

# On the Mission of Marxist Philosophy in the New Era of China Based on the Analysis of the Article 11 of Theses on Feuerbach

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**Abstract:** The report of the 19th National Congress has pointed out that socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. Philosophy is the cream of the spirit of the times. Therefore, from the perspective of theoretical development, the new era has also put forward new topics and missions for Chinese philosophy. In particular, as a leading role in the field of Chinese ideology, Marxist Philosophy is also facing new topics and missions in the new era. The mission of Marxist Philosophy in the new era is still essentially consistent with the mission of Marxist philosophy revealed in the Theses on Feuerbach. In other words, the mission of Marxist Philosophy in the new era of China is to “explain the world” and “transform the world”. There is a dialectical and unified internal relationship between the two missions.

**Keywords:** Marxist Philosophy; in the new era of China; mission; explain the world; transforming the world

## 1. Introduction

The report of the 19th National Congress has pointed out that socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era.[1] Philosophy is the age of grasping in thought[2], and it is also the essence of the spirit of the times[3]. Therefore, from the perspective of theoretical development, the new era has also puts forward new topics and missions for the philosophy in China. In particular, as a leading role in the field of Chinese ideology, Marxist Philosophy is also facing new topics and missions in the new era.

## 2. The Significance of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics Entering a New Era for the Development of Marxist Philosophy

The report of the 19th National Congress pointed out that socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. As an objective stage of China’s social and historical development, the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics is of great significance not only for the development of the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics, but also for the development of China’s theory. Among all the theories, the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics is of great significance to the development of Marxist philosophy,

which has been playing a leading role in the field of Chinese ideology. Specifically, these meanings include the following two aspects.

### 2.1. It has Provided New Social and Historical Conditions for the Development of Marxist Philosophy

The development of theory is not to build a “castle in the air”, but needs to be carried out under objective social and historical conditions on the basis of objective social and historical conditions. At the same time, social practice is not only the basis and the first source of theory, but also the first driving force for the development of theory. In short, the development of theory is inseparable from objective social and historical conditions and fresh social practice. This is especially true for Marxist philosophy with distinct practicality and the theoretical quality of keeping pace with the times. The new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics is not only a new stage of China’s economic and social development, but also an objective stage of China’s social and historical development. In the new era, China’s objective social and historical conditions has also shew new conditions and characteristics. Therefore, the new era has also provided new objective social and historical conditions for the development of Marxist philosophy.

### 2.2. It has Put Forward a New Theoretical Topic of the Times for the Development of Marxist Philosophy

The new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics is not only an objective stage of the development of Chinese social history, but also an objective fact in the process of contemporary Chinese social history. “Time is the mother of thought” [4]. The development of ideological theory must be good at listening to the voice of the times and responding to the problems of the times. The new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics has also put forward a new topic for China’s theoretical development, that is to make a scientific and effective theoretical response to the new era. In particular, as the essence of the spirit of the times, in the new era of objective social and historical conditions, China must make a scientific and effective theoretical response to the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Among all philosophical theories, especially Marxist philosophy, which has been playing a leading role in the field of

Chinese ideology, must make a scientific and persuasive theoretical response to the new era. In other words, Marxist philosophy is also facing new theoretical topics in the new era of China, and must complete a new mission. To understand the specific content of this new mission, it is necessary to go back to Theses on Feuerbach, which has been the cornerstone of Marxist philosophy. Article 11 of Theses on Feuerbach pointed out that "philosophers only interpreted the world in different ways, and the problem is to change the world." [5] It can be seen that since its establishment, the mission of Marxist philosophy has been determined as two aspects of dialectical unity: "explaining the world" and "transforming the world". Therefore, in essence, the fundamental content of the two missions of Marxist Philosophy in the new era of China should be the same. Specifically, the new mission of Marxist Philosophy in the new era of China includes two aspects: "explaining the world" and "transforming the world".

### 3. Two Missions of Marxist Philosophy in the New Era of China

#### 3.1. "Explain the World"

Combined with the specific reality and social practice in the new era of China, the main content of this mission should be to objectively, fairly, comprehensively and accurately explain the actual social situation in the new era of China, and objectively, fairly, comprehensively and deeply reveal and analyze the achievements and existing problems in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, as well as to provide a scientific, complete, comprehensive and in-depth theoretical summary of the existing experience and lessons in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Specifically, it is necessary to do well in the following three aspects.

##### 3.1.1. Objectively, fairly, comprehensively and accurately explaining the actual social situation in the new era of China

The new mission of Marxist philosophy to "explain the world" in the new era of China is first manifested in the objective, fair, comprehensive and accurate interpretation and explanation of China's real social situation in the new era. Specifically, this aspect mainly includes the following points.

First, correctly understanding China's actual national conditions. China's actual national conditions are that China is still in the primary stage of socialism and will be in the primary stage of socialism for a long time, and the gap between urban and rural development, regional development, social stratum and income distribution is still relatively large. The quality and efficiency of economic development are not high, the innovation ability is not strong enough, the level of the real economy needs to be improved, and the ecological environment protection has a long way to go. There are still many shortcomings in the field of people's livelihood, the social security system needs to be improved, the people

face many difficulties in employment, education, medical treatment, housing and pension. The level of social civilization needs to be improved. Social contradictions and problems are intertwined and superimposed, the task of comprehensively ruling the country according to law is still arduous, and the national governance system and governance capacity need to be strengthened. The struggle in the ideological field is still complex, and national security is facing new situations. Some reform plans and major policy measures need to be further implemented. There are still many weak links in building of the core administrative department [6]. In addition, China remains the largest developing country in the world. Although China's total GDP has ranked the second in the world, China's per capita GDP still ranks lower in the world. At the same time, the quality and efficiency of economic development need to be improved, the ability of innovation isn't strong, and further coordination and balance are needed between economic development and population, resources and ecological environment protection.

Second, correctly understanding the main contradictions in Chinese society. Socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. The main social contradiction in China has been transformed into the contradiction between the people's growing needs for a better life and unbalanced and insufficient development. In essence, this contradiction embodies the principle of the dialectical relationship between productivity and production relations, economic foundation and superstructure, as well as the principle of the dialectical relationship between social existence and social consciousness. Specifically, this contradiction first embodies the principle of dialectical relationship between productivity and production relations. In terms of unbalanced and insufficient development, a specific manifestation is that the level of China's social productivity has increased significantly on the whole, the social production capacity has entered the forefront of the world in many aspects [7], and some production relations need to be further improved. For example, at present, the level of China's social productive forces has increased significantly, while the specific production relations of the socialist market economic system aren't fully developed, which has led to the imbalance between the development of China's productive forces and the specific production relations of the socialist market economic system. Second, this contradiction embodies the principle of dialectical relationship between economic foundation and superstructure. In terms of unbalanced and insufficient development, another specific manifestation is that China's social productivity has increased significantly, its economic strength has increased significantly, and the people's material living standards have also improved significantly. However, the level of China's social civilization still needs to be improved, social contradictions and problems are intertwined and superimposed, the task of comprehensively ruling the country according to law is still arduous, the national governance system and

governance capacity need to be strengthened, and the struggle in the ideological field is still complex.[8] This shows that the current development of China's ideological and political superstructure is insufficient, and the superstructure lags behind the development of the economic foundation, resulting in the imbalance between the economic foundation and the superstructure. Third, to some extent, "people's growing need for a better life" is a social consciousness, and "unbalanced and insufficient development" is a social existence. Therefore, the contradiction between "people's growing need for a better life" and "unbalanced and insufficient development" also reflects the contradiction between social existence and social consciousness. Social consciousness sometimes exceeds the development status and level of social existence.

Third, correctly understanding the inevitability and rationality of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Based on China's national conditions and the practice of economic and social reform and development, socialism with Chinese characteristics is a practical and effective social development model suitable for the sustainable and healthy development of China's economy and society formed in the process of reform, opening up and socialist modernization. It has sufficient inevitability and rationality. First of all, from a historical perspective, socialism with Chinese characteristics is a social development model with Chinese characteristics formed by the core administrative department of China leading the people based on China's national conditions and the practice of economic and social reform and development, and through long-term exploration and efforts in the process of reform, opening up and socialist modernization. In other words, socialism with Chinese characteristics is not only the choice of history, but also the choice of the people, which is fully inevitable. Secondly, from the perspective of reality, since the start of reform and opening up, the core administrative department of China has led the people all over the country, always firmly adhered to the guidance of the road, theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and continuously promoted the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which has made great achievements in China's economic and social development as well as significantly improved the people's living standards. Meanwhile, the country's economic, scientific and technological strength and comprehensive national strength have increased significantly. These great achievements have also eloquently proved the rationality of socialism with Chinese characteristics from the dimension of reality. Thirdly, from the theoretical dimension, socialism with Chinese characteristics is an excellent product of combining the universal truth of scientific socialism with the practice of Chinese socialist construction. It isn't only in line with the universal truth of scientific socialism, but also in line with China's specific national conditions and the needs of socialist construction practice. It has also inherited and carried forward the excellent traditional cultural genes of the Chinese nation, and absorbed and

drew lessons from the outstanding achievements of human civilization. It has distinctive theoretical, practical, national and contemporary characteristics. It is the unity of cosmopolitan and national, traditional and modern, truth and value. Therefore, from a theoretical point of view, socialism with Chinese characteristics is also fully reasonable.

### *3.1.2. Objectively, fairly, comprehensively and deeply reveal and analyze the achievements and existing problems in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era*

Since the end of 1978, China's reform, opening up and socialist modernization have gone through a historical process of more than 40 years. These years are also the time that the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics has gradually matured from its initial emergence and continuous development. Over the past more than 40 years, the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics has made great achievements, but there are still some problems. Now, in the historical position of the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, In order to provide more scientific and effective historical experience reference and ideological and theoretical guidance for China to continue to promote the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, it is necessary to only objectively, fairly, comprehensively and deeply reveal and analyze the achievements and existing problems in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, as a leading role in the field of Chinese ideology, Marxist philosophy should make its own contribution and undertake its own mission in this aspect. Therefore, an objective, fair, comprehensive and in-depth disclosure and analysis of the achievements and existing problems of China in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era is also an important aspect of the mission of "explaining the world" that Marxist philosophy must undertake in the new era of China.

### *3.1.3. Theoretically summarize the existing experience and lessons in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era*

Since the start of reform and opening up, the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics has made great achievements, thus, a lot of successful experience can also be sum up. In addition, there have been some problems, twists and turns and lessons in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics. In the new era of China, looking back on the more than 40 year historical process of the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics, it is necessary to comprehensively, deeply, objectively and accurately summarize and summarize the experience and lessons. As the cream of the times, philosophy must respond to this question. Especially, as a leading role in the field of ideology, Marxist philosophy should actively undertake its mission in this aspect. Specifically, this mission is to theoretically summarize the existing experience and lessons in the practice of

socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era from the level and height of philosophy. Therefore, the theoretical generalization and summary of the existing experience and lessons of China in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era is not only one of the theoretical topics faced by Marxist philosophy and in the new era of China, but also an important aspect of the mission of “explaining the world” that Marxist philosophy must undertake in the new era of China.

### 3.2. “Transforming the World”

Combined with the development trend and future trend in the new era of China, the main content of the mission of “transforming the world” of Marxist Philosophy in the new era of China is to provide scientific theoretical guidance for the development of the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era at the level of world outlook and methodology. As a theory with reality and vitality, philosophy can not meet or stop at “explaining the world”, but also resort to social practice to “transform the world”. Therefore, in the new era of China, Marxist philosophy can not be satisfied or stop at “explaining the world”, but should also resort to social practice to “transform the world”. Specifically, it provides scientific theoretical guidance for the development of the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era at the level of world outlook and methodology.

## 4. The Internal Relationship between the Two Missions of Marxist Philosophy in the New Era of China

Generally speaking, there is a dialectical unity between the two missions of Marxist Philosophy in the new era of China, that is to say, “explaining the world” and “transforming the world”.

First, “explaining the world” provides theoretical guidance for “transforming the world”. In the new era of China, the main content of the mission of “explaining the world” of Marxist philosophy is to objectively, fairly, comprehensively and accurately explain and explain the actual social situation in the new era of China, and objectively, fairly, comprehensively and deeply reveal and analyze the achievements and existing problems in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, as well as provide a scientific, complete, comprehensive and in-depth theoretical summary of the existing experience and lessons in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Therefore, “explaining the world” can provide scientific theoretical guidance for “transforming the world”.

Secondly, “transforming the world” provides development purpose and development power for “explaining the world”. In the new era of China, the mission of “transforming the world” of Marxist philosophy mainly means that it provides scientific theoretical guidance at the level of world outlook and methodology for the development of the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era.

This mission provides the development purpose and driving force for the mission of “explaining the world”. On the one hand, “transforming the world” provides a development purpose for the mission of “explaining the world”. For any theory with reality and vitality, its “explaining the world” isn’t for “explaining the world” itself, nor will it stop and be satisfied with “explaining the world”. This is especially true for Marxist philosophy with distinct practicality and the theoretical quality of keeping pace with the time. Therefore, in the new era of China, the mission of “explaining the world” of Marxist philosophy is to “transform the world”. On the other hand, “transforming the world” provides development power for “explaining the world”. The need of “transforming the world” for the theoretical guidance of “explaining the world” can promote “explaining the world” to better play its role in explaining and explaining the actual social situation in the new era of China, analyzing and summarizing the achievements, existing problems and lessons learned in the practical process of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, so as to promote its own development.

Thirdly, in the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, “explaining the world” and “transforming the world” have jointly promoted the development of this great practice. In the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, the two aspects of “explaining the world” and “transforming the world” are dialectical unity, closely related and inseparable. On the one hand, “explaining the world” provides theoretical guidance for “transforming the world”. In other words, in contemporary China, Marxist philosophy gives play to its mission of “explaining the world”, explains the actual social situation in the new era of China, and analyzes the achievements, problems, experiences and lessons of China in the practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, which can provide theoretical reference and theoretical guidance for the mission of “transforming the world” to provide scientific theoretical guidance for the development of Marxist philosophy on the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era at the level of world outlook and methodology. On the other hand, “transforming the world” provides development purpose and development power for “explaining the world”. In the new era of China, Marxist Philosophy “explains the world” won’t stop or be satisfied with itself, but aims at “transforming the world” to provide scientific theoretical guidance for the development of the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era at the level of world outlook and methodology. At the same time, the need of “transforming the world” for the theoretical guiding role of “explaining the world” can promote “explaining the world” to play its role better, so as to promote its own development. At the same time, the benign interaction between the two has jointly promoted the development of the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. At the same time, on the basis and process of the great practical development of socialism with Chinese

characteristics in the new era, Marxist philosophy has also been continuously improved and developed in the new era of China. In other words, the benign interaction between the two missions of Marxist Philosophy, “explaining the world” and “transforming the world”, has jointly promoted the development of the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, and further promoted the benign interaction between Marxist philosophy and the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Thirdly, in the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, “explaining the world” and “transforming the world” have jointly promoted the development of this great practice.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, as a leading role in the field of Chinese ideology, Marxist Philosophy is also facing new topics and missions in the new era of China. The mission of Marxist Philosophy in the new era is essentially consistent with the mission of Marxist philosophy revealed in the Theses on Feuerbach. In other words, the mission of Marxist Philosophy in the new era of China is to “explain the world” and “transform the world”. There is a dialectical and unified internal relationship between the two missions. Specially speaking, first, “explaining the world” provides theoretical guidance for “transforming the world”. Secondly, “transforming the world” provides development purpose and development power for “explaining the world”. Thirdly, in the great practice of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, “explaining the world” and “transforming the

world” have jointly promoted the development of this great practice.

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