

# The Enlightenment of Marx's View of Nature to Improve Our Country's Environmental Problems

Zheng Zhu

School of Marxism, Tianjin University of Commerce, Tianjin 300134, China

---

**Abstract:** In the new era, China's environmental protection work is still facing many problems, has become the important factor that determines the social economic development fast. Accelerating social development and the transformation of various industries and promoting the construction of ecological civilization have become the top priority in the new era. Marx's view of nature is an important part of Marxist theory, which contains a rich thought and theoretical content of ecological civilization, and reflects on the real relationship between man and nature, which not only provides an important theoretical foundation to promote the harmony and unity of man and nature, but also points out the direction to solve the environmental problems of our country.

**Keywords:** New era, View of nature, Environmental problem.

---

## 1. The Main Problems Facing Our Environment at Present

Environmental problems mainly refer to various phenomena in the global environment that are not conducive to human survival and development. There are both primary environmental problems caused by natural disasters and secondary environmental problems caused by the destruction of nature, which in turn harm human beings themselves. With the development of China's economy and the accelerating process of industrialization, the degree of ecological environment pollution is increasing, and various environmental problems are constantly highlighted, and the situation is extremely severe.

### 1.1. Serious damage to the ecological environment

Since the reform and opening up, China's economy has been developing rapidly, and people's material living standards have been improving. However, rapid urbanization and industrialization lead to serious destruction of ecological environment, and the contradiction between development and protection becomes increasingly fierce.[1] Due to the over-exploitation and irrational utilization of natural resources, the ecological environment deteriorates sharply and the natural ecology is seriously unbalance. The main manifestations are: ① species extinction. China is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world, with about 10% of the world's higher plant and wildlife species, of which there are about 200 endemic organisms. However, environmental pollution and ecological destruction have led to the destruction of the ecological environment of animals and plants, the number of species has decreased dramatically, and some species have been extinct. In the past 50 years, about 200 species of higher plants have become extinct, with an average of 4 species extinct every year; About 400 species of wild animals are endangered or threatened. ② Vegetation destruction. Despite the large-scale afforestation activities carried out after the founding of the People's Republic of China, the forest destruction is still very serious, especially the accumulation of mature and over-mature forests in the special timber forests that can be harvested has been greatly reduced. At the same

time, a large amount of forest land has been encroached upon. Grasslands face severe degradation, due to overgrazing and mismanagement over the decades. It has caused serious degradation, desertification and alkalinization of 1.3 billion mu of grassland, aggravated soil erosion and damage of wind and sand in grassland. In 2017, the report of the 19th CPC National Congress pointed out that we should accelerate the reform of the ecological civilization system and build a beautiful China. During the "13th Five-Year Plan" period, China has carried out 25 pilot projects of ecological protection and restoration of mountains, rivers, forests, fields, lakes and grasslands, involving 24 provinces in China, and the ecological protection and restoration work has achieved initial results.[2]

### 1.2. The urban environment continues to deteriorate

Since the emergence of the industrialization era, human economy and culture have been developing rapidly, but the ecological environment has been destroyed in the process of human progress. And with the continuous growth of the population, the demand for a variety of materials has also increased the pressure on the environment, resulting in a serious challenge to the relationship between people and the earth. Urbanization is an important link in the development of a country, but the rapid development of cities is bound to bring some negative impacts on the natural environment. According to the monitoring data of Beijing, Shenyang, Xi 'an, Shanghai and Guangzhou, five cities participating in the global air monitoring show that the annual average daily concentration of total suspended particulates is in the range of 200-550ug /m, respectively, which is about 3-9 times higher than the World Health Organization (WHO) health standard of 60-90pg /m<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, in order to pursue ultra-high economic benefits, some cities began to exploit underground resources, causing groundwater resources to be polluted, and the water quality of most urban river reaches generally exceeds the standard. At the same time, due to the pollution of the estuary, the resources of fish and shrimp are destroyed, and the output is greatly reduced, which directly endangers the health of the people.

### **1.3. Expansion of environmental pollution areas**

The problem of urban environmental pollution has not yet been solved, and the environmental problem in the countryside has begun to spread rapidly. Agriculture occupies an important position in our country, and the use of pesticides is increasing year by year. Although the annual grain production is maintained at a high level, the effective application rate of pesticides and fertilizers is only 30%, and the rest are volatilized into the atmosphere or flow into soil and rivers and lakes with water, resulting in eutrophication of waters or excessive nitrate content of drinking water sources. Moreover, sewage treatment facilities and purification facilities in rural areas are far less advanced than the city, with the improvement of residents' living standards, domestic pollution in the weight of environmental problems, rural dry toilet problems still need a long way to go, completely change the living environment of rural residents also need several generations of joint efforts.

At the same time, the rural environmental problems are out of control, but also manifested in the development of township enterprises caused by environmental problems, many factories in the process of mining resources, caused great damage to the natural environment. With the large-scale expansion of some enterprises, more and more natural environment is occupied, and the use of fuel is more extensive, and some emissions of factories also cause bad pollution to the air. In the long run, a vicious circle of environmental problems and poverty has been formed, resulting in soil erosion and resource depletion, and aggravating the difficulty of solving environmental problems.

## **2. The Main Theoretical Content of Marx's View of Nature**

Marx's view of nature is not discussed in special works like other theories, and the thought of his view of nature is scattered in different works of Marx in different periods, but it always flashes a unique light. The relationship between man and nature is the focus of the study of Marx's view of nature. Through in-depth analysis of Marx's view of nature and understanding its internal logic, it has important theoretical significance for dealing with China's environmental problems and building a beautiful China in the future, and points out the direction for our practical activities.

### **2.1. Society is inseparable from man and nature**

Marx once pointed out: "The essence of man in nature exists only for man in society" [3]. As a natural man, a social man must rely on nature to survive. He mainly emphasized that in addition to the contact with the external environment, social relations are used as intermediaries to form human society. Human beings cannot exist in isolation in this world, and must rely on society to form an orderly human society, so as to complete human production activities and meet their needs and purposes. And the premise of all this, we must build on the basis of nature to complete. Nature and society have gradually formed an interdependent, interdependent and inseparable relationship.

### **2.2. Nature is the basis of human existence**

Nature is the material basis of human existence and development. Nature provides means of production for the

survival and development of human beings, and the survival of human beings depends on the existence of nature every moment. As a natural being, human beings must rely on nature to provide water, sunlight, air, soil and other food as a necessary condition for survival if they want to continue their lives and maintain the long-term prosperity of the race. Without nature, mankind will eventually turn to dust and human civilization will inevitably break down. We should recognize that human beings and nature are interdependent and inseparable. Human beings emerge from nature, and nature is the necessary objective condition for human existence. Human beings are part of nature and the product of nature's development to a certain stage. Without the natural world, man would be faced with the dilemma that he could not continue to survive.

At the same time, Marx believes that nature not only provides human beings with means of subsistence, but also provides workers with the means of production needed for production, otherwise the workers would not be able to create anything. All the means of labor of the worker also depend on the giving of nature, without the existence of nature, without raw materials, the labor of the worker cannot be realized, and no great results can be realized.

### **2.3. Natural and human nature**

To live in harmony with nature, human beings must not only understand themselves, but also fully recognize the characteristics of nature. The division of nature is the basis of analyzing the relationship between man and nature. In the beginning, we thought of nature as just "natural," existing in its own right, unadulterated by anything else. Therefore, there is no other understanding of it outside of human consciousness.

At the same time, we human beings can abide by the laws of nature at the same time, according to the requirements of the subjective initiative, through the rational use of various means of production to transform the nature, to meet their own needs, so that "natural" into "humanized nature". Marx pointed out that man is conscious and has subjective initiative, and can transform the nature according to his own ideas and plans to make it meet his own needs, and "humanizing nature" is the best example of man giving full play to his subjective initiative. Today, our modern society is completely different from the ancient human society. Human beings have changed the original form of nature by using wisdom and their own practical activities, and have also created many things that did not exist in nature, thus promoting the continuous development and progress of human society.

## **3. The Enlightenment of Marx's View of Nature to The Improvement of Environmental Issues**

Marx's view of nature emphasizes the objective existence of nature as well as the subjectivity of man, allowing man and nature to truly coexist in harmony. It analyzes the various relations between man, society and nature, and brings man back to the nature. While changing the natural environment, human practice in the process of social development also reveals the essential problems between man, society and nature. It provides theoretical guidance for our country's modernization construction.

### 3.1. Add ecological values to the improvement of environmental issues

Engels once warned us: "Do not be too intoxicated with our victories over nature; for every such victory, nature takes its revenge on us."<sup>[4]</sup> At present, China's ecological civilization values and sustainable development concept have not been integrated into the whole society, and there are still problems such as lack of social responsibility and weak awareness of ecological environmental protection. Therefore, the government should have a forward-looking vision and take effective measures to give full play to the role of the "steering wheel" and "pointing lamp" of ecological values, to awaken the anxiety of the whole society and mobilize their enthusiasm to actively participate in the construction of ecological civilization. Specifically, the government should strengthen the governing concept of protecting nature and strengthen the construction of ecological governance capacity, use radio, television, Internet platforms and other media to popularize and publicize laws and regulations on ecological protection, scientific research results on environmental protection, and interpret national environmental protection policies to the public in a way that is popular with the masses. We will continue to cultivate the whole society to consciously establish the concept of green development and ecological consumption, unswervingly choose and implement sustainable development strategies, build a good environmental order, and promote harmony between man and nature.

### 3.2. Provide theoretical basis for dealing with the relationship between man and nature

For a long time only focus on economic development, ignoring the protection of the natural world, resulting in serious ecological imbalance and shortage of resources and other problems until the 1960s to attract people's attention, "history shows that in the whole process of development, we can not only talk about demand without investment, can not only talk about development without protection, can not only talk about use without restoration." Actions that destroy nature will inevitably be abandoned.

Therefore, in order to save the nature, we human beings must carry out reasonable practical activities to promote the harmonious development of man and nature. The theoretical value of Marx's view of nature is that it can make the nature develop in a good direction, so that we can transform the nature while developing. Marx's view of nature provides theoretical basis for correctly dealing with the relationship between man and nature. At present, in the era of rapid development of science and technology, the way of exploiting natural resources has also undergone great changes, and people can maximize the production through reasonable exploitation of various complex ecological environments in nature.

### 3.3. Pointing out the practical direction for building a beautiful China

The construction of beautiful China is an inevitable requirement for China to enter a new era, and it is also a material premise under the guidance of Marx's view of nature. Marx's view of nature provides material premise and rules for the construction of beautiful China. Harmony and unity among man, society and nature is the common pursuit of

human society and the common vision of the Chinese nation. In practice, nature, as a natural organism, provides survival and development materials for human beings. Human beings are the product of the long-term development and evolution of nature and need to rely on nature for survival. Nature is not only the basis of human activities, but also the premise of building a beautiful China.

Previously, most areas of our country were only concerned about economic development and completely ignored the protection of the ecological environment. Industrial waste water from factories is discharged into rivers at will, which not only pollutes the soil and rivers, but also takes a long time to recover. We must not compromise the living environment of future generations for the sake of momentary convenience. We must resolutely abandon the practice of harming the ecological environment for the sake of economic development, and we must actively promote the construction of China's ecological civilization and make continuous efforts to build a beautiful China. It is better to have clear water and green mountains than Jinshan Yinshan, and clear water and green mountains are Jinshan Yinshan. "Jinshan Silver Mountain" is the material material we need for life, nature can not meet the needs of human life, so we need this "Jinshan silver Mountain" as a guarantee of life. Do not "Jinshan Yinshan", is a rough reference to wealth, not the material materials needed for life, if you want to obtain this wealth, you must sacrifice natural resources to obtain, so it is difficult to long-term stable existence, the final result can only be "two mountains" are not. Therefore, only the combination of man and nature, labor and material can create material wealth, and only the long-term stability of nature as the material basis can ensure the abundance of human material materials.

## 4. Conclusion

Marx's view of nature, as part of Marxist theory, will never be out of date, has an important guiding significance on the environmental problems and the construction of ecological civilization, and also provides the theoretical guidance for harmonious coexistence with nature.

The harmonious coexistence between man and nature constitutes the core of Marx's view of nature, respecting and caring for nature is the basic requirement of Marx's view of nature, and reforming and utilizing nature under the premise of following the laws of nature is the basic criterion for correctly handling the relationship between man and nature. Ensure the motherland's blue sky and white clouds and green mountains and green water.

## References

- [1] Qiao Biao, Fang Chuanglin: Dynamic coupling model of coordinated development of urbanization and ecological environment and its application in arid region, *Acta Ecologica Sinica*. 25(2005),No.11, p.3003-3009.
- [2] Luo Ming, YU Enyi, Zhou Yan, YING Lingxiao, WANG Jun, WU Gang: Layout and technical strategy of pilot projects for ecological protection and restoration of mountains, rivers, forests, fields, lakes and grasslands, *Acta Ecologica Sinica*. 39(2019), No.23,p.8692-8701.
- [3] Marx: *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (People's Publishing House,China 2000), p.83.
- [4] Engels: *Dialectics of Nature*(People's Publishing House,China 1984), p.17.