of Marxism with traditional Chinese culture contributes to building a socialist cultural system with Chinese characteristics, enhancing national cultural confidence and cultural innovation vitality. Therefore, in-depth research into the pathways for combining Marxist principles with outstanding traditional Chinese culture is of great significance for promoting the construction of a culturally strong country and realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Keywords

Fundamental principles of Marxism; Outstanding traditional Chinese culture; Pathways for combination.

1. Similarities and Differences Between the Fundamental Principles of Marxism and Outstanding Traditional Chinese Culture

From multiple dimensions, the fundamental principles of Marxism and outstanding traditional Chinese culture share profound similarities but also exhibit significant differences (see Table 1). First, both uphold people-oriented principles, focusing on comprehensive human development and social progress. This is a commonality between the two. However, while Marxism places more emphasis on the pursuit of human liberation and freedom, traditional Chinese culture advocates benevolence and harmony, emphasizing personal cultivation and social responsibility [1]. Second, in terms of theoretical methods and practical applications, Marxism is based on historical materialism and dialectics, emphasizing class struggle and social revolution. In contrast, traditional Chinese culture focuses more on moral education, ritual norms, and harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. In conclusion, both share common values in pursuing social justice and promoting human civilization's progress. These shared values provide a rich theoretical foundation for the sinicization of Marxism.

Table 1. Similarities and Differences Between Marxism and Outstanding Traditional Chinese Culture

	Basic Principles of Marxism	Excellent traditional Chinese culture
Similarities	Emphasize people-oriented, pay attention to the overall development of people and social progress	Advocate benevolence, harmony, pay attention to personal cultivation and social responsibility
Difference	Based on historical materialism and dialectics, it emphasizes class struggle and social revolution	It focuses on moral education, etiquette norms and harmonious coexistence between man and nature

2. The Importance of Combining Marxism with Outstanding Traditional Chinese Culture

2.1. The Innovative Nature of President Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era

The President Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is deeply rooted in Marxist theory, positions, ideas, and methods. When addressing the era's dual task of "two integrations," it demonstrates a strong sense of problem orientation. This thought emphasizes that "without strong cultural confidence, there will be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Thus, it regards outstanding traditional Chinese culture as a key factor influencing national rejuvenation. Promoting the "second integration" is an inevitable trend of the times. The prerequisite for advancing the "second integration" is to establish cultural confidence. To build strong cultural confidence, we must not only trace historical origins to clarify the developmental context, future direction, and strengths of Chinese culture but also combine it with contemporary dimensions, such as exploring new strategies in governance, ideological education, and ideological cultivation[2-3]. Using the fundamental principles of Marxism in these domains effectively resolves theoretical and practical challenges.

2.2. Advancing the Development of Marxism's Sinicization in the New Era

In the context of the new era, facing complex and volatile domestic and international situations, the proposal and practice of the "two integrations" inject new impetus into the development of Marxism's sinicization. It promotes a closer integration between Marxism and China's reality. The reason Marxism could take root and thrive in Chinese society lies in the inclusiveness of Chinese civilization towards foreign cultures. Marxist theories, ideas, and viewpoints can permeate the Chinese cultural system. Outstanding traditional Chinese culture, as a representative of advanced Chinese civilization, only deepens its explanatory power when the fundamental principles of Marxism are integrated into it. In a sense, the historical process of Marxism's sinicization is also a process where traditional Chinese culture constructs an "interpretive paradigm" for it. Only by transforming the fundamental principles of Marxism into theories that resonate with the people's thinking can it gain broader acceptance and deeper influence.

2.3. Revitalizing the Vitality of Outstanding Traditional Chinese Culture

Currently, the proposal and practice of the "second integration" help revitalize the vitality of outstanding traditional Chinese culture. As a cultural treasure that predates Marxist theory, outstanding traditional Chinese culture, with its millennia of development and accumulation, has become a source of soft power and cultural confidence for the Chinese people. However, to

maximize the value of this soft power, it must be scientifically interpreted and transformed into ideas and philosophies acceptable to contemporary individuals. Marxism, as a science, extracts the elements most aligned with modern temperament from traditional Chinese cultural concepts, ideas, and spirit, essentially optimizing traditional Chinese culture. On this basis, the two further combine to jointly contribute to the development of Chinese society. From another perspective, the "second integration" enables outstanding traditional Chinese culture to transcend temporal boundaries, passing from ancient times to the modern era, continuing to play a pivotal role in contemporary society, and showcasing its enduring value[4-5].

3. Opportunities for Combining the Fundamental Principles of Marxism with Outstanding Traditional Chinese Culture

3.1. Creating a Favorable Ideological Environment

In the new era, under the leadership of the President, ideological work has been regarded as the key to establishing the core values of the nation and the spiritual essence of the people. Significant progress has been made in governance, leading to comprehensive and fundamental positive transformations in China's ideological landscape. This transformation has objectively created a favorable ideological environment for achieving the second "integration" (see Figure 1).

With the resolute efforts of organizations at all levels, the principles of ideological work have become more prominent, ideological management has been reinforced, and the influence of ideological guidance has significantly increased. Organizations in the new era must adhere to the essence of Marxism, hold high its great banner, and explicitly reaffirm the continuation and development of Marxism. This provides strong political assurance for the second "integration." Furthermore, the one-dimensional guiding position of ideology has been established in the form of fundamental institutional frameworks, clearly defining the ideological principles of the second "integration." Through continuous theoretical study, Marxism has been widely disseminated among the people, and the innovative theoretical achievements of various organizations have gained deeper public recognition, thereby opening broad ideological space for the second "integration."

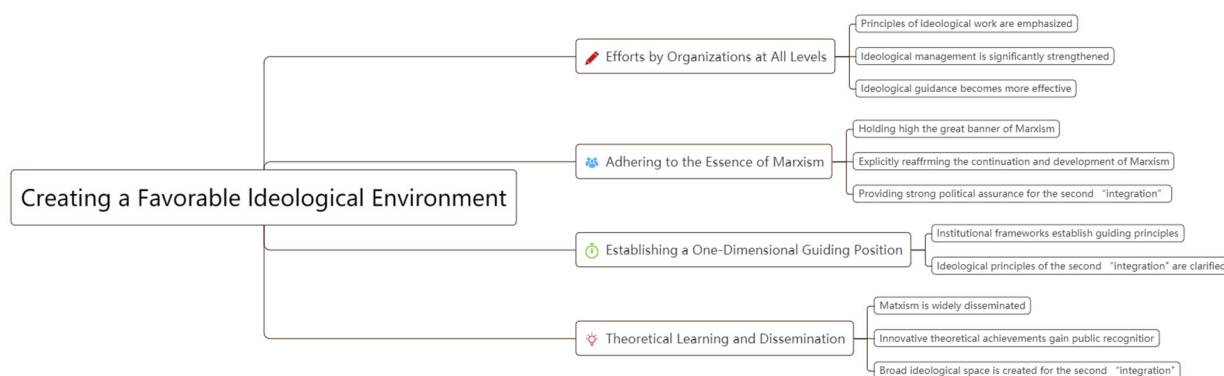


Figure 1. Creating a Favorable Ideological Environment

3.2. Meeting the Spiritual and Cultural Needs of the People

Since the new era, significant progress in material civilization has resulted in profound changes in China's primary social contradictions, with a marked improvement in people's material lives. This progress has fueled an increasing demand for spiritual and cultural enrichment. On the foundation of material wealth, people increasingly seek higher-quality spiritual and cultural experiences to elevate their spiritual realm and achieve spiritual abundance[6-7]. A notable

phenomenon is the preference for meaningful, valuable, and profound cultural products, coupled with growing resistance to vulgar, superficial, and sensational works. This demand for spiritual culture is positively significant for the second “integration,” as both Marxism and traditional Chinese culture are valuable resources for satisfying this need. Compared to other cultural and ideological resources, Marxism’s strengths lie in its scientific and truthful nature, while traditional Chinese culture excels in its local relevance and affinity. Together, they cater to the growing spiritual and cultural needs of the people to varying degrees.

3.3. Enhancing the Cultural Level of the People

Education is the cornerstone of a nation’s development. Since 2012, under the strong leadership of organizations at all levels, China’s education system has made remarkable progress, undergoing profound changes (see Table 2). The comprehensive development of all forms of education has provided more opportunities for the populace, significantly improving their cultural levels. This undoubtedly facilitates the second “integration.” Both Marxism and traditional Chinese culture require a certain level of cultural awareness among the populace. For Marxism, a foundational level of knowledge is necessary to spark interest and enable an appreciation of its profound ideas, ultimately mastering its theoretical essence. For traditional Chinese culture, individuals with cultural literacy are better equipped to identify gaps in their knowledge and distinguish between the valuable and the outdated aspects of the culture. With a discerning attitude, they can engage in the study of traditional culture, discarding the false and retaining the true. As the cultural level of the people continues to rise, the new era presents enriched potential and dynamic forces for advancing the second “integration.”

Table 2. Changes in China’s Educational Landscape Since 2012

Stage of education	Situation in 2012	Situation in 2021
Preschool education	There are 181,000 kindergartens with 36.858 million children in them,	There are 295,000 kindergartens with 48.052 million children in them
China compulsory education	There were 229,000 primary schools, with 96.959 million students; There are 53,000 junior middle schools with 47.631 million students	There are 207,000 schools providing compulsory education, with 160 million students
High school education	There are 27,000 senior secondary schools, with an enrollment of 45.953 million	22,000 senior secondary education schools with 39.764 million students,
Higher education	There are 2,790 institutions of higher learning, with a total enrollment of 33.252 million	There are 3,012 institutions of higher education, with a total enrollment of 44.3 million people

4. Pathways for Combining the Fundamental Principles of Marxism with Outstanding Traditional Chinese Culture

4.1. Upholding Marxism’s Guiding Position

The October Revolution introduced Marxism to China. Through its continuous sinicization and adaptation to modern times, abundant theoretical achievements have been made. Developing a socialist culture with Chinese characteristics requires adhering to Marxism’s guiding position while promoting the inheritance and innovative development of traditional Chinese culture to ensure its enduring vitality. Marxism posits that the economic base determines the

superstructure, with culture being part of the latter[8]. Its exploration of the relationship between culture, politics, and economics provides inexhaustible momentum for the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional Chinese culture in the new era. In this context, universities must adhere to socialist education principles, with Marxism as the foundation. Ideological and political courses in universities serve as the primary platform for imparting ideological and political education. Teachers should base their instruction on Marxist principles while exploring the concepts and values within traditional Chinese culture. This approach not only enhances students' cultural literacy but also helps them develop a correct worldview, life view, and values.

4.2. Promoting the Sinicization of Marxism Through Pragmatism

The "two integrations" are vital guarantees for advancing contemporary Chinese Marxism and 21st-century Marxism. Whether integrating with reality or traditional culture, the process must be rooted in pragmatism, showcasing flexibility and adaptability while continuing the sinicization of Marxism. China opposes dogmatic interpretations of Marxism, emphasizing its openness. As Marxism is not a static doctrine, it must remain dynamic and resilient in revealing the laws of human society. From its early stages, Marxism has shown adaptability. For example, Marx and Engels' early works focused on the capitalist context, analyzing concepts like primitive accumulation, class exploitation, surplus value, and productive forces. Applying these principles to China required acknowledging the heterogeneity between Western and Eastern civilizations, thereby formulating strategies for sinicization.

4.3. Focusing on the Exploration and Elucidation of Commonalities and Differences

Marxism and excellent traditional Chinese culture are both complementary and interconnected, containing abundant theoretical genes and individual characteristics. We should deeply explore and elucidate their commonalities and differences to promote integration, mutual learning, and joint development. On the one hand, attention should be paid to uncovering the commonalities between the two. These commonalities form the critical condition for Marxism to take root and flourish in China. Emphasis should be placed on exploring and elaborating the overlapping and similar aspects of the two, which is currently a significant focus of academic research and discussion[9]. On the other hand, attention should also be directed toward absorbing and transforming aspects unique to excellent traditional Chinese culture, which Marxist principles seldom or do not address, and vice versa. While there are overlapping and similar elements between the two, they also exhibit distinct specializations and differences. Therefore, we need to integrate the unique content of Marxism with the essence of excellent traditional Chinese culture, preserving the quintessence of traditional culture while embracing the advanced ideas of Marxism.

5. Conclusion

Excellent traditional Chinese culture originates from thousands of years of accumulation, while Marxist principles have withstood the test of centuries. Both serve as essential pillars in realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Guided by Marxism, we must inherit and develop excellent traditional Chinese culture to foster the flourishing of various undertakings in China. The integration of Marxist principles with excellent traditional Chinese culture represents a critical task in constructing socialist culture with Chinese characteristics in the new era. By deeply uncovering the intrinsic connections between the two, we can highlight their numerous points of alignment in value pursuit, social development, and humanistic care. Thus, integrating the two can enrich the theoretical system of Marxism's Sinicization, endow excellent

traditional Chinese culture with new era connotations, and provide robust cultural support for advancing the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

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