

# What is Socialism with Chinese Characteristics?

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**Abstract:** Socialism with Chinese Characteristics differs from socialism setting up on the basis of developed capitalism assumed by Marx and Engels, from socialism of the Soviet Model, and from the “Surmounting Stage” socialism in past China. The peculiarity of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics is reflected in its peculiar historical beginning, peculiar economic mode, peculiar development road and peculiar two-system relationship.

**Key words:** socialism; Chinese characteristics; development road

Putting forward the question of characteristics of socialism is the most remarkable creation and breakthrough of Deng Xiaoping. It's under the flag of establishing Socialism with Chinese Characteristics that socialism irradiates tremendous vigor and vitality in China. Then, what's Socialism with Chinese Characteristics?

**I. As for the historical beginning, Socialism with Chinese Characteristics is underdeveloped-country socialism that emerged in a? semi-colonial and semi-feudal society.**

According to Marxist classical authors, the beginning of development of socialist society is well developed capitalism. Yet, China goes on socialist road on the basis of a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. It differs greatly from the assumption of Marxism founders. It is this tremendous difference that enables Chinese socialism to have the distinctive characteristics of the underdeveloped countries.

Firstly, the basis on which Chinese socialism was born differs from the

matrix which gestates socialism referred to by its founders. The predecessor of Chinese socialism is backward semi-colonial and semi-feudal society instead of developed capitalist society. This is the particular historical beginning of Chinese socialist society.

Secondly, socialism born on the basis of backward economy and culture in China has necessarily to experience the transition period from unqualified to qualified. What is qualified socialism? Theoretically speaking, it should be better and superior than capitalism, that is, it should be socialism assumed by Marx. For the development stage of society, to realize the transform from unqualified to qualified, socialism has to experience a fairly long transition period or the primary stage.

Thirdly, socialism born on the basis of backward economy and culture will unavoidably meet a lot of difficulties and problems. As for the development level of its production power, socialism lags behind developed capitalist countries badly. Because of this fact, under the socialist background, China has to fulfill the tasks of industrialization, commercialization, socialization and modernization which other countries have fulfilled under capitalism, and build the well developed production power foundation that socialism should have.

Therefore, we can find that socialism born on the basis of backward economy and culture is peculiar. It differs from socialism referred to by Marx and Engels at a distance of an era of well developed capitalism. That is, the two come from different matrixes? There are not only differences of quality or development level, but also differences of quality between them. As a result, Chinese socialism and socialism put forward by Marx and Engels are not on the same level. It is special socialism born in a country lagging behind both in economy and culture (or underdeveloped country).

## **II. As for the economic pattern, Socialism with Chinese Characteristics is socialism which combines public ownership and marked economy.**

In socialist development history, the idea of setting public ownership against commodity economy (Marked economy) has existed for a long time. However, practice has proved that mere planned economy will constrain the development of the production power.

Since setting public ownership against marked economy will hinder the development of the production power, after the establishment of socialist public ownership, what kind of economic system should be built to accelerate the development of the production power? In order to deal with this historical question, when leading the practice of the modernization of China, Chinese communist party members insist on the marked-oriented reforming road, continuously distinguish plan and market from social system, and fix firmly the target pattern of the socialist market economy. In fact, the most prominent characteristics of socialist market economy in China lies in its engaging of the superiority of public ownership and the superiority of market economy. The practice since reform and opening has proved that combining public ownership and market economy and taking the socialist market economy is a necessary choice for the liberation and development of productivity in present China. And it is also an inevitable choice for the purpose of realizing Rich Together and social equality gradually.

The combination of public ownership and market economy does not mean that conflicts and contradictions do not exist between them. Many problems that appear in present economic and social development in China are caused by the conflicts between them. So dealing with the conflicts correctly is very important. As they cannot be eliminated, the basic principle of dealing with the conflicts is to regulate but not to eliminate them. The regulation should be done from two

aspects: on the one hand, China should adjust public ownership and enable it to be in accordance with the basic requirements of market economy; on the other hand, China should regulate market economy and make it reflect the essence of public ownership. In another word, when the two aspects are contradictory to each other, the problem should not be dealt with by letting one side to be subordinated to the other side. On the contrary, the two sides should adapt, regulate and cooperate mutually—their combination should be realized through mutual help.

### **III. As for its development road, Socialism with Chinese Characteristics is socialism developed peacefully on the basis of reform and opening and self-reliance.**

To take what kind of road for socialist construction in underdeveloped countries is unpredictable for Marxism founders. Through persevering exploration, China has built a new road for socialist construction which fits for its own characteristics. To summarize it, it is a peaceful development road.

First, to build Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, it's necessary to unite opening to the outside world and self-reliance, and insist on cross-cultural communication on the basis of self-independence, equality and mutual benefit. Self-independence and self-reliance are basic guidelines of China, opening to the outside world and strengthening exchange are basic state policies of China. To develop and grow in strength, China should depend on herself instead of plundering other countries or depending on foreign aids. However, self-independence is not closing the country to the international intercourse, and self-reliance does not mean opposing to everything foreign blindly. Self-independence, self-reliance and opening to the outside world are unanimous in essence. They have the same aim—to build Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.

Then, to build Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, we have to develop

ourselves in peaceful environment through uniting inner construction and international peace, strive for its development in peaceful environment and keep world peace on the basis of self development at the same time. The rise of China cannot take the road of plundering other countries. From the beginning of reform and opening, China has established firmly the basic thought of peaceful development and peaceful rise. Deng Xiaoping once pointed out explicitly: “The development of China is beneficial to peace and stability of both the world and the Asia-Pacific Region.” “The stronger China becomes, the more dependable the world peace would be.” His thoughts connect the cause of building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and keeping world peace closely. To rise in peace and to defend world peace better in rise should be the necessary attitude towards building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.

#### **IV. As for the two-System relationship, Socialism with Chinese Characteristics is socialism which utilizes all the fruits of capitalist civilization.**

The relationship between socialism and capitalism is the most important external relationship that socialist countries face in reform and construction. In socialist construction, there is an unavoidable big problem—how to handle and deal with the relationship with capitalism. Since the reform and opening, China has opened up successfully the new stage of peaceful co-existence between socialism and capitalism. It has become one of the distinctive features of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.

First of all, to study and utilize the fruits of capitalist civilization is an inevitable choice of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics. Till now, to learn coexist with capitalism in competition and to absorb and make use of the fruits of capitalist civilization are objective requirements of socialist development. In order

to study and make use of the fruits of capitalist civilization, at the beginning of reform and opening, China made the strategic choice taking the fruits of advanced science and technology as the start point of our development. Practice has proved that this is a right choice in Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and it is a necessary result of treating fruits of capitalist civilization in right way.

Next, considering the reality of China, we should build a new road of socialist construction by utilizing capitalism. The basic points of this road include the following aspects: (1) Accelerating the speed of modernization of China through utilizing foreign investment; (2) Reducing the distance between China and the developed countries by attract foreign advanced technology, intelligence and management experience; (3) Building the frontlines and windows of opening to the outside world through establishing special economic zones; (4) Creating a new form of utilizing capitalism by means of carrying out the idea of “One Country, Two Systems”; (5) Combining socialism and market economy organically to bridge the wide gap that socialism has to face in studying and utilizing capitalism; (6) Starting a successful mode of utilizing capitalism by constructing the main body socialist pattern.