

Modernization of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature

Yangpeng Wu

Department of Economics, Party School of Meizhou Municipal Committee of CPC, China

Abstract

The 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China is a very important conference held at a critical moment when the entire party and people of all ethnic groups in the country embark on a new journey of comprehensively building a socialist modernized country and march towards the second centenary goal. The conference has planned the goals, tasks, and major policies for the development of the Party and the country's cause in the next five years or even longer, clearly declaring what flag the Party will hold, what path it will take, what kind of spiritual state it will take, and what kind of goals it will continue to move towards in the new journey. For the construction of ecological civilization, the key word of the future party's central task proposed in the report - Chinese path to modernization, one of its characteristics is the modernization of the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. The essential requirements include promoting the harmonious coexistence of man and nature, which gives new tasks to the construction of ecological civilization on the new journey.

Keywords

Chinese path to modernization; Human and nature; Harmonious coexistence.

1. Achievements made in the construction of ecological civilization

The foundation has been laid for the comprehensive opening of a new journey of building a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature in modernization.

1.1. Continuous improvement of ecological environment quality

The report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that ecology is facing a severe situation of "tightening resource constraints, severe environmental pollution, and ecosystem degradation". Under the comprehensive leadership of the Party, pollution prevention and control has become one of the three major battles, continuously promoting the defense of blue sky, clear water, and pure land, and carrying out urban and rural environmental remediation. The sky of our motherland is bluer, the mountains are greener, and the water is clearer. At the same time, in cooperation with the central ecological and environmental protection inspection, the two rounds of central ecological and environmental protection inspection have publicly investigated and dealt with 262 typical cases, accepted 287000 ecological and environmental petitions and reports from the transferred masses, solved environmental problems strongly reflected by the people, and continuously improved environmental quality.

1.2. Solid steps have been taken in green and low-carbon development

Let's review that from 2012 to 2022, China supported an average annual economic growth rate of 6.6% with an average annual energy consumption growth rate of 3%. The cumulative decrease in energy consumption intensity was 26.4%, equivalent to approximately 1.4 billion tons of standard coal being used less and nearly 3 billion tons of carbon dioxide being emitted less. It is one of the countries with the fastest reduction in energy consumption intensity in the

world. During the 12th and 13th Five Year Plan periods, we vigorously developed zero carbon energy sources such as hydropower, wind power, solar power generation, and biomass power generation. Our installed capacity ranked first in the world, and the production and sales of new energy vehicles also ranked first in the world. We have also built the largest carbon market in the world to assist in green and low-carbon development through market-oriented means, which has achieved good results in terms of green and low-carbon development from a macro perspective.

1.3. A more sound ecological civilization system

The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China incorporated the construction of ecological civilization into the overall layout of the "Five in One" system, promoting a more sound and perfect ecological civilization system from the strategic perspective of governance. In September 2015, the General Plan for the Reform of the Ecological Civilization System issued by the State Council proposed eight systems (natural resource asset property rights, land development and protection, spatial planning system, total resource management and conservation, paid use and compensation of resources, environmental governance system, market system, performance evaluation and accountability), becoming the "four beams and eight pillars" of the construction of the ecological civilization system. Over the past decade, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has formulated and revised 25 laws, including the Soil Pollution Prevention and Control Law, the Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law, and the Yangtze River Protection Law. A legal and regulatory system covering all environmental factors has been basically established. We have innovatively established and improved important systems such as the ecological compensation system, the river and lake chief system, the forest chief system, and the "Party and government responsibilities" and "dual responsibilities" for environmental protection, making the ecological civilization system more sound.

2. Harmonious coexistence between humans and nature

What are the characteristics of Chinese path to modernization in the construction of ecological civilization, and why? What is the difference between modernization and capitalist countries?

2.1. China's Reflection on the Modernization Model and the Western Modernization Model

From the relationship between humans and nature to the period of industrial civilization, it has gone through three stages. The primitive symbiotic relationship in primitive civilization, the adaptive symbiotic relationship in agricultural civilization, and in the stage of industrial civilization, this relationship has undergone a change, with tools to govern nature for the first time.

The Western model, which first began the modernization process, will also face many problems in terms of "ecological environment crisis". Even there will inevitably be problems, because under the leadership of capital, the characteristic of capital is expansion and appreciation, which means that Western modern production will inevitably pursue scale, and this scale should be built on the basis of a large consumption of resources and emissions of pollution. From the beginning of localization, to later colonial exports, and then to the implementation of globalization, production is carried out wherever resources are abundant and the cost of environmental damage is low.

So, in terms of environmental pollution, the world's eight major environmental pollution incidents that occur in these developed countries. The United States, the United Kingdom, Belgium, and even Japan, which only began its modernization process after World War II, have

experienced serious environmental pollution incidents, each of which has led to thousands of illnesses and deaths within the scope.

The second is excessive consumption of resources. In the early stages of Western modernization, which was the beginning of the 20th century, global resources were still in a relatively loose stage, supporting the rapid primitive accumulation of Western industry. However, after achieving modernization, it is still necessary to rely on excessive consumption of resources to support a high level of material life. Here is a study evaluating the contribution of developed countries to excessive consumption of natural resources.

From 1970 to 2017, approximately 2.5 trillion tons of materials were used, of which 1.1 trillion tons were more renewable than natural processes. Developed countries account for 74% of these excess parts, while their population is only 16%. The United States (27%), the European Union (25%), Japan and Canada, as well as other most developed countries, are all ranked high on the "Over consumption Ranking".

These two aspects also indicate that the modernization of Western capitalism is achieved through pollution followed by governance, followed by excessive consumption of natural resources. It is obvious that this modernization is not sustainable.

2.2. The Road to Ecological Civilization

The Marxist ecological view believes that humans are products of nature and rely on nature for their livelihoods, and points out that capitalism's pursuit of benefits inevitably leads to ecological crises. The specific reality of China is its huge population, tight resources and energy, limited environmental capacity, and fragile ecosystem. 43% of the land to the southeast of the "Hu Huanyong Line" is inhabited by about 94% of the country's population, mainly consisting of plains, water networks, low mountains and hills, and karst landforms, with enormous ecological and environmental pressure; 57% of the land in the northwest of this line supports approximately 6% of the country's population, mainly consisting of grasslands, Gobi deserts, oases, and snowy plateaus, with a very fragile ecosystem. Realistic conditions do not support pursuing the path of modernization in the West. Many famous sayings have been passed down in Chinese culture. Firstly, it emphasizes the need to use a holistic, interrelated, and organic evolutionary thinking to understand and understand the relationship between humans and nature. Secondly, it is emphasized that human activities must respect the laws of nature and follow them in order to achieve the best results at the minimum cost. Thirdly, advocating for a scientific and reasonable system and system to provide guarantees for a more harmonious development between humans and nature. The answer can be found by combining Marxist ecological views with the specific reality of China's population, resources, and environment, as well as the simple idea of coexistence between excellent Chinese people and nature. We need to follow the path of ecological civilization, which is different from the West and is based on the carrying capacity of resources and environment. It is a sustainable development path that involves production development, affluent living, and good ecology.

3. New Deployment of Ecological Civilization Construction

What arrangements have been made for the construction of ecological civilization in the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. Before talking about the deployment of Chinese path to modernization, we first put forward the goal of ecological civilization construction in the next five years and 2035. Medium - and long-term goals: By 2035, green production and lifestyle should be widely formed in the field of ecological civilization construction, carbon emissions should be steadily reduced after reaching their peak, the ecological environment should be fundamentally improved, and the goal of a beautiful China should be basically achieved. The goal for the key period of the next five years is to significantly

improve the urban and rural environment, and achieve significant results in building a beautiful China. However, there are still some shortcomings in the field of ecological civilization construction, facing many difficulties and problems, as well as the contradiction between the fundamental status of nature and the insufficient level of understanding; The contradiction between the growing needs of the people for a better ecological environment and the capacity of ecosystem services; The contradiction between green development requirements and extensive development methods; The contradiction between the publicity of ecological civilization and the insufficient participation of the subject. In response to these issues, the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China made specific arrangements.

The epistemology of correctly treating the relationship between humans and nature. On the basis of the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China once again emphasizes "adhering to the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature". Nature is the basic condition for human survival and development, and we must "respect nature, comply with nature, and protect nature", and establish and practice the concept that green waters and mountains are mountains of gold and silver.

A methodology for promoting harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. Promote all aspects and the entire process of building a beautiful China through a systematic approach. Due to the diversity and multi-level nature of ecosystems, it is necessary to adhere to the integrated protection and systematic governance of mountains, rivers, forests, fields, lakes, grasslands, and sands. Because the root cause of environmental pollution lies in production and life, environmental improvement can only be achieved through changes in production and lifestyle. Therefore, it is necessary to coordinate economic growth and pollution control. Because saving, reducing pollution, and reducing carbon have consistency in direction. Therefore, it is necessary to vigorously promote the efficient conservation and intensive utilization of various resources.

A practical approach to handling prominent contradictions. Adhering to the problem oriented approach, the four key areas of ecological civilization construction practice were emphasized. Accelerating the promotion of green and low-carbon transformation and deepening environmental pollution prevention and control is to improve standards and requirements on the existing basis, enhance the stability and sustainability of ecosystem diversity, actively and steadily promote carbon peaking and carbon neutrality, which belongs to the new focus of ecological civilization construction in the new era.

3.1. Accelerate the green transformation of development mode

Promoting green and low-carbon economic and social development is a key link in achieving high-quality development. The focus is on Article 1, promoting the adjustment and optimization of industrial structure, energy structure, and transportation structure. Because the energy consumption per unit of GDP in China is relatively high, it is mainly due to the unreasonable structure of these three fields. For example, from the perspective of industrial structure, the proportion of the secondary industry is relatively high, reaching 39.9% in 2022. The energy consumption per 10000 yuan output value of the secondary industry is more than four times that of the primary and tertiary industries. From the perspective of the internal structure of the secondary industry, the manufacturing industry is generally still at the middle and low end of the value chain. High energy consuming industries such as steel, non-ferrous metals, building materials, petrochemicals, and chemical industries have a relatively high proportion, accounting for 85% of the total energy consumption of the manufacturing industry. This is our high-energy consumption industrial structure. Therefore, the green and high-end industrial

structure is of utmost importance. In addition, it is necessary to improve and strengthen the support system for green development in finance, green technology, and resource allocation.

3.2. Deeply promoting environmental pollution prevention and control

A good ecological environment is the most inclusive welfare for people's livelihoods, and carrying out pollution control directly reflects this. Higher requirements for pollution prevention and control require precise, scientific, and legal pollution control. Due to the emergence of new situations in environmental pollution, such as atmospheric pollution, which used to mainly focus on PM2.5 payments, now there are other new pollutants, such as increasingly severe ozone pollution. So for the pollution of air, water, and soil, it is necessary to identify the source of pollution and coordinate the treatment of multiple pollutants. This also depends on modern environmental infrastructure and the sound environmental protection systems such as pollution discharge permits as support.

In addition, as a guarantee for environmental pollution control, we should continue to promote central ecological and environmental protection supervision. From the perspective of past inspection results, there are two functions: firstly, to directly solve environmental problems that are strongly reflected by the public through petition channels; secondly, as a form of supervision, to implement various systems in place. Especially the system of equal responsibility between the Party and government for ecological environment protection and dual responsibility for one position.

3.3. Enhance ecosystem diversity, stability, and sustainability

Only by ensuring diversity can an ecosystem achieve stability, and only when it is stable can it be sustainable. The current focus of work is still on protecting the diversity of organisms and ecosystems, which is crucial for human life. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China made key protection arrangements for the ecosystems that rely on for survival. I think this part of the report emphasizes two key points: firstly, it emphasizes the boundaries of ecosystems. It includes both tangible and intangible boundaries. Delineating ecological protection red lines, establishing major ecological barriers for protection, and implementing a 10-year fishing ban on the Yangtze River, etc., will isolate human activities from the natural world and prevent human development and management activities from affecting and damaging the ecology. Strengthening biosafety management and preventing invasion by alien species is an intangible boundary. Don't let foreign species disrupt the local biological chain. Secondly, emphasize the value realization of ecological products. Environmental protection cannot rely solely on government actions, but is about everyone, and it is necessary to mobilize various forces to participate in the protection of the ecological environment. In the future, a value orientation should be formed that benefits those who protect the ecological environment, pays for users, and compensates for spoilers.

3.4. Actively and steadily promote carbon peaking and carbon neutrality

China will achieve carbon peak by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2060. During the 14th Five Year Plan period, China's ecological civilization construction has entered a critical period with carbon reduction as the key strategic direction.

The key to promoting the dual carbon policy is to be proactive and prudent, with carbon emissions highly aligned with economic growth. Accelerating carbon reduction while conditions are not yet ripe is to slow down development, which is not advisable. We only have 30 years to go from carbon peak to carbon neutrality, which is the shortest compared to other countries. Time is tight, tasks are important, and implementation is urgent, which reflects positivity. When promoting, it is necessary to coordinate development and security, especially energy security.

The principle is: to base ourselves on China's energy and resource endowment, adhere to the principle of first establishing and then breaking, and implement the carbon peak action in a planned and step-by-step manner. China's energy resource endowment is abundant in coal, with primary energy consumption accounting for 83.9% and coal consumption accounting for 56.2% in 2022. Supported by this resource, the traditional economic structure of "high carbonization" has been formed, and a corresponding investment and credit structure has naturally formed. If the gradual withdrawal of traditional energy is not based on the safe and reliable replacement of new energy, it may trigger energy crises, financial risks, social problems, and so on. Firstly, the industrial structure has not yet crossed the stage of high energy consumption and high emissions, with the aim of controlling carbon emissions. Therefore, we need to shift from controlling both the total energy consumption and intensity to controlling the total and intensity of carbon emissions. Secondly, the energy structure dominated by coal cannot be changed in the short term. Currently, coal consumption accounts for over half of the total, with a carbon emission factor of 2.66 for coal, 1.79 for oil, and 1.57 for natural gas, which is only 60% of coal. So we need to promote the clean and efficient use of energy in areas with high emissions, as well as strengthen the clean and efficient use of coal. Thirdly, the development of renewable energy is difficult, and the remaining exploitable capacity of hydropower is limited, with a significant impact on the ecology; Wind and solar power generation resources are abundant, but spatial distribution is uneven. When energy storage is not mature, power generation exists intermittently. So, the report points out the need to develop more renewable energy and establish a sound energy production, supply, storage, and sales system, especially energy storage, to provide guarantees for energy security.

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