Chapter Eight

The Spreading of Marxism and the Establishment of Marxist Educational Thoughts in China

In the last chapter we discussed the influence of Western educational thoughts on the Chinese education and in this chapter we will talk about the spreading of Marxism. Marxism is also a part of Western culture in essence, because it was a natural product of Western political and economic development. When the capitalist mode of production coalesced and the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was growing fierce in the West, Marx and Engel created Marxist theory by analyzing the experiences of European labor movements and critically absorbing German classical philosophy, British classical political economics and French utopian socialism. However, it is different from general Western culture because it represents the direction of human beings' advanced culture and it belongs to the proletariat worldwide. From the May Fourth Movement in China (1919) onwards, Chinese history has been aligned with Marxism for over 80 years. Marxism became popular, took roots and blossomed in China after the Communist Party of China accepted it and combined it with the realities of Chinese revolution. Marxism guided the success of China's New Democratic Revolution and now is still guiding the socialist revolution and construction. Marxism came to China and destroyed the roots of old Chinese cultures, thereby paving the way for new Chinese cultural development. This does not mean that we reject all traditional Chinese cultures. Instead, cultural reform in China has reached a high level during this period. Chinese people find a way to scientifically and historically criticize, select and transform Chinese ancient cultures. We may even say that the Chinese create new Chinese culture by rejecting the dross and keeping the essence of the ancient culture and while absorbing all advanced cultures in the world.

1. The Spreading of Marxism in China and the Foundation of Chinese New Culture

When it comes to the spreading of Marxist educational theory, we have to say something about the spreading of Marxism in China as a whole. Early
in the late Qing dynasty and the early Republic, scientific socialism was introduced to China, mainly through Japan. According to historical documents, Marxism was first mentioned in the pamphlet entitled *The Book of World Harmony* (*Da-tong-xue*) written by Cai Erkang. According to the selected translations by Timothy Richard, Marx, Engels and their studies of capitalism were mentioned many times. The pamphlet was published in February 1899 by *The Review of Times* run by The Christian Literature Society for China (*Guangxue hui*). *The History of Modern Politics*, written by Ariga Nagao in Japanese, was translated and published in *Translated Works Series* edited by Chinese students in Japan. In this book, Nagao correlated Marx with scientific socialism. However, the first translated work on Marx’s life and theories is *Socialism* written by Murai Tomoyoshi, the president of Japanese Socialist Society. The work was translated by Luo Dawei and published by Shanghai Kwong Chi Book Company in April 1902. Liang Qichao should be considered as the first Chinese person who introduced Marx and his theory in his article “The Introduction to Evolutionary Revolutionist Benjamin Kidd and His Theory” published in *Xinmin Congbao* on October 16, 1902. He then published “Chinese Socialism” in Issue 46 to 48 in February 1904, which gave a brief introduction to the ideology of Marx’s socialism. More works followed but it was not until the October Revolution of Russia that Marxism, as the guiding ideology of Chinese revolution, was introduced to China and spread quickly. Mao Zedong said, “The thunder of guns in the October Revolution brought us Marxism-Leninism.” Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, pioneers of the Chinese New Culture Movement, leaders of the May Fourth Movement and chief editors of the magazine *New Youth*, also made great contributions in spreading Marxism. In July 1918, Li Dazhao published “The Victory of Common People” and “The Victory of Bolshevism” in the magazine *New Youth* which celebrated the victory of the October Revolution. In May 1919, a special edition of “The Research of Marxism” was published in the same magazine. From September to November of 1919, Li Dazhao serialized “My View of Marxism” in *New Youth*, which gave a systematic introduction of Marxism; in September 1920, Chen Duxiu also

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1. It was edited by Young John Allen, who was an American Missionary in Shanghai from 1868 to 1907. It served for The Christian Literature Society for China and it was originally named *The Church News*. In 1875, it was renamed the *Globe Magazine* and then renamed again as *The Review of Times* in 1889.