

Discussing Xi Jinping's Inheritance and Development of Mao Zedong's Literary Thought

—Based on a comparative reaserch of Xi Jinping and Mao Zedong's talk at the forum on literature and art

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Abstract: We can conclude that Xi Jinping inherited and developed the Mao Zedong's theory on literature and art by the comparison of the twice forum on literature and art. They both adhere the people's principal position in the country, the leadship of the party and the guidance of marxism, they also affirm the value of literature and art. Meanwhile, Xi Jinping enriched and completed the value and function of literature and art, and put forward the new require to the literature and art worker and their creation.

Culture is a country and nation's soul. Without full confidence in our culture, without a rich and prosperous culture, the Chinese nation will not be able to rejuvenate itself. Mao Zedong made a speech at the Yan'an Forum on Art and Literature during the rectification movement in May 2, 1942, 72 years later, Xi Jinping held a forum on art and literature in Beijing and delivered a important speech in October 15, 2014, the speeches with two leaders are all important theory achievements of Marxism Chinese on art and literature which has distinct times and guidance. While inheriting and continuing the spirit of Mao Zedong's literary and artistic thoughts, Xi Jinping's speech also has developed and innovated in the new era, and put forward a series of new ideas, new judgments and new requirements. By contrasting with two meetings, it has significant theoretical guidance and realism meanings to promoting socialism literature and art prosperity and development, and improve the work for the literature of our Party with comprehending their literary theory.

1. Historical background and mission of the two forums on literature and art

The speeches in the two forums on literature and art took place in different times, both of which were in the profound background of the times. Mao Zedong's speech took place in the period of the new democratic revolution, with the theme of war and revolution, while Xi Jinping's speech took place in the critical stage of realizing the goal of "Two Centenary Goals" and the Chinese Dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The two leaders are in different historical backgrounds and face different historical missions, so they also have different guidance requirements.

1.1 In the period of Mao Zedong

At the beginning of "Talks at the Yan'an Forum of Art and Literature", Mao Zedong s description of "facts" indicates the background of the times. Under the global environment of the Anti-Fascist War, China had undergone the War of Resistance against Japan for five years, and the great landlords and the big bourgeoisie in China had shaken in the War of Resistance against Japan, implementing the coercion policy towards the masses. At the same time, although the revolutionary literature and art campaign has made some achievements since the May 4th Movement, there are also some ideological and cognitive problems and unhealthy tendencies in the domestic literary and art circles. Some writers and artists get divorced from reality and from the masses, leading to deviations in ideology and negative emotions. For example, at that time, the literary and artistic circles in Yan'an, in disregard of the needs and the acceptance ability of the masses, made a great

effort to “improve irrespective of external circumstances”, and only cared about “icing on the cake”, and wouldn’t like to “provide timely assistance”, and the people had an unclear understanding of the dialectical relationship between the praise and the exposure, and there were also other problems in ideological fluctuations and swinging cognition. In the era of revolution and war, in order to win the victory of the war of resistance, the most important task is to strengthen the unity of the revolutionary ranks, to achieve the unity of the action and thought of the revolutionary ranks and to get the liberation of the nation. Literature and art is an important cultural weapon of the democratic revolution, and the maintenance and expansion of the Counter-Japanese National United Front needs the support of literature and art work. It was an urgent problem to be solved at the time and a historical mission of the writers and artists to define whom the literary and artistic work is for and who the work serves and how to serve the masses of the workers and peasants, and to realize the combination of writers and artists and workers and peasants. In order to further develop the Yan’an Rectification Movement, give play to the active role of literature and art in the War of Resistance Against Japan and solve the problems and wrong directions at that time, the important talk has affirmed the outstanding contribution of literary and artistic work since the May 4th Movement, and also reflected that we must adhere to the guiding position of the Marxism, clarify the main body of the literature and art work, and correct the unhealthy tendencies of the literary and artistic work.

1.2 In the period of Xi Jinping

A great cause requires a great spirit. Since the 19th National Congress of CPC, the socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, and the principal contradictions in Chinese society have been transformed, and the people have put forward higher demands on the material and cultural life. In the era of developing a great socialist culture in China, adhering to the path of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics and realizing the Chinese Dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, cultural confidence is the subject of the times proposed by general secretary Xi Jinping. Since the reform and opening up, especially in the new century, the Chinese writers and artists have been working hard, reflecting a vivid picture of the prosperity and development of the garden of literature and art in China. At the same time, there are still some problems that can not be ignored. With the rapid development of the economy, there is chaos in the literary and art market, some writers and artists have lost their principles, and there are many distortions in the values of literary and artistic works. In the era of peace and development, the realization of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is inseparable from the prosperity of culture. It is inseparable from literary and artistic creation to carry forward the fine traditional culture and revolutionary culture of the Chinese nation and develop the socialist culture with Chinese characteristics. In the new era, it is the historical mission of the contemporary literary and artistic circles and writers and artists to find ways to remain true to their original aspiration, to create literary and artistic works that meet the needs of the people, to carry forward the core values of socialism by using literary and artistic works, and to enhance the cultural identity of the Chinese nation. At the same time, with the prosperity of the market economy, the Party’s leadership in literature and art should also make new adjustments in line with the requirements of the times and improve the management structure and management methods. In order to encourage and guide large numbers of writers and artists to actively devote themselves to the cause of the Chinese Dream of great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at the Beijing Forum of Art and Literature, expounded five issues on the present work of literature and art, and put forward the new requirements on the times concerning the literary and art work.

2. Xi Jinping's inheritance of Mao Zedong Literary and Artistic Thought

With the change of the theme of the times, in spite of the different historical tasks for the two leaders, there are still many similarities in the literary and artistic thoughts. Xi Jinping adheres to Mao Zedong Literary and Artistic Thought, and sticks to the fundamental principles, which is mainly reflected in the following four aspects:

2.1 The common object of literature and art service: the people

Why is human problem a fundamental and principled problem? “Talks at the Yan’an Forum of Art and Literature” took place in the period of the new democratic revolution. The people of all ethnic groups were actively engaged in the War of Resistance Against Japan, while many of the writers and artists still had no clear idea of the work policy at this time, leading to the inconformity to the needs of the masses and to the actual struggle, and even some of the writers and artists distorted the images of the revolutionary base areas and the masses in their works. In his speech, Mao Zedong made it clear that literature and art are for the masses, and above all for workers, peasants and soldiers. We must stand on the position of the proletariat, instead of standing on the position of the petty bourgeoisie, which has also become the theoretical core of Mao Zedong Literary and Artistic Thought. In the context of two major dilemmas of class contradictions and national peril, it is particularly important to build the revolutionary ranks of writers and artists to save the nation's peril. Mao Zedong called for the close integration of literature and art and the consolidation of the Counter-Japanese National United Front. Therefore, on the basis of making it clear that literature and art serve the masses, Mao Zedong also proposed to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers first, but eventually, with the victory of the new democratic revolution, the country will enter the construction stage, and the work of literature and art should return to the masses and serve the people, reflecting the broad social life.

Today, in the 21st century, general secretary Xi Jinping once again stressed that we must adhere to the people-centered cultural creation. Since the reform and opening up, the economy has developed rapidly, and the country has entered a period of overall construction of modernization. While the literary and artistic creations are flourishing, new problems have also emerged. Some literary and artistic workers are separated from the masses and divorced from reality in their creation. Some do not distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, and simply pursue economic interests. Some writers and artists distort the classics, distort the history, and vilify the images of the masses and the heroes, which has greatly affected the security of the national ideology and hindered the construction of the core values of Chinese socialism. In his speech, Xi Jinping stated that literature and art should adhere to the fundamental direction of serving the people and serving socialism. First, we must make it clear that the people need literature and art to meet the growing spiritual and cultural needs, and we must focus on the cultural construction, and the excellent works are able to enrich and improve the people's spiritual and cultural life. At the same time, as China's international influence continues to deepen, outstanding literary and artistic works can better publicize the excellent traditional Chinese culture and spread the charm of China. Second, we should make it clear that literature and art need the people, that the people are the fountainhead of literary and artistic creation, and that the needs of the people are the fundamental value of the existence of literature and art. We must walk into the people's life, constantly discover beauty and create beauty. Third, we must make it clear that literature and art must love the people. If we do not love the people, we will not be able to create for the people and serve the people. Thus it can be seen that Xi Jinping adheres to Mao Zedong Literary and Artistic Thought, and always sticks to the position of the people and the principle of literature and art serving the people.

2.2 Adhering to the leadership and political position of the Party

Since the proletariat came into power, the Party has always led the people to create miracles one after another in the history of the Chinese nation, and the leading position of the Party to literature and art has remained unchanged. Mao Zedong addressed in his speech, “Literature and art are subject to politics, but in turn exert great influence to politics.” It is clear that literature and art should serve politics and be obedient to politics, while the politics mentioned here are the politics of the proletariat and the masses, rather than the politics of a few people or individuals. At the same time, we should adhere to the political standpoint of the Marxism, observe the world with the view of historical materialism and materialist dialectics for artistic creation, and closely focus on the important mission of resistance against Japanese aggression for creation.

No matter in war or in the age of peace, it is impossible for literature and art to be completely

divorced from politics. It is the bottom line of literature and art work to insist on the Marxism belief. In his report, Xi Jinping pointed out that the leadership of the Party is the fundamental guarantee for the development of socialist literature and art. Only by correctly grasping the relationship between the Party and literature and art, can we better develop literature and art and build the socialist culture. The writers and artists should hold a strong political belief and keen political consciousness, and stick to the cultural positions in the face of the infiltration of the western ideology and the impact of multiculturalism, and should not act as the accomplices of the anti-China forces, but should build the fortress of the cultural position for the people. It should be the most fundamental principle of literary and art workers to adhere to the Marxism belief and the leadership of the Party.

2.3 Affirming the important role of literature and art

Revolution is subject to politics, but in turn exerts great influence to politics. During the period of democratic revolution, Mao Zedong highly affirmed the important position of literature and art for the whole revolutionary cause, and he stated that literature and art is an indispensable gear and screw for the machine of the revolutionary cause. "If we did not even have the most generalized and most common literature and art, then the revolutionary movement could not be carried out, and we would not win." Literature and art is an important weapon in ideological struggle and artistic struggle. If the function of literature and art is well played, it will play a role in inspiring the people for national unity and victory in the War of Resistance against Japan at that time. Although literature and art is not a tool for direct struggle in the period of democratic revolution, it also moistens the hearts of the people, condenses the national spirit, and promotes the victory of the democratic revolution.

In the age of peace and development, China has become a powerful competitor with constantly increasing comprehensive power and international attention. Literature and art construction has become an important means to enhance cultural confidence and realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation with market economic prosperity. Xi Jinping emphasized firstly that we should pay high attention to the literature and art and the work. "Without the prosperity of Chinese culture, there will be no great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Under the new times, Literature and art have become an important manifestation of the country's cultural soft power and comprehensive national strength. As a spiritual force, literature and art have been supporting China's economic, political and social development. They have played an important role in both the country and the society at any time.

3. Xi Jinping's Development from Mao Zedong's Theory on Literature and Art

The meeting which hosted by Xi Jinping, while inheriting and carrying forward Mao Zedong's literary and artistic spirit, endowed the connotation and value of the new era of literary and artistic thoughts at the same time, and provided theoretical support for the prosperity and development of the socialist literary and artistic undertakings.

3.1 To enrich and improve the value and function of literature and art: promoting the core values of socialism and firming cultural confidence

Mao Zedong made a detailed discussion on the relationship between politics and literature at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art. In the context of the revolutionary war era, he believed that literature and art mainly assisted the revolutionary work and completed the liberation task. Literary and art workers should pay attention to their historical missions, and combine literary and artistic creation with the people's liberation cause closely, in order to serve other revolutionary work preferably. Mao Zedong corrected the wrong tendency of political and artistic with opposite relation and paid more attention to the political function of literary and artistic works, in other words, "literature is subordinate to politics."

General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward new requirements for literature and art at the Beijing forum, enriching and perfecting the value function of literature and art. Firstly, Literature and art must reflect the style of the times, and create outstanding works that show the great times and great

peoples of the present. Literary and artistic works should reflect the characteristics of the people's good life, at the same time infect and motivate the people to struggle for a better life, and also become the main means to show the image of China to the world. Secondly, we must play a unique role in cultivating and promoting the core values of socialism. The socialist core values are vividly embodied in literary and artistic works, and the life-like literary and artistic works are used to lead the people to establish and adhere to correct values and national views, especially the embodiment of patriotism. Thirdly, we must pursue truth, goodness and beauty all the time which is the eternal value of literature and art. It is necessary to convey truth, goodness and beauty through literary and artistic works, enhance people's moral judgment and moral honor, and lead the Chinese people to pursue the morality of truth, goodness and beauty from generation to generation. Xi Jinping's exposition of literary and artistic functions is more abundant and perfect. It is no longer as literary and political singularity in Mao Zedong's time. He has rich theory of ideological and political functions who requires literary and artistic works to reflect the characteristics of the times, inherit and carry forward outstanding Chinese traditional culture for a flourishing socialist culture, this is Xi Jinping's development and enrichment of the value and function of literature and art.

3.2 Put forward new requirements for literary and artistic workers and literary creation: a people-centered creative orientation

At the literary forum, Mao Zedong pointed out that some literary and art workers are unfamiliar with their descriptions and recipients of works. The main reason is that they are separated from the masses and their lives are empty. It is proposed that we should change our thinking, clarify the direction of creation, adhere to the working methods that come from the masses, and understand the ideological, emotional and real life of the writing object. Only the idea is "popular" can we create real and excellent works of literature and art.

At the forum, Xi Jinping emphasized that literature and art must persist in serving the people and serving socialism. The first is to create works that people like to see and hear. With the continuous improvement of people's living standards, the people's demand for spiritual culture is constantly improving. To meet the growing spiritual needs of the people, we must constantly improve the quality, taste and style of the works. Secondly, we must consciously go deep into life, take root in the people, listen to the voices of the masses, and share the joys and sorrows with the people. Only in this way can we create works that can stand the test. By "coming from the people, coming from the life", gradually establishing and perfecting the normative art workers to closely contact the long-term mechanism of the masses will help art creators to become familiar with real life, narrow the distance with the masses, and bring literature and art creation back on track. This is a new reality and new problem facing literature and art under the new historical conditions which comes from General Secretary Xi Jinping's new hopes and new development requirements for the literary and art workers.

4. Conclusion

Mao Zedong's speech at the Yan'an forum on literature and art was the result of the sinicization of Marxist literary thought in the 1940s. Xi Jinping's speech at the national symposium on literary and art work is the cultural construction in the governance of the country under the new era. In particular, it is an important instruction and comprehensive discussion of literary and artistic work. Xi Jinping has advanced with the times and put forward a series of new ideas, new theories, and new requirements. We must profoundly study and understand the spirit of Mao Zedong and Xi Jinping's speech at the forum of literature and art. This will do a good job in the party's literary work and construction. The strong socialist culture has great historical significance and practical guiding significance.

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