

The Value Pursuit of the Theoretical System of Socialism With Chinese Characteristics: Serving the People – Taking Deng Xiaoping Thought of Serving the People as an Example

TANG Bin^{[a],*}; XUE Junjun^[b]

^[a]Post-Doctor, Lecturer at College of Marxism of Southwestern University, Chongqing, China.

^[b]Postgraduate Majored in Marxism Sinicization Research at College of Marxism, Southwestern University, Chongqing, China.

*Corresponding author.

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Abstract

“The free and comprehensive development of people”: is the value pursuit of Marxism, and is also the ultimate goal of socialist and communist development. The theory of Deng Xiaoping also regards people’s development as the goal of its value pursuit, which is of more Chinese characteristics - serving the people. This is not only the inheritance of the Marxism-Leninism, but also the inheritance of the thought of Mao Zedong, which also provides the logical origin for value pursuit of the theoretical system of Socialism with Chinese characteristics. Deng Xiaoping Theory of serving the people becomes the bridge which connects Marxism-Leninism, the thought of Mao Zedong and the theoretical system of Socialism with Chinese characteristics, and lays a foundation for the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Key words: Deng Xiaoping theory; Free and comprehensive development; Serving the people;

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INTRODUCTION

Deng Xiaoping Theory is the pioneering achievement of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Serving the people is an important proposition of Deng Xiaoping Theory, which has become the pursuit of value throughout the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and is consistent with the pursuit of value of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.

1. THE FREE AND COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE IS THE VALUE PURSUIT OF MARXISM

As a theoretical system, Marxism has both theoretical level and methodological level, core theory and related theories, philosophical, economic theories and scientific socialist theories. Such a huge theoretical system can be linked, there must be a pursuit of value which throughout the system.

1.1 The Free and Comprehensive Development of People Is the Ultimate Value Concern of Marxism

Marx’s philosophy has been formed on the basis of German classical philosophy. In Hegel’s theoretical system, the objective idealism carried by absolute spirit occupies the dominant position. It turns non-existent abstraction into spirit, and imposes it onto people who lead the status of people below spirit. What Marx improves is highlighting the specific practical subject - people; For Feuerbach, materialism is underscored, but in the field of social history the abstractive people replace the realistic people. Marx liberates people from philosophy, emphasizing that history has been created by the people. Marxist philosophy is the philosophy to liberate people, and people are the pursuit of value of Marxist philosophy.

Dialectical materialism and historical materialism provide Marxist political economics with scientific world

outlook and methodology (Marxist Political Economy Writing Group, 2011). Political economy studies relations of production, especially the capitalist relations of production. Under the influence of capitals, workers' labor is alienated and capitalists are only the personification of capitals, even science and technology are alienated, everything is alienated. The research of Marxist political economy is to analyze the capitalist productive relations which cause these alienations, pointing out that these will be replaced by a new system to achieve the free and comprehensive development of people. Marxist political economy is to carry out a profound analysis of the existing system, and to identify the new system which can realize the liberation of people. People are also the value pursuit of political economics.

On the basis of philosophy and political economy, Marx has established the scientific theoretical system of socialism, whose purpose is to realize communism. The general characteristics of communism are: abolition of private ownership, conscious social production, real social equality, great improvement of people's spiritual realm, autogenetic perdition of classes and states, free and comprehensive development of people, and high degree of harmony between human and nature, etc., each of which concerns about people, and is for the free and all-round development of people. Scientific socialism is the theoretical results which have been obtained in the process that Marx and Engels used Marxist philosophy and political economy to investigate the capitalist society (Scientific Socialism Writing Group, 2011). The value pursuit of scientific socialism more clearly directs to the development of people.

Methodological basis of philosophy, the rigorous argument of political economy, and blueprint and outlook of scientific socialism, Marxism is always for the struggle of human emancipation. From the height of holistic perspective the value pursuit of Marxism refers to people, the free and comprehensive development of people, and the liberation of all mankind.

1.2 Serving the People Is to Promote the Comprehensive Development of People

Free and comprehensive development of people is a state of people in communist society, whose realization needs a series of conditions such as highly advanced productive forces, plenty of free time, full development of social interactions, and highly developed culture and education, etc. China is now at the primary stage of socialism, while socialism itself is the primary stage of communism, thus we still have a long way to go before achieving free and comprehensive development of people, under which background serving the people has been generated.

At this stage, states and political parties have not been perished, which requires the presence of a collective leadership. The Communist Party of China (below referred as the Party) is the core of leadership of socialism with

Chinese characteristics, committed to take on the historical responsibility to promote the comprehensive development of people, whose main task at this stage is to create a variety of conditions for the comprehensive development of people. Here the "people" refers to the broad masses of people. The Party needs to effectively serve the people, and the thought of serving the people is the manifestation of free and comprehensive development of people at the primary stage of socialism. Whether the development of production or improvement of people's lives, whether material construction or spiritual and cultural construction, whether one of five or science and education to develop the country, their purpose is to promote the development of people. All of these require each party member to keep in mind and to abide by the purpose of serving the people.

2. SERVING THE PEOPLE IS THE VALUE PURSUIT OF DENG XIAOPING THEORY

Deng Xiaoping Theory is of rich content, including theory of primary stage of socialism, theory of nature of socialism, theory of socialist market economy, and theory of socialist spiritual and civilizations constructions, etc., among which the thought of serving the people is the value pursuit of Deng Xiaoping Theory.

2.1 The Main Content of Deng Xiaoping Thought of Serving the People

2.1.1 Purpose of Serving the People Wholeheartedly

As early as in 1950 when Deng Xiaoping worked in the Southwest Bureau he pointed out,

Communists should not only be the model to implement the common guideline and abide by laws and disciplines, but also need to have a correct work style – fearing no trouble, acting modestly and living plainly, seeking truth from facts and serving the people wholeheartedly without considering personal gain or loss. (*The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. I)*, 1994, p.157)

This attitude of serving the people wholeheartedly shows that serving the people is the purpose of the Party. After the founding of our country at this point has been emphasized so that we can continue to carry on the good tradition of serving the people in the democratic revolution period, and apply them into constructions. In the 1956 report of modification of Party constitution, Deng Xiaoping pointed out, "Every party member must develop a work style of serving the people, responsible to the people, consulting the people when encounter problems and sticking with each other through the ups and downs." (*The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. I)*, 1994, p.217) In 1982 the twelfth national congress of the Party has passed the new party constitution, serving the people wholeheartedly has become one of the three basic requirements for the Party to lead people in the socialist modernization. Deng Xiaoping stressed repeatedly that serve the people, we must adhere to the mass line, which

fully proves the importance of serving the people in Deng Xiaoping Theory.

2.1.2 The Act Guideline of Making Every Attempt for the Benefits of People

Serving the people cannot just stay in the slogan level. If effectively serving the people is to be carried out, specifically, every attempt shall be made to the people's interests. Interests of the people are various, mainly to be analyzed in three dimensions of economy, politics and culture.

The economic interests of the people refer to the affluence and well-being of people with socio-economic development. Reform and opening up is the key of choice to decide the fate of China, which is also the most important content of Deng Xiaoping Theory. Reform and opening up seemingly has nothing to do with serving the people, but in fact reform and opening up have better promoted and maintained the interests of the people. Taking economic construction as the central task and vigorously developing productive forces is the best reflection of serving the people in economic development. Only economy has been developed, people's living standards can be improved, and interests of the people can be developed. Deng Xiaoping's southern talk reaffirmed that economic construction as the center should not be shaken. He said,

to uphold the lines, principles and policies since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, the key is to stick to one central task and two basic points. If we don't adhere to socialism, don't adhere to reform and opening up, don't develop economy or improve people's lives, we have only a dead end. The basic line must be upheld for a hundred years, and not to be shaken. Only by adhering to this line, the people will believe us, and support us." (*The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. 3)*, 1993, pp.370-371)

Here he didn't only emphasize that the basic line was to serve interests of people, but also emphasized that the evaluation criteria of work was to improve people's living level. Such an evaluation criteria Deng Xiaoping has talked about long before, "the assessment criteria, mainly to see whether it is conducive to the development of socialist productive forces, whether it helps enhance overall strength of socialist countries, and whether it helps to improve the living standards of people." (*The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. 3)*, 1993, p.372) Productivity and development of comprehensive national strength, after all, is for the people. Just as President Hu Jintao stated at the 100th anniversary of Deng Xiaoping's birthday, "Comrade Deng Xiaoping always trusts the people, by the people, always puts the people's support, their approval, their happiness and promise as the starting point and destination to formulate the principles, policies and make decisions." (*Selected Important Documents Since*, para. 5, 2006, p.152)

People's interests in politics refer to the full exercise of the rights of ownership, and effective enjoyment of people's democracy. Adhering to the dictatorship of the proletariat is one of the Four Cardinal Principles that Deng Xiaoping stresses to always uphold. The substance

of people's democratic dictatorship and the substance of dictatorship of the proletariat is the same. Letting people fully enjoy democracy need to create certain conditions. Deng Xiaoping pointed out,

If we want to create conditions for democracy, we must reiterate the "Principle of Three Nots", do not grab plait, do not label, and do not bludgeon. The political lives inside the Party and the people can only be handled by democratic means, not by repression or strike. (*The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. 2)*, 1994, p.144)

In addition, Deng Xiaoping also put great emphasis on law construction to ensure the people are the masters. Only ensuring that the people are the masters, the lines, principles and policies can effectively represent the interests of the people, and can really implement the purpose of serving the people.

People's interests in culture refer to the rich and colorful cultural life on the basis of socialist spiritual civilization. Deng Xiaoping pointed out: "We shall improve the scientific and cultural level of the whole nation, develop a colorful cultural noble life, and build a high degree of socialist spiritual civilization while constructing a high degree of material civilization." (*The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. 2)*, 1994, p.208) Interests of the people is not limited to the economic and political fields, people's seeking for cultural life is also the reflection of people's interests, and is the manifestation of the major contradiction at the primary stage of socialism. Deng Xiaoping emphasized that spiritual civilizational construction is the manifestation of full attention to the interests of the people, and the ability of the Party to develop culture is also the reflection of the ability to serve the people.

2.1.3 To Explore Practical Approaches for Development Paths and Strategies

From a macroscopic perspective that exploring the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics is to serve the people, because only a suitable development path of China has been explored, China can be really developed, and various undertakings of China can grow prosperously, during which process people's interests can then be guaranteed and developed. The road of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the historical choice of Chinese people, and is the right path to safeguard the people's own interests. That the Party leads the people to practice on this road takes serving the people as the fundamental motivation.

From a microscopic perspective, after the socialist development path has been determined, practical development strategies need to be formulated, and the "Three-Step" development strategy has emerged. In 1987 Deng Xiaoping proposed the "Three-Step" strategy,

"our economic development will take three steps, take the first two steps in this century to realize adequate food and clothing and the well-off life. Take another step in the next century within thirty years to fifty years to reach the level of a moderately developed country." (*The Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (Vol. 2)*, 1993, p.251)

These three steps, whether the adequate food and clothing, the well-off life or the final purpose of a moderately developed country has taken people's living level as the standard. Each step of the "Three-Step" strategy has been established based on people's income and people's living.

The emphasis on the consciousness of serving the people, working for the benefits of people, and exploring development paths and strategies suited to China, in the long run, is the people. These elements constitute the thought of serving the people of Deng Xiaoping.

2.2 Serving the People Is the Coherent Value Pursuit of Deng Xiaoping Theory

Deng Xiaoping said that he is the son of Chinese people, these simple words indicate that the whole theoretical system of Deng Xiaoping is to serve his deeply loved motherland and people. Deng Xiaoping theoretical system is profound, involving all aspects of economic and social development, including construction of system and layout of strategy, adhering to the Four Cardinal Principles and innovation of socialist market economy, and the "Three-Step" development plan and the "Three Benefits" metrics. The only consistent content of the above is people, is to serve the people wholeheartedly, and to effectively protect the people's interests.

Emphasis on serving the people is to let the majority of the Party members and cadres continue to deepen the sense of serving the people, ensuring that the development of social undertakings is able to serve the people, so that the mass line can be truly implemented to serve the people. Emphasis on serving the interests of the people is the manifestation of serving the people. The economic development improves people's living standards, people's democracy allows people to become the real masters, and spiritual civilization constructions expand the connotation of serving the people. Emphasis on the development path and development strategy suited to China aims to better serve the people, the socialist road with Chinese characteristics is the only way for China's historical development, and the layout of each step of the three-step strategy is based on the people's interests. Deng Xiaoping Theory fully implements the idea of serving the people, taking people's interests as the supreme criterion of action, and serving the people are Deng Xiaoping Theory's unchanging pursuit of value.

3. SERVING THE PEOPLE WHOLEHEARTEDLY IS THE LOGICAL ORIGIN FOR THE VALUE PURSUIT OF THE THEORETICAL SYSTEM OF SOCIALISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

Deng Xiaoping Thought of serving the people have been formed on the basis of inheriting the thoughts of

previous generations, and also lays foundations for future theoretical development. Serving the people is the value pursuit of Marxism and Chinese Marxism, which under the new historical conditions is reflected as the value pursuit of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

3.1 Origin and Development of Serving the People of Deng Xiaoping Thought

Deng Xiaoping opened up the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which inherits and develops Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. Deng Xiaoping Thought of serving the people has also been bred based on inheritance and development, and has also made foundations for various subsequent theories.

3.1.1 Deng Xiaoping Thought of Serving the People Is the Inheritance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought

The ultimate value pursuit of Marxism is the free and comprehensive development of people, to achieve this goal of serving the people is requisite. In high school Marx proposed and discussed the thought of "work for human" (Liu, 2011). In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels pointed out,

All the movements in the past were for the minority of people, or made benefits for the minority of people. The proletarian movements are for the majority of people, and are the independent movements which seek benefits for the majority of people. (*Selected Works of Marx and Engels (Vol. 1)*, 2012, p.411)

Although here he did not explicitly put forward the call to serve people, the proletarian movements which seek benefits for the majority of people serve essentially for the majority of people, and the majority of people refer to the masses. In *The Civil War in France* Marx pointed out, "Universal suffrage is not to decide who from the ruling class will be the representative of people every three years or six years, but to serve the people in the commune." (*Selected Works of Marx and Engels (Vol. 3)*, 2012, p.100) Marx put forward the idea of serving the people clearly. The thoughts of Marx and Engels have laid the theoretical basis for serving the people of Deng Xiaoping Thought.

Lenin also repeatedly stressed the need to serve the people in various forms. Lenin said in *Organizations of the Party and Publications of the Party*,

It will be free writings, because it is not for the ladies who eat all day, not for the ten thousand fat and bored members in upper class, but for tens of thousands of working people, for the essence, power, and future of the country." (*Selected Works of Lenin (Vol. 1)*, 2012, p.666)

Lenin also pointed out that the Soviets have been made to serve the people. He said: "Here, for the first time democracy serves for the masses, it is no longer democracy of the rich, but in all bourgeois countries, even the most democratic republic, democracy always belongs to the rich." (*Selected Works of Lenin (Vol. 3)*, 2012, p.568)

This thought of Lenin also provides some theoretical references for Deng Xiaoping Theory of serving the people.

As early as in 1939, Mao Zedong firstly mentioned serving the people. Mao Zedong criticized the view of “courage” of Confucius, pointing out that the courage of Confucius was “used to oppress people and guard the feudal system, rather than serve the people”, (*Works of Mao Zedong (Vol. 2)*, 1993, p.163) which in turn confirmed that courage should really serve the people. In 1940 Mao Zedong explained the opinion that literature and art should serve the people in *The Theory of New Democracy* and *The Talks at the Yan’an Forum of Literature and Art*. He said, “(the new democratic culture) should serve the over ninety percent of the toiling masses of workers and peasants of the whole nation.” (*Selected Works of Mao Zedong (Vol. 2)*, 1991, p.708) In 1944 Mao Zedong published his famous speech *Serving the People*, clearly raising serving the people to the height of the aim of the Party and army, which has been one of the most essential writings of Mao Zedong Thought. After the founding of the PRC, Mao Zedong still repeatedly stressed the importance of close ties with people. In 1957 Mao Zedong pointed out, “It is normal times now, not wartime. It is training. If we do not insist on close ties with people, it’s very nature that people will be unwilling to forgive our shortcomings.” (*Works of Mao Zedong (Vol. 7)*, 1999, p.286) Although this has been emphasized for the military, it’s still applicable for the entire Party and country. We relied on contact with the people and serving the people to achieve the victory of revolution, in the peace time, serving the people are equally indispensable. Thus, Deng Xiaoping Theory of serving the people has been directly developed from Mao Zedong Thought of serving the people.

No matter it is serving the interests for the majority of people by Marx and Engels, or serving the masses and laborers by Lenin, or the purpose of serving the people clearly proposed by Mao Zedong, they are all the theoretical origin of serving the people of Deng Xiaoping Theory.

3.1.2 Development of Deng Xiaoping Theory of Serving the People in the Theoretical System of Socialism With Chinese Characteristics

“Establishing the Party for the public and ruling for people” is the basic requirement of the Party’s construction by Jiang Zemin. In 2000 his inspection tour of Guangdong Jiang Zemin firstly fully expressed the important thought of the “Three Represents”,

summing up the 70 years of history of our party, we can draw an important conclusion, that is, the reason that our party can win people’s support is because in various historical periods of revolution, construction and reform, our party always represents the development requirements of China’s advanced productive forces, represents the orientation of China’s advanced culture and the fundamental interests of Chinese people. Through the development of correct lines, principles and policies, our party makes unremitting efforts to realize the fundamental interests of the country and the people. (*Selected Works of Jiang Zemin (Vol. 3)*, 2006. p.2)

“Three Represents” is the requirement to the Party, which is consistent with the principal contradiction in our society, namely, the contradiction between people’s growing material and cultural demands and the backward social production. Representing productive forces and cultural orientation is to solve this problem, representing the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people is to provide a direction to solve this problem - for the interests of people, which is essentially the same with Deng Xiaoping Thought of serving the people.

The first explicit use of the “concept of scientific development” was proposed by Hu Jintao when he visited Jiangxi in 2003. The 17th National Congress of the CPC pointed out, “for concept of scientific development, the first prerequisite is development, the core is people-oriented, the basic requirement is to be comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable, and the fundamental approach is to be balanced.” (*Selected Important Documents Since*, para. 5, 2009, pp.11-12) The concept of scientific development is the overall requirement for the economic and social undertakings, whose core is people-oriented, where the “people” is the Chinese people. Since the 17th National Congress, the Party and the country has formulated a series of policies, which are all people-oriented: building a service-oriented government is to better serve the people; balancing urban and rural development is to better serve the majority of people; developing a socialist culture is to meet the higher demands of people’s spiritual life; building a learning type party is to keep learning and continuously improve the ability to serve the people; proposing to be incorruptible and practical is to better make benefits for the people all of these have a common goal, that is to better serve the people.

Xi Jinping pointed out that

the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream of the Chinese nation in modern times. This dream includes long-cherished wishes of several generations of Chinese people, reflects the overall interests of the Chinese nation, and is also the common aspiration of every Chinese people. (*Excerpts of Xi Jinping’s Discussions*, para.5, 2013, p.3)

Chinese Dream is national, ethnic, and for every Chinese people (Xi, 2013, May 5). The basic connotation and purpose of Chinese dream are the country’s prosperity, national rejuvenation and happiness of the people. The first two are the prerequisites, and the result is the happiness of people. The realization process of Chinese dream is the process to achieve, maintain, and develop the interests of people. As Xi Jinping has said, “Chinese dream, after all, is the dream of the people. We must closely rely on the people and continue to make benefits for the people.” (Xi, 2013, May 18).

How to build the Party, how to implement the people-oriented concept in development, and how to safeguard people’s interests in the process of achieving Chinese dream, all of which are the new development of Deng

Xiaoping Theory of serving the people in the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

3.2 Serving the People Is the Value Line Throughout the Theoretical System of Socialism With Chinese Characteristics

The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the development of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, is the theoretical innovation in the new era centered on reform and construction, is the theoretical guidance to better promote China's socialist construction and development, and is the inevitable choice to uphold Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought in the new era. Deng Xiaoping Thought of serving the people has played an important role in the process of Marxism connecting with China's reality. On one hand it is the inheritance of Marxism-Leninism and the development of Marx's thought, on the other hand it establishes a clear value pursuit for the entire theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Deng Xiaoping has explained the content of serving the people from many angles, including the purpose of serving the people, doing everything possible for the people's interests, and exploring correct path of development to serve the people, which has guided the whole theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The thought of "Three Represents" stresses building of the Party, because through building at the core of leadership serving the people can be better implemented, productive forces, cultural advancement can be better promoted and people's interests can be better realized. The concept of scientific development explains the question of how to develop. It carries out reasonable developments to truly maintain, realize, and develop people's interests, which is not for the interests of a certain area, but for the interests of the entire Chinese people; not for the contemporary interests, but to promote the sustainable interests of the people. Chinese dream stresses the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation, which is internally consistent with serving the people and national revival. Only to truly serve the people national rejuvenation can be realized, and only national rejuvenation has been realized serving the people can be provided with a solid foundation.

The theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the theoretical system which guides China to better deepen reform and conduct overall constructions.

Deepening reform and overall constructions are inseparable people, and only to mobilize the enthusiasm of people, carry forward the initiative of people, stimulate the creativity of people, we can achieve a better development. Deng Xiaoping Thought of serving the people is the reflection of Marxism historical materialism that people create history, is the high affirmation to the status and interests of people, provides spiritual support

for the overall constructions of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and is the value line of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

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