

## Party Building in the New Era

### -- An Inheritance of Mao Zedong's Thought on Party Building

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#### Abstract

**The living soul of Mao Zedong Thought is the standpoint, viewpoint and method with the characteristics of Chinese Communists. The Thought of Party Building in the new era inherits the living soul of Mao Zedong Thought. Under the new historical conditions, we should constantly promote the strict governance of the Party and strengthen the leadership of the Party, so as to continuously maintain the deep ties with people and remain invincible in the face of the challenges of the times.**

#### Keywords

**New era, Mao Zedong Thought, Party building.**

#### 1. Introduction

Mao Zedong Thought is a scientific guiding ideology drawn by the Chinese Communists, represented by Comrade Mao Zedong, in the historical practice combining the basic principles of the Marxism-Leninism with China's national conditions. During the period of socialism construction, the second-generation collective leadership of the Party Central Committee with Deng Xiaoping at its core has made a scientific and creative summary of the living soul of Mao Zedong Thought, which provides guidelines for the whole Party and the masses of all ethnic groups in the country to understand and apply Mao Zedong Thought correctly.

Since the 19th National Congress of the CPC, the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new stage. As General Secretary Xi Jinping has pointed out, "We are now at a time when ships are facing high winds in the middle of a river and masses are facing a steeper road halfway up a mountain. It is a time when progress becomes more difficult and more dangerous, but if we do not advance, we will fall behind." [1]. The more difficulties and challenges we face, the more attention shall be paid to strengthening Party building in the practice of socialism construction, the less acceptable it is for the Party building in the new era to be separated from Mao Zedong Thought and its living soul.

#### 2. The Living Soul of Mao Zedong Thought Embodies the Standpoint, Viewpoint and Method of the Chinese Communist Party

Mao Zedong Thought is the outcome combining the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and the concrete reality of the Chinese revolution, and the crystallization of the collective wisdom of the Chinese Communists. "The living soul of Mao Zedong Thought is the standpoints, viewpoints and methods that run through it. There are three basic aspects, namely Seeking Truth from Facts, Mass Line and Independence." Xi said. [2] This conclusion provides a guide for understanding theory.

The living soul of Mao Zedong Thought is a scientific summary of Mao Zedong Thought by the second-generation collective leadership of the Party Central Committee with Deng Xiaoping at

its core, which is a high generalization of the spiritual connotation and methodology of Mao Zedong Thought. Ever since Mao Zedong Thought was selected as the Party's guiding ideology, this ideological achievement has, as a beacon for the Party and the masses, has constantly guided China's revolution and construction towards progress. However, the dogmatic understanding and distortion of Mao Zedong Thought in practice has also caused great losses to the Chinese socialism. Based on such a historical lesson, Deng Xiaoping put forward the task of "guiding the whole party, the whole army and the masses of the whole country with accurate and complete Mao Zedong Thought" in April 1977, highlighting that "we should not understand Mao Zedong Thought with individual words and sentences", but "get a correct understanding from the perspective of the whole system of Mao Zedong Thought". [3] Guided by this methodological principle, Deng Xiaoping repeatedly stressed that it is necessary to carry forward the fine style of Seeking Truth from Facts and Mass line that Mao Zedong had always advocated, emphasizing taking Seeking Truth from Facts as the "essence of Mao Zedong Thought"[4], and promoted it to the theoretical height of "the fundamental attitude, the fundamental viewpoint, the fundamental method of Mao Zedong Thought" and "the generalization of the Marxism-Leninism thought, philosophy, theory and method" [5]. Later, in the process of drafting and discussing the Party's resolutions on several historical issues since the founding of the People's Republic of China, Hu Qiaomu put forward the proposal that "independence" should also be regarded as a fundamental aspect of the living soul of Mao Zedong Thought, which was approved by Deng Xiaoping and other comrades of the Central Committee. In this way, after being studied and advocated by old revolutionaries such as Deng Xiaoping, in June 1981, the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh CPC Central Committee adopted the *Resolution on Several Historical Issues of the Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China*, which dealt specifically with the spiritual core of Mao Zedong Thought, namely, "the living soul of Mao Zedong Thought", it points out that Seeking Truth from Facts, Mass Line and Independence are the positions, views and methods with the characteristics of the Chinese communists that run through all the components of Mao Zedong Thought.

As the innovation and development of Mao Zedong Thought by the second-generation collective leadership of the Party Central Committee with Deng Xiaoping at its core in the new historical period of reform and opening-up, the theoretical summary of the living soul of Mao Zedong Thought not only inherits the ideological principle of Marxism, but also reflects the essence and characteristics of Mao Zedong Thought scientifically and correctly, at the same time, it is a creative contribution to the development of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, which is in line with the Marxist view of the development of the theory itself. As early as 1886, Engels has pointed out that Marxism "is not a dogma, but a guide to action" [6]; on this basis, Lenin also pointed out that Marxism is not a dead dogma or an unchanging theory, but a flexible guide to activities, without which "Marxism would become a kind of one-sided, deformed and rigid thing, and the living soul of Marxism will be stripped away"[7]. To this end, Mao Zedong stressed, we "should learn not only the general laws drawn by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, who have studied extensive real life and revolutionary experience, but also their standpoints and methods of observing and solving problems" [8]. Thus, judging whether they are merely learning from the conclusions drawn by Marx and Lenin by studying life and experience, or whether they are learning from their standpoints and methods of observing and solving problems, is the criterion for distinguishing dogma from true Marxism. Under the historical conditions at that time, the Chinese Marxists should "seek standpoints, viewpoints and methods from it in order to solve the theoretical and strategic problems of the Chinese Revolution" [9]. Therefore, it is the essential pursuit of Marxists to discuss the "living soul" of Marxism and truly master the standpoints, viewpoints and methods of Marxism.

On the basis of summing up the historical experience, the second-generation collective leadership of the Party Central Committee with Deng Xiaoping at its core summed up the soul

of Mao Zedong Thought as Seeking Truth from Facts, Mass Line and Independence for the first time in the process of reexamining and reconstructing Mao Zedong Thought, which provided the Chinese Communists with a systematic and clear scientific definition of Marxist's standpoints, viewpoints and methods, and laid a solid and reliable theoretical foundation for regarding Mao Zedong Thought as our Party's valuable spiritual wealth and long-term guide for our actions. Seeking Truth from Facts is the fundamental viewpoint of Marxism, the fundamental requirement for the Chinese communists to understand and reform the world, and the basic methods of thinking, working and leadership of our Party. Mass Line essentially embodies the basic Marxist principle that the masses are the creators of history. Masses are the main force of historical development and social progress. Independence is an inevitable way for our Party to carry out revolution, construction and reform based on China's reality and relying on the strength of the Party and the masses. The living soul of Mao Zedong Thought is the standpoint, viewpoint and method that the Party must follow to advance the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

### **3. Upholding the Living Soul of Mao Zedong Thought Requires Party Building to Maintain the Deep Ties with People**

In Party Building, upholding to the three aspects of the living soul of Mao Zedong Thought fundamentally requires the Party to always adhere to the Mass Line and maintain its deep ties with people.

Close contact with the masses is the greatest political advantage of our Party. Back in 2013, the general secretary proposed that "no matter in the past, the present or the future, we should stick to the principle of doing everything for the masses, relying on the masses, coming from the masses and integrating ourselves into the masses, turning the Party's correct views into the masses' conscious actions and carrying out the Mass Line in all our activities of governing the country." The Party's Mass Line not only possesses the theoretical basis for the building of a Marxist party, but also a summary of the Marxist political parties' struggle practice. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx pointed out that the Communists "have no interests different from the interests of the whole proletariat" and that the Communist Party always represents the struggle for the liberation of the proletariat. In the practice of Party Building in Russia under the leadership of Lenin, the Communist Party was never a small circle of revolutionaries, but a revolutionary organization composed of revolutionaries at its core and a large number of well-disciplined and well-organized party members who are in contact with the laboring masses in all walks of life through a large number of party members and mass organizations. In the practice of the Chinese revolution, the Chinese Communists, who have also noticed the importance of adhering to the Mass Line, pointed out in the resolution of the enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist Party of China held in October 1925 that "the fate of the Chinese revolutionary movement depends on whether the Communist Party of China can organize and guide the masses or not." With the development of the Chinese revolution, Mao Zedong also put forward the task of "building a nationwide, mass-oriented, ideologically, politically and organizationally consolidated Bolshevik Communist Party of China" in Party Building, and regarded the ability to get the closest contact with the broadest masses of the people as a significant sign that distinguishes Communists from other political parties. All these practices and conclusions reflect the extreme importance of the Mass Line in the practice of Party Building.

Practicing the Mass Line in depth means adhering to the principle of Seeking Truth from Facts. The Party is required to keep close contact with the masses. "That is to say, we should gather the opinions of the masses, publicize and explain them to the masses, turn them into opinions of the masses, urge the masses to adhere to these opinions and put them into action, and test

their correctness in mass action. Then repeat the steps.” [10] Seeking Truth from Facts is the fundamental viewpoint of Marxism, which requires Marxist political parties to grasp the connections between tasks that change with each new historical shift in accordance with the specific practical tasks of the time, and act according to the laws of dialectical motion between and among these connections. “‘facts’ are all things that exist objectively, ‘truth’ is the internal relations of objective things, that is, regularity, and ‘seeking’ is the research we do.” Mao Zedong likened Seeking Truth from Facts to “shooting the arrow at the target”, and the primary factor that played an active role in the practice of China’s revolution, construction and reform is the people practice it, that is, the broad masses of the people. Therefore, to promote the Party Building with an attitude of Seeking Truth from Facts, it is necessary to investigate and study the people in practice and the social and economic conditions that they have created in China, listen to, absorb and earnestly solve the needs of the people’s opinions, and take the reaction and attitude of the people as the basic criterion to judge whether the Party Building is really effective or not. In short, the important criterion for judging whether the Party has adhered to the principles of Seeking Truth from Facts in the course of promoting Party Building is whether the Party has adhered to the deep ties with the people.

In the process of Party Building, to insist on Independence requires adherence to the Mass Line. To insist on Independence means to insist that the Chinese people shall make their own decisions and handle their own affairs. As the leading core of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the Party represents the interests of the people. Only with a thorough master of the situation of the masses and know what they think and expect, can we promote the Party Building in the right direction. The principle of adhering to independence was first drawn from the experience and lessons of the Party’s exchanges with the Comintern. In the early days of the Party, the bitter experience and lesson learned by blindly following the Comintern and believing in the “books” made the Party realize that China’s problems still needed to be solved by Chinese comrades through understanding China’s national conditions and coming up with a revolutionary road with Chinese characteristics, on the basis of seeking truth from facts, Mass line and independence. In the 1990s, under the historical background of the drastic changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the theory of the End of History became very popular. Until now, some of these ideas still have a large market, causing a certain degree of ideological confusion in the country. In the face of the changing times, only by adhering to the principle of Independence and the Party’s overall control and leadership can the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics be firmly promoted; while to insisting on Independence cannot be separated from the practice of Seeking Truth from Facts and Mass Line. In the course of the great project of Party Building, if we leave the masses and cut off the deep ties with the masses, we will lose the basis and material sources of work, and our work will be aimless, superficial and formalistic, and we will lose the fundamental support of Independence. Therefore, the most important thing to promote Party Building is to have an in-depth understanding of the needs of the people. Only by strengthening the deep ties with the people can we be firm about where we are going, neither be bound by rigid ideas nor be misled by foreign evil ways, and follow the Chinese road independently.

In the construction work of Party, Mass Line, Seeking Truth from Facts and Independence always keep closely correlated with maintaining the deep ties with people. People are the supreme arbiter and final judge of our Party’s work. Maintaining the deep ties with people requires the construction work of Party to follow Mass Line and avoid being divorced from the masses. Mao Zedong used the metaphor of seed and land to illustrate the relationship between the Party and the masses. He said that our Party members are similar to seed while people are similar to land. Wherever we reach we need to collaborate with the people there and make achievements among people. The construction of Party is ultimately for the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of people so adhering to Mass Line and avoid being

divorced from the masses are the innate connotation of the construction work of Party. Deng Xiaoping pointed out that Mass Line and Seeking Truth from Facts are the most fundamental ideas among the styles advocated by Mao Zedong. As the Marxist ruling party in China, Independence and Taking the Own Road of China are based on the actual situations of China while adhering to Seeking Truth from Facts and doing everything with a purpose are based on the actual maintenance and development of fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of people. In order to stick to the original intention and keep advancing, it is required to firmly believe that the foundation of Party roots in people and the power of Party lies in people, insist that everything is for and depends on people, give full play to enthusiasm, initiative and creativity of the overwhelming majority of people, and keep promoting the causes benefiting people.[11]

#### **4. Great Construction Project of Party in the New Era Keeps the Deep Ties between Party and People**

Adhering to Mass Line and keeping the deep ties between Party and people are the fundamental inheritance of Great Construction Project of Party in the New Era to the lively soul of Mao Zedong Thought. The inheritance and development of construction of Party to Mao Zedong Party Construction Thought are indeed the process of continuously consolidating the deep ties between Party and people in the construction practice of Party. Since the Eighteenth National Congress of Party, the central committee of Party puts the lively soul of Mao Zedong Thought in the Great Construction Project of Party into practice keeps consolidating the close relationship between Party and people through actual action.

Keeping promoting the Great Construction Project of Party and maintaining the deep ties with people are the most direct work as well as the fundamental projects. Since Reform and Opening Up, the impact of introduced thoughts and capital market has proposed a great number of unprecedented problems and challenges to the construction work of Party. The impure ideology with vacillating position of Marxism in Party, the impure organization like circle and faction division, the impure working styles like formalism and bureaucracy in work and hedonism and extravagance in life are becoming gradually prominent, damaging the deep ties between Party and people and directly endangering Party's advanced nature and purity as the core of socialist cause. Though they are just the problems of partial Party members and organizations, they deprive the people's trust in Party to certain extents and cause severe losses to Party's and national causes and people's interests. On the other hand, these problems not only damage the correlation between Party and people, but also erode and corrupt the functions of Party organization itself, which further deteriorates the ideological, organizational and style problems in the construction of Party.

Faced with a series of practical problems in urgent need of solutions in the construction of Party, Xi Jinping stressed that the construction of Party means to "collaborate with every Party members, stick to strict Party self-governance, practically solve the inherent problems, practically improve the working styles, closely correlate with the masses, and make Party the powerful leading core of socialism with Chinese characteristics." [12] For this purpose, the overall requirements and key tasks of the construction of Party in the new era were proposed on the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of Party to claim the leadership of political construction, collaboration of ideological construction of Party and institutional governance of Party, and overall promotion of all the construction of Party. It is defined that, to enhance the construction of Party in the new era, it is required to give priority to the political construction of Party, equip Party with socialism thoughts with Chinese characteristics in the new era, build professional cadre teams with high quality, enhance the grassroots organizational construction, persistently rectify the styles and disciplines, overwhelmingly win the campaign against corruption, perfect

Party and national supervision systems, comprehensive strengthen the eight key tasks like political governing ability. The eight key tasks require to devote to the Great Construction Project of Party from five aspects, namely political construction, ideological construction, organizational construction, ability construction and style construction, stick to and enhance the leadership of the central committee of Party, always maintain the deep ties with people, unite and lead people to carry out great campaigns, promote great causes and realize great dreams.

Firstly, construction of Party should stick to political construction as the leadership. Political construction is the fundamental construction of Party. In order to enhance the political construction of Party, firstly, it is required to firmly carry out the political routines of Party, strictly abide by political disciplines and rules. Secondly, it is required to carry out the serious political life inside Party and create the political ecology of integrity and upright inside Party. Thirdly, it is required to seriously execute the democratic centralism. The democratic centralism is the fundamental organization system and leading system of Party. Fourthly, it is required to firmly resist the individualism, decentralization, liberalism and faction culture inside Party. Fifthly, it is required to consciously strengthen the training of Party consciousness. Generally speaking, the starting point and foothold of enhancing political construction lie in maintaining the authority of the central committee of Party, and consciously obeying the centralized and unified leadership of the central committee of Party with Xi Jinping as the core, which is a fundamental requirement to construct an advanced Marxist ruling party. In order to correctly function and lead the masses, Party must be organized according to the principles of centralism with unified Party constitution and disciplines and strict political rules and disciplines. The serious political life and upright political ecology inside Party are the political guarantees for a political party to be a Marxist political party. Only such a political party can be able to move, educate and lead the masses with its Communist ideals and beliefs and maintain the deep ties with people.

Secondly, it is required to give full play to the leading role of ideological construction in the construction process of Party. The ideological construction is the fundamental construction of Party on account of the guiding role of ideology in action. As pointed out by Xi Jinping the secretary general, always attaching importance to ideological construction of Party and theoretical strengthening of Party are the important reasons for Party to achieve new brilliance through ups and downs. The ideological construction of Party in the new era requires to consolidate the ideals and beliefs of Party members, stabilize the belief of Party members in the lofty ideal of communism and the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics and solve the general issue, namely the outlook on world, life and values of communists. As the latest achievement of sinicization of Marxism, it is the guiding idea that the whole Party must adhere to for a long term and Xi Jinping's socialist thoughts with Chinese characteristics in the new era are the spiritual supports for communists in the new era. The primary task for working well on ideological construction is to consciously arm ourselves, guide practice and promote work with Xi Jinping's socialist thoughts with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Through promoting the normalization and institutionalization of learning Party constitution and rules, learning serial lectures and serving as qualified Party members, the training themed on "sticking to the original intention and keeping the missions in mind" is carried out among Party leaders and cadres. The Party members are organized through various forms to deeply learn and understand the era background, historical position, scientific system, spiritual essence and practical requirements of Xi Jinping's socialist thoughts with Chinese characteristics in the new era, consciously behave as the loyal practitioners of Xi Jinping's socialist thoughts with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Only by this way can we guarantee that the whole Party will always hold the same ideological standpoint like people and maintain the deep ties with people.

Thirdly, it is required to implement political and ideological construction and reflect them in organizational and institutional construction. In each historical period, Party needs to depend on powerful Party organization to realize its political tasks while Party organization always needs reasonable institutional guarantee to give full play to its own functions. It is required to enhance the grassroots organizational construction and perfect the Party's and national supervisions systems provide maintaining the deep ties between Party and people and always remaining in the side of people with organizational and institutional guarantee from grassroots and supervision perspectives. On one hand, Party's grassroots organization is the foundation of all the Party's work and competence. The comprehensively strict governance of Party not only requires the overall atmosphere of Party but also needs the specific atmosphere of grassroots Party organizations. Party's grassroots organizations are the blood capillaries of Party as the main body as well as the most direct parts contacting with people. Party members in grassroots organizations often closely contact the masses in life and work so the image of Party among the masses greatly depends on the construction of Party's grassroots organizations. On the other hand, the realization of efficient self-supervision is the important guarantee for a political party to always maintain the advance nature and purity. Efficient supervision can ensure the unity of Party in will, action and pace so that the deployment of the central committee of Party can be better implemented. It is pointed out in the report of the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of Party that, in terms of the construction of supervision system, it is firstly required to expand the supervision channels. It is required to enhance the supervision by people and allow the overwhelming majority of the masses to participate in the supervision of Party based on enhancement of organizational supervision, democratic supervision, mutual supervision and daily management supervision inside Party so as to make the powers authorized by people operate transparently. It is also required to deepen the political patrol, and construct the supervision network combing the superiors and subordinates so as to make the supervision inside Party precise and strict. Secondly, it is required to deepen the reform of national supervision system and realize the full supervision coverage on all the public servants exercising government powers. It is required to legislate the national supervision laws, legally authorize the supervisory committee with duty authority and investigation measures, realize the internal and national supervision, Party's discipline check and national supervision, organic unity of Party governing based on rules and country governing based on laws led by Party. The construction of grassroots organizations and grassroots system provides guarantee for strict correction of ideological, organizational and style problems inside Party and establishment of positive image of Party among the masses.

Fourthly, under the major background of the construction of Party, the Party members and cadres should keep learning and improving their own ability. It is required to build professional cadre teams with high quality, comprehensively enhance the political governing ability to guarantee that Party is always able to meet the interest demands of people and owns the ability to lead the country and nation to keep making progress. Xi Jinping the secretary general pointed out that the key to carry out a great campaign with many new historical features is Party and people. The key is people means that it is required to build a large cadre team with high quality. Therefore, firstly, it is required to stick to the cadre standards during the construction process of Party. It is required to adhere to the principle of morality first in inspecting cadres and select the cadres who sincerely believe in Marxism and unswervingly strive for socialism with Chinese characteristics. Secondly, it is required to highlight the political standards. Thirdly, it is required to cultivate the professional spirits and ability of cadres. Fourthly, it is required to make efforts to discover and get young cadres prepared so as to continuously deliver young members to Party's cadre team. Fifthly, it is required to perfect the cadre assessment, incentive and fault tolerance systems. Sixthly, it is required to gather the talent resources and adhere to talent management by Party so as to gather more talents into Party's causes. While improving the

cultivation of cadre talents, Party also needs to comprehensively enhance the construction of each ability, keep improving the political governing ability and level, keep enhancing the learning ability, political leading ability and reform innovation ability, improve the scientific development ability, mass working ability and implementation promotion and risk control ability, and grasp the initiative of work. Maintaining the deep ties with the masses not only requires political beliefs and ideal beliefs, but also requires the support of practical ability. On one hand, Party needs to keep cultivating the talents for causes. On the other hand, Party needs to enhance the ability construction as the ruling party. Only by this way can Party maintain its core leading position and continuously enhance self-construction and national construction.

Fifthly, it is required to keep promoting the style construction with ceaseless persistence. The style construction is the permanent theme of the construction of Party while persistently correcting styles and disciplines and keeping promoting the anti-corruption campaign to get the overwhelming success are the most direct approaches for Party to maintain the deep ties with people. Xi Jinping the secretary general pointed out that styles reflect images and quality while Party spirits are manifested and play the decisive role. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of Party, the central committee of Party adopts the style construction as the focus for comprehensive promotion of the Great Construction Project of Party, begins with formulating and implementing the central committee's Eight Rules, successively carries out the education and practice activities on Party's Mass Line and the education themed on "strict self-cultivation, strict power use, strict self-discipline, practical cause seeking, practical entrepreneurship and practical self-behaving", enhances the construction of Party styles and incorrupt politics and corrupt punishment, and promotes the obvious improvement of Party styles, civil styles and social styles. Under the background of new era, the report of the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of Party has proposed that it is still required to continuously promote Party's style construction with the spirits of seizing the routines, details and long term, further consolidate and expand the spiritual achievements of the central committee's Eight Rules, continue to keep the crackdown of rectifying Four Styles. Meanwhile, by relating with this, since the 18<sup>th</sup> National Congress of Party, as for the corruption problems inside Party, the central committee of Party begins with superficial governance, sticks to no forbidden zone, full coverage and zero tolerance, combats the corruption with stern posture, enhances the patrol work, legally punishes the corrupt members, adheres to the dual governance of root and surface, perfects the institutional system and seizes the style construction, and forms the overwhelming posture of anti-corruption campaigns. It is pointed out in the report of the 19<sup>th</sup> National Congress of Party that, in order to promote the anti-corruption national legislation, it is required to build the reporting platforms that fully cover the discipline inspection and supervision systems, further improve the systematicness and integrity of anti-corruption laws, demonstrate Party's anti-corruption determination, further strengthen the threatening that no one dares to be corrupt, consolidate the rules to forbidden corruption and enhance the consciousness of not wanting to corrupt.

It can be seen that the ideas of the construction of Party in the new era are the inheritance and development of lively soul of Mao Zedong Thought. In the new historical era, the construction of Party adheres to the deep ties between Party and people and deeply root the political ruling foundation through close correlation with the masses so as to remain invincible faced with challenges of the era.

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