

# A Study on the Thinking Path of Combining the Basic Principles of Marxism with Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture

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**Abstract:** The strategy of “combining the basic principles of Marxism with the excellent traditional Chinese culture” has promoted Marxism to develop constantly from its deep historical and cultural heritage, promoted the transformation of the excellent traditional Chinese culture from traditional to modern, and effectively promoted the practice of Chinese path to modernization. The combination of the basic principles of Marxism with excellent traditional Chinese culture not only deeply explores the connection between the core concepts of Marxism and the core of traditional Chinese culture, but also creates new cultural life forms through dialectical, innovative, and strategic thinking methods, thereby helping to build a modern civilization of the Chinese nation.

**Keywords:** Second combination; Thinking orientation; Conceptual thinking; Thinking methods

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## 1. Introduction

The combination of the basic principles of Marxism with excellent traditional Chinese culture, known as the “second combination”, is a product of innovative thinking<sup>[1]</sup>. It further promotes the deepening of the sinicization of Marxism by combining the basic principles of Marxism with China’s specific realities (the “first combination”). To meet the needs of theoretical progress, cultural construction, and practical innovation, the “second combination” came into being, adhering to the problem orientation, and created a new field of theoretical and cultural innovation. It aims to deepen the process of sinicization of Marxism, promote the modernization of China’s excellent traditional culture, and shape the modern civilization of the Chinese nation in the practice of the Chinese path to modernization.

## 2. The thinking direction of combining the basic principles of Marxism with excellent traditional Chinese culture

The second combination demonstrates a unique innovative concept and keen insight into problems,

emphasizing the synchronous promotion of theoretical, cultural, and practical innovation, and constructing an innovation system closely connected to the three<sup>[2]</sup>. Marxism and excellent traditional Chinese culture have undergone a thinking evolution from mutual influence, adaptation, and coordination to deep integration. Within the framework of “the second combination”, both theoretical innovation and cultural innovation are problem-oriented and jointly drive the innovative development of the Chinese path to modernization practice.

### **2.1. Excellent traditional Chinese culture is the root of innovative theories**

The second combination adds vitality to Marxism and promotes theoretical innovation through its profound historical and cultural heritage. Marxism continuously draws nourishment from the crystallization of global wisdom, while adapting to new historical conditions, practical scenarios, and the needs of the times, constantly innovating and strengthening itself. Although Marxism has universal truth and universality, the historical and cultural heritage of the Chinese nation is also engraved with the spiritual characteristics, national character, and value pursuit of the Chinese nation. For Marxism to exert its practicality and strength, it must fully consider the particularity of specific historical and cultural forms<sup>[3]</sup>. Therefore, the “second combination” promotes Marxism in the social foundation and actual situation of China, drawing on its rich ideological resources, spiritual driving force, and cultural essence through the exchange and integration with the excellent traditional Chinese culture, thus promoting the deepening of theoretical innovation.

### **2.2. Chinese excellent traditional culture goes from “tradition” to “modernity”**

The theoretical framework of Marxism provides theoretical and methodological guidance for the modern transformation of excellent traditional Chinese culture. This worldview, dialectical thinking, and epistemology provide rational guidance for the modernization process of outstanding traditional Chinese culture at the conceptual and strategic levels.

Marxism examines and distinguishes the “traditions” in excellent traditional Chinese culture. “Tradition is a huge obstacle and a historical inertia”<sup>[4]</sup>. The excellent traditional Chinese culture originates from the ancient agricultural civilization. Its agricultural economic concept of “emphasizing agriculture and suppressing commerce” and the ideal distribution of “equal status and wealth” to some extent limit the progress of social productivity. Although the people-oriented ideology emphasizes the well-being of the people, it also includes elements of controlling the people and maintaining authoritarian rule. Due to factors such as historical background, cognitive limitations, and social structure, some traditional cultural concepts lack scientific rigor, systematicity, and the characteristics of keeping up with the times, and even have a utopian characteristic. These reflect the conflict and tension between the ideals and reality of ancient people. Therefore, “tradition” needs to be reassessed, and necessary improvements and innovations should be made to the excellent traditional Chinese culture to meet the needs of modern culture and social development.

### **2.3. Great practice on the road to Chinese path to modernization**

The “second combination” focuses on the issues of the times and provides theoretical guidance and cultural support for shaping a unique Chinese path to modernization. The process of Sinicization of Marxism is essentially to address the main social contradictions and contemporary issues, clarify and implement the core mission of each stage, and drive the process of social evolution. Marxism goes beyond a simple knowledge system and is a beacon of social progress. The “second combination”

not only takes root in reality but also goes deep into historical and cultural excavation, realizing the deep integration of Marxism and the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation, extracting the essence of wisdom and indomitable spiritual power from the latter, which together build the cornerstone of Chinese path to modernization. The journey towards the Chinese path to modernization not only relies on the guidance of scientific theory, but also benefits from the cultivation of history and culture, and more importantly, needs the blending and coexistence of theory and history. In this process, ideology and culture interact with social practice, jointly promoting the progress of society.

### **3. The thinking concept of combining the basic principles of Marxism with excellent traditional Chinese culture**

A clear understanding and firm recognition of the scientific, progressiveness, and civilized nature of Marxism is a deeper motivation to promote the “second combination”. Marxism and excellent traditional Chinese culture complement each other.

#### **3.1. Connecting the core of Marxism and the inherent essence of Chinese excellent traditional culture**

Marxism and excellent traditional Chinese culture are two unique and complementary ideological systems. The basic principles of Marxism are “parts with universality, fundamental and long-term guiding significance”, which concentrate on the position, viewpoint, and method of Marxism, containing theoretical views on material determination consciousness, connection and development, contradiction and opposition unity, and the transformation of truth and value social forms<sup>[5-6]</sup>. On the other hand, the excellent traditional Chinese culture is the essence of national history, spreading in the form of system norms, behavior habits, and so on, which reflects the Chinese people’s life mode, thinking mode, and development philosophy. The excellent traditional Chinese culture is rich in content, including philosophical concepts such as the worldview, social view, moral view, ecological view, and so on, which are manifested in the governance concept of putting the people first, the political ethics of the same structure of family and country, the social ideal of universal harmony, the cognitive view of valuing practice, the natural concept of harmony between heaven and man, and the personality ideal of inner sage and outer king. The basic principles of Marxism resonate deeply with the excellent traditional Chinese culture in terms of social, practical, moral, and ecological perspectives. Although they differ in theoretical perspectives, ways of thinking, and discourse expression, these differences are precisely the important reasons that drive the two towards a high degree of compatibility.

#### **3.2. Integrating the core of Marxist thought with the common values of the people**

The integration of values promotes the concept of “people first” in the hearts of the people. Marxism adheres to the people’s position and emphasizes the active position of individuals in the historical process, while China’s excellent traditional culture advocates putting the people first and paying attention to people’s livelihoods. The concept of “putting the people first” is a vivid manifestation of this integration. In addition, the integration of values promotes practical actions centered around the people. Marxism is full of humanistic care, focusing on people’s practical needs, value realization, and development. In traditional culture, concepts such as “benefiting the people”, are emphasized, and the “second combination” extracts vocabulary that is easy for Chinese people to understand and accept in language expression, such as “seeking truth from facts” and “common prosperity”, clearly

pointing to the goal of social progress <sup>[7]</sup>. The “second combination” further strengthens the integration of Marxism with the value genes of the Chinese nation and the common values of the people, and enhances the recognition and belief of the Chinese people in Marxism <sup>[8]</sup>.

### **3.3. The core of Marxist ideology is connected with the spiritual character of the Chinese nation**

There is a profound resonance between the core ideas of Marxism and the long-standing essence of Chinese national culture. Firstly, both uphold a rigorous attitude of seeking truth. Marxism, based on the foundation of economic development and profound insight into social reality, reveals the universal laws of nature, human society, and the development of thinking, reflecting the rigor of science. In the excellent traditional Chinese culture, “understanding the changes of ancient and modern times”, “seeking knowledge from things”, and the pursuit of truth also demonstrate a reverence for knowledge and truth. Secondly, both advocate innovation. Marxism, as a dynamic theoretical system, continues to innovate and develop, which is in line with the wisdom of the excellent traditional Chinese culture of “renovating the old and renovating the new” <sup>[9]</sup>. Furthermore, both possess a relentless spirit of struggle. Whether it is the unremitting efforts of Marxism for the cause of human liberation or the spiritual inheritance of “self-improvement” and “creating a prosperous era” in excellent traditional culture, all reflect this enduring spirit of struggle. In addition, both demonstrate a strong spirit of resistance in the face of challenges. The critical spirit of Marx and Engels, as well as the “Jingwei Reclamation” and “Foolish Old Man Moving Mountains” in Chinese mythology, all demonstrate a resilient will to struggle <sup>[10]</sup>.

## **4. The thinking method of combining the basic principles of Marxism with excellent traditional Chinese culture**

Marxism provides a method for people to understand and transform the world, and the “second combination” is also a method for promoting theoretical and cultural innovation and practical development <sup>[11]</sup>. The second combination combines dialectical, innovative, and strategic thinking methods, successfully integrating ideological essence with cultural foundation, and nurturing a unique cultural life form. This combination has comprehensively promoted the localization, modernization, and popularization of Marxism in China, making contributions to the construction of the modern civilization of the Chinese nation.

### **4.1. Dialectical thinking: An organic combination of ideological essence and cultural foundation**

The second combination embodies the wisdom of deep integration. From a fundamental perspective, the basic principles of Marxism and excellent traditional Chinese culture are both ideological systems that adapt to change and embrace diversity. The two have a deep resonance in core concepts, value orientations, and spiritual pursuits. At the same time, they each have their characteristics in terms of historical perspective, theoretical connotation, and discourse expression, and this complementarity constitutes the practical foundation for the integration of the two <sup>[12]</sup>.

The second combination is manifested as the combination of organic interactions. The basic principles of Marxism serve as the theoretical guidance for China’s development, while excellent traditional Chinese culture contributes cultural strength to the progress of social civilization <sup>[13]</sup>. The integration of the two is committed to promoting the process of modernization. In the process

of achieving the “second combination”, the two are interconnected, mutually supportive, and grow together. Firstly, the two stimulate their respective innovation and development through interaction. Theoretical innovation is constrained by the real environment, but also by deep-seated factors such as culture and history. It guides the direction of cultural innovation, creates historical opportunities, and provides a theoretical foundation and development space for cultural modernization. Correspondingly, cultural innovation provides rich nutrients for theoretical innovation. On the other hand, the “second combination” continues to absorb new practical experiences and characteristics of the times. The constantly emerging practical needs and contemporary issues have generated demands for theoretical innovation and cultural development. In the process of promoting practical innovation, the “second combination” injects a continuous stream of vitality and practical power to enrich the connotation of Marxism and promote the modernization of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

#### **4.2. Innovative thinking: Nurturing a unique cultural life form**

The second combination represents a development model of innovative integration, which originates from the innovation of ideas and points towards the direction of cultural innovation. This process is committed to deep, long-lasting, and efficient integration, nurturing cultural life forms that adapt to practical needs and reflect the characteristics of the times. This cultural entity gradually infiltrates into the spiritual bloodline and cultural genes of the Chinese nation, reshaping the values, beliefs, and moral standards of the Chinese people, and inspiring them to pursue nobility.

The second combination has opened up a new field of theoretical and cultural innovation, continuously cultivating this cultural life form <sup>[14]</sup>. The excellent traditional Chinese culture, with its strong spiritual attraction, value guidance, and cohesion, has drawn the foundation of Chinese civilization. Its inherent values, spiritual qualities, and moral standards have become precious assets in promoting theoretical innovation. On the other hand, the development of Marxism in China has continuously provided theoretical support for solving practical problems and has also formed rich theoretical achievements in the sinicization of Marxism, verifying the correctness of the “second combination” theoretical thinking. In the journey of the new era, facing the intertwined historical background of “two major situations”, China’s demand for scientific theory guidance is more urgent. It is necessary to further root the theory in China’s reality, rely on the wisdom of China’s excellent traditional culture, and synchronously promote the dual innovation of theory and culture.

#### **4.3. Strategic thinking: Building modern civilization of the Chinese nation**

The theoretical core and practical significance of the “second combination” lies in guiding the progress of the times, driving modernization and the development of modern civilization <sup>[15]</sup>. The second combination is a theoretical grasp of the laws of modern civilization construction of the Chinese nation. Looking back at history, the second combination closely combines scientific theory, Chinese culture, and social progress, contributing scientific guidelines and cultural heritage to shaping modern civilization.

The second combination is based on the trend of the times and highlights the fundamental guiding role of Marxism in shaping the modern civilization of the Chinese nation. At the same time, the “second combination” demonstrates a broad cultural perspective and world-historical perspective, laying a value foundation for the construction of modern civilization of the Chinese nation, extracting core new values that go beyond capitalist civilization, and providing value orientation and China’s intelligent solutions for answering common problems faced by the world today.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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