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Mao-Ze-dong and his ideas on Contradiction

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Abstract

Mao Ze dong was born in Hunan Province of China. He was a Marxist and practical revolutionary. He was the founder of People's Republic of China. Mao-Ze-dong wrote the booklet "On Contradiction" in august, 1937. He wrote this book pamphlet because of Chinese communist party's (CPC) dogmatism .CPC would allow criticism, self-criticism and criticism, So that their ideology become develop. They should have permitted discussions debates for their development .Therefore contradiction had to exist to make their ideology strong. In it, it is found that there are six philosophical problems in Chinese society. Mao as a Marxist felt the gravity of the problem. He tried to understand and analyse the problem as well as tried to resolve it. The booklet On Contradiction represents the whole ideas of Mao on contradiction prevailing in the society of the then China.

Keywords: Contradiction, Chinese Society, Dogmatism, Philosophical problems, Criticisms.

Introduction: Mao ze Dong was born in Hunan Province of China in 26thDecember 1893. He was a Marxist; basically he was a Chinese Marxist and Practical revolutionary. He had only a formal education. His father refused to support him economically. He gave up his education and join in army in the revolution of 1911. The revolution was nationalist bourgeoisie revolution led by the nationalist political party that is the "Kuomintang". After success of the revolution he moves to Peking. Again he come back to Hunan and become very active in Communist Party of China (CPC).

In 1927 he tries to organize a peasant revolution among the people of Hunan Province. His first book was "Analysis of classes in the Chinese Society". In this book he identified major classes of Chinese peasantry. In this book he tries to analyze the main conflict and contradiction. He gave the role of vanguard of the Peasantry.

In the year 1937, he wrote to serious book, "On Practice" and second was "On Contradiction". In his book "On Practice" he tries to show the close relation about theory and practice. In "On Contradiction" he says that the Law of contradiction is Universal.

Influences on Mao: It is a known fact that both Karl Marx and Lenin influenced Mao. Karl Marx's ideas on dialectics, historical materialism or the stages of human history along with

the Communist Party of China and the 'Long March' made important contributions in influencing Mao Ze Dong. Some other factors and consequences help Mao to flourish his revolutionary ideas.

“What is the greatest question in the world? The greatest question is that of getting food. What is the greatest force? The greatest force is that of the union of the popular masses. What should we not fear? We should not fear the capitalists...if we do not speak who will speak? If we do not act, who will act??

In an article published in the weekly River Review, Mao wrote this. It was an obvious outburst of Mao as a peasant's son; he could feel the misery of the oppressed.

The 19th and 20th century capitalism and imperialism were such that it tends to push the revolutionary ideas of which Karl Marx was the opener. Mao was born in such a period when China was already a country in change. Before 1940s Opium war in this land of peasants, centuries of small scale farming and home handicrafts had created the material wealth underpinning the emperor's power. By 1980s foreign capitalists had begun to consolidate their positions by exporting capital itself into china. Thus the penetration of China by foreign capital and trade had important results which were later to be turned to the advance of the revolution Mao Ze Dong was to lead. It was this penetration which shattered China's small firm and handicraft economy and forced the peasants to depend on the foreign market. At the same time, imperialist interest in China began to reawaken the sense of cultural and historical identity of the Chinese people and the material conditions which the revolutionary movement could use to unite the masses of the people against foreign capital and its Chinese apologists. This was the thing due to which Mao later identified various contradictions which characterized the Chinese semi-feudal and semi-colonial society and wrote his essay “On Contradiction”.

The factor which changed this democratic personage into a revolutionary communist was the then condition of China. Mao's thinking is rooted deep in the Chinese soil; it is therefore rooted in famine and flood, disease and oppression of the poor peasants. It is rooted in natural and manmade disasters. In the China of Mao's birth, flood, drought were normal. It was an aspect of life. A famine factor was built into China's death rate: if you were a peasant, famine was one of the things you might expect to die of. This misery was added by the injustices meted out towards the peasants. If famine struck, the peasants sold his clothes before dying and ate leaf-dust, stone and tree-bark and it was neither frightening nor surprising; but it was food.

Mao's thinking and the appeal of his thinking to the Chinese peasant was born of this life only. Thus, one can easily assume that his unique concept of “Peasant Revolution” emerged due to these influences.

Mao's work was also influenced by certain lessons which life taught him. Such a greater lesson came in his youth with the failure of the 1911's revolution. From 1913 to 1918; he

admitted himself in a training school in Changsha and these years were formative in Mao's intellectual development. 'Water Margin' was Mao's favorite book which talked of stories of 108 rebels, gather in a mountain fortress to fight for justice against tyranny. Moreover in his own words," I read Adam Smith's 'The Wealth of Nations', and Darwin's 'Origin of Species', works of Rousseau, Spencer's 'Logic', and Montesquie's 'The Spirit of The Laws'...I mixed poetry and romances with serious study of history and geography of Russia, America, England, France and other countries". This was another influence on Mao Ze Dong.

Though he had limited institutional education, whatever he learnt in the school had influenced him greatly. In his early ages he found himself engrossed in books which contained the stories of various revolutions. At an early age, his family refused to support him economically and then he decided to educate himself and this thing certainly made him a very responsible man and a serious thinker. He learnt to become very practical at an early age and his 'On Practice' was a reflection of this. These factors influence Mao at a large scale.

Mao as a Marxist: The different theories and concepts developed by Marx are known as Marxism. It was not merely the contribution of Karl Marx, but it also belonged to the contribution of his fellows.

In 1960s there was a conflict between China and Soviet Union for the leadership of socialist communist. Mao was also influenced by Stalin and he tried to apply Stalin's theories and ideas in China. For this reason the intellectuals of Soviet Union criticised Mao as a non-Marxist thinker, because at that time there is a De-Stalin period was going on in Soviet Union. Stalin was very much criticised in Soviet Union so Soviet socialist theoretician criticise Mao as perversion of Marxism compared to Marx. Mao has more similarities with Lenin.

Stuart Scram was a theorist who done a lots of study on Mao's theories and concepts and he came to the conclusion that, 'Mao is a Marxist in the Leninist tradition'. In other words there are many similarities between Mao and Lenin. Both Mao and Lenin are theoretician and practical revolutionary leaders. Both were followers of Karl Marx. There is no doubt but they were practical revolutionary.

Lenin took the help of the theory of party organisation and principle of democratic centralism from Lenin. Mao totally accepted the democratic centralism enunciated and implemented by Lenin. So far as party organisation and democratic centralism are concerned both Lenin and Mao are at per.

On the other hand for Mao the revolutionary man based on peasantry system, but for Lenin the revolutionary man based on proletariats.

For Mao also the leadership of revolution is provided by the same proletariat but he is very sincere to the peasantry. Both Mao and Lenin was the supporter of revolutionary party. Mao and Lenin both believed that there are two types of revolutions-

- 1) Bourgeoisie democratic revolution.
- 2) Socialist revolution.

When Lenin said about party and masses, he developed two concepts. For party, he developed consciousness and for masses he developed spontaneity. Spontaneity means react action. Therefore Lenin defined party as safeguard of the proletariat. Mao came across a concept that is 'Mass Line'. The party to the masses and they tried to make them believe that the decisions they have taken is favourable for them and they also go to the masses and tried to know the problems of the masses and tried to make their ideas more scientific. According to Lenin, people have no knowledge, only the party have the knowledge, but according to Mao, people have also the knowledge.

Lenin's communism believes in Nationalism. Lenin's national liberation movement was going on many colonial centuries. But in China the situation was different. China was a semi-colony of the British. The Chinese struggle for their liberation under Kuomintang (KMT). The leader of this party was Sun Zhongshan. In 1966 – 67, Mao carried out a 'Cultural Revolution' in China. The Mao of 1950s was very often compared with Stalin. In the same period, he also tried to centralise the power in China. Like Peter De Great, he is also referred as the founder of Modern China. In later parts of his life, especially during the Cultural Revolution, he tried to bring differences between urban and rural areas of China. For these reasons it can be safely concluded that Mao was more or less a Marxists.

Mao Ze dong's ideas on Contradiction: Mao-ze-dong wrote the booklet "On contradiction" in August, 1937. This booklet completely represents the ideas of Mao Ze Dong on contradiction. He wrote this book pamphlet because of Chinese communist party's (CPC) dogmatism. CPC would allow criticism, self-criticism and criticism. So that their ideology become develop. They should have permitted discussions debates for their development .Therefore contradiction had to exist to make their ideology strong. In it, it is found that there are six philosophical problems in Chinese society. They are as –

a) The two world outlooks: There are two world outlooks .One is idealist or metaphysical world outlook and the other is materialist or dialectical materialist world outlooks.

According to the first outlooks the world is consists of ideas. World is develop through the contradictions of ideas. The metaphysical world outlooks make things isolated static and one- sided .It regards all things in the universe ,their forms and species ,as eternally isolated from one another and immutable .Such change as there is can only be increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place .Moreover ,the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but outside them that is the motive force is external .This external force or cause is the condition of change .They believed in the quantitative change .The cause of change is external.

But materialist dialectics holds that in order to understand the development of a thing. People should study and its relations with other things .In other words ,the developments of things should be seen as their internal necessary self- movement, while each things in its

movement is its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it. The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it is in the contradictions within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing hence its mention and developed. Contradiction within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary causes. The materialist effectively combats the things the theory external causes advanced by metaphysical world outlook. According to the materialist outlook changes in nature are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradiction in nature. Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradiction in society that is the contradiction between the productive forces and the relation of production.

According to the materialist, they hold that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are basis change and that external causes become operative through internal causes. For example in a suitable temperature an egg changes chicken, but no temperature can change a stone in to a chicken because each has a different basis.

Thus from the above discussion we can say that both the internal and external relation are important for development but internal causes are very important than external one. This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyse the movement of in opposites in different things and on the basis of such analysis to indicate the method for resolving contradiction, which is helpful for development.

b) The Universality of contradiction: As Mao was a materialist thus, for him world consists of matter. There are two meaning of this, one is the universality of contradiction means of contradiction exists in the forms of matters, Thus, contradiction is universal. The second meaning is that the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end.

Engels said, "Motion itself is a contradiction". Lenin defined the law of the unity of opposites as "the recognition of the contradictory, mutually exclusive, opposite's tendencies in all phenomena and processes of nature. These ideas are correct. Then the interdependence of the contradictory aspects present in all things and the struggle between these aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward. There is nothing that doesn't contain contradiction, without contradiction nothing would exist.

Contradiction is the bases of the simple forms of motion and still more so of the complex forms of motion. Engels explained it through an example- life consist precisely and primarily in this, that a being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is therefore also a contradiction which is present in things and processes themselves and which constantly originates and resolves itself and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end and death steps.

Lenin illustrated it like contradiction exists everywhere. In mathematics we have plus and minus, in physics positive and negative electricity. That means contradiction is exist in all things and all matters. Like in war offence and defence, advance and retreat, victory and defeat are all mutually contradictory phenomena. One cannot exist without the other. The

two aspects are at once in conflict and in interdependence and this constitute the totality of a war, push its development forward and solve its problems.

Contradiction is also present in beginning to end. Like we find contradiction in feudal society, contradiction between feudal lords and the peasants, in capitalism contradiction between capitalist and workers etc. Thus, contradiction exists in all stages of human history or civilization. Thus, it can be said that contradiction in the beginning to the end.

Contradiction according to Mao also exists in all areas of knowledge. It exist in the two world outlooks- the idealist and the materialist world outlook. It exists in our branches of knowledge both in natural and social sciences.

c) Particularity of contradiction: Contradiction is present in the process of development of all things; it permeates the process of development of each thing from beginning to end.

The contradiction in each form of motion of matter has its particularity. Man's knowledge of matter is knowledge of its forms of motion, because there is nothing in this world except matter in motion and this motion must assume certain forms. In considering its form of matter, we must observe the points which it has in common with other forms of motion. But what specially important and necessary, constituting as it does the foundation of our knowledge of a thing, is to observe what is particular to this form of motion of matter, to observe the qualitative difference between this form of motion and other forms. We should distinguish between things. Every form of motion contains within itself its particular contradiction. This particular contradiction constitutes the particular essence which distinguishes one thing from another. It is the internal cause or as it may be called, the basis for the immense variety of things in the world. There are many form of motion in nature mechanical, sound, light, heat etc. All these forms are independent, but in its essence each is different from the others. The particular essence of each form of motion is determined by its own particular condition. For example, condition between capitals and the workers and the method of revolution it is "Socialist Revolution". The condition between the imperialists and the colonised society and the method for solving it is "The nationalist revolution" etc. Thus all these two contradiction have specific feature.

d) The principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction: The Chinese is semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. We find there is different contradiction there like Feudal lords and the peasants, Imperialists and the Chinese people, bourgeoisie and the proletariat etc. There are other contradictions also like feudal lords and imperialist etc. Thus, we can find there are the main or principal contradiction and secondary contradiction are there. The main contradiction is the Japanese Imperialist and the Chinese common people, others are secondary contradictions.

In every contradiction there are two aspects. One is the principal and other is the non-principal aspects. For example in the contradiction between Japanese Imperialist and the Chinese common people. The Japanese Imperialist is the principal aspect and the Chinese

common people are the non-principal aspect. In order to understand it, may an example can be given-

Capitalism-----> Bourgeoisie and the proletariat
Socialism-----> Proletariat and the Bourgeoisie

From the example it is seen that the principal aspect of the contradiction in capitalism is becoming the non-principal aspect in the contradiction in socialism. Therefore, it can be said that the aspects of contradiction can change and it helps in the development of human beings and society.

e) The identity and struggle of the aspects of contradiction: Identity has two meanings. First one is condition or existence and second one is, aspects of a contradiction transform itself into the other aspect.

In order to understand it, an example can be given such as the struggle between Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. The struggle is always happened between them. Because of that conflict takes place and then revolution and the development of human history. But the identity of bourgeoisie is always depending on the proletariat. That means we have to know about bourgeoisie after knowing about proletariat the identity of bourgeoisie is meaningless. It means the identity of aspects of a contradiction depend on the contradiction. In that the aspects transforms each and other.

f) The place of Antagonism in contradiction: The place of antagonism is very much necessary in a contradiction because with the role of antagonism a revolution can take place. In a condition we find unity, co-existence, identity and struggle. But when there is the role antagonism found in that struggle it leads to revolution. To have a successful revolution this kind of role of antagonism is very much necessary.

Antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites. We can understand this problem from an example, in human society or history, antagonism between classes exists as a particular manifestation of the struggle of opposites. Consider the contradiction between the exploitation and exploited classes. Such contradictory classes exist in the society for a long time in the slave society, feudal society or capitalist society and the struggle with each other, but it is not until the contradiction between two classes develops to a certain stage that it assumes the form of open antagonism and develops into revolution. When antagonism in capitalist society takes place it resulted in the revolution by the proletariat. The dictatorship of proletariat. That means antagonism has a important role to play in revolution which can help in the development of society. Therefore, we can say that it is a necessary or essential part of revolution.

Conclusion: It can be said that in every society contradiction happens between masses at a minimum level. Mao felt the importance of contradiction in that period of Chinese Society. In fact he played a very crucial role in the then Chinese Society. Mao as a Marxist tried to find out the contradiction happens in every society and tried to resolve these contradiction.

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