

## Speech at the Conference Celebrating the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Marx's Birth

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Comrades,

Today, we gather here filled with reverence to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx, remember his strong character and historical achievements, and review his eminent spirit and brilliant ideas.

Marx is the revolutionary leader of the proletariat and the working people the world over, the principal founder of Marxism, the founder of Marxist parties and of the international communist movement, and the greatest thinker of the modern era. Two centuries have passed, during which human society has undergone massive and profound changes. However, Marx's name continues to be met with respect around the world, and Marx's theories continue to emanate their brilliant rays of truth.

On May 5, 1818, Marx was born in Trier, Germany, into a lawyer's household. As early as his middle school years, Marx aspired to work toward human happiness. During his university years, Marx undertook extensive and intensive studies into philosophy, history, and law in pursuit of the secrets underlying the development of human society. When he was working for the Rheinische Zeitung newspaper, Marx wrote incisive articles attacking the autocratic rule of the Prussian government and defending the rights of the people. In 1843, after he moved to Paris, Marx became an active participant in the workers' movement. In the course of his participation he brought together revolutionary practice with theoretical inquiry, thus completing his shift from idealist to materialist and from revolutionary democrat to communist. In 1845, Marx and Engels coauthored *The German Ideology*, which was the first relatively systematic elaboration of the basic principles of historical materialism. In 1848, Marx and Engels coauthored *Manifesto of the Communist Party* – which, once published, immediately shook the world. Of *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Engels said that it is “the most widespread, the most international production of all socialist literature, the common platform acknowledged by millions of workingmen from Siberia to California.”

In 1848, as the bourgeois democratic revolution sweeping across Europe erupted, Marx threw himself into and guided this struggle. Following the failure of the revolution, Marx reviewed the lessons learned from the revolution and subjected them to a systematic politico-economic analysis, thus revealing the nature and patterns governing capitalism. In 1867, *Capital* was published, which is his most profound and fecund work, and which has been honored as the “Bible of the working class.” In his later years, Marx continued to closely watch new trends in global development and new events in the workers' movement, making great efforts at reflecting on issues concerning human development from an even greater viewpoint.

Marx's life was a life of harboring lofty ideals and of dedication to the struggle for the emancipation of humankind. In 1835, a 17-year-old Marx wrote a high-school graduation composition

entitled “Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession” in which he wrote, “If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burdens can bow us down, because they are sacrifices for the benefit of all; then we shall experience no petty, limited, selfish joy, but our happiness will belong to millions, our deeds will live on quietly but perpetually be at work, and over our ashes will be shed the hot tears of noble people.” Throughout his life, Marx encountered hardships from an errant life and suffered poverty and illness, yet he stayed the course, never swayed from his original aspiration, dedicated himself to the lofty ideal of the emancipation of humankind, and accomplished a life of greatness.

Marx’s life was a life of defiance in the face of hardships and of bravely scaling new intellectual heights in search of truth. Marx once wrote that, “There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits.” In founding his scientific theoretical system, Marx endured hardships unimaginable to most ordinary people until ultimately arriving at the luminous summit. Being well-read and erudite, he not only thoroughly understood and studied the scholarship of all disciplines of philosophy and the social sciences, but also that of a range of natural sciences, diligently working to draw pabulum from the civilizational achievements of all of humankind. Throughout his life, Marx selflessly dedicated himself to his work, regularly working sixteen hours a day. Of his work *Capital*, Marx once wrote a letter to his friend saying that, “I was perpetually hovering on the verge of the grave. Therefore I had to use every moment in which I was capable of work in order that I might finish the task.” Despite constant illness in his later years, Marx still continued to stride toward new scientific fields and objectives, and he wrote an immense number of scientific manuscripts in the fields of history, humanities, and mathematics. Just as Engels said, “In every single field which Marx investigated – and he investigated very many fields, none of them superficially – in every field, even in that of mathematics, he made independent discoveries.”

Marx’s life was a life of ceaseless fighting to topple the old world and create it anew. As Engels said, “Marx was before all else a revolutionist... Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity, and a success such as few could rival.” Marx’s lifelong mission was to struggle for the emancipation of humankind. In order to change the people’s lot of suffering exploitation and oppression, Marx threw himself without hesitation into the dynamic worker’s movement, always standing at the vanguard of the revolutionary fight. Under his leadership, the Communist League was founded in 1847, which was the world’s first proletarian party, and he led the International Workingmen’s Association which was the world’s first international workers’ organization. He also zealously supported the Commune of Paris, the first revolution in which the working class seized political power, and fervently and unrelentingly drove the development of the workers’ movement across the world.

Marx was a great man of indomitable spirit, yet he was also a man of flesh and blood. He loved life, and was sincere, honest, sentimental, and fair-minded. Marx and Engels’ revolutionary friendship lasted for 40 years. Just as Lenin once said that, “Old legends contain various moving instances of friendship,” but that Marx and Engel’s friendship “surpasses the most moving stories of the ancients about human friendship.” Marx unselfishly financed the revolutionary cause; even during the most difficult times of his

life he gave his utmost to help his revolutionary comrades-in-arms. Marx and his wife, Jenny, endured these hardships together, composing a providential symphony of ideals and love.

Comrades,

The most valuable and influential legacy which Marx left for us is the theory that has been named after him – Marxism. This theory is just like a magnificent sunrise, illuminating the road on which humankind explores the patterns of history and seeks its own emancipation.

As Marx once famously noted, “The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism of the weapon, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses.” Marxism is chiefly composed of three parts: philosophy, political economy, and scientific socialism. Taken separately, these parts originate from German classical philosophy, British classical political economy, and French utopian socialism. However, the fundamental reason these ultimately sublimated into Marxism was due to Marx’s penetrating observations of the world and age in which he lived, and his profound ken of the patterns underlying the development of human society. As Marx wrote, “The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes.”

It is only by considering the long course of human history that we can gain a perspective on the essence of historical movements and the direction of contemporary developments. Marx’s scientific research was just as Lenin described, “He critically reshaped everything that had been created by human society, without ignoring a single detail. He reconsidered, subjected to criticism, and verified on the working-class movement everything that human thinking had created, and therefrom formulated conclusions which people hemmed in by bourgeois limitations or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw.” Marx’s ideas and theories originated from those times and also transcended them; his ideas and theories were both the apotheosis of the spirit of the times and the epitome of the spirit of the people.

Marxism is a scientific theory; it artfully reveals the patterns underlying the development of human society. Utopian socialists had existed long prior to the time in which Marx raised his ideas on scientific socialism; they bemoaned society’s ills and had many fine ideas concerning the ideal society. However, as they did not grasp the patterns underlying the development of society, they had not found an effective way to realize their ideals, and consequently their ideas had no real impact on the development of society. Historical materialism and the theory of surplus value which originated from Marx brought to light the general patterns underlying the development of human society, and revealed the particular laws governing capitalist operations. These discoveries lit the way for humankind to move from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, and illuminated the path for humankind to realize liberty and emancipation.

Marxism is a people-oriented theory; it was the first system of thought to be founded so that people may achieve self-emancipation. Marxism, though wide-ranging and profound, can be summed up in a sentence – the pursuit of the emancipation of humankind. Prior to Marx, the dominant theories in society were those which served the ruling class. Marxism was the first theory to seek the way to liberty and emancipation for humankind from the perspective of the people; it uses scientific theories to demonstrate the way to the ultimate creation of an ideal society in which there is no oppression or exploitation and in which people are equal and free. The influence of Marxism spans time and borders because it is rooted in the people, and demonstrates that the right path for humankind is the path on which the people drive forward the advance of history.

Marxism is a practical theory; it guides the people in their actions to change the world. Marx once wrote that, “All social life is essentially practical,” and that, “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.” Practice and existence are the basic standpoints of Marxist epistemology, and its practicality is the distinguishing feature that sets Marxist theory apart from other theories. Marxism is not scholarship to be confined to a study, but rather it was founded so as to change the people’s lot in history. Marxism was formed, refined, and developed in practice through the pursuit of the emancipation of humankind, and it has provided a powerful source of inspiration for the people to understand and remold the world.

Marxism is an open-ended and continually developing theory; it is always at the forefront of the times. Marx admonished people over and over that Marxism is not dogma, but a guide to action that must be developed with changes in practice. The history of the development of Marxism is the history of its continued development at the hands of Marx, Engels, and their successors in accordance with developments in time, practice, and knowledge. This history is one of continued self-refinement through the absorption of all of the redoubtable cultural and intellectual achievements of human history. Therefore, Marxism is able to forever maintain its appealing youthfulness, and continue to explore new problems in contemporary developments and respond to new challenges facing humanity.

Comrades,

It has been 170 years since Manifesto of the Communist Party was published, during which time Marxism has spread extensively across the globe. In human intellectual history, there has been no other body of thought which has produced such a profound and wide-reaching influence on humankind as has Marxism.

Under Marx’s personal leadership, and under the guidance of Marxism, the “First International” and other international workers’ associations were founded and developed one after another, and which at various times guided and advanced the unity and struggles of the international workers’ movement. Under the influence of Marxism, Marxist political parties were established and developed, springing up like mushrooms across the world. This marked the first time that the people became the masters of their own destiny, that they became the fundamental political force for realizing their own emancipation and indeed that of all of humankind.

When Lenin led the October Revolution (1917) to victory, socialism transformed from theory to reality, thus breaking the global capitalist order which dominated the world. Following the close of World War II, a number of socialist countries emerged, in particular the People's Republic of China, which greatly boosted the strength of international socialism. Even though international socialism has encountered complications in its development, the overall trend in human development has not changed, nor will it change.

Marx and Engels actively supported the struggle for the emancipation of oppressed nations and people. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Marxists, as represented by Lenin, built on and further developed Marxist ethnicity theories, which guided and supported the national liberation movements in colonial and semi-colonial countries. Following the close of World War II, a great many independent and emancipated nation-states were established, thoroughly dismantling the imperialist colonial system. These events showed forth promising prospects for equal association and common development between the nations of the world.

Today, Marxism firmly advances the progress of human civilization; to this day it continues to provide theoretical and discursive systems of major international influence, and Marx to this day continues to be acknowledged as the “number one thinker of the millennium.”

Comrades,

Marxism has not only profoundly transformed the world, it has also profoundly transformed China. Over the course of several thousand years of history, the Chinese nation has produced the magnificent Chinese culture, making a weighty contribution to the progress of human civilization. Following the Opium War of 1840, the Western powers savagely blasted open China's doors with their warships and cannons, miring the Chinese nation in the tragic circumstances of domestic turmoil and foreign aggression.

The barbarous imperialist invasion and the grave suffering of the Chinese people greatly roused the interest of Marx. During the Second Opium War (1856-1860), Marx wrote over a dozen articles concerning China, exposing to the world the facts about the invasion of China at the hands of Western powers, and serving as a champion of justice for the Chinese people. To a high degree, Marx and Engels affirmed the Chinese civilization's contribution to human civilization and through scientific determination foresaw the emergence of “Chinese socialism.” In their minds, they even gave an elegant name to this ideal new China – “the Chinese republic.”

With the advent of modern times, the historic mission of the Chinese people became the pursuit of national independence and liberation, of a stronger and more prosperous country, and of their own happiness. Old-style peasant wars were carried out to no avail, self-improvement and reformist movements which did not touch the foundation of feudal rule were repeatedly rebuffed, and bourgeois-led revolutions and other attempts to copy Western capitalism one after another came to naught. After all this, it was the salvoes of the October Revolution that brought Marxism-Leninism to China,

demonstrating the way forward and offering a new choice for the Chinese people who were seeking a way to save China from subjugation.

On this great tide of history, a Marxist political party which would heroically undertake the task of national rejuvenation and surely lead the Chinese people in creating a miracle for humankind came into being – the Communist Party of China.

Following the emergence of the Communist Party of China, Chinese Communists brought together the tenets of Marxism with the practical realities of China's revolution and development. Chinese Communists united the people and led them through a protracted struggle, completed the new democratic revolution and socialist revolution, founded the People's Republic of China and the basic socialist system, and carried out challenging explorations in developing socialism. Thus, they brought about the tremendous transformation of China from being the "sick man of East Asia" to gaining independence. This transformation provided rock-solid proof that it was only socialism that could save China.

Since the launch of reform and opening up in the late 1970s, Chinese Communists have been bringing together the tenets of Marxism with the practical realities of reform and opening up. Chinese Communists brought together the people in developing the great new endeavor of socialism with Chinese characteristics, enabling China to take big strides to catch up with the times. Thus, they brought about the tremendous transformation of China from having gained independence to growing wealthy. This transformation provided rock-solid proof that only socialism with Chinese characteristics could develop China.

Today, Chinese Communists bring together the tenets of Marxism with the practical realities of China's new era. Chinese Communists are leading the people in carrying out our great struggle, developing our great project, advancing our great cause, and realizing our great dream, advancing the undertakings of the Party and the country so as to prompt historic achievements that are all-encompassing and groundbreaking and to bring about historic changes that are profound and fundamental. The Chinese people are moving into a tremendous transformation from having grown prosperous to becoming strong. This process provides solid proof that it is only by upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics that we can realize the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Experience has proven that the fate of Marxism has long been closely intertwined with that of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people, and the Chinese nation. In our country, Marxism's scientific and truthful nature has been fully tested, its humane and practical nature has been fully implemented, and its open-ended and contemporary nature has been fully demonstrated.

Experience has also proven that Marxism has provided China's revolution, development, and reform with a strong theoretical tool which has enabled China, this ancient nation of the East, to produce a development miracle unprecedented in human history. It is entirely proper that history and the people have chosen Marxism, and it is entirely proper that the Communist Party of China has inscribed Marxism

on its banner. It is also entirely proper that we continue to bring together the tenets of Marxism with China's practical realities, and continue to adapt Marxism to China's conditions and keep it current.

Marx would be comforted to know that Marxism has successfully guided China down the path toward fully developing into a great modern socialist country. As loyal believers in and staunch practitioners of Marxism, Chinese Communists are making persistent efforts to uphold and develop Marxism.

Comrades,

Engels once said that "A nation that wants to climb the pinnacles of science cannot possibly manage without theoretical thought." If we Chinese are to realize national rejuvenation, we likewise cannot possibly manage without theoretical thought. Marxism is and will continue to be the guiding theory for our Party and nation. It is the formidable theoretical tool which we use to understand the world, grasp its underlying patterns, search for its truth, and effect change.

Marxist ideas and theories are wide-ranging and profound and maintain relevance even with repeated study. In the new era, Chinese Communists still need to study Marx, study and practice Marxism, and continually draw on its powerful knowledge and theories. In this way, we will uphold and develop Chinese socialism in the new era with more resolve, confidence, and wisdom in our efforts at carrying out the coordinated advancement of the "five-pronged" overall plan and the "Four Comprehensives" strategy, thus ensuring that we always stay the course toward national rejuvenation as we break the waves and sail ahead.

Studying Marx requires the study and practice of Marxist thought on the patterns underlying the development of human society. Marx revealed through his research the inexorable trend that human society would ultimately move toward Communism. Marx and Engels firmly believed that in the society of the future "we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all," and that "the proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win." Marx firmly believed that the tide of history would only surge forward once the people became the masters of themselves, society, and human development, and with this the ideal of Communism would necessarily be realized by degrees through the extant conditions of continuous change. Marxism established the theoretical foundation for the unwavering ideals and convictions of Communists. We need to have a complete mastery of the worldviews and methodologies of dialectical and historical materialism, and fully understand that realizing Communism is a historical process involving the step-by-step achievement of milestones. We need to bring together the noble ideal of Communism with the shared ideal of Chinese socialism and the endeavors in which we are currently engaged, remain confident in the path, theory, system, and culture of Chinese socialism, and adhere to the ideals and beliefs of Chinese Communists. We need to be like Marx, and strive for Communism throughout our lives.

Studying Marx requires the study and practice of Marxist thought on upholding the position of the people. An affinity with the people is Marxism's most distinctive character. According to Marx, historical

action is the action of the masses. Enabling the people to gain their emancipation was Marx's life pursuit. We must always ensure that our basic position is that of the people, and that we strive for the wellbeing of the people as our fundamental mission, remain committed to the fundamental principle of wholeheartedly serving the people, and carry out the mass line. We must also respect the principal position of the people and the creativity of the people, forever maintain close ties with them, channel our strength into an impenetrable great wall, and unite the people and lead them in moving history forward. This is the inevitable choice which respects the patterns of history, and it is the responsibility undertaken by communists on our own initiative in staying true to our founding mission.

Studying Marx requires the study and practice of Marxist thought on the forces and relations of production. Marxism holds that the material forces of production form the material prerequisites for all social existence, and that the totality of these relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of the material forces of production constitutes the economic foundation of society. The forces of production are the most dynamic and revolutionary factors driving social progress. "The multitude of productive forces accessible to men determines the nature of society." The mutual interactions and constraints between the forces and relations of production and between the economic foundation and the superstructure govern the whole course of social development. Unleashing and developing the national forces of production is a fundamental task of socialism; it is also a major concern which Chinese Communists continue to explore and work hard to resolve. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, and especially since reform and opening up, within 70 years our Party has led the people in resolute efforts at unleashing and developing national forces of production and completed a process of development that took the West several centuries to complete, thus propelling our country's high-speed rise to become the world's second largest economy. We need to have the courage to deepen reform in all areas, rouse the vitality of the national forces of production via balancing the relations of production, and adapt to the requirements of developing the economic foundation via improving the superstructure. By doing so, we will ensure that the development of Chinese socialism better conforms with the patterns governing the forces and relations of production.

Studying Marx requires the study and practice of Marxist thought on the people's democracy. As Marx and Engels noted, "The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority," "that the working class, once come to power, could not go on managing with the old state machine," it must "[shatter]...the former state power and... [replace it with] a new and truly democratic one." State organs must change from controlling the public to serving them, and accept public oversight. We need to keep to the socialist path of political advancement with Chinese characteristics, and drive the development of China's socialist democracy while remaining committed to the smooth integration of Party leadership, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance. We also need to strengthen institutional guarantees for the running of the country by the people, hasten the modernization of China's governance system and capacity, give full play to the people's enthusiasm, initiative, and creativity, and more firmly and effectively implement a people's democracy.

Studying Marx requires the study and practice of Marxist thought on cultural advancement. Marx believed that, given different economic and social environments, the people would produce different ideas and culture. Even though ideas and culture are determined by the economic foundation, they also react with it. Once advanced ideas and culture are apprehended by the masses, they transform into a formidable material force; conversely, if outmoded or erroneous ideas are not done away with, they become fetters on social development. Theoretical awareness and cultural confidence are a force for national progress; advanced values and a free mind are the source of social vitality. Culture both transforms and fashions the spirit of a nation. While remaining grounded in China's realities, our nation must embrace modernization, the world, and the future. We must consolidate the position of Marxism as our guiding thought, develop an advanced socialist culture, and strengthen observance of socialist cultural and ethical standards. We must also see that all areas of social development are imbued with core socialist values, promote the creative transformation and innovative development of our fine traditional culture, help our people raise their political awareness and moral standards, and foster appreciation of fine culture. By doing so, we will continue to add new luster to Chinese culture.

Studying Marx requires us to study and practice Marxist thought on social advancement. Marx and Engels envisaged that in the society of the future "production will be calculated to provide wealth for all," and it would feature "the participation of all in the enjoyments provided by all." Engels integrated a series of views raised by Marx in Manifesto of the Communist Party, Critique of the Gotha Program, Capital, and other works, clarifying how, under the conditions of socialism, society should "give healthy and useful labor to all, ample wealth and leisure to all, and the truest and fullest freedom to all." The people yearn for a better life, and our goal is to help them achieve it. We need to remain committed to our people-centered philosophy of development, focus on the most pressing and most immediate issues that concern the people the most, and constantly secure and improve standards of living for the people. We need to promote social fairness and justice, ensure access to a higher level of childcare, education, employment, medical services, elderly care, housing, and social assistance, and see that the gains of reform and development benefit all our people in a fair way. By doing so, we will promote well-rounded human development and achieve shared prosperity for everyone.

Studying Marx requires us to study and practice Marxist thought on the relationship between people and nature. Marx understood that "Man lives from nature," that nature not only provides humans with the source of the means of existence such as soils which are fertile, and rivers, lakes, and oceans which are teeming with fish, but it also provides humans with the source of the means of production. The natural world constitutes the natural conditions in which humans exist. If we humans treat nature well as we produce, live, and develop alongside it, nature will bestow its gifts upon us; however, "if man, by dint of his knowledge and inventive genius, has subdued the forces of nature, the latter avenge themselves upon him." Nature is the mother of life, humans and nature form a biotic community, and humanity must revere and respect nature, follow its ways, and protect it. We need to ensure harmony between humans and nature, firmly realize that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets and conscientiously act on this understanding, mobilize all sectors of society to build an ecological civilization, and build a beautiful China together. By doing so, we will ensure that the people appreciate the beauty of nature, life, and existence as they live among lucid waters and lush mountains, and pursue

a model of sustainable development featuring increased production, higher living standards, and healthy ecosystems.

Studying Marx requires us to study and practice Marxist thought on world history. Marx and Engels once said that, “The more the original isolation of separate nationalities is destroyed by the developed mode of production, commerce, and division of labor between various nations naturally brought forth by these, the more does history become world history.” Marx and Engels’ prediction of those years has since become a reality; history and reality increasingly prove the scientific value of this prediction. Today, the global nature of human association is more profound and extensive than ever before, and the interlinking and interdependence between countries are more frequent and intimate than ever before. We live in a united world; whoever rejects this world will also be rejected by it. Living things that are nourished will not injure one another; roads that run parallel will not interfere with one another. We need to stand at the perspective of world history and examine the development trends and the problems we face in the world today, continue to pursue a path of peaceful development, an independent foreign policy of peace, and a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up. We need to continue to expand cooperation with all other countries, take an active part in the global governance system, and realize mutually beneficial cooperation and shared development in more fields and to a higher level, and we must not submit to others and even less so plunder others. In this way, we can work with the people of all other countries to build a community with a shared future for humanity and create a more beautiful world.

Studying Marx requires us to study and practice Marxist thought on developing a Marxist political party. Marx recognized that, “In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole,” and that “they have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole,” but instead work “in the interest of the immense majority,” and strive to build a communist society. A communist party must “set up before the whole world landmarks by which it measures the level of the Party movement.” The basic difference between a Marxist political party and other political parties is that the former always stands with the people and fights for their interests. We need to coordinate our great struggle, great project, great cause, and great dream, and strengthen our consciousness of the need to maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, follow the leadership core, and keep in alignment. We need to continue to drive ahead full and strict governance over the Party, give top priority to consolidating the Party politically, uphold and strengthen overall Party leadership, and uphold the authority of the Central Committee and its centralized, unified leadership. We need to uphold truth and correct errors, forever preserve the political character of Communists, and build the Party into a vibrant Marxist governing party that is always at the forefront of the times, enjoys the wholehearted support of the people, has the courage to reform itself, and is able to withstand all tests.

Comrades,

The Communist Party of China is a party which arms itself with Marxism; Marxism is the soul of the ideals and convictions of Chinese Communists. In 1938, Mao noted that, “Our Party’s fighting capacity

will be much greater if there are one or two hundred comrades with a grasp of Marxism-Leninism which is systematic and not fragmentary, genuine and not hollow.”

Reflecting on the course of the Party’s struggles reveals that one of the important reasons that the Communist Party of China has been able to continue to grow in the face of difficulties and hardships is that our Party continues to highly value being well-grounded in both thinking and theory. This has ensured that the whole Party is united in thought, steadfast of will, coordinated in action, and formidable in strength.

At present, the importance of reform, development, and stability, the number of contradictions, risks, and challenges, and the tests of our capacity to govern are all at an unprecedented level. It is essential that we continually improve our ability to utilize Marxism to analyze and resolve practical problems, and continually improve our ability to utilize scientific theories to guide us in responding to major challenges, withstanding major risks, overcoming major obstacles, addressing major contradictions, and resolving major problems; doing so will enable us to gain the upper hand, seize the initiative, and secure our future. In this way, we can reflect on and fully grasp a range of major issues facing China’s future development from a broader and longer-term perspective, and continually strengthen belief in Marxism and the ideals of communism.

It has been 170 years since the publication of Manifesto of the Communist Party, during which time earthshaking changes have occurred in human society. However, on the whole, the general principles which Marxism sets forth are still entirely valid. We need to uphold and apply the worldviews and methodologies of dialectical and historical materialism, Marxist standpoints, viewpoints, and methods, and Marxist views on the materiality of the world and the patterns underlying development. We must also heed the principles such as the natural and historic significance of the development of human society and related laws, the laws governing human emancipation and the full and free development of every individual, and the essence of knowledge and the laws governing its development. In this light, we need to uphold and apply Marxist views on practice, the people, class, development, and contradiction, and truly master and apply well these key skills.

All comrades of our Party, especially officials at all levels, must do more and work harder at studying Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents, and the Scientific Outlook on Development, and the Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. All comrades must study these thoroughly, painstakingly, and assiduously, apply their studies to problems, and link their studies to reality so as to better transform scientific ideas and theories into a material force for understanding and changing the world. We Communists must read Marxist classics and understand Marxist principles as a way of life and a spiritual pursuit, and apply the classics to foster our integrity, temper our intellects, expand our horizons, and guide our practice.

Approaching scientific theories requires a scientific attitude. Engels once made the profound point that, “Marx’s whole way of thinking is not so much a doctrine as a method. It provides not so much ready-made dogmas, as aids to further investigation and the method for such investigation.” Engels also noted that theories “[are] a historical product, which at different times assumes very different forms and,

therewith, very different contents.” The basic principles of scientific socialism cannot be discarded; once discarded it would cease to be socialism. Likewise, scientific socialism is not an immutable dogma. I once said that China’s great social transformation is not a masterplate from which we simply continue our history and culture, nor a pattern from which we mechanically apply the ideas of classic Marxist authors, nor a reprint of the practice of socialism in other countries, nor a duplicate of modernization from abroad. There is no orthodox, immutable version of socialism. It is only by closely linking the basic principles of scientific socialism with a country’s specific realities, history, cultural traditions, and contemporary needs, and by continually conducting inquiries and reviews in the practice of socialism, that a blueprint can become a bright reality.

The vitality of theory is in its continued innovation, and promoting the continued development of Marxism is the sacred duty of Chinese Communists. We need to be persistent in wielding Marxism to observe and decipher the world today and lead us through it, applying the lively and plentiful experiences drawn from contemporary China to drive the development of Marxism, and utilizing an extensive worldview to draw on the civilizational achievements of all of humankind. We need to be persistent in protecting our foundations while constantly innovating to continually outdo ourselves, and learning widely from the strengths of others to continually improve ourselves. Finally, we need to continually further our understanding of the laws that underlie governance by a communist party, the development of socialism, and the evolution of human society, and open up new prospects for the development of Marxism in today’s China and the 21st century.

Comrades,

Today, we are commemorating Marx to pay our respects to the greatest thinker in human history, and to proclaim our firm belief in the scientific truth of Marxism.

Engels once said that, “The prospect of a gigantic revolution, the most gigantic revolution that has ever taken place, accordingly presents itself to us as soon as we pursue our materialist thesis further and apply it to the present time.” On the road ahead, we must continue to uphold Marxism, and ensure that the wondrous prospects which Marx and Engels envisaged for human society perpetually unfold across China.