

An Overview of the Historic Achievements in Chinese-style Modernization

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Abstract: Chinese-style modernization has promoted the continuous improvement of people's living standards, the more reasonable distribution of production factors, and the continuous improvement of people's social security. The achievements of Chinese-style modernization are historic achievements made through continuous institutional and mechanism innovation and path exploration in different periods. Chinese-style modernization promotes peaceful development and the establishment of a shared future for mankind. In summary, China's modernization has achieved remarkable achievements that have attracted worldwide attention and have distinct characteristics of the times in various historical periods.

Key words: Chinese Path; Modernization; History

China's model of modernization has captured the attention of the world with its significant achievements. Throughout this monumental historical journey, China's macroeconomic policies have evolved across various eras, crystallizing a wealth of theoretical insights, accumulating invaluable experiences, and fostering a profound spirit of progress. Grounded in a detailed analysis of developmental data and historical trajectories, it's evident that China's socio-economic growth has undergone revolutionary transformations. The historic accomplishments of China's modernization reflect distinct characteristics of the current era, epitomizing a development philosophy centered on the well-being of its people.

1. China's Model of Modernization Has Consistently Elevated the Living Standards of Its People, Optimized the Distribution of Productive Factors, and Continually Enhanced the Level of Social Security

Observing the trajectory from the revolutionary period through the construction and reform eras into the new age, it's evident that China has steadfastly used economic development to safeguard the fundamental interests of the vast majority. Per capita national income has surged from 119 yuan in 1952 to 72,000 yuan in 2020, markedly improving living standards. Similarly, life expectancy has nearly doubled from 43 years in 1960 to 77 years in 2019, placing China's longevity metrics increasingly towards the forefront internationally. These improvements in living standards and life expectancy vividly illustrate the success of China's people-centered development philosophy, which has consistently prioritized tangible enhancements in citizen well-being through its macroeconomic strategies.

Reviewing China's land policy evolution—from the revolutionary "striking the landlords and distributing land," to "reducing rent and interest" during the anti-Japanese war, from the "land to the tiller" policy of the Liberation War to the "land reform movement" post-establishment, and from the "household responsibility system" during the reform era to the "market-oriented allocation reforms" of the new era—it's clear each policy shift was aimed at optimizing land use and unleashing productive forces, ensuring land truly benefits the people. Spanning over five millennia of history and viewed against global social systems, China's land policies stand as a singular achievement in the annals of human liberation movements. China has effectively addressed bottlenecks in land rights registration and management, equitably opened land benefits to its populace for the first time, and set the nation on the path to communal prosperity. Considering the evolution of social security policies, China has unwaveringly pursued the happiness of its people in its social security endeavors, which are vital to public welfare, creating a comprehensive safety net.

From the foundational phase post-revolution,

where social security was virtually non-existent, to the gradual establishment of a labor insurance system, from exploring modern social security frameworks during the reform era to establishing the world's largest social security system in the new era—now, basic pension insurance extends to over 900 million people, and health insurance covers over 1.3 billion, achieving near-universal health coverage (Hua Ying, 2024). Social security not only anchors livelihood but also serves as a practical channel for redistributing income, significantly influencing the extension of reform benefits to the widest possible audience.

2. The Accomplishments of Chinese-Style Modernization have Been Achieved Through Ongoing Institutional and Systemic Innovation, Coupled with Strategic Explorations Across Various Historical Epochs

Most notably, China has successfully triumphed in its poverty alleviation campaign, a feat that addresses one of the most daunting global challenges—eradicating poverty. Given this monumental task, throughout its history, China has robustly advanced agricultural reforms and rural development (Sheng Junqing & Zhang Wenfa, 2024). By the end of 2012, the number of people living in rural poverty had decreased to 99 million, and the rural poverty rate had been reduced to 10.2%. With the advent of the new era and the rollout of precise poverty alleviation policies, China secured a decisive victory in this campaign. By 2020, all 99 million rural residents previously under the poverty line had been lifted out of poverty, all 832 impoverished counties had been officially removed from the poverty list, and 128,000 impoverished villages had been revitalized.

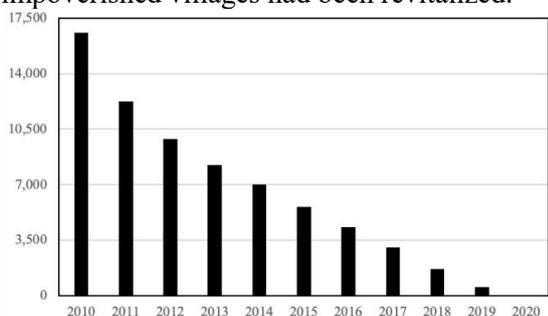


Figure 1. Number of Rural Impoverished Population (Unit: 10,000 people)

Data Source: National Bureau of Statistics

A prime example is the effective management and mitigation of significant risks and

challenges, which has been achieved through considerable effort. Reviewing macroeconomic growth and economic fluctuations, China has established a record for the longest duration of high economic growth since World War II. Throughout this period, China successfully navigated through the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis and the 2008 global financial crisis. Over the last nearly four decades, China has maintained an impressive average annual growth rate of about 9%, significantly surpassing the global economic growth rate of around 2% during the same timeframe. Faced with major public health crises such as the SARS epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic, China has consistently upheld a people-first principle, prioritizing the protection of people's health and lives as the core of its strategy. By effectively coordinating epidemic prevention and control with economic and social development, China emerged as the only major economy to record positive economic growth in 2020.

China continues to push forward with the synchronized advancement of the "Four Modernizations": industrialization, informatization, urbanization, and agricultural modernization. As a developing nation, these four pillars form the foundational strategies for China's path to modernization. In urbanization, China steadily works to narrow the disparities between urban and rural areas, always prioritizing the needs of the rural populace. The government routinely rolls out innovative policies in fiscal management, inclusive finance, and social security to foster truly people-centric urban development, guaranteeing that new urban dwellers enjoy access to solid infrastructure and comprehensive public services. Within industrialization, China's industrial sector has progressively established a robust framework, achieving substantial scale through sustained developmental efforts. By 2020, the secondary sector's added value reached 38.4 trillion yuan, accounting for 37.8% of the economy, with industrial added value alone hitting 31.3 trillion yuan, or 30.8%. Furthermore, after over seven decades of evolution, China has developed a self-sufficient and comprehensive modern industrial system, featuring 41 major industrial categories, 207 middle categories, and 666 subcategories, making it the only nation globally to encompass all industrial categories

defined by the United Nations (Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, 2019). Regarding agricultural modernization, China leverages informatization to propel rural revitalization and implement pivotal policies aimed at using technology to boost agricultural productivity. During the "13th Five-Year Plan," China's grain production reached all-time highs, with a total output of 13.277 trillion jin (about 663.85 million tons) in 2019, securing a per capita grain supply of over 470 kilograms—significantly surpassing the globally recognized food security threshold of 400 kilograms. This marks a substantial shift from the pre-revolution era of insufficient grain supplies to the current state of abundant prosperity. In the sphere of informatization, China has notched remarkable achievements, transforming from a nearly zero base to a landscape characterized by extensive networks and widespread information accessibility. Driven by successive generations of informatization pioneers, by 2020, China's internet penetration soared from 3% in 2003 to 70%, with the internet user base expanding from less than a million to nearly a billion. Stepping into a new era, China's developments in informatization have reached historic milestones, with breakthroughs in core technologies and rapid progress in cutting-edge fields such as 5G, big data, and artificial intelligence. Significant advances have also been made in quantum communication and high-performance computing. Today, the rapid construction of a new generation of high-speed, mobile, and extensive informatization infrastructure is well underway.

3. China is Dedicated to Fostering Modernization that Promotes Peaceful Development and the Establishment of A Shared Future for Mankind

China considers its contribution to global humanity as a principal mission, actively promoting and implementing the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind. During its construction era, China consistently supported Third World countries in their fights for national independence, national liberation, and against imperialist aggression and oppression. In the face of significant risks and challenges, China played a crucial role in supporting these nations' struggles for freedom. As part of its sweeping reform and opening-up

initiatives, China has continually strengthened its diplomatic relations with countries around the world, steadfastly following a path of peaceful development. This includes collaborating globally to combat terrorism and deepening cooperative ties with major world powers, gradually establishing itself as a key player in upholding fairness, justice, and order in the international community. China's independent foreign policy is defined by three clear characteristics: first, a commitment to fairness, justice, and peaceful coexistence; second, an adherence to independence and self-reliance; and third, evolving with the times and building upon historical developments, all of which contribute significantly to the welfare of the global community.

In the new era, through the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, China's foreign policy has made substantial strides in shaping a community with a shared future for mankind. The growth in China's non-financial foreign investments is evident, increasing annually from \$311.4 billion in 2012 to \$1.1588 trillion in 2019, with an average annual growth rate of about 15%. Significant milestones have been achieved in key projects such as the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Rail, Gwadar Port, and the expansion of the China-Russia Oil Pipeline. The construction of the 21st Century Digital Silk Road and the operation of over 8,000 China-Europe freight trains, reaching 14 European countries and 42 cities, underscore China's role and responsibility as a major global power. Initiatives like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) have propelled regional financial and trade cooperation, contributing to the prosperity of Asia and beyond (Su Xin & Chang Jiang, 2024). Furthermore, as China's economy embraces a higher level of openness, attracting more foreign investment, it not only fuels its own economic development but also enhances its capacity to import more high-quality goods and services, thereby fostering favorable growth opportunities for the global economy.

In summary, China's modernization has garnered international acclaim, with each historical epoch featuring distinctive characteristics relevant to its time. Through ongoing development and reform processes, China has consistently enhanced the living

standards of its citizens and expanded its economic growth. In the era of the new generation information technology revolution, China has continued to advance the construction of new infrastructure, improving informatization nationwide, empowering diverse industrial sectors, and increasing industry value added. Simultaneously, in its modernization journey, China has actively promoted the concept of a "community with a shared future for mankind," (Yang Wei & Li Chunyan, 2024) benefiting global populations by supporting the collective development of the world economy. As it expands its openness and international cooperation, China presents its solutions and insights to the global stage. China's achievements in modernization represent a historic choice in the adaptation of Marxism to Chinese conditions and the advancement of Marxism within China, thus creating a milestone in the annals of human development.

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