

In Pursuit of the Chinese Dream

Li Junru



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Preface

On November 14, 2012, the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) came to a victorious close. The day after, Xi Jinping was elected General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee at the 1st Plenum of the 18th Central Committee.

Following his election, Xi and other newly elected members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau met Chinese and foreign journalists interviewing the Congress. In his speech on behalf of the new central leadership, he assured the journalists that his team would live up to the people's expectations. He stated that the commitment was made to the nation, its people, and the Party.

On November 29, Xi and other members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau visited the National Museum for the exhibition, "Road to Rejuvenation," where

he cited three verses to describe China's yesterday, today, and tomorrow:

"Idle boast the strong pass is a wall of iron"

"But man's world if mutable, seas become mulberry fields"

"A time will come for us to ride the wind and break the waves"

With his country's future in mind, he said:

Everyone has an ideal, ambition and dream. We are now all talking about the Chinese Dream. In my opinion, achieving the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has been the greatest dream of the Chinese people since the advent of modern times. This dream embodies the long-cherished hope of several generations of the Chinese people, gives expression to the overall interests of the Chinese nation and the Chinese people, and represents the shared aspiration of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation.¹

While the whole Party and nation were studying the spirit of the 18th Party Congress, why did Xi Jinping think of the Chinese Dream?

The idea of the Chinese Dream builds a bridge between the Party and the people—one which connects the Party's proposition with the people's wish

Promoting socialism and uniting the philosophy of the

1 *People's Daily*, November 30, 2012.

18th Party Congress with the people's ideals is a major subject that needs careful study. The Party Congress is a matter to the Party itself, which is to more than 80 million Party members, while the subjects discussed during the Congress are also matters that concern the whole nation—and therein lies the fundamental question of how to best address and unite the needs of both sides together. After the 18th Party Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping led the Central Committee to communicate the Party Congress' ideals to the Chinese people. He took the opportunity to say, "To realize the great revival of our nation is the greatest dream of modern China." This means that carrying out the ideals of the 18th Party Congress with comprehensive reform is completely in line with reviving the Chinese nation.

Xi Jinping's presentation of the Chinese Dream echoes all over the nation. By using "Chinese Dream," an appealing term to the Chinese people, he manages to synchronize the people's will with the Party's proposition.

The presentation of the Chinese Dream brings the nation together

A dream is an ideal that we want to reach. By using the ideal to enhance cohesion, organize people, and mobilize them, the CPC can achieve revolution and reform. As the ultimate goal of the Communist Party, communism itself is an isolated concept. When leading the revolution, Mao Zedong associated the ultimate goal of communism with

China's situation at the time—it was still a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country. With this insight, he pointed out that the Chinese revolution should be carried out in two steps: The first step was rejecting imperialist and feudal elements for a New Democratic Revolution, and the second step was socialist revolution. He pointed out that it was only after the New Democratic Revolution finished that the socialist revolution could occur. These two stages had to be in order without a capitalist stage wedged between them. Mao's plan united the proletariat, peasantry, urban bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie to win the Chinese revolution.

Similar to Mao Zedong's strategy, Deng Xiaoping's method promoted socialism, and he also used a "three steps" strategy for China's modernization. In regard to the third step of Deng's plan, Jiang Zemin stated, "We hold fast to the important period of strategic opportunity of the first twenty years in the 21st century to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects."

The success of the revolution, reconstruction, and reform is in the hands of the Party. It's prudent to follow their instructions to reach socialism; the Chinese Dream is another means for this end.

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In Pursuit of the Chinese Dream

I

The Chinese Dream Is a Key to Reviving the Nation

Xi Jinping has pointed out: “The Chinese Dream is historic, realistic, and futuristic.”¹ The Chinese Dream yields such compelling power because it is a dream of our nation’s revival. The term connects the past, present, and future; and it possess rich connotations.

¹ *People’s Daily*, May 5, 2013.

The Chinese Dream is a widely pursued dream of our nation

The Chinese Dream has created a strong echo and resonance in the hearts of Chinese people, as this term embodies the relentless efforts and the common wish of countless Chinese people in modern times. The dream also envisions the prospect of becoming a rich and powerful state—a revived nation of happy people.

During the Opium War of 1840, China was placed in a difficult situation. Under the gunboat policy of western powers, it lost some of its sovereignty, and was gradually reduced to a semi-colonial, semi-feudal state. From then on, winning national independence, building a rich and powerful country, and bringing happiness to the people have become a dream persistently pursued generation after generation.

Here I will tell two true stories:

The first is related to the World Expo' 2010 Shanghai. Historical writing was found dating back as early as a hundred years ago, from which it was clear that someone in Shanghai

had already envisioned the Chinese Dream.

In 1910, Lu Shi'e (1878-1944), a 32 year-old author born in Qingpu County of Jiangsu Province (today's Qingpu District of Shanghai), wrote a novel called *New China*. The hero of the story, Lu Yunxiang, was in a dream in which he accompanied a lady named Li Youqin on a tour of the Huangpu River in Shanghai. During the tour, he found that the extraterritoriality of the imperialists had been abolished.

The British and Indian policemen that used to be posted in the streets had all disappeared. Even the Chinese policemen had changed their uniforms. They were wearing Chinese livery uniforms instead of the red weft caps and blue woolen uniforms. I was going to ask what had happened when I saw two foreigners coming my way, but I was afraid of a collision and hastily dodged. The foreigners seemed to be modest, and when they saw that I had dodged, they turned to the left—unlike in the past, when they would have pushed their way through.

The novel's hero was puzzled. When he asked about the change, he was told, "Now the extraterritoriality has been taken back. All the police and road affairs are ruled by the Town Hall."

Madam Li Youqin told the excited hero that an unprecedented international expo was being held along the two banks of Huangpu River. To the hero's surprise, an iron bridge had been built across Huangpu River for the grand occasion.

(I took the tram) and went out of the station and was greatly taken aback. I saw a big bridge riding the Huangpu

River and extending all the way to the east of Huangpu.

The hero was amazed that a tunnel could be built under the river so that people could take a tram from the west side of Huangpu to its east side.

The ground was dug to build a tunnel. Rails were laid in it. It was lit up day and night. The trams would shuttle back and forth inside it.

Lu Yunxiang told his wife about his dream, but his wife joked that it was only a foolish daydream, to which he responded, "Don't say it was a daydream, because it may become reality. I will write about this dream as evidence for that day."

Unfortunately, Lu Shi'e never saw the dream become reality, but it came true a hundred years later during the World Expo' 2010. That is to say, the "New China" in Lu's novel is depicted in parallel to China's revival.

The second story takes place in November 1932 regarding the *Oriental Journal*, a magazine of high prestige. The magazine published articles with themes such as "Everybody has a dream in the upcoming year of 1933." The articles were meant to answer two questions: 1. What is the future of China like in your dream? 2. What dream do you have for your own life?

The first two issues of *Oriental Journal*, published in 1933, dedicated copious amounts of writing to express the "dreams" of 144 people, including well-known intellectuals such as Liu Yazhi, Ba Jin, Xu Beihong, Zou Taofen, Yu

Dafu, Mao Dun, Lao She, Lin Yutang, Liang Shuming, Zhang Shenfu, Yu Pingbo, Zheng Zhenduo, Ye Shengtao, Zhang Junmai, Hu Qiuyuan, Cao Juren, Zhu Ziqing, Zhou Gucheng, Tao Menghe, Zhang Naiqi, Zhou Zuoren, Yang Xingfo, Ma Xiangbo, Xia Mianzun, Li Shicen, He Sijing, Hong Shen, Zhang Yaozeng, Xie Bingying, Gu Xiegang, Luo Wengan, Chen Hansheng, and Shi Zhecun.

Liu Yazi (poet, 1887-1958) wrote in his article: "China is a part of the world. If one is to have the future of China in his dream, he must first have the future of the world in his dream. The future of the world in my dream is a socialist and stateless place which breaks down the distinctions of nations and classes. The world would be one federation, in which there is no money, no brutality, no families, no prisons, and no religions. Each member does his best, and gets what he needs. There is total equality and freedom. The Chinese are also a part of this federation and there is no need to talk."

Xie Bingying (famous female writer, 1906-2000) wrote in her article: "I dream of a stateless world in which there are no boundaries, no nations, and no class distinctions. All members, male or female, old or young, must work for themselves and for the needs of their class and fellow humans. They lead a happy, free, and equal life. They have books, entertainment, and fair amount of time to rest. They enjoy all the rights they produce for themselves. There is no invasion or exploitation, no jealousy or cheating, no war or slaughter; there is only the spirit to live happily together and drive forward! Help each

other and love each other so that the whole world may become a single entity. Since there will be no states or classes, China will only be a cell of this organization. People will work and consume together in this socialist country."

Luo Wengan (diplomat, judicial official, 1888-1941) wrote in his article: "The government must be able to unify the country so nobody can say that we lack organization. We must redirect the fire from internal conflicts to face foreign invaders. Military officers must not be afraid of death, and civil officials must not be greedy. Women must manage the household with hard work and thrift—abstaining from modern fashion. Young people must work hard, lead a frugal life, and stay away from western-style fashion to help domestic products prosper. Bandits disappear and external threats are cleared. Everybody enjoys a happy and prosperous life, and the world enjoys peace."

Zheng Zhenduo (writer, translator, 1898-1958) wrote in his article: "I don't have any such 'dream'. I don't believe in anything that is called a 'dream'. Human life must progress on a certain principle. I deem that in the future, China will be a great and happy land. With our effort, we will thoroughly cleanse the scars and bloodstains that the imperialists have left on us. We will not see any more imperialist warships and troops stationed in our inner and coastal areas. We will build a great socialist country. The individual exists for the mass and vice versa. Fights among warlords, hunger, floods, and any other tribulations will become something of the past."