

CHINESE
MODERNIZATION:
THE WAY FORWARD

中国式现代化 发展之路

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Introduction

With the Spinning Jenny kicking off the Industrial Revolution in the mid-18th century, Western countries started their journey to modernization.

Today, after more than 250 years, the tide of modernization is still surging forward. China, once languishing in untold suffering and turmoil, is now embarking on a glorious and promising new journey toward modernization under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Chinese modernization is socialist modernization pursued under the leadership of the CPC. It shares features common to the modernization processes of all other countries, but it is more characterized by features that are unique to the Chinese context. It is the modernization of a huge population, of common prosperity for all, of the coordinated pursuit of material and cultural-ethical advancement, of harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature, and of peaceful development.

Is there only one model of modernization in the world? Is there only one set of standards of modernization that applies to all countries? Based on an analysis of Chinese modernization's theory and practice, the answer is no.

This report reviews and analyzes the CPC's century-long dedicated efforts

of leading the Chinese people in exploring a path to modernization. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, and particularly since the CPC's 18th National Congress, China has made tremendous achievements lauded by the world in science and technology, economic development, ecological advancement, and many other fields.

This report outlines practical approaches to Chinese modernization. Under the leadership of the CPC, China will firmly adhere to a people-centered development philosophy, follow its own path, advance reform and opening up as a crucial move, develop new quality productive forces at a faster pace, achieve greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology, and advance modernization in all respects in a systematic way. Under the leadership of the CPC, the largest Marxist governing party in the world, China will be a pioneer in exploring green, low-carbon, and high-quality development, strive to build a human community with a shared future, and respond with composure and solid action to global changes of a magnitude unseen in a century.

Based on an in-depth analysis, this report asserts that Chinese modernization has given rise to a new form of human advancement. Chinese modernization is different from Western modernization in the following ways: it puts people, not capital, first; it debunks the idea of "the end of history" and pursues the constant improvement and innovation of systems and institutions; it pursues a model of comprehensive and coordinated development, not one-dimensionality and alienation; it ensures that the people run their country and that democracy is not practiced for the few; it strives to both preserve cultural heritage and enrich it; and it rejects unilateralism in global governance and advances the building of a human community with a shared future.

This report notes that modernization is not only about the economy, it is also about the well-rounded development of the people. Chinese modernization has set an example for developing countries to independently pursue a path to modernization. Its theory and practice offer a viable alternative for countries and nations that seek to develop themselves both rapidly and independently and give

inspiration, hope, and confidence to other developing countries as they explore a path to modernization suitable to their national conditions.

The road ahead may be long and arduous, but with sustained efforts, we will reach our destination. The sun rising in the east will light up the road ahead.

Chapter One

The Evolution of Chinese Modernization

Since the very day of its founding, the Communist Party of China has made seeking happiness for the Chinese people and rejuvenation for the Chinese nation its aspiration and mission. All the struggle, sacrifice, and creation through which the Party has united and led the Chinese people over the past hundred years has been tied together by one ultimate theme—bringing about the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.^①

—Xi Jinping

In 1921, on a boat at Nanhu Lake in Jiaxing, the first CPC National Congress was concluded, launching China on its hundred-year journey of modernization.

① Xi Jinping's speech at a ceremony marking the centenary of the Communist Party of China
Xinhua News Agency, July 1, 2021.

The founding of the CPC, inconspicuous in its beginnings, was a silent clap of thunder that marked the beginning of glorious and epic endeavors. In the one hundred years that followed, generation after generation of Chinese Communists have led the Chinese people in exploring and pursuing a path to modernization, scoring remarkable achievements along the way and making outstanding contributions to human advancement.

1. Achievements on a Hundred-Year Journey

Over the course of human progress, the Chinese nation has created an enduring and splendid civilization, long ranked among the great nations of the world, and made indelible contributions to the advancement of human civilization. After the mid-17th century, bourgeois revolutions erupted in a series of Western countries, which soon entered the Industrial Revolution. Driven by new models of production, they quickly grew in strength. The bourgeoisie of these countries, through blood and fire, started its early accumulation of capital and colonial plundering.

China, a country with vast territories, abundant resources, and a large population, however, gradually fell behind other countries in the global wave of advancement, industrialization, and modernization. As a result, it became a market coveted and fought over by Western powers. Starting in 1840, Western powers repeatedly invaded China and compelled it to cede territory and pay indemnities, grabbing all sorts of privileges. They thus gravely set back China's economic development and modernization process.

“Our country endured intense humiliation, our people groaned in misery, and our civilization was plunged into darkness^①.”—This observation fully

① Xi Jinping's speech at the ceremony marking the centenary of the Communist Party of China, Xinhua News Agency, July 1, 2021.

captures what happened to China when it was dragged into a West-dominated wave of modernization. Countless dedicated patriots made every effort to learn advanced systems and technologies from Western countries, hoping to move China along a path to strength and prosperity. Undeterred by setbacks, they explored all possible ways to save China. A group of Qing government officials represented by Zeng Guofan, Li Hongzhang, Zuo Zongtang and Zhang Zhidong called for drawing from the techniques of Western countries; scholars like Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao advocated reform; and Sun Yat-sen and Huang Xing believed that the solution lied in revolution. However, despite their unyielding efforts, their plans ended in failure, and they failed to lift the old China out of weakness and poverty.

With the salvoes of Russia's October Revolution in 1917, Marxism-Leninism was introduced to China. From then on, Chinese Communists have shouldered the historic task of realizing China's modernization. Led by generation after generation of Chinese Communists, the Chinese people have ushered in a great transformation from standing up to growing prosperous and strong. By embarking on a Chinese path to modernization, China has made a historic transition from being dragged into Western modernization to leading the new wave of global modernization.

1) 1921-1949: Early explorations of modernization in the period of the new-democratic revolution

In 1921, when China was torn apart and bullied by foreign powers, the Communist Party of China was founded, and the Chinese people were granted the hope to free themselves from miseries and humiliations.

In exploring ways to save China, the early Chinese Communists soon realized that imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat-capitalism could not possibly give birth to new productive forces and that China first had to carry out a profound social revolution. China's modernization would be possible only with the independence of the Chinese nation and the liberation of the Chinese people.

During this period, the CPC rallied the Chinese people and led them in carrying out the new-democratic revolution, establishing a new China in which the people run the country and thus realizing China's independence and the people's liberation. This put an end to China's history as a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, to the rule of a small number of exploiters over the working people, and to disunity that had plagued the old China. All the unequal treaties imposed on China by foreign powers and all the privileges they held in the country were abolished. China achieved a great transformation from a millennia-old feudal autocracy to a people's democracy. This created the fundamental social conditions for China to realize modernization.

2) 1949-1978: Explorations of modernization in the period of socialist revolution and construction

The founding of the People's Republic of China marked a historic turning point in China's transformation from a country in decline into a strong and prosperous one. This made it possible for China to build socialism and pursue modernization.

At its founding, the People's Republic was poor and weak, with a complete lack of heavy machinery manufacturing or other modern technology and equipment. As Mao Zedong pointed out, "What can we make at present? We can make tables and chairs, teacups and teapots, we can grow grain and grind it into flour, and we can make paper. But we can't make a single motor car, plane, tank, or tractor."

In December 1953, Mao Zedong proposed that China should develop "modernized industry," "modernized agriculture and transportation," and "modernized national defense." The proposition of "the four modernizations" thus began to take shape. In September 1954, on behalf of the CPC Central Committee, Zhou Enlai declared for the first time that China should develop modernized industry, agriculture, transportation, and national defense. At the First Session of the Third National People's Congress, held from the end of

1964 to the beginning of 1965, Zhou Enlai officially announced to the nation the strategic goal of achieving modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology.

To achieve the strategic goal of “the four modernizations,” the CPC Central Committee put forward a two-step development plan in 1964. The first step was to establish an independent and relatively complete industrial system and national economic system. The second step was to fully realize the modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology so that China could rank among the world’s leading economies.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Chinese people, by the end of the 1970s, China had established an independent and relatively complete industrial system and economic system, accomplishing the first-step task of “the four modernizations” strategy. The creative theoretical achievements and great progress made in this period provided valuable experience, theoretical underpinnings, and material foundations for China’s modernization.

3) 1978-2012: Advances in modernization in the new period of reform and opening up

In the late 1970s, as a new scientific and technological revolution unfolded, global modernization gathered pace. Facing new developments both at home and abroad, the CPC urgently needed to make political and strategic decisions regarding fundamental policies that would determine the future of the Party and the country.

At the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee convened in December 1978, a historic decision was made to shift the priority of the Party and the country’s work agenda onto economic development and to launch reform and opening up. In March 1979, based on an assessment of the conditions in China, Deng Xiaoping creatively set the goal of achieving “Chinese-style modernization.” In December of the same year, Deng Xiaoping used the term *xiaokang* (moderate prosperity), a distinctive term of traditional Chinese culture,

to define Chinese modernization, setting forth well-defined parameters for the level of modernization China would achieve by the end of the 20th century. Xiaokang thus became a standard to be met in China's drive for modernization. In 1987, the CPC Central Committee adopted a three-step development strategy for achieving modernization. The first step was to meet the basic living needs of the Chinese people by the end of the 1980s. The second step was to achieve a moderately prosperous standard of living by the end of the 20th century. The third step was to generally achieve modernization and reach the level of a moderately developed country by the middle of the 21st century.

To advance China's modernization, Chinese Communists made bold explorations. They successfully integrated the socialist system with the market economy and made building a socialist market economy a goal of reform, thus ushering in a new stage of reform, opening up, and modernization. On December 11, 2001, China acceded to the World Trade Organization, becoming an integral part of globalization. This was a milestone in China's modernization drive. China aligned itself with WTO rules and promoted trade liberalization and investment facilitation. As it became more open, China added strong impetus to economic globalization and injected new vigor into world economy.

In this period, China achieved a historic transformation, changing from a country with a relatively low level of productivity to the world's second largest economy. It also made historic strides in raising the living standards of its people from bare subsistence to moderate prosperity on the whole, and then toward moderate prosperity in all respects. These achievements fueled China's modernization by providing new and dynamic systemic underpinnings and creating material conditions necessary for achieving rapid development.

4) 2012-present: Chinese modernization on all fronts in the new era

After the 18th National Congress of the CPC in November 2012, socialism with Chinese characteristics entered a new era, and Chinese modernization advanced on all fronts. By fully reviewing and drawing on the practices of

China's modernization, the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has continued to advance the cause and enrich the theory of Chinese modernization, thus opening up new horizons for rejuvenating the Chinese nation with Chinese modernization.

In terms of theory, with a deeper understanding of the substance and essence of Chinese modernization, a sound summary of its distinctive Chinese features, fundamental goals, and underlying principles, and the establishment of a preliminary theoretical framework, the concept of Chinese modernization has become better articulated and easier to understand and carry out. The new era is an irreversible historical process toward the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Against this backdrop, Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, rising to the occasion, represents a new breakthrough in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of our times, and provides fundamental guidance for Chinese modernization.

In terms of strategy, a two-step strategy has been drawn up for building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects. The timeline is as follows: in the period from 2020 to 2035, generally achieve socialist modernization; in the period from 2035 to the middle of the century, develop China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful. To lay solid foundations for achieving modernization, steps have been taken to implement the Five-Sphere Integrated Plan to promote coordinated economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological advancement and the Four-Pronged Comprehensive Strategy to make comprehensive moves to build a modern socialist country, deepen reform, advance law-based governance, and strengthen the Party's self-governance. In addition, a series of major strategies have also been developed, such as the strategy for invigorating China through science and education, the strategy on developing a quality workforce, and the rural revitalization strategy.

In terms of practice, the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has rallied the entire Party and Chinese people and led them in

working tirelessly and making historic achievements and changes in the cause of the Party and the country in the new era. In particular, China has put an end to absolute poverty that had plagued it for thousands of years, accomplished the First Centenary Goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects on schedule, and created a miracle in the history of poverty reduction. These represent a solid step toward the goal of delivering prosperity for all.

Advancing Chinese modernization is an unprecedented and groundbreaking endeavor. In the new era, China has adopted transformative practices, made new breakthroughs, and scored landmark accomplishments. All of this has provided more solid systemic underpinnings, laid stronger material foundations, and created a reliable source of inspiration for pursuing Chinese modernization.

Thanks to ceaseless efforts made over the past century and more, China has opened new ground and achieved initial success in pursuing modernization. The theory and practice of Chinese modernization are based on China's specific conditions. They add new modern substance to Marxist theory on development, integrate and draw on fine traditional Chinese culture, and present a theoretical framework different from that of Western modernization. Chinese modernization has disproved the claim that "modernization equals westernization" and has enriched and developed the intellectual landscape of global modernization.

"The more daunting a task, the more admirable the efforts to accomplish it." On the new journey to continue the pursuit of Chinese modernization, the Communist Party of China will surely be able to rally the Chinese people and lead them in delivering a performance that stands up to the scrutiny of history .

2. Chinese Modernization Has Changed China

Under the leadership of the CPC, in just several decades, the Chinese people have completed the process of industrialization that took developed countries several centuries to complete. China has scored widely recognized achievements in modernization and realized two miracles—rapid economic growth and

long-term social stability. It has grown from a country plagued by poverty and weakness into the world's second largest economy, achieving a historic leap in its composite national strength.

1) Eradicating absolute poverty and fulfilling the millennia-old dream of moderate prosperity in all respects

Achieving moderate prosperity is a dream long cherished by the Chinese nation. Since its 18th National Congress, the CPC has always prioritized poverty elimination in governance. Giving full play to the political strengths of its leadership and China's socialist system, the CPC adopted a wide range of distinctive and pioneering steps to launch the most far-reaching and intense drive to eliminate poverty in human history. Thanks to eight years of unremitting efforts, China met its goal of eliminating poverty on schedule. By the end of 2020, the 98.99 million rural residents living below the current poverty threshold, 832 poor counties, and 128,000 impoverished villages were all lifted out of poverty. Across the country, regional poverty was eradicated^①.

On July 1, 2021, at the ceremony marking the centenary of the CPC, Xi Jinping declared that, thanks to continued efforts of the whole Party and the entire nation, China has met the First Centenary Goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, and the absolute poverty that had plagued the Chinese nation for thousand years has been eradicated once and for all, and we are now marching in confident strides toward the Second Centenary Goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects. Realizing moderate prosperity in all respects represents the fulfillment of a key target on the way to modernization and national rejuvenation.

By reducing poverty, China has made an outstanding contribution to the

① Xi Jinping's speech at a gathering marking the nation's poverty alleviation accomplishments and honoring model poverty fighters, Xinhua News Agency, February 25, 2021.

world, accounting for over 70 percent of global poverty reduction, which marks a milestone in the development of human history^①. China's targeted poverty alleviation efforts have broken new ground in the theory and practice of poverty alleviation and are highly relevant to other countries facing similar challenges. They demonstrate that human society has gone beyond what capitalism can do to eliminate poverty, thus turning a new page in humanity's pursuit of genuine equality.

2) Achieving rapid economic development and a historic leap in GDP

Since the CPC's 18th National Congress, China's economy has achieved a historic rise, with GDP growing from 53.9 trillion yuan in 2012 to 126 trillion yuan in 2023, or around US\$18 trillion calculated at the average annual exchange rate. China is now the world's second largest economy and contributes more than 30 percent of global economic growth on average.

Quantitative and qualitative improvements in China's economy have driven global growth. Over the past decade, China has accelerated the transformation of its manufacturing industry from one that is only large in output to one that is advanced. Its service industry has become its largest sector, green development has become a core component, and consumption has become the primary engine driving economic growth. China's urbanization rate has increased steadily, and food and energy security as well as living standards have been ensured. The value added of new sectors as well as new forms and new models of business now exceeds 17 percent of China's GDP. The share of China's GDP in the global economy between 2012 and 2021 rose from 11.4 percent to over 18 percent. In the last ten years, China's contribution to global economic growth has been larger

① "The achievements made by New China in its development over the past 70 years are of global and historic significance," Wang Zhidong, *Guangming Daily*, 6th page, October 16, 2019.

than the combined total of the G7.

A high-standard open economy is taking shape. In recent years, China has continually cut tariffs, expanded market access, advanced opening up on a larger scale, across more areas, and in greater depth, and explored new ways of conducting foreign trade. Market access for foreign capital has been expanded further, and efforts have been accelerated to develop a high-standard open economy. China is becoming more open to the world, and this has greatly promoted global development and prosperity. China is now a major trading partner of more than 140 countries and regions and a main source of investment for a growing number of countries^①. At a time when the global recovery lacks momentum, a steadily growing Chinese economy will bring much needed certainty to a world full of uncertainties and add vitality to global recovery.

3) With both vitality and order as well as development and stability, hundreds of millions of Chinese enjoy peace and prosperity

In the pursuit of rapid economic growth, the CPC has stayed committed to achieving prosperity for all. It endeavors to ensure both efficiency and fairness, both vitality and order, and both development and stability while striving to fulfill the Chinese people's wish for prosperity and peace. It has thus created a good social environment for advancing national rejuvenation on all fronts by pursuing Chinese modernization and has also contributed to maintaining global peace and stability.

China's national security has been strengthened across the board. Facing more severe domestic and international challenges, China has applied a holistic approach to national security and steadily improved the leadership, legal, strategy,

① Building an open, inclusive and interconnected world for common development, keynote speech by Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the third Belt and Road forum for international cooperation, Xinhua News Agency, October 18, 2023.

and policy systems for national security. China's high-quality development has strengthened its material foundations for ensuring high-standard security, which, in turn, has ensured its high-quality development. China has intensified the fight against terrorism and separatism and ensured nonoccurrence of terrorist incidents and violence in the country for six consecutive years^①. China has also ensured sustained peace and security in Hong Kong and Macao and the successful implementation of the One Country, Two Systems policy. Thanks to comprehensive measures and continued efforts, the whole of society has been mobilized to safeguard national security, and the people's line of defense has been consolidated to ensure security in all areas.

Living standards have been improved in all aspects. The CPC has strengthened social development, with a focus on ensuring and improving the people's wellbeing. It has continued to make every possible effort, year by year, to tackle one issue after another, all to ensure people's access to childcare, education, employment, medical services, elderly care, housing, and social assistance. Since 1949, the average life expectancy in China has risen from below 35 years to 78.2 years, and the illiteracy rate has dropped from as high as 80 percent to 2.67 percent. All of this has ensured that the people are leading fulfilling, happy and secure lives. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China has created more than 130 million urban jobs and established the world's largest education, social security, and healthcare systems.

China's system and capacity for governance have been steadily modernized. China has accelerated the reform of its social governance system. Since the CPC's 18th National Congress, innovative steps have been taken to strengthen social management, promote innovations in the social governance system, develop a

① "The Ministry of Public Security: China maintains a record of zero terrorist incidents and violence for 6 consecutive years," People.cn, January 10, 2023. <http://society.people.com.cn/n1/2023/0110/c1008-32603569.html>

new model of social governance, and build a community of social governance. Guided by the principle of shared responsibilities and shared benefits, more stakeholders have become involved in governance. By the end of 2021, all urban communities in China had ensured access to comprehensive public service facilities, compared to 82 percent of urban communities at the end of the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-2020). The figure for rural communities increased from 31.8 percent to 84.6 percent in the same time frame. By the end of the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025), all urban and rural communities in China are expected to have access to comprehensive public service facilities.

Chapter Two

Practical Approaches to Chinese Modernization

Our experience proves that Chinese modernization works and that it is the only correct path to building a great country and rejuvenating the nation.^①

—Xi Jinping

The success of Chinese modernization didn't simply fall from the sky, nor did it spring from the ground. Rather, it has been achieved, step by step, by the CPC, dedicated to its founding mission as it has led the Chinese people, one generation after another, in a concerted and solid effort to persevere through tough times.

In leading and advancing Chinese modernization, the CPC has exercised

① “Xi Jinping addresses the opening of a study session at the Party school of the CPC Central Committee,” Xinhua News Agency, February 7, 2023.

overall leadership, upheld a people-centered development philosophy, followed a path of independence and self-reliance and a policy of reform and opening up, developed new quality productive forces, and emphasized a systematic approach, so as to ensure that Chinese modernization is making steady progress.

1. Leadership by the CPC Is the Fundamental Underpinning of Chinese Modernization

Chinese modernization is socialist modernization under the leadership of the CPC. The CPC's leadership is directly involved in the fundamental direction and the ultimate success or failure of Chinese modernization. It is the fundamental underpinning of Chinese modernization.

1) Ensuring the smooth advancement of Chinese modernization along the right path

The banner shows the way, and which road the way takes us down determines our destiny. What banner to fly and what road to walk are of fundamental importance to a country's development. The CPC holds high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics and unswervingly follows the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, thus ensuring that Chinese modernization advances smoothly along the right path.

The CPC has steadily advanced theoretical innovation on the basis of practice, thus providing sound theoretical guidance for Chinese modernization. It has endeavored to modernize the system and capacity for governance, thus providing strong institutional guarantees that can support Chinese modernization. It has continued to promote the creative transformation and development of fine traditional Chinese culture and the development of modern Chinese civilization, thus creating a powerful source of inspiration for Chinese modernization.

As Xi Jinping has said, "Chinese modernization will have bright prospects

and prosper only if we unswervingly uphold the leadership of the Party. Otherwise, we will veer off course, forget ourselves, or even commit catastrophic errors.”^①

2) Making steady and sustained efforts to secure the goals of Chinese modernization

The CPC has stayed true to its founding mission of pursuing happiness for the people and rejuvenation for the nation, and it has always worked to pursue both its lofty ideals and tangible, incremental progress. Once its goals are set, the CPC will never stop until they are met. This has enabled it to transcend the fate of some countries to suffer endless strife between political parties and fickle policy platforms.

The advancement of Chinese modernization has been a relay race through history. In particular, since the launch of the reform and opening up policy, China has been firm in pursuing the goals of modernization, steadily improving and enriching them through practice. At the 20th CPC National Congress convened in 2022, an inspiring blueprint was drawn up for building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects and advancing national rejuvenation on all fronts through a Chinese path to modernization. This spirit of generation after generation tenaciously fighting to achieve the nation’s goals is profound evidence of the CPC’s strategic resolve and institutional strengths.

3) Creating a mighty force to advance Chinese modernization

Scattered, we are hopeless; together, we are strong. In a country with such a large population and complex conditions as China, in order to rally all forces to

^① “Xi Jinping addresses the opening of a study session at the Party school of the CPC Central Committee,” Xinhua News Agency, February 7, 2023.

pursue modernization, there must be a united political party.

From a small political party with just a few dozen members, the CPC has grown into a party with more than 98 million members, a party that governs a country of more than 1.4 billion people. The CPC has always attached great importance to achieving unity by relying on common ideals and convictions, a tight organizational system, a Party-wide sense of consciousness, and strict discipline and rules. The CPC will continue using its latest achievements in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of the times to arm all of its members, so as to achieve unity in thinking, will, and action.

Chinese modernization is the cause of the hundreds of millions of Chinese people, and the people are the agents of Chinese modernization. The CPC has its roots in the people, and the people are its lifeblood and its source of strength. The CPC has no special interests of its own, nor does it represent any interest group, any power bloc, or any privileged class. Rather, it has always represented the fundamental interests of all of the Chinese people. With a stirring vision of Chinese modernization, the CPC has inspired, motivated, and rallied the people and promoted harmony among political parties, ethnic groups, religions, and Chinese both at home and abroad. It has thus brought the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation in and outside China together to strive in unity, creating a mighty force for building a modern socialist country in all respects.

2. Upholding a People-Centered Development Philosophy

Development is the eternal theme of human society. Modernization serves the people's longing for a better life and is a goal pursued by all countries across the world. Rooted in a people-centered development philosophy, Chinese modernization aims to protect the people's interests, advance their well-being, and ensure that development is for the people and by the people and that its fruits are shared equitably by all the people.

1) Upholding development as the CPC's top priority in governance

The goals of modernization can only be achieved through development, and the CPC has “pursued development as its top priority in governance.” Keenly aware that “development is of paramount importance” and that “development holds the key to solving all of China’s problems,” the CPC has “made dedicated efforts to pursue development” as the central task of advancing Chinese modernization.

China is a latecomer in the process of global modernization. Catching up is no easy task, and only a few countries have succeeded. Many countries that started late in pursuing modernization have landed themselves in all sorts of development dilemmas. In the end, how to maintain sustained and healthy economic development is a fundamental challenge facing every country in the world.

Thanks to more than 40 years of rapid development since the launch of reform and opening up, China’s economy has grown fast, and it now comfortably ranks as the world’s second largest. In 2023, China’s per capita GDP reached 89,358 yuan, an increase of 5.4 percent from the previous year. When calculated at the average annual exchange rate, it amounts to roughly US\$12,700, maintaining a record above US\$12,000 for three consecutive years.^① China’s economic achievements have been widely recognized.

2) Meeting the people’s growing needs for a better life

Bringing maximum benefit to the people is what governance is all about. Guided by the people-centered development philosophy, Chinese modernization aims to ensure that development is for the people and by the people and that its

① “The Underlying Trend of Economic Recovery and Growth in the Long Run Remains Unchanged in China,” Leading Party Members Groups of the National Bureau of Statistics, Qiushi Journal, 3rd edition, 2024.

fruits are shared by the people. It is pursued to meet the people's growing needs for a better life and equitably deliver the benefits of modernization to all.

This country is its people, and the people are the country. The Party has fought to establish and defend the People's Republic, and in doing so it has been defending the will of the people. As Xi Jinping said, "Our goal is to see that the people's aspirations for a better life are fulfilled," and, "The Communist Party is here to do things for the people to make life better for them day by day, year by year."

Guided by this philosophy, China has made every effort to support and improve the people's livelihoods through development. It has taken forceful and effective measures to address issues that are important in the life of the people, such as education, employment, healthcare, social security, and social stability. As a result, the people feel more fulfilled, happier, and more secure.

3) Following the overarching guidelines for China's development

Chinese modernization is an ongoing endeavor that will continue for a long time to come. We have seen that Chinese modernization is a broad path to building a great country and rejuvenating the nation. But this broad path may not always be smooth, and our goals cannot be achieved overnight. It will require a lot of hard work to turn the grand blueprint of Chinese modernization into a reality.

How can we continue to make miraculous achievements in development as we forge ahead on our journey ahead? China's answer is to embrace a new stage of development, apply a new philosophy of development, create a new pattern of development, and promote high-quality development. This means embracing a new stage of development to build a modern socialist country in all respects, applying a new philosophy of innovative, coordinated, green, open, and shared development, moving faster to foster a new pattern of development that focuses on the domestic economy but features positive interplay between domestic and international economic flows, and continue promoting high-quality development.

The new stage of development tells us where we are now, the new philosophy

of development lays down the principles that guide our way forward, and the new pattern of development shows us the path to follow. The three are unified under the theme of high-quality development. High-quality development is our top priority in building a modern socialist country in all respects. In the past, China pursued development to meet the basic needs of its people. In the future, China's development will focus more on ensuring the well-being of its people. China will constantly improve the quality and effectiveness of its development.

3. Independence and Self-Reliance Are the Only Way

Chinese modernization is a distinctive path that the CPC has blazed in leading the Chinese people to independently carry out long-term explorations and unremitting struggles. It is a path that suits China's conditions and meets the needs of the Chinese people. This path is determined by China's national conditions and nature as a country as well as the times, historical context, and external environment in which Chinese modernization is pursued.

1) Making concerted efforts to modernize China under the strong leadership of the CPC

As a developing country with a population of more than 1.4 billion, China naturally faces many complex issues and problems as it pursues prosperity for all in the process of modernization. These issues and problems can be resolved only through the strong leadership of the CPC and the concerted efforts of the Chinese people. Only by leveraging the political strengths of socialism can we motivate the people and pool resources to launch major initiatives, thus creating powerful synergies for achieving modernization.

2) Forging our own path through the arduous explorations of the Chinese people

Some developing countries once hoped to copy the Western path to

modernization, but they all ended in failure due to ignorance of their own national conditions. In the 1980s and onwards, some Latin American countries accepted the policy recommendations of the Washington Consensus and introduced neoliberal reforms to varying degrees. Although some gains were made in their economic transitions, many major problems emerged, such as the loss of government control over the economy and growing social polarization.

Unlike these countries, China has followed its own path to modernization. By staying connected to its concrete reality and through arduous exploration, China has set clear goals, tasks, and essential requirements for Chinese modernization. This path to modernization is rooted in China's reality and has distinctive Chinese features.

3) Only by maintaining independence and self-reliance can China be free from others' control

To grow strong, we must first and foremost maintain independence and self-reliance. Leaving the future and destiny of one's country in the hands of others can only derail its pursuit of modernization. Even worse, it could lead to a country's subjugation by others or even its disintegration. For more than 100 years, the CPC has rallied the Chinese people and led them in unyielding struggles, overcoming many unimaginable difficulties and winning one great victory after another. As China's economy has continued to grow, the living standards of more than 1.4 billion people have been steadily raised, and moderate prosperity has been achieved in all respects. All of this has further consolidated the CPC's place as the governing party, and the giant ship of socialism with Chinese characteristics has continued to sail forward. It is independence and self-reliance that have made all these achievements possible.

4. Reform and Opening Up Is a Crucial Move

A review of the history of global modernization shows that economic

modernization is core to a country's modernization and serves as its material foundation. It is also an important source of power driving modernization as a whole. China's reform and opening up process, which began in 1978, was a crucial move that has enabled China to take great strides to catch up with the times and has made China what it is today. Reform and opening up is therefore of vital importance to continuing to advance Chinese modernization.

1) Without reform and opening up, China would not be what it is today

Before reform and opening up started, China had become stagnant and lagged behind the times. With tremendous political courage, Deng Xiaoping, the chief architect of China's socialist reform, opening up, and modernization, called for the launch of the reform and opening up policy. He said, "If we don't reform now, our modernization program and socialist cause will be doomed." Deng Xiaoping regarded reform and opening up as an important way to unleash and develop China's productive forces and as an initiative that was crucial to the future and destiny of socialism in China. Since the launch of reform and opening up, the CPC has led the Chinese people in freeing their minds, seeking truth from facts, and boldly carrying out experiments and reforms. By making timely adjustments to the relations of production that were not compatible with the development of the productive forces, China caught up with the times in great strides and opened up a vast new horizon.

Wuyi Village is in Chengxi Sub-district, Yiwu, Zhejiang Province. When a visitor sees Wuyi's rows of beautifully designed new Chinese-style townhouses with white walls and black tiles, one may think that they have entered a neighborhood of urban villas. Yiwu was among the first places in China to pilot the reform of separating the ownership, qualification, and use rights of rural residential plots. While ensuring that every household had a house, the reform went further to allow the transfer of residential plot qualification rights and interests between people from different villages. Since this pilot was launched,

reforms have given rural residents more property rights and put 10 billion yuan of dormant rural assets to work, giving new impetus to rural development.

At a time when the global economic recovery is sluggish, only countries with good business environments will attract investment, enjoy thriving business, and demonstrate strong economic resilience and self-sustaining momentum. China has promoted reforms to streamline administration, delegate powers, and improve regulation and services. This has created a market environment of fair competition in which state-owned enterprises grow vigorously, private businesses blaze new trails, and foreign companies do not hesitate to invest. During the COVID-19 pandemic, local governments in China rolled out a full range of policies to help market entities survive and grow.

China's ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business Report jumped nearly 50 places from 78th in 2018 to 31st in 2020. This put it among the top 10 economies that had made the greatest improvements in their business environments for the second year in a row.

Reform and opening up is an ongoing endeavor that will continue for a long time to come. Reaching a new crossroads in history, China finds itself facing broad and profound changes in both its internal and external environments. Reform has entered uncharted waters and will inevitably encounter tough challenges. Going forward, China must deepen reform and opening up on all fronts in order to realize Chinese modernization. Of particular importance is the continuation of reforms to grow the socialist market economy, to give full play to its institutional strengths, and to promote both an efficient market and a well-functioning government.

2) China adheres to the right direction, stance, and principles in carrying out reform

China is now deepening reform across the board, but this does not mean that everything will change. China adheres to the right direction, stance, and principles in carrying out reform. It will firmly change what should and can

be changed, and it will firmly resist changing what should not and cannot be changed.

Socialism is the fundamental direction of China's reform, and the people's position is the most fundamental stance of reform. The most salient principle guiding China's reform is the leadership of the CPC. This leadership is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and it is the greatest strength of the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This direction, stance, and principle must be adhered to and should never be changed.

While upholding and developing the socialist system, China carries out reform to change the parts and elements of the relations of production that are out of step with China's productive forces and the parts of the superstructure that are incompatible with the economic foundation. This reform is pursued to strike a balance between the "visible hand" and the "invisible hand," so as to ensure the steady improvement of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the growth of China's productive forces.

China has developed new ways to regulate market activities, and it has fully implemented fair competition policies against monopoly and unfair competition. For example, in the face of global challenges such as the regulation of monopoly capital, while fully leveraging the positive role of capital as a factor of production, China has improved its legal system and strengthened law-based regulation. It has created a "traffic light" to prevent capital from being diverted away from the real economy and blindly expanding. All of these changes will further enable capital to play an important role in promoting the development of productive forces, creating social wealth, and ensuring and improving the people's well-being.

3) China will pursue high-standard opening up to promote reform and development

Opening up to the outside world has boosted China's economic and social development. It has played a key role in promoting reform and development,

thus enabling China to make continuous advances in development.

China began its process of reform and opening up in 1978, opening its doors to the world. Following the trend of global development, China seized the strategic opportunities created by economic globalization and acceded to the World Trade Organization. By relying on its own efforts and riding the tide of global development, China has achieved economic take-off.

Since the beginning of the new era in 2012, China has further opened itself, more actively pursued the opening up strategy, and built a globally oriented network of high-standard free trade areas, thus promoting opening up on a larger scale, in more areas, and at a higher level.

Craig Allen, president of the United States-China Business Council, remarked that despite challenges, cooperation between US companies and their Chinese counterparts is extremely resilient. According to Allen, the total volume of trade in goods between the US and China reached a record high in 2022, and US exports to China supported nearly one million jobs in the US.^① A survey by the European Union (EU) Chamber of Commerce in China shows that more than 60 percent of EU companies surveyed consider China one of their top three investment destinations. Jörg Wuttke, president of the EU Chamber of Commerce in China, said that the choice of EU companies to invest in China fully reflects their confidence in China's open market and that they hope to be a part of China's development story.

Going forward, China will open even wider to the rest of the world.

China will continue to improve its legal system for intellectual property protection and formulate and improve laws and regulations on IP protection in the age of the digital economy. The Foreign Investment Law and its implementation regulations have been adopted, a management system based on

① "Growth drivers, Confidence, Opportunities: insights from global financial and economic leaders on China's economic growth prospects," Xinhua News Agency, March 26, 2023.

pre-establishment national treatment and a negative list has been implemented, and the negative list for foreign investment has been repeatedly shortened.

China will continue to pursue high-standard opening up and expand the level of opening up based on goods and factor flows to institutional opening up in terms of rules, regulations, management, and standards. It will remain committed to economic globalization, promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, boost the momentum and vitality of its modernization through opening up, and continue to create new opportunities for the world through its development.

5. Accelerating the Development of New Quality Productive Forces

To build a modern socialist country in all respects, China must, first and foremost, pursue high-quality development. Cultivating new quality productive forces stands as an intrinsic requirement and an important focus of this endeavor. Primarily driven by innovation, new quality productive forces break free from traditional economic growth modes and productivity development paths, feature high technology, efficiency and quality, and represent an advanced form of productivity aligned with the new development philosophy. They are shaped by revolutionary technological breakthroughs, innovative allocation of production factors, and profound industrial transformation and upgrading. Improvements to labor forces, means of labor, subjects of labor and their optimal combination constitute the fundamental elements, and a significant increase in total factor productivity is the core hallmark. With innovation as the trait and quality as the key, new quality productive forces are advanced productivity in essence.^① Accelerating the development of new quality productive forces is a strategic

① “Xi Jinping stresses development of new quality productive forces, high-quality development,” Xinhua News Agency, February 1, 2024.

decision made to seize the commanding heights in a new round of global scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, open up new areas and new arenas in development, cultivate fresh growth drivers, and build up nascent competitive advantages.

1) Scientific and technological innovation is essential

Scientific and technological innovation can generate new industries, novel business models and fresh growth drivers, and is essential for the development of new quality productive forces. It is thus imperative to boost scientific and technological innovation, particularly original and disruptive innovations, speed up efforts to attain greater self-reliance and strength in science and technology, boost emerging strategic industries, and rigorously grow future industries.

According to the Global Innovation Index 2023, a report released by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), China holds the 12th position and is the sole middle-income economy among the top 30 economies. China also secures three seats in the world's five biggest science and technology cluster ranking. In 2023, the country's total research and development expenditure reached 3.3 trillion yuan, or 2.64 percent of its GDP^①. The principal role of enterprises in innovation was further reinforced. China boasts approximately 400,000 high-tech enterprises, eight times of 2012's figure of 49,000. It now leads the world in terms of the number of top 100 global scientific and technological innovation clusters.

At the National SuperComputer Center in Tianjin Binhai New Area, a powerful supercomputer is working around the clock. This is China's first petaflop supercomputer, which runs as fast as hundreds of thousands of connected laptops running together.

① The Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2023 National Economic and Social Development, the National Bureau of Statistics, February 29, 2024.

From the release of the first global map of Mars to the development of an exaflop supercomputer, China has continued to step up original and pioneering scientific and technological research, breaking new ground in innovation. In recent years, it has strengthened basic research and original innovation to remove technological bottlenecks, making breakthroughs in some core technologies in key areas.

China has made continuous efforts to scale new heights in science and technology, with achievements such as the launch of the Shenzhou spacecraft, the commissioning of the Jiaolong deep-sea manned submersible, the success of the Chang'e lunar probe series, the landing of the Tianwen-1 probe on Mars, the deployment of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System, and the launch of the Mozi quantum science satellite.

The modernization of science and technology is key to Chinese modernization. By accelerating the development of new quality productive forces, China lays solid material and technological foundations for its modernization and pursuit of high-quality development.

2) Talent is the primary resource

Talent is the most active and decisive factor in developing new quality productive forces. In order to meet the requirements for developing new quality productive forces, China is promoting the forming of a virtuous cycle among education, science and technology, and personnel training, enhancing the working mechanisms, intensifying efforts in nurturing talent, and improving incentives in income distribution. These efforts aim to improve the conditions for nurturing talent, create a favorable atmosphere that champions innovation and allows for failure, and turn the “key variables” of innovators into the “greatest increments” for accelerating the development of new quality productive forces.

In Qingdao, a coast city in east China's Shandong Province, a LiDAR can turn wind field information within a range of 10,000 meters into visualized data

through three-dimensional scanning, which can not only observe wind but also predict it. This technology was developed over 20 years ago at the Qingdao-based Ocean University of China, and had provided meteorological support during the Beijing Winter Olympics and scientific expeditions to Mount Everest. However, this technology was not applied outside the laboratory in a timely manner. In recent years, Shandong has optimized the allocation of resource elements, supporting enterprises in collaborating with universities and research institutes to achieve breakthroughs in technologies, providing research personnel with marketing teams, promoting the integration of experimental technological products with application scenarios, introducing angel investments, analyzing and judging research results according to market logic, and promoting the market application of research results. Today, the wind LiDAR has empowered a number of industries. In just five years, the annual output of Qingdao Leice Transient Technology Co., Ltd., which focuses on the research and development, manufacturing, and related technical services of the entire LiDAR system and key LiDAR components, has exceeded 100 million yuan, with an average annual growth rate of 70 percent^①.

China's full-time equivalent of research and development personnel had increased from 3.247 million person-years in 2012 to 6.354 million person-years in 2022, ranking first in the world. The international academic influence of the country's top scientific and technological talent continues to increase, with the number of the world's highly cited scientists increasing from 111 person-times in 2014 to 1,169 person-times in 2022, ranking second in the world^②.

① "A report on Shandong's efforts in accelerating the development of new quality productive forces," Xinhua News Agency, January 28, 2024.

② "China's full-time equivalent of research and development personnel increases to 6.354 million," Xinhua News Agency, December 15, 2023.

3) Developing new quality productive forces based on local conditions

China is a large country with a big population, with resource endowments and development levels varying significantly in different parts of the country. The development of new quality productive forces in China does not mean neglecting or abandoning traditional industries. Instead, it means development based on local conditions, selectively promoting the development of new industries, new business models, and new growth drivers, using new technologies to transform and upgrade traditional industries, and making industries higher-end, smarter, and more eco-friendly.

Mechanical arms move in an orderly manner in the air, cutting edges, conducting quality inspection, labeling... In the rare earth steel cold-rolled sheet factory of Baogang Group, nobody is working there. However, all the equipment is working, revealing an automated, smart, and informationized factory. Facing the significant downward pressure on the steel industry in recent years, the Group, with the support of local policies and its own comprehensive transformation, has not only turned losses into profits but also found a new opportunity for transformation by leveraging the rapid development of new energy.

To accelerate the development of new quality productive forces, southwestern China's Guizhou Province is actively promoting the opening of various industries' application scenarios to Huawei Cloud. Currently, it has selected eight major industries of liquor, coal mining, chemical industry, non-ferrous metals, electricity, new materials, steel, building materials, as well as four areas of urban smart upgrading, rural digitalization, tourism scenario innovation, and government convenience services. The province is deepening the application of Huawei Cloud Pangu large models in key industry scenarios.

6. Advancing Chinese Modernization as a Systematic Endeavor

Chinese modernization is an all-embracing modernization that covers all areas, including the economy, politics, culture, society, and ecological

conservation. This endeavor is a multi-dimensional one, involving reform, development, and stability, the governance of the Party, the country, and the military, domestic and foreign affairs, and national defense. It is a process of transformation that will lead to the advancement of society as a whole. Accordingly, the pursuit of Chinese modernization calls for making efforts across many sectors, links, and levels. We must take into account all factors, plan systematically, and advance Chinese modernization as a whole.

1) Making systematic plans to advance Chinese modernization

Advancing Chinese modernization means achieving a broad and profound social transformation. In this endeavor, a single move may affect everything. Therefore, it is necessary to make systematic plans at the macro level.

In the report to the 20th CPC National Congress, a top-level and strategic decision was made to pursue Chinese modernization as the Party's central task on the new journey in this new era. Strategic plans were made for building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects, and clear goals for each stage, as well as a timetable and roadmap for achieving these goals, were set. The report also laid out systematic and well-considered plans to advance work in 12 areas, including speeding up the creation of a new development pattern, implementing the strategy for invigorating China through science and education, advancing whole-process people's democracy, exercising law-based governance on all fronts, and modernizing China's national security system and capacity.

Advancing Chinese modernization is a pioneering cause that has never been attempted before. Many of our tasks have no precedent to follow, many unknown areas need to be explored, and many undertakings require progress through exploration, growth through practice, and advancement through innovation. In advancing this cause, the CPC has paid particular attention to both top-level design and practical exploration. It works to see that top-level design plays the leading, planning, and guidance roles. At the same time, the CPC has been constantly freeing its mind and making bold explorations, "crossing the river by

feeling for the stone.” It supports and encourages trials and pilot programs on the ground, such as making Shanghai Pudong New Area a pacesetter of socialist modernization, building a demonstration zone for realizing common prosperity through high-quality development in Zhejiang Province, and establishing national pilot zones in Fujian, Jiangxi, Guizhou, and Hainan provinces for ecological conservation. Both top-level design and practical exploration have ensured sustained and steady progress in advancing Chinese modernization.

2) Taking into account all factors to advance Chinese modernization

Advancing Chinese modernization is a complex and challenging task, and it requires a systematic and holistic approach. Therefore, it has been important to take into account all factors and properly handle the following major relationships.

Enhancing efficiency while promoting fairness. In pursuing modernization, China has continued to boost its economic strength and unleash social dynamism, thus achieving a higher degree of efficiency than the capitalist system and creating miraculous economic growth. At the same time, it has upheld social fairness, applied a people-centered development philosophy, paid special attention to promoting prosperity for all, and achieved coordinated regional and urban-rural development to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in the modernization process and enjoy its benefits.

Advancing reform and development while ensuring stability. In pursuing modernization, China has energized its development and deepened reform on all fronts to address issues of interests that concern the people most. It has endeavored to develop whole-process people’s democracy, built extensive consensus in society, developed new approaches to improve social governance at the community level, and fully motivated its people and released their creativity. At the same time, China has maintained social order and stability. In determining the intensity of reform and the pace of development, it has taken into account the level of public acceptance of change, and it has maintained both the energized

development and order and stability, thereby creating a miracle of sustained social stability.

Promoting development while ensuring security. China has always proactively pursued modernization. It has seized major historical and strategic opportunities to accede into the WTO, integrate itself into economic globalization, and actively unleash a new wave of scientific and technological revolutions and industrial transformations. At the same time, it has continued to guard against and mitigate major risks, improve its national security system, and ensure the security of major industrial and supply chains. China has remained on guard against various “black swan” and “gray rhino” events that could occur at any time.

3) Advancing Chinese modernization as a whole

Chinese modernization is an all-embracing modernization that encompasses the economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological spheres. These five spheres are not unrelated; rather, they form an organic whole in which they complement each other and are highly connected. We should not expect that a breakthrough in any one sphere will bring us modernization. Only by advancing them all together can we move forward.

Modernization within each of the individual spheres also needs to be advanced in a holistic way. Why has China, in its pursuit of modernization, completed in several decades the process of industrialization that took developed countries more than 200 years to complete? The reason is that it has taken a development path different from that taken by the developed countries of the West. Western countries have pursued development in the order of industrialization, urbanization, agricultural modernization, and then informatization, one at a time. China, on the other hand, has pursued industrialization, informatization, urbanization, and agricultural modernization all at the same time.

Of course, we need to look farther and adopt a broad perspective as we

make advances on multiple fronts. This approach does not seek uniformity in advancement, but rather gradual, step-by-step progress on the basis of various conditions. It seeks both overall progress and breakthroughs in key areas, with overall progress as the ultimate goal. Advancing Chinese modernization is a historical process that requires the unremitting efforts of one generation after another.

Take, for instance, China's reform and opening up. China's reform began in rural areas before moving to cities, and it was first carried out in the economic sector and then extended to other fields. China's opening up began in the south, particularly in the southeastern coastal areas, and it gradually expanded to cover the north, and the central and western inland regions. This opening up was gradually expanded in terms of direction, level, and area. Over 40 years later, China's reform and opening up has continued to unfold in both breadth and depth. This represents the overall progress of Chinese modernization.

Advancing Chinese modernization is an arduous, complex, and challenging endeavor, and various difficulties, both foreseeable and unforeseeable, are bound to arise. Keenly aware of this, the CPC has always taken a systematic approach, with the understanding that all things are interconnected, part of a complete system, and constantly evolving. Taking this approach, it endeavors to properly manage the relationships between the whole and the parts, the immediate and the long-term, the macro and the micro, the primary and the secondary, and the particular and the general. The CPC has also steadily improved its ability to think dialectically, to deal with worst-case scenarios, and to conduct governance and leadership. All of this has provided continued impetus for advancing Chinese modernization in a systematic way.

Chapter Three

Defining Features of the Chinese Modernization

For any country to achieve modernization, it needs not only to follow the general laws governing the process, but more importantly consider its own national conditions and unique features. Chinese modernization contains elements that are common to the modernization processes of all countries, but it is more characterized by features that are unique to the Chinese context.^①

—Xi Jinping

Modernization is a comprehensive concept that is compatible with the mode of industrialized production and includes marketization, democratization,

① “Xi Jinping addresses the opening of a study session at the Party school of the CPC Central Committee,” Xinhua News Agency, February 7, 2023.

legalization, urbanization and other elements. Since the industrial revolution, in the pursuit of modernization, all countries have common characteristics in the transition from tradition to modernity. In the meantime, they also have their own distinctive features.

It has been shown that the path to modernization a country chooses is determined by many factors, such as its historical traditions, social system, development conditions, and external environment. Taking its national conditions into consideration, China has pioneered a new path toward modernization with its characteristics and made successive remarkable achievements that have attracted world attention, displaying unique features of Chinese modernization to the world.

1. Modernization of a Large Population

An enormous population and large development disparities between urban and rural areas and among different regions have long been a reality for China. China is working to achieve modernization for more than 1.4 billion people, a number larger than the combined population of all developed countries in the world today. Chinese modernization will be unprecedented in history in terms of its scale, the number of people that benefit from it, and the formidable challenges along the way.

1) The greatest modernization benefiting the largest population

China, a large developing country, has a population that outnumbers the combined populations of all developed countries. Therefore, Chinese modernization is the modernization of huge population. In comparison, Britain had a population of less than six million at the outset of the First Industrial Revolution. The American population was close to 80 million during the Second Industrial Revolution. By 2019, the total population of countries and regions that have achieved modernization worldwide has not exceeded one billion. With

such a large population, as China develops into a modern country, the world's landscape of modernization will be completely changed. Hence, Xi Jinping pointed out that Chinese modernization is the most difficult and the greatest.^①

Since the CPC's 18th National Congress, the Party has undertaken the most extensive and aggressive anti-poverty campaign in the history of humanity. With this, the CPC has turned China into a prosperous society in all respects, benefiting the largest population in the history of human development. Chinese modernization not only expands the avenue toward modernization for developing countries, but also offers Chinese insight and solutions to problems facing humanity. Martin Jacques, a British scholar and a visiting researcher at the Institute of International Relations of Tsinghua University noted that, "Its (China's) demographic size, its sense of independence and identity, its rich historical inheritance, and a remarkable political leadership enable it to achieve Chinese path to modernization." He said, "We now find ourselves at a great historical juncture. Now modernization is no longer for a tiny sliver of humanity but is increasingly accessible to the great majority... While the Age of the West was the Age of the Small Minority, the Age of China will be the Age of the Great Majority."^②

2) Abundant human resources and super-large market scale creating development potential

Since the policy of reform and opening up was introduced in 1978, plenty of rural surplus labor was transferred from the agricultural sector to non-agricultural sectors, in particular to manufacturing, yielding remarkable

① "Strive in unity to build a modern socialist country in all respects: on the successful conclusion of the 20th CPC National Congress," Xinhua News Agency, October 23, 2022.

② "Chinese modernization leads to Age of Great Majority: Martin Jacques," Global Times, May 12, 2023, <https://opinion.huanqiu.com/article/4CrBgxTvuxF>.

“demographic dividends,” and promoting the relocation of resources between rural and urban areas, as well as among different regions and industries. Over the past decade, while speeding up the transformation and upgrading of the manufacturing sector, China has energetically developed new forms of business, such as the cyber economy and platform economy, and witnessed a significant influx of young workers into tertiary industries. By the end of 2022, China had a labor force of nearly 900 million. In recent years, an average of over 12 million urban jobs has been created annually.^① Since the 18th CPC National Congress, China has adopted an employment-first policy and eliminated unjustified restrictions and discrimination that undermine equal employment, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to pursue a career through hard work. The average per capita disposable income in China increased from 18,311 yuan in 2013 to 39,218 yuan in 2023, driving an upswing in consumption. A large body of consumers, coupled with their strong purchasing power, continue to promote the transformation and upgrading of consumption patterns, giving shape to an enormous, unified market and propelling the remarkable development of infrastructure, transportation, and the information and service industries. In the pursuit of Chinese modernization, the abundance of human resources and the vast market serve as invaluable assets, fueling powerful momentum for high-quality development.

Meituan, a Chinese network technology retail company, has provided a model for solving China’s employment challenges arising from its large population. This company now provides a wide range of over 200 types of consumer services, including take-out, catering, hotel accommodation, and travel, serving over 9.3 million businesses and 680 million customers at home while attracting a significant number of employees. This enterprise boasts an

① “With over 12 mln urban jobs to be created, how to stabilize the employment market in 2024?,” Xinhua News AGENCY, March 5, 2024.

astonishing fleet of delivery workers, In 2022, over 6.24 million delivery workers earned income through Meituan's platforms, and the daily count of active delivery workers surpassed 1 million. From 2018 to 2023, the number of delivery workers registered on the platform and come from key counties receiving government assistance for rural revitalization increased from 120,000 to 395,000, covering all 160 such counties in China. China boasts a mass of Internet companies and renowned e-commerce platforms, such as Taobao, JD.com, Pinduoduo, Dianping, and Ctrip, in addition to Meituan. They not only make up a gigantic online market but also take in a substantial workforce.

3) An urbanization process of the largest scale and fastest pace in world history

Cities play important roles in modernization. Prior to the introduction of the reform and opening up policy, the urban population in China made up less than 18 percent. Since then, China has initiated an urbanization process of the largest scale and fastest pace in world history. Now, in many regions in east China, such as Shanghai, Guangdong, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang, the urban and rural areas have been integrated. Thanks to the persistent implementation of large-scale development policy and the stimulation effects of major cities such as Chongqing, Chengdu, and Xi'an, the western region has witnessed thriving city clusters, accelerated urban-rural integration, and a narrowing urban-rural gap. Statistics show that the share of permanent urban residents in the total population reached 66.16 percent in 2023.^① In accordance with the 14th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development (2021–2025) promulgated in 2022, China will adhere to the path of new urbanization with Chinese characteristics, advance people-centered new urbanization, and leverage the role of city clusters and metropolitan

① National Bureau of Statistics: "Statistical Communique of the People's Republic of China on the 2023 National Economic and Social Development," February 29, 2024.

areas to promote the coordinated development of cities of different sizes and small towns with their own distinctive features, thus enabling more people to enjoy higher-quality urban life.

With upgraded rural infrastructure and the implementation of urban-rural integration policies, many rural areas in China are no longer associated with outdated productivity. Instead, they have become new stages for urban talent to pursue entrepreneurship and carry out innovation activities, and the land of happiness that they admire. The human resources, capital, technology from cities combined with the strength of land and labor in rural areas inject fresh elements and vitality into the traditional agricultural sector during its transformation. This synergy not only meets the evolving demands of cities and urban residents, but also paves the way for the creation of innovative agricultural industries.

4) Addressing diverse and intricate needs of a vast population

When a minor problem is magnified within the context of China's massive population of over 1.4 billion people, it undoubtedly escalates into a major challenge. With China's large population comes diverse interest demands of different regions, sectors, and social groups. The large population also gave rise to immense essential requirement of ensuring the people's wellbeing, including basic needs such as food, healthcare, education, elderly care, and law and order. These pose significant challenges to the advancement of Chinese modernization. In improving people's living standards, China gives top priority to solving the pressing difficulties and problems that concern people the most. China has remained patient in advancing the course of history, taken steady and incremental steps to sustain progress, and turned the challenge posed by a large population into an advantage in scale for the modernization drive.

As a populous country with limited farmland, China always places food security above all. In recent years, it has taken strict and standardized measures to offset cultivated land used for other purposes and made steady and orderly efforts to maintain the total area of arable land, in order to ensure the area of farmland

remains above the red line of 1.8 billion mu (120 million hectares), giving the Chinese people a secure food supply. Up until now, China has developed 1 billion mu of high-standard cropland. We have achieved grain harvests for 20 years on end and seen grain output stay above 650 million tonnes for nine consecutive years. China boasts a self-sufficiency rate of above 100 percent for staple food. Moreover, the country boasts an average annual per capita grain supply of 490 kilograms, surpassing the globally recognized safety threshold of 400 kilograms.^①

In terms of ensuring personal safety, China has been regarded as one of the safest countries in the world. The Chinese government has consistently emphasized the comprehensive maintenance of law and order, implementing robust measures to combat organized crime. As a result, there has been a continuous yearly decline in the number of major criminal cases, public security cases, and total criminal cases. As evening falls, urban residents can joyfully engage in leisurely strolls, exercise, and recreational activities in the streets, alleys and parks. On China's video-sharing platform Bilibili, a young foreigner said, "People often overlook the good parts of China, because they neither show tolerance to China nor would like to go there themselves. Safety is one of the good parts of the country."

2. Modernization for the Common Prosperity of All

Achieving common prosperity is a defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics and an abiding goal of the Chinese Communists. Chinese modernization aims to ensure that the gains of modernization benefit all people fairly, and constantly satisfy the people's ever-growing needs for a better life. By promoting common prosperity and preventing polarization, China's goal is

① National Bureau of Statistics: "Statistical Communique of the People's Republic of China on the 2023 National Economic and Social Development," February 29, 2024.

to foster a harmonious and stable society while maintaining steady economic development.

1) “On the road to common prosperity, no one will be left behind”

Looking back on the history of Chinese civilization spanning over 5,000 years, one can observe that the ideal of pursuing common prosperity has been deeply ingrained in China’s fine traditional culture. Laozi stated, “Diminish where there is superabundance and supplement where there is deficiency.” Confucius said, “Fear not scarcity but inequality.” Guan Zhong mentioned that, “The key to running a country is to first enrich its people.” A society of “universal harmony” was an ideal illustrated in *The Book of Rites*.

Carrying forward China’s fine traditional culture, the CPC makes achieving common prosperity for all one of its major goals. The Party remains committed to the mission that development is for the people and by the people, and that its fruits are shared by the people. Mao Zedong said, “Our prosperity is common prosperity, and our strength is shared by all. Everyone has a part to play in this.” Deng Xiaoping emphasized, “Some people and some regions should be allowed to prosper before others, always with the goal of common prosperity.” Xi Jinping stated, “The common prosperity that we pursue, both material and cultural, is for all of our people; It is not for a small minority, nor does it imply an absolute equality in income distribution that takes no account of contribution.” As a party that emerges from and represents the people, the CPC has dedicated itself to serving the people. Thus, the pursuit of common prosperity for all stands as its long-term aspiration and committed action.

China has finally resolved the problem of absolute poverty, achieved moderate prosperity in all respects, and consistently elevated the quality of life for its people through its ongoing pursuit of modernization. Presently, with a middle-income group exceeding 400 million people and per capita disposable income surpassing 39,000 yuan, China has achieved a historic leap from a low-income country to an upper-middle-income country.

By conducting a trial and presenting a set of data, China vividly exemplifies its approach to achieving common prosperity. As Zhejiang Province strives to become a model of common prosperity through high-quality development, the per capita disposable income of local residents reached 63,800 yuan^① in 2023, while the ratio of urban income to rural income lowered from 2.37:1 in 2012 to 1.86:1 in 2023.

2) Weaving the world's largest social security net

People's wellbeing is an important indicator and basic component of common prosperity. To achieve modernization, China does everything within its capacity to direct more support, in terms of employment, education, social security, and medical care, toward rural areas, local communities, and underdeveloped regions, as well as helping people living in difficulty, making sure social security programs can meet the people's basic needs.

China now has established the world's largest networks for education, social security, and healthcare. According to statistics, in 2023, the retention rate of nine-year compulsory education and the gross enrollment ratio for senior secondary education reached 95.7% and 91.8% respectively. Basic old-age insurance covered nearly 1.1 billion people, more than 1.3 billion people were enrolled in the basic medical insurance scheme, and 44 million were included in the subsistence allowance and extreme poverty relief scope. There were 1.07 million healthcare institutions across the country in 2023, offering 9.56 billion^② diagnosis and treatment services per year.

In recent years, in an effort to reduce regional disparities, the central

① Zhejiang Provincial Bureau of Statistics: Statistical communiqué on people's livelihood of Zhejiang Province in 2023, March 4, 2024.

② National Bureau of Statistics: "Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2023 National Economic and Social Development," February 29, 2024.

government of China has consistently increased transfer payments to local governments, prioritizing underdeveloped areas and areas in need, particularly to cover expenditures on education, medical care, and other sectors, which aim to ensure inclusive public services, meet people’s essential needs, and guarantee basic living standards for those facing difficulties. In 2023, the transfer payments from the central government to local governments reached 10.29 trillion yuan, marking the highest amount spent in recent years^①.

3) Making the “cake” bigger and sharing it fairly

In the pursuit of Chinese modernization, achieving common prosperity is not an empty political slogan. Rather, it represents a great social reform effort that engages all people striving together under the leadership of the Party. Through the synergy between an efficient market and a well-functioning government, the Chinese people work together to make a bigger “cake” and share it fairly through well-designed institutional arrangements.

The system of income distribution is the foundational system for promoting common prosperity. China emphasizes both efficiency and fairness by establishing an institutional framework under which primary, secondary, and tertiary distribution is well coordinated and mutually complementary. By giving more weight to work remuneration in primary distribution, China has seen personal income essentially growing in step with economic growth, as well as pay rises growing in tandem with increases in productivity. Local governments continue to raise minimum wages in light of local conditions so as to increase the remuneration of workers, in particular those working at the primary level. China improves the policy system for distribution based on factors of production, explores multiple avenues to increase rural incomes, and guarantees the full

① Ministry of Finance: “Report on the Implementation of China’s Fiscal Policy in 2023,” March 7, 2024.

payment of wages for rural migrant workers. China continues to improve the secondary distribution mechanism, making policy adjustments more intensive and targeted. The individual income tax threshold has been raised from 800 yuan at the outset of the reform and opening up initiative to 5,000 yuan now, and certain expenses, such as children's education, treatment for serious diseases, mortgage interest, and rent, have been included as special deductions for individual income tax, allowing everyone to save more. China also attaches importance to the role of tertiary distribution, by promoting charity programs and encouraging businessmen to actively participate in or launch public welfare and charitable initiatives, so as to ensure the well-to-do shoulder due responsibilities, and show integrity and compassion.

As a long-range objective, the pursuit of common prosperity will be incorporated into the overall process of China's modernization drive and cannot be accomplished overnight. It is China's belief that as long as we continue to promote high-quality development, earnestly address imbalances and inadequacies in development, constantly narrow gaps between urban and rural areas and among regions, and enable everyone to share in the fruits of development, common prosperity for all can be achieved.

3. Modernization of Material and Cultural-ethical Advancement

Chinese modernization aims at both material abundance and cultural-ethical enrichment, allowing both of them to coordinate with and stimulate each other. No country or nation can stand firm in the world if it fails to guide its people with advanced culture, enrich their intellectual lives, and build up its cultural strength.

1) Flourishing cultural programs and industries

In advancing Chinese modernization, great importance is attached to improving the modern public cultural services system, launching new public-

benefit cultural programs, expanding the coverage of public cultural services and making them more adaptable to people's needs, and protecting the people's basic cultural rights and interests. China has continually enriched people's cultural lives through the promotion of excellent films, TV programs, dramas, radio plays, and books. Across the country, public museums, libraries, galleries, and cultural centers are opened to the public free of charge, and a national strategy has been formed to foster a love for reading among the people. China has a total of more than 3,300 public libraries^①, more than 100,000 brick-and-mortar bookstores, and 587,000 rural libraries. These have helped facilitate people's love for reading and foster a culture of civility in China.

2) Enhancing civility throughout society

Core values are a bond linking a nation and common moral foundation of a country. Chinese modernization aims to promote core socialist values of prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity, and kindness, values which will solidify an intellectual foundation for all Chinese people to strive in unity, foster a pioneering spirit, and cultivate healthy and positive values.

China has worked to foster virtue by example. The country has established a sound system of Party and state awards and honors to promote individuals who exemplify core socialist values for others to follow. In recent years, a number of people were awarded honorary titles of role models of the time, national moral paragons, integrity stars, and outstanding youths in the new era in China. The noble character of these excellent individuals has illuminated society and will inspire generations of Chinese people to strive for excellence and cultivate fine virtues. Inspired by these shining examples, acts of kindness, like rising to the

① National Bureau of Statistics: "Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2023 National Economic and Social Development," February 29, 2024.

occasion during emergencies, returning lost money, showing respect to the elderly and affection to the young, and lending a helping hand to those in need, have become increasingly common and frequent in Chinese society. All these contribute to the cultivation of a proper worldview, a positive outlook on life, and a strong sense of values.

China has worked to educate people through excellent cultural works. While pursuing Chinese modernization, the country places emphasis on nourishing the roots and forging the soul of our nation with advanced socialist culture, revolutionary culture, and fine traditional Chinese culture, all the while promoting socialist cultural-ethical progress through the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional Chinese culture. In recent years, we have carried out the Chinese Civilization Origins Project and the Chinese Cultural Resource Survey Project. A large number of innovative works have been created, such as the dance show “Night Banquet in Tang Dynasty Palace” and the TV show “China in the Classics,” sparking widespread enthusiasm toward traditional Chinese culture. China has become the world’s largest producer of books, TV plays, and animations. China’s film market consistently sets new records, boasting the largest number of screens and leading box office revenues globally, presenting a number of major works such as Making a New China, The Battle at Lake Changjin, and The Age of Awakening. China has made remarkable strides in cultural progress, overcoming plateaus to reach new peaks.

China has emphasized institution building in the process of cultural advancement. In the pursuit of Chinese modernization, the country has established a framework to raise cultural-ethical standards through “Cities, Towns, Villages, Organizations, Families, and Schools of Civility.” We have built centers for promoting ethical and cultural advancement in the new era, launched initiatives to raise the public’s cultural-ethical standards, and worked to see that all areas of social development are imbued with core socialist values and that they become part of people’s thinking and behavior. Volunteer service is an important indicator of social progress. Over the past decade, the number of registered

volunteers in China increased from 2.92 million in 2012 to 232 million^① in 2023, and community volunteer services amounted to 1.57 billion hours in duration from 2022 to 2023. In Hengyang, Hunan Province, there are nearly 1.5 million registered volunteers, about one fifth of the city's total population. They just show up where there is a need, demonstrating the vitality of Chinese volunteer services.

When the people have ideals, their country will have strength, and their nation will have a bright future. The fundamental reason why China can overcome challenges and achieve continuous and steady progress in its modernization endeavors is that the CPC has united and led all Chinese people to move forward with the utmost synergy and unity.

3) Improving China's cultural soft power

In pursuing Chinese modernization, we draw on the outstanding achievements of human civilization and apply them in innovative ways. We have integrated the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and fine traditional culture. We encourage the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional culture as we strive to develop advanced socialist culture. The comprehensive advancement of our society is a testament to the systemic and coordinated nature of Chinese modernization.

China has always emphasized the protection and preservation of cultural heritage, diligently organizing archeological excavations and documenting and interpreting their findings, to unleash all aspects of the value of our culture and cultural heritage. TV programs such as "The Nation's Greatest Treasure" and "Chinese Archaeology Assembly" have received high viewership ratings

① National Institute of Social Development, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and the Research Center of China's Volunteer Services: "Blue Paper on Volunteer Services: Report on the Development of China's Volunteer Services (2022-2023)."

and sparked widespread discussion among the public, inspiring the people's confidence in our culture. We strive to develop a framework for the disciplines, academia, and discourse in philosophy and the social sciences with distinctive Chinese quality, style, and ethos. Based on the lives of ordinary people, Chinese artists have created a large number of excellent works that reflect contemporary Chinese people's work and life. Some of them are even popular overseas.

4. Modernization of Harmony Between Humanity and Nature

Chinese modernization epitomizes green development. China is committed to sustainable development and coordinated economic, social, and ecological advancement. Acting on the principles of prioritizing resource conservation and environmental protection and letting nature restore itself, we pursue a model of sound development featuring improved production, higher living standards, and healthy ecosystems to ensure the sustainable development of the Chinese nation. History and today's reality have repeatedly shown that nature provides the basic conditions for human survival and development; only by observing the laws of nature can humankind avoid costly blunders arising from its exploitation. In pursuing Chinese modernization, we must respect, adapt to, and protect nature. We must act on the principle that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets and maintain harmony between humanity and nature.

1) "Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets."

This is an important concept for development and a major principle for advancing Chinese modernization. It reveals the truth that to protect the environment is to protect the productive forces, and to improve the environment is to boost the productive forces. A healthy environment represents the most equitable public good and the universal wellbeing for everyone. This has become the widely embraced consensus and incentive for conscious action throughout Chinese society.

Focusing on solving the major environmental problems harming people's health, the Chinese government has made greater efforts to keep skies blue, waters clear, and lands clean in recent years. Local governments along the Yangtze River work together to promote well-coordinated environmental conservation while avoiding excessive development in the Yangtze River basin. The water quality of the river mainstream has remained stable at Grade II for recent years. This environmental protection endeavor covers 11 provincial-level regions in China, benefiting over 40% of the Chinese population.

China has drawn redlines for the protection of ecologically significant or vulnerable areas, as well as regions with substantial ecological potential, in order to protect vital ecological spaces. Over 30% of China's total land has been designated under ecological conservation redlines. The ratio of days with good to excellent air quality in cities at and above prefecture level was 86.8%, and the days with heavy pollution decreased to 1.1% in 2023. China has become the country with the fastest rate of improvement in air quality in the world. Guangyang Island in Chongqing is the largest island in the upper reaches of the Yangtze River. After putting an end to real estate development and implementing ecological restoration in adherence to the principle of promoting well-coordinated environmental conservation and avoiding excessive development, it is now adorned with lush greenery, delightful birdsong, and babbling streams, becoming a popular ecotourism destination along the Yangtze River.

2) Taking a holistic and systematic approach to the conservation and improvement of mountains, waters, forests, farmlands, grasslands, and deserts

China is committed to green development. We have designated redlines for ecological conservation, set benchmarks for environmental quality, and imposed caps on resource utilization, all of which are being strictly observed. China is developing a system of protected areas with national parks as the mainstay, supported by nature reserves, and supplemented by nature parks, in

an effort to strengthen biodiversity conservation. The first five national parks, Sanjiangyuan National Park, Wuyi Mountain National Park, Giant Panda National Park, Northeast China Tiger and Leopard National Park, and Hainan Tropical Rainforest National Park, as well as nearly 10,000 protected areas of various types at different levels have already been established. This new system of protected areas has provided effective protection for 90% of terrestrial ecosystem types, 65% of higher plant communities, and 74% of key state-protected wildlife species. It has also contributed to the increase in population numbers of over 300 rare endangered species of wild fauna and flora. The Dianchi Lake in Yunnan, with a drainage area of 2,920 square kilometers, is the largest lake in Southwestern China^①. After persistent and dedicated input and efforts in environmental governance over decades, its water quality has improved from lower than Grade V to Grade IV, with some areas even reaching Grade III.

3) Developing an eco-friendly growth model and way of life

With concerted efforts to cut carbon emissions, reduce pollution, expand green development, and pursue economic growth, China is exploring a new approach to modernization characterized by harmony between humanity and nature, which prioritizes ecological protection, efficient and intensive use of resources, and green and low-carbon development.

China is changing rapidly every day. To make way for an ecological corridor along the Erhai Lake in Dali, Yunnan Province, various lakeside inns and bed and breakfast have been demolished. The once dusty mining areas in Anshan City,

① Kunming municipal water supply bureau: Reply to the No. 141370 suggestion proposed at the first session of the 14th Kunming Municipal Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, May 30, 2022 <https://shuiwu.km.gov.cn/c/2022-05-30/4603910.shtml>.

Liaoning Province, have transformed into green ecological gardens. A group of comparison satellite photos capturing the changes in China drew widespread attention on overseas social media in March 2023. Such massive changes in China fully demonstrate the vigor and vitality of Chinese modernization. Overseas netizens expressed awe at the remarkable achievements of China over the past decade, affirming that these changes were indeed significant and deserving of admiration.

Green development cannot be achieved without green energy. China has advanced the energy revolution, promoted clean and efficient use of coal, and speeded up the planning and development of a new system of energy sources. In the desert, thousands of solar panels glisten under the sun, and at sea, large wind turbines stand tall. The six mega-cascade hydropower stations on the mainstream of the Yangtze River make up the world's largest "clean energy corridor." In 2023, clean energy consumption, including natural gas, hydropower, nuclear power, wind power and solar power, accounted for 26.4% of the total energy consumption.^①

Chinese modernization aims to promote green and low-carbon ways of production and life by adjusting and improving the structure of the industrial, energy, and transportation sectors, pursuing high-quality development with the support of a healthy environment. As a responsible major country, China upholds the concept that humanity and nature make up a community of life, and pledges to peak carbon emissions before 2030 and reach carbon neutrality by 2060. Based on China's energy and resource endowment, we will strive to realize a transition from carbon peaking to carbon neutrality in the shortest timeframe in the world.

① National Bureau of Statistics: "Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2023 National Economic and Social Development", February 29, 2024.

4) Transcending anthropocentrism and upholding that humanity and nature make up a community of life

Since the advent of modern times, Western modernization, with its focus on capital and pursuit of maximum profits, has regarded nature as a material source solely for human exploitation, resulting in severe environmental crisis and issues. As Western countries push developing countries to copy their modernization model and shoulder the industrial costs, this model, achieved at the expense of environment, has spread to the countries of the Global South, increasingly worsening global eco-environmental issues.

Chinese modernization aims to promote harmony between humanity and nature. This concept looks beyond the Western anthropocentrism that prioritizes human interests above those of the natural world. It is rooted in China's fine traditional culture such as the ideas that "Man is an integral part of nature," "Dao follows the laws of nature," and "Take with moderation, use with prudence." We emphasize that humanity and nature make up a community of life and uphold the principles of prioritizing resource conservation and environmental protection and letting nature restore itself. We call on people to respect, adapt to, and protect nature, value and care for the environment as much as we value our own lives, and restore the serenity, harmony, and beauty of nature.

Through scientific coordination of various factors within the natural environment and human society, Chinese modernization has pioneered a new approach to achieving coordinated progress in eco-social development and environmental protection. Meanwhile, it also contributes China's wisdom and strength to jointly promoting global eco-environmental advancement and building a community of all life on Earth.

5. Modernization of Peaceful Development

In accordance with the overarching strategy of national rejuvenation and the overall context of once-in-a-century world change, Chinese Communists

hold high the banner of peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit, champion the common values of humanity, promote the development of a human community with a shared future, and remain committed to peaceful development on the path to modernization.

1) Striving to safeguard world peace and development while pursuing our own development.

Having endured a tragic history of aggression and humiliation by Western powers, the Chinese nation deeply appreciates the value of peace. In pursuing modernization, China will not tread the old path of colonization and plunder taken by some countries, nor will it ever seek hegemony as it grows in power. China steadfastly upholds peaceful development in the pursuit of modernization. China is firm in safeguarding the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. China advocates addressing the complex and intertwined security challenges with a spirit of solidarity and a win-win mindset, and contributes to a security architecture featuring fairness, justice, joint contribution and shared benefits. China is the only country in the world that has enshrined “keeping to a path of peaceful development” in its constitution. It now ranks first among the permanent members of the UN Security Council in terms of the number of peacekeepers dispatched. China is the only nuclear-armed country in the world that pledges never to use nuclear weapons first. In view of the future of humanity, the CPC has pioneered a path to modernization that challenges the conventional notion that a rising power is bound to seek hegemony.

Unity amid diversity is a defining feature of Chinese culture. There still exists ancient temples that combine the elements of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in Hengyang, Hunan Province and Tai’an, Shandong Province, as well as various other regions of China. Many ideas from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in China, such as Confucianism’s principles of benevolence,

righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness, Buddhism's emphasis on compassion and good deeds, and Daoism's belief in following the laws of nature and the principle of non-action of the Great Way, harmoniously coexist and mutually complement without conflicting or opposing each other.

Based on the pluralistic unity of Chinese culture, we advocate the ideas of acting in good faith, being friendly to others, and fostering neighborliness. We have integrated the vision of a human community with a shared future with the Chinese traditional view of peace among all nations. Drawing inspiration from the notion of inclusivity embodied in the Chinese saying that "the vast ocean admits all rivers," we advocate that global affairs should be governed by all nations jointly. Recognizing that the beauty of harmony lies in diversity, we uphold that different civilizations should communicate and learn from one another to achieve common progress. Believing that we are not alone on the Great Way and the whole world is one family, we call on all countries to collaborate and unite to build a better home planet for all humanity. Chinese people reject zero-sum thinking and firmly believe in and follow the notion that cooperation leads to mutual benefits, while confrontation does no good to anyone.

The Chinese nation does not carry aggressive or hegemonic traits in its genes. Influenced by a culture of peace and harmony, China laid out the ancient Silk Road more than 2,000 years ago, promoting exchanges and development of countries along the route. More than 600 years ago, Zheng He, an esteemed navigator during the Ming dynasty, commanded the strongest fleet in the world at the time and made multiple expeditions in the Pacific and Indian oceans, visiting over 30 countries and regions across Asia and Africa. During his voyages, he did not engage in any acts of territorial conquest or aggression, but rather advocated for peace and friendship.

China works to see that multilateral institutions, such as the WTO and APEC, play their roles more effectively, cooperation mechanisms such as the G20, BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization exert greater influence, and emerging markets and developing countries are better represented and have

greater say in global affairs. China has successfully facilitated the restoration of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran, thereby mitigating the tensions between the two countries and fostering peace and stability in the Middle East. In response to the Ukrainian crisis, China maintains an objective and neutral stance, formulating its position and policies based on the merits of the situation. China is dedicated to promoting dialogue and negotiation.

2) Making greater contributions to world peace and development through our own development.

Chinese modernization is the modernization of opening the door to the world. We uphold a path of mutual benefit to promote global development. China plays an active part in the reform and development of the global governance system. We uphold true multilateralism, strive to promote trade liberalization and investment facilitation, and boost international macroeconomic policy coordination. China is committed to working with other countries to foster an international environment conducive to development and create new drivers for global growth. We work to narrow the North-South gap and assist other developing countries in accelerating development.

China put forward the initiative of jointly building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road (BRI) in 2013. According to *The Belt and Road Initiative: A Key Pillar of Human Community with a Shared Future* published in October 2023, over the past decade, China had signed more than 200 BRI cooperation agreements with over 150 countries and more than 30 international organizations following the principle of achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration, launching a large number of landmark projects and small yet smart projects that benefit the people. Moreover, by that point we had consecutively held six China International Import Expo events, ten China International Fair for Trade in Services events, and three China International Consumer Products Expo events. Through these activities, China shares Chinese market and opportunities with the rest of the world.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement came into effect on January 1, 2022. Signed by 15 countries including China, this free trade area boasts the largest population, the largest economic and trade scale, and the greatest development potential in the world. Against the backdrop of an increasing backlash against globalization and a sluggish global economic recovery, the RCEP continues to unleash policy dividends, becoming the biggest highlight in world economic growth. In 2023, China's trade with the other 14 RCEP members reached a value of 12.6 trillion yuan, indicating a growth rate of 5.3%^① compared with 2021. "Amid declining global openness, rising trade costs, and emerging supply chain bottlenecks, the RCEP is contributing to global economic development," said Rebeca Grynspan, secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. China is playing an increasingly important role in promoting global openness and cooperation and safeguarding the multilateral trading system.

The CPC believes that in the pursuit of modernization, it is imperative for every country to uphold the principles of unity, cooperation and common development and embark on a path of joint contributions, shared benefits, and win-win outcomes. As President Xi Jinping said, "Countries that take the lead should make sincere efforts to help other countries develop. Blowing out other's lights does not make yours brighter; standing in someone else's way won't get you any further."

① Press conference of the State Council Information Office on China's 2023 imports and exports, January 12, 2024.

Chapter Four

Chinese Modernization: A New Form of Human Advancement

Chinese modernization is deeply rooted in fine traditional Chinese culture and reflects the advanced nature of scientific socialism. It draws inspiration from all of human civilization's outstanding achievements, represents the direction of human progress, and creates a new model that is different from that of Western modernization. It is a new form of human advancement.^①

—Xi Jinping

Referring to the state of a progressing human society, civilization did not exist from the beginning, nor does it remain unchanged. Rather, it has

① “Xi Jinping addresses the opening of a study session at the Party school of the CPC Central Committee,” Xinhua News Agency, February 7, 2023.

gradually evolved, upgraded, grown, and spread as driven by the development of productivity. Modern civilization is the highest achievement of social progress thus far, bringing about radical changes to the world throughout history. However, this does not mean that human civilization has reached its ideal end.

Social systems are the product of the development of civilization and also the foundation for its changes and refinement. Though the capitalist system “has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together,^①” it has not solved the various problems of social development. In today’s world, as various challenges and crises are intertwined and the development gap widens, we once again come to a historical crossroads in our pursuit of modernization.

In order to completely change the future of the nation and find a better social system for humanity, the CPC has led the Chinese people in pioneering a Chinese path to modernization and creating a new form of human advancement through a century-long struggle. With continuous improvement of theory and deepening of practice, this form of socialist civilization with Chinese characteristics has fully displayed distinctive features, remarkable advantages, and global influence as a new type of modern civilization.

1. A New Form of Values: Putting the People First

Values are the soul of any civilization and determine both its evolution process and ultimate direction. The essential difference between Chinese modernization and Western modernization in terms of value orientation is that Chinese modernization puts the people first while rejecting capital supremacy.

Capital supremacy is the fundamental value of capitalist civilization. Western

① “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” co-authored by Karl Heinrich Marx and Friedrich Engels and translated by Chen Wangdao, Hunan People’s Press, 2021.

modernization is centered on, driven by, and stuck in capital. While bringing about rapidly increasing productivity and a newfound abundance and variety of goods that have improved people's lives, Western modernization has also led to the unavoidable evils such as the expansion of materialism and the polarization between the rich and the poor.

In pursuing Chinese modernization, realizing people's aspirations for a better life has been taken as the starting point, and realizing the full and free development of every individual has been made the ultimate goal. In this way, Chinese modernization has fundamentally surpassed Western modernization in terms of the starting values formed.

1) Taking the people's aspirations for a better life as the starting point of all endeavors

"Our goal is to satisfy the people's aspirations for a better life," said Xi Jinping, when he met with journalists from home and abroad in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on November 15, 2012 after he was elected General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee. He used a simple and vivid sentence to best interpret the CPC's governance philosophy and values, which focus on putting the people first.

The purpose of Chinese modernization is to improve people's lives—it's not modernization for modernization's sake. China has always upheld people-centered views toward its modernization drive and strived to better respond to the people's concerns and meet their needs. In doing so, it pays more attention to the people's happiness and wellbeing than can be reflected by indicators and data on paper. This has helped to avoid both deviation from the right path and path dependence, both flaws that occurred during the earlier process of modernization.

2) Taking the full and free development of every individual as the ultimate goal

With regard to the form of values, the essence of Chinese modernization is

the modernization regarding the people, not materials. It strives for the people's full modernization, not their partial modernization.

Chinese modernization strives to improve both people's competency and their quality of life. For one thing, we have worked faster to build a large, high-quality modern workforce that is well-structured and well-distributed, in order to support Chinese modernization with high-quality development of the population. Another point is we have coordinated material and cultural-ethical advancement, so as to reach towering heights not only with the many skyscrapers across our great country, but also through our cultural achievements.

3) Taking whether development results benefit all people as a criterion
Common prosperity for all is an essential part of Chinese modernization.

In contrast to Western modernization, which stimulates polarization between the rich and the poor, Chinese modernization aims to achieve not only wealth, but also common prosperity for all. It is a modernization that involves everyone, not just a few. China has taken effective measures to make sure that modernization benefits all people more fairly by eliminating poverty, revitalizing rural areas across the board, building demonstration areas for achieving common prosperity, and enhancing targeted assistance and cooperation between more developed eastern and less developed western regions.

China has made a tremendous achievement unprecedented in the history of human social development by winning the battle against poverty in its pursuit of modernization. This has freed China, once a poor and weak eastern country, from absolute poverty, lifting a big country with one-fifth of the world's population out of absolute poverty. China has become the world's second largest economy with its GDP surpassing 100 trillion yuan and its per capita GDP exceeding 10,000 US dollars. With this, China, once in a marginal and backward position in the world economic system after the advent of modern times, is now contributing greatly to the world economy through its own development, thus greatly elevating the economic status of developing countries.

As a big developing country with a large-scale population, China's modernization will greatly change the world modernization landscape and stand as a positive development model among the changes unseen in a century. For a long time, America, Western European countries, and capitalist countries deeply influenced by American and European cultures have been seen as an embodiment of modernization and advancement, while developing countries have been regarded as the symbol of entrenched tradition and backwardness. Some Western countries have formed a sense of innate superiority and a hegemonic mindset that looks down upon non-Western countries and nations, leading to the prevailing of Western-centrism. The great success of Chinese modernization has challenged the superiority and arrogance of Western countries, and greatly boosted the international status, voice, and influence of developing countries.

2. A New Form of System: Constant Improvement and Reform

In the 1990s, the world socialist movement encountered serious difficulties with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the drastic changes in Eastern European countries. The “end of history” theory stirred discussion for a time, and the social system of Western developed capitalist countries was defined as “the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution”^① and “the final form of human government.”^② Entering the 21st century, the rapid rise of socialist China has enabled scientific socialism to shine with renewed vigor. Chinese modernization has an advantage over Western modernization. It has proved

① *The End of History and the Last Man*, authored by Francis Fukuyama and translated by Chen Gaohua, Guangxi Normal University Press, 2016.

② *The End of History and the Last Man*, authored by Francis Fukuyama and translated by Chen Gaohua, Guangxi Normal University Press, 2016.

the “end of history” theory to be false by constantly improving its system and making innovations.

1) A system with a core leadership force

More than 70 years have passed since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, and the Chinese nation has undergone a tremendous transformation: it has stood up, grown rich, and become stronger. This is fundamentally attributable to the CPC leading the people in establishing and improving a socialist system with Chinese characteristics.

“To understand China today, one must learn to understand the CPC.” The most essential trait of Chinese socialism is the leadership of the CPC, which is also the fundamental leadership system of China.

In advancing Chinese modernization, the CPC has deepened its understanding of the laws that underlie governance by a communist party, the development of socialism, and the evolution of human society. It has remained committed to self-reform, and integrated its self-development with China’s modernization drive. It has worked with energy and drive to ensure its firm and continuous leadership over China’s modernization drive.

The system of CPC-led multiparty cooperation and political consultation is referred to as a new type of political party system. It is capable of representing broad interests, reflecting consistency of shared goals, promoting the sound formulation and implementation of policies, and ensuring the effectiveness of national governance. This system avoids problems such as disputes between parties, favoritism toward certain interest groups, and manipulation by a minority of political “elites.”

2) A system guided by sound theory

Guided by Marxism, the Chinese socialist system has developed under the real conditions and culture in China, enjoying the full support of the people. Marxism has distinctive, practical character. It is not only committed to

explaining the world in a rational way, but also to changing the world actively.

Over the past century, proceeding with its founding mission, the CPC has continued to produce new theories while integrating the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and fine traditional culture, thus maintaining its vigor.

From Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents, the Scientific Outlook on Development, and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the CPC has stayed committed to integrating the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and fine traditional culture in the efforts to adapt Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of the times, through which a guide to action can be established for its modernization drive.

In response to the questions of "what Chinese modernization is," and "how to advance it," the CPC have continued to write new chapters on the miracle of successfully advancing modernization by following the socialist path. During this process, they have produced the theory of Chinese modernization boasting rich contents, and expounded upon the central task, core content, Chinese features, essential requirements, strategic arrangements, general goals, main objectives, and major principles of Chinese modernization. The theory has elevated the understanding of past practical experience of the modernization drive and represented original development of theories on socialist modernization.

3) A system that constantly applies the achievements of civilization

China does not imitate the political systems of other countries, but it is willing to learn from other countries' beneficial governing experience. During the period of socialist construction, China drew beneficial lessons from the Soviet Union in establishing its state system and national governance system. Ever since the launch of reform and opening up, China has further opened to the outside and integrated socialism with the market economy.

At the beginning of reform and opening up, some people in China with

dogmatic thinking believed the market economy was opposite to socialism. While focusing reform on balancing the relations of production, China has continued to reform its economic operation mechanism and ownership structure to establish a new economic structure, under which public ownership is the mainstay and diverse forms of ownership develop side by side, so that all forms of ownership complement and reinforce each other for common development. This helps exert the advantages of socialism while also giving play to the strengths of the market economy. This solves the question of how to integrate socialism with the market economy, which is one of the most difficult questions in world economic history.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress in 2012, China has made greater efforts in integrating socialism with the market economy in order to give full play to both sides. By exerting the role of both an “effective market” and a “capable government,” China has greatly liberated and developed productive forces and greatly stimulated social vitality.

3. A New Form of Development: Becoming More Comprehensive and Coordinated

Civilization is comprised of all tangible and intangible achievements made by humans as they work to understand and change the world. A civilization must pursue progress if it is to grow, and to achieve progress it must pursue comprehensive and coordinated development. Chinese modernization is distinctly different from Western modernization in that it has rejected the one-dimensional approach that leads to alienation, instead pursuing comprehensive and coordinated development.

1) Working toward the modernization of the people

When taking a broad perspective on civilization, material culture is the most basic level that is always a guiding factor. However, under the logic of capitalism,

the “one-dimensional” pursuit of material wealth has not only caused a slew of social issues, but has also intensified alienation. Modern civilization has brought a lot to mankind, but it has also caused mankind to lose a lot.

In 1964, American scholar Herbert Marcuse published a book titled *One-Dimensional Man*, noting that the United States, as an advanced industrial society, is not a truly free and open society, but a one-dimensional society. It bribes the people with consumption and enjoyment, plunging them into a comfortable “unfreedom”. According to Marcuse’s sharp criticism of modern capitalist society based on his in-depth studies, in an advanced capitalist society that has become richer, alienation, instead of disappearing, has permeated more deeply, widely, and subtly into all aspects of life. Commodity fetishism dominates the economy, politics, and culture. People living in this kind of society are one-dimensional humans who have lost true freedom.

Chinese modernization, however, has targeted the modernization of its people since the very beginning in an effort to explore an approach to comprehensive and coordinated development.

2) A pattern of comprehensive and coordinated development taking shape

Material scarcity is not socialism, nor is cultural backwardness. China has developed a pattern of comprehensive and coordinated development by pursuing material, political, cultural-ethical, social, and ecological advancement, building on its previous efforts to pursue material and cultural-ethical advancement.

In as early as 1982, a strategic goal for China’s modernization drive was set at the 12th CPC National Congress, stressing the necessity of pursuing high-level socialist cultural-ethical advancement while pursuing high-level material advancement. In 2012, the Five-Sphere Integrated Plan was introduced in the report to the 18th CPC National Congress, which aims to promote integrated economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological advancement. The plan regards economic advancement as the fundamental task, political advancement

as the guarantee, cultural advancement as the soul, social advancement as the precondition, and ecological advancement as the foundation. In accordance with this plan we have promoted collaboration between these different spheres to advance Chinese modernization in a coordinated way. Ten years of endeavor have led to fruitful achievements. China has written a new chapter in the history of human civilization and brought human civilization to a new stage of development.

3) Making coordinated advances with a focus on addressing imbalances and inadequacies in development

In 2017, the report to the 19th National Congress of the CPC clearly stated that the principal contradiction facing Chinese society has become the contradiction between imbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life. Facing this all-encompassing historic change, the CPC has implemented a people-centered philosophy of development and worked to meet the people's ever-growing needs in the fields of economy, politics, culture, society, and environment by increasing the quality and efficiency of development and striving to resolve imbalances and inadequacies therein.

With its notable material advancement, steady political advancement, impressive cultural advancement, innovative social advancement, and prominent ecological advancement, China has made new progress in promoting comprehensive and coordinated development over the past decade of the new era.

Modernization is a complex system. The further it develops, the more it displays its systematic characteristics, and the more it calls for overall coordination. Following the Five-Sphere Integrated Plan, the Chinese people's multi-level needs for a better life have been fully and dynamically understood. By identifying and continuing to resolve the most practical problems that are of the greatest and most direct concern to the people, we have ensured a more complete and lasting sense of fulfillment, happiness, and security for our people.

4. A New Form of Democracy: Whole-process People's Democracy

Democracy is a political system under which the majority of people enjoy the rights granted by the state, which essentially requires that the people run the country. It is an effective means of governance in modern society. However, the term “democracy” has been co-opted by the West, leading to Western dominance in democracy narratives worldwide. In the eyes of most people in the West, the model of democracy is the Western multi-party system and universal suffrage, but for the Chinese people, this is only a form of democracy which has nothing to do with substantive democracy. The biggest difference between Chinese modernization and Western modernization in terms of governance mechanisms is that the former transcends democracy in form to promote whole-process people's democracy.

1) Democracy is for solving problems

Taking a look at the world, we can see that some countries who call their democracy “global models” have failed to govern effectively and are undergoing severe social division. On the other hand, some developing countries that have blindly copied the Western model of democracy are facing a dilemma such that there is only democracy in name but no governance.

As time has passed, people no longer take Western-centrism for granted as the standard when considering a model of democracy. Governance efficiency, rather than procedures, has gradually become a high priority criterion for assessing the performance of a democracy. Democracy is not an ornament to be used for decoration. It is to be used to solve the problems that need to be solved for the people.

According to the logic of the CPC, “substantive democracy,” in which the people run the country, represents the true values of democracy. And the development of “whole-process democracy,” through which the people can enjoy the benefits of peaceful development and live a happy life, reflects the efficiency of democracy.

2) Extensive, genuine, and effective democracy

The core of people's democracy in China is to uphold the unity between CPC leadership, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance. By upholding CPC leadership, we have answered the question of who can bring the people together. By upholding the running of the country by the people, we have answered the question of what the goals of democracy are. By upholding law-based governance, we have answered the question of how to govern the country.

The underlying mechanisms of people's democracy are as follows: the people form an organic whole under the leadership of the CPC; the common will of the Party and the people is expressed in the form of the Constitution and the law; the state is organized, run, and developed on the basis of the Constitution; and the exercise of power must be within the framework of the rule of law. Finally, the people, with the CPC at the core, participate in various ways in the management of state, economic, cultural, and social affairs in accordance with the law. The Constitution and the law together with their implementation must effectively reflect the people's will, safeguard their rights and interests, and stimulate their creativity.

3) Breaking the "vote-only" model to safeguard the people's rights

Whole-process people's democracy is a basic feature of Chinese democracy, which means that democracy must be reflected in every aspect of the operation of the state apparatus, not just in the voting process. This form of democracy breaks the "vote-only" model and safeguards the people's rights to participate in democratic elections, consultations, decision-making, administration, and oversight, covering every aspect of state and social life.

Beat Schneider, professor emeritus at Bern University of the Arts in Switzerland, observed that the Chinese democratic system, as he is familiar with, has democratic institutions and people's congresses at various levels. The CPC not only maintains close ties with the people, but also unites together with them.

This is an advantage compared to the elections held every four years in Western countries.

In July 2020, the Harvard Kennedy School of Government released a report titled “Understanding CCP Resilience: Surveying Chinese Public Opinion Through Time,” which shows that since 2003, there has been a notable increase in satisfaction among Chinese citizens regarding the government, with over 90% expressing satisfaction with the CPC^①. They rated the government as more capable and effective than ever before based on the impact of national policies down to the conduct of local officials.

4) Building broad consensus to make governance more effective

The reason why whole-process people’s democracy works best is that its ethos, institutions, and mechanisms permeate China’s political system and governance practices. Whole-process people’s democracy represents the people’s general will, involves the widest range of people, and extensively gathers their opinions. Being constantly improved on a regular basis, democratic consultation represents an effective way of finding the largest common ground that reflects the wishes and demands of the whole of society. Based on a wide range of participants, a consensus can be reached, providing the impetus for effective governance.

Whole-process people’s democracy exists in every link of democracy. Its mechanism fills the gaps in governance and its quality ensures holistic governance. In order to improve the effectiveness of national governance, it is essential that we uphold whole-process people’s democracy to better serve the people’s public interests, whereby we rely on the people’s strengths and wisdom to ensure national

① “Understanding CCP Resilience: Surveying Chinese Public Opinion Through Time”, July, 2020, <https://ash.harvard.edu/publications/understanding-ccp-resilience-surveying-chinese-public-opinion-through-time>.

governance better reflect their will and safeguard their rights and interests.

5. A New Form of Culture: Continually Learning From the Past to Make Innovations

Culture is the lifeblood of a nation, and it gives the people a sense of belonging. Cultural confidence represents a fundamental and profound force that sustains the development of a country and a nation. With contemporary value being steeped in it, fine traditional culture, through creative transformation and innovative development, is capable of unleashing huge energy that adapts to contemporary culture and modern society. In terms of cultural identity, Chinese modernization is distinctly different from Western modernization in that it never severs ties with tradition and always learns from the past to make innovations.

1) Safeguarding cultural roots to pass on the torch of civilization

China's fine traditional culture is extensive and profound. It is the crystallization and essence of Chinese civilization, the root and soul of the Chinese nation, and the foundation upon which China can stand firm amidst strong global cultural interaction. In pursuing Chinese modernization, we have held a broad perspective on history, analyzed the mechanisms of evolution, and explored the patterns of history by taking into account historical experiences, contemporary trends, and global changes, thus putting forward strategies and measures in response to changing times.

According to some views of classical Western modernization theory, tradition and modernity are polar opposites of each other and mutually exclusive, with tradition inevitably hindering modernization, and advancing modernization inevitably denying and abandoning tradition. There are also views that deny the difference in the historical process between different countries and consider the process of advancing modernization in different countries as the constant repetition of the Western model of modernization.

In exploring the path to modernization, China has been adept at viewing human society's history of modernization by taking stock of what has happened in ancient or modern times, at home and abroad. We have respected the laws of history and cultural traditions and based our current endeavors in the present to create the future, showing profound historical endowment that has been built on our nation's over 5,000 years of civilization. China is one of the four ancient civilizations in the world, and Chinese civilization is the only civilization that has continued to this day uninterrupted. The Chinese Civilization Origins Project and other important projects have produced evidence of one million years of humanity, ten thousand years of culture, and more than five thousand years of civilization in China. Zhang Guangzhi, the late, renowned Chinese-American paleoanthropologist, introduced the theory of continuity and fracture. He believed that Chinese culture is different from the Western culture in terms of its view of the universe and path to cultural development, with the former characterized by continuity and the latter riddled with fractures. His theory has provided us with a different perspective for re-examining the general laws of human advancement.

The development of world history has proved that a country should choose its path to modernization not only in accordance with general laws of modernization, but also in line with its own realities, such as its historical traditions, social system, development conditions, and external environment. China believes that only by drawing on historical experience and grasping the laws of history can a country take the initiative in pursuing modernization, seize the opportunity to realize historic transformations, keep pace with the times, and forge ahead with greater effort and determination.

2) Creative transformation and innovative development

Fine traditional Chinese culture carries national governance wisdom and provides profound inspiration for resolving common challenges confronting human society. In the process of modernization, China has promoted creative

transformation and innovative development of its fine traditional culture, fully tapping into and expounding upon the contemporary value of relevant important concepts, including pursuing common good for all; regarding the people as the foundation of the state; governing by virtue; discarding the outdated in favor of the new; selecting officials on the basis of merit; promoting harmony between humanity and nature; ceaselessly pursuing self-improvement; embracing the world with virtue; acting in good faith and being friendly to others; and fostering neighborliness. By doing so, we have utilized our fine traditional culture as an important source of nutrition sustaining our core socialist values, and continued to integrate the essence of Marxism with the best of fine traditional Chinese culture.

China has worked to adapt Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of the times, adapt the basic tenets of Marxism to its realities and fine traditional culture, and promote creative transformation and innovative development of its fine traditional culture, all in a bid to create a new, living cultural entity that combines the basic tenets of Marxism with fine traditional Chinese culture. In this process, the basic tenets of Marxism and fine traditional Chinese culture fit in with and complement each other. By combining the two, we have created a new cultural form of Chinese modernization and a new and unified living cultural entity, namely the modern civilization of the Chinese nation.

3) Coexistence, exchange, and mutual learning as equals

Civilizations become more colorful through exchange and richer through mutual learning. Cultural differences should not be a source of global conflict, but rather a driving force for human advancement. Championing equality, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness between civilizations, Chinese modernization enables cultural exchanges to transcend estrangement, mutual learning to transcend clashes, and coexistence to transcend feelings of superiority, thus helping promote civilizations along a balanced, positive and virtuous trajectory. According to Western modernization theory, the development of

human society is divided into two stages—civilization and barbarism, and the world is divided into modern industrial societies and non-industrial societies. Modern industrial societies of the West are meant to be role models for the entire non-Western world, and Western civilization is the pinnacle of human advancement.

The Chinese people, however, believe that just as human beings may differ in skin color and language, civilizations may also vary in color and hue; no civilization is superior to another. Various civilizations created by human society have laid solid foundations for modernization in various countries. Chinese modernization advocates respecting the diversity of world civilizations, and upholds equality and respect while rejecting hubris and prejudice to deepen understanding of the differences between our own civilization and others when facilitating harmonious coexistence between different civilizations. Civilizations do not need to clash with each other. We should not only keep our own civilizations flexible and dynamic, but also create conditions for other civilizations to flourish. Together we can make the garden of world civilizations colorful and vibrant.

Chinese civilization has been known for its openness and inclusiveness since ancient times, and it has continued to find new life through exchanges with and learning from other civilizations. Being deeply rooted in China's fine traditional culture, Chinese modernization fully taps into and expounds upon the contemporary value of this culture and the intellectual features of Chinese civilization, embodies the advanced nature of scientific socialism, draws inspiration from all of human civilization's outstanding achievements, and represents the direction of human progress, thus creating a new model that is different from Western model of modernization. As a new form of human advancement, Chinese modernization, by drawing from other civilizations, will surely enrich the garden of world civilizations, provide theoretical inspiration for resolving common challenges confronting human society, and provide intellectual guidance for the modernization of humanity.

6. A New Form of Global Governance: Building a Human Community with a Shared Future

Peace and security, like sunshine and rain, are hardly noticed when we are benefiting from them, but without them we are lost. Facing the changing times and an increasingly turbulent world, people of all countries aspire to peace and stability. China's modernization drive aims not only to benefit the Chinese people, but also to promote the common development of the world. In other words, our goal is not only to make the country stronger and realize national rejuvenation, but also to contribute to human progress and world harmony. Chinese modernization is different from Western modernization in terms of the way it perceives global governance. It opposes unilateralism and protectionism and advocates building a community with a shared future for humanity.

1) Pursuing common values and safeguarding a shared future

A peaceful and developing world should have different forms of civilization and allow for diverse paths toward modernization. China holds dear humanity's shared values of peace, development, fairness, justice, democracy, and freedom, rejects the practice of forming small circles or playing zero-sum games, and calls for joint efforts to build a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice, and mutually beneficial cooperation. By doing so, we will be able to expand the convergence of interests and achieve the greatest synergy possible.

With a confrontational zero-sum mentality, some Western countries used to rely on their "early bird" advantage in modernization to export their modernization models to other countries. They shifted the costs and crises generated by their own wealth accumulation onto developing countries through economic exploitation and colonial plunder, placing numerous obstacles to economic and social development in the path of late-comer countries pursuing modernization, thus giving rise to serious imbalances and injustices in world

modernization.

China, adhering to the world view of harmony among all nations, has always been concerned with the future of humanity, striving to provide new opportunities for world development via new achievements in Chinese modernization. Following the right path of peaceful development, China has advocated bridging differences through dialogue and resolving disputes through cooperation, linking its future with that of peoples around the world to promote the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

The Chinese people have always celebrated and strived to pursue the vision of peace, amity, and harmony. China has never invaded or bullied others in the past, and will never do so in the future, nor will it seek hegemony. China has always worked to safeguard world peace, contribute to global development, preserve international order, and provide public goods, and it will continue to provide the world with new opportunities through its new development.

2) Safeguarding common order and improving global governance

There is no such thing as a single authoritative model of modernization, nor is there a one-size-fits-all standard for modernization. In pursuing modernization, China refuses to follow the old path of war, colonization, and plunder taken by some countries. Furthermore, China is opposed to certain countries that maliciously distort the meaning of international law, package their own will as the so-called “rules-based international order,” and impose it upon the international community, wantonly infringing on the legitimate rights of other countries.

China advocates a vision of global governance featuring shared growth through discussion and collaboration. We have actively participated in, promoted, and joined hands with other countries to push forward reform and development of the global governance system in a bid to make the international order fairer and more equitable. We have worked to advance the modernization of human society through continued efforts to guarantee equal rights, equal

opportunities, and fair rules for all.

Chinese modernization aims to resolve the problems that have arisen from the process of modernization and that Western countries have failed to solve, such as capital-centric practices leading to the polarization between the rich and the poor, expansion of materialism, and expansion and plunder. China will stand firmly on the right side of history and on the side of human progress. Dedicated to peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit, we will strive to safeguard world peace and development as we pursue our own development and make greater contributions to world peace and development through our own development.

3) Fulfilling our responsibility as a major country and calling for joint action

In September 2021, China put forward Global Development Initiative, advocating a people-centered, inclusive, and innovation-driven approach and harmony between humanity and nature. China believes that all countries must join hands and cooperate with each other as their development is closely linked and their people share a common future.

From proposing the Global Development Initiative in September 2021 to proposing the Global Security Initiative in April 2022 and the Global Civilization Initiative in March 2023, President Xi Jinping has provided important public goods for the international community based on his deep concern for the future of humanity and insight into the prospects of human advancement. The three initiatives put forward have each enriched and expanded the theoretical connotation and practical means of building a community with a shared future for humanity. According to Robert Lawrence Kuhn, chairman of the US-based Kuhn Foundation, the idea of a community with a shared future for humanity is a great vision for improving global governance, which shows that China is willing to take on more global

responsibility for promoting world peace and prosperity^①.

Chinese modernization has expanded the channels for developing countries to achieve modernization by providing them with a brand-new option, and offered a Chinese proposal for humanity's search for a better social system. Every country's effort to independently explore the path to modernization in line with its national conditions should be respected, and developing countries have the right and the ability to independently explore their own unique paths to modernization that fit them best. We will always develop the country and the nation through our own strength and maintain a firm grasp on the future of China's development and progress. We will also respect and support the independent choices of peoples around the world regarding their own development paths in a concerted effort to draw a new vision of the future featuring harmonious coexistence of modernization in diverse forms.

① “Contributing to solving common problems confronting humanity: 20th CPC National Congress in eyes of international community,” Xinhua News Agency, October 27, 2022.

Conclusion

Today, our world, our times, and history itself are changing in ways like never before. A new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is well under way. The deficit in peace, development, security, and governance is growing. The world has entered a new period of turbulence and change and has once again reached a crossroads in history. Its future will be decided by all the world's people.

If we say Western modernization is a prelude to modernization, then China and other developing countries are becoming increasingly involved in the symphony of modernization.

The history of humanity's pursuit of modernization is a history of developing the new from the old through exchanges and mutual learning between different civilizations. In the arduous struggle to pursue modernization, the Communist Party of China has led the Chinese people in pioneering a path of Chinese modernization, creating a new model for human advancement, expanding the channels for developing countries to achieve modernization, and contributing a Chinese approach to humanity's search for better social systems.

Chinese modernization is socialist modernization pursued under the

leadership of the Communist Party of China. Being adept at upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground, the Communist Party of China has integrated the basic tenets of Marxism with China's specific realities and fine traditional culture in a continued effort to adapt Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of our times. On this basis, it has enriched scientific socialism through the bustling development and great achievements of Chinese modernization, turning the pursuit of common prosperity into concrete action and rendering the ideal of universal harmony into a form no longer beyond reach.

Advancing Chinese modernization is a trailblazing undertaking. On the journey ahead, we will inevitably be confronted with risks and challenges, difficulties and obstacles, and even dangerous storms, some of which we can foresee and others we cannot. It should be clearly noted that in today's world, hegemonism, power politics, and bullying are severely impacting world peace. Some countries are inciting division and confrontation, imposing decoupling, and disrupting industrial and supply chains, thus severely threatening global security. Regional security hotspot issues continue to emerge, regional conflicts and disturbances are frequent, traditional and non-traditional security threats are intertwined, and a backlash against globalization is rising as protectionism mounts and world economic recovery is sluggish.

Our future is bright, but we still have arduous tasks to accomplish and a long way to go. Chinese Communists would neither be complacent with what we have achieved in the past, nor would we be hesitant about moving forward in the face of external pressure. At the same time, Chinese Communists have been committed to following a modernization path of peaceful development. We firmly believe that humanity constitutes an organic whole, and the Earth is our common home. In the face of common challenges, no person or country can remain insulated. The only way out is to work together in harmony with one accord. The Chinese have believed that "all under Heaven are of one family" since ancient times. We have advocated "affinity between all people and all creatures,"

“peace among all nations,” and “harmony under Heaven.” We have aspired to create a better world in which “when the path is just, the common good will reign over all under Heaven,” and we are dedicated to building a human community with a shared future.

As an ancient Chinese saying goes, “All living things grow side by side and do not impede one another. All roads run parallel and do not counter one another.” Only when all countries pursue the common good, live in harmony, and engage in cooperation for mutual benefit will there be sustained prosperity and guaranteed security. China is committed to building a world of lasting peace through dialogue and consultation, a world of universal security through collaboration and shared benefits, a world of common prosperity through mutually beneficial cooperation, an open and inclusive world through exchanges and mutual learning, and a clean and beautiful world through green and low-carbon development.

We are convinced that as long as all countries work together to pursue peaceful development and mutually beneficial cooperation, champion equality, mutual learning, dialogue, and inclusiveness between civilizations, and hold dear humanity’s shared values, we will definitely be able to create a better future for modernization and human advancement.