

B.6 The Chinese Heartland and its Imaginaries: Essays

The Genetics of China's New Era: Red Genes and Inter-Generational Leninism-- Considering "用好红色资源，传承好红色基因 把红色江山世代代传下去 习近平 [Make good use of red resources, inherit the red gene, and pass on the red country from generation to generation, Xi Jinping]

**Coalition for Peace & Ethics
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As the Coalition for Peace & Ethics has been reporting over the course of the last year or so,² Xi Jinping has been building a corpus of writings that collectively are intended to serve as the memorialization of

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² See, e.g., Thoughts on 不断开拓当代中国马克思主义政治经济学新境界 作者：习近平 (Constantly open up a new realm of contemporary Chinese Marxist political economy / Xi Jinping), Law at the End of the Day (18 August 2020); available [<https://lcbackerblog.blogspot.com/2020/08/thoughts-on-constantly-open-up-new.html>].

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New Era Theory. To that end, these writings have been published periodically in the flagship Journal of the Chinese Communist Party--Qiushi (求是 Seeking Truth), published bi-monthly by the CPC Central Committee.³ These essays are important not only because of their influence on the development of Chinese Marxist Leninism. They are also critical signals about the emphasis of Leninist development at a particular time. The choice of essays to publish and the timing of that publication may provide a window both on the vectors of theoretical development, but also of what may be an important element of internal discussion at the time of publication.

More recently, the leading forces of society have been concerned about both the development and transmission of political knowledge as part of the long term responsibility of moving the masses closer toward the realization of a communist society in the nation.⁴ To that end, there has been a renewed emphasis not just on the development of contemporary Marxist Leninist theory but on its transmission forward to the next generation. That dual objective--development and transmission, is deeply bound up in the core premises of Chinese Marxist-Leninism. More specifically, it is bound up in the key responsibility of a Marxist Leninist vanguard in power--the need to identify, meet, and overcome contradiction.⁵ That need constitutes the animating challenge that societies progressing toward the realization of communism face at every stage in their historical development. And it is the responsibility of the Leninist vanguard (first as professional revolutionaries, and then as the core collective in power) to ensure a forward (more or less).⁶ Each contemporary contradiction must be met and overcome. In the process society moves closer to the realization of its end objective; but in the process it also refines its understanding of Marxism and Leninism, the later as the mechanism by which both theory is developed and the masses are correctly led toward the ultimate societal goal.

³ The website of the English language version of the publication is available [<http://en.qstheory.cn/>]; the original Chinese version with more elaborate essays is available [<http://www.qstheory.cn/>].

⁴ Cai Yiwen, "China Wants Students to Inherit 'Red Gene': Jiangxi to roll out school textbooks reinforcing Communist Party's revolutionary values," Sixth Tone (4 January 2018); available [<https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1001501/china-wants-students-to-inherit-red-gene>] (discussing the introduction of new textbooks written toward those ends). "In 2016, President Xi Jinping said that students should be educated in a way that helps them "develop firm beliefs and confidence in lofty communist ideals, and socialism with Chinese characteristics." Throughout the past year, Chinese educational institutions have been heeding this call." Ibid. A discussion of some of the policy reforms undertaken toward those ends may be found in the essays in this volume 16(1) Parts B.1-B.3.

⁵ See, Mao Zedong, "On Contradiction" (August 1937) Originally delivered as lectures at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yanan, later revised); available [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_17.htm].

⁶ The Cultural Revolution was usually understood as an example of the imperfection and sometimes meanderings of the vanguard's forward path.

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Thus, for example, the role of markets was a contradiction that was important in meeting the principal contraction of the age of Reform and Opening Up ushering in during the leadership of Deng Xiaoping--the primary need for in economic development (e.g., the development of productive forces). This was explored both as a matter of theory, and as a forward moving inter-generational project the resolution of which would move society to a new era of historical development.⁷

1. The Core leadership of the CPC have long centered the theorization of the Chinese political-economic model as a primary task. Though it tends to be dismissed as "slogans" or "propaganda" by outsiders,⁸ the theorization of the political-economic model is among the most important elements of New Era Theory. No doubt there are many reasons that are known only to the core leadership and their close circle of advisors. Likewise, for most people, the importance of these efforts are more usefully focused on the interpersonal politics and the institutional maneuverings that is common to large and powerful organizations with its own ethos and framing ideology (in Marxist Leninist terms, its "working style").⁹

2. Yet it would be a mistake to dismiss the value of this exercise not just as theory, but as the foundation from which much policy will be built. Xi is clear on this point; the "purpose of studying Marxist political economy is to better guide the practice of economic development in our country."¹⁰ That is the nature of theory with Chinese characteristics. It is

⁷ The following seven paragraphs are taken, with small changes, from Thoughts on 不断开拓当代中国马克思主义政治经济学新境界 作者：习近平 (Constantly open up a new realm of contemporary Chinese Marxist political economy / Xi Jinping), Law at the End of the Day (18 August 2020), supra.

⁸ Larry Catá Backer, "The Rule of Law, the Chinese Communist Party, and Ideological Campaigns: Sange Daibiao (The Three Represents), Socialist Rule of Law, and Modern Chinese Constitutionalism," 16 Transnat'l L. & Contemp. Probs. 16:29 (2006-2007); Ales Karmazin, "Slogans as an Organizational Feature of Chinese Politics," Journal of Chinese Political Science 25:411-429 (2020) (leadership slogans through an institutional lens; "On the contrary, institutionalism provides a perspective that is capable of capturing a more macro-level role of slogans vis-à-vis the national political system. On top of that, approaching slogans as institutions allows integrating their (macro-level) functions into one account." Ibid., 413).

⁹ CPC work styles also have a substantial ideological element. "These three work styles are the integration of theory and practice, the mass line of leadership, and the use of criticism and self-criticism." Pierre M. Perrolle, Introduction," in Fundamentals of the Chinese Communist Party (Pierre M. Perrolle (ed); Routledge 2018 (first published 1976), at xxiii. The scope of work styles as applied at the end of the Cultural Revolution is discussed ibid., pp. 111-128.

¹⁰ 不断开拓当代中国马克思主义政治经济学新境界 作者：习近平 (Constantly open up a new realm of contemporary Chinese Marxist political economy / Xi Jinping), available at Thoughts on 不断开拓当代中国马克思主义政治经济学新境界 作者：

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meant not to serve as a sort of laundry list, but rather as a normative template only within which can Chinese Marxist Leninism be applied through the state apparatus, and only within the values of which may individual and institutional conduct be assessed, punished and reward (through the emerging systems of accountability within the CCP and outside of it, through Social Credit systems).

3. The efforts at theorizing the political economic model has acquired a global dimension since 2015 when it was first delivered by Xi Jinping. Even as the Chinese were developing their model with national characteristics, the Cuban Communist Party (PCC) was undertaking the same exercise. The Cuban effort produced a unified document that continues to serve as the foundational template for PCC and state approaches to governance.¹¹ Cuban ideological development is elaborated as an interpretive gloss on a set of fundamental principles that do not change with the times. Chinese Leninist theorists, on the other hand, have taken a linear and coordinated approach to the development of theory. Its foundations provide the basis for further elaboration that is itself the product of successfully meeting or learning from the errors encountered in the face of the contradictions that mark every stage in the historical progress of a society, under the leadership of its leading forces, toward the establishment of the ideal communist society.

Chinese engagement with ideology tends toward the iterative and dynamic; Cuban and European Marxism tends toward the static, deepening and glossing foundational text locked in place and time.¹² That difference in principles of theory making is important. It reflects quite distinct views of both the character of ideological development, and its character (dynamic versus static). It underlines the importance of national conditions and therefore the difficulty of speaking about Marxist-Leninism as one unified global theory except at a broad level of generality. Theory making, then, is the way in which the Chinese vanguard *makes meaning* within which the world is understood, their responsibilities better defined, and the parameters of analysis constructed.

习近平 (Constantly open up a new realm of contemporary Chinese Marxist political economy / Xi Jinping), *Law at the End of the Day* (18 August 2020), *supra*.

¹¹ Discussed in Larry Catá Backer, *Cuba's Caribbean Marxism: Essays on Ideology, Government, Society, and Economy in the Post Fidel Castro Era* (Little Sir Press 2018), Chapter 5. That model was elaborated in a free standing document adopted by the 7th Cuban Communist Party Congress in 2016 and then revised by the 8th Communist Party Congress in 2021. See, *Conceptualización del modelo económico y social Cubano de desarrollo socialista* (2021); available [<https://www.mined.gob.cu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/CONCEPTUALIZACION-DEL-MODELO-ECONOMICO-Y-SOCIAL-CUBANO-DE-DESARROLLO-SOCIALISTA-y-LINEAMIENTOS-DE-LA-POLITICA-ECONOMICA-Y-SOCIAL-DEL-PARTIDO-Y-LA-REVOLUCION-PARA-EL-PERIDO-2021.pdf>].

¹² Backer, *Cuba's Caribbean Marxism*, *supra*.

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4. Issues of theorization of the political-economic model is also crucial now and thus a mandatory task for the core leadership. This leadership has moved Chinese Marxist Leninism to embrace the fundamental animating premise that China has moved decisively from the old (Deng Xiaoping) Era to a New Era.¹³ That fundamental shift then makes it necessary to align theoretical development to the march of history and the changes in the stage of development to China (and its vanguard party) now find themselves. At the same time, progress and development is not revolutionary rupture (that was meant to occur only once--and legitimated in 1949 with the victory of the CCP forces). As such, New Era theorization must build on rather than dispatch the key structural foundations of the prior era--socialist modernization, reform and opening up, and Markets Marxism. That tension was meant to be bridged by the movement from an old era to the new era fundamental contradiction on which the revised political-economic model might be erected.

Xi Jinping said Wednesday that the principal contradiction facing Chinese society has evolved, as socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered a new era. Xi made the remarks in a report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) at the Great Hall of the People in central Beijing. "What we now face is the contradiction between unbalanced and inadequate development and the people's ever-growing needs for a better life," he said. The evolution of the principal contradiction represents a "historic shift that affects the whole landscape and that creates many new demands for the work of the Party and the country," Xi said.¹⁴

5. As such, any effort to move forward the political economic model into the New Era requires a focus on the current principal contradiction, and any deviation from the path through that contradiction would have to be dismissed as error--that is, it would not be capable of consideration. o that end, all of the fundamental principles of old era ideology on which the Chinese political-economic model were built would necessarily have to be modified (developed) to suit the times. But that suiting of the times (like that of its predecessor) would continue to have to be assessed (and disciplined) by the fundamental objective: the institution of a communist vanguard party to lead the nation toward the development of a communist society in China. That is

¹³ Discussed in Larry Catá Backer, "Toward New Era Thought: Reflections on Xi Jinping, Speech at the Meeting Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Reform and Opening Up," *Emancipating the Mind in the New Era: Bulletin of the Coalition for Peace & Ethics* 15(1):121-144 (2020); available [https://www.thecpe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/15-1_FINAL_Pt_C_5_Comment_XiJinping_Speech_Backker.pdf].

¹⁴ "Principal contradiction facing Chinese society has evolved in new era: Xi," *Xinhua* (18 October 2017); available [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/18/c_136688132.htm].

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the objective from which there can be no deviation. Of course the path is hardly ever straight and the CPC must confront, in addition to the challenges of contradiction, those of error and ideological neglect from time to time. These challenges, in turn, suggest the need for the sort of improvements in self-discipline that have been the subject of focus since the 1980s and is now embedded in the ideological premise of “emancipating the mind.”¹⁵ And it remains a highly contentious issue of ideological development in the new era.¹⁶

6. One of the most curious elements of this effort, like other writings of the same sort, is the studied defensiveness of the text (e.g., “Some people think that Marxist political economy is outdated and Capital is outdated”).¹⁷ This discursive trope is an important element of modern Chinese Marxist Leninist writings--it has deep roots in the evolution of China's consciousness from out of what appears to be the great formative period of Chinese modernity--its humiliating engagement with the West in the 19th century.¹⁸ Thus one sees echoes of this trope everywhere--from the construction of Chinese foreign policy, to the structuring of the Belt and Road Initiative, to the way that Chinese officials will create systems of (comparative) assessment. It is central to

¹⁵ “Emancipation of the mind, too, means opposing both “Left” and Right ideologies. The call by the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee for emancipating our minds was directed at the “two whatevers”, and the emphasis was on correcting “Left” errors. Later a Right deviation emerged that must, of course, also be corrected. Deng Xiaoping, “On Opposing Wrong Ideological Tendencies” (27 March 1981) (Summary of a talk with leading comrades of the General Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army); available [https://dengxiaopingworks.wordpress.com/2013/02/25/on-opposing-wrong-ideological-tendencies/] (“Fifth, in rectifying “Left” and Right tendencies, we should not arbitrarily raise the matter to the level of a principle or launch a movement and have everyone make a self-criticism. If everyone had to do so, we would soon have another movement on our hands. Of course, the fact that we aren't going to launch a movement doesn't mean that our political work can be without orientation or that we don't need to build momentum behind our effort. We will still need a rectification campaign at the proper time. Without it some problems may be difficult to solve.” Ibid.).

¹⁶ See, e.g., Cai Xia, “The Party that Failed: An Insider Breaks with Beijing,” *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 2021); available [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-12-04/chinese-communist-party-failed]. In the original Chinese as 蔡霞 失败的党 一个体制内人士与北京决裂 *Foreign Affairs* (4 December 2020); available [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-12-04/shibaiededang].

¹⁷ 不断开拓当代中国马克思主义政治经济学新境界 作者：习近平 (Constantly open up a new realm of contemporary Chinese Marxist political economy / Xi Jinping), available at *Thoughts on 不断开拓当代中国马克思主义政治经济学新境界 作者：习近平* (Constantly open up a new realm of contemporary Chinese Marxist political economy / Xi Jinping), *Law at the End of the Day* (18 August 2020), *supra*.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Alison A. Kaufman, “The “Century of Humiliation” and China's National Narratives” (10 March 2011); Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Hearing on “China's Narratives Regarding National Security Policy”; available [https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/3.10.11Kaufman.pdf].

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the developmental principle of Chinese Marxist-Leninism embedded in the CCP Basic Line.¹⁹

7. The key elements of the New era political-economic model , then, are organized around six key principles.

"First, adhere to the people-centered development thinking."²⁰ The focus here is on the development of the collective. The focus is on collective prosperity both in the material and societal sense. Development is a moral as well as an economic process. The focus of the political economy, then, must be on the "all around development of the people." That is a conception quite distinct from its liberal democratic counterparts. It focus not just on economic, social, and cultural rights (over civil and political rights), but it refocuses the objective of those rights on the collective.

"Second, adhere to the new development concept."²¹ The New Era offers a five point development concept: "innovation, coordination, green, openness, and sharing." They point normatively to late stage communist conceptions, and include an internationalist element. But they remain relatively underdeveloped.

"Third, uphold and improve the basic socialist economic system."²² The focus here is on the primary role of the state sector in economic organization. But public ownership does not mean central planning of the Soviet or Cuban style. There is an emphasis on market mechanisms for allocating resources. But the ultimate control of key elements is state driven. In effect, the political is meant to be reinserted into the economy. That is, there is an emphasis of the role of political objectives as an economic value that ought to drive decision-

¹⁹ Thus the Constitution of the Communist Party of China in its General Program emphasizes that the road to Communism is long and that China is only at the early stages of travel. "China is currently in the primary stage of socialism and will remain so for a long time to come. This is a stage of history that cannot be bypassed as China, which used to be economically and culturally lagging, makes progress in socialist modernization; it will take over a century." Constitution of the CCP (Revised and adopted at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China on October 24, 2017); available [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China.pdf].

²⁰ 不断开拓当代中国马克思主义政治经济学新境界 作者：习近平 (Constantly open up a new realm of contemporary Chinese Marxist political economy / Xi Jinping), *supra* ("第一，坚持以人民为中心的发展思想。发展为了人民，这是马克思主义政治经济学的根本立场。")

²¹ *Ibid.* ("第二，坚持新的发展理念。")

²² *Ibid.* ("第三，坚持和完善社会主义基本经济制度。")

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making—and especially that of state enterprises. As Xi then notes, “It is also an important guarantee for consolidating the party's ruling position and adhering to my country's socialist system.”

“Fourth, uphold and improve the socialist basic distribution system.”²³ The object of production for the New Era political-economic model must be distribution. That follows directly from the character of the new era principal contradiction. This ties in to the first principle of “people centering.” Thus, the ends of production are not merely to create wealth, but also to make that determination as a function of its value in distributing wealth to the collective. Note, though, that this is not meant to produce Cuban style uniformity in the short run. There is plenty of room for disparities of the enjoyment of the fruits of production, but there is also a political obligation to ensure that these differences are not skewed.

“Fifth, adhere to the direction of socialist market economy reform.”²⁴ The objective is to better merge the value of markets as an efficient system of allocating resources with a vanguard politics committed to the utilization of economics for quite specific societal aims. Economics, it is emphasized, is political. That is its value and utility is not measured merely by economic gain, but is measured instead by the political value of that gain. The political value of gain, in turn, is to be measured against the ultimate obligation of the vanguard party—to bring about the establishment of a communist society in China.

“Sixth, adhere to the basic national policy of opening up.”²⁵ Here one encounters Chinese communist internationalism in the new Era. That internationalism is embodied in the Belt and Road initiative. And like the rest of the New Era political-economic model, it is meant to combine economic policy and political objectives. That is communist internationalism advances economics bent toward political objectives. Those objectives produce a victory for Chinese national objectives, but in the process are also meant to produce gain for China's partners (and thus the “win-win” nature of the strategy). But the win-win is not identical; each is measured by the context and each state. The result, of course, outside of China, remains controversial, especially where by outside measures China may appear to win more than its partners.

²³ Ibid. (“第四，坚持和完善社会主义基本分配制度。”).

²⁴ Ibid. (“第五，坚持社会主义市场经济改革方向。”).

²⁵ Ibid. (“第六，坚持对外开放基本国策。”).

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The result is a new framework for engagement, one that encourages contact, but one in which the vanguard now serves not merely as gatekeeper but as mediator and translator. "In short, we adhere to the basic principles and methodology of Marxist political economy, and do not exclude the reasonable elements of foreign economic theories."²⁶ In this case, the resolution of the contraction of markets for the Reform and Opening Up Era (in the form of convergence based engagement with liberal democratic markets regimes) was a critical element of overcoming the Reform and Opening Up Era's principal contradiction focused on the development of productive forces. But success changed the form of the contradiction posed by markets in the new era. Where convergence might have been a useful approach to the contradiction of markets when faced with the greater contradiction of developing productive forces (and avoiding overcoming class struggle), in the new era markets and markets based ideas may be used as a reference but now more carefully detached from their underlying ideology--not convergence but naturalizing transposition from liberal to Marxist conceptions.²⁷ It is to that contradiction that contemporary Marxist Leninism must meet. And that is an essence of contradiction--sometimes the object of contradiction remains the same--what changes is the nature of the contradiction it poses as society moves from one stage of historical development to another.

For its Issue 10 (distributed June 2021), Qiushi published 习近平 "用好红色资源，传承好红色基因 把红色江山世世代代传" [Xi Jinping, "Make good use of red resources, inherit the red gene, and pass on the red country from generation to generation"],²⁸ a set of thirty two (32) excerpts of speeches and other texts notable for its construction of an intertwined set of premises about the deep normalization of Leninism within the advanced societal forces of China, the character of the Leninist normalization, and its encoding into the national genetic code. It focuses on three important elements of ideological development, ones especially important to Chinese Marxist Leninism. The first is memory. The second touches on the construction of that memory as inextricably linked not just to the constitution of the advanced social forces but to their emergence as the leading force whose guidance is a central element of

²⁶ Ibid. ("总之，我们坚持马克思主义政治经济学基本原理和方法论，并不排斥国外经济理论的合理成分")

²⁷ Ibid., ("西方经济学关于金融、价格、货币、市场、竞争、贸易、汇率、产业、企业、增长、管理等方面的知识，有反映社会化大生产和市场经济一般规律的一面，要注意借鉴。").

²⁸ 习近平 "用好红色资源，传承好红色基因 把红色江山世世代代传" 《求是》 2021/10 " [Xi Jinping, "Make good use of red resources, inherit the red gene, and pass on the red country from generation to generation" Qiushi 10:Online (2021)] (distributed June 2021); available [http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/qs/2021-05/15/c_1127446859.htm].

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the *progressive* (in the sense of moving forward toward a societally valuable goal) *understanding of history* (as an instrumentalization of memory) and its operationalization for the development of society's productive forces. Lastly, the third examines the necessity of the incarnation of memory in the bodies of that vanguard's cadres and its encoding into future generations through the blood sacrifices of those who bring the project forward from past to present and then onward toward the establishment of a communist society in China.

The essence is autopoietic in the sense of manifesting the autopoiesis (self-creation) of social systems through a process of encoding.²⁹ In this sense social systems manifested in the fields of politics, economics, culture, and the like interacts with other social systems "through special codes, encoding the information, sent to other systems, and decoding the information received from those systems. These coupling points are the only way to achieve meaningful interaction between the system and the remaining environment."³⁰ Indeed the biological metaphor ties the entire enterprise of red genetics to a theoretics of social systems,³¹ but one with Chinese characteristics. The key element of those characteristics seems to rest on the premise that interactions can be instrumentally coordinated to a greater purpose. In this case meeting the challenge of external complexity produces positive systems of internal complexity, by bringing the world within the thought universe of the vanguard.³²

In that respect, the essays ought to be read carefully for the sense of the way that China emerges more purified in every generation from the sacrifices of the past. Sacrifice here acquires both a modern sense--as a

²⁹ See, e.g., Michael King, "The 'Truth' About Autopoiesis," *Journal of Law and Society* 20(2):263-323 (1993); Stirling Oles Andriychuk, "Exclusive Legal Positivism and Legal Autopoiesis: Towards a Theory of Dialectical Positivism," *Rechtstheorie* 46:37-70 (2015).

³⁰ Stirling Oles Andriychuk, "Exclusive Legal Positivism and Legal Autopoiesis," *supra*, p. 40.

³¹ See, e.g., Kevin Mac G. Adams, Patrick T. Hester, Joseph M. Bradley, Thomas J. Meyers, and Charles B. Keating, "Systems Theory as the Foundation for Understanding Systems," *Systems Engineering* 17(1):112-123 (2014) (view of systems from the perspective of modelling). Of relevance to the encoding project here, the authors note: "Systems theory provides explanations for real-world systems. These explanations increase our understanding and provide improved levels of explanatory power and predictive ability . . . [as] a model of linked axioms (composed of constituent propositions) that are represented through similarity to the real system." *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³² See, Anselm Schneider, Christopher Wickert, and Emilio Marti, "Reducing Complexity by Creating Complexity: A Systems Theory Perspective on How Organizations Respond to Their Environments," *Journal of Management Studies* 54(2):182-208 (2016). See also Vladislav Valentinov, "The Complexity-Sustainability Trade-Off in Niklas Luhmann's Social Systems Theory," *Systems Research and Behavioral Science* 31:14-22 (2014) (growing systemic complexity entails the increasing risk that systems develop insensitivity to those environmental conditions on which they critically depend.).

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symbolic performance of fidelity and of the transmission of knowledge and allegiance across generations, as well as in its older sense of blood incarnation, of payment, of the giving of value for value received at a fundamental level of cultural self-construction.³³ Here the sacrifice touches on the surrendering of history on alters of the future.³⁴ In this case these ritualized performances “inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past”³⁵ but now transformed and projected forward into the future. That is the core contradiction of a vanguard--the challenge of self-reproduction but in ways that then propels the fundamental purpose of collective organization towards ends that lie well beyond the lifespans of its contemporary members and that must both necessarily change with the times but preserve its mission and essence.

Qiushi's Issue 10 itself carries forward these themes in the articles that then follow. Contributions speak to the spirit of the vanguard and its genesis from its earliest times. The issue, and one central to New Era theory, is to accomplish two objectives. The first is to distinguish socialist from capitalist morality--to inherit the red gene, something reported in the West certainly in focused form since 2019.³⁶ The phrase red genes (红色基因; hongse jiyin) emerged during the leadership of Hu Jintao and “refers to the revolutionary spirit and history of the [CPC] as a kind of political and cultural inheritance, the celebration of which is a means of consolidating the Party's position within the national identity

³³ On an excellent discussion of the transformation and relevance of sacrifice, see Keren Wang, *Legal and Rhetorical Foundations of Economic Globalization: An Atlas of Ritual Sacrifice in Late-Capitalism* (Routledge, 2019) (“It is important to note that ritual sacrifices were far more than simply acts of religious devotion. Historical evidence suggests ritual sacrifices were performed as crisis management devices.” Ibid., 4).

³⁴ In this case, the objective is to thwart historical nihilism. See, Shailaja Neelankantan, “Chinese lawmaker pitches ‘Red genes’ project to ‘preserve’ Communist Ethos of country,” *The Times of India* (19 March 2018); available [<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/chinese-lawmaker-pitches-red-genes-project-to-preserve-communist-ethos-of-country/articleshow/63363539.cms>] [“The Henan lawmaker proposed a ‘Red gene transmission project be initiated in schools to foster love of the Communist Party of China and for the country while countering ‘historical nihilism’, which ‘smears revolutionary heroes and plants incorrect values and views of history.’”].

³⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 1-2.

³⁶ See, e.g., Eric Cheung, “‘Inherit the Red Gene’: China Issues Xi-Focused Morality Guides,” *The Daily Rip* (30 October 2019); available [<https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/30/asia/china-morality-xi-jinping-intl-hnk/index.html>] [“Chinese citizens have been urged to ‘inherit the red gene’ by following new morality rules which use President Xi Jinping’s eponymous political thought as a guiding principle. The new guidelines, released by the country’s State Council on Sunday, focus heavily on nationalism and the citizen’s duty in ‘bearing the great responsibility of national rejuvenation.’”].

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and thereby constructing the legitimacy of the CCP regime.”³⁷ It is tied to both the fact of transmission and its act. Red genes are biological on the sense of its capacity for reproduction and passing knowledge--of preserving a historical past into a future necessary to shape it further--and then pass it on again. This is what Xi Jinping was suggesting as he explained: “Revolutionary traditional education should start with a baby, focusing not only on instilling knowledge, but also strengthening emotional cultivation, so that the red gene can penetrate into the blood and heart, and guide the vast number of young people to establish a correct outlook on the world, life, and values.”³⁸

The second is to provide a basis for a more leftist application of Jiang Zemin's Sange Daibiao (三个代表; Three Represents) theory, one more suitable for the New Era, by focusing on broadening through encoding. Left unstated, of course is the connection of both to the New Era's focus on data driven measures to bring the people closer to the ideal--the ideal represented by the red gene in a red nation. This continues to cause some controversy within the ranks of Party theorists, and some high profile defections.³⁹

Let us consider these themes more closely:

1. One of the most interesting aspects of these carefully curated extracts of speeches are its focus on education. Education, here is understood as social encoding of norms and political premises. Education here is tied to the land which bears witness to events which provides the history the encoding of which on the “genetic materials” of the masses provides the basis of “red” education. Take for example, ¶ 28,⁴⁰ describing both the ‘red’ history in Ningxia and its alignment with the task of encoding knowledge into the ‘red genetics’ of the nation.⁴¹

³⁷ David Bandurski, “Red Genes (红色基因)” The China Media Project (CMP) Dictionary (18 May 2021); available [https://chinamediaproject.org/the_ccp_dictionary/red-genes/].

³⁸ 习近平 “用好红色资源，传承好红色基因 把红色江山世世代代传《求是》2021/10” [Xi Jinping, “Make good use of red resources, inherit the red gene, and pass on the red country from generation to generation” Qishu 10:Online (2021)]; supra, ¶10 (Speech during the survey in Anhui from April 24 to 27, 2016) (“革命传统教育要从娃娃抓起，既注重知识灌输，又加强情感培育，使红色基因渗进血液、浸入心扉，引导广大青少年树立正确的世界观、人生观、价值观。”)。

³⁹ Cai Xia, “The Party that Failed: An Insider Breaks with Beijing,” supra, and discussion infra § 8.

⁴⁰ 习近平 “用好红色资源，传承好红色基因 把红色江山世世代代传《求是》2021/10” [Xi Jinping, “Make good use of red resources, inherit the red gene, and pass on the red country from generation to generation” Qishu 10:Online (2021)]; supra, ¶ 28 (Speech at the end of the inspection work in Ningxia on June 10, 2020).

⁴¹ Ibid. (“In 1935, Chairman Mao led the Red Army and moved to Ningxia, leaving behind the red story of “Single Family Ji Night Talk”. In 1936, the Red First and Second Front Army joined forces in Jiangtaipu victory. The Long March of the Red Army left a precious red memory in Ningxia. You must use these red resources to educate party members and cadres to inherit the red genes and take the long

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The last century has evidenced a substantial movement from education as a means of socializing students to the fundamental premises and assumptions of a society. In this sense education has always been centered on indoctrination--the naturalization of *doctrine* within the recipient--for the stable ordering of society and the perpetuation of its culture, norms, mores, habits, traditions, and the like. Education has also focused on *vocation*. This is practical education designed to prepare the student for the assumption of their roles in society or for their insertion into the labor markets, or for the assumption of authority based on social, economic, religious, political or ethnic class. Indoctrination has given way to vocation in most of the world. It has become fashionable to view official indoctrination as an object of suspicion in the liberal democratic camp and as less important elsewhere. Even Marxist Leninist states had moved in this direction over the last two decades.⁴² This appears to be changing in the New Era and under the leadership of Xi Jinping. For the rest of the world this represents a movement against the current of educational doctrine (at least in the public sphere). Yet the reinvigoration of education as indoctrination even in liberal democratic states appears to be making a comeback. The fight over the teaching of so-called critical race theory provides a flashy entry point for that trajectory.⁴³

2. Education, then, ought to be patriotic, in the old fashioned sense (Latin *patrioticus*; Greek *patriotikos*) relating to a common homeland rather than in its more political notion from the Greek *polis* relating to a common state. The educational patriotism advanced, then, is focused not just on the instruction in political premises, but in the underlying cultural and societal norms that serve as the foundation for that political structure. *This is moral education*⁴⁴ that is expressed politically, of course, but also in cultural, societal, and economic relations. Paragraph 32 of the selection of Xi Speeches and remarks nicely sketches out these ideas:

march of the new era." [1935 年毛主席率领红军转战宁夏，留下了“单家集夜话”的红色佳话。1936 年红一、二方面军在将台堡胜利会师。红军长征在宁夏留下了弥足珍贵的红色记忆。你们要用这些红色资源教育党员、干部传承红色基因、走好新时代长征路。]]

⁴² see, e.g., Cuba: Backer, Larry Catá, 'Order, Discipline and Exigency': Cuba's VIth Party Congress, the Lineamientos (Guidelines) and Structural Change in Education, Sport and Culture? (July 1, 2011). Consortium for Peace and Ethics Working Paper No. 2011-2, Available at SSRN: [https://ssrn.com/abstract=1881598].

⁴³ See, e.g., Rashawn Ray and Alexandra Gibbons, "Why are States Banning Critical Race Theory?," Brookings (November 2021); available [https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2021/07/02/why-are-states-banning-critical-race-theory/].

⁴⁴ See, Cai Yiwen, "China Wants Students to Inherit 'Red Gene'," supra.

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Fujian is an old revolutionary base with many events in party history, red resources, and revolutionary ancestors. It has unique advantages to carry out party history study and education. It is necessary to learn history wisely in the study and education of party history, which is the prerequisite for increasing credibility, advocating morality, and practicing. From the party's glorious achievements, hardships, historical experience, and fine traditions, we must deeply understand why the Communist Party of China can, why Marxism is practiced, and why socialism with Chinese characteristics is good, etc., and clarify the historical logic, theoretical logic, and practical logic among them. We must deeply understand the historical inevitability of upholding the leadership of the Communist Party of China and strengthen our confidence in the leadership of the party. It is necessary to deeply understand the truth of Marxism and its Chinese innovation theory, and strengthen the firmness of consciously implementing the party's innovation theory. We must deeply understand the correctness of the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics and unswervingly follow the only correct path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.⁴⁵

It is the foundation of the nation which is organized politically through the apparatus of government. And it weaves together the critical strands (for Chinese Marxist Leninism) of thought (siwei 思维), ideology (sixiang 思想) and consciousness (yishi 意识).

3. History is the glue that holds this moral project together. History properly distilled, serves as the essence of the spirit of doctrine that is to be encoded from generation to generation. Story telling is well known in the West. It is applied here in a Marxist Leninist context.⁴⁶ Many of the excerpts of the speeches touch on revolutionary places and moments, the transmission of which encode the red gene.

⁴⁵ 习近平 "用好红色资源，传承好红色基因 把红色江山世世代代传《求是》2021/10" [Xi Jinping, "Make good use of red resources, inherit the red gene, and pass on the red country from generation to generation" *Qiushi* 10:Online (2021)]; *supra*, ¶32 (Speech during the inspection tour in Fujian on March 25, 2021) ("福建是革命老区，党史事件多、红色资源多、革命先辈多，开展党史学习教育具有独特优势。要在党史学习教育中做到学史明理，明理是增信、崇德、力行的前提。要从党的辉煌成就、艰辛历程、历史经验、优良传统中深刻领悟中国共产党为什么能、马克思主义为什么行、中国特色社会主义为什么好等道理，弄清楚其中的历史逻辑、理论逻辑、实践逻辑。要深刻领悟坚持中国共产党领导的历史必然性，坚定对党的领导的自信。要深刻领悟马克思主义及其中国化创新理论的真理性，增强自觉贯彻落实党的创新理论的坚定性。要深刻领悟中国特色社会主义道路的正确性，坚定不移走中国特色社会主义这条唯一正确的道路。")].

⁴⁶ See Christopher Nash (ed), *Narrative in Culture: The Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy, and Literature*(Routledge, 2005).

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Each has a specific meaning that layers meaning onto the principles of Chinese Marxist Leninism that are embedded throughout the nation. Xi speaks of the “red land” of Ningxia,⁴⁷ of the old revolutionary base of Guangxi,⁴⁸ and of the Shaanxi-Gansu border region.⁴⁹ Excerpt 26, for example, speaks to the revolutionary history of Yunnan with its “many touching stories.”⁵⁰ These then serve as the encoded genetics through which history is transmitted and encoded into the living flesh of the next generation.

4. The focus on unity is strong. It is useful to compare two powerful phrases from two quite different political-social systems: 一寸山河一寸血，一抔热土一抔魂 (unity from the smallest space to the nation, blood and spirit)⁵¹ with *e pluribus unum* (from out of many, one).

We must continue to follow the footsteps of the revolutionary predecessors and pass on the red country from generation to generation. Revolutionary traditional education should start with a baby, focusing not only on instilling knowledge, but also

⁴⁷ 习近平 “用好红色资源，传承好红色基因 把红色江山世世代代传《求是》2021/10” [Xi Jinping, “Make good use of red resources, inherit the red gene, and pass on the red country from generation to generation” *Qiushi* 10:Online (2021)], *supra*, ¶11 (Speech at the end of the inspection work in Ningxia on July 20, 2016) (“This time we went to Jiangtaipu and experienced the historical scene of the three main forces of the Red Army meeting on the spot, and once again received a profound education.”). And again *ibid.*, ¶28 (Speech at the end of the inspection work in Ningxia on June 10, 2020) discussed *supra* n.36.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, ¶13 (Speech at the end of the inspection work in Guangxi on April 21, 2017) (“Revolutionaries of the older generation, such as Deng Xiaoping, Zhang Yunyi, and Wei Baqun, led the Baise and Longzhou uprisings on this red land and established the Zuojiang Revolutionary Base.”)

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, ¶7 (Speech when I went to Shaanxi to visit and condole the cadres and the masses on the eve of the Spring Festival from February 13th to 16th, 2015) [The Shaanxi-Gansu border revolutionary base centered on Zhaojin wrote a glorious page in the history of the Chinese revolution. It is necessary to strengthen the study of the history of the revolutionary base area, sum up historical experience, and better carry forward the revolutionary spirit and fine work style. [以照金为中心的陕甘边革命根据地，在中国革命史上写下了光辉的一页。要加强对革命根据地历史的研究，总结历史经验，更好发扬革命精神和优良作风。]]

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, ¶26 (Speech when visiting cadres and masses of all ethnic groups in Yunnan on the eve of the Spring Festival from January 19 to 21, 2020). The excerpt makes this explicit: “These stories should be used as vivid teaching materials for the education of “not forgetting the original intention and keeping in mind the mission”, and guide the majority of party members and cadres to continuously examine and nourish their original aspirations, and constantly temper their political character of loyalty, cleanness and responsibility.” (“要把这些故事作为“不忘初心、牢记使命”教育的生动教材，引导广大党员、干部不断检视初心、滋养初心，不断锤炼忠诚干净担当的政治品格。”)。

⁵¹ 习近平 “用好红色资源，传承好红色基因 把红色江山世世代代传《求是》2021/10” [Xi Jinping, “Make good use of red resources, inherit the red gene, and pass on the red country from generation to generation” *Qiushi* 10:Online (2021)], *supra*, ¶10 (Speech during the survey in Anhui from April 24 to 27, 2016)

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strengthening emotional cultivation, so that the red gene can penetrate into the blood and heart, and guide the vast number of young people to establish a correct outlook on the world, life, and values.⁵²

Both states appear to have moved back in the direction of adding flesh to these abstractions, flesh that is in harmony with the political-social system and its contemporary contradictions (race in the United States, unequal distribution in China). From these one can construct the meaning of the patriotism in the great patriotic campaigns currently being waged (and to some extent also resisted) in both imperial orders.

5. The martial quality of this encoding ought not to be overlooked. Like the various social wars waged in the liberal democratic camp for generations (the war on poverty, the war on drugs, etc.), the militarization of the red gene campaign is a central element of its form. But here, it is the military itself that serves as a mirror on the nation, and as the model from which patterns of behavior, or responsibility and duty may be replicated in the popular culture. The martial quality of the red gene also suggests the vanguard's working style and the expression of the way in which it will approach its responsibility to the nation.

6. Blood, the sacrifices of martyrs, these are the mechanisms through which the red gene is passed along from one generation to the next. I am reminded of a famous passage of Justice Holmes in *Missouri v. Holland* (1920):

With regard to that we may add that, when we are dealing with words that also are a constituent act, like the Constitution of the United States, we must realize that they have called into life a being the development of which could not have been foreseen completely by the most gifted of its begetters. It was enough for them to realize or to hope that they had created an organism; it has taken a century and has cost their successors much sweat and blood to prove that they created a nation.⁵³

These are present in the essays but now with Chinese characteristics. Virtually all of the essays touch on the blood sacrifices of past generations to bring the nation to its current stage of development. That blood sacrifice encodes and provides the framework for the education of the young as the means of ensuring that the encoding "takes."⁵⁴ As the extract

⁵² Ibid. ("我们要沿着革命前辈的足迹继续前行，把红色江山世世代代传下去。革命传统教育要从娃娃抓起，既注重知识灌输，又加强情感培育，使红色基因渗进血液、浸入心扉，引导广大青少年树立正确的世界观、人生观、价值观。")

⁵³ *State of Missouri v. Holland*, 252 U.S. 416, 433 (1920).

⁵⁴ 习近平 "用好红色资源，传承好红色基因 把红色江山世世代代传《求是》2021/10" [Xi Jinping, "Make good use of red resources, inherit the red gene, and pass on the red country from generation to generation" *Qiushi* 10:Online (2021)],

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in ¶ 19 explains: “Revolutionary martyrs died generously for their ideals and beliefs, relying on faith. Today, there are fewer life and death tests of blood and fire like the war years, but the great struggle with new historical characteristics is still going on. We are facing a series of major challenges and major winds.”⁵⁵

7. The red gene requires its animating spirit. And that, in the end, provides the foundation for the readings--the centrality of the advanced social forces of the nation, organized first as professional revolutionaries, whose sacrifices over generations established a state structure in which a revolutionary party could become the political center in which the advanced social forces, organized along Leninist lines, could then serve to move society forward. Here one comes to both the gene and its color.

8. And that brings one back to Sange Daibio (三个代表; Three Represents; the vanguard represents the trend of development in China, its advanced culture, and the fundamental interests of the people). As a “whole people's” party it has a duty to encode the sensibilities of the advanced social forces to the masses; perhaps eventually merging with and into the masses on the establishment of a communist society in China sometime in the future. It is not for nothing that Cai Xia and other elements of the vanguard fought so strenuously over its meaning and content. Cai Xia, of course, was expelled from the vanguard and moved to the West where she denounced the current leadership. That is a matter for internal debate.⁵⁶ What was most important, though, was that in her denunciation was a strong attachment to Sange Daibiao and a sense of its importance for the transmission of a certain type of red gene forward. The question for the vanguard is in a sense tied to that battle between Cai Xia and her (currently victorious) opponents within Chinese Leninism. Xi Jinping has now clearly revealed the way forward under his leadership. A reconciliation of the two opposing views may be possible at

supra, ¶ 19 (Speech at the end of the inspection work in Jiangxi on May 22, 2019) (“The enemy can only cut off our heads, and must not shake our beliefs”, this is Comrade Fang Zhimin’s oath left before his sacrifice. The enemy cut off his tongue cruelly before Martyr Liu Renkan was put to justice. He still wrote “Long live the success of the revolution” with his feet dipped in blood.” [“敌人只能砍下我们的头颅，决不能动摇我们的信仰”，这是方志敏同志牺牲前留下的铮铮誓言。刘仁堪烈士在就义前，敌人残忍地割下了他的舌头，他仍然用脚蘸着流下的鲜血写下“革命成功万岁”。”]).

⁵⁵ Ibid. (“革命先烈为了理想和信念慷慨赴死，靠的是信仰。今天，像战争年代那种血与火的生死考验少了，但具有新的历史特点的伟大斗争仍然在继续，我们正面临着一系列重大挑战、重大风险、重大阻力、重大矛盾的艰巨考验。”).

⁵⁶ For an earlier version of the debate before the advent of the New Era, see Cai Xia, “Advancing Constitutional Democracy Should be the Mission of the Chinese Communist Party—a discussion with Professor Yang Xiaoqing” (Timothy Cheek, Joshua A. Fogel, and David Ownby (trans) *Reading the China Dream*, from the original 2011 publication); available [https://www.readingthechinadream.com/cai-xia-advancing-constitutional-democracy.html].

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some future point but that remains to be seen.⁵⁷ For the moment the contemporary leadership core is driving the project. Eventually, though, the red gene will have to find its way into the entire body of the nation; that perhaps will be the challenge for the vanguard in its next era.

9. All of this bears careful study in the West. To understand the thrust of these moments forward may help to analyze, and perhaps anticipate, the motivations and constraints of the Chinese core of leadership. That is not to suggest either agreement or acquiescence. But it is to suggest that the West cannot protect, much less advance, its own interests by self-consciously reading its own 'red-white-blue' genes into the Chinese 'red' gene discourse and its consequences for the construction of Chinese society. Or worse, by dismissing this movement by invoking terms of illegitimacy within its own normative universe--authoritarian and the like. At the same time, as is hinted above, such careful study more clearly (and usefully) exposes the fundamental values, approaches and principles on which our own society is built, challenged and reconstructed as it moves toward the consolidation of its own new era--but in accordance with the 'genius' of its own normative-moral structures.



⁵⁷ Cai Xia, "The Party that Failed: An Insider Breaks with Beijing," *supra*, "I was disgusted by the superficial methods of the party's publicity apparatus. I grew determined to reveal the true meaning of the Three Represents, a theory that in fact marked a bold departure for China. This, it turned out, would bring me into conflict with the entrenched bureaucracy of the CCP."