

The background of the cover features abstract, flowing, wavy lines in shades of brown and orange. In the center, there is a light brown square with a white rectangular label on top of it.

The Chinese Path and The Chinese Dream

By Li Junru



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

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Preface: Starting With the “Cautious Mention of a ‘China Model’”

It is well known that there was a discussion on the “China Model” among Chinese thinkers from 2008 to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) convened at the end of 2012.

The background of the discussion was that China’s economy showed a good performance and attracted wide attention while other countries were challenged by the international financial crisis triggered by the U.S. subprime mortgage crisis in 2008. Prior to the discussion, Goldman Sachs had already proposed a “Beijing Consensus” different from the “Washington Consensus” by researching and evaluating China’s economic development. After 2008 more and more people have paid attention to the “Beijing Consensus.” As a result, being optimistic about China and discussing and researching the China model has become a hot topic among Chinese thinkers. The discussion is well-grounded and reasonable.

However, I stated we should “cautiously mention the ‘China

model” at the very beginning of the discussion, and, more importantly, I think we should make more effort to research the “Chinese path.”

I remembered I challenged the idea of the “China model” put forward by others at the seminar on the issue of Chinese Path in 2008. At that time, I delivered an impromptu speech in a soft tone and only emphasized that we should “cautiously mention the China model.” In my opinion, China was likely to eventually form a Chinese development model entirely different from Soviet model because it launched large-scale, extensive and profound reform. However, it was still too early to mention the issue. Therefore, I made the following statement at the seminar, “Now many people are talking about the ‘China model,’ indicating our experience has attracted attention from and been valued by others. That’s a good thing. It is an encouragement for our exploration as well as an education for those people who blindly look back nostalgically or blindly worship the West. However, we should be keenly aware in the course of research that our system has not taken full shape yet and that we need to continue our exploration in a scientific way. Mention of a ‘model’ which takes full shape does not meet the facts and is very dangerous. Why is it dangerous? On the one hand we may become self-contented and blindly optimistic, and on the other hand we may change the direction of reform. The target of our reform is the old system.

If we state that 'China model' has already taken shape when the old system is not entirely reformed and the new system is not improved and finalized, we are likely to change the target of reform into such 'model' and regard it as the target of the reform."

"The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics is a road of constant development and improvement. After long-term explorations and in particular the explorations over the last three decades since the introduction of the reform and opening-up policy on the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we have formed good development thinking, systems and mechanisms. However, we have not yet finished the task, and our system has not taken full shape. Therefore, in my opinion, we should properly summarize our experience and profoundly research the path. We should research problems that we encounter in practice, keep improving our development mode, system and mechanism, and constantly develop a path that brings hope to the Chinese people."

I also stated, "We should attach importance to two points when summarizing the Party's governing experience. Firstly, we should keep pace with the times and keep abreast of the progress of the development of the times. We will be eliminated by the progressive trend of history if we fail to do so. Secondly, we should act according to our abilities and be realistic and pragmatic. We should develop China as quickly as possible, but we

should be aware of our strength and seek truth from facts. China has made historic progress and remarkable achievements in the course of more than 30 years of reform and opening-up, but we should bear in mind that China is still in the primary stage of socialism and lags behind more than 100 countries in per capita GDP. We should be proud of our achievements and at the same time be mindful of potential danger and take action within our capabilities when discussing the 'Chinese Path'. Hence I would rather say that it is a road that is being constantly developed and improved."

Therefore, I summarized my speech by "It is better to mention the 'China model' with caution."

At that time, I gave two reasons why we should do so. Firstly, we have not yet finished the reform and improved and finalized the system, so we should not be self-contented and blindly optimistic. Secondly, we should prevent the direction of reform from being shifted from reform of the old system to "reform" of the reform. I didn't say many things that I wanted to say so as to avoid misunderstanding by others. For example, I disapprove of "modeling" the practices of relying on the government's administrative measures and intensifying macro control when coping with the international financial crisis. In my opinion, we can take some special measures in special periods, but we can't normalize such measures and call such practices the "China

model.” I made such statements at relevant Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conferences (CPPCC). I said so because history tells us we should be confident but not arrogant about our cause and we will make a mistake if we are hotheaded. We must remain cool-minded, and be keenly aware of modesty after achieving a great victory in reform and opening-up. I strongly support the statements emphasized by the CPC Central Committee that all the comrades in the Party must keep in mind their historic missions, remain modest and prudent, guard against arrogance and rashness, and maintain the style of plain living and hard struggle. We should be eager to make changes and innovations, and guard against rigid thinking and stagnation. We should not vacillate, relax our efforts or act recklessly. And we should never be intimidated by risks or confused by distractions. We must unswervingly forge ahead along the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and work ever-harder to unite with and lead the people of all ethnic groups in China in working for a happy life and the bright future of the Chinese nation.

Unexpectedly, the *Beijing Daily* published my impromptu speech, which raised many echoes. Later the *Study Times* of the Party School of the CPC Central Committee summarized and published the views of Zhao Qizheng, me and other comrades which exerted an even greater influence. As a result, debates arose one after another. I believe debate is a good thing, as it at least can

activate the academic atmosphere and evoke more thoughts. At that time, the leaders of the People's Publishing House and Social Sciences Academic Press hoped I would write a book about this for them to publish. I was touched, and thought of the name of the book—*Researching the Chinese Path*. Later, I laid the work aside because I was busy, and discussions on the issue gradually faded.

In April 2012 an editor of the People's Publishing House asked me to write a book titled, *Researching the Path of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics*. I promised to do so. Of course I did not talk about the "China model" in the book, but focused on the "path of socialism with Chinese characteristics," as we know that a correct path is crucial.

"The revolutionary party is the guide of the people and any revolution for which the party leads a wrong way is doomed to fail," said Mao Zedong^[1]. This view was evidenced by the new democratic revolution in China, the history of the country after the founding of New China in 1949, as well as the great practice of socialist modernization since the adoption of the reform and opening-up policy.

I think the real value of our innovations in practices and theories since the reform and opening-up is that we have found the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. In contemporary China, we will really adhere to socialism if we follow

the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

On June 24, 2013 several leaders and editors of the Foreign Languages Press asked me to write a book *The Chinese Path and the Chinese Dream* for foreigners who want to know more about Chinese. I promised with pleasure for two reasons: First, I had already written *Researching the Path of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics* and thus had laid a solid foundation for the new book; second, there have been many new ideas about this since the 18th CPC National Congress, so I felt that it was necessary to write a new book.

I should note that I have no objection to researching a “China model” nor to comprehensive discussion on the history and main characteristics of a “China model” at a right time under the circumstances of richer practices and more mature conditions. However, we should first research and expound the “Chinese Path,” because this path is dynamic in practice while the model is gradually formed in the course of development of the path.

This is the theme and origin of this book.

My Little Grandson's Question

History of the Chinese Path

Where Is the Chinese Path Heading?

Overview: The Past, Present and Future of the Chinese Path

On May 5, 2011 I gave a speech titled, “The Past, Present and Future of the Chinese Path” at the China-EU Seminar on Future Development. The speech was written for international exchanges and was of course the result of my theoretical research, but it also reflects and summarizes my life experience and feelings.

I said our seminar was designed to discuss the “future” at that time. Maybe the topic was thought up by a young man because generally speaking young people look forward to the future, middle-aged people value reality and elderly people relish the past. My topic was “The Past, Present and Future of the Chinese Path,” which may suit the interests of the young, middle-aged and elderly people.

My Little Grandson’s Question

I told a story before starting my speech. I said that when we were watching the wedding of Prince William a few days previously my little grandson asked me: “Why does Britain have a queen?” He asked this question because China had no emperor for over a century, and all modern Chinese people regard emperors and queens as ancient monarchs.

I thought of the political systems and development roads of all the countries in the world when I answered the question.

The governing party and administrators in Britain take turns, but the royal family exists permanently; the head of state, governing party and administrators also take turns in France; the head of state, governing party and administrators remain almost unchanged for decades in some states; the governing party remains unchanged and party and state leaders take turns with age limit on tenure in China. Such differences in political systems highlight the difference between the “Chinese Path” and the paths of other states on which our discussion of the “Chinese Path” today is grounded.

History of the Chinese Path

The “Chinese Path” I mean is the “path of socialism with Chinese characteristics,” which has been found by us in circuitous explorations by reflecting on the lessons of the Soviet model and summarizing our historical experience.

I say circuitous explorations because the Chinese people found this path after two explorations.

The first exploration began in 1956, when CPC leader Mao Zedong found Soviet practice did not completely accord with the actual conditions in China and saw the disadvantages of the Soviet model. He proposed at that time that we should explore

a path of socialism that met the actual conditions in China by taking the Soviet experience as a mirror. Sadly, Mao Zedong failed to persist in the exploration, and made many mistakes. But he also left us much precious ideological wealth, provided valuable experience, made theoretical preparations and laid a material foundation for our later exploration.

As a result, China began the second exploration soon after the end of the “cultural revolution,” i.e., the reform and opening-up introduced at the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee at the end of 1978. In 1982, Deng Xiaoping, chief designer of China’s reform and opening-up, inherited the cause unfinished by and precious wealth left by Mao Zedong, and proposed that “we should go our own way and build socialism with Chinese characteristics” by summarizing the historical experience of socialist construction in China and other countries. Since then, China has unremittingly explored this path and made remarkable achievements in the face of profound and complicated changes in both the domestic and international situations.

This is the origin and background of the “Chinese path” that is being discussed by many people around the world.

In the 21st century, Chinese society shows many characteristics of a new stage, and China stands at a new historical starting point of reform and opening-up. China is making new efforts while following its unique development road.