

Good Life and Value Leadership

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Abstract: The way of human existence is to live meaningfully. A good life fundamentally reflects a harmonious and beautiful way of existence and state of being. People's need for a good life is not only a question of how to meet that demand, but also of how to guide it correctly. The new era of good life is a lifestyle that abandons and transcends modernity, highlighting the human orientation of socialist modernization and manifesting the people-centered practical purpose and value implications.

Keywords: Needs; Good life; Value leadership

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1. Introduction

The way of human existence is to live meaningfully. The increasing diversification of needs inevitably changes the meaning of life from satisfying material needs to pursuing the satisfaction of social and spiritual needs, which not only reflects the original intention and mission of the Communist Party of China, but also fully embodies the essential attributes and value aspirations of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, as well as puts forward clear development directions and requirements for the realization of people's all-round development and society's all-round progress. The restoration of socialist ideology to the realm of everyday existence entails the integration of the advocated core values into people's everyday production and spiritual world, truly allowing people to perceive it, comprehend it, and accept it in practice, thus achieving the effect of subtle and silent embellishment. Therefore, we should not only strive to meet the growing needs of the people for a better life, but also appropriately direct such needs.

2. Human needs and their values

Man is not only a natural existence, but also has social attribute. Man is a living existence with objective needs. Needs are the intrinsic regulations of human life activities, in which all activities are designed to satisfy their needs. Every human trait, behavior, or desire is transformed into a need ^[1]. Therefore, human needs and the satisfaction of needs are the basis for the existence and development of society as well as the fundamental motive of social and historical development.

2.1. Needs are human nature

Man, as a consciously active organism and a social being, must exchange matter, energy, and information with the outside world for the continuity and development of life. In Marx's view, the needs of human beings differ from those of animals: "Individuals have always and in all circumstances 'proceeded from themselves,' but because they were not unique in the sense of not needing any connections with one another,

and since their needs, consequently their nature, and the method of satisfying their needs, connected them with one another (relations between the sexes, exchange, division of labor), they had to enter into relations with one another ^[2].” Therefore, human beings are not only material beings with survival needs, physiological needs, and security needs, but also social and spiritual beings with aesthetic needs, intellectual needs, development needs, and respect needs. Maslow divided human needs into five levels from the perspective of psychology: physiological needs, security needs, social needs, respect needs, and self-actualization needs. Marx, on the other hand, divided human needs into three levels from the perspective of historical materialist anthropology: survival needs, enjoyment needs, and developmental needs. According to Marx, “survival needs” are the most basic human needs because “the first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus, the first fact to be established is the physical organization of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature ^[3].” However, if human beings simply rely on the satisfaction of survival needs or take them as the ultimate and only purpose, detaching themselves from the other spheres of human activity, they are only performing “animal functions” ^[4]. In fact, in addition to survival needs, human beings have enjoyment needs and developmental needs. Compared with survival needs, enjoyment needs are richer and more diverse, including both, material and spiritual enjoyment. Developmental needs are considered as advanced needs, which cross the domains of human from animal to social attributes and serve as evidence of human’s essential power.

2.2. Human needs are infinitely rich and expandable

For Marx, needs are constantly satisfied with the development of the productive forces of human society. The history of social production is also the history of the constant satisfaction of human needs. Human needs and enjoyment are produced by society; therefore, they are measured by society, not by the goods that satisfy them ^[5]. Moreover, with the development of social production practices, the width and breadth of human needs will continue to expand. In primitive society, due to the backwardness of productivity and the lack of social products, human needs and the way to satisfy them were relatively single, and human desires and needs could not be satisfied. With the development of private ownership and social division of labor, both, labor and human needs are alienated; human beings are also alienated as tools to obtain private profit and dominate others. This mode of production, driven by capital logic, adds value to capital by constantly opening up new products to stimulate the desire for new needs, and human needs are distorted and alienated by the domination of capital. Labor would not become the first need of life and man would not fully become a free and complete being until a point where productive forces are highly developed and the opposition between mental and physical labor ends, which fully reflects the advanced stage of a communist society. In this way, man takes possession of his full essence in a comprehensive way, as a complete person.

2.3. Human needs are proactive and creative

While the needs of animals are purely natural and a reflection of instinct, the needs of human beings are not merely intrinsic instincts, but rather a proactive approach to creating new needs and ways of satisfying themselves. According to Hegel, animal uses a limited set of means and methods to satisfy its equally limited needs, but man, although also subjected to such limitations, confirms his ability to transcend them and his universality ^[6]. When man takes the step of producing his own means of living, he is no longer an animal that has instinctive, direct, and natural needs, but rather exists as a free conscious activity in the “practice–need” cycle and in the process of continuous development. It is through one’s own consciousness and active creativity that one produces and innovates new needs and ways of satisfying them. In other words, in order to achieve the satisfaction of one’s own needs, it is necessary to give full play to one’s subjective

initiative and active creativity, so as to achieve one's goals through practice and hard work.

3. Human needs and value pursuit

Marx pointed out that philosophy is not just about explaining the world, but more importantly, about transforming it. What kind of a world is being transformed? Or what kind of world should it be? This requires certain value orientation and value goal as a guide to make the transformed world meet the needs of human beings. Value is a category characterizing the relationship between subject and object under certain socio-historical conditions, reflecting the significance of the object to meet the needs of the subject, as well as being the unity of objectification of the subject and subjectification of the object.

First of all, value embodies a relational category. Value does not exist from the beginning but is produced from the relationship of satisfying people's needs, reflecting the subject-object relationship, characterized by the subject's inner scale. On the one hand, the subject transforms the object according to the needs of the subject and the scale of the subject to meet the material and spiritual needs of the subject. On the other hand, the object, after being known and transformed by the subject, acquires the value meaning needed for the subject. Therefore, the essence of value lies in the unity of subjectivity and objectivity. Without the existence of the object, the objective basis of value is lost. Similarly, without the needs of the subject, the object is just an existence in itself, and the value of its existence cannot be determined. "Value cannot be formed only by the needs of the subject or by the properties and functions of the object ^[7]."

Second, value is generated in practice. In Marx's view, practice is fundamental to man becoming human, and it is in the practice of life that the interactive relationship between subject and object is formed. Marx criticized the old philosophical view of the nature of man, pointing out that the main flaw of former materialism was that objects, reality, and sensibility are understood only in their objective or intuitive form, not as sensible human activity, practice, or in terms of the subject ^[8]. Obviously, the old materialism and idealism both make a common mistake; that is, when understanding the object, they both divide the subject and the object, and view it only from one aspect, not from the practice of the unity of the subject and the object. Marx argues that "practice," a conscious and dynamic activity of life, is crucial to the development of human essence because, since man's true social connection constitutes his essence, he creates and generates his social connection in the course of realizing his own essence ^[9]. It can be seen that it is in the practical activities of man that contribute to the generation of value relations. On the one hand, the subject realizes the pursuit of value goals through practice and in practice to know the object, change the object, possess the object, and transform the potential value of the object into real value; on the other hand, the subject, in practice, also constantly improves the needs, knowledge, and skills of man, while enhancing his character and value.

Finally, human beings carry out their activities in accordance with the "laws of beauty." Man is a creative being. According to Marx, unlike an animal that is created only according to the scale and needs of the species to which it belongs, man knows how to apply his inner scale to objects everywhere and to carry out creative activity in accordance with the "laws of beauty." Human activities are not restricted by their own species as long as they master the essential characteristics and internal laws of things; they can produce according to human needs. However, human activities are not simple, repetitive labor, but rather a construction in accordance with the "scale of the species" and the "law of beauty"; that is, the unification of the purposefulness and compliance of needs.

Human needs are the corroboration of the essential characteristics of human beings, and no one can do anything without doing something for his own needs and the organs of such needs ^[10]. However, human needs are diverse, effective, complex, and historical. Different socio-historical conditions produce different contents, degrees of satisfaction, and forms of satisfaction of needs. For example, material needs, spiritual needs, social needs, self-interest needs, collective needs, reasonable needs, non-reasonable needs, luxury

needs, and civilizational needs, and so on. However, some of these needs are necessary for the survival and development of human beings, and are rational and justified needs, while others are contrary to the laws of social development, and are needs arising from personal selfishness, which are unjustified and unreasonable. Therefore, in the value direction of human needs, we must give correct evaluation and guidance, advocate positive, healthy, and reasonable needs, as well as resist the value tendency of profit-oriented, money-oriented, hedonistic, and individual-oriented. However, driven by the logic of contemporary capital, “materialization” has become the value standard of human beings, and the materialistic value orientation of human beings’ contemporary development has reached the extreme, manifesting in the excessive worship of things and the fervent pursuit of wealth, as well as the possession and consumption of things to confirm the existence and value of one’s life. First, human happiness is derived from the unrestricted possession of things. Material things are the necessary means of life for human survival and development, but when human values are replaced by materialistic values, the relationship between human beings and material things is completely reversed, where human beings are now slaves of material things and are controlled by them. People’s needs for a better spirit is embodied as the “hungry” pursuit of material things and for material enjoyment at the expense of losing health and life. The second is the materialization of human relationships. As materialization tends to penetrate into relationships between people and things as well as among people themselves, the emotional connection between people is replaced by the mutual use of material relations. The principle of material equivalence, which is “if there is profit, people come, if there is none, people leave,” penetrates into interpersonal relationships, gradually weakening family affection, friendships, and other essences of human relations. The questions of how to gain benefit from each other and what benefits can be obtained from the interaction between people have become important factors in dealing with interpersonal relationships. Third, materialistic consumption has become the standard for measuring value. Under the influence of commodity fetishism, people are keen on material possession, entertainment, and current pleasure, taking the high consumption of chasing fashion and high-grade goods as the fundamental purpose of lifestyle. Especially in the period of social transition, the disorder and pluralism of social values have confused many people, burgeoning confusion and disorientation in people’s value judgment and choice. Under the trend of hedonism and extreme individualism, some people are at a loss and incompetent in dealing with the relationship between righteousness and profit, power and ability, human feelings and system, relationship and effort, as well as dependence and self-reliance, leading to the phenomenon of value exhaustion, value pluralism, value misalignment, value suspension, and value emptiness ^[11].

4. Value leadership in everyday life

“Men must be in a position to live in order to be able to ‘make history’ ^[12].” This has been the governing state for thousands of years. Thus, for Marx, the existence of a living and sensual everyday life is the basis for the survival and development of the realm of non-everyday life and an important foundational area for the formation of human values. According to Lukács, human attitudes in everyday life are of the first nature, and people’s everyday attitudes are both the starting point and the end of all human activity ^[13]. Therefore, only by attaching importance to the free and comprehensive development of human beings, meeting people’s needs for a “good life,” and attaching importance to the meaning and value of a “good life,” it is then possible to build a solid foundation for the guidance of socialist ideology.

4.1. The value appeal of “good life”

What is a “good life”? What kind of life do people pursue? How can people live a meaningful and valuable life? The term “beautiful” originally refers to one’s physical appearance. In “Zhuangzi – Miscellaneous,” it was written, “Dao Zhi grew up to be beautiful, and people saw and said so.” At the same time, the term

also reflects fullness and satisfying. The term “good life” means to live a satisfying, pleasant, and happy life. In traditional Chinese culture, “Shi Jing,” which reflects a “well-off life,” “Li Ji,” which depicts “the common wealth of the world,” and Tao Yuanming’s beautiful scenery of “the paradise of the world,” all represent the aspirations and pursuits of ancient Chinese people for a better life. In the west, since the beginning of ancient Greece, there has been a search for the meaning of life; namely, “How one should live?”, or “What is a good life?”. It is generally believed that the meaning of life is a pursuit based on people’s understanding and experience of their own lives^[14]. The pursuit of a good life is the central idea of Socrates’ philosophy. For Socrates, philosophy is the guide to a good life, and only a virtuous life will lead to a good life. According to Aristotle, a happy and good life is not about material enjoyment, but rather a life filled with wisdom and contemplation. Happiness is not a pastime or entertainment but a realistic activity in accordance with the pursuit of the “highest good.” The Middle Ages, on the other hand, saw God as the origin of happiness, and considered God as the essence of the highest good and the highest goal of human happiness. The Enlightenment’s critique of Christianity, in fact, brought about a new understanding of happiness and good life in the modern west. In particular, the fetishism of instrumental rationality, while bringing progress to society, has led people to reflect on material supremacy, ecological crisis, and human nature crisis. For this reason, western philosophers such as Husserl and Heidegger emphasized the need to return to the “living world” and create a better life.

Beginning from historical materialism, Marx criticized the traditional ontological philosophy; he started from the essence of man, based on the law of social development, focused on social practice, and proposed that the free and comprehensive development of man is the highest purpose of social life. In Marx’s view, the nature of man is a complex system, but human needs are undoubtedly the most basic and essential existence. According to Marx, “Communism is the positive sublation of private property as human self-estrangement, and hence the actual appropriation of the human essence through and for man; it is the complete restoration of man to himself as a social – i.e., human – being, a restoration which has become conscious and which takes place within the entire wealth of previous periods of development^[15].” Thus, for Marx, good life is the pleasure and joy that real individuals can feel through their senses and perceptions, as well as the good way of being and the state of existence as complete human beings, possessing full essence.

First of all, a good life is a life in which the richness and comprehensiveness of human needs can be satisfied. The satisfaction of human needs is a necessary prerequisite for the development of human beings. In the materialistic view of history, life is the root, the origin, and the premise on which history resides. In people’s lives, material and cultural life is at the most basic level and is the basis of all activities, because people cannot be emancipated when they are not yet able to have their food, drink, shelter, and clothing fully guaranteed in terms of quality and quantity^[16]. However, unlike animals, human beings have consciousness and are spiritual beings, and their material needs are never purely material, but are accompanied by spiritual needs that demonstrate the search for the meaning and value of life. In terms of the meaning of human existence, if people simply pursue material enjoyment and indulge in money, they will fall into confusion and lose the sense of existence as well as the value and meaning of life that distinguishes them from animals. Hence, while focusing on economic construction, vigorously developing productive forces, and constantly improving people’s material and cultural living standards, it is also necessary to attach great importance to the construction of spiritual civilization and promote the all-round development of people. This requires people to make every effort to promote the process of modernization, especially the need to deal with relationships with the society, people, and nature, as well as actively build a more scientific, reasonable, happy, and high-quality way of life. It has been proven that socialism with Chinese characteristics has taken on a powerful vitality, and people’s living standards have been improving along with their confidence in achieving a better life.

Secondly, a good life is a life of freedom. For Marx, how to achieve human emancipation and freedom is the value thrust of philosophy. Marx's vision from the very beginning was that of freedom. His concern was for human freedom, and his attention was drawn toward two features of modern society that stand in opposition to human freedom: inevitable suffering and the waste of life ^[17]. Through his critical analysis of the capitalist mode of production, Marx proposed the establishment of the "association of free men." In the capitalist society, the great development of productive forces provides richer and more diversified needs for human life, but due to the high homogenization of capital logic with the pursuit of money, it has led to the alienation of human needs and consumption. As a result, people are becoming "one-way people." Only in a socialist society, with the development of productive forces and the dissolution of irrational social relations, man becomes the master of his own social union, and thus the master of nature and of himself – a free man ^[18].

Finally, a good life is a harmonious and beautiful life. A good life fundamentally reflects a harmonious and beautiful way of existence and state of being. The ancient Greek Pythagorean school believes that "harmony is the most beautiful thing." In China, a saying that goes "there is nothing harmless like the harmony of music" is used to express the harmonious relationship between various sounds and rhythms. A harmonious life is the harmonious relationship between various elements of life. First, the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. The harmony between man and nature not only provides abundant material and spiritual wealth, but also a beautiful and livable environment. To this end, it is necessary to actively advocate green development and a healthy lifestyle. The second is the harmony between people. Under the conditions of capitalist private ownership, there will be people who gain monopoly on development, depriving the majority of their needs. Thus, to create a good life, it is necessary to overthrow all relations that make man humiliated, enslaved, abandoned, and despised ^[19]. A "good life" refers to the good life of each person, not just one or a select few. In order to achieve this, the responsibility and enjoyment of everyone should be upheld, including adhering to the bottom line, highlighting priorities, improving the system, guiding expectations, improving the public service system, guaranteeing the basic life of the masses, and constantly meeting the growing needs of the people for a better life. The third is a physically and mentally healthy lifestyle. Marx emphasized that human needs are reasonable and moderate needs for survival and development. However, under the dual role of market economy and capital logic, there is a serious misconduct in China's everyday life, in which consumerism, hedonism, and other undesirable lifestyles are growing and proliferating.

4.2. The value leadership of "good life"

4.2.1. Modernity and the hidden worries of everyday life

It is generally believed that modernity is a rationalized cultural model and social operation mechanism that originated in the west, forming from the practice of modernization. It is a new artificial and rationalized operation mechanism and rule formed following the freedom of human society from natural territorial association ^[20]. However, after mankind attained liberation from the traditional society and created a brilliant modern civilization by means of enlightenment and with the power of reason, the spiritual world of mankind plunged into a crisis, triggering phenomenal faith deficit and value crisis. As Marx pointed out, modernity has eliminated "all fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions swept away, and all new-formed ones became antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind ^[21]." In this way, modernity, which lost the guidance and support of value rationality, at last turned into a pure tool for the one-sided pursuit of material interests.

So, what causes the crisis of modernity itself? And how to overcome the internal divisions and

contradictions of human nature and liberate people from alienation? Husserl believes that the crisis of modernity is essentially a crisis in the meaning of life. In other words, while modernity in western society emphasizes the rationality of interests, tools and means, material wealth, material benefits, and material enjoyment, it neglects the real purpose, value, and meaning of human existence, as well as the care for the meaning of life and humanistic spirit, leading to a crisis between the living world and the ideal. All of this is in the realm of everyday life but is obscured by it. Therefore, only through the philosophical criticism of everyday life can we reveal the alienation of human beings hidden behind everyday life and find a way to overcome its alienation and that of human beings. Marx pointed out that “everyday life production” exists in the historical evolution of everyday life, and “everyday life” is the sphere of existence and life that is closely related to every person, as well as the precondition and basis of all other activities. According to Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre, “everyday life” is a general term for the negative, alienating features and characteristic of modernity, as well as the various links and subsystems under the control of the ubiquitous system of modernity, where the alienation of everyday life becomes the dominant feature of modernity^[22]. For Lefebvre, modern everyday life has been organized and integrated into the overall links of production and consumption. The general repression of difference forms the basis of modern everyday life. Everyday life has been completely alienated, the political domination and ideology of capitalism has permeated all corners of everyday life, and it is firmly controlled by the combined domination of technical and bureaucratic classes. Therefore, the critique of everyday life is the strategy to regain self-subjectivity, and the mission of the critique of everyday life is to overcome the bias of neglecting the revolution of everyday life and the emancipation of individuals, as well as to place the revolution of the microcosm at the center of the transformation of life, that is, through the reappropriation of the ideology of everyday life, with the real aim of acquiring ideological leadership^[23].

4.2.2. The value leadership of “good life”

“Does the need for theory automatically translate as a need for practice? It is not enough that ideas seek to become reality; reality itself should seek to converge on ideas^[24].” Undoubtedly, under the stimulus of the logic of reason and the logic of capital, modern society has achieved rapid economic growth, bringing about a great increase in material wealth and a huge transformation of the entire relations of production; however, due to the inherent contradictory nature of capital, the emptiness and displacement of the human spirit have become increasingly severe. In this modern society where instrumental rationality prevails, people are more confused, anxious, lonely, painful, and uneasy than in any other era in history. Modernity has created a distinct style of everyday life that “throws us off the track of all types of social order in an unprecedented way, and thus shapes its existence^[25].” With this style of everyday life, “materialization is the inevitable and direct reality^[26].” Clearly, the people’s need for a better life is not only a question of how to meet that need, but also of how to guide it correctly. A “good life” in the new era is a kind of lifestyle that abandons modernity and transcends it, highlighting human-oriented socialist modernization, which involves manifesting people-centered practical purpose and value implication, as well as completing the real “return” of human life from “external to human” to “internal to human”^[27].

The first is to lead people to better identify with shared ideals in order to build a better life. Aristotle once pointed out that “every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good,” which is known as “the state or political community”^[28]. In Aristotle’s view, there is an inherent consistency between the common values recognized and esteemed by the Greek state or political community and the everyday “good life” of individuals. On the one hand, common values are the supports for the normative idea of the “good life,” in which the realization of a good life must be brought about by a leadership with reasonable common values. On the other hand, a good life is the result of the practice of the common value concept. It can be said that a good life is a political value, a normative public

value, and a value that is recognized and praised by the community ^[29]. However, in real capitalist society, due to the total alienation of social relations caused by the private ownership of the means of production, the value of individual will and the supremacy of private interests transform the relationship between people into the relationship of “means” and “tools” for mutual use. In such a society, calculation, greed, exploitation, possession, and narcissism reflect the people. People lose the value of self-fulfillment and take material acquisition as the sole purpose of life. As a result, the value of individual life gradually alienates from the common value of universality and wholeness on which social life is based upon, which also leads to the rootlessness and dispersion of the value of individual life. Especially in the era of globalization with the diversity of civilizations and cultural diversity, if society lacks a relatively consistent and unified value system, widely shared value judgments, and universal codes of behavior, then it is prone to disorder and misbehavior. Socialist core values are the basic values that must be adhered to in the path, theory, and system of socialism; they are the value guidance for the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and as the strong support for guaranteeing the stable development of national society, maintaining social harmony, regulating people’s lives, and constructing a better life, they determine the future development direction of China. To this end, in the face of the new situation and new tasks, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of the socialist core value system, maximize its role in regulating people’s lives and leading diversified social trends and ideological changes, constantly improve people’s ideological realm, as well as lead the healthy development of social customs.

The second is to guide people to shift their focus on all-round human development for a better life. A good life is never just equivalent to the pleasure of material satisfaction but emphasizes the importance of human virtue, quality, and ability. It can also be said that a good life is not just for enjoyment, but also for creating and reflecting human values, actualizing the pursuit of all-round human development. According to the materialistic view of history, people are the subjects and creators of history, and creativity is the most concentrated manifestation and corroboration of human subjectivity. According to Marx, “The whole character of a species, its species-character, is contained in the character of its life activity; and free, conscious activity is man’s species-character ^[30].” In Marx’s view, the difference between species lies in the “character of its life activity,” reflecting and displaying the nature of species. The nature of human life activity is labor, the essential reality of human, and the activity of human confirmation and affirmation of self-value, which is also the most fundamental difference between human and animal. That is to say, human beings are not only consuming animals and taking material enjoyment as their sole pursuit, but also realizing their essence through free and conscious labor. It is through practice that man proves himself to be an existence in the process of transforming the objective world. Thus, according to Marx, the realization of comprehensive human development is to abandon alienated labor and realize the emancipation of labor. As China enters a new era, people’s need for material and cultural life has changed into a more comprehensive and richer need for a better life, and people have also changed from “one-sided people” to “comprehensive human development.” After more than 40 years of reform and opening-up, especially since the 18th Party Congress, China’s road to socialist modernization has made historical achievements, and people’s material and cultural standards have improved significantly. The needs of the people are increasingly diversified and extensive, changing from “material and cultural needs” to “needs for a better life.” For this reason, opportunities and stages must be created for everyone to achieve their dreams and succeed, so that labor is no longer a means to earn a living, but rather a realization of human nature, assuming the fulfillment of the needs of others as the embodiment of the value of labor.

The third is to guide people to create a better life through struggle. According to Marx, everything that people struggle for is related to their interests ^[31]. This is also the original motivation for the subject to pursue a happy and good life. Labor is both the impetus for promoting social progress and the realistic basis to achieve a good life. First, the spirit of struggle should be promoted to achieve a good life. The realization

of a good life is by no means easy or simply achievable by banging gongs and drums, but it requires arduous and hard work over a long struggle process. Being closer than at any time in history and more confident and capable of achieving the goal of a better life, there are still many risks and challenges faced by the people. Solving the problem of “unbalanced and inadequate” is not something that can be done overnight. To turn this grand blueprint into reality, being practical, taking one step at a time, and really working hard are of utmost importance. Only through creative work can the fundamental solution to the problem be solved. At present, the country is at a crucial stage of completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects. It is necessary to continue to carry forward the spirit of the “foolish old man who removes mountains” and strive tenaciously, in order to ensure that impoverished areas and people escape poverty together into a wealthy society, Secondly, the sense of responsibility and the spirit of commitment should be enhanced. Everyone is responsible for the rise and fall of the world. The realization of a good life is inseparable from the unity and struggle of countless Chinese sons and daughters, the social responsibility to build a good life, and the spirit of commitment. In the pursuit of a good life, everyone needs to have a strong sense of social responsibility and mission in their respective jobs, work hard, as well as to be active and productive to create a better life. Finally, the realization of a good life requires a pioneering and innovative spirit. Since ancient times, there is a saying, “If you start carving and give up, you will not be able to break even rotten wood, but if you start carving and do not give up, then you can engrave even metal and stone.” This is a profound explanation of the need to forge ahead and persevere in the face of challenges. In the face of the new situation, new challenges, and new tasks, it is necessary to learn to adapt, so as to cope with the changing and developing society and environment; it also important to take courage to break, establish, and to be the first to promote reform and opening-up, so as to achieve national economic and social development, as well as meet the needs of people for a good life.

The fourth is to guide people to lead a correct way of life. The way of life is the sum of various forms of life activities that are developed to meet one’s needs under certain socio-historical conditions and the guidance of certain values. Individuals express their lives through what they do ^[32]. Thus, a good life is concretely embodied in the practical activities of people’s lives, and likewise, the cultivation of an active and healthy lifestyle helps to promote the realization of a good life. However, the realm of everyday life has long been excluded from the ideological field of view, resulting in a lack of attention to the issue of lifestyle ^[33]. Despite the improvement in people’s material living standards, there has been a loss of the meaning and value of life. Especially under the influence of market economy and capital logic, the “materialistic” lifestyle has gradually occupied the space of everyday life, placing more emphasis on the symbolic meanings of brands, status, fashion, and other emblems reflecting consumption, while losing the soul of life. According to Frommer, it is the alienation of consumption that makes man himself more and more a greedy and passive consumer; objects are not used to serve people anymore, instead people have become the servants of objects ^[34]. On the one hand, it is necessary to establish the concept of reasonable and moderate consumption. Although a new era has begun and the main social contradictions have undergone historical changes, China is still in the primary stage of socialism. The satisfaction of people’s needs for a better life must be based on realistic national conditions, rather than the pursuit of excessive consumption and desire gratification. On the other hand, it is necessary to form a green, low carbon, civilized, and healthy lifestyle. A beautiful and harmonious ecological environment is indispensable and essential to good life. In the process of understanding and transforming the world, human beings must respect the laws of nature and unite the building of a good life with the construction of a beautiful China. However, the alienated consumption of modern everyday life not only exacerbates resource depletion and the increasingly severe ecological crisis, but also causes the suppression and distortion of human nature, leading to the emptiness of life and loss of spirit. The ecological crisis is becoming a constraint to achieving good life; thus, this situation must be reversed urgently.

Disclosure statement

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