

Historical Origin and Realistic Enlightenment of “Nanniwan Policy” - On the Realistic and Pragmatic Scientific Spirit of Zhu De

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Abstract

Proposal and implementation of “Nanniwan Policy” fully reflects the scientific spirit of being practical and realistic, being innovative and realistic and pragmatic proposed by Zhu De, which has a realistic significance and enlightenment effect on construction of innovative and harmonious society and sustainable development of social economy in the current China.

Keywords: Zhu De, Nanniwan policy, scientific spirit, realistic significance

During the formidable period of the Anti-Japanese War, in order to resolve the survival issue of soldiers and civilians involved in the war, Zhu De “personally guided development of Nanniwan, promoted the large scale production campaign and made significant contributions to development of production of security of supplies”, (Hu Yaobang, 1986). This is the so-called Nanniwan policy we are talking about.

1. Survival or Perishing: “Nanniwan Policy” Compelled by Three Difficulties

1.1 Deficiency of Clothing and Food in the Base Area, Seriously Threatening Survival and Development in the Base Area

Ever since 1937 when Kuomintang-Communist cooperation in the Anti-Japanese War, the enemy’s rear area battlefield and frontline battlefield were formed in China. These two battlefields depended on each other and collaborated with each other. After 1938, Japanese invaders changed their policy of aggression against China, and they mainly attacked the anti-Japanese base area and carried out the policy that was centered by political lure into surrender and was supplemented by military attack towards Kuomintang government. The anti-Japanese base area suffered cruel “smashes” by the Japanese invaders for several times. The Kuomintang government adopted the policy of besiege and blockage in the anti-Japanese base area, successively ceased releasing such necessary material supplies as soldiers’ pay and rations and ammunition to the Eighth Route Army, blocked the normal commercial trade channels between the border area and the outside, which made the native products in the border area unable to be sold out, and the urgently needed food, ammunition, drug and salt unable to be bought in, and which, in the meantime, stopped the donation assistance from the progressives in all walks of life and from the overseas Chinese. Zhu De once said in a conference, “Chiang kai-shek neither released pay nor food, implemented military and economic blockage in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border region. He ordered not to give us food or clothing. He is planning to starve us to death and freeze us to death.” The land in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border region was infertile and natural disasters frequently occurred, so this region was unable to burden the least survival demand of the border area government and army. Especially under the “great smash” of the Japanese invaders and attack of the Stubborn Army, the area of the base area declined sharply from more than 120 thousand square kilometers to only 90 thousand square kilometers or so. Thus, development of economy and security of supplies became a matter of primary importance to be resolved by the government.

1.2 Financial Deficiency of the Border Area Government, Seriously Constraining Sustainable Development of the Anti-Japanese War

The Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border region was located in the Loess Plateau and was a closed and extremely backward poverty-stricken area, where the agriculture was quite backward. Before the Anti-Japanese war began, there was no industry in the border area. After the war, there were 9 public-owned factories in the border area, with a capital of 523 thousand RMB Yuan, 29 production cooperation institutes, with a share capital of 135

thousand RMB Yuan and a production value weight of 20 thousand Yuan. The economic condition was unable to provide sufficient sources to the finance of the border area. Before 1940, the primary revenue of the government was the channel of foreign assistance, so it had a small amount of balance. When the Kuomintang government changed its policy to besiege and block the base area in 1940, and, furthermore, a large batch of young people hurried off for Yan'an, and the forward-deployed forces, such as, 359 Brigade headed by Wang Zhen, were recalled from the frontline to defend the border area, the population in the border area sharply increased, and the finance became more deficient. In 1941, the financial economic deficit reached as much as 5.672 million RMB Yuan. It became an extremely urgent matter how to develop economy, increase financial revenue, open new financial sources and provide solid material security for the Anti-Japanese War.

1.3 The Economic Burden of Peasants Was Extremely Heavy, Their Accumulated Rancour in the Government Deepened, and the Issue of Food Possibly Evolved into a Disturbing Political Issue

When the most difficult period of the Anti-Japanese war approached, the burden of the people in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border region become heavy. "The common people transported public salt and provided us with public salt as a replacement of money. Besides, we bought a government loan worth of 5 million RMB Yuan in 1941, which is also a heavy burden". At the beginning of the Anti-Japanese War, the border area allocated an agricultural tax paid in grain worth of 10 thousand Dan to the peasants, 50 thousand Dan in 1939, increasing to 90 thousand Dan in 1940 and sharply increasing to 200 thousand in 1941. At that time, there was already a population of 1.5 million in Yan'an. These people had to burden public food worth of 200 thousand Dan. Furthermore, there were a lot of other public loans and taxes. The burden of peasants was extremely heavy, so the public had objections and relationship between the cadres and the masses became intense, contradictions appeared between the government army and peasants, and the dissatisfactory emotions of the masses increased. As a result, such cynical remark emerged as "Why the Thunder God doesn't beat Mao Zedong to death." Thus, it can be seen, the issue of food had become an austere political issue and was involved about the fundamental principle issue whether the central government and the army could gain support of the common people, get through the most difficult time and carry the war through to the end.

Then, the most critical issue in how to coordinate relationship between the government, the army and the common people, maintain the affection of fish and water between the government and the common people and ensure victory of the war was how to develop the economy and lessen the burden of the people.

Zhu De mentioned in "Finishing the Financial Economic Plan of the Border Area in 1941" in December 1940, the most critical matter in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia border region was to resolve the problems of food, clothing, articles of everyday use and military supplies. If these problems were unlikely to be resolved, it was difficult to carry through the war to the end and victory of the Anti-Japanese War was not guaranteed.

In order to continue to finish the undertaking of anti-Japanese, the Central Communist Party of China headed by Mao Zedong formulated in time the policy of "production of self-help", calling the people and the army in the border area to depend on themselves, better troops and simplify administration and conduct large scale production campaign. Proposal of "Nanniwan policy" and development of Nanniwan then emerged as the times required.

2. Unveiling of "Nanniwan Policy" and Three Reflections of the Scientific Spirit of Zhu De

The scientific spirit refers to the be practical and realistic attitude of respecting an objective rule, the realistic and pragmatic concept of daring to be the first and the human-oriented spirit of respecting science and technology as well as talents.

In development of Nanniwan and the decision-making process of "Nanniwan policy", the realistic and pragmatic scientific spirit of Zhu De was mainly reflected in three aspects.

2.1 Adhering to the Historical Materialism with Close Combination of Scientific Development and Building the Country through the Anti-Japanese War

According to the historical materialism, Zhu De believed that, in order to effectively resolve the above three political and economic issues, we had no other choice but to focus on science and on application of natural science, and resolve the central economic issue with science and technology. Then we might ensure the material interest of the people and that the undertaking of the Anti-Japanese War was carried forward. He proposed the scientific development thought of "combining science with Anti-Japanese War." That is to say, the People's Republic of China at that time was in a great process of building the country through the Anti-Japanese War, so whether its gaining victory of the war or its success in building of the country depended upon science, both social science and natural science. According to Zhu De, "Natural science is a great power. Only if we achieved

progress of the natural science, development of all fields in industry and agriculture, growth in production capacity, development and correct utilization of natural resources, and correct management of the industry, could we replenish our power, enrich the struggling forces of the troops, ensuring the people with an affluent life, improving the cultural degree and political consciousness of the common people, gain victory of the war and win success in building of the country. Whoever ignores this power is a big mistake.”

According to the scientific development thought, Zhu De creatively put forward the solution to the economic and more political issue of food in a scientific way, namely, “Nanniwan policy”. The core content was that the troops opened up wasteland and grew food grain to develop a variety of diversifying operations and depended upon themselves to carry through the war.

It was proved by the fact that it was exactly due to implementation of “Nanniwan policy” and proceeding of specific measures that effectively impelled large scale production campaign proceed towards a broader and deeper direction, which recuperated the financial resources of the people, strengthened unity between the army and the people, exercised the troops and obtained necessary material power for carrying through the war to the end.

2.2 The Realistic and Pragmatic Spirit to Go Examination on the Spot

When the Commander in Chief Zhu De returned to Yan’an from the frontline of Northern China, it was exactly the most difficult period of the Anti-Japanese War. Therefore, how to produce by self-help and how to carry through the war to the end, without doubt, became the most critical matter of all his businesses.

Nanniwan was located forty to fifty kilometers far away from the southeast of Yan’an, closely neighboring to the military defense area of Hu Zongnan, and was a southern gate towards Yan’an, with an important strategic position. In addition, its land was fertile, with sufficient water sources and had nearly 10 thousand Mu of land to be reclaimed.

Zhu De drafted some articles, such as “Discussion on the Economic Construction of the Border Area”, proposed such opinions as developing resources in the border area, and enhancing the technology and production by self-help to achieve half self-sufficiency and total self-sufficiency of the finance, and creatively put forward the new mode of social and economic development of opening up wasteland by the troops for self-assistance.

Zhu De, born in a peasant family, had personally gone to Nanniwan for several times for on-the-spot investigation and exploration and offered detailed and accurate evidence for formulation, implementation and adjustment of the policy.

It was recorded by historical data, the Commander in Chief “personally made an on-the-spot survey on Nanniwan, organized the opening up of Nanniwan. At that time, Nanniwan was a desolate place, where birds and beasts were everywhere and wormwood and fleabane blocked the road. When the Commander in Chief got there, he could only find a shack for accommodation at night.” Under such a circumstance, the Commander in Chief who was over fifty years old braved the wind and dew, drank cold water, and ate dry steamed bun, slept in a “wolf” nest, overcoming all obstacles and putting himself out of the way. He went to Nanniwan for three times so as to personally know about the geomorphic feature of Nanniwan and its vegetation condition, etc.. On the basis of an on-the-spot survey, he gradually produced a scientific and overall conception to develop Nanniwan.

According to the change and requirement of objective conditions, Zhu De pursued new knowledge and new rules, change unfavorable conditions to favorable conditions and fully reflected the realistic, pragmatic, steadfast and earnest spirit.

It was proved by the fact that, it was exactly this kind of realistic and pragmatic down-to-earth spirit that became the precondition and security for successful implementation of “Nanniwan policy”. For only one year, the new appearance was presented in Nanniwan, “a new market was opened, cave dwellings well all over the mountains, golden grain was planted on the plain, and new rice was grown in the paddy field. The wasteland was reclaimed and soldiers had enough to eat and wear. Flocks and herds were fat in the farm and Ma Lan was well suitable for papermaking.”

Implementation and promotion of “Nanniwan policy” promoted development of large scale production campaign. During the two years of 1941 and 1942, the part obtained through self operation by the army and institution schools occupied a large part of the entire need. This was an unprecedented miracle in Chinese history and was unconquerable material foundation.

2.3 The Human-oriented Spirit of Respecting Science and Technology as well as Talents

Scientific spirit originates from activities of exploration of truth and pursuit of innovation. Its preliminary idea is

to lay emphasis on scientific innovation and respecting technical talents. Zhu De once pointed out, “All science and all scientists should serve and make efforts for building of the country through the Anti-Japanese War. Then, we could defeat the Japanese fascist robbers and build a democratic republic of Three Principles of the People.”

In the process of formulating and implementing “Nanniwan policy”, Zhu De showed positive support on scientific investigation by the investigation group constituted by the famous agricultural and forestry biologist Le Tianyu and others on plant resources and natural conditions in Nanniwan and attached great importance to his suggestion to reclaim Nanniwan to increase food production that was proposed in his “Report on Investigation of Forests in Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region”. Besides, he went to the natural academy in Yan’an in person to invite experts such as Le Tianyu to go to Nanniwan to explore its ecological environment and decide areas that could be developed.

At the same time, Zhu De appointed Li Shijun as the director of administrative committee in the military region of Nanniwan, an agricultural expert who had rich experience in reclamation of wasteland by an army unit. In order to fully play the roles of agricultural, forestry and animal husbandry scientific persons, under the instruction of Zhu De, a liberation region agricultural association was set up in Yan’an in 1941 headed by the famous agricultural and forestry expert le Tianyu. In the process of reclaiming Nanniwan, It was exactly owing to the strong scientific power of the agricultural association and its scientific planning and specific implementation and guide of soil and water conservation, crop improvement and land development that ensured scientific and sustainable development of Nanniwan.

In 1942, the self-sufficiency rate of 359 Brigade was 61%, and increased to 100% in 1943. In 1944, 260 thousand Mu of wasteland was reclaimed and tilled, 37 thousand Dan of grain was harvested, 5624 pigs were raised, and 10 thousand Dan of public grain was turned over, achieving “equal cultivation and balance”.

Respect of science and respect of scientific talents made development of Nanniwan achieve great success and accumulated rich experience for economic construction in the future.

Zhu De made high comments, “Aggression of Japanese invaders caused severe devastation and difficulties to scientific development in China. Yet, the great undertaking of Anti-Japanese War directed a new forward development path for science and offered stimulus. On the wasteland which brilliance of the natural science had never shined on, our scientific practitioners learned to overcome difficulties, discovered quite a lot of buried treasure, and made a lot of contributions. All these made us full of wish and confidence, trust in our own power and our scientific power, which was enough to build a new China...”

3. Contemporary Enlightenment of the Realistic and Pragmatic Scientific Spirit of Zhu De

A great practice breeds a great spirit. Decision making and implementation of “Nanniwan policy” realized the established target of “developing economy and securing supply”, made cave dwellings all over the mountains and strong appearance of the troops, and brought sufficient food and sufficient soldiers who grew grain by themselves, so as to impel the overall development of the large scale production campaign and promote coordinated social and economic development in the border area.

Development of Nanniwan reflected Zhu De’s surefooted scientific spirit of looking far ahead and aiming high. Its realistic and pragmatic spirit of not only following the objective role but also daring to innovate, without doubt, has great realistic significance and enlightenment effect to the contemporary socialism harmonious social construction and construction of an innovative country.

3.1 Persisting in Scientific Development Spirit, Grasping the Primary Contradiction and Promoting Social Coordinated Development

“Development of Nanniwan” was guided by the scientific development of Chinese revolution, formulated the economic development plan of opening up and reclaiming wasteland by the army, grasped the major contradiction of economic construction, coordinated relationship between the border government and the common people and relationship between the army and the common people, coordinated relationship between struggle, training and production of the army, and also coordinated the organic connection between economic construction and carrying through the war to the end. Thus, it became a new mode that fits in with the contemporary social and economic development and laid solid material foundation and masses foundation for the ultimate victory of the revolution. At that time, the reform and opening up in China was at a golden development period, and, meanwhile, a critical period where contradictions were prominent. In the face of the multiple problems and contradictions, it was more necessary to follow and use the natural and social objective roles, closely connect scientific development and construction of a harmonious society, and formulate a scientific plan and strategy that was suitable for different environments, and helpful to resolve major contradictions and for

benign development of the society and economy, so as to bring benefit to one party and promote harmonious development of the society.

3.2 Adhering to the Development Tenet that Interest of People Was Higher than All and Establishing Scientific People-oriented Performance Concept

Troops opening up wasteland had existed in ancient China. Development of Nanniwan was featured by troops' opening up and reclaiming wasteland. The essence of this feature started out from the fundamental interest of the common people in Yan'an, a new economic policy proposed from the perspectives of alleviating the burden of the peasants, recuperating the financial resources of the people and ensuring victory of the Anti-Japanese War. Only if "the people both have losses and have gains, and their gains are more than their losses, can they support the long run Anti-Japanese War". In accordance with the instruction of Mao Zedong, "the more developed our self-sufficient economy, the less heavy the taxes imposed on the people". It was necessary to take the common people as the orientation, worry what the masses worried, think about what the masses thought about, start out from the most urgent problem to be resolved by the masses, resolve practical matters in an effective way, listen to the voice of the people and know about the sufferings of the people. It was also necessary to regard social, economic and scientific development as the starting point of attaining the political performance and regard as the standard to balance the political performance whether the common people were satisfied or whether they recognized. Only in that way, could we construct a promising and harmonious country together.

3.3 Persisting in the Scientific Spirit of Pragmatic Innovation and Respecting Knowledge and Talents

As the first productive force, without doubt, science and technology will bring enormous material wealth, which is the material foundation for social and economic development. Emphasis on science and technology and emphasis on scientific talents was an important experience in development of Nanniwan. In today's socialist construction, innovation of science and technology seems especially important.

During the contemporary social transition period of China, new situations and new issues emerge constantly. In the face of new situations and new issues, if we choose not to go deep into the grass-root organizations for an on-the-spot investigation and not to stride our steps to enter the field, peasant house and workshop, etc., and, instead, we just "give a hurried and cursory glance" and skim over the surface, then the new socialist countryside building and building of a harmonious society and creative society will become only an armchair strategist.

The fact that "Nanniwan policy" was able to be effectively implemented and that "the slush mud bay" was able to be developed into "Jiangnan in Shaanbei", benefited from the Commander in Chief Zhu De who was at an age of over fifty years and who still personally led his undertaking team to go to the wasteland and practiced on himself, and benefited from the Commander in Chief Zhu De and his undertaking team who resorted to science, respected scientific personnel, and planned a scientific development plan, which, without doubt, was a prerequisite condition for successful development of Nanniwan.

Today, when we review development of Nanniwan and implementation of "Nanniwan policy", without doubt, the practical and realistic and pragmatic scientific spirit of Zhu De has a realistic significance to deepening of the contemporary Chinese social reform and opening up and to construction of innovative society.

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