

The Construction and Characteristics of the Theoretical System of Xi Jinping's View of History

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Xi's historical view is a scientific theoretical system with a tight logical structure. The construction of this theoretical system follows the principles and methods of the construction of Marxist theoretical system. The theoretical features of Xi's view of history are unity of theory and practice, unity of politics and science, unity of universality and nationality, unity of collective wisdom and individual wisdom, unity of dialectical thinking and historical thinking, and unity of history, reality, and future.

Keywords: Xi Jinping, view of history, construction, logical system

Xi Jinping's view of history is the significant inheritance and development of Marxist theory of history by the central leading collective of the Party with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core in the new era, and it is the Party's fundamental viewpoint and view on history and its development as well as the basic principle and methodology for the Party to observe and study historical phenomena and problems. In the new era, to study Xi Jinping's view of history, it is necessary to make an in-depth study and scientific exposition of the construction and characteristics of its theoretical system.

The Construction of the Theoretical System of Xi's View of History

There is no doubt that the contents of Xi's view of history are mainly put forward by Xi Jinping, with its theoretical content existing in its concrete theoretical form or text form as a natural form. We can find that the concept, category, and principle existing in natural form or text form follow certain logic construction principles and methods, and have their reasons and conditions.

Reasons for Construction

Need of its own development. Xi's view of history is an important theoretical achievement of the sinicization of Marxism and an important component of Xi's thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Xi's numerous interpretations of historical issues have been made at different times and on different occasions, and are scattered in his speeches and writings in a natural, isolated form. Summarizing the historical views, thoughts, and principles expounded by Xi Jinping into a complete theoretical form, elaborating its basic contents and ideological connotation, and revealing its core significance, theoretical features, and values, alongside with the formation of an overall understanding of the theory are an inevitable result of the development of Xi Jinping's theory of history, and also a realistic requirement for its further development.

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Need for opposing the historical nihilism and consolidating the dominant position of Marxist ideology. Opposing the historical nihilism is the proper meaning of firm “four self-confidence”. For a period of time, the erroneous trend of propagating the historical nihilism in society has been stirring up as undercurrents, and some people with ulterior motives have changed their advocacy methods, putting on “flower coats”, putting on “a maze”, and releasing “smoke bombs”, and deconstructed the so-called “historical truth” by means of Internet media, etc. Consequently, the image of the Party and the country is being vilified indiscriminately; the history of the Party, the history of the country, and the military history of the country are being slandered; the Party, leaders of the country, and model heroes are being slandered and smeared. Meanwhile, beautifying falsely the historical negative figures, denying Chinese history, culture, and contributions, and fabricating false stories about foreign celebrities occur from time to time. All of these above, to a certain extent, are dispelling the mainstream positive energy values in China and have a negative impact on the society. The fundamental purpose of this erroneous view of history is to completely deny Marxism, to deny the leadership of the Party, to deny the socialist system of China, to weaken the foundation of China’s mainstream ideology, to shake people’s spiritual support, and to realize his political attempt of “changing the banner and banner”. The construction of the theoretical system of Xi Jinping’s view of history is conducive to the education and guidance of the people in establishing a correct view of history, upholding the guiding position of Marxism in the ideological field, and consolidating the Party’s ideological foundation in power. It is of great significance to safeguard national political security.

Need for promoting the construction and research of Marxist theory, and providing theoretical support for the teaching of ideological and political theory in colleges and universities. The construction of the theoretical system of Xi Jinping’s view of history is conducive to a deep understanding of Xi Jinping’s thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, a grasp of its essence and scientific connotation, and an appreciation of the logical charm of Marxist theory and the power of scientific truth. It is also instructive to expand the research field of Marxist view of history, innovate research ideas and methods, and deepen the construction and research of Marxist theory; to strengthen the education of historical view and give full play to the role of the main channel of classroom teaching of ideological and political theory; to carry out the basic task of establishing morality and fostering people; to adhere to the direction of running a school under socialism, and to embody the political nature and ideological nature; to deepen the construction of the “two courses” and the setting of the teaching contents; and to embody the scientific rationality and systematicness. It is of practical significance and reference value for carrying out the activities of “entering the teaching materials, mind and classroom” of Xi Jinping’s thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, and improving the students’ historical thinking and application ability.

Conditions of Construction

Open conditions. “Marxism has the theoretical quality of keeping pace with the times” (Jiang, 2006, p. 282). Xi Jinping’s view of history is the scientific theory of Marxism, which determines that his theory is not a fixed, closed, and rigid theoretical system, but an open and developing theoretical system. On the one hand, the formation and development of Xi Jinping’s view of history is a historical process. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC), with the deepening of the Party Central Committee’s practice of governance, Xi Jinping has constantly put forward new views and ideas on history; these thoughts and viewpoints are put forward step by step, from less to more, from shallow to deep, and finally form a

complete theoretical form of stages. On the other hand, truth is relative, and knowledge develops with the development of the material world. "There are no prescient people in the world" (Xi, 2016a). Restricted by the objective world, although Xi Jinping is able to theoretically describe and envision the future social development state and goals, it is impossible for him to foresee the content of the future development of the theory, so he must provide enough space for the future development of the theory. "Marxism is an open theoretical system that develops with the development of the times, practice and science. It does not end the truth, but opens the way to the truth", Xi (2016b) said. Insisting on emancipating the mind, keeping pace with the times, and maintaining the open development of the theory are a prerequisite for the construction of Xi Jinping's theory of history.

Holistic conditions. Wholeness is the prominent feature of Marxist theory, and it is also the confirmation standard of whether Xi Jinping's theory system of historical view is finally established or not. The integrity of Xi Jinping's theory of historical view lies in that its internal logical structure has the essential elements of logical starting point, logical main line, and logical central category of Marxist theory, and constitutes a complete theoretical framework; it lies in the organic connection, complementary, and consistent logic between his many concrete theoretical forms and theoretical categories, and in his consistent adherence to the political beliefs of the dialectical materialism and the historical materialism, to observe the consistency of the methods and means of analyzing historical problems by applying Marxist standpoint, viewpoint, and method; it is a continuous theoretical innovation and practical exploration around a theme—"seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation". The integrality condition is the basic condition for constructing the theoretical system of Xi Jinping's historical view.

Scientific conditions. The scientific nature of Xi Jinping's view of history lies in his adherence to the basic principles and methods of Marxism, and his close integration of these principles and methods with the actual construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics, realizing the great innovation and development of the theoretical understanding of the historical view of the Chinese Proletariat; it lies, at every major historical juncture, in the sense of historical distress and the principle of thinking, by taking history as a mirror, regularly reviewing the history of the Party, seeing clearly the source, remaining true to the original aspiration, and keeping to the right direction and embarking on course of smooth and sustainable growth; it lies in the fact that it inherits the essence of the historical views of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao, and in its further theoretical creation and practical application in the new historical conditions; it lies in its critical inheritance of Chinese traditional culture and foreign civilization and its purposeful sublation, the realization of the dialectical and scientific attitude of "making ancient things serve China" and "making foreign things serve China"; it lies in its political attitude of persisting in self-revolution, self-criticism, self-analysis, and self-examination, and actively solving and answering questions in the face of the requirements of the times, trying hard to realize the "problem consciousness" of its own theoretical leap. The scientific condition is the essential condition to construct the theoretical system of Xi Jinping's view of history.

Methods of Construction

Follow the principles and methods of constructing the theoretical system of Marxism. Generally speaking, the following steps should be taken to construct the theoretical system of Marxism: Firstly, construct the framework of theoretical logic structure. The logical structure of Marxist theory is to divide the content of wholeness theory into several logical units according to its logical function, and to clarify its internal logical

relations and the development process of thinking, and then forms the frame system and the theory construction method including the theory organization, and its internal expression. The important work involved is to form a complete logical structure by choosing the elements of determining the category of logical starting point, the category of logic mainline and the category of logic center. Secondly, it further enriches and expands the corresponding theory on the basis of theoretical logic structure. The formation of theoretical logic structure does not represent the final establishment of theoretical system. From the theoretical logic structure to the establishment of the theoretical system, we need to enrich and perfect many theoretical links from the starting point category to the central category, from the central category to each specific category, around the logic main line and the logic core, and accordingly, the concrete theory category and the principle of each aspect are further proposed and elaborated, thus forming a complete Marxist scientific theory system. Finally, it reveals the internal logical relations and functions of the theory. Because of the difference of the research object, task, and specific principle, the logical function and theoretical category of each component of Marxist theory are also greatly different. On the basis of the integral internal logical structure, it is an important link in the construction of Marxist theoretical system to explain the internal logical connection of its theory and the special theoretical connotation of its specific field.

Adhere to “Seek truth from facts”. “Seek truth from facts” is the basic viewpoint and essence of Marxism, the basic thinking method, cognitive method, and working method of the Communist Party of China. Practice has proved that the Chinese Communist Party started and developed by seeking truth from facts. If it adheres to “Seek truth from facts”, it will be able to formulate the correct line, principles, and policies, and it will be able to rejuvenate the Party and the country. If it disobeys the ideological line, it will lose the correct way forward, which is a catastrophe for the Party and the country. “Seek truth from facts” is a scientific method to probe into the essence of things and their developing rules, and to form the knowledge of truth. It is also an inevitable requirement for the CPC to promote the theoretical innovation. In its long practice of leading the Chinese revolution, construction, and reform, the Party has always adhered to the principle of “Seek truth from facts”, proceeding from reality in all respects, integrating theory with practice, and realizing many historic leaps in the integration of Marxism with China's reality, and has produced a series of important theoretical achievements, including Xi Jinping's conception of history. The internal requirement of seeking truth from facts is to emancipate the mind, which is the inherent meaning of “Seek truth from facts”. The dialectical unity of seeking truth from facts and emancipating the mind is the master switch to break through the limitation of traditional thinking and stimulate the vitality of theoretical innovation. Since the 18th anniversary of the Communist Party of China, Xi has consistently adhered to the ideological line of “Seek truth from facts”, putting forward a series of historical views and theories in the positive interaction between theoretical innovation and practical innovation, thus establishing a proletarian historical view with Chinese characteristics and the characteristics of the new era has been formed.

Use dialectical thinking: Dialectical thinking is the reflection and application of Materialist dialectics in thinking. It is to observe and analyze the inherent contradictions of the objective object with the viewpoint of universal connection and dynamic development in order to explore the objective object in general and in essence, to form a scientific thinking mode that reflects the nature and development of objective things and their inherent laws. Dialectical thinking usually adopts the methods of induction and deduction, analysis and synthesis, abstraction and concreteness, logic and history to arrange and process the thinking, so as to

realize the leap from perceptual knowledge to rational knowledge. The dialectical thinking grasps the concrete truth by the logical category and its system, which is the key to forming the fixed logical thinking (also the theoretical thinking), and establishing the scientific theory system. Xi Jinping's view of history contains rich dialectical thinking and philosophical wisdom and adheres to the Marxist dialectical thinking method. A complete logical system of Xi Jinping's view of history has been established in his circular and complex cognitive activities from concrete to abstract and then back to concrete, aiming at problems and phenomena in the field of social history.

The Theoretical Features of Xi Jinping's View of History

Xi's view of history has distinctive features of the times and theory, and its internal logical relations are as follows:

Unity of Theory and Practice

Theory comes from practice and is tested by practice. Mao Zedong pointed out that "there is only one kind of real theory in the world, that is, the theory is extracted from the objective reality and proved in the objective reality" (Committee of the CPC Central Committee, 1991, p. 817). The concrete historical unity of theory and practice, knowledge and practice is the basic principle of Marxist epistemology. On the one hand, Xi's view of history is Xi's knowledge and exposition of historical phenomena and problems, and the law of the objective world. It is a systematic and rational cognition with good theoretical properties. On the other hand, Xi Jinping's view of history was formed and developed in the process of the Party leading the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which are a summary of the practical experience in history and a dynamic reflection of the practical process. Being both a continuation of the traditional practice and the guidance to the new practice, it has the practicality. Xi Jinping attaches great importance to theoretical formulation. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has formulated major principles and policies, all of which have to go through a long period of analysis, research, and demonstration, review and draw lessons from historical experience, and clarify the historical and realistic basis for policy-making, to improve the science and feasibility of theory. Advocating social practice, Xi pointed out that every undertaking, no matter how big or small, is made by keeping grounded in reality and making achievement bit by bit. "Socialism is made, so is the new era" (Xi, 2018). Xi called on people to "roll up sleeves and work hard" (Xi, 2017a), to promote the implementation of the tasks of the new era through hard work. Practice is of social historicity. Human's social practice is restricted by social and historical conditions, and runs through the development of history. Xi's view of history is rooted in practice and has a solid foundation in practice, which provides impetus and source for the formation and development of Xi's view of history. The unity of theory and practice is a distinctive feature of Xi's view of history.

Unity of Truth and Value

Practice is the only criterion to test the truth of cognition. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, under the guidance of the thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics with Xi Jinping's view of history as the core, socialist construction with Chinese characteristics has made all-round and pioneering historic achievements, which shows that Xi's view of history fully conforms to the current trend of social and historical development in China and the requirements of the times. It is a truth proved by historical experience and practice. The value pursuit of Xi Jinping's view of history is the realization of communism,

mankind's most lofty social ideal. The value orientation of Xi Jinping's view of history is based on the truth of his theory, and the aim of his pursuit of truth is to pursue value. In the process of understanding and exploring the objective truth of the laws governing the development of human society, Xi stressed the need to move with the times and adapt to the situation, giving full play to the subjective initiative of social subjects in understanding and transforming the objective world, regarding the people as the subject of value creation and value evaluation, and regarding the realization of the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people and the promotion of the free and all-round development of human beings as the fundamental value orientation and goal. And conforming to the changes and requirements of new era's value orientation, Xi put forward the "two hundred years" goal. Xi's view of history is characterized by both truth and value. The unity of the two is not an abstract or general unity in theory, but a realistic and historical unity in concrete social practice.

Unity of Political Nature and Rational Thinking

Xi Jinping's view of history is one of the Party's ideology, which reflects the Party's class nature—the People's nature, reflects the basic ideas, positions, and viewpoints of the Proletarian Party in power, and has political nature. "Socialism with Chinese characteristics is socialism rather than any other kind of socialism", Xi said. "The basic principle of scientific socialism cannot be lost, and socialism cannot be lost" (Xi, 2016c, p. 22). We must uphold, defend, and develop Marxism, in particular, the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We must always maintain a correct political position and direction. Xi stressed that the road is the life of the Party and that there must be no subversive mistakes in such fundamental issues as what banner to hold and what path to follow, "The essence of the issue is what should be changed and what should not be changed, some of which cannot be changed and will not be changed for a long time to come" (Feng, 2018). This reflects the unshakable nature of the Party's fundamental nature and principle of upholding the development direction of socialism with Chinese characteristics. He put forward the "people-centered" development thought and put the people in the supreme position. Xi Jinping's view of history is a social science that is embodied in the form of knowledge and a certain system of disciplines. It conforms to the principles or rules of science and is scientifically rational. Xi stressed that Marxism is a science and that "adhering to the guidance of Marxism is the fundamental symbol that distinguishes contemporary Chinese philosophy and social sciences from other Philosophical Social Sciences" (Xi, 2016d). To this end, we must insist on using the Marxist standpoint to analyze and interpret history, not only understanding the content and logical connection of historical science, but also grasping the law of historical development and the correct application of Marxist standpoint. Xi pointed out that the study of history is the foundation of all social sciences, and called on the majority of historical researchers to "integrate research forces, improve research levels and innovative capabilities, promote the integrated development of relevant historical disciplines, and accelerate the construction of a disciplinary, academic and discourse system with Chinese characteristics" (Xi, 2019). Xi stressed that we should promote the research and development of Chinese history and give full play to the role of learning from the past, learning from the present and educating people through funding the government. Xi's related statements are in line with the rational requirements of philosophy and social sciences and point the way to the development of philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics. The adherence to rational thinking takes the adherence of political nature as the soul, and in turn lays a solid scientific foundation for the latter. Xi Jinping's view of history embodies the unity of political nature and rational thinking.

Unity of Dialectical Thinking and Historical Thinking

Dialectical materialism and historical materialism are the fundamental scientific theories of Marxism, the world view and methodology of the Chinese Communists, and they are the unity of materialist and dialectical views of nature and history on the basis of practice. Xi has organized two intensive studies on the basic principles and methodology of the historical materialism and the dialectical materialism, respectively, in the Politburo, and called on the entire Party to learn how to master the world outlook and methodology of the historical materialism and the dialectical materialism. He stressed the need to learn and master Marxist methods of thought, “constantly nourished by the wisdom of Marxist philosophy, and more consciously adhere to and apply the dialectical materialism world view and methodology” (Xi, 2015a). We should learn the basic principles of the movement of the contradiction of things, grasp the law of the development of things in the course of the contradiction between the two sides, strengthen the ability of dialectical thinking, and actively resolve the contradiction problems in the course of the reform and development of our country. Xi believes that promoting reform should be both “broken” and “established”. “Breaking” is to break the old tradition formed in history and embody the revolutionary nature; “establishing” is to establish the new rules and requirements of the times and reflect the nature of development. “Breaking” and “establishing” complement each other, through a break and a stand, to achieve reform and innovation, and to promote sustainable social development. Aiming at deepening reform in an all-round way, Xi proposed a methodology that combines strengthening top-level design and crossing the river by feeling for stones. “This is an important principle that must be followed in the overall deepening of reform, and it is also a requirement of the historical materialism” (Xi, 2015b, p. 77). He said. It can be seen that Xi’s view of history, embodying a rich Materialist dialectics of thought, is the unity of dialectical thinking and historical thinking.

Unity of the Past, the Present and the Future

“History, reality and future are interlinked. History is the reality of the past, and reality is the history of the future”, Xi (2016c, p. 67) said. It is a dialectical historical thinking, which put emphasis on the relevance and continuity of historical development, analyzing and investigating problems by linking past, present, and future. First, we should respect history and understand yesterday. In Xi’s view, history is a fact that has already happened and cannot be changed. We should learn to understand history in a serious manner and absorb the wisdom of history. He pointed out that “everything goes forward, and we cannot forget the road we have taken; no matter how far we go, or how glorious our future is, we cannot forget the past we have taken, and we cannot forget why we started” (Xi, 2017b, p. 32). “Only by looking back at the path we have taken, comparing the paths of others and looking far ahead, and figuring out where we are coming from and where we are going, can we see deeply and accurately”, he (Xi, 2014a) stressed. Xi Jinping’s profound historical vision and dialectical thinking are reflected in the relevant discussions. The second is to study history and grasp today. History is the root of reality, and the reality of any country comes from history. He stressed that “it is only by understanding where a country came from that one can understand how it can be this way and not the other way around” (Xi, 2014b). Looking back on history, he noted, is not about seeking solace from past glories, nor is it an excuse to avoid the difficult problems we face today, but to sum up historical experience, grasp the historical law and do the current work well. Third, draw lessons from history and create a better tomorrow. Mr. Xi has likened history to a “mirror” that illuminates the present and the future, pointing out that only by learning from history and keeping pace with the times can we better move towards the future. Keeping in mind the 5,000-year history

of Chinese civilization, the 500-year history of development of world socialism, the 170-year history of struggle of the Chinese people since modern times, the 90-year history of struggle of the Communist Party of China and the 60-year history of development of the People's Republic of China, and more than 30 years of exploration of the history of reform and opening-up, Xi has revealed in his speeches the historical roots and stressed the importance of building a confident road and correctly understanding and grasping the direction of future development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Xi's view of history reflects the unity of history and reality, the unity of the present, and the unity of the future.

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