

The Development Course, Theoretical Connotation and Contemporary Value of the Soul of MAO Zedong Thought

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Abstract

Mao 's ideology, which was the cornerstone for the Communist Party of China's significant triumphs in the New Democratic Revolution, socialist revolution, and national development, encapsulates three essential aspects: — the pursuit of seek the truth from facts, the concept of mass line, and the pursuit of independence. These enduring principles have not only played pivotal roles throughout history but continue to demonstrate remarkable vitality and contemporary relevance in the new era. This study explores the developmental trajectory, theoretical essence, and modern significance of Mao Zedong Thought's living soul, providing theoretical foundations for advancing transformative reforms, promoting common prosperity for all, and realizing the Second Centenary Goal. By examining its practical applications and theoretical evolution across historical periods, along with the contemporary enrichment of its concepts in the new era, this paper reveals its vital relevance to modern society.

Keywords

MAO Zedong Thought; seeking truth from facts; mass line; independence; development history; theoretical connotation; contemporary value.

1. Introduction

The essence of Mao Zedong Thought lies in deriving truth from facts, fostering independence, and adhering to the mass line, a concept Deng highlighted in his leadership of "Resolution on Certain Historical Issues of the Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China"[1]. The essence of Mao Zedong Thought permeates and is embedded within the entire Mao Zedong Thought system, rooted in a solid Marxist philosophical foundation. This approach forms the core methodology and guiding tenet of the Communist Party of China, enduring during its 90-year battle and serving as the primary conduit linking the socialist theory with Chinese traits to Mao Zedong Thought. Additionally, the living soul of Mao Zedong Thought embodies the Sinicization of Marxist dialectical thinking methods, containing the rational core of the three holistic principles of Marxist value philosophy, while demonstrating the red theoretical genes and character of Sinicized Marxism. Mao Zedong Thought's vibrant essence attains a harmonious blend of scientific principles and philosophical value in dialectical reasoning, connecting facts with values via the logical consistency of philosophical thought and practical reasoning. Nowadays, the essence of Mao Zedong Thought continues to serve as the ideological tool for the Communist Party of China to partake in significant battles, construct grand initiatives, achieve noble goals, and fulfill grand aspirations. The living soul of Mao Zedong Thought serves as the action guide that led the Communist Party of China to victory in revolution, construction, and reform. In the new era, the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi at its core continues to uphold seeking truth from facts, the mass line, and independence, continuously enriching, deepening, and expanding these principles in practice,

elevating them to new heights. Analyzing the evolution of Mao Zedong Thought's living essence, interpreting its scientific principles, and summarizing its contemporary relevance holds profound significance for advancing transformative reforms, promoting common prosperity, and achieving the Second Centenary Goal. This ideological core has permeated China's revolutionary, construction, and reform processes since emerging from the Party's "opposition to dogmatism" doctrine throughout the era of the New Democratic Revolution[2]. Through the Party's leadership in socialist practices, it has been continuously enriched and refined. The core scientific principles of this evolving philosophy, anchored in the pursuit of truth through facts, the concept of the mass line, and autonomy, are crucial in modern times. A thorough understanding of its developmental trajectory and philosophical depth enables us to better address modern challenges, stay true to our founding mission, and fulfill our historical responsibilities.

2. The evolution of MAO Zedong Thought's living essence

2.1. The New Democratic Revolution Era: Guided by the vibrant spirit of MAO Zedong Thought, the Communist Party of China accomplished the significant goal of constructing a new nation, toppled the "three big mountains," and secured triumph in the ensuing democratic revolution.

In the New Democratic Revolution Era, guided scientifically by Mao Zedong Thought's dynamic spirit—pursuing factual truth, widespread support, and autonomy—Chinese Communists rallied and guided the Chinese populace through strenuous battles, culminating in the remarkable achievement of nation-building. In this era, the Communist Party of China merged Marxism-Leninism's fundamental tenets with the tangible actions of the Chinese revolution, forging a revolutionary trajectory distinct to China. The Party triumphed in toppling the triad of peaks - imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism - through the land revolution, armed conflict, and building base areas, thus concluding the period of China's semi-colonial and semi-feudal societal structure. The Party, through sustained revolutionary efforts, steadfastly followed the appropriate political stance, rallied and depended on the wide spectrum of workers and peasants, and executed widespread collective front work. Finally, the year 1949 marked its triumph in the New Democratic Revolution, the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the attainment of national sovereignty and the emancipation of the populace, and the commencement of a fresh epoch in China's evolution.

2.2. In the period marked by the Socialist Revolution and Construction, steered by Mao 's vibrant ideology, the Communist Party of China successfully merged Marxism with the socialist revolution, leading to China's formation.

2.2.1. Embrace realism: merging theoretical concepts with practical application

A fundamental tenet of Mao Zedong Thought is to derive veracity from actual data, focusing on deriving from reality and merging theoretical concepts with practical application. In the era of socialist upheaval and building, the Communist Party of China formulated a series of policies and measures suitable for China's development through the commitment to the principle of deriving truth from factual information and combining it concerning the unique national circumstances of China. For instance, the "Three Major Transformations" established a robust groundwork for the growth of China.

2.2.2. The mass line: rely on the power of the people

The mass line stands as another crucial principle of Mao Zedong Thought, emphasizing "from the masses, to the masses[3]." In the era of socialist revolution and building, the Communist

Party of China achieved revolutionary victories and developmental milestones by mobilizing and relying on the broad masses. For instance, during the land reform movement, the Party mobilized peasants to abolish feudal land ownership, enabling them to reclaim their land. This initiative not only boosted farmers' productivity but also laid a vital material foundation for socialist construction. Furthermore, through the mass line approach, the Party launched the initiative known as the 'Great Leap Forward' Movement and the Movement of Communes. Although these campaigns encountered practical challenges, they demonstrated the Party's unwavering commitment to advancing social progress through grassroots engagement.

2.2.3. Autonomy and self-governance: stick to the route of autonomous growth

Mao Zedong Thought strongly advocates for autonomy and self-sufficiency, stressing the importance of maintaining one's stance in global matters independently of outside influences. In the era of socialist upheaval and building, the Communist Party of China maintained an autonomous International relations, protecting its national sovereignty and honor. As an example, during the initial phase of New China's establishment, the Communist Party of China fostered amicable ties with socialist countries like the Soviet Union through a prejudiced foreign policy, yet preserved a neutral position during the Korean War to safeguard national security and stability. In the era of socialist progress, the Communist Party of China fostered a culture of self-sufficiency and intense conflict by advocating for independence, enhancing the country's ability to innovate independently, and establishing vital groundwork for its modernization.

3. The Conceptual Implication of MAO Zedong Thought's Living Soul

3.1. Pursue veracity through factual evidence

The pursuit of truth from facts involves beginning with the real world, merging theoretical concepts with practical application, and evolving and validating truth through practice. This is the fundamental view of Marxist materialism, dialectics, and epistemology. Over the past century, Chinese Communists have consistently adhered to the ideological line based on practical realities, endowing it with new contemporary significance by integrating it with their historical context and the demands of the times. Mao reinterpreted ancient phrases with new meanings in "Transforming Our Study," profoundly transforming the Chinese traditional cultural term "seeking truth from facts" through Marxist narrative methods[4]. This transformation imbued it with distinct epistemological characteristics, rendering it an essential element of the Communist Party of China's ideological line.

3.2. The line of mass

The line of mass is to do everything for the people, rely on the people in all things, come from the people and return to the people, turning the party's correct propositions into the people's conscious actions[5]. The foremost challenge in the New Democratic Revolution, spearheaded by the Communist Party of China, "Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This question is the foremost issue in revolution. China's past revolutionary struggles achieved little success, and the fundamental reason lies in its inability to unite true friends while attacking real enemies[6]." On the basis of clearly distinguishing between friends and enemies, uniting with friends, closely rallying all forces that can be relied upon around oneself, isolating and weakening the enemy's influence, and ultimately eliminating them—this is the profound theoretical essence of the mass line.

3.3. Autonomy

Independence and self-reliance are the inevitable conclusion of the Communist Party of China applying Marxist positions, viewpoints, and methods, proceeding from China's actual

conditions, and relying on the power of the Party and its citizens in executing China's revolution, development, and changes. They constitute an important principle for the establishment of both the Communist Party of China and the People's Republic of China. Mao Zedong Thought on independence and self-reliance contains rich connotations, among which relying on one's own strength is the fundamental premise; taking one's own path is the essence of Mao's independence and self-reliance thought; properly handling relations with external forces is a crucial aspect of this ideology; and advancing domestic revolutionary and construction endeavors constitutes its fundamental purpose.

4. The Modern Significance of MAO Zedong Thought's Living Soul

(1). The Party's policy and guideline development is grounded in the theoretical pursuit of truth derived from facts. China's Communist Party's past is marked by its adherence to an ideological approach of deriving truth from facts. Amidst the era of reform and liberalization, at a critical historical juncture when China faced the question of its ultimate direction, Deng proposed the thesis of "empowering the intellect and pursuing veracity through factual information," He stressed that the key to achieving socialist modernization and fulfilling the monumental goal of re vitalizing the Chinese nation lay in beginning with the unique national circumstances of China and depending on the general populace's collective effort[7]. Following the 13th CPC Central Committee's Fourth Plenary Session, Comrade Zemin J, emphasized the importance of staying abreast with evolving historical trends, suggesting a holistic approach of "enhancing mental faculties, deriving truth from factual information, and adapting to contemporary trends," infusing new material with modern attributes and the core ideological position of our Party[8]. The essence of our Party lies in shaping the mind, deriving truth from factual information, and staying abreast of contemporary trends. These elements are vital for preserving and evolving its sophisticated character, and they act as ideological tools, empowering the Party to guide the populace in forging a novel trajectory with Chinese traits and attaining fresh triumphs in socialist modernization. This represents a completely Marxist ideological stance, along with a deeply Sinicized version of Marxism. Post the 16th CPC National Congress, the Scientific Outlook on Development has steadily won over the favor of both the Party and the populace, evolving into the primary doctrine for nurturing socialism characterized by Chinese attributes. During the 18th National Congress of CPC, the report declared: "The Scientific Outlook on Development emerges from merging Marxist concepts with the current realities of China and the traits of our era, representing Marxist worldview and methodology regarding development[9]." "Fundamentally, scientific development is development guided through the pursuit of truth derived from factual information and adherence to natural laws. Seeking truth from facts constitutes the theoretical essence of the Scientific Outlook on Development. Post the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Xi has continued the Party's pragmatic philosophy by considering national conditions, global trends, and Party realities. Demonstrating courage in responsibility, prioritizing action, and putting people at the core, he has persistently advanced the liberation of the pragmatic approach through problem-oriented strategies, rigorous research, and the perseverance akin to hammering nails. In the new era, Xi upholds this pragmatic methodology and work ethic, implementing a governance philosophy centered on serving the people. Through accumulating governance experience, he leads our nation toward new journeys. The pragmatic approach remains both historically consistent and evolving, serving as an ideological engine for social progress from revolutionary times to the present day. This contemporary interpretation embodies practical guidelines and demonstrates formidable vitality, guiding the Party and people to maintain a pragmatic ethos and contribute to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation at critical historical junctures."

(2). The mass line is the governing foundation of the Communist Party of China. As the lifeline and fundamental working principle of the Party, implementing the mass line in different historical periods and developmental stages exhibits distinct phased characteristics, while the Party's mass work carries varying historical missions and specific features. Currently, mastering the mass line is a required course and Essential ability for Party members and leading cadres during this novel period. Effectively executing the mass line during the new period , we must consistently uphold a people-centered value orientation, develop genuine capabilities for mass work, and strengthen the long-term mechanisms for mass engagement. The adoption of the mass line represents the legacy and development of Marxist views on mass. As a concentrated embodiment of Marxism's fundamental stance, the Marxist mass perspective serves as a crucial indicator of its advanced nature and forms the theoretical foundation and ideological origin of the Communist Party of China's mass line. Lenin emphasized, "Wherever there are masses, there must be work[10]." In its early days, our Party established the principle that "all Party activities must penetrate the broad masses," creatively integrating the mass line ideology with China's revolutionary realities to provide guidance for uniting the broadest social forces across various historical contexts[11]. The mass line does not exist in isolation; its implementation in different historical periods and developmental stages demonstrates distinct phased characteristics, while the Party's mass work carries varied historical missions and specific features. In the era of reform and liberalization, Deng X, leveraging Mao 's philosophy of mass production and his hands-on experience in revolution, building, and reform, championed the importance of valuing public initiative and focusing on their financial gains. He pioneered innovative approaches to mass work through his "One Center, Two Basic Points" fundamental line and "Three Favors" criteria, which fundamentally reflected the Party's commitment to measuring work effectiveness through the people's interests—a significant advancement of the mass line. Post the Fourth Plenary Session of the 13th CPC Central Committee, leadership of the third generation featuring with Comrade Zemin J at its core has upheld Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory while creatively proposing the "Trio Symbolizes" doctrine. This philosophy prioritizes people-oriented governance, enriches and develops the mass line of the Party , and more fully embodies human value connotations, establishing new standards for evaluating the Communist Party's work during this novel period . Following the 16th National Congress of PC , the fourth-generation leadership with Comrade Jintao H central to it is continued upholding these ideological frameworks while introducing the Scientific Perspective on Development. The Scientific Outlook highlights the dual role of individuals as architects of history and recipients of its accomplishments, advocating that "development outcomes should benefit all citizens." It further clarifies that "people-centered development aims to achieve comprehensive human development," marking another major evolution of the mass line. Post the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi has profoundly understood the nuances and principles of the Party's collective efforts, broadened the Marxist perspective on the populace, and realized novel advancements in both the theoretical implications and practical approaches of the Party's mass line.

(3). Independence and self-reliance constitute a fundamental principle for establishing both the Party and the nation. In the period of reform and liberalization , Deng emphasized that only by proceeding from China's specific national circumstances and relying on the broad masses of the people through arduous struggle could we accomplish the tasks of socialist modernization and achieve the historic mission of the significant revival of China's national identity .Starting with the 13th CPC Central Committee's Fourth Plenary Session , the third-generation leadership, led by Comrade Zemin J, has consistently championed the principles of Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory, firmly maintaining independence and promoting reforms and openness. The independent foreign policy philosophy of Zemin J is a continuation and evolution of Mao

and Deng 's ideas on autonomous foreign relations in novel situations, marked by forward-thinking and deep-seated consequences that reflect the insights of the third-generation leaders and the entire Party. From the 16th CPC National Congress onwards, Comrade Jintao H has been at the heart of the fourth-generation central leadership, fervently supporting Mao Zedong Thought and Deng Xiaoping Theory . Raise the esteemed pursuit of socialism through Chinese characteristics and unite in the quest to establish a modern socialist country, along with the significant concept of "Three Represents," rooted in the early phase of socialism in China. Maintaining their autonomy, they have persistently promoted reforms and liberalization, merging autonomous foreign policy with involvement in economic globalization, and harmonizing both national and global objectives to support the noble pursuit of worldwide peace and development. To further modernize in a Chinese manner, fulfill the second hundred-year milestone, and bring about the significant revival of China in this new period, it's imperative to steadfastly maintain Mao's autonomous foreign policy. Following the 20th CPC National Congress, the Party Central Committee, anchored by Comrade Xi, has methodically articulated the idea of modernization in the style of China , all the while maintaining Mao's autonomous foreign policy tenets. General Secretary Xi , in his remarks to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, emphasized: "While Chinese-style modernization exhibits similarities with other nations' modernization, it also possesses unique Chinese traits tailored to its national circumstances[12]."The hallmark of Chinese-style modernization lies in its large population, universal wealth, the harmonious development of both material and spiritual societies, along with the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature , and a commitment to peaceful progress. The unique values embodied in Chinese-style modernization represent a significant innovation in global modernization theories and practices, and are a crucial manifestation of Mao's independent thinking in building a modernized nation. We must cherish these values all the more and continue to expand and deepen their contemporary significance.

5. Conclusion

This paper systematically examines the concept of MAO Zedong Thought's living soul , comprehensively reviewing its developmental trajectory, theoretical connotation, and contemporary value. The research findings indicate that MAO Zedong Thought's living soul is not only a significant theoretical achievement in Chinese philosophy and the sinicization of Marxism but also a scientific worldview and methodology guiding China's revolutionary, construction, and reform practices. This study has the following limitations: First, insufficient depth in researching the specific application of the MAO Zedong Thought's living soul concept in grassroots practice; Second, relatively limited comparative research between the MAO Zedong Thought's living soul and other theoretical systems; Third, room for strengthening research on the specific manifestations of the MAO Zedong Thought's living soul in different historical periods. Future Research Directions Based on the findings and limitations of this study, future research could develop in the following directions: First, conducting empirical research on the MAO Zedong Thought's living soul in grassroots governance, exploring its specific application models in different fields; Second, strengthening comparative research between the MAO Zedong Thought's living soul and other philosophical thought systems, deepening understanding of its theoretical characteristics; Third, researching the innovative development of the MAO Zedong Thought's living soul in the digital era, exploring its application prospects in intelligent social governance; Fourth, expanding research on the international dissemination of the MAO Zedong Thought's living soul , providing theoretical support for promoting the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind. Concluding Remarks As a concentrated embodiment of the scientific worldview and

methodology of Chinese Communists, the MAO Zedong Thought's living soul is an important theoretical achievement in the sinicization and modernization of Marxism. It not only guided the great practice of China's revolution and construction in the past but also continues to play a significant theoretical guiding role in the new era. With the continuous advancement of Chinese modernization, the MAO Zedong Thought's living soul is bound to radiate even more brilliant theoretical light under new historical conditions, providing a powerful ideological weapon for realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

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