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ARTICLES ON EDUCATION IN COMMUNIST CHINA

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ARTICLES ON EDUCATION IN COMMUNIST CHINA

Following is a translation of selected articles from various issues of the Chinese-language newspaper Kuang-ming Jih-pao, Peiping, Date of issue, page and author, if any, are given under individual article headings.

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1. The New Power of Science and Technology Greatly Advances

1 January 1960
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A new power in the China Academy of Science, the Geology Research section, with Party assistance is rapidly maturing in accord with the expansion of China's geological science, and has become an important force in scientific research.

For several years, this group of young geologists, combining learning and doing, have undergone strict discipline in actual working. The needs of construction have brought them a broad arena of activity; their foot prints are found in every corner of our native land. Accompanied and guided by older geologists, they have studied the causes of deposits containing rare elements, and the laws of their distribution; and have undertaken the task of geologic study in connection with guiding the course of the T'ao River in Kansu. In a North China area hitherto dubbed "lacking deposits. They have surveyed many mineral resources, and found rich deposits. They have constructed many maps showing the land structure and other geologic maps of China and its borders. They have improved several dozen kinds of instruments, and made X-ray fluorescent lamps and a "many-furnace, quick-sending-heat instrument," and so on.

By means of this survey and research work, this new force's competence in science and ability to work independently has been very much improved. Many recent graduates of universities who are doing research and field work, heretofore have been able only to write reports on field work; now they can write comprehensive summaries of high quality and sound in theory. Many persons have undertaken leadership of field teams and of indoor research groups, and responsibility for topics. Many research and field workers who are university graduates of 1954 and 1956 have attained the rank of assistants in research. Demobilized soldiers and middle school students who only in 1958 entered research quarters as observers have progressed rapidly; most of them can in the main take charge of indoor skills and field operations. Among them some have become experts, and in their field of knowledge have become specialist experts. When observers in the mineralogy section first went out in to field work, it took several men to survey one mine spot; now there are some who can guide ten or more work-study university students and those from middle vocational schools, to do mineral survey work. One of them, a demobilized soldier of only junior middle grade, Chang Shao-li, in less than a year had acquired the ability to picture strata, make relief maps, find specimens, calculate reserves, and other technical knowledge, reaching the second-year university level. Another observer, in the section on sedimentary rocks, after joining in field work, with guidance from other researchers, collected

specimens and took part in writing "Geology of Phosphorus Mines in North China", by writing the chapter on "Geology of Phosphorus Mines in North Hopeh."

The quick maturing of this new force is due to the method adopted by the research section of boldly setting free young men to discipline themselves through actual work, giving them a definite research responsibility, training them, and helping them to rise step by step. Simultaneously, the Party organ improves their education in ideology: on the one hand teaching them to destroy superstition, to dare think and do; on the other hand asking them to learn humbly and to accept the guidance of higher and medium researchers. Of these latter, it asks that they consider the training of this new force as an important political duty, and perform it. Thus they both fulfill the nation-entrusted duty of scientific research and also train youthful cadres. For example, the task of studying rare elements, which was accepted by this section, as originally determined, was to complete the study of four chief elements in 12 years. In the past few years, several took up this work; but being rather few in number, results were not significant. In the 1958 big leap forward, this section's leaders freely let all the young cadres in the mineralogy room participate, and also accepted students from higher schools, forming 10 field teams, each big team being led by a research fellow. As a result, with the help of the units concerned, in the short space of 10 months the task was successfully accomplished. The area surveyed covered 100 mine spots in 12 provinces. Some 33 kinds of rare elements, were located, and estimates were made of reserves of these deposits and their industrial value; and on this foundation was written an analysis method and an account of these minerals, and a preliminary chart for the processing of rare elements. Researchers and workers in this room, after this study, became familiar with the general picture of China's rare elements, and mastered the methods of field and indoor research, and grew much in theoretical professional knowledge.

Summing up the work of research, and starting many kinds of technical operations, is an important method of causing the new force to mature quickly. Opening up many kinds of technical activity can conjoin personal with group research, can arouse the enthusiasm of high, medium, and beginning researchers and technical men, thus raising the professional level of young researchers. About the time of National Day, 1959, the research institute held a comprehensive technical report meeting, summing up experience and examining results. Among the 269 essays done by the institute, 80% were done by young persons (being examined and revised by scientists), and 5 of these were done by observers. In addition to the big report meeting, each research room at underdetermined intervals holds work report meetings in which field workers and observers are free to report any results they may have gained.

Besides, the institute arranges for observers to study in geological schools, red-expert universities, and short-term training-classes to raise systematically their operational knowledge.

2. Extensive Correspondence Education Trains Engineering Cadres

5 January 1960

Unsigned article

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The T'ung-chi University correspondence education has had tremendous expansion and gained definite results.

When T'ung-chi started correspondence education in 1958, there was only the one specialist course in industrial and civilian construction (6-year system), with 106 students, all of whom came from Shanghai. Beginning with 1957, courses have been started in water-supply and sewage, heating, gas supply and ventilation, highways and streets, and 3 specialist courses on the 6-year system. The number of students has increased to 590, and they come from all over the country (temporarily none from Tsinghai or Tibet). In 1958, with the nation-wide big leap forward in industry and agriculture, T'ung-chi University, in order to meet better the needs of building socialism, in addition to the aforementioned four regular specialist courses, added 20 single courses by correspondence. Such courses fit the needs of inservice employees as regards production and Party work. Related courses may be studied as electives in higher schools, and are welcomed by employees. At present such single courses number 1200-man-courses, and 298 persons have already quit.

To fulfill the Party educational aim, and to stimulate a big rise in spare-time education, the University Party committee in May of last year suggested as its work-aim: "Set in order and make firm, raise quality, prepare well to welcome a big expansion in spare-time education." In line with this aim, there has been a re-ordering of correspondence education, and a revision of the curriculum of regular correspondence education. Scientific research and graduation designs have been added. Measures have been taken to make firm the correspondence teachers, and to set up a correspondence cell in the study-group on correspondence teaching.

For three years now, T'ung-chi University has been actively working on correspondence materials, and besides writing handbooks as a guide in using daytime school materials for study, they have also prepared 15 kinds of correspondence textbooks; among which, textbooks for correspondence work in higher mathematics and in general physics have been published by the National Publishing Co. Correspondence cells in study groups have also prepared answer-collections for topics ordinarily raised by correspondence students, correspondence teaching

outlines and ways of solving problems, as supplementary loose-leaf material, to guide correspondence students in their study. In teaching methods they have used all sorts of auxiliary methods. In the past three years, in Shanghai, Nanking, Ho-fei, Tsinan, Hangchow and elsewhere, they have organized correspondence teaching, which takes up 20-30% of the total teaching time; and in summer vacation each year these students have gathered in groups for 2-4 weeks of experiment and examination work. Furthermore, they constantly send persons to penetrate everywhere to inspect the status of their study; and often publish a correspondence newsletter instructing correspondence students how to study. In order to improve common leadership with production units over correspondence education, there has now been established a cooperative relationship with the agencies concerned, and the methods and system agreed on. This will further solidify relations between operating departments and the leadership of correspondence work.

T'ung-chi University recently held a conference of correspondence teachers which inspected the work and summed up experiences; they also held a conference of department chiefs and some study-group heads for preliminary drafting of a program for expanding spare-time education. It decided that besides operating all-day schools they would arouse fervor, dig out hidden strength, and greatly expand spare-time education.

Correspondence education of Hupeh higher normal schools, under guidance of the Party educational aim, and by applying the mass line, the aim of walking on two legs, and holding that correspondence teaching reaches the goal of systematic uplifting, has caused higher normal correspondence education to assume the appearance of a big lead forward, and made a large contribution to the training of in-service middle school teachers.

Correspondence education of the Hupeh higher normal schools, has been initiated with the guidance and support of the provincial committee, provincial education bureau, and of local Party committees and educational agencies, with practical undertaking of this work by the Huachung Normal College, with 7 standard courses in Chinese language, mathematics, history, geography, biology, chemistry, and physics. Correspondence students now number over 13,000 from all the provinces. The departments have prepared and printed over 30 kinds of correspondence material, and over 70 occasional auxiliary publications; and have sponsored 7 large vacation gatherings for teaching, with over 50 occasions of oral guidance in smaller centers. These teaching activities have been of notable use in training and improving teachers.

The special courses in Chinese language and mathematics are now over. Judging by the final grades in the Ching-chou Special District, 95% of the correspondence students passed, 60% of these with excellent grades. Still more important is that through this study, such students generally were raised in systematic knowledge of science and culture; thus the teaching quality was raised, and middle schools were improved. Quite a number of correspondence students in the special Chinese and

mathematics courses have been promoted to be senior middle teachers. Take the I-tu industrial district as an example; Among correspondence students in the Chinese course, senior middle teachers at the beginning comprised 5.8%, now this proportion has risen to 37.2%; in the mathematics course, the rise has been from 18% to 48.5%; and two teachers have undertaken teaching work of professional teachers. The others not promoted to be senior middle teachers all became junior middle third-year teachers, and yet more became chairmen of study-groups. The Hua-chung Normal College, in starting higher normal correspondence education, started out from the principle: "Begin with solving actual problems of middle schools, and reach the goal of systematic improvement." They revised the curriculum so that it could better fit the needs of "much, quick, good, cheap" training and improved in-service middle school teachers. In all departments of teaching they gave heed to conjoining teaching with politics, with production, with middle schools, and with the actual work the correspondence student was doing. The Chinese, mathematics, and physics departments have prepared special brochures on teaching middle schools subjects which have proved most useful in guidance of teaching, and have been well received by correspondence students. This semester they have prepared 11 kinds of special correspondence materials, and 55% of the courses opened this term. They have begun to make a change in the former commonly used arrangement of material in standard courses. They plan in one or two years to prepare a complete set of materials suited for correspondence and personal study work.

3. Peiping University Improves Teaching of Russian

11 January 1960
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Peiping University since the beginning of this semester has changed the teaching of Russian from two to three years for all students to substantially raise their ability to use Russian. The university's Russian language study group, in accord with the change in curriculum, is arousing fervor, sweeping along a popular movement, improving teaching, and has already gained preliminary results.

The university's Russian language study group is responsible for the teaching of Russian to over 6000 students in the first to third year grades in 17 departments. Among the 70 or more teachers, the great majority are young. Under party guidance, they have made a series of improvements in the work of teaching. For instance, they have drawn up a new set of teaching outlines. The outlines for science students not only trains the student's ability to read professional articles,

but also develop their ability to read general articles concerned with science in newspapers and magazines. Those for arts students, besides training their ability to read professional articles, must also train their ability to read general discussions on politics. The new teaching outlines divide the entire teaching time into three stages: namely, that of foundation grammar, that of analytical explanation, and that of independent reading. The first two stages form the stage of elementary Russian, with emphasis on training the student's rudimentary ability in Russian; while the third stage stresses training the student's ability to read professional articles in Russian. Language courses are conjoined with the teaching periods of specialities, but as a rule not more than one-third of the whole time is taken for Russian. In response to the needs of the teaching outlines, the study-group has also given much effort to the building up of materials, and now has prepared textbooks in basic and in professional Russian -- altogether 17 sets of new materials for use in the teaching and collections of phrases in common use.

Then too this study group, relying on collective strength, has made rather large changes in teaching methods. According to the three stages in the whole process of teaching, they have organized three research cells on teaching methods and will incorporate the fruits of research into essays. The study group has also decided that teachers of common material shall prepare their lessons collectively; and when such teams contain three or more members, they must put into writing their common conclusions. Moreover, the study group suggested to teachers of first-year Russian that they seek unity among teaching demands, methods, and principles, these three; so that each sentence, each form of speech, may attain economy of time, while getting the biggest results. Besides all this, the study group also initiated experimental lessons in solving special problems and decided that teachers should practice regular reciprocal hearing of lessons; and many lesson-preparing cells further suggested "one person teach, all pay attention," using collective wisdom to better each individual's work.

Ceaseless raising of teacher's political and professional level is an important prerequisite for the ceaseless raising of the teaching quality. For this, the study group has drafted and begun to put into effect a teacher training program and a three-year program in scientific research.

Quite recently the results of the study group's over-all inspection of teaching work has shown that first-year students' ability to hear, speak, write, read and translate is all higher than before. Student activity in class-room is greater, and so the grasp on words and grammar is stronger; a second-year student's grasp on words and analysis is better, too. Third-year students can read twice as much new material in a 90-minute period as they could before.

4. Psychological Research Must Leap Forward

17 January 1960
Page 2

Shang Shan-yu

As the 1960 leap forward year begins, how should China's comparatively weak psychology organize its resources, and decide its steps so that in 1960 psychology too can perform rather large exploits, and reach the high peak it should have to spark China's socialist construction?

This is an important question. Please offer any views you may have for the benefit of us comrades.

First is the problem of how to carry on better the work of research. Speaking of the psychology research section of the China Academy of Science, present work is being carried on chiefly from two aspects. One is the work of linking with reality; chiefly research on problems concerned with psychology in industrial production, education, medical treatments and health; the other is conjoining electronic control and other new theories with techniques, doing research on the larger brain as the material body of human psychology. The goal of the former lies in tentative solutions of problems of psychology in China's socialist construction, so that psychology can contribute its resources to such building; the goal of the other lies in using new theories and techniques from the psychological angle to discover and master the basic laws of human brain activity.

At the beginning of this new year, what we should think about is this: In our past stage of work, what important problems deserve our research?

What I am prepared to speak on is chiefly the status of linking policies with reality.

Psychological research should be linked with reality; this is what we become convinced of in the 1957 reform. Since the reform quite a period of time had elapsed. During this considerable time, our work has felt its way along. We have been careful to absorb lessons from the work, so as to have it in regular order, and have it on the correct path. But as of now, we must confess, we have not fully understood it. This is worth a further examination.

Looking back over our work, problems worth studying are very numerous. Here we are ready to discuss two which I consider are rather important in carrying on the work.

The first problem is: How to clutch a problem, and how to clutch big problems.

This seems to go without saying. Since we want to link psychology with reality, we must solve problems for reality, and of course we should solve the larger problems. Only thus can our research have yet more weighty meaning, and count more for building socialism. Real cir-

cumstances are variegated. Some of our work has dealt with such weighty problems as experimental research on whether a six-year old child can enter school, on teaching algebra to upper class students in elementary school, on comprehensive quick treatment of nervous weakness, and on some factories conjoining technological reforms with creative thinking: as we see it now, research on these questions was important and proper. But not all the comrades are clear on this matter. Quite a number of them have misgivings. They are accustomed to each man being guided by his personal advantage, doing his own groping about some minor points, unwilling for further research into real conditions, and starting from these to formulate problems. Of course there are some difficulties here too; however, one chief problem which remains is that we still are not good at grasping problems. Some problems cannot be solved all at once by us, but if we can think about the work rather comprehensively, we can have a comparatively distant goal, and can wrap our work around it; and while we may start from a small point, this small point is linked to an important goal, and brings closer the winning of such a goal. This is entirely correct. But now our question is: Without a thorough going study of the work, but simply going round and round on minor matters, some of our work becomes cluttered with details. Such conditions may be unavoidable as work begins, and if they last too long, they will be harmful.

An important cause of such conditions is: Some comrades are accustomed to one man doing research on one small matter; and are not used to many comrades in one place doing research on broader and weightier topics. While this problem has been improved somewhat in actual work, yet it undoubtedly still remains and is in our work an unseen element with adverse effect. To overcome it further is still a weighty problem. Of course from another aspect, we do not object to one comrade doing individual research on a single problem. This is a state of affairs we will often meet with in our work; if circumstances need to have it so, of course there is no question. The remaining question now is: Some comrades while urgently crying for cooperation, still want to take up something of their own. There remains much blindness which is not good for the work.

The second problem is: How to grasp firmly the goal of research deeply and thoroughly.

The objective of psychological research is without doubt a rather complex one. Speaking of linking with reality, whether in productive labor, or in education, medicine and health, many problems have both a natural reference and a social one; and often these two are linked together. Thus, in our research work, some phenomena can always be cleared up in a very short time; while others seem to persist. Some phenomena cannot be identified at once. If we put our research on a strict scientific foundation, we will have to conduct repeated experiments, examine carefully all principal contradictions, and thoroughly clear them up before our work can reach a definite level, or have theoretical and somewhat universal meaning. Alas! our comrades still often go lightly on reaching conclusions, and after making some progress on a certain

problem, do not care to pursue it further, but turn to new topics so that some research is left unfinished, some is not of high quality, and some is limited to investigating and generalizing a few facts without a painstaking examination. So they utter a conclusion and apply it to widespread cases. They consider they have completed a piece of research and pass in their papers with glee. This is not a good plan.

Speaking of psychology, in many research problems, observation and investigation is an important method. This cannot be denied! But such activities can only be the beginning of our work, which cannot end with them. To have psychological research employ observation and investigation along, and to generalize uncertain facts and then utter a conclusion as if it represented completed research, is poor research practice. Facts testify that such research is merely a general statement of some general facts, which seem to be general, but really are not. As to solving problems existing in reality, these also often exist only in the general concept, and the theoretical meaning too is not large. If we keep on working in this fashion, as far as psychology is concerned, its scientific quality will be seriously affected. We must sternly demand scientific procedures and build our research on a strict scientific foundation. On this matter any light-hearted attitude is wrong.

When we are discussing in general the methods of psychological research, our tendency is often to study problems by themselves; so as soon as we mention the defects of laboratory research, some comrades question the value of laboratory research. Actual work proves that there are many studies linked with reality, which on the one hand need spot observation and study, and on the other must fit in with the tested results of laboratory research. When we are out of touch with reality by being only in the laboratory, and use bourgeois methods to perform research that is without real meaning, and that has questionable theoretical value, such research has no value. When we in touch with reality as we study some very significant problems, and make the fruits of research have a strict scientific quality by fitting them in with laboratory research, we are then fulfilling a necessary purpose. Spot observation and investigation is definitely not enough. But some of our comrades still cherish a frivolous attitude, one of impatient grasping for results; they hurriedly make a couple of cursory trips to the spot, then on returning write out a ponderous report. This method is not good, and should not be encouraged.

Facts testify, that as far as psychology is concerned, we should not be impatient to get results, but must have a strict and honest attitude and conduct repeated tests and studies. For instance, the study of nervous weaknesses undertaken by the psychological research institute, after four rather extensive spot studies, raised the rate of basic cure to 86%. After this, spot study was continued on the one hand, and on the other hand, there was intensified study of the physiological system. That was correct. Of course, not every problems need to be mechanically pursued like this. But it is very necessary to seek strictness and repeated examination and proof.

II

At present another problem involved in psychological work is that of cooperation.

Extensive specialist cooperation is undoubtedly a very important method of carrying on our work; it is very important in psychological studies. For psychology is still in a rather embryonic stage. If we want to leap forward, and push forward our work better and faster to depend on the resources of one unit or one bureau is very inadequate. We must break down dividing lines, start big cooperation, organize dispersed forces, choose some important topics, and do planned research; thus we can hope for some fairly good and quick results. For this reason, in psychological research, cordial cooperation is very important.

In bygone days, we did cooperate. In the study of nervous weaknesses, the psychology institute worked cooperatively with units concerned. Since last fall, with the help of the Ministry of Education, we have also cooperated with 20 normal colleges and schools, pursuing studies in educational psychology, and this cooperation is now going on. The question now is: Shall we not be satisfied with the work we have, but enlarge it; and plan to cooperate better, making it more fruitful and over a wider area.

Without doubt, at present the chief target for cooperation ought to be the normal institutions. Speaking for Chinese psychological circles, normal institutions have absorbed our chief resources. At present, a large proportion of China's psychology cadres are distributed throughout the system of normal institutions. Therefore we should say the latent force is very large, and the opening of psychological research should be given careful consideration. Here the remaining question is: If we start research of this sort, organizing cooperation is an important method; for it is very clear that if a school does it along, its resources are limited, and difficulties many; by combining, powers become strong and progress is facilitated.

For this reason, we say that cooperation of psychological circles should fundamentally be of two spheres: 1) National, as in the matter of educational psychology; 2) Local, organized around one area.

As seen at present, in pursuing cooperation, two chief questions need examination:

1. While practicing cooperation, or after it has been set up, what is to be done in cases where learned opinions differ? We have already met such cases. We say that this makes no difference. The differing of learned opinions is quite a normal matter. When such cases arise, we just follow the course enunciated by the Party central committee: "Let all schools have their say," and go our separate ways. When experiments are needed, we can do different ones separately. We need not force the demand that one group shall be subservient to the other. Of course if there is much agreement and little difference, or the difference is only in details, it is better to work together, and

unify the chief topics. What needs special pointing out here is the matter of attitude. This means that comrades who take part in cooperation must prize it, must cherish the attitude of amicable working together, mutual respect, full consultation over affairs that come up, and humble consideration of the other side's opinion. While we encourage self-expression by all in matters of learned opinion, we need not force assent to views that we feel are not sound; but in a definite situation, truth can only be one; and humble consideration of the other side's opinion is the scientific attitude that we should have.

2. Another problem is that of good organization. While at present our cooperation has not yet begun, in the future we must strive to make it broader, by degrees nation-wide; but speaking of us who are now practicing it, it can be seen that in a sense cooperation still involves some complexities. We should have an adequate estimate of such complexities. This means we should not oversimplify them. Since all want to work together, no questions will arise, but anything heard will be allowed, each going its own way. In some of our cooperation, questions have already arisen, and only because we have taken notice of them, have they not grown bigger with time. So it becomes very necessary to improve the work of organization, and give to cooperation the reassurance that comes from organization. Such organization work should begin chiefly from study regarding two problems: 1) establishing a leadership core; 2) establishing a definite system, talking over the principal questions before they arise. Some should have written decisions, and some can be accomplished by consultation beforehand. Here we should also include a system of summarizing learned research. In our work there should be much study and discussion on learned matters so as to arrive promptly at unanimous agreement, enabling cooperation to go on in a more wholesome manner.

III

In psychological work, yet another problem is overcoming fear of hardship. At present, among researchers in psychology, some comrades have such feelings. In many cases, such feelings induce dispersal of fighting spirit, and lassitude in zeal. And among some individual comrades such feelings are very serious; if not conquered, they will hinder much the progress of our work.

It may be said that fear of hardship arises from two causes:

1. Some comrades, deeply influenced by the old psychology, claim that psychology can produce nothing. They have no confidence in psychology. Some of the more serious cases among them want to do away with psychology, saying that since it can accomplish nothing, it might as well be abruptly done away with. Through having been deeply influenced by the bourgeoisie, they also claim that even at best psychology is bourgeoisie in character and does not solve any problem. So they

say that spending time on psychology is "shameful." In actual work they cannot penetrate deeply, nor grasp the problems. Since their work is haphazard, they get few results, and their confidence is low.

2. another cause comes from actual work. Namely, after linking with reality, they want both to get deep into the arena and also to work at cooperation; but because heretofore it has been one man working on a single problem, one man active in the laboratory, when he is suddenly thrown into a rather complex environment for work, he is not good at solving the various problems that arise in actual work. They become almost helpless in their confusion and do not think up new problems to solve, but fear hardship and waver. This seriously hampers our work.

Clearly, it is very difficult under such circumstances to think of new tasks for a leap forward. To solve this problem, politics must take the lead, and organization work must be well done. Most important there must be a practical arrangement so that the work will in a definite period produce results and raise confidence. Then too, it is necessary to improve ideological work in order to enhance vitality, to stimulate enthusiasm, and to eliminate mechanical criticism. This problem can be solved in time.

As it appears now, psychology circles are full of vitality. After several sessions of rather heavy criticism and debate, the direction of research has become fairly clear. Confidence has risen, not gone down. From another angle, out of criticism and debate men have come to see this important truth: Psychology is a science bearing on human consciousness. It studies how mankind is conscious by reflection of objective things. This is a science with both weighty meaning in theory and also in regard to reality; to have an attitude of doubt about this is baseless. After criticism and debate, psychology has won rather widespread attention among men. Though our resources are frail, and the results few, we have no reason to doubt that we can get results in the future. On the contrary, after this recent work, we feel that the direction in which our work is traveling is correct. We are full of confidence, we firmly believe that in the not too distant future we surely can get some results, and will make the proper contribution to building socialism in China.

The approaching national conference in Peiping of psychological societies should, we think, examine the following: How should china's psychological workers join hands and leap forward, organizing and arousing the nation's resources, and how can we initiate research work to enable it in a short time to make fairly large progress.

The national leap forward situation is stirring us to advance. We must go forward, and do so with full confidence!