

Research on Li Dazhao's Philosophical Thought and Its Contemporary Value

Linzhi Li

Baoji University of Arts and Sciences, Baoji, Shaanxi, 721013, China

Abstract: *The process of China's modernization is consistent with the process of Marxism's Chineseization, and nowadays, both the practical path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the Chineseization of Marxism are facing a lot of new challenges and tasks, so it is crucial to study in depth and re-examine the excellent theories on the development of the Chineseization of Marxist philosophy. Li Dazhao's philosophical thought was formed in the process of dramatic transformation of modern Chinese society, and was one of the early Marxist theoretical achievements. An in-depth study of Li Dazhao's philosophical thought is of great significance for us to deepen our understanding of the transition from traditional Chinese philosophy to modern philosophy, to promote the in-depth development of the theory of the Chineseization of Marxist philosophy, and to help young people to establish a scientific outlook on life and hold fast to the people-centered value goal.*

Keywords: Li Dazhao, Philosophical Thought, Contemporary Value.

1. The Historical Background and Theoretical Origin of Li Dazhao's Philosophical Thought

1.1 The Historical Background of Li Dazhao's Philosophical Thought

The formation of Li Dazhao's philosophical thought is directly related to the background of the times. After the outbreak of the Opium War, the imperialist and western capitalist countries carried out large-scale aggression against our country, which had already become a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. In order to obtain huge wealth in China, the invaders forced our country to sign many unequal treaties, thus bringing great harm to our government and people. During this period, our country was in a critical period of rapid upheaval and change between the old and the new. During this period, the invaders plundered our country's wealth and land and signed many unequal treaties. In order to prevent our country from being invaded by the Western powers and to enable the people to lead a new, happy and stable life, many patriots came to our country's rescue through various means and in many dimensions. Patriots such as Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan put forward the idea of "learning from the barbarians to control the barbarians" after the First Opium War. Patriots such as Zheng Guanyin and Wang Tao realized the obvious gap between China and the Western powers in terms of political system and technology during the foreign affairs movement. The outbreak of the October Revolution in Russia, which ignited the hope of development for backward countries around the world, had a very significant impact on Li Dazhao. Based on this, Li Dazhao believed that socialism was crucial to the rescue of China, and he publicly published a number of articles on socialism, such as "The Triumph of Bolshevism" and "A Comparative View of the French and Russian Revolutions," which provided a more profound exposition of the significance and nature of the October Revolution. "Li Dazhao's center of gravity was in political science and philosophy [1]," Li Dazhao fully absorbed traditional Chinese culture while borrowing advanced bourgeois ideas from the West, and was guided by the Marxist concept of materialistic history while carrying out the revolution, which made outstanding contributions to the development of China's revolution.

1.2 The Theoretical Origin of Li Dazhao's Philosophical Thought

The influence of traditional Chinese thought, especially Confucianism, plays an important role in the development of Li Dazhao's philosophical thought. The traditional Chinese cultural thoughts such as "the rise and fall of the world, the responsibility of the people", taking the world as one's own responsibility, bowing down for the country and the people and so on have a far-reaching influence on Li Dazhao, who has always insisted on struggling for the liberation cause of the country and the nation. Li Dazhao's philosophical thinking was greatly influenced by Yanzhao culture, and the patriotic sentiment of saving China from the fire was Li Dazhao's unswerving belief. Li Dazhao by the "unity of heaven and man", "the people are the basis of the state" and other traditional Chinese cultural thought has a profound influence. Mencius put forward the theory that the people are more important than the ruler, and advocated people-centeredness. The concept of "people-oriented" is deeply integrated into Li Dazhao's philosophical thought. Based on this idea, Li Dazhao combined it with Marxism, evolving it into the idea of proletarian democracy. The idea of "people's rights" is an important manifestation of his people-centered thinking. Li Dazhao's acceptance of the people-oriented ideology began as early as his childhood in traditional private education, when Li Dazhao already had a preliminary understanding of the power of the people, Li Dazhao believed that the rescue of the new China in dire straits needed to rely on the power of the masses. Li Dazhao inherited the Confucian concept of "benevolence" and linked it to Marxist doctrine. Li Dazhao incorporated the idea of "benevolence and love" into communist and socialist morality.

Western culture had a very important place in the intellectual framework of Li Dazhao during his teaching and work at Peking University, his studies at Waseda in Japan, and his time at the Peking Law School. Li's philosophical thinking was greatly influenced by Darwin's theory of natural evolution, Bergson's philosophy of life, and Kropotkin's idea of mutual aid, and the idea of Western evolution was introduced to China at the end of the 19th century and the

beginning of the 20th century. Darwin believed that the phenomenon of natural selection was widespread, and that the natural law of survival of the fittest prevailed as higher organisms gradually replaced lower ones. During this period, people's understanding of evolutionary thought was mainly through Yan Fu's *The Theory of the Evolution of Heaven*. The book also had a certain influence on Li Dazhao, who, inspired by the idea of evolution, absorbed the essence of the theory of evolution and believed that the law of the alternation of the old and the new was equally suitable for human society, and expressed his views and opinions to the public through easy-to-understand language. Li Dazhao believed that Marxism had a very important role to play in the victory of the revolution, and that the path to success of the October Revolution in Russia was precisely the way to find a way to create a "third civilization", and that the new culture of Marxism specifically referred to a new culture of socialist cultural construction based on the ideas of Marxism. "Li Dazhao's study of the Western philosophy of history, on the other hand, was carried out under the guidance of the materialistic view of history, and had a clearer direction and purpose [2]."

2. The Main Content of Li Dazhao's Philosophical Thought

"Li Dazhao's philosophical thought is not an ivory tower of abstract righteousness, but starts from concrete social phenomena and practical problems, analyzes the essence of the problem and gives scientific and reasonable explanations with a holistic and up-to-date mindset [3]." Li Dazhao's philosophical thought mainly includes the philosophical thought centered on patriotism and revolutionary democratism at the early stage of his ideological transformation, the youthful philosophical thought interpreted in the middle stage by the law of "metabolism", and the historical view of Minyi that integrates democracy, legal system, and people's principle. In the latter part of his life, after completing his change of mind, he interpreted the materialistic view of history from the perspective of the basic contradictions of society and the class struggle, and so on. The history of Li Dazhao's turn to Marxist philosophy is divided into three stages: first, the searching stage from 1912 to 1916, examining texts such as *The Hidden Worries*, *The Great Mourning*, and *A Refutation of the Fate of the Partition of China*, and the introduction of Tolstoy, Nietzsche, Rabindranath Tagore, and Bacon, the theme of Li Dazhao's thought at this stage was to search for the truth of a strong nation and the salvation of the people; second, the touching stage from 1917 to 1918, examining *The Russian Revolution*, and the Russian Revolution. In this stage, the theme of Li Dazhao's thought is to contact Marxism and to cheer for the Russian Revolution. In this stage, the theme of Li Dazhao's thought is to contact Marxism and to cheer for the Russian Revolution. and *My View of Marxism*, the theme of Li Dazhao's thought at this stage was belief in and interpretation of Marxism.

2.1 Philosophical Thought at the Time of Early Thought Transformation

"Li Dazhao's early philosophical thought was influenced by the evolutionary thought of the time [4]." Just as Marx and

Engels shifted from idealism to materialism and revolutionary democratism to communism, such a shift implicitly existed in the thinking of advanced Chinese scholars in the early process of the Chineseization of Marxist philosophy. The same is true of Li Ta-Chao, whose early philosophical thought also underwent a process of transformation. After the Opium War in 1840, China was gradually reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country under the invasion and division of Western capitalism and imperialism. After the Xinhai Revolution, the struggle of the Chinese people against imperialism and its lackeys continued to develop until the May Fourth Patriotic Movement broke out in 1919. Li Dazhao's thinking gradually changed during this struggle. He emphasized that the people should revive their spirit and carry forward the spirit of courage. At that time, some people committed suicide to protest against the invasion of our country by Japanese imperialism and the traitorous acts of Yuan Shikai's government. Li Dazhao believed that: suicide is a manifestation of youthful ambition, suicide of the youth, is "the youth of the country's demise", rather than "the youth of the country's rise". He pointed out that: "the death of the country, non-people die me, I die; the crime of the death of the country, not with the people, I'm from the body [5]." Strong thoughts of worrying about the country and the people and patriotism were connected with all the activities and writings of Li Dazhao's life. In June 1912, Li Dazhao wrote "*Hidden Worries*" in which he pointed out that the newly built republic was facing hidden worries such as border trouble, soldiers' worries, financial difficulties, food difficulties, industry blindness, and talent difficulties, etc. On April 1, 1913, he published "*Great Sorrows*", which pointedly exposed the authoritarian nature of the warlord bureaucrats who had usurped the power after the Xinhai Revolution.

2.2 Youthful Philosophical Thought and Minyi's View of History in the Middle Period

Li Dazhao's philosophical thought of youth is a milestone of his early thought, and at the same time, it is also an indispensable logical link in his transformation to Marxism. His philosophical thought on youth is mainly reflected in works such as *Youth*, *Contradictory Life and Double Burden*, and *Pseudo-Reconciliation*, which summarize the contents of youthful cosmology, youthful China, and youthful outlook on life. Li Dazhao's conception of the history of the people and Yi was put forward by combining the modern democratic ideas of the West with the ancient Chinese civilization, which captured the essence of modern Western democratic politics and served as a political enlightenment for the people. The formation of the Min-Yi view of history went through three stages: the initial mass backwardness theory, the middle stage of critical heroism, and the final Min-Yi view of history. Li Ta-Chao preached the philosophy of youth, which finally came down to the youthful outlook on life. He believed that the outlook on life was based on the cosmic outlook. If a person fails to realize the endless youth of the universe, he will not be able to understand the value of life and will waste his years from the time of his birth to the time of his death, and he will feel that his time is as fast as an electric wave. He opposed the pessimistic theory of the future of mankind. According to philosophy and modern science, the earth also has a process of formation, development, and extinction, a process from child, youth, youthfulness, youthfulness, and

whiteness. The "People's View of History" was put forward by Li Dazhao on the basis of modern Western democratic thought and ancient Chinese civilization, which captured the essence of modern Western democratic politics and served as a political enlightenment for the people. Li Dazhao pointed out that history is not created by saints, but by the people. Li Dazhao pointed out in "Violence and Politics": "The public opinion can not be reached by the path of the persecution of the people..... small out of assassination, large out of revolution [6]." At this time, the confinement of the people's minds through the feudal ethic will no longer exist. He believed that the driving force of history is "people's will", and historical idealism believes that the change of national thought is the driving force of historical progress. Li Dazhao's viewpoint differed somewhat from the materialist view of history, but they were basically the same, and his subsequent transformation into Marxist materialism was also based on that viewpoint.

2.3 Materialistic View of History in the Later Period When the Ideological Transformation was Completed

Against the background of the victory of the October Revolution in Russia and the development and change of the May Fourth Period, Li Dazhao's ideological conception underwent a radical change, and Li Dazhao shifted toward the Marxist materialistic conception of history while abandoning the idea of evolution. Li Dazhao closely connected the history and reality of China, studied the relationship between the superstructure and the economic base, the productive forces and the relations of production, and analyzed the relationship of human social change influenced by class struggle, thus discovering the great power of the people. After Marxism was accepted by Li Dazhao, based on the materialistic view of history, his thought was fully developed. After the October Revolution, Li Dazhao highly recognized the view that the people are the creators of history, and further clarified the position of the people in the development of history. He pointed out that the people's masses are the prerequisite for the creation of history, and the people's masses are even the main body of historical development. "As of now, the forces that history has left behind have all been eliminated, such as the political valves, warlords, the imperial system, religions, etc., and the forces that encounter the people's masses will be defeated, and those that offend the interests of the people's masses will be extinguished." The fall of the Qing Dynasty, the defeat of Yuan Shikai, and the downfall of Duan Qirui all proved this truth. Guided by the materialistic view of history, he had new research results on the path of Chinese revolutionary practice. "As the first Chinese Marxist, Li Dazhao, in adhering to the philosophical position of the first nature of matter, understood matter on the basis of practice, so that matter is not only the object material entity, but also includes the material activity of society [7]." Through *Essentials of History*, Li Dazhao highly endorsed Marx's materialistic view of history, arguing that in the past history of development, people could find God and saints, but most of all could not find the self. The materialist conception of history, on the other hand, holds that the motive force of human social life lies in the survival of society itself. Through *My Marxist View*, he systematically introduces the fundamentals of the Marxist materialist view of history and evaluates them positively. This shows that he has transformed

from an evolutionist to a Marxist. In his elaboration and application of the Marxist view of material history, Li Dazhao's view of history also shifted toward the Marxist view of material history. However, the transformation of one's worldview cannot be achieved overnight, and the process of Li Dazhao's gradual transformation from a revolutionary democrat to a Marxist was a long one, during which he experienced many setbacks and the influence of old and new ideas. Although he did not fully understand the materialist concept of history, Li Dazhao grasped the essence of the materialist concept of history, which laid a solid foundation for the later development of Marxism in China and provided a good reference for the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC). His ideas had a greater impact on the CPC in both practical and theoretical dimensions.

3. The Main Features of Li Dazhao's Philosophical Thinking

Li Dazhao in solving and thinking about the way out of China's crisis, is based on the actual situation in China at that time, using the way of thinking cohesion of Chinese traditional colors, based on the traditional culture of advanced philosophical thinking, so as to find a new path for China's development. Therefore, nationality is the main feature of Li Ta-Chao's philosophical thought. "The 'moving spirit' of Western civilization, which Li Dazhao esteemed, was actually embedded in ancient Chinese philosophical thought [8]." In Li Dazhao's eyes, even though the Chinese nation today is rotten, it still can't be destroyed by the Western powers, the main reason is that the youthful generation of the Chinese nation is about to rise up and "if the youth don't die, the Chinese nation won't perish". Therefore, he strongly summoned the young people to break away from the bondage of feudal dogmatism and "create a youthful family, country, and nation with a youthful me." Li Dazhao learned about and recognized Marxism between 1917 and 1918, a time when the outbreak of the October Revolution and the February Revolution had a profound impact on Li Dazhao, who believed that the revolutionary socialist party was the Bolshevik party, at which time Li Dazhao gradually shifted his methods, views, and positions toward Marxism. Using the method of tracing tradition and integrating East and West, Li criticized the traditional Chinese "peace" culture, Confucian mediocrity, and Taoist dialectics. Based on the social environment of the time, he also drew on the anarchist ideology, the theory of "mutual aid" and the concept of "freedom" in Western society. On the basis of an in-depth study of the theoretical content of Marxism, he constructed his own philosophical system, which is integrative in nature.

4. Contemporary Value of Li Dazhao's Philosophical Thought

The highest ideal of Marxist communism is then very similar to the Cosmos Society described in Confucian culture, which represents the life that people have been longing for, and is the beautiful ideal of human beings for the future society. Li Dazhao analyzed the highest idea of Marxism through the concept of the Cosmopolitan Society, which made the masses understand and recognize Marxism more. In addition, Li Dazhao widely publicized the idea of democracy among the

proletariat based on Mengzi's ideas of Minzu-ism and "the theory that the people are more important than the ruler". There are also similarities between Marxism and Laozi and Zhuangzi's ideas of the law of nature and dialectics. Li Dazhao used the dialectics of Laozi and Zhuangzi to analyze the Marxist theory that "the world is developing and changing, and the objective matter is not static". Li Dazhao linked traditional culture with Marxist theory, actively explored commonalities, and realized the innovation of viewpoints based on traditional modes of thinking, so that the people could deeply understand Marxist thought. "Before the New Culture Movement, Li Dazhao's philosophical thought on life was taking shape [9]." Li Dazhao actively publicized Marxism during the May Fourth Movement and the New Culture Movement, and from then on, he comprehensively opened up the path of Marxism leading the development of socialism. He set up a Marxist theory column in the Morning Post and then actively contributed articles. During his teaching period at Peking University, he organized many lectures on the materialist concept of history, interacting and communicating with students. As a result of Li Dazhao's influence, the thinking of many intellectuals changed significantly, and more and more people took the initiative to participate in the cause of spreading Marxism. There are epochal and national differences between Marxist philosophy and traditional Chinese philosophy. Li Dazhao began the preliminary work of combining traditional Chinese philosophy with Marxist philosophy on the basis of analyzing the epochal and national characteristics of Chinese and Western cultures, which opened the way for the Chineseization of Marxist philosophy.

Li Dazhao believed that under the bondage of feudal traditional culture, young people needed to cut off the old system and old ideas, pursue scientific truth and freedom of thought, and chase the spirit of innovation and youthful will. "Li Dazhao can be said to have explained the spiritual core of the materialistic concept of history in a more comprehensive way in the field of modern Chinese philosophical thought." In the process of getting rid of the feudal bondage Marxism shows the way for it, is the foundation for the youth to go to victory and step into the light. Young people in the process of self-improvement and self-armament need to be based on the scientific theory of Marxism to provide a solid foundation for the liberation of democracy and the rise of China. "On the basis of this worldview, Li Dazhao recognized the changes in the world with the vision of big history and from the height of the philosophy of history, and thus was able to grasp the general trend of history beyond the limitations of the times [10]." In the new era, innovation has a very important position, and it is one of the basic elements of China's socialist modernization. Comrade Xi Jinping pointed out that "Youth is the most creative and dynamic group in the process of social development, and youth has a powerful boost in innovation and development [11]." China's youth are the vital force and main force of our country's socialist development. Therefore, young people should follow the footsteps of the times and constantly enhance their sense of innovation to provide a strong impetus for the rise of China. "This epoch-making change in China's view of history, and thus the establishment of the concept of people's supremacy in this change, was realized first of all in the change of Li Dazhao's philosophical thought [12]." Li Dazhao attached great importance to the

people under the guidance of the materialistic view of history. He pointed out, "The true history of mankind is not the history of a few. The pure master of history is these masses, never a few great men." He believed that the main body of history was the people, not individual great men or heroes. Nowadays, to realize the great rejuvenation of the "Chinese dream", we should also respect the main position of the people. Whoever wins the hearts of the people wins the world, and it is important to build a good relationship between the Party and the masses, and to practice the principle of "the masses".

5. Conclusion:

In 1889, when Li Dazhao was born, it was the time when the Chinese nation was in a difficult and perilous predicament, and the development of the country since then has been an era when the Chinese nation suffered an unprecedented national crisis, but also an era when the Chinese nation regained its vigor and vitality, "turning my back on the darkness and turning to the light, advancing civilization for the world, and creating happiness for the mankind, and creating the youthful family, youthful nation, youthful people, youthful earth, and youthful universe with the youthful me". With my youthful self, I will create a youthful family, a youthful country, a youthful nation, a youthful humanity, a youthful earth, a youthful universe". The important era of the Chinese Communist Party. The peril of the nation, the enlightenment of thought, the surging of the two political currents of improvement and revolution, and the rapid transformation of the traditional feudal society, the development of the times needed great men of history, and Comrade Li Dazhao grew up and struggled in just such a great era. Li Dazhao was the first person in modern China who transformed from a revolutionary democrat to a Marxist, and his philosophical thought is not only an important link in the historical evolution of modern Chinese philosophy, but also constitutes the beginning of Marxist philosophy.

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