

The Chinese Ideological and Cultural Roots Embedded in the Zhao Jin Spirit

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to deeply analyze the three main connotations of the Zhaojin Spirit—“firm belief in loyalty to the Party,” “heroic spirit of tenacious struggle,” and “working style rooted in the masses”—and explore how these connotations reflect a revolutionary inheritance and innovation of traditional thought and culture. Additionally, the study aims to evaluate the academic value and practical significance of these connotations in a modern context.

Design/Methodology/Approach – The study employs a literature analysis method, combining historical data and relevant theories, particularly the integration of Marxism with Chinese traditional culture, to systematically examine the specific practices of the Northwest Communists in the Shaan-Gan Border Revolutionary Base. By studying the words, actions, and deeds of key figures such as Liu Zhidan, Xie Zichang, and Xi Zhongxun, the core elements of the Zhaojin Spirit are distilled, and its background and influencing mechanisms are analyzed.

Findings – 1. Firm Belief in Loyalty to the Party: This belief stems not only from the ideal of communism but is also deeply rooted in the concepts of “people-oriented governance” and “practical application for the betterment of society” found in traditional Chinese thought and culture. 2. Heroic Spirit of Tenacious Struggle: It demonstrates the spirit of sacrifice and self-improvement shown by the Communists under extremely difficult conditions, which resonates with the emphasis on moral cultivation and social responsibility in ancient Confucian and Taoist philosophies. 3. Working Style Rooted in the Masses: This reflects the principle consistently upheld by the Communists of “coming from the masses and going back to the masses,” embodying the Chinese philosophical idea of harmonious coexistence between humans, nature, and society.

Research Implications – It highlights the importance of continuing to promote the Zhao Jin Spirit in the new era, particularly in terms of strengthening ideal and faith convictions and adhering to the people-centered development philosophy, which holds significant practical guiding significance.

Keywords: Zhaojin Spirit, Thought and Culture, Revolutionary Inheritance, Root Characteristics

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In the history of the Chinese revolution, the Northwest Revolutionary Base, renowned for its historic contribution of “Two Bases and One Preservation” (serving as dual strategic strongholds and preserving revolutionary forces), was a remarkable endeavor undertaken by Communists and revolutionaries, who armed themselves with Marxism-Leninism, revolutionarily inherited and carried forward the fine ideological and cultural heritage, studied and implemented Mao Zedong’s thought of “armed colonialism by workers and peasants (establishing localized revolutionary bases through armed struggle)”, and adhered to the Jinggangshan path—the CPC’s first rural revolutionary base. The Shaanxi-Gansu Border Revolutionary Base Area, centered on Zhaojin, pioneered a new chapter in worker-peasant armed independence across Shaanxi and Gansu provinces. Through trials of blood and fire, Communists’ noble convictions were forged and elevated, crystallizing into the Zhaojin Ethos. The core connotations of this spirit include unwavering loyalty to the Party, heroic perseverance in struggle, and a work style centered on the masses. This spirit embodies the faith, ideals, aspirations, revolutionary optimism, wisdom, capabilities, and ethos of Communists and revolutionaries in Zhaojin’s struggles, reflecting their original mission, commitment, and virtues. Rooted in China’s intellectual and cultural traditions, the Zhaojin Spirit vividly demonstrates the pragmatism and greatness of Communist ideals. Conducting an in-depth study of the ideological viewpoints and humanistic values inherent in the northwest revolutionaries’ struggles holds significant academic and practical value.

I. Unwavering Party Allegiance: The Zhaojin Ethos and Its Revolutionary Synthesis of Minben Governance and Pragmatic Statecraft from Chinese Political Cosmology

The harmonious coexistence of nature, humanity, and society reflects the worldview and philosophy of Chinese thought and culture, where humans should follow nature, cultivate virtue, and contribute to building a universally harmonious society. This serves as the intellectual and cultural foundation for the ideals and beliefs of Chinese Communists. The Communists and revolutionaries in Northwest China firmly believed that only under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, guided by Marxism-Leninism, could the Chinese people achieve victory in their great and just cause of striving for national independence and the freedom and happiness of the people.

Chinese thought and culture hold that heaven, earth, and humanity exist in harmonious unity, advocating the construction of a harmonious society based on moral cultivation, which Confucianism calls the “Great Unity” (Datong) society. It emphasizes the power of individuals, believing that virtuous and noble-minded people should cultivate their moral character and contribute, both individually and collectively, to establishing a well-ordered society and advancing civilization. Both Daoism and Confucianism recognize that nature operates according to its own laws, and humans should follow rather than defy them. Laozi’s *Dao De Jing* (Chapter 5) written by Laozi (Taoism Founder) warns that between heaven and earth, there exists a selfless and impartial Dao, much like straw dogs that are discarded after sacrificial rituals. This impartial Dao demands that

humans respect and conform to nature, just as rulers should respect and follow the capabilities of their people. Confucianism teaches that the workings of heaven and earth are selfless and natural—the cyclical progression of seasons and climatic changes influence the growth of all living things, reflecting natural laws. Thus, rulers should revere heaven and care for the people. These philosophies reflect an understanding of both natural and social laws. Furthermore, both Taoism and Confucianism stress moral self-cultivation. Taoism emphasizes “harmony” (hé) as a fundamental principle, proposing that “virtue (dé) is the cultivation of harmony.” Confucianism asserts that the “Way of Heaven” (Tiāndào) must be manifested through the “Way of Humanity” (Réndào), declaring that “humans can broaden the Dao” —meaning human effort can expand and illuminate the cosmic order. Confucianism outlines a progressive moral cultivation process: Investigating things (Géwù) Extending knowledge (Zhìzhī) Sincerity of heart (Chéngxīn) Rectifying intention (Zhèngyì) Cultivating the self (Xiūshēn) Regulating the family (Qíjiā) Governing the state (Zhìguó) Bringing peace to the world (Píng Tiānxià). These stages represent different levels and degrees of moral refinement. The concepts of “heaven and earth being selfless” and “cultivating virtue to broaden the Tao” became core tenets of the ancient worldview and philosophy of life, inspiring virtuous individuals to strive tirelessly for moral betterment and societal progress.

The concept of respecting people in Chinese thought and culture gradually evolved into the “people-oriented” (mínběn) philosophy. Guanzi emphasized “putting people first” (Guanzi·Baxing), advocating moral education to enrich the people and strengthen the nation. The Annals of Lǚ Buwei proposed “practicing virtue and loving the people,” stressing that the “foundation” (the masses) must live in stability, and that the people should be taught farming and weaving as essential duties. Mencius further developed Confucius’s “benevolent way” (réndào), establishing a theory of “unifying the world through benevolent governance” (wáng tiānxià), which fully reflected the people-oriented philosophy. In the early Han Dynasty, the Huang-Lao School of Taoism regarded the people as the foundation of the state, emphasizing “being close to the people” (qīnmín), frugality, and ruler’s benevolence. Huainanzi more prominently highlighted the principles of pacifying, following, benefiting, stabilizing, and civilizing the people. Dong Zhongshu believed that the heavenly duty of emperors was to “bring peace and happiness to the people” (ānlè mín). The people-oriented philosophy was strongly reflected in Sima Qian’s Records of the Grand Historian, which opposed tyranny and warned feudal rulers that those who govern with kindness would prevail, while those who ruled with cruelty would perish—asserting that governance must “follow heaven’s will and respond to the people’s needs” (shùn tiān yìng mín).

The concept that “Humanity can uphold the Way” gradually evolved into the philosophy of “Statecraft and Practical Application” in Chinese intellectual tradition. As noted in *The History of World Civilizations* co-authored by American scholars Edward Mcnall Burns and Philip Lee Ralph: “While Greek philosophers were probing the nature of the physical world and Indian thinkers were contemplating the relationship between soul and divinity, Chinese sages sought to discover the fundamental principles of enlightened governance for human society.” These “sages” refer to thinkers like Laozi and Confucius. Laozi’s “Discourse on the Tao” and Confucius’s “Doctrine of Benevolence and Ritual” constituted their foundational principles for establishing social order, governing society, and pacifying the populace. This tradition manifested in various historical

contexts: The “Huang-Lao School” nurtured national strength in the early Han Dynasty; the “Exclusive Veneration of Confucianism” policy consolidated centralized authority under Emperor Wu of Han; the Qian-Jia School pursued scholarship for political statecraft; the New Text Confucianism during the Jia-Dao period (in the period between the Jiaqing and Daoguang reigns in the Qing Dynasty) advocated applying classical knowledge to socio-political development; and the Guan School, profoundly influential in the Shaanxi-Gansu regions, exemplified this tradition. Its founder, Zhang Zai, and subsequent scholars were rooted in Confucianism while seeking pragmatic statecraft solutions; they emphasized ritual propriety, moral virtue, and personal integrity; they were committed to practical learning and social transformation; and they promoted broad scholarship and cultivated talents. And during the Ming-Qing transition, Li Yindu, the scholar of Guan School, epitomized practical learning. He conducted rigorous classical studies to derive governance principles, advocated “learning for statecraft application”, insisted that scholarship must illuminate state governance, and demanded that literary works address contemporary realities. This enduring tradition of deriving enlightened governance measures through practical statecraft became a defining feature of Chinese thought and culture. It was precisely this distinctive tradition that enabled China’s feudal society to progress despite its burdens.

Connected with concepts of harmony, people-centered governance, Great Unity, and upholding the Dao, the pursuit of freedom has been a consistent philosophical tenet and humanistic spirit in Chinese thought and culture, which manifested in social philosophy as resistance against autocracy. Daoist reclusion, epitomized by Zhuangzi’s spiritual “Free and Easy Wandering”. The Wei-Jin era’s intellectual rebellion, where scholars rejected Confucian norms through either extreme aestheticism or uninhibited behavior. The Neo-Confucian revolution during the Ming Dynasty aimed to liberate individuals’ thoughts from the confines of the classics of sages and sages’ teachings. By opposing traditional dogmas, it gave rise to an ideological trend of individualism and philanthropism with the pursuit of intellectual freedom as its ultimate goal, striving to avert an impending crisis. These successive waves of anti-traditional, anti-constraint, and anti-autocratic movements continuously renewed Chinese intellectual culture and propelled social progress.

The ancient ideals of harmony, people-centered governance, Great Unity, upholding the Dao (the fundamental principle of the universe in Chinese philosophy), and the pursuit of freedom, along with the pragmatic ethos of serving the people and applying knowledge to statecraft, find contemporary expression in the following aspects: the Communists’ “unwavering loyalty to the Party”; the supreme faith of the Northwest revolutionaries in communism; and the original mission of the Northwest revolutionaries to fight for national liberation under Party leadership. These aspects embody how traditional Chinese worldview and philosophy have evolved into the ideological foundation of the Communist Party of China, merging classical humanism with revolutionary praxis.

The connotation of the “unwavering loyalty to the Party” embodied in the Zhaojin Spirit truly reflects the beliefs, ideals, and pursuits of Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China. Firstly, they established a lofty communist faith and a firm belief in striving for it. Liu Zhidan resolutely declared upon joining the Party, “Joining the Party means fighting for one’s faith to the end. As a Communist Party member, fighting to the

end means fighting until death.”^① Xie Zichang exclaimed passionately during his Party induction oath, “I will devote my entire life to the cause of communism.”^② Xi Zhongxun joined the Party in prison^③ affirming, “The Communist Party is good; I will follow it to the end regardless!”^④ The communist goal guided the struggle for national independence and people’s freedom and happiness, firmly establishing the foundation of loyalty to the Party among Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China. Secondly, they pursued the goal of dedicating themselves to the people’s freedom and happiness under the Party’s leadership. Liu Zhidan aimed to “make all Chinese people live a good life.” “The most touching aspect is his unwavering belief in fighting for the people’s cause and his infinite loyalty to the Party and the people.”^⑤ Their infinite loyalty to the people and unwavering efforts for the people’s cause sincerely strengthened their value orientation of loyalty to the Party. Thirdly, they demonstrated political integrity with a sense of mission and responsibility. Xi Zhongxun summarized the Yaoxian Uprising by stating, “Revolution, especially in the life-and-death struggle during extremely harsh war conditions, cannot withstand severe tests without lofty revolutionary ideals and firm political integrity.”^⑥ Communists and revolutionaries with lofty revolutionary ideals and firm political integrity withstood severe tests, consciously tempering and enhancing their moral cultivation of loyalty to the Party. Fourthly, they adhered to scientific and practical ideological and theoretical guidance. In the revolutionary struggle, Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China accepted and disseminated Marxism-Leninism, effectively implemented Mao Zedong’s thought of “armed peasant insurgency,” wholeheartedly followed the Jinggangshan path, and adhered to “acting like Comrade Mao Zedong”^⑦, relying on “Shaolin” (dense forests) for struggle, “not blindly relying on superior instructions and abstract dogmas, but adept at integrating the Party’s guidelines with the actual situation in Shaanxi-Gansu, correctly assessing enemy and our situations. Deciding policies based on objective circumstances, independently handling major issues, demonstrating political maturity and originality.”^⑧ Pragmatically applying scientific ideological theories to achieve victory in revolutionary struggles effectively makes Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China practically implement and practice the action guide of loyalty to the Party.

^① Editorial Committee of Commemorative Collection of Liu Zhidan. Commemorative Collection of Liu Zhidan, Military Science Press, 2003:38.

^② Yin Sheng. Biography of General Xie Zichang, People’s Liberation Army Press, 1987:32.

^③ Yan Qiying. Illustrated Biography of Xi Zhongxun, Learning Press, 2013:29-30.

^④ Yan Qiying. Illustrated Biography of Xi Zhongxun, Learning Press, 2013:36-37.

^⑤ People’s Political Consultative Conference Zhidan County Committee, Huangtuqing Friendship Association. Shaanxi-Gansu: 1927-1936 (Zhidan County Cultural Materials Collection Vol. 24), 2019:876-879.

^⑥ Party History Research Office of Shaanxi Provincial Committee of the CPC, Party History Research Office of Gansu Provincial Committee of the CPC. Shaanxi-Gansu Border Revolutionary Base, Party History Press of the CPC, 1997:252.

^⑦ People’s Political Consultative Conference Zhidan County Committee, Huangtuqing Friendship Association. Shaanxi-Gansu: 1927-1936 (Zhidan County Cultural Materials Collection Vol. 24), 2019:4.

^⑧ People’s Political Consultative Conference Zhidan County Committee, Huangtuqing Friendship Association. Shaanxi-Gansu: 1927-1936 (Zhidan County Cultural Materials Collection Vol. 24), 2019:235.

In the Northwest Revolution, guided by Sinicized Marxism, the Communists and revolutionaries upheld lofty communist beliefs, tempered and cultivated a scientific worldview and outlook on life through revolutionary struggles, and became Party members and advanced individuals, making outstanding contributions to national independence and people's well-being.

II. Heroic Tenacity in Arduous Struggle: The Zhaojin Ethos and Its Revolutionary Reconfiguration of Confucian Moral Praxis from Self-Sacrifice to Ceaseless Cultivation

Chinese thought and culture emphasize righteousness, benevolence, moral cultivation, the supremacy of righteousness (regarding righteousness as the foremost principle and essence), the unity of knowledge and action, and perseverance, among other concepts, which are expressions of worldview and values. The excellent cultural traditions, such as the spirit of self-sacrifice for righteousness and unremitting self-improvement, have been revolutionarily inherited in the revolutionary struggles of Communists and revolutionaries.

Confucianism regards morality as the highest value pursuit and subordinates the pursuit of interests. When faced with the choice between righteousness and interests, Confucianism has consistently emphasized "righteousness" as its value orientation. Confucius explicitly advocated "righteousness as the supreme principle" (The Analects of Confucius: Yang Huo [Chapter 17]), teaching people to "consider righteousness when confronted with interests." At the same time, when discussing the interests of the people, he also attached importance to "interests," believing that one should "benefit the people in accordance with what is beneficial to them" (The Analects of Confucius: Yao Spoke [Chapter 20]). Mencius inherited and developed Confucius's view on righteousness and interests, believing that the greatest "profit" is life, while the essence of righteousness is morality. Both "life" and "righteousness" are what people pursue, but when the two cannot be obtained simultaneously, one should abandon the hope of life and seek the perfection of morality.^⑨ Mencius believed that people are inherently good, with a kind "original heart" of goodness. If this "original heart" is obscured by "profit" leading to forgetting righteousness for the sake of profit, it is considered "losing one's original heart" (Mencius 6A:1). "To lose one's original heart" is completely opposed to "sacrificing life for righteousness." Only by maintaining one's "original heart" and not losing it, as the "virtuous" do, can one avoid being driven by personal interests and achieve "sacrificing life for righteousness (yi)." He believed that the pursuit of "profit (li)," whether personal or collective, is undesirable, and the pursuit of personal profit is particularly alarming.^⑩ Moral ideals are the far-reaching pursuits advocated by Mencius. Later Confucian scholars continuously elaborated on Confucius's and Mencius's views on righteousness and profit, with an important point being

^⑨ Mencius 6A:1 (Gaozi I): "Life is what I desire, and righteousness is also what I desire. If the two cannot be obtained together, I would abandon life and choose righteousness."

^⑩ Mencius 1A:1 (King Hui of Liang I): "When those above and below compete for interests, the state is in danger."

the recognition of the unity of righteousness and profit, emphasizing the importance of both.^⑪ This “profit” mostly refers to national interests. This is influenced by Mohist thought^⑫ and the absorption of its reasonable components.

Another issue concerning values in traditional Chinese thought and culture is the relationship between “virtue” (de) and “power” (li, here referring to governance through laws and punishments). “Virtue” refers to the moral cultivation of the people, with the pursuit of moral elevation as the ultimate goal; “power” denotes the use of administrative decrees and punishments to regulate, restrain, and govern society, that is, the rule of law. The view that prioritizes virtue over power has been the mainstream, while the perspective that values both virtue and power holds a secondary position. Confucius emphasized virtue,^⑬ advocating “governing through virtue,” whereby the people of the world will naturally follow. This is because governing through virtue enables the people to develop a sense of shame and to submit from the heart.^⑭ He believed that moral cultivation and ritual education can prevent problems before they arise.^⑮ Mencius advocated “winning people through virtue” (Mencius 2A:1, Gongsun Chou I), and thus proposed the governance method of “gaining the people through good education.”^⑯ In contrast, Mozi of the Mohist school believed in the unity of virtue and power, while Han Fei of the Legalist school believed in their opposition. The views of the Mohist and Legalist schools had some influence on later thinkers. Wang Chong of the Han dynasty synthesized the viewpoints of his predecessors and, in Lunheng: “Critique of Han Fei”, developed a relatively correct understanding of virtue and power, considering the balance of both as the way to govern the country. However, this did not become the dominant perspective. Instead, it was the Confucian emphasis on virtue over power that played a more significant role in Chinese feudal society. Moral norms became political tenets, and moral cultivation became an important means of governance. Feudal politics placed great importance on utilizing the inherent constraints of morality to achieve social stability, and to promote social progress and development.

The perspectives on righteousness versus material gain (yi vs. li) and virtue versus power (de vs. li) in traditional Chinese thought and culture have influenced the Chinese philosophical view of knowledge and action. “Knowledge” (zhi) refers to understanding or awareness, and by extension, to correct views and insights; “action” (xing) denotes behavior or conduct. Emphasizing practice and gaining correct cognition through

^⑪ Zhang Zai (Song Dynasty), Zhengmeng: Dayi: “Righteousness governs the benefits of all under heaven.” Yan Yuan (Early Qing Dynasty), Rectifying Errors in the Four Books: “Rectify righteousness to pursue benefit.”

^⑫ Mozi 35:1(Fei Ming I): “The profit of the state, the people, and the populace.”

^⑬ The Analects of Confucius: Xianwen, Confucius vividly elaborates on the issue of virtue and power by discussing the “steed” (a thousand-mile horse), believing that the value of a thousand-li horse (ji) is measured not by its stamina to gallop miles (li), but by its exceptional moral character (dé).

^⑭ The Analects of Confucius: Weizheng, “Guide them with virtue, unify them with ritual, and they will have a sense of shame and will be well-regulated.”

^⑮ In The Book of Rites: Jingjie: “The subtle influence of ritual education corrects deviations before they become crimes, causing people to unconsciously move towards goodness and away from evil.”

^⑯ Mencius: Jin Xin I: “Good governance makes the people fear it; good education makes them love it. Good governance gains wealth, but good education gains the people’s hearts.”

practice is a value pursuit in Chinese humanistic culture. The concept of “the unity of knowledge and action” was proposed by Wang Shouren in the Ming dynasty. Its correct aspect lies in recognizing the interdependence of knowledge and action, while its flawed view is the confusion of the concepts of knowledge and action. “The unity of knowledge and action” has profound ideological origins. Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi all valued “knowledge” but placed even greater importance on “action.” Confucius believed that adhering to correct insights and applying them successfully was the highest state of attainment: “Knowing something is not as good as loving it; loving it is not as good as delighting in it.” (The Analects of Confucius: Yong Ye [Chapter 6]) Mencius regarded “walking the great path of the world” as a lofty life pursuit (Mencius 3B:1, Teng Wen Gong II). Xunzi believed that only through “acting” could one “understand,” and that “understanding” was as great as being a “sage.” (Xunzi: Ru Xiao [The Efficacy of the Ru] [Chapter 8]) Chinese thought and culture recognized the relationship between cognition and practice relatively early, emphasizing the importance of putting knowledge into practice. As the saying goes, “It is not difficult to know; the challenge lies in doing.” (Zuo Zhuan [Zuo’s Commentary]: The 10th Year of Duke Zhao [532 BCE]) “It is not difficult to know; it is only difficult to put it into action.” (Shangshu (Old Text): The Charge to Yue, Part 2 [Apocryphal Chapter]) This is precisely what is meant.

The theory of knowledge and action in Neo-Confucianism during the Song and Ming dynasties further evolved and developed. On the one hand, there was a recognition of the guiding role of knowledge in action. Cheng Yi stated: “One must possess knowledge before one can truly delight in it; therefore, to diligently practice, one must first acquire knowledge.” On the other hand, it was acknowledged that correct ideological theories marked the attainment of the highest spiritual realm (Chengshi Yishu (Surviving Writings of the Cheng Brothers), juan 18). In response to Wang Shouren’s tendency to blur the boundary between knowledge and action, Wang Fuzhi of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties explicitly proposed the proposition of “knowledge and action mutually supporting” (zhi xing xiang zi), gaining a clear understanding of the interdependent and mutually transformative relationship between knowledge and action.

The phrases “self-improvement without cessation” (zì qiáng bù xī) and “cultivating abundant virtue to sustain all things” (hòu dé zài wù) are among the most resonant expressions in Chinese thought and culture, epitomizing the spirit of relentless progress and moral striving. Confucianism emphasizes: “As heaven moves with vigor, a noble person strives ceaselessly to strengthen oneself (Xiang Zhuan [Commentary on the Symbol] of the Qian Hexagram, The Great Treatise of the I Ching [Yì Zhùàn]).” The natural world is in perpetual motion and change, and a person of virtue should emulate nature by being self-reliant, striving for self-improvement, and acting with vigor and purpose. Daoism, on the other hand, views nature as characterized by simplicity, selflessness, desirelessness, inclusivity, and harmony, advocating Wu Wei (a state of unforced harmony between human intention and the natural order). However, Daoist “Wu Wei” does not imply complete inaction but rather requires weighing the pros and cons, acting when the benefits outweigh the drawbacks, and refraining from acting when the drawbacks are greater. Confucianism posits that there is “universal harmony” between nature and humans, as well as among humans, with “benevolence” (ren) and “sincerity” (cheng) being the essence of both nature and humanity, reflecting a profound understanding of the authenticity and morality of material

existence. Confucius' teachings to his students demonstrated an attitude of self-reliance, striving for self-improvement, and acting with vigor and purpose, which influenced later scholars, all of whom believed that the spirit of striving ceaselessly should permeate one's entire life. This spirit is "a vivid and accurate portrayal of the Chinese national character"¹⁷ Its extensive and far-reaching impact lies in the fact that for thousands of years, it has educated and inspired virtuous individuals and people of noble aspirations to be self-reliant, strive for self-improvement, act with vigor and purpose, devote themselves wholeheartedly to the pursuit of truth, dedicate themselves to serving the world and improving society, confront corrupt officials with unwavering integrity, and resist foreign aggression with indomitable will, thus becoming a profound aspect of the Chinese national character and quality.

"The symbolic attribute of Kun (Earth Hexagram) lies in its receptive capacity; accordingly, the junzi (exemplary person) cultivates abundant virtue to bear and nurture all things. (The Great Commentary on the Zhouyi [Yizhuan])." The earth is expansive, and a person of virtue should encompass all things with a generous and inclusive demeanor. "Virtue" here refers to morality, which early Confucian scholars believed distinguished humans from other animals. Chinese ideological culture generally encompasses three dimensions of morality: first, the meaning of life; second, how to discern good from evil and choose goodness over evil; and third, the integration of inner moral sentiment with external ritual norms, i.e., "refined in both substance and form." These constitute the main content of moral theory and ethical standards. Confucius proposed an overarching moral principle and standard called "benevolence" (ren). Mencius spoke of "noble spirit" (hao ran zhi qi) and "uprightness" (zheng qi), as well as the concept of "a true man".¹⁸ In summary, moral cultivation should aim for breadth and depth. Only then can one possess a broad-mindedness, far-reaching aspirations, and noble ideals, enabling one to draw on the strengths of others, innovate, and forge ahead resiliently, continuously achieving progress and development. The "debate on harmony and uniformity" in the late Western Zhou Dynasty emphasized understanding things from a holistic perspective, where different elements come together to achieve coordination, harmony, complementarity, and coexistence, i.e., unity amidst diversity. Confucius summarized this debate as "The He-Tong Debate (Harmony through Diversity vs. Superficial Conformity)": "The noble person (junzi) harmonizes (he) without conforming (tong); the petty person (xiao ren) conforms (tong) without harmonizing (he)" (The Analects: Zilu [Book XIII, named after Confucius' disciple Zhong You]). This means that a person of virtue values "harmony," listens to diverse viewpoints, thinks deeply, synthesizes information, absorbs strengths, and arrives at correct conclusions while upholding truth, without being narrow-minded or blindly conforming. Confucius encouraged his students to debate and persist in correct conclusions, even if they differed from his own, stating: "When it comes to benevolence, one should not yield to one's teacher" (The Analects: Wei Ling Gong [Duke Ling of Wei, Book 15]). The manifestation of "cultivates abundant virtue to bear and nurture all things" in "harmony without uniformity" has had profound and far-reaching impacts on the

¹⁷ Zhang Qizhi. Chinese Humanistic Spirit, Northwest University Press, 1996: 44-45.

¹⁸ Mencius. Teng Wengong II: "Wealth and high station cannot corrupt him; poverty and low station cannot shake him; authority and force cannot subdue him — this defines a da zhangfu (a person of unyielding moral integrity)."

development of Chinese thought and culture.

Traditional Chinese thought and cultural perspectives on human nature, norms of social and moral conduct, aspirations for social ideals, as well as the unity amidst diversity and the relationship between science and philosophy, have provided rich and profound theoretical nourishment for the sinicization and popularization of Marxism, fostering a unity between the history and reality of Chinese thought and culture. The philosophical concepts of ancient Chinese moral exemplars—such as righteousness versus utility, virtue versus power, knowledge versus action, and self-strengthening versus magnanimous virtue—along with their ethos of “sacrificing life for righteousness” and “ceaseless self-improvement,” are profoundly embodied in the Zhaojin Spirit. This spirit crystallizes the “heroic spirit of tenacious struggle” that defined the Communists and revolutionaries of Northwest China, manifesting as selfless dedication and joyful perseverance—a revolutionary optimism that has shaped the core values and social ideals of Chinese intellectual culture and humanistic tradition.

The connotation of the “heroic spirit of tenacious struggle” embodied by Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China is a true reflection of their revolutionary optimism. Firstly, it is manifested in the righteous force supported by the people. The revolutionary struggles were all for the freedom and happiness of the toiling masses, earning widespread response and support. The growing mass base and the flourishing development of the revolutionary base areas mutually reinforced each other, enabling the Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China to continuously achieve victories and forge ahead with indomitable spirit. Liu Zhidan firmly and proudly stated, “Our cause is just, and the oppressed masses stand firmly with us!”¹⁹ Many intellectuals, especially those with credibility, decisively joined the revolution. People said, “The Communists have great skills, and people are willing to follow them.”²⁰ All social strata generally aligned with the Party organizations and revolutionary forces, believing in the Party, loving the Red Army, and consciously following them. This is the source of confidence for the heroic spirit of the Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China! Secondly, it is characterized by rational and resilient courage. The Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China came from the common people and were deeply influenced by Chinese thought and culture, especially the Guan School (Guanxue, a Neo-Confucian philosophical tradition founded by Zhang Zai during the Northern Song Dynasty, which emphasizes the unity of principle [li] and material force [qi], as well as ethical cultivation through practical learning). Particularly tempered through revolutionary struggles, they possess not only revolutionary courage, daring, wisdom, and perseverance, but also a rationality forged in the crucible of revolutionary conflict. This is a trait of Communists and revolutionaries. Wang Shitai addressed the perils of revolutionary armed struggles, declaring: “We stake our lives for the revolution. Without dauntless courage,

¹⁹ Shaanxi Academy of Social Sciences, CPC Zhidan County Committee, and Zhidan County People’s Government. Liu Zhidan and the Northwest Revolutionary Base Area, Shaanxi People’s Publishing House, 2003:34.

²⁰ Shaanxi Academy of Social Sciences, CPC Zhidan County Committee, and Zhidan County People’s Government. Liu Zhidan and the Northwest Revolutionary Base Area, Shaanxi People’s Publishing House, 2003:214.

unyielding perseverance, and self-sacrificing audacity, victory is utterly unattainable.^{②①} Xi Zhongxun's life motto, "Fight for a lifetime, be happy for a lifetime, strive every day, and be happy every day"^{②②}, is a concise expression of the revolutionary optimism of the Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China. Thirdly, it is demonstrated by their decision-making competence enriched with dialectical thinking. The Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China were influenced by the traditional education and impact of the Pre-Qin Zhou culture, Chang'an culture, and official learning culture, as well as the dialectical thinking and practical learning style of Guanxue. The dissemination, study, and application of Marxism-Leninism helped them form scientific dialectical thinking. Therefore, when the 26th Red Army was fighting bloody battles in Zhongnan Mountains and there was no hope for the main force of the Red Army to return, the CPC Shaanxi-Gansu Special Committee held the famous "Chenjiapō Conference" on August 14, 1933 to discuss and formulate the strategic policy of rebuilding the main force of the Red Army, widely launching guerrilla warfare, and opening up base areas. Liu Zhidan, who had returned to the Zhaojin Revolutionary Base Area after enduring great hardships, highly praised this decision, and the establishment of the Nanliang Revolutionary Base Area in the Shaanxi-Gansu Border Region was inseparable from the correct decision made at this meeting. Later, Zhou Enlai also spoke highly of the Chenjiapō Conference, remarking, "In my view, this exemplifies the Marxism of Northern Shaanxi."^{②③} Fourthly, it is embodied in their heroic sentiment of fearing no sacrifice and striving for victory. During the battle to defend Xuejiazhai, more than 400 guerrilla fighters, as well as personnel from the armament repair workshop, clothing factory, Red Army hospital, and logistics unit stationed at Xuejiazhai, engaged in fierce fighting that lasted for five days. The female guerrilla fighters detonated hand grenades to perish together with the enemy, and more than 20 female guerrilla fighters leaped off cliffs.^{②④} The Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China demonstrated great revolutionary courage and a selfless spirit of fearing no sacrifice and striving for victory in the revolutionary struggles.

Today, under the guidance of Marxism, we have established new and correct values, gaining profound insights into the relationship between righteousness and profit, as well as between virtue and power. We prioritize meeting the ever-growing material and spiritual interests of the people as our highest objective, combining moral governance with legal governance. This fully demonstrates the progress of our thought and cultural development. The Marxist perspective on the relationship between cognition and practice, as well as theory and reality, when integrated with China's excellent traditional culture, encompasses profound insights from Chinese philosophy. More importantly, it provides us with a scientific understanding and serves as a guiding principle for our cognitive and practical endeavors.

^{②①} Editorial Group of The Revolutionary Career of Xi Zhongxun. The Revolutionary Career of Xi Zhongxun, China Literature and History Press, 2002:50-52.

^{②②} Xi Zhongxun. Zhaojin Revolutionary Memorial in Shaanxi-Gansu Border Region.

^{②③} History and Chronicles Office of CPC Tongchuan Municipal Committee. Xi Zhongxun and Zhaojin, Approval Number of Shaanxi Internal Resource Books BT-26 (2015), 2018:73.

^{②④} Editorial Committee of Red Stories of Zhaojin. Red Stories of Zhaojin, Compiled and Printed by the Memorial of the Zhaojin Revolutionary Base Area in the Shaanxi-Gansu Border Region, 131-133.

III. The Zhaojin Ethos: Revolutionary Synthesis of Traditional Governance Wisdom and Dialectical Praxis in Mass-Rooted Statecraft

The “humanistic” thought that emphasizes human affairs is a core issue in Chinese intellectual and cultural heritage. It originates from discussions on natural philosophy and the relationship between humanity and the cosmos, and also serves as the foundation for the Communist Party’s historical materialism and mass viewpoint.

In Chinese intellectual and cultural traditions, the correct understanding of the fundamental principles governing the changes in nature, humanity, and society is regarded as the highest attainment of personal cultivation. And people are advised to adapt to the evolving circumstances of things and consciously initiate transformations. This is a crucial understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature, as well as between humanity and society. The Great Treatise (Xi Ci) of the Book of Changes affirms the natural order from the heavens and earth to human society, explaining how the myriad things in the universe undergo diverse transformations through the interplay of yin and yang, the two fundamental forces. It posits that the dynamic interplay and unity of opposites between yin and yang constitute the most essential principle. By aligning oneself with this principle in one's conduct and life, one can fully manifest one's inherent nature. Moreover, it is believed that gaining profound insights into the intrinsic nature and transformative principles of things represents the pinnacle of moral and intellectual accomplishment. The Commentaries on the Yi (Yizhuan) admonish humanity about the significance of change and transformation in the opposing aspects of Yin and Yang, extending this insight from the natural world to human society. It advises individuals to adapt to the trends of change in things and consciously initiate transformations to achieve moral perfection and realize their ideal life goals.

When exploring the origin of the universe, Laozi, the founder of Daoism, stated that the “Dao” (“the Way”), which “existed before heaven and earth” (Chapter 25 of Laozi), gave rise to yin and yang. The interaction between yin and yang then generated the complex and diverse world (Chapter 24 of Laozi). Laozi’s “Dao” is a real existence, serving as the foundation for the generation and development of all things. In this sense, the “Dao” is “being” (“You” in Chinese). However, the “Dao” is also distinct from concrete objects, as it cannot be perceived like tangible things. Therefore, it is also considered “non-being” (“Wu” in Chinese). “Being” and “non-being” are opposite yet unified in the “Dao”.²⁵ This is a generalization of the laws of things, reaching a level of scientific abstraction. Laozi also posits that when things reach their extreme, they transform into their opposites and eventually return to their original state (Chapter 40 of Laozi). The method to prevent things from transforming in a negative direction is the “gentle and yielding” approach, which means adhering to the principles of nature without coercion, or “non-action” (“Wuwei” in Chinese). Laozi’s theory of the “Dao” first reveals that things have been in motion and change since their inception, indicating that Chinese philosophy, from its very beginning, recognized the world’s origin as change. Meanwhile, it also reveals the law of

²⁵ representing two complementary natural forces. In Laozi, in addition to yin and yang, being and non-being, there are also pairs such as difficulty and ease, long and short, high and low, sound and voice (Chapter 2 of Laozi), disaster and blessing (Chapter 58 of Laozi), strength and weakness (Chapter 76 of Laozi).

opposition and transformation of things, suggesting that returning to the origin is the result of opposition and transformation.

Confucianism and Daoism both place great importance on exploring the origin and operation of the universe. Confucius proposed the requirement of “zhong” (moderation, balance) and the methods of “inquiring into both extremes” and “harmony in diversity” for correctly understanding things. He advocated that people should “speak with precision” and believed that “going too far is as bad as falling short” (The Analects: Xian Jin [The Progressive Disciples, Book 11]). To achieve “zhong” and avoid “going too far,” one must draw on the strengths of others and synthesize various perspectives to form correct views and opinions. This requires “inquiring into both extremes” (The Analects: Zi Han [The Master’s Reserved Discourse, Book 9]), that is, grasping the two opposing aspects of a contradiction, and “harmony in diversity,” which means being adept at listening to others’ viewpoints while presenting one’s own correct insights. From an epistemological perspective, Confucius “applied the principle of ‘harmony in diversity’ to the field of epistemology and created the method of ‘inquiring into both extremes.’ ‘Harmony in diversity’ gradually became a proposition advocated by Confucianism in the Pre-Qin period for handling cultural issues.”²⁶ It also influenced other schools of thought and the political sphere.

Confucian humanistic thought is profound and systematic. Confucius believed that the essence of human beings lies in “righteousness” . “Righteousness” is the most worthy pursuit. For a virtuous person, righteousness is the most important principle in conducting affairs and interacting with the world, which should be practiced in accordance with the requirements of profit, reflected in a modest attitude, and genuinely embodied in actions (The Analects: Wei Ling Gong [Duke Ling of Wei, Book 15]). “Taking righteousness as the supreme principle” (The Analects: Yang Huo [The Discourse on Subversion and Moral Cultivation, Book 17]), righteousness is also the highest principle in handling affairs and shaping one’s worldview. “A person can propagate the Dao.” Transmitting and upholding righteousness should be the core and most noble pursuit of human beings. The correct life is one that strives to realize one’s life value and significance, manifests one’s social role, rather than pursuing material gains. As recorded in Zuo Zhuan (24th Year of Duke Xiang), the classic Chinese historical text articulates the “Three Imperishables”: “establishing moral exemplars”(li dé), “achieving meritorious deeds”(li gōng), and “formulating enduring teachings”(li yán). These principles later became foundational to Confucian ethics on immortality through legacy. An individual or group’s endeavors should aim to establish virtue through ideological and institutional innovations that broadly benefit the people; to achieve merit by rescuing the nation from crises, resolving difficulties, and facilitating overall positive development; and to leave behind words by formulating practical and concise theories that have immediate and long-term impacts.

Mencius inherited Confucius’s viewpoint of regarding righteousness as the essence and paramount virtue, further developing the Confucian “humanistic” thought and elaborating on the issues of human “heart” and “nature.” He believed that the human “heart” and “nature” constitute the distinctiveness that sets humans apart

²⁶ Zhang Qizhi (ed.). Research on Confucius and Confucianism at the Turn of the Century, Collection of Essays on Chinese Thought History Guangxi Normal University Press, 2000, Volume 1:349.

from all other creatures, making them the quintessence of existence. According to Mencius, the essence of a human lies in the “heart”; without qualities such as “compassion,” “a sense of shame and righteousness,” “modesty and deference,” and “a sense of right and wrong,” one cannot truly be considered human (Mencius: Gongsun Chou [Chapter 1]). “Compassion” embodies the cultivation of benevolence and empathy; “a sense of shame and righteousness” embodies the cultivation of self-awareness and self-discipline; “modesty and deference” embody the cultivation of knowing when to yield; and “a sense of right and wrong” embodies the cultivation of discernment. These various aspects of the “heart”—the cultivation of one’s inner self—form the content of “nature,” which is one’s moral capacity. By “fully cultivating the heart,” one can “know one’s nature,” and since “nature” is bestowed by heaven, knowing one’s nature is akin to knowing heaven. In Mencius’s philosophy, heaven and humanity are interconnected, almost indistinguishable. Xunzi articulated a clear distinction between Heaven (tian) and Humanity (ren), recognizing their fundamental differences while asserting that humans’ defining characteristic lies in “righteousness” (yi)—a moral principle governing ethical conduct. Simultaneously, he acknowledged the interconnectedness and interdependence of Heaven and Humanity, proposing that humans possess the capacity for “dynamic participation” (neng can) in cosmic processes through ritual and moral cultivation (Xunzi: Discourse on Heaven). Furthermore, Xunzi believed that “the operations of heaven follow a constant pattern” and that humanity can “harness the destiny of heaven and utilize it” (Xunzi: Discourse on Heaven), emphasizing that humanity can transform nature through wisdom and effort. To summarize the above analysis: The inherent “heart” and the manifested “nature” of humans are intertwined, synergistic, and mutually reinforcing, endowing humans with cognitive, thinking, and practical abilities, as well as a worldview, outlook on life, and values. They also instill in humans ideals, beliefs, a sense of mission and responsibility, agency, creativity, lofty aspirations, a spirit of dedication, cognitive capabilities, and a fighting spirit. Liu Yuxi of the Tang Dynasty proposed the view of “heaven and humanity each prevailing in their respective domains,” believing that the combination of “the way of heaven” and “the way of humanity”²⁷ is the driving force behind social development, emphasizing humanity’s proactive spirit towards nature. Zhang Zai (1020-1077), founding philosopher of the Guan School in the Northern Song Dynasty, prominently put forward the proposition of “unity of Heaven and humanity,” acknowledging not only the unity of heaven and humanity but also the distinction between “the way of heaven” and “the way of humanity.” Cheng Hao of the Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism emphasized “being one with all things”²⁸, while Cheng Yi emphasized the identity of “the way of heaven” and “the way of humanity”²⁹, urging humans to fully follow objective laws. Overall, Chinese philosophy places more emphasis on heaven-human unity and only to a certain extent explores the idea of “heaven prevailing over humanity” or vice versa. Mencius’s “doctrine of heart and nature,”

²⁷ On Heaven: “The way of heaven lies in nurturing life, its function in determining strength and the way of humanity lies in weakness; establishing laws and regulations, its function in discerning right and wrong.

²⁸ Cheng’s Collected Works, Volume II, Part I: “Scholars must first recognize benevolence; a benevolent person is harmoniously one with all things... The functions of heaven and earth are all my functions.”

²⁹ Cheng’s Collected Works, Volume XXII, Part I: “There was never a distinction between the way of heaven and the way of humanity; it is the way of heaven when in heaven, and the way of humanity when in humanity.”

Xunzi's "theory of the distinction between heaven and humanity," Liu Yuxi's "view of heaven and humanity each prevailing in their respective domains," and Zhang Zai's "proposition of heaven-human unity" all explore, from different angles and to varying degrees, human agency.^{③⑩} This is the shining aspect of Chinese thought and culture.

During the Song and Ming dynasties, when there was profound interaction and integration between traditional culture and foreign cultures (mainly Buddhism) and when science and technology were relatively advanced, the Chinese philosophical epistemology witnessed new developments. Wang Anshi, a thinker and statesman of the Northern Song dynasty, not only acknowledged the motion and change of the world but also affirmed that the characteristic of motion and change was the replacement of the old by the new, a process of new emergence and old extinction. Zhang Zai, another thinker, proposed the ideas of "A single entity with dual aspects" (*Yi wu Liang ti*) (Zhang Zai: *Correcting the Ignorant—Chapter on Dialectical Duality*) and "existence of opposites." "Where there is a phenomenon, there are opposites, and opposites necessarily act in contrary ways (*You xiang Si You Dui, Dui Bi Fan Qi Wei*) (Zhang Zai: *Correcting the Ignorant—Chapter on Supreme Harmony*)." He believed that all objective phenomena are characterized by opposition and conflict, and that the "existence of opposites" in things determines their characteristics.^{③⑪} It is also because of the "existence of opposites" that there is unity, and unity contains opposites.^{③⑫} This was Zhang Zai's discourse on the relationship between opposition and unity, to a certain extent integrating materialism with dialectical thinking. Shao Yong (1011-1077), a thinker of the Northern Song dynasty, referred to the "existence of opposites" as "one divides into two" (Shao Yong: *Supreme Principles Governing the World—Outer Chapter on Observing Phenomena*). Zhu Xi (1130-1200), a thinker of the Southern Song dynasty, explicitly stated that people should analyze things starting from the "existence of opposites" (Zhu Xi: *Classified Dialogues—Chapter 95: On Principle and Material Force*). During the transition from the late Ming to the early Qing dynasty, social upheavals inspired thinkers with a strong sense of social responsibility. They delved deeply into social issues and made new developments in the study of the "existence of opposites." Wang Fuzhi concluded that every stage of the process

^{③⑩} Sun Wu, a general and military strategist of the late Spring and Autumn Period in the State of Wu, who preceded Mencius and Xunzi, provided a relatively comprehensive argumentation on the relationship between the objective laws of war and human agency. Sun Wu believed that the objective conditions of both sides in a war could only indicate the possibility of victory or defeat. Good objective conditions increased the likelihood of victory, while poor ones decreased it, but they could not determine the certainty of the outcome. In military practice, effective exercise of subjective agency and correct command could compensate for inadequate objective conditions and lead to victory, while poor exercise of subjective agency and faulty command could undermine advantages and result in defeat. Sun Wu's discussion of human consciousness illustrates the foundation upon which Mencius's and Xunzi's discussions of human agency are built.

^{③⑪} Zhang Zai. *Zhengmeng*: Chapter on Living Beings, "Nothing exists in isolation by its inherent principle. Unless similarity and difference, contraction and expansion, beginning and end mutually manifest it, even a "thing" would not be a thing. Events attain completion through initiation and conclusion. Unless shared by the people and through interaction between presence and absence, their completion remains unseen; if completion is unseen, even a "thing" would not be a thing. Therefore it is said: "Through mutual resonance of contraction and expansion, benefit arises."

^{③⑫} Zhang Zai (Song Dynasty), *Zhengmeng*: Chapter on Supreme Harmony: If the Two Forms are not established, the One cannot be perceived. If the One cannot be perceived, the function of the Two ceases. These dual aspects are void and solidity, movement and stillness, convergence and divergence, clarity and turbidity — yet ultimately, they are unified in the One.

of change in things is characterized by “opposites,” that “opposites” are inherent in things, that “all motion is motion,” and that “stillness is also motion” (Commentary on Zhang Zai’s *Correcting the Ignorant*, Volume 1), further theoretically affirming truths such as “all things have opposites” and that things are in motion and development. Moreover, he had a new understanding of the “Dao” theory in *The Great Treatise (Xi Ci)* of the *Book of Changes*, believing that while specific objects are diverse, the characteristic of “opposites” is universal, and all specific objects embody the “Dao” (laws). Thus, Wang Fuzhi organically unified the dialectical thought of “opposites” with materialism. The developmental history of the “existence of opposites” doctrine shows that the dialectical thinking of “opposites” for exploring the origin and essence of the world is an exploratory spirit of seeking truth from reality (nature and society). Concepts related to “opposites” include “hui tong”: “The sage perceives the movements of the world and observes their convergence and transformation to apply rituals and norms (*The Book of Changes—The Great Commentary*).” “Huitong” means observing the convergence and transformation of things, that is, harmonizing and reconciling different interpretations and meanings to resolve contradictions, thereby clarifying their meanings and achieving correct understanding. Other related concepts include “no evidence, no belief (*wuzheng buxin*)” and “seeking truth from facts (*shishi qiu shi*)”.

The philosophical concepts of ancient Chinese noble-minded individuals and men of virtue—such as “the nature of human conscience,” “righteousness as the highest principle,” “righteousness as the essence,” “yin-yang opposition,” “harmony without uniformity,” “examining both extremes,” and “exploring the profound to understand transformation”—along with their pragmatic, wisdom-driven approaches to governance that emphasized human affairs and dialectical reasoning, are reflected in the Zhaojin Ethos. This ethos manifests as a working style deeply rooted in the masses, embodying the mass-line methodology upheld by Communists and revolutionaries in northwest China. Through this, the Zhaojin Ethos embodies the philosophical foundations of historical materialism and dialectical materialism, merging traditional Chinese ethical wisdom with revolutionary practice.

The work style of the Zhaojin Ethos, which is deeply rooted in the masses, truly reflects the wisdom, capability, and style of Party members and revolutionaries in northwest China. Firstly, the Party organization serves as a strong organizational guarantee. The Party organization “acts as the spark of revolution”^③, establishing “a strong Party organization”^④. Party organizations at all levels have strong cohesion and combat effectiveness, fostering a robust organizational system that forms an organizational guarantee for being rooted in the masses. The 26th Red Army, the Zhaojin Yuyuan Guerrilla Force, and the General Headquarters of the Guerrilla Forces in the Shaanxi-Gansu Border Region established Party committees and organizational systems, exploring and improving organizational structures and work mechanisms to ensure Party leadership over armed and revolutionary forces. Secondly, there is a consistent commitment to unity and reliance on the masses. Party

^③ Shaanxi Academy of Social Sciences, the CPC Zhidan County Committee, and the Zhidan County People’s Government. Liu Zhidan and the Northwest Revolutionary Base, Shaanxi People’s Publishing House, 2003:215.

^④ Shaanxi Academy of Social Sciences, the CPC Zhidan County Committee, and the Zhidan County People’s Government. Liu Zhidan and the Northwest Revolutionary Base, Shaanxi People’s Publishing House, 2003:127.

members and revolutionaries in northwest China have always been “of one heart with the common people”^{⑤⑤}, with all work “closely relying on the masses”^{⑤⑥}. They shared hardships and joys with the masses, embodying the path and principles of a work style rooted in the masses. Liu Zhidan said, “Relying on the people, raising armed forces, and establishing base areas will surely lead to the vigorous development of the revolution.”^{⑤⑦} Xi Zhongxun carried out revolutionary struggles in the Niucun area of Zhaojin, and Li Miaozechai did the same in the Yuyuan Village area of Zhaojin, “expanding guerrilla zones in a planned manner.”^{⑤⑧} Furthermore, there is the promotion of public awareness and education to foster consensus. The struggle in the Zhaojin Revolutionary Base Area in Shaanxi-Gansu and the broader Northwest Revolutionary Base Area adhered to the guiding ideology of “proletarian revolutionary armed struggle combined with peasant struggle and the creation of revolutionary base areas,” promoting, educating, and uniting the masses to win their support. Relying on and mobilizing the masses to carry out mass-based people’s guerrilla warfare embodies the guiding principles of a work style rooted in the masses. The Shaanxi-Gansu revolution adhered to the guidance of Mao Zedong’s concept of “proletarian revolutionary armed struggle combined with peasant struggle and the creation of revolutionary base areas”^{⑤⑨}, unifying the understanding of the revolutionary forces and the people to foster consensus. The 26th Red Army established political committees and soldiers’ committees, forming a political work system and ensuring democratic rights for soldiers. Revolutionary armed forces such as the Red Army, guerrilla forces, and Red Guards continuously improved intra-Party democratic life and regular ideological and political education systems and measures. Fourthly, there is the establishment of the broadest united front, reflecting the extensive and in-depth characteristics of a work style rooted in the masses. Liu Zhidan said, “Revolution requires the establishment of a united front. The fewer enemies, the better; the more friends, the better. Every increase in our strength reduces the enemy’s strength by one.”^{⑥⑩} During the revolutionary struggle, the policy of winning over, transforming, and uniting was adopted to strategically handle relations with various armed forces and gain the initiative. During the period of the Shaanxi-Gansu Guerrilla Force, relations with the Miaowan Xia Yushan militia were properly managed, facilitating the actions of the newly established revolutionary armed forces. When the 26th Red Army operated in the Qinling Mountains, the united front also

^{⑤⑤} Shaanxi Academy of Social Sciences, the CPC Zhidan County Committee, and the Zhidan County People’s Government. Liu Zhidan and the Northwest Revolutionary Base, Shaanxi People’s Publishing House, 2003:217.

^{⑤⑥} The People’s Political Consultative Conference Zhidan County Committee and the Loess Affinity Association. Shaanxi-Gansu: 1927-1936 (Zhidan County Cultural Materials Volume 24), 2019:7.

^{⑤⑦} Shaanxi Academy of Social Sciences, the CPC Zhidan County Committee, and the Zhidan County People’s Government. Liu Zhidan and the Northwest Revolutionary Base, Shaanxi People’s Publishing House, 2003:215.

^{⑤⑧} Party History Research Office of the Shaanxi Provincial CPC Committee and Party History Research Office of the Gansu Provincial CPC Committee. Shaanxi-Gansu Border Revolutionary Base, Party History Publishing House, 1997:109.

^{⑤⑨} Party History Research Office of the Shaanxi Provincial CPC Committee and Party History Research Office of the Gansu Provincial CPC Committee. Shaanxi-Gansu Border Revolutionary Base, Party History Publishing House, 1997:2.

^{⑥⑩} Editorial Committee of the Memorial Collection of Liu Zhidan. Memorial Collection of Liu Zhidan, Military Science Press, 2003: 61-62.

played a role.

Party members and revolutionaries inherited traditional thought and cultural concepts such as the “harmony between heaven and humanity,” “humanistic studies,” the philosophy of “recognizing contradictions and striving for synthesis,” the approach of “integrating diverse ideas,” and dialectical thinking such as “no proof, no belief” and “seeking truth from facts.” In the course of revolutionary struggle, they tempered the Marxist worldview, social outlook, and mass viewpoint, achieving a high level of organic unity between materialism and dialectics, as well as between the materialist view of nature and the materialist view of history. This enabled them to gain ideological guidance, spiritual motivation, and a pillar of support, thereby solidifying the ideological foundation for a lifelong struggle for communism. Contemporary Marxist dialectical materialism and historical materialism have become the latest and greatest scientific achievements of humanity.

Conclusion In the early 20th century, Party members and revolutionaries in northwest China, who strived and fought for national independence and the freedom and happiness of the people, acutely and perceptively embraced and disseminated Marxism-Leninism during their struggles in the Shaanxi-Gansu Border Zhaojin Revolutionary Base Area and even the broader Shaanxi-Gansu Revolutionary Base Area. They inherited the moral cultivation of the sages and virtuous individuals of the Chinese nation, tempered their own cultivation as Party members, and forged the great Zhaojin Spirit, making immortal contributions to the cause of national liberation. Their revolutionary inheritance of thought and culture transcended regional and historical limitations, reflecting the profound characteristics rooted in excellent thought and culture, and vividly demonstrating the practicality and greatness of the Party members' spirit tempered through the fires of revolutionary struggle. When we examine traditional thought and culture from a philosophical perspective, it becomes clear: in the revolutionary and constructive practice of spreading Marxism-Leninism and integrating it with Chinese practice, the main ideas and fundamental spirits of profound Chinese thought and culture have radiated timeless value, becoming a precious reservoir of thought and culture.

Today, we must deeply appreciate the contemporary value of the Zhaojin Spirit: during the revolutionary struggle, Party members in northwest China learned and practiced Marxism-Leninism, cultivating excellent qualities in Party members to strive for communism, and infusing new humanistic elements into Chinese thought and culture aimed at achieving national liberation and the freedom and happiness of the people. Specifically, firstly, there is the emphasis on scientific theoretical armament. During the Zhaojin revolutionary struggle, Party members and revolutionaries prioritized arming their minds with Marxism-Leninism, studying Mao Zedong's works, comprehending the concept of “proletarian revolutionary armed struggle combined with peasant struggle and the creation of revolutionary base areas,” and firming up their belief in “unwaveringly following the Jinggangshan Road.” This led to strong Party leadership, the growth and development of the Red Army, and the consolidation and expansion of the base areas. Secondly, there is the adherence to the people-oriented principle. During the Zhaojin revolutionary struggle, Party members and revolutionaries, committed to the Party's principle of serving the people, always stood on the side of the overwhelming majority of the masses. Through the tests of revolutionary struggles and the fires of hardship, they accumulated experience, gained practical insights, strengthened their Party spirit, enhanced their Party cultivation, remained loyal to the

Party's cause, and continuously advanced from victory to victory. Thirdly, there is the adherence to the mass line. During the Zhaojin revolutionary struggle, Party members and revolutionaries consistently adhered to the principle of doing everything for the people and relying entirely on the people, delving into reality, taking root among the masses, maintaining close ties with them, fostering consensus, and leading the broad masses to work together to advance the struggle against the enemy and the work in the base areas.