

## *Original Paper*

# China's Experience in Reform and Opening up for Forty Years

Ma Xiaoshuang<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Academy of Marxism, Jiangsu University, Zhenjiang, China

\* Ma Xiaoshuang, Academy of Marxism, Jiangsu University, Zhenjiang, China

Received: November 7, 2018 Accepted: November 14, 2018 Online Published: November 21, 2018

doi:10.22158/wjssr.v5n4p335

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/wjssr.v5n4p335>

### **Abstract**

*In December 1978, after the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Party, China entered a new era of reform and opening up. It has been for forty years, and has accumulated richly in the process of exploration and development in these forty years. Faced with the new tasks and new demands put forward by the new era, China has embarked on a new journey. The construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics needs to be further promoted. Reform and opening up is still the source of vitality for the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. We should profoundly summarize and give full play to the experience of the fortieth anniversary of reform and opening up, hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, implement new development concepts, and constantly promote the development of the cause of reform and opening up.*

### **Keywords**

*Reform and Opening up, socialism with Chinese characteristics, basic experience*

### **1. Introduction**

Forty years since the reform and opening up, China has achieved great achievements in socialist construction, and the Chinese nation has realized a transition from poverty and backwardness to a socialist power. All these achievements stem from our party's unswervingly taking the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized: "Reform and opening up is a new great revolution led by the party under the new historical conditions and is the key choice for determining the contemporary Chinese national movement. The reason why socialism with Chinese characteristics has a vital vitality lies in the implementation of socialism in reform and opening up. China's rapid development over the past 30 years relies on reform and opening up, and China's future development must also unswervingly rely on reform and opening up. Only reform and opening up can develop China, develop socialism, and develop Marxism". Profoundly summarizing and studying the valuable experience and ideological and theoretical achievements of the 40 years of reform and

opening up, has important theoretical significance for further developing socialism with Chinese characteristics, promoting reform and opening up in the new era, and continuously achieving new achievements in socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. Realistic meaning.

## **2. The Historical Context of the 40 Years of Reform and Opening up**

When we first entered socialism, China's economy and culture were relatively backward, which made the task of building socialism arduous and arduous. The end of the "Cultural Revolution" has made Chinese society face a critical choice on the way forward, that is, to continue to take the road of closed and rigid or to explore a new path of modernization. The party's second-generation central leadership collective with Comrade Deng Xiaoping as the core has made a great decision on reform and opening up on the basis of accurately grasping the development trend of the world and the actual situation facing China. Therefore, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Party has also become the starting point for China to enter a new era of reform and opening up.

### *2.1 The Preliminary Exploration Stage of Reform and Opening up*

The Third Plenary Session of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to Deng Xiaoping's Southern Talks is the initial stage of China's reform and opening up. The key task of this stage is to break through the traditional socialist model and break the structure of a single ownership economic system. China's reform and opening up has started from the most basic aspects. Breaking out egalitarianism, removing the requirements that are incompatible with the development of productive forces, and the planned economic system that constrains the development of productive forces have become top priorities. After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Communist Party of China led the country to explore economic system reform in practice. The rural areas promote the development of productive forces by implementing the household contract responsibility system; in the cities, they encourage the production enthusiasm of enterprise employees by expanding the autonomy of enterprises. At the same time, a major sign of opening up to the outside world is the establishment of special economic zones and steady implementation.

After the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, it was the stage of China's full implementation of reform and opening up. Exploring the new economic system to meet the development requirements of productive forces has become the primary task of this stage. The Third Plenary Session of the 12th CPC Central Committee put forward the argument that "China's socialist economy is a planned commodity economy based on public ownership". It is this assertion that laid a solid foundation for China's reform of the socialist market economic system. Theoretical basis. Later, China began to shift the focus of economic restructuring from rural to urban areas, and the degree of openness to the outside world was further expanded. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the situation at

home and abroad changed drastically, and China's reform and opening up also faced serious challenges.

### *2.2 The Comprehensive Acceleration Phase of Reform and Opening up*

The period when Deng Xiaoping's southern talks to the 16th National Party Congress was a period of comprehensive speed-up of reform and opening up, the focus of which was to establish the goals and models of economic system reform, that is, how to correctly understand and deal with the relationship between market and plan. In 1992, Deng Xiaoping published a series of important speeches in the southern talks based on the relatively stagnant state of reform and opening up, and proposed the theory of socialist essence. This argument effectively liberated people's thoughts and expanded new ideas. It is the guidance of Deng Xiaoping's southern talks that China has opened a new phase of comprehensive acceleration of reform and opening up.

Deng Xiaoping made a profound statement in the talks in the South: "The planned economy is not equal to socialism, and capitalism has plans; the market economy is not equal to capitalism, and socialism also has markets. Both plans and markets are economic instruments". In order to establish the ideological and theoretical basis for the establishment of China's economic system reform goals at the 14th National Party Congress. The "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Several Issues Concerning the Establishment of a Socialist Market Economic System" adopted by the Third Plenary Session of the 14th CPC Central Committee further promoted the progress of China's all-round system reform. At the same time, China's opening up to the outside world has gradually formed an all-round, multi-level pattern of wide areas. The 15th National Congress of the Communist Party of China first proposed the concept of "Deng Xiaoping Theory", which fundamentally explained the basic program of the primary stage of socialism and pointed out the direction for exploring various forms of realization of public ownership. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, China initially established a socialist market economic system and realized the first two steps in the "three-step" strategy in advance, that is, the first step, from 1981 to 1990, the realization of the gross national product was more than that in 1980. Some times, to solve the problem of people's food and clothing; the second step, from 1991 to the end of the twentieth century, the gross national product has doubled, and people's lives have reached a comfortable level.

### *2.3 The In-Depth Development Stage of Reform and Opening up*

From the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China is a crucial period for China's reform and opening up and a stage of in-depth development. Perfecting the socialist market economic system has become the primary goal of this period. Facing the reality that the people's living standards have reached a moderately prosperous society in general, our party has further proposed the goal of building a well-off society in an all-round way. The Party Central Committee firmly grasps the opportunities of China in the development process and unswervingly promotes the development of the cause of reform and opening up.

#### *2.4 The Comprehensive Deepening Stage of Reform and Opening up*

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, China has launched a new situation of comprehensively deepening reforms. The reforms have been carried out in a shallow, deep and comprehensive manner. General Secretary Xi Jinping shoulders the arduous task of comprehensively deepening reforms. He personally serves as the head of the comprehensive deepening reform team of the central government, and clarifies the basic issues of the direction, objectives, main body and path of reform, and focuses on the most prominent and typical problems that constrain economic and social development. We will build a reform framework with leading roles in various fields, and comprehensively open supply-side structural reforms; strengthen the reform of state-owned enterprises, improve the state-owned assets supervision system, develop a mixed-ownership economy, and strengthen financial system reform. On the political front, we will accelerate the institutionalization, proceduralization, and standardization of socialist democratic politics, so that the rule of law will be steadily advanced and the people's democracy will be more comprehensive and extensive. We will comprehensively strengthen the party's self-construction, purify the party's internal organization environment, strengthen grassroots organization construction, and comprehensively promote reforms in the organizational system, cadre personnel system, and talent development system, and strengthen the establishment of the party's internal supervision system. In the social field, the people's livelihood reform has been strengthened. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, a series of major reform measures have been introduced to protect the people, and the reforms in the fields of ecological environment, old-age care, medical care, and education have been tightened. The scope of reform involves a wide range, deepening, and implementation. Strong and earnestly increase the people's sense of well-being and gain.

### **3. Basic Experience of Reform and Opening up for Forty Years**

During the 40 years of reform and opening up, China has consistently combined Marxist theory with China's concrete reality, constantly exploring and answering "what is socialism, how to build socialism", "what kind of party to build, how to build the party". "The theoretical and practical issues concerning China's most fundamental development have made Marxism and the cause of socialism flourish in China, fully developed and perfected the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and constantly created more valuable and valuable experiences".

#### *3.1 Adhere to the Party's Ideological Line and not Waver*

The party's ideological line is the party's guiding ideology and action guide, which determines the party's political line and various principles and policies. The further development of reform and opening up plays a decisive role in the enrichment and development of the party's ideological line. After the "Cultural Revolution", Deng Xiaoping led the whole party to grasp the ideological line of

chaos, and at the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Party Central Committee established the ideological line of emancipating the mind and seeking truth from facts. After that, people deeply realized the development of Marxism. Combining with the characteristics of China's times and the staged features of socialist development, it constantly develops Marxist theory in practice. Seeking truth from facts has become the ideological line that China's successive central leadership groups have always adhered to and grasped. They have closely integrated Marxism with the reality of China, especially since the party's 18th National Congress, with the central party of General Secretary Xi Jinping as the core, insisting Emancipating the mind, seeking truth from facts, and using constant political strength and a strong sense of responsibility, innovating and breaking through in the process of comprehensively deepening the reform, has brought about historic changes in the cause of the party and the state. The practice of forty years has fully proved that the Chinese Communist Party has achieved great achievements in reform and opening up because it has continuously enriched and developed its ideological line, emancipated its mind, and boldly explored it.

### *3.2 Based on Grasping China's Basic National Conditions*

The first generation of the party's leading collectives had many twists and turns in the process of socialist construction, and many detours were taken because they did not correctly grasp China's basic national conditions and did not proceed from the actual situation in China to propose policies and policies that conformed to the state of social development at that time. General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed that China will be and will be in the primary stage of socialism for a long time. It is based on the re-recognition and accurate grasp of the basic national conditions of contemporary China. It is therefore scientific and realistic with the development of Chinese society. Matching is also the basis and driving force for continuously promoting China's reform and opening up. Abandoning the wrong thinking of the socialist system and overcoming misconceptions and policies that are incompatible with the development of the times are the reasons why China has achieved a series of great achievements in the past 40 years of reform and opening up. The practice in the past 40 years has proved that only by firmly grasping China's current basic national conditions and building socialism with Chinese characteristics in a down-to-earth manner can our party continue to promote the development of reform and opening up and achieve brilliant achievements.

### *3.3 Based on the Fundamental Interests of the People*

Marxist historical materialism holds that the masses of the people are the decisive force for social development. In 1978, the decision of the Communist Party of China to reform and open up was to meet the enthusiastic expectations of the people and to safeguard the fundamental interests of the people. In the past 40 years, the reform and opening up has always taken the ardent expectations of the people as the fundamental direction and the power of the people as the fundamental driving force for reform. Since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of

China, it is precisely because of the fundamental interests of the people that the reform and opening up can promote the continuous development of the cause of reform and achieve great achievements. Practice has proved that the strategic decision-making of reform and opening up is in the fundamental interests of the people, exerts the main role of the people, and has withstood the test of the people, so that our party can continuously promote the development of reform and opening up.

#### *3.4 Strengthening the Party's Own Construction Is a Guarantee*

The process of socialist reform is huge and systematic. Only a strong core of leadership can promote the smooth development of reform. The Chinese Communist Party has proved through practice that it can shoulder this historical responsibility. China's socialist reform, starting from a highly centralized planning system and backward productivity, is a revolution in the self-improvement and development of the socialist system, which is profound and complicated. Therefore, it was decided that the reform must firmly rely on the leadership of the party and be carried out in a planned and orderly manner under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The important guarantee for the leadership reform of the Communist Party of China is to strengthen its own quality, strengthen its own construction, and constantly become a strong core of leadership. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping has advocated strengthening inner-party supervision, upholding the party's ability to govern the party, comprehensively and strictly administering the party, adhering to the ideological and institutional combination of building the party and the party, and earnestly grasping the organization, discipline, and work style, and strengthening The building of a clean government and the fight against corruption have made great achievements in the process of self-construction of the party.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In the past 40 years, China's reform and opening up has made great achievements. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China: "Socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era, which is a new historical orientation for China's development". This assertion marks that China is transforming from being rich to strengthening, indicating that China is in a critical period of reform, and the new era is a key node for the comprehensive construction of a socialist modernization power. The historical experience of the 40 years of reform and opening up tells us that we must unswervingly promote reform and opening up and carry out reform and opening up to the end. In the new era, China must conform to the current trend of the world, and always clearly understand the main contradictions of Chinese society, and promote the comprehensive transformation and upgrading of reform and opening up in comprehensive and deepening reforms.

## References

- Hu, A. G. (2017). The primary stage of socialism: the first half and five stages. *Journal of Sichuan University (Philosophy and Science Edition)*, 2.
- Nie, Q. Y. (2018). On the Historical Process and Basic Experience of the 40 Years of Reform and Opening-up. *Studies on Mao Zedong Thought*, 35, 109-114.
- Wen, F. A. (2018). The Party's Construction, Experience and Realistic Enlightenment in the 40 Years of Reform and Opening-up. *Journal of the Party School of Fujian Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China*, 8, 33-40.
- Xi, J. P. (2013). To fully implement the spirit of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, we must focus on six aspects of work. *Qiushi*, 1, 3-7.
- Xi, J. P. (2017). *Report on the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China [EB/OL]*. Xinhuanet.

## Biography

Ma Xiaoshuang (1993- ), female, Shangqiu, Henan, graduate student of Marxism college, Jiangsu University, mainly engaged in the study of Marxism in China.