

The theoretical foundation of Xi Jinping's important exposition on rural revitalization

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Abstract: Xi Jinping's important exposition on rural revitalization serves as a guide for addressing the challenges related to agriculture, rural areas, and farmers (the "Three Rural Issues") and promoting agricultural and rural modernization in the new era. Its formation is rooted in profound theoretical foundations. This exposition is deeply embedded in the traditional Chinese philosophy of valuing and benefiting agriculture, endowing it with new connotations in the new era through creative transformation and innovative development. It inherits the core essence of the "Three Rural Issues" thought from classical Marxist writers, achieving a new theoretical leap in light of contemporary China's reality. Furthermore, it continues the fine tradition of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in valuing work related to the "Three Rural Issues," realizing a sublimation based on the inheritance of the "Three Rural Issues" theories from successive generations of leadership collectives. The organic integration of these three elements constitutes the theoretical foundation of Xi Jinping's important exposition on rural revitalization, highlighting the unity of theoretical inheritance and practical innovation, and providing fundamental guidance for comprehensive rural revitalization.

Keyword: Xi Jinping; rural revitalization Important exposition; theoretical foundation

At a time when the CPC Central Committee had made strategic plans for socialist modernization, set clear phased development goals, achieved historic accomplishments in poverty alleviation, and entered a crucial stage of consolidation and expansion, Xi Jinping formally proposed the rural revitalization strategy at the 19th CPC National Congress. Whether rural areas can achieve comprehensive revitalization and effective development is directly related to whether the achievements of poverty alleviation can be sustained and consolidated, whether the national food security line can be firmly maintained, and more importantly, whether the goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the Chinese path to modernization can be successfully achieved. Based on this strategic consideration, Xi Jinping has always attached great importance to rural revitalization work. On multiple important occasions, he has systematically expounded and provided scientific guidance on the top-level design, practical paths, and key tasks of rural revitalization, gradually forming a series of important discussions

with lofty intentions, rich connotations, and rigorous logic. These discussions provide fundamental principles and action guidelines for addressing the "three rural issues" and accelerating the modernization of agriculture and rural areas in the new stage of development.

The formulation of Xi Jinping's important exposition on rural revitalization is not simply a summary of practical experience, but is rooted in profound theoretical foundations and a clear ideological trajectory, with a solid, systematic, and reliable theoretical basis. From the perspective of ideological origins, this important exposition is deeply rooted in the excellent traditional Chinese ideology of valuing and benefiting agriculture, realizing the creative transformation and innovative development of the wisdom of traditional agricultural civilization. This important exposition is the theoretical crystallization of the integration of Marxist classical writers' "Three Rural Issues" thought with the specific practice of "Three Rural Issues" in China in the new era, promoting a new leap in the realization of Marxist "Three Rural Issues" thought in contemporary China. At the same time, this important exposition continues and inherits the fine tradition and theoretical accumulation of the CPC's emphasis on and development of "Three Rural Issues" over the past century, enriching and sublimating the "Three Rural Issues" thought of successive generations of the Party's leadership collectives. The triple theoretical foundations resonate in unison, jointly building the complete ideological foundation of Xi Jinping's important exposition on rural revitalization.

I. Creative transformation and innovative development of the Chinese traditional ideology of valuing and benefiting agriculture

China boasts a vast territory and excellent natural endowments. The basins of the Yellow River, Huaihe River, Yangtze River, and the Pearl River are characterized by vast plains, fertile soil, and abundant water resources. Coupled with the climate of simultaneous rain and heat, these provide superior natural conditions for agricultural production. This has enabled China to form a stable agricultural civilization earlier, gradually establishing a development approach centered on agriculture and based on the country's agricultural foundation. Based on this, a philosophy of emphasizing and benefiting agriculture with profound connotations and a complete system has been nurtured for thousands of years. Within this ideological system, emphasizing agriculture and benefiting agriculture are interdependent and intrinsically unified: the concept of emphasizing agriculture emphasizes that the state should place agriculture in a fundamental position for national stability and security, valuing and safeguarding agricultural production through ceremonial rituals and policy measures such as labor allocation, incentives for land reclamation, promotion of agricultural tools, and construction of farmland; the concept of benefiting agriculture emphasizes putting people first and enriching the people, advocating light taxation, not delaying agricultural seasons, practicing strict frugality, constructing water conservancy projects, building granaries for emergency use, and balancing grain prices, thereby improving farmers' production conditions, reducing their burdens, and safeguarding their vital interests, making the policy system conform to the laws of agricultural development and fit the actual production and life of farmers.

Based on the overall national development in the new era and the practical needs of rural construction, Xi Jinping systematically refined, creatively transformed, and innovatively developed the traditional Chinese ideology of valuing and benefiting agriculture. He extracted its value essence and endowed it with new

connotations of the times, enabling the deep integration of traditional agricultural civilization wisdom with contemporary "agriculture, rural areas, and farmers" practices. Mozi proposed: "All grains are what the people rely on and what the ruler relies on for sustenance. Therefore, without the people's reliance, the ruler cannot provide for them; without food, the people cannot work. Hence, food cannot be neglected, and the land cannot be neglected." This profoundly reveals the fundamental connection between food production, national governance, and social stability. Inheriting this important concept, Xi Jinping, taking into account China's national condition of a super-large population and the new situation of food security, clearly pointed out that "solving the problem of feeding over a billion people" is the top priority in governing the country. He emphasized that "the Chinese people's rice bowls must be firmly in their own hands," and further proposed that the key to ensuring food security lies in enhancing the comprehensive production capacity of food, ensuring that it can be produced, supplied, and optimized at critical moments^①. Elevate the traditional emphasis on agriculture and benefiting farmers to a new height within the national security strategy. When elucidating the relationship between people's livelihood and social stability, Mencius stated, "In terms of the way people conduct themselves, those with permanent property have a constant heart, while those without permanent property lack a constant heart. Without a constant heart, they become unrestrained, perverse, and deviant." This profoundly illustrates the fundamental role of land, as a "permanent property," in farmers' livelihoods and social stability. Absorbing this ideological essence, Xi Jinping, in conjunction with the reform practice of the rural land system in the new era, emphasized that one of the important reasons for the overall stability of Chinese society is that farmers have land and houses in their hometowns, which provides them with a solid foundation and a sense of reassurance^②. He has repeatedly emphasized the need to maintain the stability and long-term unchangeability of land contracting relationships, aligning with the practical expectations of the majority of farmers to retain their land contracting rights and transfer their management rights, thus providing farmers with a long-term and stable "reassurance"^③. It not only inherits the core of traditional agricultural-emphasizing and farmer-benefiting thoughts, which values land and stabilizes farmers, but also achieves innovative development with a modern land system. "Lü Shi Chun Qiu" proposes: "The husband is the one who cultivates, the land is the one that grows, and the sky is the one that nurtures", and warns against "draining the pond to catch all the fish, which may yield a harvest this year, but there will be no fish next year", emphasizing that people are the main force in agricultural production, and land, climate, and ecological environment jointly constitute important conditions for sustainable agricultural development. It advocates following natural laws and coordinating human efforts with ecological protection. Inheriting this agricultural

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^① Xi Jinping: "On the Work of 'Agriculture, Rural Areas, and Farmers'", Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2022, pp. 247-248.

^② Xi Jinping: "On the Work of 'Agriculture, Rural Areas, and Farmers'", Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2022, p. 4.

^③ Xi Jinping: "On the Work Related to Agriculture, Rural Areas, and Farmers", Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2022, p. 245.

ecological wisdom, Xi Jinping clearly proposes that the key to promoting comprehensive rural revitalization lies in people^①, We should prioritize the development of human capital, strengthen support for rural talents, cultivate new agricultural business entities, and enable those who devote themselves to the countryside and hometown construction to develop with peace of mind and achieve something. At the same time, he emphasized the need to solidly promote rural ecological revitalization, adhere to the direction of green development, and focus on addressing prominent environmental issues in rural areas^②, We must strictly adhere to objective laws, promote the coordinated advancement of agricultural production and ecological protection, and infuse the traditional emphasis on agriculture and benefiting farmers with a distinct ecological civilization connotation.

It can be said that the excellent traditional Chinese ideology emphasizing agriculture and benefiting farmers provides profound cultural soil and spiritual nourishment for Xi Jinping's important exposition on rural revitalization, serving as its indispensable historical and cultural foundation. Xi Jinping transformed and developed this ideology from a Marxist perspective, preserving the essence of Chinese agricultural civilization while endowing it with theoretical forms and practical directions that meet the requirements of the new era, thus achieving an organic connection between traditional agricultural wisdom and modern rural governance.

II. The Continuous Development of the "Three Rural Issues" Thought of Marxist Classical Writers in the New Era

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The "Three Rural Issues" in the modern sense have gradually emerged during the historical process of industrialization initiation and accelerated urbanization. Their essence lies in the structural contradictions faced by agriculture, rural areas, and farmers during the industrialization and urbanization process, such as the outflow of resource elements, relative lag in development, and a tendency towards marginalization. When examining the modernization process of major European and American countries, Marxist classical writers profoundly discovered that the Industrial Revolution profoundly reshaped urban-rural relations and worker-farmer relations. The rapid expansion of industry, commerce, and cities led to their dominant position over agriculture and rural areas, placing rural areas and agriculture in a subordinate position. Consequently, phenomena such as income disparities between urban and rural residents, industry-to-industry earnings gaps, development opportunity disparities, and disparities in levels of civilization emerged^③. These long-standing development gaps have led to prominent issues such as urban-rural imbalances, weakened agriculture, and disadvantaged farmers in major European and American countries during their modernization processes, which have become inherent contradictions that are difficult to avoid in capitalist modernization.

Meanwhile, classical Marxist writers also pointed out that the gap between urban and rural areas, as well as

^① Xi Jinping: "On the Work Related to Agriculture, Rural Areas, and Farmers", Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2022, p. 220.

^② Xi Jinping: "On the Work of 'Agriculture, Rural Areas, and Farmers'", Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2022, p. 269.

^③ Liu Hancheng, Xia Yahua: Theory and Practice of Rural Revitalization Strategy, Beijing: China Economic Publishing House, 2019, p. 47.

between workers and farmers, is not immutable, but can be gradually alleviated and even reversed through the development of productive forces and institutional adjustments. They believed that as industry extends to rural areas and endogenous rural industries grow, new types of workers who are both industrial and agricultural will emerge, driving the development of the rural economy and increasing farmers' income. Urbanization, while absorbing rural population and promoting land concentration, also creates conditions for large-scale and intensive agricultural operations. After urban industries mature, factors such as capital and technology will flow back to rural areas, forming a pattern where industry promotes agriculture and cities drive rural development. The improvement of farmers' organizational level and cultural quality will significantly enhance rural development capacity and living standards. Through policies such as improving infrastructure, providing public services, and reducing farmers' burdens, the state can also effectively narrow the urban-rural gap and alleviate the "three rural" contradictions. These important ideas provide an important theoretical source for the subsequent promotion of coordinated urban-rural development by the state.

Currently, after completing three industrial revolutions, human society is ushering in a new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation, and people's production and lifestyle are undergoing unprecedented profound changes. As an active participant, important promoter, and leader in the new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation, China has made a series of significant progress and landmark achievements. However, it must also be clearly recognized that in the overall development of our country, the "Three Rural Issues" (agriculture, rural areas, and farmers) remain a prominent shortcoming and weak link in the modernization drive. Promoting the priority development of agriculture and rural areas and achieving comprehensive rural revitalization remain major tasks that must be grasped and done well in the new era. Based on the overall strategy of national rejuvenation, Xi Jinping deeply grasps the fundamental, strategic, and overall significance of the "Three Rural Issues". Based on the reality of rural development in China and on the basis of adhering to the "Three Rural Issues" thoughts of Marxist classical writers, he combines the new practices and new requirements of "Three Rural Issues" work in the new era, and makes original and contemporary enrichment and development of Marxist "Three Rural Issues" thoughts, forming a solution to the "Three Rural Issues" with Chinese characteristics, Chinese style, and Chinese style.

Xi Jinping clearly stated that the rural revitalization strategy is a Chinese solution proposed by China to address rural development issues and promote coordinated urban-rural modernization. This solution is guided by the overall requirements of "prosperous industries, livable ecology, civilized rural customs, effective governance, and affluent lives", with the goal of achieving strong agriculture, beautiful rural areas, and prosperous farmers. It systematically promotes comprehensive rural revitalization through seven paths: First, adhere to integrated urban-rural development, promote the orderly entry of urban talents, technology, capital, and other factors into rural areas, support industrial and commercial capital to enter rural areas in accordance with laws and regulations, improve rural infrastructure, and build an integrated urban-rural education, healthcare, social security, and public service system, breaking the urban-rural dual structure from institutional mechanisms; second, adhere to common prosperity, stabilize the basic rural management system, develop various forms of moderate-scale operations, cultivate diversified new agricultural business entities, develop and strengthen the new rural collective economy,

and allow farmers to share more of the benefits from industrial value-added; third, adhere to quality and green agriculture, maintain the bottom line of food security and agricultural product quality safety, deepen structural reforms on the supply side of agriculture, cultivate characteristic and advantageous industries, develop new rural industries and business forms, and promote the integrated development of the primary, secondary, and tertiary industries in rural areas; fourth, adhere to green rural development, build an ecology-oriented policy support system and a green and low-carbon agricultural industry system, strengthen agricultural non-point source pollution control and rural human settlement environment improvement, and take the path of sustainable development; fifth, adhere to rural cultural revitalization, strengthen education in ideals and beliefs and guidance by mainstream values, promote the national spirit and the spirit of the times, carry out mass cultural activities close to farmers' lives, protect, inherit, and activate local culture; sixth, adhere to the path of good governance in rural areas, improve the rural organizational system, perfect the modern rural governance mechanism combining autonomy, the rule of law, and the rule of virtue, strengthen grassroots party organizations and key teams, and innovate grassroots governance models; seventh, adhere to the Chinese path of poverty reduction, strengthen industrial employment assistance, enhance the self-development ability of the impoverished, stimulate endogenous motivation, and make up for the development shortcomings of impoverished areas. At the same time, improve the institutional mechanisms for the party's leadership in "agriculture, rural areas, and farmers", continue to deepen rural reforms, and provide a strong institutional guarantee for rural revitalization. This series of important discussions not only adheres to the theoretical foundation of Marxist "agriculture, rural areas, and farmers" thought, but also makes significant innovations based on China's specific reality, promoting the sinicization and modernization of Marxist "agriculture, rural areas, and farmers" theory to a new level.

III. Inheritance and Development of the "Three Rural Issues" Theory of the Communist Party of China (CPC)

During the democratic revolution, the unique national conditions of modern China dictated that the Communist Party of China (CPC) must embark on the correct path of encircling the cities from the countryside and seizing political power through armed force. It was imperative to penetrate the vast rural areas, rely on the vast majority of the population, namely the peasants, to carry out the agrarian revolution, develop agricultural production, establish revolutionary bases, and strengthen the people's armed forces, in order to ultimately achieve revolutionary victory. Therefore, the "Three Rural Issues" have been closely linked with the fate of the Party, the country, and the nation from the very beginning, becoming the fundamental reliance for the CPC to establish itself, develop, and grow. This has also forged the Party's excellent tradition and political advantage of always attaching great importance to the "Three Rural Issues" and comprehensively leading them.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the comprehensive leadership of the Party in "agriculture, rural areas, and farmers" (hereinafter referred to as "the Three Rural Issues") entered a new historical stage. Chinese Communists, represented by Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao, successively put forward a series of important ideas and policy propositions on the "Three Rural Issues" based on the goals of modernization in different periods and the actual development of the "Three Rural Issues". They

gradually formed a theoretical system of the Party's "Three Rural Issues" that is both consistent and advancing with the times, laying a solid theoretical and practical foundation for Xi Jinping's important exposition on rural revitalization in the new era. Its core content is mainly reflected in four aspects:

Firstly, the "Three Rural Issues" are of utmost importance. During the democratic revolution, Mao Zedong profoundly pointed out that farmers are the main source of revolutionary troops, an important force in democratic politics, the mainstay of the industrial market, and a crucial supplier of industrial raw materials, which cannot be ignored for a moment. After the founding of New China, he emphasized from the overall perspective of the national economy that agriculture is related to the national economy and people's livelihood, is the main source of capital accumulation and raw materials for light industry, and that rural areas constitute a vast domestic market. After the reform and opening up, Deng Xiaoping repeatedly emphasized that agriculture is fundamental, rural stability ensures the stability of the whole country, and prosperity of farmers leads to the prosperity of the country. The issue of food has always been a top priority. Jiang Zemin clearly stated that the "Three Rural Issues" are fundamental issues that concern the overall development of the party and the country's cause, and are both economic and political issues. Hu Jintao further emphasized that the work related to the "Three Rural Issues" is the top priority of the entire party's work, and agriculture is a strategic industry that stabilizes the country and reassures the people. The fundamental position of agriculture must be continuously consolidated.

Secondly, we must adhere to promoting agricultural and rural modernization through technological progress and scientific policies. Our party has always attached importance to relying on both technology and policies to drive agricultural development and rural revitalization. During the socialist revolution and construction period, Mao Zedong proposed to promote agricultural mechanization and rely on technology to develop agriculture, while Zhou Enlai incorporated agricultural modernization into the overall layout of the country's "four modernizations". After the reform and opening up, Deng Xiaoping clearly pointed out that agricultural development depends on policies first and technology second. Good policies can liberate productive forces, while technology can fundamentally change the face of agriculture. Jiang Zemin emphasized that the key to agricultural modernization lies in technological progress and application. Hu Jintao proposed that the development of modern agriculture must rely on policy drive, reform promotion, and technology promotion, while strengthening rural infrastructure construction and poverty alleviation and development to provide strong support for agricultural and rural modernization.

Thirdly, we must adhere to the overall coordination of urban-rural and worker-peasant relations, promoting industry to support agriculture and cities to lead rural areas. During the period of socialist construction, Mao Zedong emphasized the need to correctly handle urban-rural and worker-peasant relations, adhere to giving equal consideration to both urban and rural areas, and both industry and agriculture, and oppose the one-sided emphasis on cities and neglect of rural areas. After the reform and opening up, Deng Xiaoping proposed that industry should support agriculture and promote coordinated development between urban and rural areas. Jiang Zemin proposed to optimize rural resource allocation with a market-oriented approach, promote the coordinated development of the primary, secondary, and tertiary industries in rural areas, and improve the mechanism of industry subsidizing agriculture and industry leading agriculture. Hu Jintao clearly made the significant judgment that China has

entered a stage where industry promotes agriculture and cities lead rural areas, proposing the major principle of industry nurturing agriculture and cities supporting rural areas, and promoting a historic transformation in urban-rural relations.

Fourth, we must adhere to the people-centered approach, continuously increase farmers' income, and improve their living standards. Farmers have always been the largest group in our country's population and the main force in revolution, construction, and reform. The Communist Party of China (CPC) has always regarded safeguarding farmers' interests and enhancing their well-being as the starting point and end result of its work related to agriculture, rural areas, and farmers. During the democratic revolution, Mao Zedong enabled farmers to obtain land and reduce their burdens through the agrarian revolution. After the reform and opening up, Deng Xiaoping unleashed the vitality of farmers and broadened income-generating channels through the household contract responsibility system, township enterprises, and rural reforms. Jiang Zemin proposed protecting farmers' material interests and implementing development-oriented poverty alleviation. Hu Jintao completely abolished agricultural taxes, established new rural cooperative medical care systems, promoted the construction of a new socialist countryside, significantly reduced farmers' burdens, and improved their living standards.

Entering the new era, Xi Jinping, on the basis of fully inheriting the "Three Rural Issues" thoughts of successive generations of the Party's leadership collectives, combined them with the practical requirements of comprehensive rural revitalization in the new era, achieving an overall innovation and systematic sublimation of the Party's "Three Rural Issues" theory. He emphasized that issues related to agriculture, rural areas, and farmers are fundamental issues concerning the national economy and people's livelihood. Without the modernization of agriculture and rural areas, there can be no modernization of the entire country. To achieve the modernization of agriculture and rural areas, we must firmly grasp the two keys of technology and talent, and vigorously enhance the level of agricultural mechanization, digitalization, and intelligence. More importantly, he creatively proposed that rural revitalization encompasses five aspects: industry, talent, culture, ecology, and organization, thereby constructing an overall framework for "Three Rural Issues" work in the new era: in terms of industrial development, we must maintain the bottom line of food security and the supply of important agricultural products, strictly adhere to the red line of cultivated land, deepen the structural reform of the agricultural supply side, and promote coordinated development of production, life, and ecology; in ecological construction, we must continuously improve the rural living environment, strengthen pollution control, and build green and beautiful villages; in facility services, we must address the shortcomings of rural infrastructure and improve the level of equalization of public services; in grassroots governance, we must adhere to the leadership of Party building, improve villagers' autonomy, and enhance governance efficiency; in rural culture, we must cultivate civilized rural customs, good family traditions, and honest folk customs, enriching the spiritual and cultural life of farmers; in factor allocation, we must promote bidirectional flow and equal exchange of urban and rural factors; in institutional guarantees, we must stabilize the basic rural management system and develop and expand the new rural collective economy. These important discussions not only continue the Party's stance and fine traditions on the "Three Rural Issues" in a consistent manner but also enrich and develop the Party's theoretical system on the "Three Rural Issues" with a new perspective.

IV. Conclusion

Xi Jinping's important exposition on rural revitalization is rooted in a profound, systematic, and solid theoretical foundation. It represents a significant theoretical achievement that integrates and innovates the excellent traditional Chinese emphasis on agriculture and the benefit of farmers, the "Three Rural Issues" thought of Marxist classical writers, and the "Three Rural Issues" theory of the Communist Party of China (CPC) over the past century. Specifically, the traditional Chinese emphasis on agriculture and the benefit of farmers provides profound historical and cultural nourishment, the Marxist "Three Rural Issues" thought offers scientific theoretical guidance, and the CPC's "Three Rural Issues" theory provides solid empirical inheritance and practical support. Based on the national and agricultural conditions of the new era, Xi Jinping inherits, transforms, innovates, and sublimates these three elements, forming a comprehensive, logically rigorous, and distinct exposition on rural revitalization. This exposition not only scientifically addresses a series of major theoretical and practical issues related to the development of the "Three Rural Issues" in China in the new era but also enriches the achievements of sinicizing and modernizing Marxism in the Chinese context. It provides scientific guidance for comprehensively promoting rural revitalization and accelerating the construction of a strong agricultural nation, and contributes Chinese wisdom and solutions to countries around the world, especially developing countries, in promoting rural development and achieving coordinated urban-rural modernization.