**Yu Keping: Socialist Democracy, Rule of Law, Fairness and Justice, Freedom and Equality**

April 2015

**Yu Keping is Deputy Director of the Translation and Translation Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, professor, and doctoral supervisor**

**Originally published in "Exploration and Contestation" Issue 2, 2015.**

Rule of law and fairness and justice

We are very familiar with fairness and justice. Why? Because we have always said that fairness and justice are the core values ​​of socialism and the primary value of socialism. This is undoubtedly true. If there is no fairness and justice, socialism will be impossible to talk about. Capitalism emphasizes freedom and efficiency. We also want freedom and efficiency, but in addition, we also place special emphasis on fairness and justice.

Some people may question that since the reform and opening up, we have implemented the principle of "efficiency first, taking into account fairness". Deng Xiaoping also proposed that the essence of socialism is to liberate and develop productive forces, eliminate exploitation, eliminate polarization, and ultimately achieve common prosperity. Liberating and developing productive forces mainly emphasizes efficiency, while eliminating exploitation and achieving common prosperity puts more emphasis on fairness and justice. This puts efficiency and fairness and justice on the same footing, and does not give priority to fairness and justice.

In fact, freedom, democracy, equality, justice, efficiency, etc. are all basic human values ​​and are the common pursuit of mankind. However, the emphasis is different in different countries and under different conditions, and these basic values ​​sometimes exist in contraadicrion with each other. For example, freedom and equality will be contradictory at certain times. Specifically, if we emphasize freedom when the distribution of wealth is very unequal, and say that the primary value should be to maintain freedom, then people with more property and high social status will definitely have more freedom and more choices.

In this case, an emphasis on freedom would impede equality. But conversely, a special emphasis on equality can also hinder freedom. For example, when there is a large gap in wealth distribution, and equality is particularly emphasized, and the state uses coercive means to deprive some rich people of their wealth through taxation or other means, which will actually put some restrictions on the freedom of the rich. Therefore, freedom and equality sometimes conflict, so what should we do? At this time, the political wisdom of politicians and the ruling party is very important. They must be keenly aware of which one is more important to the interests of the majority of citizens under real political conditions.

**What was our reality before reform and opening up?**

At that time, wealth distribution was relatively equal, and the Gini coefficient averaged about 0.2. If everyone eats from one big pot, everyone will become poor together.

So the problem we faced at that time was that the efficiency was too low. If we emphasized the absolute egalitarianism of "one big and two public", it would be difficult to fully release social productivity, social wealth would be quite scarce, and the development level of the entire national economy would be very low. "One Big and Two Publics" is the abbreviation for the two characteristics of [the people's commune movement](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%BA%BA%E6%B0%91%E5%85%AC%E7%A4%BE%E5%8C%96%E8%BF%90%E5%8A%A8/390672?fromModule=lemma_inlink) launched by [the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E7%A4%BE%E4%BC%9A%E4%B8%BB%E4%B9%89%E5%BB%BA%E8%AE%BE%E6%80%BB%E8%B7%AF%E7%BA%BF/3331282?fromModule=lemma_inlink)[in](https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%85%B1%E4%B8%AD%E5%A4%AE/1017851?fromModule=lemma_inlink) 1958 at the climax of the Great Leap Forward Movement under the guidance of the general line of socialist construction . Specifically, it refers to: first, the people's communes are large in scale; second, the people's communes have a high degree of public ownership.

In the end, it would be the other way around and negatively affect social fairness and justice. We don’t want this low-level equality, where everyone can’t even have enough to eat. This kind of equality and fairness is not worth pursuing. After the reform and opening up, some people proposed giving priority to efficiency, which was right at the time. Deng Xiaoping was a great politician. He understood very well that at this time, absolute egalitarianism must be broken, the big pot rice should be broken, and some people should be allowed to get rich first. However, after 20 to 30 years of wealth accumulation, the differences in wealth distribution among different groups have become too great. At this time, if we still insist on "prioritizing efficiency and taking into account fairness", we will be irresponsible to this country.

At this time, we must put fairness more prominently. It can be seen that in the past two years, the party and the government have no longer mentioned "prioritizing efficiency and taking into account fairness". Instead, they have emphasized fairness and justice more prominently and put it in the first place.

In addition, fairness and justice are also very important to social harmony and long-term social stability. Many scholars have done research and came to the conclusion that if the distribution of material wealth, political rights and social rights in a society is very unfair and breaks through certain critical points, then the society will only have two results: one is turmoil and the other autocracy (dictatorship).

The material basis of fairness and justice is the fair distribution of wealth. However, fair distribution of material wealth alone is far from enough. Fairness and justice must have two foundations: one is the material foundation, and the other is the institutional foundation. Fairness and justice must be guaranteed by the system institually.

On both fronts we face many serious challenges in China. Taking the Gini coefficient, which reflects the gap in material wealth distribution, as an example, China's Gini coefficient in 2012 announced by the National Bureau of Statistics was 0.47.

This number is already high, exceeding the international warning level of 0.4. However, many scholars do not recognize the statistics bureau's data. In 2012, a research team from Southwestern University of Finance and Economics announced that the Gini coefficient of China’s household income in 2010 was 0.61, much higher than the official data. In 2014, the China Social Science Survey Center of Peking University announced that the Gini coefficient of China’s household net wealth in 2012 was even more terrifying, at 0.73. Moreover, according to its observations, the richest 1% of families in China now account for more than one-third of all family wealth in China. Of course, we can say that this is because we are in the primary stage of socialism, and there is still needed a process to achieve common prosperity. But no matter what, if the distribution of material wealth is so unequal and the gap is so large, it will inevitably lead to inequality in other areas of society, such as education, the environment, and even people's medical care.

**Socialism requires common prosperity, fairness and justice.**

So, how to overcome such serious challenges in terms of fairness and justice?

Is economic development alone enough? Economic development is the foundation, but if we only expand the pie without improving the system and establishing a fair and just institutional guarantee system, then it will be difficult to achieve fairness and justice in wealth distribution and the entire society. Proposing to govern the country according to law and build a rule of law system is actually to establish an institutional guarantee system to maintain social fairness and justice.

The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in 2013 not only put forward an overall goal of comprehensively deepening reforms, but also had a very important sentence, that is, improving people's well-being and promoting fairness and justice should be the starting point and goal of comprehensively deepening reforms.

This is very important. What is the "starting point and ending point"? It is nothing more than saying that all reforms must start here and return here. Taking fairness and justice as the starting point and end point of comprehensively deepening reforms shows that the central government is very clear about the importance of fairness and justice to our country and society, as well as the challenges we face. This time we proposed to govern the country according to law and build a country ruled by law, which has taken another very important step in building a system to maintain social fairness and justice.

Ruling the country according to law and modernizing State governance

Many scholars say that the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee and the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee are intrinsically linked, and the decisions of the two Plenary Sessions are "sisters."

This is also a conclusion of the Central Committee, and it is indeed the case. The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee proposed the overall goal of comprehensively deepening reforms and promoting the modernization of national governance. The Fourth Plenary Session of the CPC Central Committee proposed the strategic goal of establishing a rule of law system and a rule of law country, which is actually a substantial step forward in promoting the modernization of national governance. Therefore, realizing the modernization of national governance and building a country ruled by law are the relationship between the overall goal and sub-goals.

**So, what is the modernization of national governance?**

There are many interpretations. The modernization of national governance is actually a transformation process from a traditional national governance system to a modern national governance system. It should have five elements: first, institutionalization; second, democratization; third, rule of law; fourth, Efficiency; fifth is coordination. Among these five elements, democracy and the rule of law are the most important.

 I have always believed that the most substantive elements of the modernization of national governance are a high degree of democracy and the rule of law. Without these two elements, there is no modernization of national governance.

Some scholars believe that some dynasties in Chinese tradition have governed very well. I agree with that. This is indeed the case. For example, the "Government of Wenjing" and the "Government of Zhenguan" all said that at that time, the houses were not closed at night and the streets were not picked up. The people's customs were so good and the society was peaceful. Now we all yearn for this kind of governance. Today it is difficult not to close the door at night and not pick up things on the road. However, no matter how good traditional governance is, it cannot be modern national governance because there is no democracy and rule of law.

In the final analysis, the traditional national governance system is to safeguard the interests of the minority ruling group represented by the emperor. It cannot be democratic governance, and it is definitely not a modern national governance system.

One of the elements of the modernization of national governance is the rule of law, and the legal system is the basic content of the modern national governance system. The shift from emphasizing state rule to emphasizing the modernization of national governance is in line with the general trend of human political development.

I especially disagree with the views of some scholars who believe that the concepts of national governance modernization and national governance are influenced by the West and were moved from the West.

I don’t think this is the case. We should not regard some good things as Western. In fact, many of them are common values ​​of mankind. It is just that some values ​​may appear first in the East, and some values ​​may appear first in the West, but we cannot conclude that they are Western. Or something oriental. For example, the current civil service system in the West has some elements of this civil service system that we have had in China for a long time. In traditional China, officials and bureaucrats were separated, similar to the separation of political affairs officers and affairs officers in the modern West. You cannot say that the Western civil service system belongs to China. On the other hand, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, which are common political values ​​for mankind, may have first appeared in the West, but we cannot say that they are Western. To insist on describing these things as Western is to forcefully push good things that belong to all mankind to the West. According to this logic, aren’t the computers, telephones, cars, and airplanes that we cannot live without today also belong to the West and cannot be wanted? In fact, human civilization is a whole, including both artifact civilization and institutional civilization. As long as it is excellent, we should learn from it and absorb it. "Govern more and rule less" is the today’s general trend of human political development.

This involves the relationship between Chinese characteristics and universal values, an issue that has been debated a lot in recent years. On this issue, we must avoid two extremes. One extreme is to regard Western values, especially American values, as universal values. The other extreme is to have Chinese characteristics in everything. Even 1+1 would like to be equal to 3 in China. . Another problem is that we cannot regard the common values ​​of mankind as Western values. In fact, everything has both universality and particularity. This is what Marxist dialectics tells us. For example, democracy and the rule of law are of course universal human values ​​and the common achievements of human civilization. You cannot say that they are Western. But in each country, these universal values ​​must have different specific contents, especially different ways of realizing them. This is the relationship between the universal and the particular.

Rule of law and legal system

There are two words in Chinese, one is called "knife" and the other is called "water". Chinese characters are very particular. One word for "Zhi" and the other word for "Zhi" have the same pronunciation but different meanings. "Legal rule" mainly emphasizes that things should be done strictly in accordance with the law. "Rule of law" in addition to emphasizing that things should be done in strict accordance with the law, also emphasizes that the China’s constitution and laws are the highest authority in public governance. No individual or organization must have authority beyond or above the constitution and the law. The law is equal for everyone, including the ruling party, who must also operate within the legal framework. This is the meaning of the rule of law.

Therefore, the rule of law is a transcendence of the legal system, and the rule of law is precisely the product of modern national governance and an element of modern political civilization.

In traditional Chinese society, even in those dynasties that most strictly followed the law, at most there was only the rule of law, but no rule of law at all. When talking about the history of China, we will all mention some great emperors with great talents and strategies. Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Gaozu of the Song Dynasty, Genghis Khan, and the founding emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties are all great. But even these great emperors, they The country under the rule only has the rule of law at best, but there is absolutely no rule of law. Because above the law, there is always a higher authority, and that is the emperor.

Simply put, no matter where there is an organization or an individual whose authority is beyond the laws of the country, there can be no rule of law, at most there is only the rule of law.

**Rule of law and democracy**

What is democracy?

It is very simple, it means that the people are the masters of the state, it is the rule of the people. However, it is not enough to just stop at this definition. Because the "people" here is a collective concept, you and me as individuals belong to the people, but you and me cannot be equated with the people. "People" is also a political concept. The people belong to their own camp, and the enemy does not belong to the category of the people. For example, during the "Cultural Revolution" there were the "Five Black Categories", namely landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, bad elements and rightists. The "five black categories" are not the people, but the targets of suppression. "People" is still a historical concept. At a certain time, these people are the people. After a while, these people may become enemies, and vice versa.

**So we have a second definition of democracy, which is more important and specific: Democracy is a political system that guarantees sovereignty among the people. Democracy is a state system, and this system guarantees sovereignty among the people.**

This definition is more in-depth and specific than the previous definition, clarifying that democracy is a political system. **This system must ensure that sovereignty lies with the people, that is, the highest power lies in the hands of the people. But this definition is still abstract. Who are the people whose sovereignty lies with the people? What kind of power is the highest power? Still not sure. So we have a third definition of democracy.**

**The third definition is: Democracy is a series of systems and mechanisms that ensure civil freedom, equality, and human rights. This makes it clear that the "people" here refer to citizens in the legal sense.**

As long as they are legal citizens, they enjoy democratic rights. The democratic rights here refer to the political rights and human rights of citizens. As long as you are a legal citizen of the country, you will enjoy the basic rights of citizens, which are embodied in the political rights and human rights of citizens. The state must provide institutional protection. So this definition goes one step further than the previous one.

However, the state has many systems and mechanisms. Is democracy so complicated?

In fact, democracy is not complicated. Among all these systems and mechanisms, there are two systems and mechanisms that are the most critical: the authorization system and the power restriction system.

Therefore, democracy is actually very simple, with only four words, namely "authorization" and "power restriction." Authorization means citizens granting power to officials. There must be a set of institutional mechanisms that allow some citizens to entrust their power to other citizens who can represent their interests and wishes. The latter are officials. After officials are authorized, they cannot act recklessly, and their power must be restricted and checked by citizens. This is the power restriction system. Officials' decisions must also reflect the interests of citizens, and citizens must limit the power of officials, such as legal restrictions, budget restrictions, public opinion restrictions, and removal restrictions.

**Democracy is a state system, and the rule of law is an element of democracy.**

For example, democracy is like a table with many legs, such as elections, participation, constraints, consultation, transparency, and the rule of law. Without any leg, the table of democracy may be incomplete.

**Why are there problems with democracy in some countries?**

It is because the legs of the table of democracy are missing, whether it is lack of rule of law, lack of participation, or lack of constraints and checks or supervision, that the table falls down and breaks its legs.

So in this sense, democracy is inseparable from the rule of law. The rule of law ultimately serves democracy. The fundamental role of the rule of law is to protect the rights of citizens. There is a sentence in the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which insists on ensuring the people's dominant and master position. This actually shows that the ultimate function of the rule of law is to ensure that the people are the masters of the state. Therefore, the rule of law and democracy are inseparable. Without democracy, the rule of law has no foundation; without the rule of law, democracy cannot be effectively guaranteed.

However, there is currently a tendency to overemphasize the rule of law and neglect democracy, especially electoral democracy, which has been marginalized in a sense.

**When we talk about democracy, we focus more on consultative democracy, and we are a bit neglectful of electoral democracy.**

**Why is it difficult to develop electoral democracy in China?**

 On the one hand, it’s because we don’t have a tradition in this area. Elections are a product of modern times. Strictly speaking, they only existed after the Republic of China in 1910s. Elections were introduced from the West.

Deliberative democracy is different. The concept of deliberative democracy was only proposed in political science a few years ago, but it quickly became popular. Because consultation has a long history in China, deliberative democracy is very easy for the Chinese to accept, but elections are difficult to accept.

On the other hand, it is also related to many practical concerns. If there are elections, there will be competition, and competition will pose a certain threat to the ruling status of those who are already in power. This is a fact. Elections must be competitive. Nowadays, many elections only have one candidate. Strictly speaking, that cannot be called a true election.

Another reason is that in recent years, due to our imperfect electoral system, many negative phenomena have occurred. In particular, the phenomenon of vote-buying in rural village committees is quite serious.

Now, vote-buying is also appearing in the elections of National People's Congress deputies, and even in intra-party elections. This is of course an act of violation of laws and disciplines, which not only violates the spirit of democratic politics, but also seriously violates the rule of law. This phenomenon has a very negative impact on promoting democratic politics, especially competitive elections. Some people are originally opposed to competitive elections and believe that it is inconsistent with China’s national conditions. The occurrence of these negative phenomena just provides them with the basis for their opposition.

**Rule of law and good governance**

**What is good governance? Good governance is the governance process and governance activities that maximize public interests.**

Good governance is a kind of co-governance between the government and the people, a kind of cooperation between the state and society, an ideal goal for the modernization of national governance, and an ideal state that our governance should achieve.

Public governance has four consequences. The first two are what we should pursue, and the latter two are what we should avoid. The first is to maximize public interests, that is, all stakeholders should benefit; the second is that the vast majority of people should benefit; the third is that the interests of the vast majority of people are harmed; the fourth is that interests of all stakeholders are damaged. Maximizing public interest is good governance.

Good government mainly refers to the China’s public power agencies, that is, the government must be good, such as being fair, being close to the people, acting in accordance with the law, and caring for the people like children. This is called good governance or benevolent governance in traditional China. Good governance means that the entire society is governed well, which means that when the government is not strong, or even not very good, the order of the entire society is still in order. In this case, the entire society will be better governed. Good governance requires good governance, but good governance does not necessarily mean good governance.

To achieve good governance, there is a prerequisite, which is to have good laws. Good laws required by good governance should have five elements: legitimacy, completeness, scientificity, authority and feasibility. Good governance is also inseparable from the rule of law. Good governance has many elements, such as fairness, legality, participation, transparency, consultation, and the rule of law. Good governance is impossible without the rule of law. Only relying on the rule of law can prevent governance from becoming bad governance and bad governance.

Governing the country according to law and governing the country according to the constitution

**What is a constitution? The Constitution is the fundamental law of the state and should have the highest authority.**

From the perspective of political science, the constitution is actually the most fundamental provision of the political system. This involves what a political system is, and a political system is the norm for political behavior. From another perspective, the political system is actually a contract signed by citizens and the government, and the constitution is the biggest contract that everyone, whether citizens or the government, must abide by.

As a general contract signed between citizens and the government, the Constitution not only stipulates the boundaries of the government's public power, but also delineates the boundaries of citizens' political rights. Anyone who crosses this boundary between power and rights has breached the contract, and whoever breaches the contract should be punished.

The laws and systems of all countries are ultimately designed to safeguard the basic systems, civil rights and national interests established by the Constitution. The formulation and implementation of all laws, policies and contracts must be based on constitution. Other laws and regulations of the country are natural extensions of the Constitution and are intended to realize the rights and interests of citizens and national interests guaranteed by the Constitution. They must be consistent with the provisions and spirit of the Constitution. Violating the constitution is fundamentally harmful to the fundamental interests of the country and the basic rights of citizens. “Adhering to governing the country according to the law must first adhere to governing the country according to the constitution, and the key to adhering to governing the country according to the law is adhering to governing the country according to the constitution.” This is a basic requirement of the rule of law and a common sense in modern countries.

Governing the country by law and governing the country by virtue

The issue of governing the country according to law and governing the country according to virtue is controversial in the legal circles. Ruling the country by virtue was proposed by Jiang Zemin when he was General Secretary.

He said that rule of virtue and rule of law are two wheels. There was controversy at that time. Some scholars believe that governing the country by virtue should not be mentioned, but should only be mentioned by governing the country by law. The reason is: In traditional society, the rule of morality is usually expressed as rule by etiquette, but in fact it can also be understood as rule by man. Because the "virtue" of the rule of virtue is defined by people, such as what exactly this "virtue" is, what kind of things belong to "virtue", what kind of things are called "good", and what kind of things are "evil".

The premise of the rule of virtue is to judge good and evil, and good and evil are judged by people. If the rule of virtue is not handled well, it will become the rule of man. This is why everyone is very wary of the rule of virtue. This caution is justified. Now, the debate between the rule of law and the rule of virtue has been raised again. What is the relationship between them?

Governance by virtue actually relies on moral ethics to regulate, influence and restrict the behavior of officials and people, thereby maintaining social order. The rule of virtue mainly regulates and restrains the inner order, while the rule of law mainly regulates and restrains the external order. In this sense, moral norms and legal norms are complementary to each other and are indispensable elements for regulating human behavior. In fact, there are two other similar concepts in traditional Chinese culture, namely the way of heaven and the king's law; the West also has similar concepts, namely natural law and statutory law.

**There are two bottom lines in life: one is the moral bottom line, and the other is the legal bottom line.**

Just like being a human being, there must be a bottom line in governing a country. There are also two bottom lines in governing a country: one is the moral bottom line. The country must have morality and valuable goals. The first is fairness and justice. Any political leader must maintain social fairness and justice. The other one is of course the legal bottom line, which is to govern the country according to law.

Therefore, the rule of law and the rule of virtue complement each other and each has its own advantages. However, they cannot replace each other, but each has its own focus. From the perspective of national governance as a whole, we must unswervingly follow the path of governing the country according to law. Moving from the rule of men to the rule of law is the fundamental direction, and this point cannot be shaken in any way. In the field of national governance, we cannot place too much emphasis on the rule of virtue. For example, we can have two basic methods to deal with the corruption of officials. One is to educate and constantly tell them that you are a public servant of the people, a party member and a leading cadre, you should have ideals and beliefs, and you should be a moral model. However, we have never lacked education for party members and cadres, but after the education is completed, there are still so many corrupt officials. Therefore, the constraints on officials cannot be based mainly on moral education. What is important is the rule of law. That is, there must be a standardized system to restrict power so that officials cannot be corrupt. Now the central government has proposed the "three no's" against corrupt officials, so that they dare not be corrupt, do not want to be corrupt, and cannot be corrupt. I think it's very good, all aspects have been thought of. But in my opinion, the focus should be on "not being greedy". Of course it's good not to be greedy, but it's hard to guarantee that any official doesn't want to be greedy. For example, some officials' eyes turn green when they see money. You can't ask them not to be greedy. He said he didn't want to, but in his heart it was hard to tell. There are also some officials who are so courageous that they dare to take risks without fear of death. What's the key? The key is that when he wants to be greedy and dares to be greedy, there must be a system to control him so that he cannot be greedy. This must rely on the rule of law.

Of course, the rule of virtue is also needed in some fields, such as the field of social governance, where the rule of virtue should still be emphasized and valued. National governance includes three sub-systems: government governance, market governance and social governance. In the field of social governance, society has some of its own rules. If these rules do not conflict with the laws of the country and are in a sense an extension of the laws of the country, then the society can conduct self-management through its own set of rules. management, there is no need to raise it to the level of national law. In other words, problems that can be solved by the rule of virtue do not need to be solved by the rule of law.

Moreover, China has its own traditions in terms of social governance. In traditional Chinese society, there are no state power agencies below the county level, and governance mainly relies on the society itself. In this field, governance by virtue is sometimes more effective. For example, if there is a dispute between neighbors, if you always file a lawsuit, the effect may not be good. It's better to ask a respected person to mediate, maybe the problem will be solved. Therefore, in the field of social governance, moral governance can still make a difference.

Ruling the country according to law and party leadership

This issue may be one that everyone discusses a lot now, especially in academia.

The "Decision" of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China particularly emphasized the need to uphold the party's leadership and believed that upholding the party's leadership and governing the country according to law are unified. This issue involves the relationship between the Party and the law, and it should be said that there have always been different views in the academic community on this issue. Generally speaking, there are three views: one view is that the Party is greater than the law; another view is that the law should be greater than the Party; and the third view is that the two are unified. The official view is that the first two issues rasied are "pseudo issues" and do not exist. The party's leadership and the rule of law are unified. However, to be honest, these issues still exist in the academic community and are still debated.

How to understand this problem? The "Decision" of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee emphasized unification.

In theory, this unification is understandable. It is based on such a logic: Our party represents the people's will and interests, and the law is the unity of the people's will and the party's will. The party leads the people to legislate and lead the people to enforce the law. The will of the party is consistent with the people and the will of the law. But in real life, the party's leadership is realized through party organizations and party leading cadres at all levels. The party's leadership is not equivalent to the leadership of a specific party organization and party member cadres.

We must distinguish the leadership of the party from the behavior of specific party organizations and party members and cadres. This distinction is very important. The party's leadership should still be elevated to a fundamental principle, and it is the party's collective authority and collective leadership, not the individual behavior of a certain party organization or a certain party member cadre. Regarding party organizations and party member leading cadres at all levels, we should emphasize that party organizations and party leading cadres at all levels must operate within the scope of the Constitution and the law, and must not have authority beyond the Constitution and the law. If these two issues are confused, then there will be what has been frequently reported in the media before. Some local leading cadres think that they represent the party and those who listen to them are listening to the party. That is ridiculous. Therefore, in real life, we should place more emphasis on governing in accordance with the law and the constitution. We must emphasize that party organizations at all levels, especially party members and leading cadres, must act within the scope of the constitution and law. Under China's real political conditions, adhering to the rule of law means upholding the party's leadership. Any act that weakens the rule of law is actually an act that weakens the party's leadership.

I have another point of view on this issue, which I have been advocating for many years, that is, if we want to comprehensively promote the rule of law, the party should first take the lead. We must promote the rule of law by governing the party according to law. This point of view is complementary to my other point of view, which is that we must promote social democracy or people's democracy through inner-party democracy. Why is it said that governing the party according to law should lead to governing the country according to law? The reason is simple: the party controls the core state power, and any state power must operate within the scope of the constitution and law. As stated at the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the Party leads the people in making legislation, and the Party should also lead the people in enforcing the law. If the Party does not take the lead, it will be almost impossible to implement the rule of law in society and establish a state ruled by law. Therefore, ruling the party according to the law drives the rule of the country according to the law, just like inner-party democracy drives people's democracy, it is a realistic way to promote China's democracy and rule of law with the lowest cost, the lowest cost and the greatest effect.

Above, I talked about the eight pairs of relationships that should be properly handled in order to comprehensively promote the rule of law from a political science perspective. In short, comprehensively promoting the rule of law is a systematic project. It is part of the cause of socialist modernization with Chinese characteristics, a key link in realizing the modernization of national governance, and the basic content of socialist political civilization. Therefore, governing the country according to law and our China’s democratic politics and modernization of national governance complement each other and are conditions for each other, and must be promoted as a whole.