

Conclusion

The expression “new normal” was originally adopted by General Secretary Xi Jinping to describe China’s economy; however, recently, it has been increasingly extended by the general public to the political field and even more extensively in China. Obviously, this usage is not scientific or rigorous and is even improper; excessive generalization of this concept will weaken its originally explicit definition. However, who is favored in the new normal of Chinese society? Why is there a willingness to understand the concept in an obviously generalized, even transnational way? From another perspective, this extension represents a deep cognition and great expectations of a series of changes in Chinese society since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party and embodies a high level of trust in and stalwart support of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with Xi Jinping as General Secretary. Therefore, an understanding of the new normal is gained by grasping the core of the strategic layout and the essence of the developmental logic of contemporary China.

The new normal is the state in which Chinese society “should” exist and reflects persistence in value.

A society is anything but the situation of man’s wayward nature and a simple game governed by the law of the jungle. In terms of economic development and political choices, the people pay more attention to realizing their ideal social goals and value pursuits through economic and political operations. Therefore, economic action and political endeavors based on specific goals and pursuits are the state in which society “should” exist. The Chinese dream of achieving a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream in contemporary Chinese society. The new normal shows adherence to this value.

We can take the new normal regarding the economy as an example. With the end of more than 30 years of high-speed growth, China’s economy entered the state of adjusting, stock-taking and improving its stability. Many people are ill adapted to such a new normal for China’s economy and are struggling to address it or experiencing despair. This attitude is incorrect. Given the great economic strength of contemporary China, it would not be difficult to provide another economic stimulus of 4 trillion yuan, or even 8 trillion or 16 trillion yuan. Why should we rush fruitlessly to take such measures, regardless of the consequences? The new normal

of the economy indicates clearly that the Chinese people have figured out what the economy should look like and the reason for its current situation.

The economy should be “sound”, not merely “rapid”. Economic development should lay a strong material foundation for a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation rather than merely consisting of a numbers game. The achievements of economic development should be shared by the overwhelming majority of the people instead of becoming a tool for a small number of people to accumulate wealth by exerting pressure on society. Economic development should be pursued by proceeding from the current situation and focusing on the future rather than recklessly seeking short-term gains at the expense of long-term development. Thus, General Secretary Xi Jinping said: “Growth must be real and a sustainable growth without exaggeration and with benefits and quality”, which is why Premier Li Keqiang advocated the reform-focused stimulus rather than merely strong fiscal and monetary stimuli.

Slack fiscal and monetary policies can maintain high economic growth for a certain period, and a cheap labor force working for the world can create a huge trade surplus; however, this is a long-term measure and should not be carried out. China, a large country, cannot act as a technical, economic and political vassal for other countries. We can introduce technologies, but we cannot do so indiscriminately. For key technologies, China should rely on itself. We should be good at developing ourselves through the international division of labor and comparative advantages; however, if a large country, especially a large country with an independent political system, does not have a complete modern industrial system, such development is also unimaginable. China has obtained Coca-Cola, Boeing and Airbus and even enormous amounts of dollars through trade, but it cannot acquire a powerful national defense, high-end industries and a high-quality labor force—the standard factors for development in a large country—through trade. These elements entail skilled work, painstaking efforts, patience and perseverance.

The things that should emerge at the economic level naturally lead to those that should arise at the political level. From practical educational activities concerning the mass line to the governance of the country under the rule of law, from institutionally containing power to reaffirming the ideals and faith of the political party, the people will become the masters of the country in both form and fact, and China’s political field will have a new appearance. “Under the Chinese socialist system, things should be decided through good consultations, and the things that have a bearing on the people’s interests should be handled by consulting the people to find the solutions that cover the greatest will and requirements of the whole society; this is the essence of a people’s democracy.” This remark by General Secretary Xi Jinping is the best explanation of the new appearance of China’s politics.

The new normal is the state in which Chinese society “must” exist and reflects the observance of law.

To revitalize a large country, many things should and must be done. “Must” refers to compliance with law because disregard of the law, wanton and wishful acts, indifference to the law and the far-fetched idea of the maintenance of harmony

are traps for the revival of a large country. To realize the Chinese dream and rejuvenate the Chinese nation, we must overcome unhealthy phenomena, resolve deep-seated contradictions and retain identity recognition. Chinese society is praiseworthy in the following aspects.

- To forge iron, one must be strong. As the Communist Party of China serves as the core leadership in Chinese society, it must be advanced and excellent to meet the baseline requirements and establish a foundation for the legitimacy of governance. However, over the years, some members of the political party have lost faith and become dispirited and corrupt. If this situation cannot be fundamentally reversed, the Party will lose its combat effectiveness, its recognition by society will vanish and its long-term governance of the country will not be carried out. Therefore, fighting corruption and strengthening Party self-discipline have overwhelmingly become the first priority of the new normal of politics.
- A reform cannot be reduced to a situation in which a small number of people grab wealth. A reform that does not focus on common prosperity is futureless. A reform cannot solidify the social strata and estrange the groups. The prevalence of the second generation of officials, the rich second generation and poor second generation, is the biggest crisis for the reform. How can the image of the reform be reshaped, and how can a consensus regarding it be achieved? It is imperative to break the interest barriers and comprehensively intensify the reform with the courage of a self-revolution. This is what was accomplished in the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.
- Human society has become increasingly modern, and the recognition of identity has become more and more prominent. Technologies in human society may be universal—a car has four wheels in Western society, and it is unnecessary to deliberately design a three-wheeled car in Eastern society. However, cultural value in human society is not and cannot be universal; otherwise, it is a “standard product” on a modern production line. To become unique among the nations of the world so as not to be overwhelmed and lose our identity amidst globalization, we must keep, care for and carry forward our cultural gene, value source and spiritual home. Only when spiritual independence is preserved can a solid foundation be established for economic and political independence and can real economic and political independence be achieved. When General Secretary Xi Jinping visited the Kong Family Mansion in Qufu, he talked about Confucius in Beijing and culture in countries around the world; he hoped to carry forward traditional Chinese culture, including Confucianism, and seek out the soft power to demonstrate and explain modern China through creative conversion and innovative development.

The new normal is the “original” state of Chinese society and expresses historical continuity.

At present, when interpreting the new normal stressed by Xi Jinping, some people focus on “new”. New leaders, new deeds and new appearances surely

deserve great attention, but the essence of the new normal stressed by Xi Jinping lies in “normal” rather than “new”. We have regarded the deeds, appearances and atmosphere since the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China as the “new normal” because these deeds, appearances and atmosphere are consistent with those of the Communist Party of China in struggling for more than 90 years, governing the country for more than 60 years and reforming for more than 30 years. In fact, they are a continuation of the “original” economic and political state of Chinese society over decades of the new historical period.

More efforts are being made to vigorously fight corruption and beat the tigers. We recall the momentum of the severe punishment of Liu Qinqshan and Zhang Zishan by Mao Zedong. To achieve unceasing reform and opening up, we recollect Deng Xiaoping’s unswerving determination to blaze new trails for reform. The emerging ecological civilization and the new normal of the economy are the great achievements of standing firm, not slackening and avoiding self-inflicted setbacks in scientific development.

The new-generation members of the Communist Party of China not only have received the baton of building socialism with Chinese characteristics from their predecessors but have also received their spirit, will, efforts and deeds as the foundation for development, which cannot be forgotten and abandoned. In this regard, we can gain a deeper understanding by reviewing two speeches delivered by General Secretary Xi Jinping.

Xi Jinping made important speeches at the 120th anniversary of Mao Zedong’s birth and at the 110th anniversary of Deng Xiaoping’s birth two years after the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was convened. Regarding Mao Zedong, he noted: “The living soul of the Mao Zedong Thought consists in seeking truth from facts, adopting the mass line and achieving independence.” He praised Deng Xiaoping: “He has the lofty ideal of communism, a firm faith in socialism with Chinese characteristics, an ardent love for the people, the theoretical character of always seeking truth from facts, the political courage for continuous innovations, strategic thinking, great foresight and a broad mind.” These three elements of the soul and these characteristics define both late great men, and they are the most prominent signs of two generations of great men; careful observation shows that they represent the self-encouragement, expectations, practice and observance of the new-generation members of the Communist Party of China with Xi Jinping as General Secretary.

The report to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China suggested that by carrying forward traditional Chinese culture and retaining the spiritual independence of Chinese society, “we are experiencing many great struggles with new historical characteristics”, and the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China stressed that “we must have the courage and great mind to make self-renovation.” If we consider these aspects of change as the new normal, more generations of “normal” will come, and they will create the “new” expressions, deeds and positions.

Why do we consider this state, which should, must and originally did exist, “new”? It is because “normal” changes from something obvious, hidden, and real

into something unreal. If dazzling jewelry is not often cleaned, it will be covered by dust and lose its luster. If an advanced and outstanding group does not carry out self-examination, it will make honest mistakes. A small number of groups may obtain unfair, unjust special interests through “abnormal” practices; as time passes, “abnormal” will become “normal”, latent rules and false principles will prevail and evils will be unbridled, in which case, “normal” will to some extent become surprisingly fresh and strange. This reminds us that heavy responsibilities must be undertaken and that we have a long way to go to maintain “normal” in Chinese society.

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