

# **China's Economic Prosperity begins with the People Being Masters of Their Own Affairs**

## **-- From an Institutional System in Which the People are Masters of the Country to a Socialist Market Economy**

Leyi Deng

Beijing Technology and Business University, Beijing, 100048, China

### **Abstract**

In 1906, the "civil rights" included in the Three Principles of the People proposed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen was the predecessor of democracy. Since then, the concept of democratic republic has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, based on the national conditions at that time and drawing on the excellent historical experience, China finally established the system of the people as masters of the country. In 2019, the Fourth Plenary session of the 19th CPC Central Committee stressed the importance of upholding and improving the system of the people as masters of the country and developing socialist democracy. Since the founding of new China, our planned economy system has been gradually built and improved, and it ADAPTS to the changes of times, and our socialist market economy system also ADAPTS a lot to our basic national conditions. The establishment of the system of the people as masters of the country provides the foundation for the construction of the socialist market economic system. This paper starts from the civil rights, introduces the system of the people as masters of the country, analyzes the emergence of the socialist market economic system and summarizes historical experience.

### **Keywords**

**The Birth of Civil Rights; Democratic Policy; The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee; Socialist Market Economic System.**

## **1. "Civil Rights" in Modern China**

### **1.1. Foundation Laying**

The modern history of China begins with the Opium War in 1840. In the early 19th century, Britain became the most capitalist country in the world, earning the title of "the sun never sets" empire, and its next major target in Asia was the Qing government. From the early Qing Dynasty to the eve of the Opium War, the Qing Dynasty was still an independent feudal state.

After the completion of the Industrial Revolution, Britain needed a large enough market to export its trade, and at this time, China became the target of Britain. Later, in order to open the Chinese market, the British government chose to smuggle a special commodity -- opium to China.

But because the Qing government and stand uncertain, self-reliant, general blindly arrogant, poor command, the first Opium War ended violently, forced to sign a series of unequal treaties with the British government. These treaties fundamentally changed the nature of China and reduced it to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. The defeat of the Opium War brought a huge impact to the Qing government, and the gap between China and the West in military science and technology emerged. Many keen feudal men realized the problem and decided to help themselves.

In the early stage of the Westernization Movement, the Westernizers began to "self-strengthen" by using advanced western production technologies to establish a number of modern military industries and develop civil industries and new transportation industries. However, the Westernization Movement was, in the final analysis, a self-rescue movement at the level of objects, led by the feudal class. Finally, the defeat of the Beiyang Navy in the Sino-Japanese War declared the failure of the Westernization movement. The Westernization movement proved unable to save China, so instead they focused on Western political systems.

In 1895, the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed, and Kang Youwei and others launched the "writing on the bus". After that, the Reformists actively carried out propaganda and organized various activities to introduce the experience and lessons of reform in Western countries. In the end, because the old guard represented by Cixi held real power, Cixi imprisoned Emperor Guangxu to "train the government" again, the Reform Movement of 1898 failed. The Hundred Days' Reform, as a reform movement in modern China, even though it was killed by the old school, it still laid the ideological and public foundation for the later ideological movement.

## 1.2. Sprout of "Civil Rights"

The word democracy, many monarchs have similar sense of democracy, but cannot really do democracy. In Zou Ji mocking the King of Qi for accepting Remongivings, the king of Wei said, "If the officials are able to face my enemies, they will be rewarded; The book remonstrate with me, by reward; He who can speak ill of the court and hear my ears is rewarded." [1] As early as the Spring and Autumn Period, the monarch had similar consciousness of democracy, but because of the deep-rooted feudal monarchy, the democratic thought has not been really realized. In the Reform Movement of 1898, reformists such as Liang Qichao and Kang Youwei founded newspapers, organized societies, set up schools, gave speeches and wrote letters to the Guangxu Emperor, asking for a comprehensive reform of the reform movement, including education, economy, politics and culture. Among the extensive suggestions, an important topic is the thought of "civil rights" put forward by Comrade Liang Qichao.

I think Liang Qichao's civil rights are roughly divided into two aspects: monarchical power and gentry power.

The relationship between civil rights and monarchy is an important content in Liang Qichao's thought of civil rights. He severely criticized the phenomenon of imperial power without civil rights and centralization in ancient Chinese society. He believed that the first step in the implementation of civil rights was to change the absolute monarchy. He once said: "In ancient times, the emperor of the people, they call themselves alone, alone, to a single person, how can be stolen from the disaster. Lonely and few, the world is called no tell also, and alone thought inevitable name is music, the posthumous title of the king also, that duff, that monogamy, hear the Mo do not know for the reputation, I do not understand the exegetical to a person, and duff have what different." [2] China has been a feudal country with absolute monarchy since ancient times, so Liang Qichao proposed to change the absolute monarchy into the rule of the monarch and the people.

Gentry power is a special historical phenomenon in China. It comes from the word "gentleman", which refers to the rights of people who are not officials but not the people. Gentry power and official power are different, but their functions and power are interpenetrating. Liang Qichao once said, "If you want to promote civil rights, you should first promote the power of the gentry." [3] Liang Qichao believed that the gentleman was the representative figure of the people, who had certain power, low position and influence in the local area. It could be said that the gentleman existed as the bond between officials and the people. Under the national conditions at that time, it was impossible to delegate power directly to the people, and the gentry, not the people but the officials, just became a bridge. However, since the gentlemen knew little about politics at that time, Liang Qichao also put forward the idea of inspiring the

gentry's wisdom. Enlightened gentlemen of good character and excellent knowledge were elected by the local districts to give regular lectures in the Institute. The development of gentry power promotes the development of civil rights.

### 1.3. Formation of Civil Rights

The failure of the Hundred Days' Reform made the bourgeoisie revolutionaries represented by Sun Yat-sen onto the stage of history.

In 1894, Sun Yat-sen founded China's first bourgeois revolutionary organization in Honolulu, the Xingzhong Association. People cannot help shouting, "Keir to save the people in fire and water, cut the building will fall." In 1905, Sun Yat-sen, Huang Xing and others founded the Chinese Tongmenghui in Tokyo, Japan. In the program of the Tongmenghui, they proposed to "expel the manchu, restore China, establish a republic of China and equalize land rights". It was also the predecessor of the Three Principles of the People. The "civil rights doctrine" with the connotation of "founding the Republic of China" is the core of the "Three Principles of the People".

The "establishment of the Republic of China" is actually very easy to understand, is to carry out a political revolution, overthrow the feudal monarchy and establish a democratic republic. Based on the theory of freedom, equality and fraternity, civil-rights doctrine has broken down the principles of democratic political establishment, namely: (1) The "revolutionary procedure theory" of implementing the process of democratic political establishment; (2) Promoting the "party politics theory" of "republican politics" and "representative government"; (3) The "power distinction theory" that the people have "right" and the government has "ability"; (4) The "local autonomy theory" of implementing the democratic construction plan; (5) Building ideal government structure blueprint "five-power Constitution Theory". Sun Yat-sen's theory of civil rights inherited part of Confucianism and integrated the western political ideas of advocating freedom and insisting on "sovereignty in the people", and finally formed the most complete and advanced theory of civil rights during the old democratic revolution.

This theory had a profound influence in China at that time, but because it did not put forward the anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism proposition directly, and because of the status of the broad masses of the people and the weakness and compromise of the bourgeoisie, the revolutionary political party was weak and could not build a strong political party and complete the task of anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism completely.

## 2. Democratic Policy Since the Founding of New China

When the People's Republic of China was founded, there were many ruins waiting to be built. Our country also formally stepped out of the step of socialist modernization construction. We established the system of people's congresses and the system of regional ethnic autonomy, consolidated political power, and established a socialist democratic political system with Chinese characteristics.

### 2.1. The System of People's Congresses

The system of people's Congress is our fundamental political system, and also the organizational form of the people's democratic dictatorship. It stipulates that all our power belongs to the people, and that the organs through which the people exercise state power are the National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at various levels. The NPC is also the best organ of state power. It can amend the Constitution and other laws, supervise the implementation of the Constitution, elect leaders at various levels (the President of the People's Republic of China, the Chairman of the Central Military Commission, etc.), review and approve plans for national economic and social development, etc.

On the whole, the system of people's congress is the fundamental political system suitable for our national situation, which is also the embodiment of our national nature of the people's democracy dictatorship. It guarantees that state power embodies the will of the people; To ensure the unity of the central and local state power; It has guaranteed the equality and unity of our ethnic groups. In short, the system of people's congresses in China can ensure that state power is in the hands of the people, in line with the purpose of the people as masters of their own affairs.

## **2.2. System of Regional Ethnic Autonomy**

The system of regional ethnic autonomy refers to the system of exercising regional autonomy and setting up organs of self-government to exercise the right of autonomy in areas where various ethnic minorities live in compact communities under unified state leadership. Since its founding, the CPC has attached great importance to ethnic issues. With the development of the Communist Party of China is becoming more and more mature, the national problems are exposed day by day, and gradually put forward the solution of the national problems, that is, national regional autonomy.

The people's governments of national autonomous areas, under the unified leadership of The State Council, report on their work to the people's congress at the corresponding level and to the state administrative organ at the next higher level. It is a democratic policy with national characteristics.

It should be noted, however, that regional ethnic autonomy is autonomy under the unified leadership of the state. It cannot exist in isolation from the state and must be subject to the unified leadership of the central government. It is not only the combination of ethnic and regional factors, but also the combination of political and economic factors.

## **3. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee**

The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee was held in Beijing from October 28 to 31, 2019. Chaired by the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, the meeting will study several major issues, including upholding and improving the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics and modernizing China's system and capacity for governance.

The plenum stressed that China must uphold the principle that the people are the masters of the country, develop people's democracy, maintain close ties with the people, rely on the people closely, and guide the people in a reasonable way to promote national development. We will effectively protect the legitimate rights of the people and uphold the rule of law.

The plenum pointed out that we should uphold and improve the system of people running the country and develop socialist democracy. We must uphold the principal position of the people, unwaveringly follow the socialist path of political development with Chinese characteristics, and ensure that the people manage state affairs through various channels and forms in accordance with the law. We should uphold and improve the system of people's congresses as the fundamental political system, uphold and improve the system of multi-party cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the CPC, consolidate and develop the broadest possible patriotic united front, uphold and improve the system of regional ethnic autonomy, and improve the system of community-level self-governance that is full of vitality. [4]

The emphasis on improving the institutional system of the people as masters of their own affairs at the meeting ensures the people's democratic rights, helps the people to participate in the management of state affairs, and makes China stronger and stronger in the environment, economy, culture and other aspects. China is a socialist country in which the people are masters of their own affairs, ensuring the people's rights and the country's prosperity and development.

## 4. The History of China's Economic Restructuring

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, China gradually established a highly centralized planned economy system, during which it experienced two major transitions: the first happened at the beginning of the founding of New China, which gradually changed from a new democratic economy to a socialist planned economy; The second, after 1978, was the gradual transition from a socialist planned economy to a socialist market economy. In 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee laid the foundation for reform and opening up, and the reform of the economic system took the lead in rural areas.

With the knowledge of middle and high school history, it is not difficult for us to think of the household contract responsibility system. The development of this responsibility system, first abolished the implementation of more than 20 years of "three level ownership, team based" people's commune economic system, changed the old management system of our country's countryside, liberated the productive forces of rural areas, mobilize the enthusiasm of farmers' production and operation. At the same time, the reform experiment in the city also started. Four special economic zones were established in 1980; In 1984, 14 coastal port cities were opened; The coastal economic zone was opened in 1985. By the 1990s, it had basically formed an open system of special economic zones, coastal open cities, coastal open zones, port cities along the river, Yanbian open towns, and inland open cities. Also in 1984, the government separated administration from enterprise management, streamlined administration and delegated power, and enterprises were responsible for their own profits and losses and independent management. Centering on the reform of state-owned enterprises, the central link of economic reform, the reform of the planning system, the pricing system, the commercial operation system, the management system, the financial system, the banking system and other aspects further expanded the opening to the outside world. A series of significant advances have been made on a number of fronts.

In 1992, after Mr. Deng Xiaoping's southern speech, the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed the establishment of a socialist market economy system. In December of the following year, the Third Plenary Session of the 14th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Several Issues Concerning the Establishment of a Socialist Market Economy System", proposing the overall plan for the establishment of a socialist market economy system and the action plan for economic system reform. In 1997, the 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed and elaborated on Deng Xiaoping Theory, establishing China's basic socialist economic system. From then on, China's socialist basic economic system was officially established. Every year after this, China has been continuously improving its socialist market economy system, ensuring better protection of people's rights. People's lives are more stable, and society is more stable, harmonious, and vibrant.

## 5. Review History and Summarize Experience from the Process

Grow through mistakes. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, when China's economy was beginning to improve, we ushered in the most difficult three years in China -- 1959 to 1961. The three years of economic difficulties were caused by the gradual rise of the people's commune movement in 1955 and the idea of the "Great Leap Forward". "High index, bungling, fanfares, anti-communization" the sixteen words become the pronoun of the era. In the people's commune movement, many places confused the distinction between ownership by the whole people and collective ownership, between socialism and communism, seriously violated the economic interests of peasants, discouraged the enthusiasm of collectives and peasants, destroyed rural productive forces, and caused great losses to the development of agricultural economy. The designation of this draft has, to a certain extent, played a positive



role in overcoming the "left-leaning" mistake in rural work, mobilizing the enthusiasm of farmers, and promoting the recovery and development of agriculture. No matter what you do, no one is perfect and you will always do something wrong. When you encounter a mistake, don't be afraid or panic. Calm down and analyze the current situation, overcome it and overcome it by combining what you have learned with actual efforts, and learn from your mistakes to improve yourself.

Take theory as your sail. In 1984, the Third Plenary Session of the 12th CPC Central Committee adopted the "Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Economic Restructuring"; In October 1987, the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of China further proposed that "the socialist planned commodity economy should be a system of internal unity between planning and the market" and that "the new economic operation system should, on the whole, be a mechanism whereby the state regulates the market and the market guides enterprises". In October 1992, the 14th CPC National Congress put forward the reform goal of building a socialist market economic system; In December 1993, the Third Plenary Session of the 14th CPC Central Committee issued the "Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Some Issues concerning the Establishment of a Socialist Market Economic System"; In October 2003, the Third Plenary session of the 16th CPC Central Committee adopted the Decision of the CPC Central Committee on Several Issues concerning the Improvement of the Socialist Market Economic System. All these are the continuous summing up of experience in practice, and then summing up practical experience into theories, so as to combine the basic principles of Marxism with China's specific realities, more suitable for China's national conditions, and contribute to China's economic development. Theoretical guidance is indispensable in the development. It is like the sails of the ship, pointing out the direction of progress for us when we are confused, so that we have more goals and keep moving forward towards the goal.

## **6. The Relationship between the System in Which the People are Masters of the Country and the Socialist Market Economy**

The system of institutions in which the people are masters of the country upholds the correct leadership of the Communist Party of China and guarantees the people's principal position. From the "Three Principles of the People" to the establishment of an institutional system in which the people are the masters of the country, this is the result of constant exploration of the Chinese nation, and it is also a very correct result. For the socialist market economy system, the reform of China's economic system and the development of the socialist market economy system is a process of continuous improvement. In this process, we trial and error, we practice, and finally out of a best fit for our path. It is the system that people are masters of their own country that provides the basic guarantee for the formation of socialist market economic system, and also provides excellent environment for the formation of socialist market economic system. We will stick to this path, overcome difficulties when we encounter them, correct mistakes when we put aside them, and cater to the trend of The Times so that China's economy will become stronger and stronger and China will stand tall in the world.

## **References**

- [1] Textbook Research Center of Chinese Language Publishing House. Chinese. Grade Eight. Below. Beijing: Chinese and Language Press, 2003.1 (Reprinted in December 2013).
- [2] Liang Qichao. Teng Hao, Liang Qichao, Contemporary World Publishing House, 2016.02.
- [3] By Liang Qichao. The Coup of 1898.
- [4] Wang Jianing. Communique of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee [N]. Xinhua News Agency, 2019-10-31.