

XI JINPING

WIT AND VISION

SELECTED QUOTATIONS AND COMMENTARY

Chief Editor : Chen Xixi



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS



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Everyone has pursuits and ideals; everyone has his own dreams. We are now all talking about the Chinese Dream. In my opinion, achieving the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has been the greatest dream of the Chinese people since the advent of modern times. This dream embodies the long-cherished hope of several generations of the Chinese people, gives expression to the overall interests of the Chinese nation and the Chinese people, and represents the shared aspiration of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation.

— Speech given by Xi Jinping while viewing *The Road to Rejuvenation* exhibit

November 29, 2012

We will continue in the right direction and press ahead with reform and opening up. We dare to chew the tough bones and navigate the rough waters. We must have the courage to break down the barriers of old notions and the fences of interest groups.

— Speech given by Xi Jinping during his inspection visit to Guangdong Province

December 7–11, 2012

We stand for the sharing of dignity by all countries and peoples in the world. All countries, irrespective of size, strength and wealth, are equal. The right of the people to independently choose their development paths should be respected, interference in the internal affairs of other countries opposed, and international fairness and justice maintained. Only the wearer of the shoes knows if they fit or not. Only the people can best tell if the development path they have chosen for their country is suitable or not.

— Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations

March 23, 2013

We must hold on to the practice and experience of the Party and people over the last ninety-some years as the foundation that we stand on, never to be lost or forgotten. We must be neither self-abased nor over-confident. We must hold fast to the straight road which has been forged through the long-term practice and exploration of the Party and people.

— Speech given by Xi Jinping at the symposium to commemorate the 120th anniversary
of Mao Zedong's birth, December 26, 2013

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Publisher's Note

Language has a magical power. In his speeches, President Xi Jinping frequently uses analogies and storytelling to express profound truths. His colloquial, straightforward language clarifies ideas that many find puzzling, and his quotations from China's traditional culture well summarize his topics and thoroughly expound his propositions. His speeches express wisdom in simple language that packs a powerful, penetrating punch.

Readers will welcome imagery that sparks the imagination, such as "hunt tigers and swat flies" or "power must be caged by the system." Other selections, such as "to forge iron, one must be strong," and "place what you want to say on the table," drive home their points with vivid precision. Chinese classics have also been quoted by Xi Jinping to explain his philosophy on governance, for example, "governing a great country is as delicate as frying a small fish" and "exaltation of the virtuous is fundamental to governance." "Boundless is the ocean where we sail with the wind" was used to describe the common development of the Asia-Pacific region, and "neglecting duty for empty talk" was cited to criticize a work style that separated theory from practice ...

The book is composed of four sections: Overview, Imagery and Metaphors, Everyday Sayings, and Quotations from the Classics. We arranged the content of each section based on the order of the 12 major themes presented in *Key Speeches by Xi Jinping*, compiled by the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

We would like to thank the authors, Chen Xixi, Ding Xiaoping, Wang

Yushen, and Huang Qingqiao, for their dedication and hard work on the manuscript. It was not an easy task! We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude for the strong support we have received from the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China; the Ministry of Education; the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television; the Publicity Department of the Shanghai Committee of the Communist Party of China; and the Shanghai Press and Publication Administration; among other entities. We are grateful to leaders and experts who provided guidance, including Feng Gang, Wang Ran, Xu Yanguo, Zhu Jian, Ji Bo, Tan Yi, Liu Huajie, and Zhao Zhengyan. We are especially grateful to Zhang Xi, former member of the standing committee and secretary-general of the Zhejiang Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China and former Party secretary of Zhejiang University, for reviewing the manuscript and offering invaluable advice.

The speeches of Xi Jinping cover a sweeping range of topics with great depth. We regret that we were unable to include more of this valuable material. Finally, we are grateful to all the individuals mentioned above for their contributions. We hope that readers will excuse any imperfections and offer their suggestions.

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Overview

Everyone has pursuits and ideals; everyone has his own dreams. We are now all talking about the Chinese Dream. In my opinion, achieving the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has been the greatest dream of the Chinese people since the advent of modern times. This dream embodies the long-cherished hope of several generations of the Chinese people, gives expression to the overall interests of the Chinese nation and the Chinese people, and represents the shared aspiration of all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping while viewing The Road to Rejuvenation exhibit, November 29, 2012*

The Chinese Dream

— *A common wish for rejuvenation of the nation and prosperity for the people*

In the latter half of 2012, not long after the 18th National Party Congress drew to a close, the phrase “the Chinese Dream” gradually started trending online. It originated in a speech given by Xi Jinping when viewing *The Road to Rejuvenation* exhibit, not long after becoming General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee. Soon thereafter everyone was talking about it, from the halls of academia to teahouses and neighborhoods, all around China, and even in other countries. It resonated among people and aroused high expectations.

Dreams are the images, sounds, thoughts, and feelings that come from our imaginations when we sleep. They are physiological in nature, but also psychological, and can inspire our artistic imaginations. It is because of this that people connect thoughts with dreams in a way that transcends purely physiological phenomena and turns them into hopes for the future and goals we set about to achieve.

One poet used personification to express the power of dreams: “The dream of grass is to cover the fields and hills in green, the dream of water is to conquer the rocks and desert, the dream of birds is to soar over ravines and rapids, and the dream of the earth is to raise all living things ...” Life must have dreams. Without dreams, there is nothing to fight for in life, no direction in which to travel. Likewise, it applies to a country or a nation. The Chinese Dream put forward by Xi Jinping is a way of expressing the rejuvenation of China that includes the “two centenary goals” of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2021 (100 years after the founding of the CPC) and building a prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious

modern socialist country by 2049 (100 years after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949).

The Chinese dream of rejuvenating China didn't just appear when Xi Jinping started talking about the Chinese Dream. It has been the dream of the nation since the beginning of the modern times, and carries with it the common ambitions of all the children of China. China has had a brilliant civilization that has profoundly impacted civilizations of the world. China was once one of the most economically developed nations in the world. According to the estimates of one Western scholar, at the height of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the Chinese economy accounted for one-third of the world's economy. After the Opium War of 1840, however, the country entered a century of externally imposed humiliation and turmoil from civil wars. The Chinese people suffered enormous disaster and hardship, and truly endured immense suffering and misfortune. National rejuvenation thus became the objective of the continuous struggle of the Chinese people over the years. Countless men and women with lofty ideals answered the call and attempted to right the tilting giant ship. Liang Qichao (1873-1929) advocated "young China," Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) called for "invigorating China," and Li Dazhao (1889-1927) called for the struggle to "regenerate and remake the Chinese nation." The Chinese people never gave up and continually strove against adversity. Under the leadership of the CPC, following the path of the New Democratic Revolution, they finally took charge of their own fate and began the great course of building New China. Since the launch of reform and opening-up policy, we have continued the tough exploration to find the correct path toward rejuvenating China, and a bright future is gradually emerging over the horizon.

The Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation naturally encompasses both having a strong nation and prosperous people. Xi Jinping said, "The Chinese Dream of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation means that we will make China prosperous and strong, rejuvenate the nation, and bring happiness to the Chinese people." The Chinese Dream is a dream of a strong, revitalized nation, but in the end it is the people's dream for

happiness. Since the country and nation are not abstract concepts, but rather formed by the people, strengthening and revitalizing the country necessarily relies on the people, and the objective of having a strong, revitalized nation also continually brings prosperity to the people. This is why the Chinese Dream will become the common dream of the 1.3 billion people of China, and the people of China will deep down in their hearts decide to pursue the Chinese Dream together. Xi Jinping was referring to the concept of both the national dream and the people's dream when he said to President Obama, "The Chinese Dream has many things in common with all the beautiful dreams, including the American Dream, of people all over the world."

It has been said that the American Dream emphasizes the individual dream, while the Chinese Dream emphasizes the national dream, and the two are not related. Actually, this is a misreading of both the Chinese Dream and the American Dream. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had this to say about the American Dream: "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.... I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.... And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true." This reflects the dream of all of society.

Of course, due to the differences in Chinese and American cultures, different historical tasks in modern and contemporary times, and different choices of ideology and paths of development, the American Dream emphasizes more the value of individual effort, while the Chinese Dream gives prominence to having a strong, revitalized country. But under the backdrop of developing the socialist market economy and democratic politics, we have to recognize that "little rivers are full when the big river is full" and that we must have the breadth of mind to aspire for a strong, revitalized country. When Xi Jinping first mentioned the Chinese Dream, some people translated it as the "China Dream." Now people have started calling it the Chinese Dream, however, which shows

that people have started to recognize that the Chinese Dream is the dream of the Chinese people and that there is value in each individual's personal dreams. As Xi Jinping said, "The Chinese Dream is the dream of our nation and the dream of every Chinese."

When the 18th CPC National Congress drew to a close, Xi Jinping solemnly promised the people on behalf of the Party that "the people's wish for a good life is our goal." The 18th CPC National Congress Communiqué also stated that the primary "basic requirement" of upholding and developing socialism with Chinese characteristics is "upholding the people's dominant position."

Now most Chinese people are not as concerned as they used to be about raising the GDP, and instead they want better education, more stable jobs, better income, more reliable social security, more comfortable housing conditions, more diverse cultural consumption, and a better environment. They expect to know more, express more, participate more, and oversee more, and they expect that the next generation will grow better, work better, and live better than they did. These demands and pursuits of every Chinese person can become the motivating wellspring for achieving the Chinese Dream and the national dream. If the state can encourage every Chinese person to fight for their own career and life ideals while staying within the law and respecting social values, and create a competitive society with equal rights and fair opportunities and rules, then everyone will have an opportunity to shine and make their dreams become reality. This will synergize the energies of labor, intellect, technology, management, and capital, making the wellsprings of social wealth surge and realizing the dreams of strengthening the country and revitalizing the nation.

There is a big picture and little pictures within the Chinese Dream. To every Chinese person, "One's own small undertakings will only flourish if the greater cause prospers." Our causes will not be successful if we do not incorporate individual life ideals into the great cause of strengthening the country and revitalizing the nation.

Today, more than at any other time in history, we are closer to the

goal of rejuvenating China. Since the launch of the reform and opening-up policy, China has undergone earthshaking changes. Annual per capita GDP has leapt from USD200 before reform and opening up to nearly USD7,000 in 2013, and China has become the second largest economy in the world. The meaning and form of the people being masters of the country has continually been enriched, and there have been major advancements in education, science, culture, and health. Society has been stable and harmonious on the whole, and the Party's governing ability has improved. All of this has laid a solid foundation for the appearance and realization of the Chinese Dream.

China is still the largest developing country in the world, however, and enriching the lives of 1.3 billion people is no small feat. China still faces a plethora of difficulties and challenges along its path of development, and every Chinese person must make a protracted, arduous effort to realize the Chinese Dream of rejuvenating the nation.

China must take its own path, the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, to realize the Chinese Dream. This is a hard-won path. It has been stamped out in the experiences of more than three decades of reform and opening up and in the exploration of more than six decades since the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. It has been synthesized from the more than 170 years of development of modern China and pioneered over the 5,000 year-long course of the Chinese civilization. The path has been chosen by history.

In philosophy, *fundamental proposition* concerns the most original, most basic problem. Each era has its own fundamental proposition, and exploration of the path to take is each era's answer to its basic problem. In 1840, the powerful gunboats of the Western powers forced open the gates of our country, and "freeing ourselves from humiliation and suffering" became the fundamental proposition of that era. This gave rise to the Self-Strengthening Movement, which sought to learn from the strengths of foreigners; the Hundred Days' Reform, which sought to strengthen the country; the Revolution of 1911, which established the Republic; and the May Fourth Movement, which advocated science and democracy. Each

movement coming on the heels of the other, wave after wave of men with lofty ideals explored the path to rescuing the country and the people, but none of them was able to lead the Chinese nation out from the burden of great disaster. It was the CPC that led the endless succession of Chinese people through bloody battles created a new government, and realized independence for the nation and liberation for the people, successfully answering the call of the era. After the establishment of New China in 1949, exploring socialism became the fundamental proposition of the time. In “On the Ten Major Relationships” and “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People,” Mao Zedong proposed “learning from the Soviet Union” and taking our own path more suited to China. This was the path of Chinese industrialization, which began to answer this problem. But due to interruptions by erroneous leftist thought, such as the Great Leap Forward Movement and the Cultural Revolution, these deviations from the path caused theory to become divorced from practice, and the exploration of socialism suffered a great setback. The Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee broke through the ideological barriers of the “two whatevers,”* restored order among the chaos, and established the correct path centered around the economy. “What is socialism? How do we realize socialism?” became the original problem of the reform era. On his tour of southern China in early 1992, Deng Xiaoping said: The question of whether to have more planning or more market is not a fundamental difference between socialism and capitalism. From then on the train of Chinese socialist modernization has been in the high-speed era, and reform and opening up has entered a new historical stage. History has chosen this path, and history will prove that this is the correct path that fits China’s situation and will make the people prosperous and nation strong.

In realizing the Chinese Dream, the Chinese spirit must be upheld — this is the spirit of the nation that runs on patriotism and the spirit of the era that is driven by reform and innovation. Patriotism is the call to fight

* Whatever Mao Zedong said is right, and whatever Mao stipulated must not be changed. — *Tr.*

for the great rejuvenation of China, the spiritual bond that ties together the children of China, and the spiritual force behind jointly building a beautiful home. Reform and innovation means breaking through outmoded ways of thinking and boldly exploring new concepts. It is the mission of not willing to fall behind and striving to get ahead, and the spirit of steadfastly working to strengthen ourselves. The Chinese spirit is the spirit of rejuvenating and strengthening the country that combines the hearts and efforts of the multitudes, “the vigor and vitality” of the nation.

To realize the Chinese Dream, the forces of China must be combined — that is, the force of great unity of all ethnic groups of China. The Chinese Dream encompasses the overall interests of the Chinese people and is the joint wish of all of the children of China. History and reality tell us that the future and fate of every person is intimately tied to the future and fate of his country and nation. Just as little rivers combine to form the vast sea and tiny grains of sand can build a majestic castle, real deeds rather than empty talk are what will shore up the nation, and the wisdom and hard work of 1.3 billion people will join to form an indomitable force.

We must persist in peaceful development to realize the Chinese Dream. The dream of rejuvenating China is the dream of washing away 170 years of humiliation and rising tall amidst the great nations of the world. It is not the dream of hegemony held by rising foreign powers over a century ago. Just as Xi Jinping said on a visit to France, “Napoleon once said that China is a sleeping lion, and when this lion wakes, the world will tremble. The Chinese lion has already awoken, but it is a gentle, agreeable, sociable lion.” The Chinese Dream is a dream of peace, development, cooperation, and win-win. We will not only strive to develop ourselves, but also stress our responsibility and contributions to the world. We will not only enrich the Chinese people, but also the people of the world. A strong China brings more opportunities for the world, not threats. In the end, realizing the Chinese Dream will greatly promote world peace, stability, and development. It will also provide lessons to draw on for other developing nations of the world on their own paths to modernization.

Imagery and Metaphors

We will continue in the right direction and press ahead with reform and opening up. We dare to chew the tough bones and navigate the rough waters. We must have the courage to break down the barriers of old notions and the fences of interest groups.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping during his inspection visit to Guangdong Province, December 7-11, 2012*

Daring to Chew the Tough Bones and Navigate the Rough Waters

— *Reform means breaking down the barriers of
old notions and the fences of interest groups*

The Chinese equivalent of “tough bone” is frequently used to symbolize a formidable task. Mao Zedong used the expression in his work “On Protracted War”: “In attacking an enemy force on the move, if we strike too early, we expose ourselves and give the enemy a chance to prepare, and if we strike too late, the enemy may have encamped and concentrated its forces, presenting us with a hard nut to crack*.” The Chinese equivalent of “rough waters” is a general reference to rocky areas in rivers where the water is shallow and the current swift, and thus dangerous for ships to navigate. The term is currently used as a metonymy for challenging perilous situations.

After the 18th CPC National Congress, Xi Jinping conducted his first field inspection in Guangdong Province, the bellwether of China’s reform and opening-up policy. He used the familiar images of “tough bones” and “rough waters” to remind everybody that many new challenges await the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics during the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, especially in terms of driving reform to a deeper level.

When China first launched its reform and opening-up policy, the roadblocks of reform were primarily ideological in nature. Some people pointed to Stalin as the touchstone of true socialism, and relegated the household responsibility system with remuneration linked to output, special economic zones, commodity economy, and so forth to the

* Literally “a tough bone to chew.” — *Tr.*

preserve of capitalism. But such measures stimulated rapid economic growth and benefited all strata of society. As such, once the ideological shackles of the “socialism vs. capitalism” debate were removed, reform proved to be an inexorable force.

China has wrought remarkable achievements over more than three decades of reform and opening up. A sound trajectory has been charted, and a viable blueprint is complete. This blueprint involves tackling the easy issues before the difficult ones, pursuing progressive reform by “wading across the river by feeling for the stones,” and seeking progress while holding on to China’s heritage. China has not followed in the footsteps of certain Eastern European nations and the former Soviet Union by attempting to reform the economy by means of so-called “shock therapy.” No — in the course of carrying out reform, China has sought to preserve social stability while promoting economic prosperity and social progress.

As the reforms deepen, however, there will doubtless be difficulty. “The easy part of the job has been done to the satisfaction of all. What is left are tough bones that are hard to chew.” Virtually all of the rocks that might be felt in the knee-deep water have already been discovered. The rocks that remain are the long-abiding struggles that have accumulated in areas that are hard to reach. In other words, China has entered the deep, perilous waters of reform. In addition, China’s accelerated development has ushered in greater achievements, and this has only raised the people’s expectations. All of this is putting our courage and vision to the test as we seek to further reform. Given the urgency of the situation, we must heed the call of the hour and the voice of the people by “daring to chew the tough bones and navigate the rough waters.”

The call to reform is a summons to profound revolution. Reform brings with it an intense clash of ideas and demands a reorientation of people’s interests. This is why courage and resolve are indispensable. There have been signs of ossification in the interest relationships that have formed throughout the last thirty years of reform. In particular, certain groups have sought to capitalize on loopholes in the market

economy and legal system for their own private gain. Their aversion to having their interests shifted has created a barrier for reform. Today, at a new starting point in history, we must set sail once again. We must face the difficulties head-on and courageously rise to the challenges set before us. We must break through the barriers and perils of intractable interests to ensure that more fruits of reform and development might be shared by the people in a fairer way. That way, the glorious light of equity and justice might shine upon the great nation of China.

It will no longer do to settle for merely localized, stopgap, or piecemeal reforms, as such reforms are suited neither to the needs of today nor the expectations of the people. We are beleaguered today with issues that our predecessors never faced — issues that cannot be bypassed or avoided. Comprehensive and deep reform is now a non-negotiable. The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee sounded forth the rallying call for comprehensively deepening reform. The key now lies in implementation. “When there are many to gather firewood, the fire burns high.” Driving deeper, all-around reform calls for maintaining the iron determination and faith of the CPC as well as marshaling the efforts of the whole society, especially when it comes to fostering the pioneering spirit at the grassroots level. The history of China’s policy of reform and opening up offers telling evidence that the effective tools of revolutionary reform are to be found among the masses.

“Tough bones” are hard on the teeth and “rough waters” are difficult to navigate. When faced with hardship, danger, and challenge, we must not only “have the nerve” to face them but also “have the mind” to solve them; we need both courage and wisdom. This is, to put it in concrete terms, the road to comprehensive and deeper reform: “To progress steadily means to stay on course and proceed in safety, and, more importantly, make no fatal mistakes.”

The success of China’s policy of reform and opening up has proven that the kind of reform that China needs today is continuous and progressive, moving from the shallow to the deep and from the simple

to the demanding. The political upheaval of Eastern Europe is heuristic insofar as it shows that extreme forms of “shock therapy” introduced in the name of “reform” are altogether ill-suited to advancement in China. China, as a large country, must continue “chewing tough bones” and “navigating rough waters” by leading example, encouraging innovation at the grassroots level, and strategically “moving from individual points to surface application.” We cannot afford to take the old path of a rigid closed-door policy, nor an erroneous path by abandoning socialism.

With respect to actual and potential issues that loom along the road to reform, we must overcome every obstacle one by one and solve every issue one by one. We must have the courage to act and the wisdom to respond in order to ensure that we advance with “swift hooves and a steady gait.”

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the first meeting of the Central Leading Group for Deepening Overall Reform, January 22, 2014*

Swift Hooves and a Steady Gait

— *Dialectic thinking for comprehensively deepening reforms*

The Chinese phrase meaning “swift hooves and a steady gait” literally denotes the quick, steady gallop of a horse. It is now used as a metaphor for development that is swift and steady. One of the main reasons that Deng Xiaoping was able to achieve remarkable results in leading China’s policy of reform and opening up is that he clung to the idea that one must “be bold, take a confident step.” In a similar vein, Xi Jinping has spoken of the need to move with “swift hooves and a steady gait” when it comes to furthering all-around reforms. He was getting at the idea that comprehensive and deep reform requires a sense of urgency; we must take the bull by the horns and focus on depth as opposed to breadth. In addition, there should be only “one footprint for every step.” In other words, the policy of reform must remain stable and sustainable in order to avoid losing control of the reins.

A strategic roadmap and timetable for the comprehensive deepening of reform were adumbrated at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee. The plan includes building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2021 — the centenary of the founding of the CPC — and establishing a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious by 2049 — the centenary of the People’s Republic of China. This demands that we must muster all our strength and ramp up the pace of reform in terms of both ideology and application.

Judging from the global landscape today, China is poised before a very unique opportunity for development. Meanwhile, China is facing massive external pressure as the global economy loses steam, while

dealing with increasingly pointed structural conflicts with developed nations and a number of neighboring countries. We urgently need to pick up the pace of reform to keep up with global development. Here at home, China has waded into the deep waters of reform. The pressing issues of the hour are the “tough bones” that are hard on the teeth as well as the new issues and conflicts that have cropped up in the course of China’s reform and development. Reform has now reached the point of no return: We have no choice but to forge ahead. In the words of the Chinese adage, “one knows that tigers lurk in the mountains, yet he goes there undeterred.” Even when the year 2021 rolls around and we have realized our preliminary objective of establishing a moderately prosperous society, it shall not be time to let up. We must ride onward with all our might.

Once the bow is drawn, the arrow cannot turn back; the hooves of reform must move with all dispatch. But there will be resistance. It is inevitable that reforms will chafe against the interests of certain individuals or departments. If reforms are slackened or falter as a result of the pushback of those with vested interests, then the reforms run the risk of being truncated and all may come to naught. For instance, when the CPC initially put forward its objectives and stipulations for the current administrative reforms, a number of authorities did not want to hand over their respective powers. In response, the CPC refused to relax its commitment to “streamline administration and delegate more power to lower-level governments or social organizations” and continued to drive its “self-revolutionary” reforms at full speed ahead. On top of the administrative approval system reforms in 2013, the following year another 200-plus items requiring administrative approval were removed or transferred to lower-level governments or social organizations. The masses applauded the unabated forward push of administrative reform.

The current reforms are by no means a reenactment of the Great Leap Forward, as they are being carried out steadily with only “one footprint for each step.” The Great Leap Forward we experienced in the late 1950s set the national economy on the brink of total collapse. This

is an error we cannot afford to repeat. The furtherance of all-around reform is an uphill battle. The waters are perilous, and storms must be weathered. We must remain on an even keel. We cannot recklessly barrel ahead or take another “great leap forward.” We must “overcome every obstacle one by one and solve every issue one by one.” We must regroup at every step and seek overall victory in the miniature victories that happen along the way. We must not buy into the delusion that one will beef up after eating a single meal. We must keep a steady pace as many of us ride on at full tilt.

There is another reason why we need to maintain a “steady gait” in furthering comprehensive reform: China is at a very unusual stage of development. Experience shows us that the road of development is littered with traps along the stretch wherein per capita GDP falls between US\$ 3,000 and 10,000. This period is a sensitive one in which social tensions abound and rough terrain is a given. If social problems and tensions are not dealt with in the right manner, then a single misstep can end up costing the entire game and the mission will fail on the eve of success. This is where China now finds itself. China is inundated with a whole host of social issues and tensions, society is undergoing deep-seated structural change, and new interest claims are cropping up by the day. Thus, it is necessary that we set out to be “swift” and seek to hold the line “steady.” We must learn to breathe as we ride on at such a high speed, in order that the forward movement of our economy and society might be both sound and swift.

Riding atop swiftly moving hooves is exciting, which is all the more reason why the gait needs to be steady. “Swift hooves” with an “unsteady gait” will result in tumbling riders and toppled horses. Conversely, a “steady gait” with “sluggish hooves” will result in lost opportunities or an incomplete mission. “Swift hooves and a steady gait” represents the correct methodology and pacing for carrying out comprehensive and deep reform in accordance with the principles of dialectical materialism.

We must enhance checks and supervision over the exercise of power, make sure that power is “caged” by the system, and form a punishment mechanism to deter corruption, a warning mechanism to prevent corruption and a guarantee mechanism to curb corruption.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Second Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, January 22, 2013*

Power Must Be “Caged” by the System

— *Instituting a robust system of checks and supervision for restraining power*

A cage is a practical implement that is used to hold objects or confine animals. The term is used in Chinese to connote restraints, strictures, limitations and the like. A “prisoner’s cage,” for instance, is another way to refer to a jail cell in Chinese. Xi Jinping describes a system in terms of a “cage” in order to drive home the idea that the system places power under checks and supervision — particularly when such power is abused.

Individuals throughout history have had a profound understanding of “power.” For instance, the modern British thinker Lord Acton famously said, “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Likewise, the French sociologist Montesquieu made the remark that all power, if left unchecked, will result in corruption.

China as a nation has historically placed a high premium on official rank and the rule of man as opposed to the rule of law. As a rule of thumb, Chinese are quite at home with categories such as “face” and “guanxi” (lit., “relationships”), and are comfortable when business is handled according to unspoken rules. The notion that power trumps the law is deeply embedded in the Chinese psyche, as is the idea that officials are to be heeded instead of the law. Despite its more than thirty years of reform and opening up, China has had a difficult time ridding itself of these traditional modes of thinking. This, on top of an inchoate system of checks and supervision for restraining power, is the reason why power continues to be abused even today. Furthermore, a society that undermines the authority of law-based governance inevitably becomes a hotbed of corruption. In many places and domains, shady practices and corruption remain intractable even after repeated crackdowns; new cases

of corruption pop up constantly.

Thus, it is imperative that we deal with corruption in the abuse of power by undergirding these institutional “cages.” As Deng Xiaoping astutely remarked: “If these systems are sound, they can place restraints on the actions of bad people; if they are unsound, they may hamper the efforts of good people or indeed, in certain cases, may push them in the wrong direction.” Since it adopted the policy of reform and opening up, the CPC has remained committed to exploring how it might enhance the system as well as education and prevention programs. The Party has sought to institute a system of checks and balances for restraining power as well as eliminating or curbing slipups on the part of Party officials. Still, many blind spots remain in institution-building — a clear reminder that the practical efforts to “‘cage’ power with the system” need to be ramped up.

Deng Xiaoping’s remarks also indicate that a system cannot give full play to its role as enclosure unless it is sound — that is, a scientifically formulated system that is oriented around necessity, relevance, and feasibility. The establishment must focus on the key issues, key points, and key links. In terms of institution-building at present, the key is to “enhance checks and supervision over the exercise of power,” and setting in place “a punishment mechanism to deter corruption, a warning mechanism to prevent corruption and a guarantee mechanism to curb corruption” for all Party officials.

The institution of a robust system for the supervision of power must be fitted to the prevailing conditions in China. We must not mechanically copy Western paradigms and enact a “separation of powers” among the legislative, executive, and judicial organs. To the contrary, we must ensure that there is mutual collaboration as well as checks and balances among the policy-making, executive, and supervising powers, that is, one power is used to hold another power in check. The first fundamental principle is to uphold the Party leadership; the second is to uphold the authority of the Constitution; and the third is to let the people be the master of their country. The people are entitled to have the right to know, to express, to

take part in and to supervise state affairs.

But setting up a sound institution *per se* is not going to cut it. The institution must be implemented in a sound manner. In reality, it is often not that we lack a sound institution, but rather that we pay it short shrift by failing to implement it well. Therefore, when it comes to enhancing institution-building, it is necessary that we give attention to both the system as well as its implementation. The two must be addressed in tandem, and the solutions offered must target specific problems.

Implementing the system in a satisfactory manner requires raising awareness concerning laws and regulations among the general public. Indeed, raising awareness concerning law and regulations among the general public is what makes it possible to implement the system adeptly and yield satisfactory results. Party officials and government agencies ought to set an example in this respect and take the lead in complying with laws, rules, and regulatory requirements. They should continuously endeavor to make improvements to the institutional mechanisms and free the system from power interference.

“‘Caging’ power by the system” is an effective prescription that combats the symptoms and causes of corruption with disciplinary and preventative means. It is a difficult and protracted campaign requiring considerable mental preparation. That being said, the Party must be clear-headed and see the task through to its completion with the determination to “leave marks on stone and iron,” so that the people might behold its fruit.

We must never do away with China's great cultural legacy. On the contrary, we must carry on and foster our heritage, as it represents the "root" and "soul" of Chinese nation. If the "root" and "soul" are lost, then we are left without a foundation on which to stand.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping during his inspection visit to Guangdong Province, December 7-11, 2012*

The “Root” and “Soul” of the Chinese Nation

— *Preserving and fostering China’s great cultural heritage*

The words “root” and “soul” occur frequently in the Chinese language. The former is another way of describing an object’s origin, and the latter refers to the spirit or essence of an entity, whether it be an individual person or entire state or nation. Xi Jinping has used the words “root” and “soul” to drive home the vital importance of preserving and fostering China’s great cultural legacy in relation to national development and rejuvenation.

The Chinese people have created a rich and expansive culture over more than five thousand years of history. Chinese culture serves as a repository of the people’s deepest spiritual pursuits. It codifies the spiritual genotype of the Chinese people, and it is the most distinctive emblem of the Chinese spirit. China’s traditional culture has provided the vital nourishment for its people to live and thrive. The culture has survived generation upon generation of dynastic change and foreign invasion, and stands today as the only unbroken civilization in the history of mankind.

Chinese culture is the very lifeblood of its people. For instance, in terms of family relations, “filial piety is the first of all virtues” and “a harmonious family shall prosper in all things.” In terms of society, honesty, trustworthiness, and benevolence toward one’s fellow man are highly desired traits. In terms of the state, patriotism and a focus on the public interest are noble pursuits. In terms of nature, emphasis is put on maintaining reverence and harmony. In terms of personal character, stress is given to integrity and fraternal love. Chinese culture has begotten many generations of Chinese offspring, and its impact has been felt

across all of East Asia and the rest of the world.

The great cultural legacy of the Chinese people is more than just our “root” and “soul.” It is a source of strength that has proven indispensable in the development of world civilization. That is the confidence that we ought to bring to the table as we further China’s cultural legacy. That said, however, Chinese culture has obviously fallen on hard times. During the modern era, Western invasion shattered China’s sense of national pride. Men of vision in China began to take notice of China’s shortcomings, which set the stage for a new trend of learning from the West. Before long, full-fledged Western studies became the order of the day.

In the midst of such change, some Chinese began to eye their own culture with skepticism, and for a time Chinese studies were replaced by all things Western. With the founding of the People’s Republic of China, China once again regained faith in itself and came to appreciate the value of its traditional culture. During the Cultural Revolution, however, the campaign to “destroy the Four Olds” (i.e., old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits) cast a dark shadow over the fate of Chinese culture. Later, order was re-established and Chinese culture emerged intact when China adopted its policy of reform and opening up. Nevertheless, the ideological winds of Western culture along with a massive influx of foreign commerce caused some to succumb again to a disoriented state. A wave of blind xenophilia swept through the land. Even today, there are people who continue to be fixated on and ideologically tethered to things Western.

If we look down upon our culture and fail to embrace and develop it, we will fall into peril. This will strip us of our spiritual bearings and may even pose a threat to national security. In the modern world, “cultural soft power” and “cultural smart power” have become important staples in a nation’s political resources and are playing an increasingly important role in foreign relations. Currently, international competition is present not only in terms of the economy and military but also in terms of culture. The world as we know it is characterized by an intense ongoing bout of cultural tug-of-war. The Western world, with the U.S. at its helm,

is seeping into Chinese culture in all kinds of ways. If we do not carefully preserve and foster China's cultural legacy, it will be difficult to maintain resilience in the current zeitgeist, and the great rejuvenation of China will be deprived of its "root" and "soul." Thus, the preservation of China's cultural legacy is of urgent necessity for the sake of the development and rejuvenation of China.

Preserving and fostering China's cultural heritage is a systematic endeavor. It requires the joint efforts of all Chinese offspring, including those overseas. We must believe in our culture, for without such confidence we will have neither the presence of mind nor the motivation to carry it forward. Indeed, it is only with an ample measure of confidence in our national culture that we can remain conscientious in thought and action and effectively carry on China's great cultural legacy.

Preserving and fostering China's cultural heritage also demands a certain degree of cultural introspection. Chinese culture is not perfect. It is admittedly a work in progress. It must remain in step with the times. It needs to be critically engaged. It needs to be more open with respect to assimilating the positive elements of other cultures. In a word, it needs to be confident but not conceited; unassuming but not self-degrading. The Chinese people have furnished a culture with a remarkably long history. There is no question, then, that amid all of the cultural exchange, amalgamation, and even confrontation, China can usher in a new era of cultural virtue as we follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

By nailing down our ideals and convictions, we can effectively address the “master switch” issues involving one’s worldview, life outlook and value system. But if the “master switch” issues remain unresolved, then we are bound to go off the rails.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping while providing guidance to a Conduct Review Meeting for the Hebei Provincial Party Standing Committee, September 23-25, 2013*

Nailing Down the “Master Switch”

— *The core issue of ideals and convictions*

The term “master switch” is technological in nature. It refers to the switch that controls the main power source or supply line. When the master switch is on, the entire system runs as it should. But if the master switch is not set up properly, then the entire operating system will be impaired. In Chinese, the phrase “master switch” is often used metaphorically to refer to one’s guiding ideology.

On a number of occasions, Xi Jinping has spoken of “master switch” issues in terms of establishing political ideologies, work styles, anti-corruption agendas, and the like. His purpose is to drive home the importance of calibrating a proper view with respect to the world, life, and values. So long as a Party-member-official’s take on the world, life, and values is sound, then his or her ideology, work style, and conduct will be sound; this is especially true when the individual is in a position of leadership. But when such an official’s take on the world, life, and values goes awry, then his or her ideology, work style, and conduct will inevitably follow suit — causing great detriment to the Party and state.

So why refer to one’s worldview, life outlook and value system as the “master switch”? A worldview is about how one fundamentally perceives the world, and that finds expression in how one views life and values. The way in which a person views life and values is actually determined by what kind of worldview he or she posits. The CPC, which has embraced historical materialism of Marxism as its worldview, is clear in its conviction that a society’s existence determines its consciousness and that the people are the creators of history. This belief has played itself out in a full panoply of ideals, convictions, and spiritual tenets that constitute

the Party's basic outlook on life and values, expressed in catchphrases such as "the Party functions for the common good, rule is administered for the people"; "serve the people wholeheartedly"; "be the first to bear hardship and the last to enjoy comfort"; and "self-reliance and persistent work." When taken as a whole, one's worldview, life outlook, and values form a single unit, a system — the "master switch," as it were — that governs how one thinks and acts.

It is by setting up and nailing down these basic "master switch" convictions that generations of Party members continue to man the frontlines with such steely resolve. These convictions have enabled the Chinese people to work with one accord during the revolutionary period and the construction period alike, which is why China is moving forward with its present momentum. Indeed, the spirit, energy, and drive of China's development today have grown out of the right ideals and convictions.

For the most part, Party members and officials today have a fine grasp of "master switch" issues, but some continue to exhibit a shaky foundation, weak comprehension, low standards, and poor application of "master switch" issues. In particular, the long period of a peaceful environment under the rule of the Party and the growing tide of social pluralism have led a number of leading officials to "hang on the words of soothsayers and snub the common folk" against a backdrop of the deepening reform. They are spiritually bankrupt, given over to fortune-telling, the beseeching of deities, and a superstitious fascination with "*Qigong* gurus." Some believe that communism is merely an illusive fantasy. They are feeble in their convictions. They send their spouses, children, and money over to foreign nations, in order to "leave themselves a way out," and prepare to "jump ship." There are others whose hearts are enslaved to material things, worshipping at the altar of wealth, fame, and pleasure; they have no category for reverence, and they have no moral baseline. The list could go on. In all such instances, the heart of the problem lies in the "master switch."

When something goes wrong with the "master switch," then we

are bound to go off the rails: The self is given priority over the group, profit is valued over commitment, and pleasure precedes hard work. In moderate cases, one might pursue private gain at the expense of the public; in serious cases, one might pervert the law and end up bringing calamity upon the nation. For instance, consider media coverage of corruption scandals at the central and local levels. The moral slippage of these individuals followed from their failure to get a handle on the "master switch." They lost faith and became detached from the people. They threw caution to the wind and turned a blind eye to Party discipline and state law. In the end, they fell under the contempt of the Party and people.

In order to effectively resolve "master switch" issues, it is first of all imperative to resolve issues with a person's ideals and convictions. We must not lay aside our political faith. Party members and officials should read up in order to become well-versed in Marxist theory as well as the Party's nature, mission, and political philosophy. They should seek to lay a solid foundation by cultivating their sense of Party spirit as well as their awareness of the mission. Second, they should maintain a reverential disposition. As the ancients put it, "I reflect on myself thrice a day." One must continue to undergird the "master switch" by evaluating his own thoughts and deeds and redressing his errors at the outset. Third, efforts must be ramped up in cracking down on unhealthy practices and corruption, and the authority of Party discipline and state law must be upheld. Lastly, Party members and officials must put their own hands to the plow and seek to engage with the people. As they serve the people, they should continue to calibrate their worldview, life outlook, and values — that is, the "master switch."

Seize every opportunity and occasion to help create an atmosphere in life and society that fosters socialist core values. Allow them to become as ubiquitous and timeless as the air we breathe.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the 13th collective study session of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee on February 24, 2014*

Core Values Are as Ubiquitous as the Air We Breathe

— *Create an atmosphere that fosters core values*

Air — what could be more familiar? Our very existence depends upon it. Xi Jinping compared our dependence on the air to the importance of socialist core values. These values should permeate place and time. They should be incorporated into our daily lives and welcomed into our hearts.

Socialist core values can be summarized as 12 phrases: prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony; freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law; patriotism, professionalism, integrity, and friendliness. They fit into three dimensions. Prosperity, democracy, civility, and harmony are goals that we need to work toward at the national level. Freedom, equality, justice, and the rule of law are values that serve to guide society. Patriotism, professionalism, integrity, and friendliness are values that set the standard for individual citizens. These values reflect socialist ideals and convictions; they carry on the essence of traditional Chinese culture. These values transcend time and embody the most common aspirations of the Chinese people.

Economic growth and material wealth are not the only indicators by which to judge the development and culture of a society. Perhaps even more telling are the ideological convictions and the moral consciousness of the people. China, in particular, wants to build socialism with Chinese characteristics, which entails a comprehensive “five-in-one” approach that focuses on economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological progress. Socialist core values are at the heart of this process. Without them, the building of socialism would run off course.

As transformation fully permeates society, balancing social interests has become more complicated, and people’s thinking has become more fluid. In this process, we have witnessed frequent incidents that wring

the heart. Some, pushed by greed, adulterate food or even add poisonous ingredients. Others, driven by fear of false accusations, refuse to help a stranger who has fallen down. People are less inclined to greet one another and more apt to keep their guard up. Each deviation from our social ethics is another strike against our moral bottom line. The chaos created by anomie and moral decline leaves us to wonder: What is really going on? While there is no dearth of explanations, the fundamental problem lies within our values. We need to recommit to our values and re-examine what they really are. In the words of Xi Jinping, we need to set the “master switch” for our worldview, life outlook, and value system. Socialist core values are the guiding ideology to set this “master switch.”

Socialist core values compose an ideological and theoretical system that is also a practical code of conduct. We need to use our senses to cultivate these values and apply our intelligence to put these values into action. Imbuing socialist core values with the timeless and ubiquitous qualities of air is no easy task. It requires that society work together as a whole. Most important, however, is that, one, government officials set a good example and, two, educate the public with subtle yet detailed efforts.

As a popular saying goes, people emulate their leaders. To implement socialist core values through leadership, talking loudly about values is not the answer. Rather, the better way is for those in leading positions to embody these values in their own lives, boldly take the lead, and work selflessly and diligently for the public interest, inspiring the people to emulate their work ethic. When government officials embody these values, society as a whole will become more harmonious.

Promoting socialist core values also requires subtle and detailed efforts. We must engage with the community by building connections between these values and the daily lives of the people, with the understanding that no detail is too petty to be overlooked. We need to highlight the simple acts of kindness that occur between ordinary people — their stories are the most persuasive. When socialist core values take root among the people, their impact becomes as ubiquitous and timeless as the air we breathe.

The rice bowls of the Chinese people must be firmly in our own hands. Our rice bowls should be filled mainly by Chinese crops.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Central Rural Work Conference,
December 23-24, 2013*

The Rice Bowls of the Chinese People Must Be Held by Themselves

— Ensuring food security and social stability

The rice bowl is indispensable in our daily lives, as we all have to eat. Xi Jinping used the humble rice bowl to illustrate just how important food security is to a large, developing country such as China. Food production has remained high for many years, yet that is all the more reason for us to remain vigilant about food security.

Chinese people often say, “Grain in the larder sets minds at rest,” and “A bumper crop bestows happiness on the land.” Food is a top priority in China, a country with a population of more than 1.3 billion people. Without a secure food supply, social stability and national development would not even be part of the conversation. In China, food security may be called the ballast stone that keeps social stability and national development on an even keel.

China cannot allow the recent, steady gains we have achieved in grain production to lull us into a false sense of security. We should not forget about the suffering caused by previous famines just because we have managed to recover. Rather, we should recognize that the issue of food security is a red line that would trigger terrible consequences were it ever to be compromised. The famine years of the early 1960s were not so long ago, and little more than twenty years have passed since the last of the food ration coupons were issued. Memories of those days have been etched into the hearts of many and should serve as a reminder to us all. That is the reason the CPC Central Committee has made the “three rural issues” and food production top priorities to ensure China’s food security.

There have been suggestions that food security is simply an economic issue: Food shortages can be addressed through trade on the international market in today's globalized world. Yet, this is a dangerous view. A quick look around the globe reveals that countries with stable societies are invariably those that maintain self-sufficiency in food. Those that are unable to produce enough to feed their own people suffer from domestic unrest and foreign pressure. The market economy enables us to increase food imports in order to adjust — to a certain degree — the agricultural structure and accelerate the modernization of our agricultural industry. We should never ease up on domestic food production. Depending on other nations to ensure our food security is not a viable option.

In the mid-1990s, the American scholar Lester Brown stirred up international controversy when he asked, "Who will feed China?" The core of his argument maintained that continued rapid industrialization would force China to rely heavily on food imports. He argued that China's inability to produce enough food to satisfy domestic demand would trigger a global food crisis.

Twenty years later, the government and people of China have proven Mr. Brown wrong. Not only have we achieved rapid economic development, we have become almost entirely self-sufficient in food production. This remarkable feat has greatly contributed to world peace and development. It is a retort to those in the West who may be biased against China.

China is experiencing rapid development and people's living standards are improving. The mix of food is changing. Demand for food is further expanding. We should never say that we have produced enough grain or allow our vigilance about food security to wane.

As the very foundation of agricultural production, arable land must be protected if China is to ensure food security. We must hold fast to the central government's decision to maintain "1.8 billion *mu* (120 million hectares) of arable land and 1.6 billion *mu* (107 million hectares) of land for grain growing." We must implement the regulations and policies that

the central authorities have instituted to resolve the “three rural issues,” and enhance our input in support of those policies.

A strong China cannot exist without a robust agricultural industry. A beautiful China cannot exist without a bustling countryside. A rich China cannot exist without prosperous rural communities. Only when these conditions have been met will the rice bowls of all Chinese people be firmly, steadily, and contentedly in their own hands.

Even when the “cake” has indeed become bigger, we must cut it fairly. The Chinese people have always had a perception that “inequality rather than want is the cause of trouble.” Based on continued development, we should do a better job of promoting fairness and justice, trying our best while being mindful of our limitations so that we can ensure people’s access to education, remunerable employment, health care, senior assistance, and housing.

— *Speech by Xi Jinping titled “Align Our Thinking with the Guidelines of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee,” published in People’s Daily, January 1, 2014*

“Baking a Cake” and “Cutting a Cake”

— *Keeping in mind both economic development and social equality*

Everyone is familiar with cake. Cutting one up and sharing it with friends and family is always a happy occasion. In modern Chinese, “baking a cake” is a metaphor for developing the economy; “cutting a cake” is a metaphor for distributing social wealth.

Xi Jinping used these analogies about cake to explain the importance of maintaining economic growth in order to create more social wealth. When we bake a bigger cake, we can cut it into bigger slices, thus laying a foundation for the material needs of the people. Xi Jinping’s analogy also expressed the need to promote a fair and just society, where the economic success brought about by reform and opening up is more equitably shared by all Chinese people, thus achieving the goal of making a bigger cake.

There is a saying in classical Chinese that highlights the importance of satisfying our basic physical needs: “Only when silos are filled with enough grain do people understand etiquette. Only when people are well-fed and well-clothed are they aware of honor and shame.” There is no doubt that China has achieved incredible economic growth since the launch of reform and opening up in 1978. Yet China still contends with a large population, a weak economic foundation, a shortage of natural resources, and lagging economic development. Areas where China has lagged behind can only be addressed through economic development. As people’s transition from simply having their basic needs met to enjoying a comparatively good standard of living, their desire for an even better quality of life has grown. This has put more requirements on economic development. Even though our “cake” is bigger than ever,

it pales in comparison to the "cakes" of developed countries. Moreover, the population of China is so large that even the most fairly divided "cake" would be cut into slices that were too small for one person to enjoy. China needs to work on baking a bigger "cake." We have a long journey ahead of us, but we cannot waver from the path that focuses on economic development.

According to another well-known Chinese saying, "Inequality rather than want is the cause of trouble." This means that unfairness is worse than poverty. In contemporary China, due attention should be paid to issues of equality and justice, for a great deal of unfair and unjust incidents still occur in our society. The growing gap between the rich and the poor is just one example. A small segment of the population exploits loopholes in our developing economy or resorts to questionable, sometimes even illegal, schemes to get rich quickly. Many of those who engage in this behavior are wealthy and callous, and are denounced by people.

China is in the primary stage of socialism. Many differences still exist in our society, including professional differences, regional differences, and urban-rural differences. The factors that have contributed to this are complicated, and few expect these differences to disappear soon. However, nothing could be more dangerously damaging to social stability and development, or be more disliked by the general public, than the social inequality created by those who follow the "law of the jungle." They use public office for private gain, exploit their monopolistic positions for the money-grab, and leverage their early successes for unfair competitive advantages down the road.

Inequality and injustice elicit a strong reaction from people, creating an atmosphere that, to a certain degree, incites people to lash out at those who have more money. Indeed, one only needs to open the newspaper to find examples of extreme behavior resulting from fermented anger. Injustice and inequality may be considered major social problems that affect Chinese development. As such, they need to be taken seriously. A failure to resolve these problems will make it difficult to maintain all the

success we have achieved through socialism. It could even cause social unrest.

Problems that have been caused by development ultimately hinge on development for their solution. While the primary task of the Party and government is to lead economic and social development, it also shoulders responsibility for defending social equality and justice. This requires following the resolutions of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee. We need to comprehensively deepen reforms and maintain our goal of continued development, while at the same time ensuring that all Chinese people live in a fair and just society.

We ought to find a balance between the bustling energy that drives social development and the order needed for society to function properly. Neither a pool of stagnant water nor a surging undercurrent is ideal.

— *Speech by Xi Jinping titled “Align Our Thinking with the Guidelines of the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee,” published in People’s Daily, January 1, 2014*

A Pool of Stagnant Water and a Surging Undercurrent

— *Ensuring the energy and order necessary for social development*

Stagnant water does not flow and is not replenished. This expression is often used as a metaphor to describe a society or organization that lacks vitality. An undercurrent refers to a rapid that surges beneath the surface of seemingly calm waters. Nowadays, the term is often used to describe disorder and chaos in society. Xi Jinping has used these expressions as metaphors to illustrate the need for vitality and order in social development.

When a society is compared to “a pool of stagnant water,” it means while that society may appear orderly, its social system has become rigid. Shackled by this rigid system, people lack the space to exercise their freedom and everything is predetermined to follow a fixed course. “Orderly” societies such as this lack vigor; as a result, they hardly progress or develop.

In the days of the centrally planned economy, Chinese society lacked vigor. Under the egalitarian scheme at that time, people had no incentive to be productive because competition was minimal and there was little reward for hard work. Society as a whole lacked forward momentum and had insufficient sources of innovation and creativity. Reform and opening up dismantled this system by unfettering social development and allowing social vitality to spring forth. It promoted the development and progress of Chinese society.

History and experiences have shown that social development requires vigor; it is a basic principle that cannot be breached. In order to create a robust society, we must reduce unnecessary regulation and interference in social life and activities. In order to continually regenerate the bustling energy in our society, we must provide the necessary policies, systems,

and legal protection. For a society such as China that has had to deal with excessive government control, it is necessary to deepen reforms to build a modern governance system that helps move society forward. With the unleashing of key components such as labor, knowledge, technology, management, and capital, vitality comes forth. When all sources of social wealth are allowed to flow freely, riches are created.

Vitality does not come from chaos, much less from a surging undercurrent. We need to encourage social vitality that develops in an orderly fashion and follows the rule of law. A lack of order and a surging undercurrent are not manifestations of vitality, but rather threats to the health and vigor of society. The development experience of other countries has shown that no nation has been able to develop and progress in a state of disorder. Disorder signifies chaos. Disorder implies danger. The social structure in China is undergoing significant adjustment and transformation. Thoughts and ideas have become increasingly diverse. Demands from different interest groups have grown all the more complex. If society has free rein to develop, without any consideration, it would result in social disorder. It would not only fail to promote social development, it would damage the progress made by Chinese society. All that has been achieved since reform and opening up could be irrevocably lost. Consequently, it is imperative to identify, manage, and mitigate “surging undercurrents.” We should not lower our guard or become complacent. Ignoring or disregarding the existence of any “undercurrents” is not the answer.

Neither “a pool of stagnant water” nor “a surging undercurrent” benefits social development. While a society that lacks vitality stagnates, one with “surging undercurrents” running through it creates so much chaos that it dispels any chance for development. Only those societies that maintain order and bustling energy can continue to progress and develop — this is what building socialism with Chinese characteristics seeks to do.

Building a harmonious society that is orderly and robust requires aligning with the spirit of the Third and Fourth Plenary Sessions of the

18th CPC Central Committee and comprehensively deepening reforms. It requires accelerating the process of governing by rule of law and pushing for swifter reforms in the political and administrative systems. It requires that we further streamline the administration and institute decentralization. We need to promote a governance system befitting a modern society, one that allows different social actors to assume their rightful role in social governance. Together, we will mobilize all aspects of society to strive to build a vibrant, harmonious society.

We need to improve urban construction, especially the quality of infrastructure, to form a functional system that is advanced, interconnected, and forward-thinking. We need to curb urban development that follows the “roll-out-dough” model.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping during his inspection visit in Beijing, February 26, 2014*

Curb Urban Development That Follows the “Roll-out-Dough” Model

— *Taking a scientific approach to urban construction*

Rolling out dough for noodles and pastries is a familiar sight in China. A rolling pin is used to roll out dough from the center so that it spreads outward evenly. Xi Jinping has used the term “roll out dough” to criticize an irrational trend in urban development: building up around the old city center and expanding outward to extend the city limits. The result of this trend has been increasingly larger cities that bring a host of urban problems. Xi Jinping emphasized the need to curb the “roll-out-dough” model of urban development while on an inspection tour in Beijing, a venue that lent great weight to his concerns.

The “roll-out-dough” model of urban development may produce larger, more awe-inspiring cities, but it also brings about serious urban problems. For example, cities are so large and services are so centralized that urban populations have become extremely dense. Urban public infrastructure is overwhelmed and public resources are in short supply. The consequences of this urban sprawl include traffic congestion, environmental pollution, skewed housing prices, and a rising cost of living. These problems have taken a particularly heavy toll on megacities, such as Beijing. The “roll-out-dough” model of urban development has made livable cities unlivable and made urban development unsustainable.

How should we build and develop modern cities? Chinese have been exploring this question since the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. With little first-hand experience building modern cities, we have had to look abroad for answers. Many of our cities still bear the mark of Soviet-era architecture from the 1950s and 1960s.

After the adoption of the reform and opening up strategy in 1978, rapid economic growth was accompanied by the continued expansion of Chinese cities. We looked to the West for inspiration and gradually accepted an urban development model that depended on the construction of megacities to lead economic growth. Yet, we had overlooked the state of our own country by not taking into consideration our large population and relatively low-end industrial structure. Cities have indeed become bigger, but infrastructure and public services have not been able to keep up, resulting in one urban problem after another.

The notion held by many leading officials that bigger is better and foreign things are more desirable led to unchecked urban sprawl. Some local leaders built up their careers by focusing on bigger, newer, and more foreign-leaning ideas in urban planning and construction, with little regard for reality. Increasingly larger cities were created by the wanton ambition and vanity of some leaders. For the most part, there are historical and practical reasons that Chinese cities, especially big cities, follow the "roll-out-dough" model of development.

In order to curb urban sprawl, city managers need to abandon the erroneous ideas of promoting large building projects and pursuing anything foreign just to chalk up points in their career. They need to stop making blind comparisons and start living in reality. Bigger cities and taller buildings are not the equivalent of good urban planning. Instead, the focus should be on building up needed urban infrastructure. At the same time, the criteria used to assess the achievements of officials should be reexamined. Cities should not simply be judged by their size and appearance. We need to enact institutions to put an end to this impulse for blind urban expansion.

Curbing the "roll-out-dough" model of urban development also requires that we adhere to scientific urban planning and stop following the whims of officials. Good urban planning considers future needs and then lays the groundwork for future development. Nevertheless, urban development should address real-world conditions. It should not be divorced from reality or blindly imitate the experience of other countries.

Once a scientifically vetted plan for urban development has been determined, the blueprints should be followed through to completion. Of course, proper adjustments should be made to the plan as the requirements for urban development change, but care should be taken not to follow the whims of officials to alter city plans.

As China enjoys continued economic growth, social stability, and prosperity, it is difficult to avoid the impulse for urban expansion. In order to prevent the “roll-out-dough” model of development, we must commit to an epic undertaking that requires an appreciation of urban aesthetics to better people’s lives. It tests the wisdom of city managers and requires the concerted efforts of every citizen.

We want blue waters and green hills, but we also want mountains of gold and silver. We would rather live in the green hills than the mountains of gold. For blue waters and green hills are mountains of gold and silver. We must never sacrifice our environment for the sake of temporary economic growth.

— *Comment made by Xi Jinping during a question and answer period after his speech at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan, September 7, 2013*

Blue Waters and Green Hills, Mountains of Gold and Silver

— *Environmental protection and economic growth
reinforce and transform each other*

Back in 2006, while still Party Secretary of Zhejiang Province, Xi Jinping elaborated at length about the dialectical relationship between environmental protection and economic development. And since the 18th CPC National Congress, he has seized many opportunities to emphasize, “Blue waters and green hills are mountains of gold and silver.” He uses this analogy to explain the symbiotic relationship between the environment and the economy, emphasizing that the two are not in direct conflict, but rather reinforce and transform each other.

After more than thirty years of reform and opening up, the idea that “development is of overriding importance” has become very familiar to us. Everyone, from our leaders to the person on the street, realizes the importance of “mountains of gold and silver.” Without a solid material base, a nation cannot throw off the yoke of poverty and backwardness. People are helpless to improve their quality of life. China is a large developing country with a population of 1.3 billion people, yet the reality is that we are still in the primary stage of socialism. Many people still live below the poverty line, and the gap between urban and rural development is still wide. China has become the world’s second largest economy as measured by total GDP, but per capita GDP is still in the middle of world rankings. Economic development is beset with a host of problems that are closely connected to our daily lives, including health care, employment, education, and care for the aged. If we are to solve these problems, we must rely on development. It will require a material

base, it will require investment, and it will require “mountains of gold and silver.”

While promoting development is important, for far too long economic growth and environmental protection have been considered mutually exclusive in many places. Some people still stick to the logic, “productivity now, environmental protection later.” Others simply ignore the very idea of sustainable development and disregard society’s best interests. They are content to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, squander the world we have been given, and leave future generations with nothing. This thinking has exacted a heavy price, exhausting natural resources, destroying the environment, and sparking energy crises. It has become a huge obstacle to further economic development in China. Nature has its own rules for creating energy reserves and sustaining a clean environment. To try to force or break those rules would cause irreversible damage. If we insist on “productivity now,” the time for environmental protection will have slipped through our fingers. If we do not live in harmony with Nature and respect natural laws, we will be on the receiving end of Nature’s anger. As Engels warned: “Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us.” We cannot survive without “blue waters and green hills.”

The level of PM 2.5 in our air has become a global topic. The environmental crisis requires the attention of every person in China. We do not want to pit development against the environment. We are not pursuing modernization only to live under dark skies, where there is no fresh air to breathe, and no clean water to drink.

People have come to a consensus about the real threat to the environment and the need to find ways to protect it. As a people, we need to rethink how best to integrate the efforts of government at the macro level with the actions of individuals at the micro level. At the same time, we should recognize that pursuing prosperity at the price of the environment has been a global problem. From the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, developed countries in the

West faced similar worries about environmental pollution. They, too, confronted the embarrassment of open sewers and hazy skies. After all, is not that the reason London came to be called “the city of fog?” Hazy skies began to hover over the United States in the 1940s. Americans endured more than two decades of smog until 1970, when the Clean Air Act was unveiled. It also took Londoners more than twenty years of rethinking policies and correcting past mistakes before they once again “saw the light of day.” Therefore, we must fully recognize the huge investment of time required to take on such a difficult problem. Environmental protection is not just an uphill battle; it is a protracted war. We must remain steadfast and patient in order to fight it.

Environmental protection and economic growth are not diametrically opposed, but rather are representatives of dialectical unity. Fundamentally, it requires a shift from a traditional resource-driven economy to an innovation-driven model at every level of local government. More importantly, it requires that we refrain from racing down a path with no recollection of our destination. If we think in terms of our quality of life, blue waters and green hills truly are mountains of gold and silver. As Xi Jinping said: “Protecting the environment equates to protecting productivity and ... improving the environment also equates to developing productivity.” Chinese proverbs also remind us, “One need not worry about firewood while the green hills still stand,” and “Evergreens are money trees, clean water is the fount of wealth.” In other words, blue waters and green hills can reinforce economic development and turn into mountains of gold and silver. As we see many places successfully pursue prosperity and environmental protection, we remain hopeful for the future.

The world community also expects a continuously improved and expanded China-US relationship. Good China-US cooperation will serve as a ballast stone for global stability and a booster for world peace.

— *Comments made by Xi Jinping during a meeting with U.S. President Obama, June 7, 2013*

“Ballast Stones” and “Boosters”

— *Working together to safeguard global peace and stability*

Xi Jinping has made frequent reference to “ballast stones” and “boosters” when discussing foreign relations. On February 14, 2012, while still vice president, he attended a forum for Chinese and American entrepreneurs as part of his visit to the United States. He told the attendees, “Strengthened economic and trade ties function as ‘ballast stones’ and ‘boosters’ in bilateral relations.” On January 25, 2013, during a meeting with Natsuo Yamaguchi, leader of Japan’s New Komeito Party, Xi Jinping said: “The facts have proven that the four political documents between our two countries have been the ballast stone in Sino-Japanese relations. We should continue to abide by them.”

In the past, ships often had to sail with empty cargo holds. After cargo was unloaded, the ship’s center of gravity rose above the water level, which made it easier for the ship to capsize. In order to stay upright, the ship would carry ballast stones that could be dumped when the ship took on more cargo. While modern, ocean-going freighters usually sail with full cargo holds, they still need to carry “ballast stones.” No longer composed of real stones, the modern-day equivalent is forged out of cast iron to fit a universal standard. In Chinese, “ballast stone” is often used to describe a guarantee that will facilitate healthy progress and development.

A “booster” is a technical term for a propulsion device that is used during launches. Boosters are rocket engines that help guided missiles and spacecraft take off quickly and accelerate to a predetermined flight speed. A “booster” is a common term that is used to describe a key factor that takes on the role of promoting

and spurring development. Development requires "ballast stones" to maintain stability, but it also needs "boosters" to push it forward and advance.

Xi Jinping has used "ballast stones" and "boosters" to illustrate the importance of economic and trade ties in the development of Sino-American relations. They are the foundation of stability and the driving force pushing for greater development in bilateral relations. Xi Jinping has also used these metaphors to describe the important role that friendship and cooperation between China and the United States play in facilitating world peace and development. China and the United States are committed to cooperation not confrontation. This is not only the basis for safeguarding global stability, but also the impetus for promoting world peace and development.

Xi Jinping also uses "ballast stones" to illustrate the special importance of the "four political documents" in developing Sino-Japanese relations. The "four political documents" are: the Joint Communiqué on the Normalization of Diplomatic Relations between China and Japan, which was issued when the two countries resumed diplomatic relations in 1972; the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between China and Japan, which was signed in 1978; the China-Japan Joint Declaration, which was issued in 1998; and the Joint Statement on Promoting a Mutually Beneficial Relationship Based on Common Strategic Interests, which was issued in 2008. These four political documents respect history, acknowledge Japanese aggression against China, and recognize disputes about territorial issues between the two countries. These documents are not only the "ballast stones" that maintain friendly relations between China and Japan; they are the "boosters" that drive Sino-Japanese relations forward. Adherence to these four political documents can safeguard and promote the development of bilateral relations; however, a failure to comply with them would undermine Sino-Japanese relations.

The clever use of metaphors when speaking "Chinese" to foreigners is a hallmark of Xi Jinping's linguistic style. Here, he used

“ballast stones” and “boosters” to illustrate the basic ideas, principles, and positions that China abides by when conducting foreign relations. These metaphors are concise and vivid, yet simple and easy to understand.

China will commit itself to building a cross-Pacific regional cooperation framework that benefits all parties. The vast Pacific is free of natural barriers, and we should not erect any man-made ones. We should let APEC lead and coordinate our actions, and uphold the approach of openness, inclusiveness and mutual benefit. We should enhance coordination on macroeconomic policies and regional free trade arrangements, promote regional integration, and avoid the Spaghetti Bowl effect, so as to build closer partnerships across the Pacific and jointly pursue long-term development of Asia Pacific.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the APEC CEO Summit, October 7, 2013*

Guarding Against the Spaghetti Bowl Effect

— *Bolstering cooperative relations in the Asia-Pacific region*

The American economist Jagdish Bhagwati first coined the phrase “spaghetti bowl effect” in his 1995 article “US Trade Policy.” It refers to bilateral free trade agreements and regional trade agreements (“preferential trade agreements” or PTAs) leading to different preferential treatments and country-of-origin provisions under various agreements that intertwine like a bowl of spaghetti and cannot be untangled or sorted out.

Xi Jinping used the economic term “spaghetti bowl effect” to show how the Asia-Pacific region needs to bolster cooperation to prevent unnecessary economic, political, and security conflicts from arising and impeding regional cooperation and development. This phrase also shows another feature of Xi Jinping’s speaking style: His adeptness at using language understood in the international community; his concise, insightful descriptions of complex global situations; and his bold, clear expression of China’s viewpoints and stances.

The Asia-Pacific region is now one of the most active and promising regions of the world — this was especially evident after the 2008 financial crisis. But the politics of the Asia-Pacific region are very complicated. Even though peace and development is on everyone’s mind at the moment, there is no lack of conflicts and clashes between countries in this region. Occasionally some countries experience internal political turmoil. This leads to a strong spaghetti bowl effect in the field of politics, and especially security, of the countries in the region. If the countries of the Asia-Pacific do not pay close attention to this, it will significantly affect peace and development in the region and even the world. This is why Xi Jinping emphasized guarding against the spaghetti

bowl effect.

In terms of economic and trade relations, in the Asia-Pacific region there are many trade agreements that exist simultaneously outside of APEC, and there surely are some conflicts among them. The political and security faction-forming of some countries has led to instability in the region. Furthermore, problems left over from history, geopolitics, and conflict of strategic interest such as territorial disputes have greatly complicated relations between Asia-Pacific countries, and the situation can change as quickly and mysteriously as the weather. This is why integrating the Asia-Pacific is such a challenging task.

To help stop the spaghetti bowl effect from arising, there needs to be more mutual trust and unity among the countries of the Asia-Pacific. Mutual trust is as valuable as sunshine is to life, and there is no future if Asia-Pacific countries are suspicious of and constantly on guard against each other. Peace and development in the Asia-Pacific must be built on the foundation of mutual trust among all countries. Just as Xi Jinping calls for, countries of the Asia-Pacific “cannot step on each other’s feet, let alone offset each other.” They must support each other, let everyone be winners, cooperate with each other, combine forces, and face challenges together. This is the only way to fully unlock the energy and potential of the Asia-Pacific region.

China has an ancient saying that “without rules, nothing can be accomplished.” To prevent the spaghetti bowl effect from arising and avoid possible conflicts, we must create rules for action that all countries must abide by. The rules under the APEC system are excellent examples of this. The regional rules created to protect the common interests of all countries in the Asia-Pacific region should be respected and upheld by all countries. This is the only way to combine the forces of the Asia-Pacific countries, resolve differences, and resist the risks and challenges of regional development.

Under the backdrop of economic globalization, the Asia-Pacific region has formed a community of common interests and fates, and in some sense all prosper when one prospers and all fail when one fails. In

all major issues of regional peace, development, stability, and security, the countries of the Asia-Pacific must support, bolster, and supplement one another with constructive words and actions. China is willing to do this, and is in fact tirelessly working toward this end. If every country of the Asia-Pacific is able to do this, we will prevent the spaghetti bowl effect from arising. This is certain to unlock the full energy and potential of the Asia-Pacific region and the regional prosperity and development is bound to be realized.

Ideals and convictions are the “calcium” in the bones of Communists. If we lack or are infirm in our ideals and convictions, being in a sense of “calcium deficient,” we will have weak spines. Some Party members and officials suffer from this ailment and problems of various kinds occur, which, to the final analysis, is rooted in their lack of ideals and confused faith.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the first collective study session of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee, November 17, 2012*

Calcium Deficiency and Weak Spines

— *The damages caused by lack of ideals and confused faith*

Calcium is an element of life with strong functions and a very active chemical nature. It can combine with many substances to form new substances. Calcium is extremely important for our health, and the protein in our muscles, nerves, fluids, and skeletons is all formed from calcium ions. To have a healthy body, 1.5-2% of its weight must be calcium. A lack of calcium will affect our health and development. For example, osteoporosis is a physiological disease caused by calcium deficiency.

Xi Jinping brought the element of calcium and physical ailment of weak spines into the political arena to demonstrate the importance of calcium — members of the CPC having firm ideals and convictions — and the grave danger of the lack thereof, resulting in weak spines.

History has proven that the CPC is the party with the most calcium and strongest bones. The Party was established at a moment of national peril and led the people of China on the great path of national liberation and independence. In those dark times, through those ordeals, along the arduous journey, without firm ideals and convictions, our world-shaking revolution would have been impossible. Over the past nine decades, the Party went from having just a roomful of members to becoming a great ruling party with more than 80 million members. It is inseparable from the firm ideals and convictions of the Chinese Communists and from the power of their spirit and beliefs. Countless Party members including Li Dazhao, Liu Hulan, and Xia Minghan held firm ideals and beliefs in sacrificing themselves for the Chinese revolution. During the era of building socialism, firm ideals and convictions are also the spiritual driving force of the Communists

in their tireless struggle. Jiao Yulu, Kong Fansen, Yang Shanzhou, and Guo Mingyi are typical examples of this.

Then why is it that “some Party members and officials suffer from this ailment and problems of various kinds occur, which, to the final analysis, is rooted in their lack of ideals and confused faith”? The root of the problem is that over the long course of Party governance, some Party members were not able to overcome real-life enticements, trials, and challenges. They had low standards for themselves, let down their guard, and fell behind in their studies. Without even realizing it, their ideals and convictions had wavered, and they became spiritually “calcium deficient.” It was their “calcium deficiency” that caused them to be egotistic, hedonistic, and materialistic. Going on like this, they found themselves lost when confronted with major questions of right and wrong. They wilted when enticed with money and became captives to beauty, resulting in an endless onslaught of “problems of various kinds.” Individual “calcium deficiency” is like this, and collective “calcium deficiency” is like this as well. Xi Jinping repeatedly emphasized, “Faction-forming is not allowed. Interest groups and interest exchanges are not permitted.” This is a serious warning to Party members and officials at all levels.

Having a “weak spine” due to lack of “calcium” not only ruins the lives of Party members, it also ties into the very existence of the Party itself. Since the Party’s progressiveness must be jointly upheld by Party members, the people form their image of the Party as a whole through the images of individual Party members. This is even more the case today when no longer can one hero cover up a hundred fools. Rather, now one fool sullies the reputations of a hundred heroes, so the demands on Party members and officials are greater than they ever were before. This is also a reason why Xi Jinping repeatedly emphasized the importance of having steadfast ideals and convictions.

Those suffering from “calcium deficiency” need extra “calcium.” Due to the nature of the CPC, the basic principles of Marxism are the first “calcium” to be replenished in the case of a deficiency to make up for theoretical weakness and solidify the basis for ideals and convictions.

They must be incorporated into real work. Improve oneself through work, be a paragon of socialist morals, take the lead in upholding integrity, and safeguard fairness and justice. Replenishing one's spiritual "calcium" lets one live up to the wishes of the people. Show the communist character through real actions and do not turn into a clown loathed by the public. One also must constantly be on guard, as one's "calcium" is easily lost. This is why replenishing our "calcium" must be a daily, long-term effort. Just like eating and sleeping, we have to make replenishing "calcium" a daily necessity and not let up in the least.

Using "calcium" as a metaphor for the communist spirit deftly turns the abstract notion of ideals and convictions into something everyone instinctively comprehends. This is a brilliant rhetorical device that deepens our understanding of the importance of steadfast ideals and convictions.

We should fight corruption with strong determination, “leave marks when we tread on stones or grasp iron,” persevere in our anticorruption effort till we achieve final success rather than start off full of sound and fury and then taper off in a whimper. We must let the whole Party and the people oversee power, and demonstrate to the people continuous and real results and changes of Party conduct and the combat of corruption.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Second Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, January 22, 2013*

Leaving Marks When We Tread on Stones or Grasp Iron

— *Be vigorous and persevering in improving work conduct*

“Leaving marks when we tread on stones or grasp iron” is a metaphor for never letting up until our goals are reached — when we set out to do something we better do it right. Xi Jinping used the metaphor of leaving marks in stone and iron to emphasize that the Party must follow through with its crusade to improve conduct and fight corruption. It especially highlights that the new central leadership collective must be vigorous and persevering in its actions.

This resolute, resonant, forceful phrase is the best explanation of Xi Jinping’s work style of boldly taking responsibility, making real accomplishments, and adopting a down-to-earth approach. It exhibits strength and firmness, is rooted in reality, and conveys a sense of uprightness backed by confidence and resolve. It was just the right thing to say at just the right moment, each word weighed to convey precisely the right spirit.

Down-to-earth conduct is an outstanding tradition of the CPC. Mao Zedong once said, “What really counts in the world is conscientiousness, and the Communist Party is most particular about being conscientious.” Down-to-earth conduct is an important reason that the CPC overcame intense hardship and won over the support of the people. Both during the revolution and era of peaceful construction, work was never effective without upright conduct. Conduct can never be improved without truly getting down to business. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the new central leadership collective has been refreshing in its work attitude and conduct that has left marks in stone and iron, ushering in a new era of outstanding Party conduct.

Undoubtedly, in reality some people of government agencies have not conducted themselves in a way that left marks in stone and iron, but rather lightly brushed against stone and iron like billowing silk. Their superficial work just touches the surface like a dragonfly skimming on water, and they take a wide detour around problems. They breeze in, wave their arms about, and just make an appearance without following through, delving deeper, or staying through to the end. Some just want to play it safe and do not dare step up to tackle problems, preferring rather to cower in fear and avoid sharp edges. This work style and attitude “like billowing silk” harms the socialist cause and is loathed by the populace.

An attitude of leaving marks in stone and iron must be maintained in the fight to improve conduct and stop corruption. This is both an ideological and methodological matter. Work to improve conduct and fight corruption must be firm and solid. It cannot halt along or only last for a moment — a long-lasting mechanism must be established and kept up from start to finish, and the people need to see real results.

The marks in stone and iron must be real. Action is a necessary condition, as without action no marks can be left behind. If we act like dragonflies skimming on water or vanish like fleeting shadows, if we lace up our sneakers so we can be the first to head for the exit when difficulty arises, not adopting any scientific measures or force, then no achievements or results are possible. At the same time, our actions must have focus and we should not try to attend to everything at once irrespective of priority. We must focus on the key policies and plans of the Central Committee of the CPC, emphasize the main conflicts and key segments in work, and take scientific and highly effective actions.

Actions must be properly taken. To leave marks in stone and iron, brute force and blind action will not suffice — this will only leave painful marks. Therefore, we must use force scientifically and intelligently, learn from our actions and then apply what we have learned, and think about our actions so they may be more intelligent. This is what will quickly leave good marks in stone and iron.

Leaving marks in stone and iron requires good follow-through. Our

actions are the basis, and leaving marks is the objective and outcome. We are currently in a key period in pushing reforms through that is fraught with conflicts, problems, and difficulties. We have to follow through with the arrangements of the Central Committee of the CPC and have the courage and will to leave marks in stone and iron. If we face up to our problems, resolve differences, and overcome difficulties, the Chinese Dream of rejuvenating the nation cannot fail.

We must not let up one iota in terms of governing the Party with strict discipline. We should continue to catch “tigers” as well as “flies”^{*} when dealing with cases of leading officials in violation of Party discipline and state laws as well as misconduct and corruption problems that directly affect the people’s livelihood.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Second Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, January 22, 2013*

^{*} Referring to high-ranking offenders as well as petty ones. – *Tr.*

Hunting Tigers and Swatting Flies

— *Never let up in rooting out bad conduct and corruption*

Tigers are ferocious wild animals that cause people to tremble in fear, and flies are pests detested by all. Here the tigers and flies stand for corrupt officials. The tigers refer to corrupt officials in the highest ranks of power, while the flies are the petty corrupt lower officials who hatch little schemes, always have their hands out, and bend the law for their own gain. The people loathe them as well.

Over the past few years, the word on the street has been that people are afraid that only the flies are being swatted, and the tigers are being left alone. After all, the old saying goes in China that “you can’t touch the rear end of a tiger.” To assuage the people’s worries, Xi Jinping said, “You must hunt both the tigers and the flies,” to show the resolve and clear stance of the CPC in dealing with corruption. There is an old Chinese saying that “if the top beam isn’t straight, the bottom ones will be crooked.” If the senior officials and those with real power take bribes that easily reach tens and even hundreds of millions of yuan, the impact on society will be devastating. If the tigers are left alone, their subordinates will imitate them, and the flies will proliferate, causing the country to fall apart.

Hunting tigers should therefore take center stage in the fight against corruption. But we also must recognize that often what the ordinary people encounter are the flies buzzing around their heads every day. The corruption of the flies usually involves the intimate interests of the people, such as misappropriating disaster relief funds, seizing land requisition compensation, and skimming from educational funds, migrant laborer wages, and subsidies for disadvantaged groups. Coupled with

other injustices, the vile nature of these actions has a direct effect on the Party's relationship to the people. Unchecked, they will become like the tigers and threaten the Party's governing status and social stability. Hunting both tigers and flies is a dialectical method employed in the fight against corruption.

The people care most about what really gets done. Xi Jinping's mention of hunting both tigers and flies gave people hope. The focus and intensity of the CPC Central Committee's fight against corruption since the 18th CPC National Congress has bolstered the spirits of the populace. The people have been overjoyed over the fall of Zhou Yongkang, justice handed out to Bo Xilai and Xu Caihou, and fall of provincial and ministerial officials such as Liu Zhijun and Jiang Jiemin. Statistics show that from late 2012 to July, 2014, more than 40 provincial and ministerial level officials have been investigated and disciplined, and an innumerable number of regional and local flies have been punished, causing overseas media to state that the Communist Party "isn't playing around" this time.

Of course, the flip side of the coin is that the achievements in the fight against corruption reflect the immense, complex, and long-term nature of the task. Corruption is a problem everywhere in the world and not unique to any one country or party. It is a problem that has haunted the governments of all ages. As the ruling party, the CPC has always paid attention to anti-corruption work and boldly excised the tumors in its midst. The clear call and real actions of hunting both tigers and flies further shows the maturity, confidence, and resolve of the CPC. At the same time, we must also be aware that the conditions for corruption to grow and spread still exist, and the fight against corruption cannot be completed in a short period — we must resolve to carry out a long-term struggle.

Xi Jinping's ingenious metaphor of tigers and flies draws a vivid picture of the principled standpoint and policy measures of the Central Committee of the CPC in the life-and-death problem of fighting corruption, and serves both as a warning to those in the wrong and

encouragement in the hearts of the people. It is not only a political declaration, but also a solemn commitment with far-reaching significance and clear direction. Each carefully measured word of the phrase resonates with resoluteness.

The education and practice program must emphasize self-purification, self-improvement, self-innovation, and self-enhancement. The main goal is to examine oneself in the mirror, straighten out one's clothes and hat, take a bath, and treat one's illnesses.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Party work meeting on the program of mass line education and practice, June 18, 2013*

Examine Oneself in the Mirror, Straighten Out One's Clothes and Hat, Take a Bath, and Treat One's Illnesses

— *The general requirements of the mass line education and practice program*

In ancient times it was said: “You can straighten your clothes and hat in a mirror of copper, you can learn the course of history in the mirror of time, and you can understand success and failure in the mirror of man.” Just as the CPC was about to drive the mass line education program to a deeper level, Xi Jinping defined its overall requirements as “examining oneself in the mirror, straightening out one’s clothes and hat, taking a bath, and treating one’s illnesses.” This means that the time for a massive spring-cleaning has come and any bad work habits and improper actions must be kicked to the curb. The Party has to improve its ability to self-purify, self-improve, self-renovate, and self-enhance, and continually push forward the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. These overall requirements were put forward in view of existing problems and will have a long-term significance. They are easy to understand, clear in meaning, and conform to reality. They are highly targeted and oriented.

“Examining oneself in the mirror” chiefly means to use the Party Constitution as a mirror for measuring Party discipline, the hopes of the people, and role models. It demands improved conduct and lays out problems, room for improvement, and areas of emphasis in sense of purpose, style of work, clean governance, and self-discipline. Efforts must be made to find out shortcomings and deficiencies, and make sure that the direction is correct. It demands using the Party’s basic theories as a mirror: Follow communist ideals and convictions, and be firmly confident in the theory, path, and system of socialism with Chinese

characteristics. One must first look at himself in the mirror so that he may not let down the Party. The Party Constitution is the basic law and supreme code of conduct for the Party members. It is the yardstick for the words and actions of Party members and officials. The Party Constitution must be used as a mirror to find deficiencies, in particular in carrying out the Party's mission, following the mass line, and maintaining clean governance. We must use the wishes of the people as a mirror, and go to the communities, find out the actual situation, and conduct more and thorough investigation. We have to reflect on where our work is not up to snuff and boldly steer our conduct in the right direction.

"Straightening out one's clothes and hat" means being honest and working for the people, daring to look our deficiencies in the eye, and firmly upholding Party discipline, especially political discipline. This involves reflecting on our thinking and confronting conflicts and problems. We must start right here and right now, and be upright in our manners, be true to the Party, sort out our obligations to the Party, follow Party rules and national laws, and keep a good image for the Communist Party. We cannot truly draw close to the people without straightening ourselves out. We must look in the mirror to find where we need to improve, be completely responsible to the Party and the people, and really take a good look at ourselves. This means true self-education, self-improvement, and self-elevation. Act now to sort out our own problems: Do not overlook them, avoid them, or shirk them. Dare to confront them, correct them, and be responsible for them. Work right alongside the people, modestly learn from them, hear what they really have to say, and learn what is really going on. Work to create a good image of being honest and working for the people, and really earn the people's trust.

"Taking a bath" essentially means to make criticism and self-criticism in the spirit of cleaning up conduct. Thoroughly analyze the causes of problems, dust off our thoughts and actions, and uphold the true political nature of a Communist. Consciously use the weapon of criticism and self-criticism to battle with improper conduct, and take aim both at practical problems and ideological problems. We must clean

ourselves up to fend off invading viruses. Leading officials especially have to “take a bath” to shake off the dust. We must speak the truth, do real deeds, and resolve the people’s worries. Use incisive self-analysis and earnestly accept criticism. Use criticism and self-criticism to lay the problems out before us, recognize them, and improve our conduct.

“Treating one’s illnesses” means learning from past mistakes to avoid future ones, and saving the patient by treating the disease. Recognize the situation, prescribe the proper medicine, and educate and remind Party members and officials with conduct issues. Strictly investigate serious problems and focus our treatment on improper conduct and outstanding problems. Party members and officials must therefore go deep to the communities and learn from our greatest teachers — the people. Win the people’s support and pool the wisdom of millions. We cannot stride forward with our heads held high without first solving our own problems. In the end, solving our problems is the goal of the mass line education and practice program. Mao Zedong once said we must “learn from our past mistakes to avoid future ones, and save the patient by treating the disease.” Therefore, treating our illnesses both has the objective of saving the patient, and also looks ahead to avoid repeating past mistakes. Improper conduct must be sought out and widespread problems must be tackled. Find causes in the system and work on treating the root cause. At the same time, we must sum up our experiences of treating the illness and recognize the patterns that arise in our treatment and preventive measures, so we may stop tiny problems in their tracks. Our focus should be on resolving systemic and mechanistic problems.

The ancient saying goes: “I reflect on myself thrice a day.” Every Party member, especially leading official, must frequently examine himself in the mirror, straighten out his clothes and hat, take a bath, and treat his illnesses. We must always be conducting ourselves with dignity while reflecting, cautioning, and encouraging ourselves. We must be firm in our ideals and convictions, make real improvements in our conduct, establish correct values, and fight for the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the nation.

I remember this place very well — I came to the village on my bike back then. Today I came to listen to everyone, meet villagers, remain in contact with the ground, and recharge my batteries.

— *Speech by Xi Jinping when visiting officials and villagers in Tayuanzhuang Village, Zhengding County, Hebei Province, July 11, 2013*

“Remaining in Contact with the Ground” and “Recharging One’s Batteries”

— *Leading officials must go all the way down to
the grassroots and learn from the people*

“Remaining in contact with the ground” (*jie di qi*, literally “connecting with the ground’s energy”) is a colloquial phrase. In a traditional Chinese sense, the Earth has underground energy that moves upward, and you can plug yourself into the Earth’s energy, flow with nature, and replenish your health. In modern times, remaining in contact with the ground refers to meeting people at the grassroots level. “Recharging batteries” is a technical term that refers to the process of replenishing the power stored in rechargeable batteries. When the energy in rechargeable batteries is used up, the batteries can be recharged and generate power again, forming a charge-discharge cycle. The modern connotation is that organizations and individuals can replenish their energy and knowledge, allowing them to continually improve themselves.

The phrase “connecting with the ground’s energy” has been widely used in recent years, and was even included in *Yaowen Jiaozhi* (*Verbalism*) magazine’s “Top 10 Popular Phrases of 2012.” Xi Jinping used this popular phrase for self-encouragement and to encourage all officials. It means that all levels of Party and government leaders must go all the way down to the grassroots where the people are, and learn from them and listen to their opinions. In this regard, “remaining in contact with the ground and recharging your batteries” is actually the basic requirement of the Party’s program of the mass line education and practice.

His extensive experiences working at the grassroots level gave Xi Jinping a natural affinity with the grassroots masses and a strong

identification with "remaining in contact with the ground and recharging your batteries." From 1969-1975 Xi worked as a sent-down youth with the Liangjiahe production team in the Wen'anyi Commune in Yanchuan County, Shaanxi Province. He worked in Zhengding County, Hebei Province from 1982-1985. Therefore, even though he was born into the family of a high official, Xi Jinping gained extensive experience working at the grassroots level, which gave him intimate knowledge of the grassroots situation and intimate familiarity with ordinary people, which is why he naturally and aptly said he wanted to "remain in contact with the ground, and recharge my batteries."

Intimate connection with the masses is one of the three weapons that has made the CPC a peerless force. During the revolutionary war years, the CPC merged with the masses, which became the source of the Party's power. The Party was only victorious in the revolution due to the sincere embrace and powerful support of the people. Whether it was in the Jinggang Mountains era, Yan'an era, or Xibaipo era, the Party was with the people, and "remaining in contact with the ground" became an outstanding tradition of the CPC.

After the CPC led the people to power, they still devoted themselves to maintaining close ties to the people. But due to their long-time governance in times of peace, some leading officials started getting cozy hearing reports in their meeting rooms and reading reports in their offices, and spent less time at the grassroots learning about the situation, listening to the people's opinions, and connecting with the people. They grew distant from the people, and tensions started to develop between the people and the Party and officials. In many cases, there was no effective communication, and small issues turned into big issues. A lot of the problems that have bubbled to the surface now are actually directly related to a lack of communication between the people and officials of leading organs who fail to put their ears to the ground.

The people are the creators of history, and in their own everyday experiences they have accumulated valuable experience. The people have the final say in whether the Party and government are following the right

path and employing the right policies, and in whether policies are being implemented correctly. Therefore, officials at all levels must “put their ears to the ground,” get a handle on the grassroots situation, and listen to the voices of the people. At the same time, the origins of practice and innovation lie at the grassroots level, and we can “recharge our batteries” by directly learning from the masses. We can only truly solve the real problems faced by the people by combining these two strategies and thus be accepted by the people. Only in this way can we resolve conflicts and issues and drive the harmonious development of society.

More than sixty years have passed and we have made huge progress. The Chinese people have stood up and gotten rich, but we still face immense, complex challenges and problems. We should say that the Party's "civil service examinations" are still far from being completed.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping to instruct the Party's program of mass line education and practice during his inspection visit to Hebei Province, July 11-12, 2013*

Heading Off to Take the Civil Service Examinations

— *New trials faced by the Party and a sense of peril*

The civil service examinations were a product of traditional Chinese society in which scholars had to travel to take the exams and hoped to seek a career in the government. In modern Chinese, they can be brought up as a metaphor for the trials to be overcome when completing certain tasks. In the history of the CPC, Mao Zedong was the first to reference “heading off to take the civil service examinations.” On the morning of March 23, 1949, the CPC central authorities were moving from Xibaipo to the peacefully liberated Beiping (present-day Beijing). Along the way, Mao Zedong excitedly said to Zhou Enlai, “Today is the day we enter the capital, we are heading off to take the exams.” Zhou Enlai smiled and replied, “We should all pass the exams ... we will not be rejected.” Mao Zedong said: “Rejection means failure. We cannot be like Li Zicheng. We all want good marks on the exams!” Mao Zedong used taking the exams in the capital as a metaphor and even brought up Li Zicheng to warn the Party that their main task is to turn from using arms to gain political power to building socialism. The Party’s main work was about to turn from the countryside to the cities, and it faced a tough new test.

Xi Jinping made the important determination at Xibaipo that “the Party’s ‘civil service examinations’ are still far off” to explain that in the new situation with new tasks ahead of it, the Party faces new challenges of increasing its capability of leadership and governance.

History has proven that maintaining an attitude of preparing for examinations and keeping up the revolutionary era work styles of modesty, caution, humility, and temperance coupled with arduous struggle has been one of the CPC’s major weapons for making great

achievements in both the socialist revolution and construction. But good grades only represent the past, there is no end to our tests, and we still face numerous problems, difficulties, and challenges in our development. The CPC faces tests from long-term governance, reform and opening up, the market economy, and the external environment in its incisive reforms of the economic system, tough changes to social structure, major adjustments of interest relations, and revolutionary changes in thinking. There is an even more acute risk of mental laxity, weak capabilities, becoming divorced from the people, and passivity and corruption.

Faced with steep uphill challenges, Xi Jinping raised the notion of taking the civil service examinations to send a warning to the entire Party — a warning learned through the lessons of history and clearly reflected in reality. He imparts a sense of urgency in preparing day and night for the exams. The current task of pushing reforms forward is immense. The way to realize the goal of the grand “two centenary goals” is arduous. The people are clamoring even louder to live better lives. This puts greater demands on the leadership and governance of the CPC, and it will have to act as if it is preparing for the civil service examinations to keep up a positive spirit of advancement. It will have to take every opportunity and meet every challenge it faces to live up to its mission and the great trust that the people place in it.

Preparing for the examinations must be done by focusing on conduct: Keep up modest, cautious, humble, and temperate attitudes, and keep up the arduous struggle. This is the outstanding tradition that history has bequeathed upon us and our heritage cannot be lost. We take joy in seeing that since the 18th National Party Congress, the Party’s central authorities have made a major effort in maintaining clean governance. It is heartening that they have implemented the Eight Rules* and insisted on hunting “tigers” alongside “flies.” The people are

* The Eight Rules were proposed by the Political Bureau of the 18th Central Committee of the CPC to cut bureaucracy and maintain close ties with the people. They are summarized as follows: improving investigation and research, streamlining conference activities, simplifying the writing of documents and briefings, standardizing trips, enhancing security

encouraged when they see improvements in governing style of the Party and the government.

Preparing for the examinations also requires conscious acceptance of criticism and openness to evaluation. The times and the people are the makers of the exams for the Communists. History and practice determine what the correct answers will be. If the answers are correct, we must keep on going, and if they are incorrect, we must make immediate corrections. The people are the graders of the ruling Party's exams, and they have the final say in determining the exam scores. The only way to hand in an answer sheet the people will be satisfied with is to continually improve the exam scores, all while under the supervision of the people.

The ancient saying goes that "One survives in worries and miseries and perish in ease and comfort." There is no final exam — there are only midterms.

guard work, improving news reports, imposing restrictions on publishing of writings, and practicing diligence and frugality.

Improving your work style means breaking through the “enclosed city,” “glass doors,” and “invisible walls.” It means going all the way to the grassroots where the people are and remaining in contact with the ground.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at a meeting with leading officials in Hubei Province, July 23, 2013*

Breaking Through the “Enclosed City,” “Glass Doors,” and “Invisible Walls”

— *Improving work styles and keeping close tie with the people*

Chinese people are very familiar with the phrases “enclosed city,” “glass doors,” and “invisible walls.” Xi Jinping used these three phrases as metaphors for Party members and officials — in particular leading officials, who have become strangers to the grassroots and divorced from the people. He stressed the importance of breaking through these barriers and truly be one with the people.

The work style of Party members and officials, especially leading officials, is a matter related to the relations between the Party and the people, between officials and the people. Xi Jinping frequently uses vivid metaphors to demonstrate the importance of this problem. For example, he talked of “remaining in contact with the ground” and “recharging one’s batteries” to explain connecting with the grassroots and the importance of learning from the people. He talked of the widely hated phenomenon of “putting on a show” to describe how some officials like to put on formalities and not really get down to business. Breaking through the “enclosed city,” “glass doors,” and “invisible walls” focuses attention on the key problems affecting the relations between officials and the people, and how to resolve them. Clearly, these apt metaphors all point to the same phenomenon while individually alluding to different sides of the interrelated problems.

During the revolutionary era, there was no “enclosed city,” “glass doors,” or “invisible walls” between the Party and the people. The Party and the people were like fish in water, like peas in a pod. After coming to power, the Party still made great efforts to keep up its blood-and-flesh

relationship with the people. But governing is no revolution after all, and some officials who are Party members no longer felt the pressing need to relate closely to the people, and an "invisible wall" started to form between many officials and the people.

Some Party members and officials feel that they are above the people, that they regard the people as aliens, and they dread to meet the people. In some places and some offices they are difficult to access, hard to talk to and impossible to get them to act, let alone actually solving the people's problems and serving the people. This phenomenon is most acute at the lowest levels that interact the most with the people, and this is what the people complain about the most.

The ancient saying goes: "To rule means to be correct. If you are the model of correctness, who will dare to not be correct?" The Party's Central Committee with Xi Jinping as general secretary are an excellent model for improving work styles and intimately relating to the people. From chatting with the people and eating home-cooking during a visit to Hebei, to trekking through water with pant-legs rolled up on an inspection in Wuhan, every word and action of Xi Jinping served as a vivid model in the effort to transform work styles.

To break through the city, doors, and walls, Party members and officials need to remember what the Party stands for. Especially in these times when conditions everywhere are improving, Party members and officials need to study the philosophy of the Party all the time and be focused on the people. They need to understand in their bones that the Party's mission is to wholeheartedly serve the people, and thoroughly implement the Party's Eight Rules on improving work styles and intimately relating to the masses. They must think what the people think, worry about what the people worry about, truly keep the people in mind, sincerely interact with the people, and show the people the concern they would show their own family. This is the only way to break through the thick walls separating them from the people.

To break through the city, doors, and walls, Party members and officials need to go out to meet the people and invite the people in. On

the one hand, Party members and officials need to get out more and stop sitting in their offices listening to reports and reading forms, thinking they are doing a good job. They must get outside the office, look and listen at the grassroots, check on things, listen around, and resolve people's problems where they occur. They have to be the first to find out what is going on at the grassroots. On the other hand, Party members and officials have to be adept at keeping their doors open to let the people stroll in. They should explain to the people the work and problems faced by the Party and government, and gather more opinions from the people when making decisions. This will open the two-way communication channels, which is the only way to advance mutual understanding, mutual appreciation, and mutual consideration. All this will slowly eliminate the misunderstandings and chasms between Party members and the people, between officials and the people.

"Book learning is no substitute for hands-on experience." To transform work styles, we not only have to fully recognize the importance of intimate relations with the people, we also have to make sure that every Party member and official personally gets in the action. The only way for the "enclosed city," "glass doors," and "invisible walls" to be kicked to the curb once and for all is for the entire Party to follow the mass line.

We must truly enforce organization discipline: No special cases or exceptions are allowed. All levels of Party organizations must dare to find and deal with problems and truly turn discipline into a live high-voltage line.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, January 14, 2014*

The Live High-Voltage Line

— *Truly enforce and strictly uphold organization discipline*

The technical term “high-voltage line” usually refers to power lines that transmit more than 10 kilovolts of electricity. One touch of a live high-voltage line can cause instantaneous death. Xi Jinping employed the metaphor of discipline being a high-voltage line to demonstrate the necessity of strictly enforcing and upholding Party discipline, and any violation of Party discipline must result in strict punishment. This is aimed straight at the heart of the current Party building effort and is important for guiding the Party in maintaining its purity and progressiveness.

Discipline is the rule system that the organization members must follow to uphold collective interests and guarantee that work moves forward smoothly. As a code of conduct, discipline comes hand-in-hand with human society and tends to be compulsory. The ancient saying goes: “With a thousand people thinking alike, you get the force of a thousand people. With ten thousand people thinking differently, you get the force of none.” The implication is that if a thousand people coordinate their efforts, they will have the force of a thousand people as a whole, and if ten thousand people each fight their own battle, not even one person will be of use. These words vividly demonstrate the importance of a uniform code of conduct to an organization, and in a sense it can mean the life or death of the organization.

Discipline plays an even greater role in modern society, and the success or failure of a group or organization is often intimately related to the effectiveness of its discipline. To the ruling Party, iron discipline not only can result in healthy growth, it can also help it defuse dangers. Conversely, lax discipline and slack enforcement can result in unthinkable

results for the ruling Party's development.

The CPC has a relatively robust organization discipline and rule system. Strict discipline is one of the major weapons that helped the CPC achieve victory in the revolution. It is also a fundamental assurance for the CPC's continued powerful growth and leadership of the Chinese people in realizing tremendous achievements in reform and the building of socialism. We can say that Party discipline is a cornerstone of the continual advancement of contemporary China.

But in reality, there is widespread condemnation of the Party's inability to effectively enforce discipline as well as improper conduct and even corruption. All such things are black marks on the Party's discipline scorecard, and not only harm the Party's authority, but also weaken its foundation for governing and corrode its ability to govern and drive Chinese society forward in its development. "High-voltage lines everywhere, but all of them are dead." This catchy popular saying gives voice to the people's immense dissatisfaction with lax enforcement in some places and even the complete absence of discipline outside of mere formalities. One cannot say that in the past there was a lack of rules governing Party members, in particular leading officials. But many times there has been loose, weak discipline over Party members and leading officials who break the rules, turning Party discipline into "dead high-voltage lines," naturally making it difficult for discipline to play its restrictive role.

Evidently, there is much work to be done to truly turn Party discipline into "live high-voltage lines." The most important thing, however, is working on the enforcement of discipline, and boldly and adeptly drawing our swords against all violations of Party discipline. Without strict enforcement, no matter how robust our discipline is, making discipline effective will be an uphill battle.

Party discipline is a hard and fast line, a high-voltage line that tolerates no violation. We must work hard to supervise discipline, investigate violations, and educate on following the rules. We must openly and ruthlessly fight back against people who think nothing of

discipline, follow the beat of their own drum, and act recklessly. Actions that damage Party organization discipline must face the iron hand of enforcement — there must be no compromises and no playing deaf and dumb. All violations of Party discipline must be promptly uncovered, reprimanded, and stopped. Small problems cannot be allowed to develop into big problems, and Party discipline must truly become “live high-voltage power lines.”

Continual high pressure must be kept up in the fight against corruption, and there must be zero tolerance in the punishment of corruption. Corruption cases must be thoroughly investigated one by one. Catch them early while they are small, treat the illnesses right away. Deal with problems as soon as they come up — don't let sores fester and become bigger problems later.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, January 14, 2014*

Catch Them Early While They Are Small, Just as Illnesses Must Be Treated Immediately

— *Punishing corruption and promptly dealing with problems*

The Chinese people frequently like to say, “catch it early while it is small, treat the illness right away.” For example, Chinese parents like to stress “starting early while they are young” in their children’s education to lay a good foundation. In science lectures, doctors also emphasize “treating illnesses right away,” so that minor illnesses do not linger and become major illnesses and become that much harder to treat. “Don’t let sores fester” is a traditional saying that means if you do not treat a painful sore, it will give you problems later, implying that indulging in bad people and bad things will lead to more serious consequences.

Xi Jinping employed the imagery and traditional sayings of “catch it early while it is small, treat the illness right away” and “don’t let sores fester” to demonstrate that early action and early involvement must be used for major political tasks. If we get out ahead of the work, we can catch problems while they are small and nip corruption in the bud.

The ancient saying goes, “A thousand-mile dike is done in by an ant tunnel.” This means that tremendous dikes are often caused to collapse by small ant tunnels. Corruption has the same effect. Corruption also develops from problems of quantity into problems of quality: Minor corruption issues slowly evolve into major corruption issues. For most people, if they are given a warning when problems first arise, they will not “follow the dark alley until they reach the end.” In the decaying process that eats away at corrupt officials, the dikes formed by their ideals and convictions are eaten away one tiny bit at a time. This means that “catching them early while they are small” becomes very important in

the great task of fighting corruption. If you lay a solid dike of ideals and convictions early, fix “sores” in the dike as soon as they arise, and mend minor problems quickly, you can prevent corruption from occurring, worsening, and spreading.

“Catch it early while it is small, treat the illness right away” and “don’t let sores fester” embodies the new thinking of the CPC in the new era of punishing and preventing corruption, and reflects the further identification of the CPC with anti-corruption rules. On the one hand, there must be zero tolerance for corruption, and violations of the law must be strictly punished. “Investigate them one by one,” mop the floor with their reputations, and make them pay a hefty price. This much is non-negotiable. On the other hand, we must establish an effective mechanism for preventing corruption, start looking for it earlier, actively prevent it, and use both punitive and preventive measures. This is equally important.

Systemic assurance is necessary to “catch it early while it is small, and treat the illness right away.” On the one hand, we must strengthen our laws, regulations, and systems, plug up the holes that form in the system, make sure administration follows the law and office work follows the system, and allow no opportunity for corruption to poke its head out. On the other hand, we must step up supervision of power — in particular the power of leading officials. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. If power is not supervised, the system of rules is nothing more than words on paper and will lead to the rise and spread of corruption. At the same time we must better educate Party members and officials — in particular leading officials — and help them establish correct worldviews, life views, and values, as well as correct views on authority, status, interest, and political achievement. We must enhance self-cultivation, raise our ability to better distinguish between right and wrong, strengthen self-discipline, and lay a solid ideological foundation for resisting corruption.

An ancient statesman said: “Don’t pass up the opportunity to do a small good deed, and don’t think small bad deeds won’t come back to haunt you.” Party members and officials, especially leading officials, would do well to keep these words firmly in mind!

Work efficiency must be improved by establishing a long-lasting work mechanism. Serving the people cannot be like a gust of wind, in with a bang and out with a whimper; it cannot be formalistic.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping while inspecting the Jiao Yulu People's Hotline in Lankao County, Henan Province, March 17, 2014*

Serving the People Cannot Be Like a Gust of Wind

— *Real results and a long-lasting work mechanism are needed to serve the people*

In modern Chinese, “a gust of wind” is often used to mean something that is a flash in the pan — it comes and goes quickly and does not last for very long. Xi Jinping used the analogy of “a gust of wind” to show his hopes that the government does not serve the people like “a gust of wind,” coming quickly and going quickly, but rather achieves real results on the foundation of a long-lasting work mechanism.

The entrances of many local government offices and organs of authorities are adorned with the phrase “Serve the People” in Mao Zedong’s calligraphy. But in reality, serving the people is at risk of becoming an alien concept. For example, to bolster their images, some local government offices and organs of authorities create superficial so-called “serve the people” projects that are packaged up and put on display like miniature bonsai gardens. They look nice, but are completely useless, and do not help with the people’s actual problems. In this way, serving the people has been distorted into government “imagery projects.” Some leaders of local governments and organs of authorities also rack their brains to come up with so-called “serve the people” projects to show off their abilities and achievements to their higher-ups, and their hearts really are not with the people. They run around in circles to “score political points,” and as this has gone on, serving the people has been distorted to become “political points projects” for officials. Some leaders also really like to “put on a show” — they like to do things nice in appearance. To them, a false show of serving the people is the safest path, and as this has gone on, serving the people has devolved into another type of show business. The result of such distorted means of serving the

people is nothing more than a gust of wind. At first, the leaders give much of their attention, everyone runs around in a great hubbub, the media swarms in, and leaders come out of the woodwork to start giving directions. Not long afterward, however, those who “serve the people” are not as enthusiastic anymore, serving the people becomes a mere gesture, organizations that serve the people turn cold, and formerly booming “serve the people” projects peter out and come to nothing.

There is immense harm in serving the people like a gust of wind. On the one hand, it is a great waste of social resources, including material, human, and administrative resources, and greatly increases the cost of public administration. On the other hand, and more importantly, it severely harms the image of and public trust in the Party and government, and lets down the people who placed hope in the Party and government. The negative psychological effect this has on society undermines genuine efforts to serve the people, making people question their authenticity and making it difficult to move such efforts forward, thereby making public administration all the more difficult.

It is not hard to do one good deed, but it is difficult to keep on doing good deeds. To prevent serving the people like a gust of wind and see real results in serving the people, we must work to establish long-lasting work mechanisms. First, we must establish a scientific evaluation mechanism to scientifically evaluate leaders’ achievements and reveal opportunists for who they really are. Second, we must establish an accountability mechanism, step up punishments for authorities and leaders who serve the people like a gust of wind, and create an atmosphere of public administration that prevents such superficial actions. Third, we must scientifically create policies that serve the people, which means scientifically forming policy measures on the basis of widespread studies, thoroughly investigating what the people long for and need, following through on the results, and establishing rules and mechanisms that will last for the long-term.

The common saying goes: “Heaven sees what man does.” When it comes to serving the people, the people are “Heaven.” Especially

in this day of instantaneous information and networks, the people are watching your every move at every moment! Mao Zedong once said: “We Communists are like seeds and the people are like the soil. Wherever we go, we must unite with the people, take root and blossom among them.” Every Party member and official, especially leading officials, must never forget their purpose of wholeheartedly serving the people, and never forget Xi Jinping’s warning that “Serving the people cannot be like a gust of wind, in with a bang and out with a whimper; it cannot be formalistic.” They must work in the spirit of “leaving marks in stone and iron,” take real, pragmatic actions to serve the people, continually do real, good deeds for the people, and continually pool positive forces for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

“The best governance is long-lasting.” To be an official and to govern requires bold steps, determined advancement, and maintaining overall stability and continuity of work. Once you’ve zeroed in on your task you must make immediate adjustments and improvements, but each incoming leader cannot “dump the bag out,” let alone completely change course to score political points. You must truly follow the blueprint through to the end: Don’t fool around and don’t repeat your work — achieve real results.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Central Economic Work Meeting, December 15, 2012*

Incoming Leaders Must Not “Dump the Bag Out”

— *Maintaining overall stability and continuity of work*

“Dumping the bag out” originally referred to turning out a bag to search through its contents, and in modern Chinese this phrase is often employed to refer to reinventing the wheel and completely overturning original plans or statements. Xi Jinping used the phrase “dump the bag out” to imply the poor governance of some local authorities where new leadership comes into the local government and completely reinvents the previous leadership’s governing plan.

Governance through “dumping the bag out” is a grave problem with some local authorities. New leaders arrive, and to show off their own extraordinary ability, without performing scientifically sound studies or demonstrations, they shout out orders to overturn their predecessors’ plans and praise themselves as carrying out “reforms” or “innovations.” In truth, they are just wasting time.

This sort of wasting time by “dumping out the bag” is especially evident when it comes to urban development. For example, one city may want to spruce up its looks, and while the previous leader had London Plane trees planted, the new leader comes in and has privet trees planted instead. Then the next leader comes and orders to have privet trees replaced for camphor trees. Ten years pass, and there are still tree saplings all along the city’s main thoroughfare. Or, for example, during urban planning, the leadership orders the city to grow to the east. Then new leaders come with new ideas and have the city grow to the south. While this nice blueprint is being followed, new leaders come and again change the plan and have the city grow to the west. Ten years later, and with all the changes in city planning, the entire city is spread out like rolled-out

dough with half-finished projects everywhere, creating enormous waste and impeding urban development.

There is immense harm in governing by “dumping out the bag.” Not only is it a great waste of national resources like manpower, materials, and money, but it also hurts the development of construction itself, damages public confidence in the Party and government, and harms the legitimate interests of the people. In truth, the negative consequences of governing by “dumping out the bag” also elicit the most complaints and intense opinions among the people.

There are many causes of the phenomenon of governing by “dumping out the bag.” If you really get down to it, there are two main factors: First, leading officials worship a distorted view of political achievement. Some leading officials just touch the surface and love to work on formalistic, “political points” projects while completely ignoring the real problems in reform and development. They run around in circles for their new, novel projects while doing very little actual project-oriented reforms. They do not want to make long-term plans or “make a wedding dress” for the next person. They only want to rush to score political points and get some quick results. Second, leaders lack restrictions on their power. Democratic centralism, which should be strictly enforced, becomes a formality, and “what the top leader says goes.” The leader blindly makes decisions in complete disregard of the collective. As media exposés have shown, “dumping out the bag” is usually the result of one leader’s forceful actions.

“The best governance is long-lasting.” To resolve the problem of “dumping out the bag,” leading officials need the correct view of political achievement. As Xi Jinping said, they need to have the mindset of “not always taking credit” and “driving in nails.” Nails usually cannot be hammered in with just one strike, but rather need to be struck continuously until they hold fast. We must make foundational, long-lasting efforts and stop working on unrealistic political points projects. Stop flattering those above and deceiving those below, and truly take responsibility for history and the people. We have very good historical

lessons to draw on in this regard, such as our immensely successful development path following the “five-year plans,” and we must become good at standing on the shoulders of our predecessors to give us even further advantage.

To resolve the problem of “dumping out the bag” in governance, we also must fundamentally improve the evaluation system for leading officials and change the uniform standard for evaluating achievement. Instead, we should focus on foundational and long-lasting work, resolving people’s livelihood problems, and hearing about the qualities, thoughts, and abilities of leading officials from the mouths of the people themselves. We must also improve the training, selection, and appointment mechanism for officials so that they truly “scientifically govern, democratically govern, and govern within the law,” leaving no space in which they can dump out their bags.

In this regard, we need to have a “driving in nails” mindset. When we use a hammer to drive in a nail, a single strike often may not be enough; we must keep striking until it is well in place. Then we can proceed to strike the next one, and continue driving in nails until the job is completely done.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Second Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, February 28, 2013*

The “Driving in Nails” Mindset

— *Do solid, thorough, detailed mass work*

Driving in nails is an act often seen in our daily life, and this image is often employed nowadays to imply earnest work that is seen through to the end. When discussing changing work styles, Xi Jinping brought up the “driving in nails” mindset several times. He used it as an analogy for stressing that leadership at all levels must diligently work and persist until the job is done. We must have the resolve and patience to “follow the blueprint to the end” and not start with a bang and end with a whimper or give up halfway through without finishing the job.

Improving work styles is a major problem for a governing party. It lies behind the success or failure of Party and national causes as well as the image of the Party in the people’s minds. The Party’s work style and image are often determined by the work styles of leading Party officials. If work styles are good, the Party will be all the more cohesive, appealing, and powerful; poor work styles will only lead to the opposite. Work must be done with a “driving in nails” mindset, otherwise it becomes a typical example of poor work style.

There are many manifestations of leading officials lacking the “driving in nails” mindset. One is floating on the surface, not investigating the frontlines, hesitating to go to the grassroots level to understand the people’s mindset, and taking a detour when deep-rooted problems are found. Such officials avoid the tough jobs and act like dragonflies skimming over water. They muddle through, make some formal gestures. They focus on writing documents instead of doing actual work, and hold meetings as implementation of their documents. They raise their hammers high and bring them down with a light tap, to the great ire of

the people. Another problem is that some leading officials work like a “gust of wind” and like to carry on “campaigns.” They start strong and finish weak, and lack the resolve and patience to “follow the blueprint to the end.” Their “one-off deals” never get much done and instead leave unfinished projects strewn all about. These work style problems are really bureaucratic and formalistic in nature, and are typical cases of a mistaken view of political achievement.

Mao Zedong once said, “What really counts in the world is conscientiousness, and the Communist Party is most particular about being conscientious.” The outstanding traditions handed down through history — earnest work, two feet planted on the ground, arduous struggle, seeking truth from facts, and the mindset of “the foolish old man who removed the mountains” — were important experiences as the Party led the people of China to revolutionary victory and great achievements in building socialism. The “driving in nails” mindset is a continuation and development of the Party’s outstanding traditions in this new historic period. Calling on all levels of leaders to uphold the “driving in nails” mindset has immense practical significance in implementing the CPC Central Committee’s strategic decisions in deepening reforms and in realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Upholding the “driving in nails” mindset first requires resolve and patience. Many times a nail cannot be hammered in with one strike, and requires strike after strike until the nail holds fast. Without the resolve and patience to keep hammering away at the nail, the nail will not hold, and will ruin the project, causing great harm.

To uphold the “driving in nails” mindset, one cannot just scratch the surface or hammer the nail in only halfway. A nail sticking out may look like it is fine, but it will not hold up at key moments and cannot hold up to any stress. Therefore, nails must be hammered in all the way, as this is the only way to stand the test of time and the people.

Upholding the “driving in nails” mindset also requires scientific strikes — one cannot use brute force to smash the nail or blindly flail away and drive in the nail in a sidelong way. In actual work, we must firmly

grasp the true spirit of the CPC Central Committee’s comprehensive deepening of reforms. We must have the attitude and resolve to resolutely implement work, not skimping in the least on implementing the instructions of the Central Committee. We must use the wisdom and methods of considering the actual situation and being innovative in our work. Nails must be hammered in strike after strike until they hold fast, and all tasks must be implemented one after another until result is achieved and the people are satisfied.

Persistence lies at the root of upholding the “driving in nails” mindset. The “driving in nails” mindset is a continual, persistent requirement that never expires.

Everyday Sayings

We stand for the sharing of dignity by all countries and peoples in the world. All countries, irrespective of size, strength and wealth, are equal. The right of the people to independently choose their development paths should be respected, interference in the internal affairs of other countries opposed, and international fairness and justice maintained. Only the wearer of the shoes knows if they fit or not. Only the people can best tell if the development path they have chosen for their country is suitable or not.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, March 23, 2013*

Only the Wearer of the Shoes Knows If They Fit or Not

— *Maintaining full confidence in the path,
theory, and system of Chinese socialism*

The saying “only the wearer of the shoes knows if they fit or not” is a home-spun maxim of real-life experience that deals with finding the right shoes. If you wear shoes that are too big, it will be difficult to walk as the shoes will wobble. If the shoes are too small, they will pinch your feet and can even cause painful blisters, which may keep you off your feet for several days. That being said, it is important to wear shoes that fit, and only the person wearing them can determine whether they fit or not.

Xi Jinping shared this maxim at an international event to let the world know that China has chosen its own path of development, and the Chinese people are full of wisdom. The Chinese people are the only ones in a position to evaluate the path they have chosen. The saying “only the wearer of the shoes knows if they fit or not” is simple yet profound, as it communicates the truth that only the people can best tell whether the development path they have chosen for their country is suitable or not.

This saying vividly reflects Xi Jinping’s rhetorical style and word choice. It expresses a simple confidence and has a personal and credible ring to it, even as it conveys to the world that we are staunch believers in the path of Chinese socialism. The new central leadership is calm and resolute in its commitment to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which sends a strong message to the rest of the world that the CPC is confident in the path, theory, and system of Chinese socialism.

After the Opium Wars reduced China to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, many people with lofty ideals sought to make China a prosperous nation in a variety of ways. In the end, we found our way to the

broad path of Chinese socialism under the leadership of the CPC. Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, China has ushered in remarkable economic achievements as it has driven its policy of reform and opening up. In the 35 years from 1979 to 2014, China's economy grew by an average of 9.8% each year, which elevated the people's standard of living. Such development is a powerful reminder that Chinese socialism is the only road that will lead to the prosperity of the Chinese nation and the rejuvenation of the Chinese people. The path of socialism with Chinese characteristics is both a reflection of China's historical practice as well as a charter for China's future development. Chinese socialism is able to stand the test of history, as it is well suited to the prevailing national conditions, in step with the times and supported by the people. Indeed, it represents the choice of both the CPC and the people as a whole.

Practice is the sole criterion for testing truth. As Mao Zedong said in "On New Democracy": "There is but one truth, and the question of whether or not one has arrived at it depends not on subjective boasting but on objective practice. The only yardstick of truth is the revolutionary practice of millions of people."

Each nation has its own history and culture. A nation's path must be tailored to its particular history and culture. "Only the wearer of the shoes knows if they fit or not." A person can comment on how a pair of shoes fits someone else, of course, but that is merely the musings of a bystander. We do not comment whether some other country is wearing the right "shoes," just as we do not wish for others to pontificate on whether our "shoes" fit. The 18th CPC National Congress has clearly articulated our commitment to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and this path requires us to open up our minds, deepen reform, marshal our strength, and overcome difficulties. Indeed, many challenges await in the course of China's development, and that is why we must draw upon the collective wisdom of the Party and people in formulating a clear policy framework, timeline, and roadmap for future reform and development. In other words, we must continue to follow our own path in the shoes that fit us best.

As someone aptly put it, “No mountain is too high for man to scale and no road too long for man to walk.” However high the mountain may be or however long the road may seem, we will be able to get there as long as we stay the course and keep moving forward.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the APEC CEO Summit, October 7, 2013*

No Mountain Is Too High for Man to Scale and No Road Too Long for Man to Walk

— *Staying the course in driving reform*

The expression “no mountain is too high for man to scale and no road too long for man to walk” first appeared in “The Distance Is Far and the Mountain Is High,” a poem by the contemporary Chinese poet Wang Guozhen. The meaning embedded in the poem is that the one who perseveres will be able to scale mountains of difficulty regardless of their elevation, and the one who aspires will be able to traverse the road of life regardless of its length. Xi Jinping quoted this verse at an APEC CEO Summit in Bali, Indonesia in order to express China’s determination to comprehensively deepen reform and thereby create a powerful new impetus for economic development.

Xi Jinping’s declaration that “no mountain is too high for man to scale and no road too long for man to walk” was synchronized with China’s transition into a new phase of economic development — a phase marked by profound change in the method and structure of economic development. Growing pains are a foregone conclusion, which means that determination is needed — determination to cross the rough terrain and tackle difficulties.

Reform is a profound revolution that involves adjustment of major interests and improvement of systems and institutions in various fields. But such reform is difficult and calls for courage, fortitude, and persistence. The massive complexity of real issues requires that we incorporate the principle of strengthening top-level design in our present reform efforts of “wading across the river by feeling for the stones.” In this way, we will continue to drive overall reform through institutional

innovation and rigor. China has already formulated its master plan for deepening overall reform. We are now taking a holistic approach to reform in the economy, politics, culture, society, and ecology, and working hard to resolve issues in development.

Having the courage to make such a public declaration is a clear testament to the courage and tenacity of China's leadership and the Chinese people. After all, it is confidence that enables a man to stick to the path he has chosen and embody the spirit of Yu Gong, "the foolish old man who removed mountains," one stone at a time. It is confidence that drives us not to run away from countless difficulties and challenges but to hold our ground.

During his tour of southern China in 1992, Deng Xiaoping articulated his vision: "It will probably take another thirty years for us to develop a more mature and well-defined system in every field." This was reaffirmed by the 18th CPC National Congress in its statement that we must put in place a well-developed, systematically and rationally regulated, and effective framework of systems to ensure that all systems and institutions are working properly and functioning well. Looking back over more than thirty years of reform, the road has been anything but smooth: We have had to chisel through the ice of old ideologies, reorient interests, adjust our development model, and cultivate institutional civility. Every step forward has been made amid difficulty and peril. But as Mao Zedong wrote in a poem, "Nothing is hard in this world / If you dare to scale the heights." This is the same unshakable conviction that was echoed from the APEC CEO Summit in Bali: "However high the mountain may be or long the road may seem, we will reach our destination so long as we stay the course and keep moving forward."

The Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee sounded forth a new call for comprehensively deepening reform. Once the bow is drawn, the arrow cannot turn back. We must press on toward the goal of reform.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the New Year's Tea Reception of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, December 31, 2013*

Once the Bow Is Drawn, the Arrow Cannot Turn Back

— *Pressing on toward the goal of reform*

“Once the bow is drawn, the arrow cannot turn back.” In its literal sense, this saying means that an arrow must be shot after the bow has been pulled. It is taken more broadly to mean that there is no turning back once things are underway. Xi Jinping used this expression in his speech on the eve of 2014 in reference to reform, particularly in terms of China’s determination to achieve the goal of comprehensively deepening reform set by the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee.

China’s great reform and opening-up policy was introduced at the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee in December 1978. At that time, China reestablished its commitment to seek truth from facts, abandoned its political strategy of “taking class struggle as the key link,” and redirected the Party’s focus on to the cause of socialist modernization. Thus, the stage was set for socialism with Chinese characteristics. Over the last 36 years, the Chinese nation has adapted to the tide of reform and opening up and wrought remarkable achievements.

The road to reform has been no walk in the park. Changes and challenges have abounded from the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, which set in place China’s reform and opening-up policy, to the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, which reaffirmed its commitment thereto. The difficulties notwithstanding, China has tenaciously held to its basic policy of “carrying out domestic reform and opening up to the outside world.” During his tour of southern China in early 1992, Deng Xiaoping spoke with his characteristic verve: “If we did not adhere to socialism,

implement the policies of reform and opening to the outside world, develop the economy and raise living standards, we would find ourselves in a blind alley.”

The momentum of China’s reforms has not eased for even a moment, and nor can it. The issues of reform are growing increasingly complex as China has entered a stage in reform where, to put it figuratively, “the tender meat has been consumed, and what is left are tough bones that are hard to chew.” Xi Jinping underscored the same idea before the Shanghai delegation at “*lianghui*” (the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference) in 2013: “China’s reform has sailed into uncharted deep waters with tough challenges. We must dare to chew the tough bones and navigate the rough waters. We must respect the rules of the market, give fuller play to the role of government, and leverage our policy of opening up so as to secure greater room for advancement.”

There are no bounds to practice and development, to freeing the people’s minds, or to the reform and opening-up effort. We will reach an impasse if we stall or go into reverse on our path; reform and opening up is always ongoing and will never end. The problems and challenges that we are faced with show that reform must not be slowed down, much less stagnate — not even for a moment. We are already at a place where “once the bow is drawn, the arrow cannot turn back.” It is only by relentlessly driving reform and breaking down the barriers of old notions and the fences of interest groups that we will be able to resolve issues in development and ward off risk; create an environment of fair competition and enhance economic and social development; put in place a well-developed, rationally regulated, and effective institutional and governance systems; raise government efficiency and effectiveness; bring about social fairness and justice; promote social harmony and stability; and improve the Party’s leadership and governance.

As history shows, China has taken on a new look, recaptured its youth, and discovered new drive since embarking on the road to reform. Indeed, China’s policy of reform and opening up has brought about

dramatic change in virtually every respect, whether it be social stability at home or increased voice abroad. The saying “once the bow is drawn, the arrow cannot turn back” is both a call to press on with reform as well as a testimony of China’s determination to drive reform to a deeper level. We have already identified the development path best suited to our own circumstances, so now we must follow it — with firm resolve and full confidence.

Are we well-off? Ask the country folk. We must recognize that agriculture is the short leg in the “Synchronization of the Four Modernizations,” and the countryside is the weak link in the building of a moderately prosperous society.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Central Rural Work Conference, December 23-24, 2013*

Are We Well-off? Ask the Country Folk

— *Helping rural residents boost income*

The Chinese word for “moderate prosperity” appears in a line from the *Book of Jin*: “The Empire has been consolidated; China shall enjoy moderate prosperity.” The word hearkens back to the Confucian ideal of a society in which governance and education are carried out with integrity and the people enjoy peace and prosperity. The term came to refer more generally to a society that is peaceful and moderately well-off. Today, the term “moderate prosperity” is often used in reference to China’s goal of achieving a certain level of socio-economic development.

When China’s policy of reform and opening up was first launched, the economy languished with per capita GDP around US\$ 200, far below the international poverty line at the time. Deng Xiaoping took into account the feeble economy, along with the issue of China’s unwieldy population size, when designing the strategic goals and steps of China’s plan for modernization. Therefore, instead of aiming to achieve the “Four Modernizations,” Deng took a more realistic view and sought to establish a “moderately prosperous society” by the end of the 20th century. He further set forth what was called the “three-step” development strategy. The strategy proposed doubling the GNP by the end of the 1980s and ensuring that the people would have adequate food and clothing; doubling the GNP once more by the end of the 1990s, thereby raising per capita GDP to US\$800-US\$1,000 and achieving moderate prosperity overall; and quadrupling the GNP in the first 30-50 years in the 21st century to match the level of moderately developed countries and achieve modernization in general. From then on, a “moderately prosperous society” has become a stock phrase referring

to a society in which everyone is able to enjoy a relatively comfortable standard of living.

In the ensuing years, the first two steps of Deng's objective materialized according to plan. However, the level of prosperity that China had achieved by the turn of the century — a per capita GDP of US\$ 1,000 — was still quite low and incomprehensive. As such, the CPC adopted a strategic mission of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020. By 2010, a full decade ahead of schedule, China had realized the third step of Deng's strategy with a per capita GDP of US\$ 4,000. Amid all of the economic upsurge, however, issues such as unbalanced socio-economic development and unequal distribution of wealth have put a damper on the goal of building a moderately prosperous society.

Xi Jinping's remark that we must look at the country folk to determine whether we are prosperous is richly textured, as it is rooted in both the past — as a continuation of Deng Xiaoping's "three-step" strategy of development — as well as the present. Xi's point is that, in our conception of a moderately prosperous society, we must take into account both total economic output as well as quality of life; both the size of the "cake" as well as the way it is cut and distributed; both the "averages" as well as the "majority." Xi's comments show that the Party has sharpened its understanding of a moderately prosperous society.

China's economic achievements are a present-day marvel. We should by all means find encouragement in the growing number of wealthy individuals as we continue to realize Deng's vision — that is, to allow some individuals to become prosperous faster than others so that they can help promote the progress of those that lag behind, until all become prosperous. Yet, we must never forget that the purpose of allowing some to become prosperous before others is to promote the progress of those that lag behind, with the ultimate aim of bringing benefit and prosperity to all. Therefore, we must not grow complacent in the face of our present economic achievements, but must carry on with even greater resolve to realize our vision of common prosperity.

The answer to the question ‘Are we well-off?’ is found by observing the state of the ‘country folk.’ During China’s revolutionary war years, the CPC was able to carry out its revolutionary campaign of national rescue and reconstruction by relying on the support of the common people. The Huaihai Campaign ended in victory thanks to country folk faithfully pushing along their handcarts to support us. The rapid urban development in China today provides reason to rejoice, of course, but more attention needs to be focused on underdeveloped areas, the countryside in particular. A nation’s development ought to be balanced and bring benefit to all of its people. In China, the rural population makes up the vast majority of the total population, which means that China can only experience true prosperity to the extent that its rural population is prosperous.

Having served as a Party Branch secretary in the countryside, Xi Jinping has a keen understanding of China’s rural life and carries the issues of villages and villagers close to his heart. The objective of “developing agriculture by means of science and technology” and rural urbanization is to enable villagers to reap tangible benefits. The only way a society can live up to the name of “moderate prosperity in all respects” is if such prosperity is a reality in the lives of its country folk.

Agricultural products are the taproot of food safety, and the agricultural industry its soil. In order to get to the bottom of it, we must first concentrate on the quality of agricultural products. We must seek to change the mode of agricultural development and accelerate agricultural modernization by focusing on the quality and safety of agricultural products. We must apply the most stringent standards, supervision, penalties, and accountability to ensure that the people “keep a clean palate.”

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Central Rural Work Conference, December 23-24, 2013*

Keeping a Clean Palate

— *Doing everything we can to ensure food safety*

The oft-quoted saying that “the people regard food as heaven” is taken from the *Book of Han*: “The sovereign regards the people as his heaven, and the people regard food as their heaven.” The idea here is that people see their “heaven,” or survival, as being inextricably tied to their food supply — food is obviously a matter of vital importance. In recent years, food has been scrutinized for its safety; food safety is now a matter of first importance. Xi Jinping shared the comments above at the Central Rural Work Conference in order to make it abundantly clear that China takes this issue seriously. He used the image of a “clean palate” to address the major social issue of food safety.

In July 2014, Shanghai Hushi Food Company was targeted by the media for its use of expired ingredients, an incident that raised concern about KFC, McDonald’s, and other Western fast food joints that originally appeared “immune” to such mishaps. Risk in food safety is virtually ubiquitous now that food manufacturing and food processing are being diversified, and this has thrust the issue of food safety into the social limelight. Food safety incidents keep popping up, putting food producers in the hot seat and steadily chipping away at consumer confidence.

China is an agricultural nation, as it has been throughout history. Long, long ago, the Chinese ancients learned how to grow crops, raise livestock, and furnish a variety of natural delicacies. The four predominant styles of Chinese cuisine — Szechuan, Shandong, Cantonese, and Huaiyang — as well as the “Manchu Han Imperial Feast” of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) era have catapulted Chinese cuisine into fame.

And in more recent years, China's culinary culture has taken on a more "classy" look thanks to the popular TV documentary *A Bite of China*.

Food is eaten to satisfy one's hunger. But it must not be consumed if it is unsafe or toxic, regardless of how pleasing it is to the palate. The culprit of food safety mishaps, at least to some extent, has to do with dishonesty and "fearlessness" on the part of producers. Some food producers become monomaniacal about financial gain and disregard the basic principles of human conduct. They go so far as to mix harmful additives in with food in order to extend its shelf life or enhance its appearance. Others seek to pass off inferior goods as genuine or practice "waste utilization." All of this is done in the interest of temporal financial gain. Their consciences are blinded by money.

But such food safety incidents ought to prompt us to reflect on our institutional shortcomings and the need for supervision. The difficulties in eliminating serious food safety problems are a result of food producers treating regulations as mere child's play, inspectors paying short shrift to food safety risks, and law enforcement officers being essentially "all bark but no bite."

Food safety is indeed a hot-button issue in society, which the Party and government have taken to heart. Ensuring food safety is an arduous, long-term campaign that requires the concerted and tireless efforts of the government, businesses, and people. We must educate food producers and ramp up supervision in order to crack down on food safety violations, eliminate food safety incidents, and promote food safety. That is the only way to ensure that we can keep a clean palate and swallow our food without worry.

Without a solid foundation, the earth shakes and the mountains move. The focus of social governance must be on urban and rural communities. When community services and management capabilities are enhanced, communities become more stable. Real stability in China depends on our comrades who are working at the grassroots level.

— *Remarks made by Xi Jinping during a discussion with the Shanghai delegation to the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, March 5, 2014*

Without a Solid Foundation, the Earth Shakes and the Mountains Move

— *Enhancing grassroots services and management capabilities*

“A terrace nine storeys high rises from hodfuls of earth; a journey of a thousand miles starts from beneath one’s feet.” No matter how big the project, it starts from a foundation built one small piece at a time. For example, the Great Wall of China and the pyramids of Egypt — these marvels of engineering that seem incredible today must have seemed even more incredible to people who lived thousands of years ago. Nevertheless, our ancestors did indeed start at the foundation, where they completed seemingly impossible tasks one brick, one tile, one stone, and one piece of wood at a time.

“Without a solid foundation, the earth shakes and the mountains move” is a popular saying that has been handed down for generations. It uses concise, straightforward language, yet the truth behind it is plain to see. A vivid example of this saying is the 13-story building that collapsed in Shanghai on June 27, 2009. This incident taught a hard lesson about the importance of the foundation. In 2014, Xi Jinping participated in a discussion with the Shanghai delegation to *lianghui* (the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference). After listening to a report about grassroots community management from Zhu Guoping, a Party branch secretary and grassroots representative, Xi Jinping used the above folk adage to emphasize the importance of improving grassroots services and management standards.

Party members and officials who work at the grassroots level are in direct contact with the people. They are the ones who explain and implement Party policies. They are the ones who nourish the Party’s

roots and strengthen the Party's base. The impression they create, be it good or bad, has a direct influence on the image of the Party and the nation. As ancients said in the *Book of History (Shang Shu)*, "People are the foundation of a state. When the foundation is strong, the state is at peace."

Grassroots Party members and officials who conduct mass work must resolve a threefold problem. First is affection for the people. In order to strengthen our feelings toward the people, it is necessary to hold a deep affection for them while conducting our work. The people's concerns must be our concerns. The people's worries must be our worries. We must tackle the difficulties that plague the people and strive to realize the hopes that they cherish. Only then would we be able to do a better job in this regard in communities. Over the years, many outstanding grassroots workers, such as Wu Renbao, Yang Zhaoshun, and Zhu Guoping, have emerged as role models. We can easily see from their fine examples that when you show the people more warmth, they respond with more affection, and when you do more for the people's welfare, they have more confidence in you. Second is to look at things in the perspective of the people. When carrying out mass work, we should always maintain the staunch political position that the Party is built to serve the interests of the people and to govern on their behalf. As long as we put the people first and adhere to the mass line, doing a good job of mass work will never be too difficult. Third are the interests of the people. We must effectively realize, safeguard, and develop the interests of the people. Their interests must take precedence when deepening reforms, promoting development, and maintaining stability. We must always remember the hardships of the people, especially those whose situations are most dire, and try to solve real problems and difficulties.

"Without a solid foundation, the earth shakes and the mountains move" also emphasizes the immense destructive power that is produced when there is a problem with the foundation. The incident that took place in Weng'an, Guizhou Province, on June 28, 2008, is a stark portrait of what happens when not enough work, perhaps not even any work,

has been done at the grassroots level. This time it led to a sudden disturbance that should never have occurred, in which people were hurt, buildings were torched, and property was destroyed. Afterward, the provincial Party secretary of Guizhou apologized and bowed to the people three times. The county Party chief and the head of the county of Weng'an were removed from office, and the director and the political commissar of the county Public Security Bureau were dismissed. This incident was primarily caused by the actions of a small number of local officials working at the grassroots level. In dealing with some issues that involved economic interests, these local officials did not respond to the appeals of the people by thinking about ways in which to help them resolve their problems. Instead, they abused the power by using the police to confront the people, and resorted to crude and simplistic behavior in a vain attempt to compel the people by brute force. This kind of work style is far removed from the fundamental aim of the mass line. It caused the worst kind of influence. If not checked, it will shake the very foundation of the Party and the state.

Whether grassroots work is good or not is judged by the satisfaction and approval of the people. As the saying goes, "Authorities at higher levels are like thousands of threads and governments at the community level are the single needle that weaves." The path of this needle should closely adhere to the needs of the people by solving real problems, undertaking difficult tasks, and doing good work, so that the people receive tangible benefits. The satisfaction and approval of the people should be the first and last considerations when formulating policies. Without exception, policies and plans should be based on reality. Studies should be conducted on their feasibility and their likelihood of being adopted by the people, for even the soundest of policies will be reduced to mere rhetoric if the people are unable to adopt it. If not implemented properly, policies are liable to meet with disapproval and resistance from the people. In practice, doing grassroots work and laying the foundation requires real action, with the keyword "real" always remaining at the forefront. Local officials should refrain from trying to achieve instant

results with overly ambitious policies and grand words. Instead, they should adopt a down-to-earth approach and do solid work. Matters that touch on the people's livelihood should be handled properly to deliver real results. Likewise, ambitions for grandiose plans should be rejected; "formalistic projects" and "political points projects" brought to a halt. Let there be no market for those who trade in utilitarianism. By following these recommendations, local officials and Party members are laying a solid foundation for socialism.

The community level serves as both a platform to develop and train officials, and a testing ground, where officials are evaluated and selected for promotion. Party members and officials who work at the community level should focus their attention on the work for the local people. With responsibilities to supervisors and to the people aligned, local officials should conduct their day-to-day work with a long-term vision, and incorporate the people's needs into their work objectives. They should pay attention to the real world, speak the truth, make honest reports, and seek real results. Simply working for the sake of appearances or practicing fraud should be firmly rejected. When Party members and officials roll up their sleeves to do solid work, they are hammering out an ideology and work-style that ties them to the people, establishes them at the grassroots level, and invests them in addressing the people's concerns. By improving the overall quality of Party members and officials, we create a pool of talent that can be drawn upon for future development.

As a Chinese proverb goes, “Just as distance tests a horse’s strength, time will show a person’s sincerity.” The growth of Chinese-Latin American and Caribbean relations has proved and will continue to prove that ours is an open, inclusive, mutually beneficial and cooperative relationship.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping before the Mexican Senate, June 5, 2013*

Just as Distance Tests a Horse's Strength, Time Will Show a Person's Sincerity

— *Strengthening cooperation and mutual trust with
Latin American and Caribbean countries*

According to an ancient Chinese adage, “Just as distance tests a horse’s strength, time will show a person’s sincerity.” This proverb was taken from the first act of *The Struggles to Repay Kindness*, a play written by an anonymous author during the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368). It reads, “Sister, I wish you a long life filled with honor and fortune. Should I ever be in a position to repay your kindness, I shall certainly do so, then as they say, just as distance tests a horse’s strength, time will show a person’s sincerity.” Simple and straightforward, this adage suggests that in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of a horse, one must test it on a long journey. In order to determine the virtues and vices of a person, one must spend extended time together.

Xi Jinping used the above quotation to describe the open, inclusive, mutually beneficial, and cooperative relations that exist between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries. The longer both sides promote mutual trust, strengthen communication, and seek common development, the more confidence we will have in one another.

Latin America is the farthest continent from China. Yet Che Guevara’s portrait can often be seen emblazoned on the T-shirts of Chinese youths. Leaders such as Fidel Castro and Hugo Chavez have become heroes in the eyes of many Chinese for galvanizing anti-American sentiment in Latin America. Soccer legends such as Pelé and Diego Maradona have fascinated generations of Chinese fans. Delve a little deeper, however, one finds that Chinese people do not know enough

about Latin America and Caribbean, and exchanges and communication between ordinary people have been especially lacking.

During the Cold War in the 1960s, the United States regarded Latin American and Caribbean countries as its own “backyard,” and left a heavy footprint on them. Consequently, those countries were late to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC. It was only after Henry Kissinger made his secret trip to Beijing and China restored its lawful seat in the United Nations that countries in Latin America and Caribbean started lining up to establish diplomatic relations with China. Nevertheless, many of these countries that wanted to develop official ties with China still needed to consider the attitude of the United States. As long as the United States maintained a relaxed attitude, those countries accelerated the pace of establishing diplomatic relations with China. So far, China has established diplomatic ties with 21 countries in Latin America and Caribbean. For historical reasons, Latin America and Caribbean account for almost half of over twenty countries that still maintain “diplomatic relations” with the Taiwan region. Today, Latin American and Caribbean countries and China frequently engage in high-level exchanges, and economic and trade ties have developed rapidly. In 1979, trade volume between China and Latin America and Caribbean amounted to merely one billion USD. In 2007, trade volume surpassed its record high of 100 billion USD, and China became the third largest trading partner of Latin America and Caribbean. In 2012, bilateral trade between China and Latin America and Caribbean grew to set a new high of 261.2 billion USD against a sluggish global economy.

Countries in Latin America and Caribbean are generally smaller and less populated, with a more modest presence on the international stage. Having long faced pressure from the United States, they want economic development but they also yearn for independence and autonomy. Xi Jinping quoted the adage mentioned above in order to outline the state of relations between China and Latin American and Caribbean countries, with an eye not simply fixed on the present but on long-range strategic considerations. Rather than proposing a cooperative development model

based solely on economic and trade cooperation, we put forward a comprehensive, multilayered model that included everything from the economy and culture to health and sports. These are the areas that most concern people in Latin America and Caribbean.

Countries in Latin America and Caribbean are part of the same developing world as China. Through multilevel exchanges and communication, Latin America and Caribbean and China can build mechanisms that promote mutual assistance and mutual trust, so that people from both regions have the opportunity to improve their lives. This is the essence of the adage “just as distance tests a horse’s strength, time will show a person’s sincerity.”

“To forge iron, one must be strong.” Our responsibility is to work with all Party members to uphold the principle that the Party should supervise its own conduct and run itself with strict discipline, effectively solve major problems within the Party, improve its work style, and maintain close ties with the people. By so doing, our Party will surely remain at the core of the leadership in advancing socialism with Chinese characteristics.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at a press conference for the new Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, November 15, 2012*

To Forge Iron, One Must Be Strong

— *Continuing to improve the Party*

According to a Chinese proverb, “To forge iron, one must be strong. To stitch embroidery, one must be dexterous.” As a blacksmith, “one must be strong” in order to heat and shape metals into sturdy ironware. Similarly, one must have nimble fingers and skilled hands in order to sew beautiful embroidery. In Book 13 of *The Analects*, Confucius said: “If the ruler himself is upright all will go well even though he does not give orders. But if he himself is not upright, even though he gives orders, they will not be obeyed.” In other words, rulers should first correct their own behavior. If one lacks integrity, one cannot correct the behavior of others. If one is not strong, one cannot produce high-quality ironware. Extending this concept further, we realize that in order to accomplish a mandate or task of any kind, we must first determine which personal qualities are necessary. If we find that the qualities or skills we possess are inadequate, then we are unable to complete the given task. Furthermore, we need to be models of rectitude, with the correct ideology and value system.

At a press conference for the new Standing Committee of the Political Bureau, Xi Jinping quoted the above proverb in response to the media’s interest in the issue of self-improvement within the CPC. His decision to use this proverb showed just how much importance he placed on the issue. To govern the country, one must first govern the Party. For the Party to govern the country, it must not only be strong, it must also be correct. It needs to continue to enhance its capabilities while remaining progressive and ideologically pure.

As the ruling party, the CPC is the true representative of the interests of people of all ethnic groups in China. The Party led the nation out of

the chaos of war toward peace, steered it from a backward course toward modernization, and guided its transition from a closed society to one that opened up to the world. The Party has become “the core of leadership for the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Just like any individual, however, as the role of the Party has become more important, the responsibilities that it must bear have also grown. It is important to recognize that the Party’s mandate to rule is the result of the people’s choice and historical events. It is the rational progression of history and the inevitable course of reality. However, the progressive nature and ruling status of the Party are neither permanent nor immutable. A progressive past does not guarantee a progressive future; having possessed something in the past does not mean that it has been secured for the present or the future. In order to maintain its progressive nature and consolidate its ruling status, the Party must anticipate and prevent problems. While still improving governance skills and capabilities, the Party needs to exercise sound judgment and guard against arrogant or rash behavior.

Just as a bunker is most easily breached from within, internal factors form the basis for change and development. The radical changes that took place in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Union are examples of countries where the ruling Communist parties fell from power, or even died out, because the parties neglected to improve themselves. They failed to maintain ideological purity and keep up with the times. When people lost faith in the parties, they lost authority to lead the development and building of the countries. These collapsed parties and fallen states offer valuable lessons to the CPC. Right now, we are distressed by some leaders within the Party who are self-important and act arrogantly toward the public, or who are spiritually empty and believe that communism is an illusory dream. We are concerned about some Party members who choose to use the authority entrusted to them by the people for their own personal gain. When tempted by fame and fortune, they fail the test and surrender to their own self-interests. This behavior disappoints the people and damages the Party’s image. As the

ruling party, the CPC must attach importance to these issues and impose severe punishments when needed; otherwise, the foundation of the Party will be compromised.

A political party must always keep a clean mind on reality, strengthening close ties with the people, and enhancing its immunity. It must control and eliminate the risk of corruption that is associated with expanded power and higher status. It is imperative that members of the CPC understand the situation facing them. They must not stay aloof from the people and should willingly submit to society's supervision. While putting more pressure on themselves, Party members should strive to adapt and advance. They have to enhance their abilities so that they are able to adapt to new situations, respond to new challenges, and resolve new problems.

Over the years, some government agencies and leading bodies have chosen to concern themselves with respect rather than rules, connections rather than principles. They skirt around conflicts and ignore or drag out problems for so long that they are never resolved. Closed doors, long faces, and convoluted procedures turn some regulations into “scarecrows” that stand there without any use. This behavior has drawn strong reaction from the people.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at a symposium he chaired in Hebei Province, July 12, 2013*

Closed Doors, Long Faces, and Convoluted Procedures

— *Do not make life hard for the public*

When people go to government offices to take care of matters, they frequently find themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to deal with “closed doors, long faces, and convoluted procedures.” Ordinary business grinds to a halt, and simple matters are made complicated. Government workers create as much distance between themselves and any trouble, then kick back and take it easy. When a problem requires the coordination of multiple agencies, they either kick “the ball” back and forth between agencies, or wait for the other agency to “serve.” Ultimately, it is the common people who get the short end of the stick. They have summed up their widespread discontent toward government departments and social service agencies as “closed doors, long faces, and convoluted procedures.”

Before entering the door, members of the public are met with several rounds of questioning and are restricted by ubiquitous signs declaring “Employees Only.” These are the “closed doors.” When people go to a government agency to handle a matter, government personnel berate them right in their face without even bothering to ask what the matter is about. They assume that serving the public will only make more trouble for themselves. These are the “long faces.” People run around to different departments trying to tick off all the right boxes but are still stonewalled by government staff, who shift responsibility and just pass the buck. These are the “convoluted procedures.” Xi Jinping used the people’s own words to express his indignation at the bureaucracy of these government agencies, especially leading bodies.

On the surface, “closed doors, long faces, and convoluted procedures”

may just seem to be the consequences of dealing with office workers whose character and professional abilities are questionable. Probing a little deeper, however, one finds that it is actually bureaucracy at work.

On October 11, 2013, the China Central Television program *Topics in Focus* conducted an exposé on just such a case. Mr. Zhou worked in Beijing, away from his hometown. When his company decided to send him overseas, he needed to apply for a passport. Since Mr. Zhou had contributed to social insurance for less than a year while working in Beijing, regulations required that he return to the location of his registered permanent residence to apply for the passport. Ordinarily, the application process is not difficult. Mr. Zhou, however, had to make six long treks between Beijing and Wuyi County, Hebei Province, which are more than 300 kilometers (186 miles) apart. After more than half a year of running around, he still could not complete his application. Just the thought of having to watch the long faces of government workers each time filled him with apprehension. Here is a summary of the documentation that he had to provide: proof that he did not have a criminal record; a certificate of employment from his employer; his employer's business license; proof that his employer was eligible to send staff abroad; and his local ID card. Mr. Zhou had to travel more than 3,000 kilometers (1,864 miles) just to provide these five documents. Yet, the website for the Ministry of Public Security clearly stipulates, when ordinary citizens such as Mr. Zhou apply for a passport, they are only required to provide their ID card and their permanent residence registration booklet, both the original and a photocopy of them, and their passport photo. With the exception of his local ID card, none of the documentation that the clerks demanded was required by law. People are frustrated by government workers who try to lord over them. This kind of work style grieves and troubles people who are simply trying to get things done. This behavior may seem like a trivial matter when compared to greedy and corrupt high-ranking officials. Nevertheless, it is the countless trivial matters such as these that chip away at the Party's image to damaging effect.

To some extent, the work style of office staff is a reflection of local officials and local governments. When open for business, government departments should not assume that the people they serve will bring “trouble,” nor should they forget where their duty lies.

There is the puffed-up argument, “the government should concern itself with important matters, not trivial ones.” For some civil servants, however, those “trivial” matters that involve the people’s interests may just be the real test of their governing ability.

Xi Jinping detests “closed doors, long faces, and convoluted procedures.” Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the whole Party has participated in the program of mass line education and practice, which seeks in part to curb the corrosive tendencies of bureaucracy from spreading inside the Party. This initiative has been remarkably effective and unanimously praised by the public. As for the problems that still remain, we sincerely hope that certain Party leaders will ask themselves whether they have genuinely connected with the people, learned about their hardships, and made a concrete difference in their lives.

Every branch and leaf should be valued. It only takes a glance for the people to discern who is putting on a show and who is genuinely trying to connect with them.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at a symposium he chaired for leaders in Hubei Province, July 23, 2013*

Putting On a Show

— *Never be insincere with the people*

Entertainment programming, such as “The Ellen Show,” “Your Face Sounds Familiar,” “80s Talk Show,” and the reality show “Where Are We Going, Dad?,” is popular with audiences around the country. It would seem that everybody likes a “show.” When preceded by “put on,” however, “shows” become awkward and deliberate, with pushy agendas that are disliked or even detested by everyone. Xi Jinping used this common saying as a form of criticism to highlight the need to combat deception and formalism. He encouraged Party leaders to follow the mass line and never be insincere with the people.

“The people have sharp eyes.” They can discern which government officials veer into fantasy and put on a show, and which genuinely connect with the people. Putting on a show harks back to the feudal system, when certain officials sought favor from their superiors by claiming credit for things they did not do. These officials are motivated by the hope that notching up professional successes will increase their chances for promotion. If not stopped, this phony and egotistical work style is bound to foment harmful social tendencies, such as making false reports, concealing the truth from superiors, lying, and committing forgery. This work style is detrimental to national development and improvement. It can even be serious enough to create antagonism between the government and the people, and lead to bouts of social instability. The Party and the state maintain a policy of opposing and attacking “shows” put on by officials, and are determined to never allow similar incidents to affect the close relationship between the Party and the people or shake the Party’s mass base.

The original meaning of the word “show” is to display charisma, reveal an attitude, or express emotion. A good “show” can help improve and promote positive interaction between the government and society, enhance mutual trust and understanding, and remove barriers. “Shows” that are designed to deliberately confuse or trick people, however, should be resolutely opposed. Instead of playing any positive role, these “shows” deepen conflicts between officials and the people, which may lead to social unrests.

From 2008 to 2014, Jiangxi Province launched a massive afforestation campaign to the tune of tens of billions of RMB. As the province already boasted the second-highest percentage of forest cover in China, tree planting should not have been its top priority. Nevertheless, the top leader at the time considered this his pet project and used his clout to make tree planting a political act that was promoted at all levels of government. This drove localities to implement a succession of haphazard plans in order to meet expectations. For example, as early as 2010, the media reported stories about mature trees being cut down and replaced with new ones. The road leading into the county-level city of Ruichang, which falls under the jurisdiction of Jiujiang City, was once lined with big London plane trees. Under the guise of road construction, the municipal administration removed the London plane trees and replaced them with other species, such as camphor trees. Less than a year later, they dug up and replanted the trees, which caused many to wither and die. This waste of manpower and money is a typical example of formalism. When officials put on this kind of “show,” their behavior should meet with harsh criticism.

In and of itself, afforestation is a good thing. Nevertheless, when we disrespect science, ignore the reality of changing circumstances just to satisfy the interests of those in authority, or impose one-size-fits-all solutions, then good things become bad things and projects designed to improve the people’s livelihood become “formalistic projects.” The afforestation campaign makes it clear that when leading officials launch a project, they simply cannot put on a show. Rather, they need to be

realistic and think of the people's interests, not engage in formalism!

The people have great antipathy for shows, just as they do for acts of deception and formalism. Some officials have been unable to live up to their responsibilities to help people resolve their problems. Some engage in nothing but posturing and arbitrary policymaking, which disgusts the people to no end. How should officials conduct themselves? They should work with the real situation on the ground and use genuine concern to help ease the people's worries and solve their problems. They should narrow the distance between the Party and the people, make a clean break with formalism, and stop putting on shows.

The future and destiny of any political party ultimately depends on the support of the people. “Popular support makes power.” The number of Party members is small compared to that of the people. The grand goal of our Party can never be realized without popular support. It is not up to us to judge our Party’s governance capacity or performance; they must and can only be judged by the people, the supreme and ultimate judge of the Party’s work.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the symposium to commemorate the 120th anniversary of Mao Zedong, December 26, 2013*

Popular Support Makes Power

— *The mass line is the life of the Party*

“Popular support makes power.” Simple yet effective, this short four-word sentence implies a profound truth capable of deciding the fate of a political party or state, achieving the great rejuvenation of a nation, or accelerating the end of an era. Xi Jinping used this common saying to emphasize the nature of the relationship between the Party and the people, and to remind Party members that “the mass line is the life of our Party and the fundamental approach to the Party’s work.”

“The water that bears a boat is the same that capsizes it.” The future and destiny of any political party or state power ultimately depends upon the support or opposition of the people. The celebrated patriot and democratic advocate Huang Yanpei engaged in a famous conversation with Mao Zedong while they were in Yan’an. Throughout history, he said, there have been emperors whose indolence allowed eunuchs to monopolize state power, rulers whose deaths brought an end to the policies they put in place, and people who sought wealth and status but only brought shame upon themselves. No dynasty has been able to break this cycle.

Indeed, history has proven this point. Internal factors and public disapproval caused mighty dynasties to fall. The Ottoman Empire once swept across Eurasia unrivaled. Yet in the end, it was vulnerable and collapsed in the face of Western European countries, which had developed rapidly during the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution. The Roman Empire stretched across Europe, Asia, and Africa; the Mediterranean was considered the empire’s own inland sea. The Chinese Qin Dynasty (221 BC-206 BC) was the first to defeat the other warring

states and unify the land. Emperor Yang of the Chinese Sui Dynasty (581-618) opened the Grand Canal and promoted military strategy. Nevertheless, they all fell due to the lack of popular support. Over the past three decades, a succession of major parties that had dominated governments for long periods have been defeated and lost political power. Even some long-term opposition parties that had managed to flourish have now floundered. Examples of fallen parties include the Institutional Revolutionary Party of Mexico and the Communist Parties in France and Japan. The breakup of the Soviet Union, the collapse of its Communist Party, and the rapid changes in Eastern Europe also serve as weighty lessons.

Be it a government or a party, its fate ultimately depends upon its ability to improve enough to progress with the times and to win the support of the majority of the people. Mao Zedong responded to Huang Yanpei, "We have found a new path and we can break this cycle. This new path is democracy. When the people are allowed to monitor the government, it dare not become lax. When everyone bears responsibility, the death of one person will not cause the government to stop." The aphorism, "the one who wins the heart of the people gains an empire," propounds that popular support has the power to dominate a land. This power stems from two sources: approval and participation of the people in the objectives of a political party, and their judgments and choices.

Whether the people identify with the ideas and objectives of a political party depends on whether these ideas and objectives represent the interests of the people, and integrate their immediate and long-term interests in particular. Only after identifying with a party's ideas and objectives are the people able to actively support and dedicate themselves to that party's endeavors. The objectives of a political party cannot be achieved without the support of the people.

Whether the performance and effectiveness of a political party is sound or not is not judged by that party itself. The ruling status of the CPC is the inevitable determination of history and the people. Its ruling status has been shored up by and is inseparable from the wholehearted

endorsement and support of the people. As Deng Xiaoping repeatedly warned the Party, “The ultimate standard for judging the merits of our work is the happiness, satisfaction, support, and agreement of the people.” Globalization is behind many of the factors that influence China’s development. Deng Xiaoping often reminded us: “The economies of some of our neighboring countries and regions are growing faster than ours. If our economy stagnates or develops only slowly, the people will make comparisons and ask why.”

The vast majority of the people trust and support our Party. However, some Party members remain remote and seriously isolated from the people. These Party members view the people as “unruly” and act indifferent toward the problems they report. These officials muddle through their work or simply feign compliance. They have become increasingly distant from the people. If unhealthy tendencies and corrupt practices such as these continue to spread within the Party, or if we fail to properly develop our relationship with the people, then the power of the CPC will become like a river without a source or a tree without roots. Left unchecked, they would put the Party in dangerous territory.

“Popular support makes power.” This is the foundation for the Party to govern. It is the power to make history and the strength to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Every official must bear the following in mind: “Don’t be too greedy with your grasp; those who stretch too far will be caught.”

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, January 14, 2014*

Don't Be Too Greedy with Your Grasp; Those Who Stretch Too Far Will Be Caught

— *Keeping up high pressure on corruption*

In March 1954, Marshal Chen Yi composed a suite of poems entitled *Inspired Thoughts*. The fourth poem of the suite, “Seven-Character Verse, Don’t Steal,” contains the powerful maxim: “Don’t be too greedy with your grasp; those who stretch too far will be caught.” While issuing a stern warning to those harboring evil intentions, Chen Yi also displays his selfless spirit and earnest willingness to write a prescription for those who are “ill.” The easily understood and smoothly flowing language of this poem brings insight as well as a warning, and it can teach and benefit both ordinary people and leading officials upon first reading. In quoting lines from Chen Yi’s poem, Xi Jinping intended to warn and urge leading officials, telling them that they must have “zero tolerance” for graft and corruption for both themselves and for others.

The ancient Chinese forewarned, “Those who do not eliminate their greedy hearts will be like moths flying toward the flames, never stopping until their bodies have burned away.” There is a deep philosophy of life behind these plain, yet profound words, as they vividly reveal to us the danger of avarice and importance of establishing correct life outlooks and values. As the ancients said, “Appetite and lust are human nature.” Everyone has their own material desires, and there is nothing wrong with pursuing legitimate personal interests. But “if a gentleman is fond of wealth, he obtains it through the proper way.” Interests must be reasonably and legally obtained through honest hard work and not by harming the interests of others, society, or the nation.

There should be even greater demands on our leading officials,

as they hold the power bestowed upon them by the people, and the question arises: whom they are wielding power for? If the people trust you and hand the power over to you, they demand that you — with a hold on power — do a solid job in your position. Those in power should do real deeds and seek to benefit the people rather than using power as their own tool for amassing wealth. Throughout history, the people have detested corrupt officials, and this problem has also been a great threat to the nation. Leading officials must keep a clear head, and no matter who they are, how great their office, or how powerful their position, everyone who touches the high-voltage line of corruption will face harsh punishment under Party discipline and national laws and make a disgraceful exit. There should be no illusion that one can get away with corruption, and the only way to keep corruption from being exposed is not to commit it in the first place.

There are too many harsh lessons from real life corruption cases. Some people are quite cautious in their normal lives, but lose their way as soon as they are given more power, and cannot resist the temptation. The lessons are bitter, the costs are high, and there is no turning back once you start down that path. So everyone in power must always keep a barrier around them to prevent corruption and degradation.

“Don’t be too greedy with your grasp; those who stretch too far will be caught.” This reflects the resolve of the Party central authorities to make corruption unthinkable for officials. It is also a warning and ultimatum: a warning to those who think they will somehow get away with their schemes and harbor base intentions, and an ultimatum to those faced with temptation who get the itch to stick out their hand when the first sprouts of greed start to grow in their minds. Always be aware of the dangers of avarice and always keep yourself in check. To control one’s own desires, individuals must not only bolster their own moral fiber, society must also uphold correctness and encourage an upright, orderly social atmosphere.

Many people aspire to do their work well and are full of enthusiasm, but lack the abilities required to succeed in changing circumstances. In response to new circumstances and problems, they cling to old patterns of thinking and old practices. The problem stems from ignorance of general trends and new approaches, as well as inadequate knowledge and abilities. They rush headlong into their work and act blindly. As a result, even though they are conscientious in their work and spare no effort, they take the wrong approach, act in a way that defeats their purpose, or even hop on a northbound chariot when they mean to be going south. This is called not being able to use new methods, clinging to old methods, shying from hard methods, and wasting time with soft methods.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the celebration assembly of the 80th anniversary of the Central Party School and the opening ceremony of its 2013 spring semester, March 1, 2013*

Not Being Able to Use New Methods, Clinging to Old Methods, Shying from Hard Methods, and Wasting Time with Soft Methods

— *Studying harder and overcoming the dread of incompetence*

In today's pressure- and competition-filled world, young people in particular face enormous pressure to compete and find jobs. Now there is widespread anxiety and lack of direction among college students looking for work, and cognizance of their own "dread of incompetence" has quietly taken over their psyches. There is even a book about this phenomenon called *The Dread of Incompetence* that argues that the greatest fear we face is that of our own dread of incompetence, and in this era of fierce competition, everyone must save themselves! The key questions of our time are how to truly carry out the Learning Revolution, how to best invest in our own abilities, and how to rapidly improve our abilities.

Mao Zedong first introduced the concept of "dread of incompetence" to the CPC in a speech on the Yan'an study movement he gave in 1939, which has been published as "Speech Given at the Cadre Education Mobilization Meeting in Yan'an" in Volume 2 of *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*. Back then, most of the leading officials came from peasant backgrounds and were raised on the unforgiving battlefield, and lacked a systematic education. When the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression reached a stalemate, there were many changes in the Party's tasks, and the new situation called for more than what the Party's former "abilities" were, which started to expose problems. In response to this, Mao Zedong pointed out the problem of the "dread of incompetence," intending to warn the officials that they had to adapt to the new situation, start studying right away, and improve their own abilities for when the

revolutionary wave would come. This speech became an important motivating force in the CPC's cadre study movement in Yan'an.

In the ever-changing era of the knowledge economy, faced with an unending procession of new things and new problems, and faced with the objective of deepening overall reform, leading officials who are vested with this great historical mission cannot light the way for others while they are in the dark themselves. They must be able to have a handle on the entire situation. The experience of the Yan'an study movement shows that study is the fundamental answer to eliminating the dread of incompetence. Reading and studying is the only way to sharpen the minds of more officials and prevent stagnation, superstition, fanaticism, and outdated views. Now we especially must correct the work styles of certain leading officials who have grown lax in their studies, lack reflection, and have become divorced from the actual situation.

Xi Jinping's new warning to Party members and officials about the dread of incompetence in the new situation came just when the world, the nation, and the Party were undergoing deep changes. From a global perspective, the current era is characterized by changes, innovations, development, and diversity. Knowledge is rapidly advancing, and we have already entered the era of knowledge explosion. From a national perspective, contemporary China is already standing at a new starting point, new features have emerged in the current stage of economic and social development, and new situations, problems, and conflicts are continually emerging. From the Party's perspective, the CPC is currently faced with a serious and complex test of its governance, and it is continually tested by the market economy and environment. In this type of global, national, and Party situation, if we do not study now and study well and continually improve ourselves in study and work, it will be hard for Party members and leading officials to shoulder their historic tasks or even keep up with the current era.

The dread of incompetence reflects the Party leadership's great concern with building the Party itself. The course of human advancement and development is one of continually improving the ability of humans

to adapt to their environment and face nature. From primitive man being terrified by and worshipping lightning and thunder to modern technology's use of electricity to provide us with better lives, from only being able to pray for protection from floods to modern dams and dikes that turn water resources into wealth, humans have advanced by continually improving their own abilities. The same goes for a political party, which can only move ahead with unstoppable force by continually pursuing change and advancement and being able to adapt to the new environment.

This shows that “not being able to use new methods” is ignorant, “clinging to old methods” is thoughtless, “shying from hard methods” reveals lack of confidence, and “wasting time with soft methods” reflects lack of ability. People who do this are destined for a life of mediocrity, and officials who do this plant the seeds of disaster that will beset the nation and the people. There is important significance in Xi Jinping using these common phrases to point out the dread of incompetence — a problem among Party members and officials.

The only way to overcome the dread of incompetence is through study. All Party members and officials need to continually improve their own ability to adapt and deal with problems. Knowledge exists in books as well as in practice. “If you can't, then learn; if you don't know, then ask.” We must not only absorb energy from books, but also act on what we learn and improve ourselves through practice. Learning should return to its roots of “beginning in practice and ending in practice.” Turning knowledge learning into ability learning is the only way to truly overcome the dread of incompetence and move away from “not being able to use new methods, clinging to old methods, shying from hard methods, and wasting time with soft methods.”

“The fire burns hotter when more hands feed it.” We have within the central leadership an effective mechanism featuring both division of labor and coordination. So we go about our respective duties while working in concert to get the job done properly.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at a joint interview by the press of the BRICS countries, March 19, 2013*

The Fire Burns Hotter When More Hands Feed It

— *United as one, making great achievements together*

“The fire burns hotter when more hands feed it, with few people nothing can get done.” This folk saying was included in *Selected Chinese Idioms* and means that when many people act together and add firewood to a burning fire, the flame will leap up high. It is generally used to imply thinking the same thing and working toward the same purpose to form a consensus and combined forces.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, the world has paid close attention to China’s new leadership. During a joint press interview, Xi Jinping talked about the work to be done by himself and the new leadership team, and made symbolic use of this Chinese idiom to impart two levels of meaning: First, the traditional Chinese understanding of leadership is not pure individual existence, but rather individuals integrating into the whole, working together, and complementing one another. This is what leads to better results. Second, it clearly told everyone that China’s top leadership was actually not what it was believed by the outside, with a “big boss” who called all of the shots. Instead, it was a collective leadership in which each member had clear duties but also worked closely together.

The job of the CPC is to work tirelessly to lead the Chinese people in development, build a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious, and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. To realize the common dream of more than a billion people, everyone must do their part. This requires that more people identify with the value of this dream and jointly participate in the great cause of development and construction. If

everyone does their part in realizing this dream, given enough time they can build a soaring tower.

“There is power in numbers and everything is easier with more help.” This concept has been around in China for a long time. The deeper social cause of this is from the ancient Chinese social structure that focused on agriculture, and the more labor forces that were put to use at the same time, the greater the harvest. But the division of labor is increasingly minute in modern large-scale socialized production, and individuals have a stronger sense of self-identity. Systems theory and modern management theory tell us that the whole is not necessarily the sum of the parts, and the overall function may be greater or less than the mechanical accumulation of all subsystems or departmental forces. It is determined by whether the subsystems or departments have the same goal and also by whether their structure is reasonably formed. If people do not have the same mental identification or action guidance within a system, it will be a total mess with everyone working toward their own ends. Or, even if some systems do have highly unified thoughts and objectives, they might still be prone to internal strife if the members cannot complement each other’s abilities and individual drive is not utilized.

Therefore, we must have a full understanding of “the fire burns hotter when more hands feed it” than simply “there is power in numbers.” Apart from having the same objective of building a strong, prosperous, democratic, culturally advanced, and harmonious socialist nation, we must also form a scientific operating mechanism and reasonable division of labor, as this is the only way in which we can finally create an indomitable force and let the fire burn even hotter.

I don't find pleasure in pain, I find pleasure in exhaustion.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping while meeting staff members of the Chinese Embassy in Russia and representatives from Chinese-funded organizations, March 22, 2013*

Finding Pleasure in Exhaustion

— *Working hard with optimism*

The Chinese entertainment world was all abuzz when Chyi Chin came out with his album *Painfully Happy* in 1995, and thereafter, phrases like “working and happy” and “toiling and happy” became popular. The 2014 CCTV Spring Festival Gala featured the song *Where Has the Time Gone?* Since then, “where has the time gone” and its variations have become popular phrases in everyday conversations.

When Xi Jinping met staff members of the Chinese Embassy in Russia and representatives from Chinese-funded organizations during his visit to Russia in March 2013, he discussed his current trip and where his time had gone, “I don’t find pleasure in pain, I find pleasure in exhaustion.” He humorously altered this popular phrase to show his own optimistic outlook on his work and life.

Time shows no favoritism, and everyone has 24 hours only each day. How to make use of this time is of the utmost importance to every individual. From the news, we know what Xi Jinping does with his time as a leader of a major nation. Leaders like him have different activities each day and their schedule of a day is strictly followed. Leaders’ itineraries, when visiting a foreign country, are strictly laid out with one thing after another and little time for rest in between. Even when they do get a moment’s rest, they still have to constantly be preparing for and thinking about what they must do next. The difference between ordinary people and leaders is that leaders have symbolic significance for a country, and every move they make and word they say must meet the expectations and demands of the citizens. Shouldering these tasks and mission, it is not easy at all being a leader. As Xi Jinping said, he “finds pleasure in

exhaustion.”

In saying he “finds pleasure in exhaustion,” Xi Jinping was frankly expressing what he himself must endure without disguising this fact. He was also telling everyone that he is glad to be able to work hard and contribute his own part for the country and the people, and that it would be worth it even if the job were more difficult and demanding. “Empty talk harms the country, while hard work makes it flourish” – this was his reflection after viewing the exhibition “The Road to Rejuvenation.” “Dedicate myself to public service, advance the interests of the people” was his pledge to the people after taking office. “I find pleasure in exhaustion” was Xi Jinping’s promise to carry out “hard work” that “makes the country flourish,” as well as his perfect interpretation of governing for the people. This line shows his optimism and humor in his work and life as well as his dedication and loyalty to this cause.

The duty of leaders at every level in every position and in every place is to serve the people. Momentary exhaustion at the end of a full day is the visible result of work, and leading officials can only truly carry out their duties by putting their all into their work. Happiness is a state of mind as well as a concept and wish. Leaders are people too, and biologically speaking, being tired is an inevitable byproduct of a massive workload. But psychologically speaking, they can experience happiness through this because of their intimate relationship with the people and by incorporating their sincere feelings into their work of governing for the people. The only way to feel incomparable gratitude when the wishes of the people are fulfilled is to have true loyalty and love for the people. Giving it your all is a part of the job description, and happiness is the sense of gratitude and blessing that comes from serving the people.

The popular greeting of “have you eaten?” has slowly been replaced by “what’ve you been busy with?” in contemporary society. Many people say they are “really busy” when asked whether they have been busy lately. Being busy has already become normal in Chinese life, and the result of being busy is exhaustion and hard work. Some people are fickle, easy to lose temper, or become impatient because of this. In fact,

being exhausted is just a superficial result, and what is more important is why we are becoming exhausted. You may be exhausted after enduring hardship for someone you love, but you will also be happy. You may be exhausted after working hard for a cause you are dedicated to, but you will also find glory! Xi Jinping's words reveal his optimistic spirit and infuse positive energy into Chinese society.

Courage and the Party spirit are needed for criticism and self-criticism; we must not lose our weapon for protecting and curing ourselves. True words are jarring to ears, and good medicine tastes bitter. Communists must place what they want to say on the table.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping while providing guidance to a Conduct Review Meeting for the Hebei Provincial Party Standing Committee, September 23-25, 2013*

Place What You Want to Say on the Table

— *Be adept at criticism and self-criticism*

“Place what you want to say on the table” calls for both sides in a conversation to honestly announce their respective stances and viewpoints without reserving or even concealing any issues. Xi Jinping used this common phrase to uphold the Party’s outstanding tradition of criticism and self-criticism, with the intention to further unify the leadership and increase the transparency of decision-making.

Mao Zedong once listed criticism, self-criticism, coupling of theory to practice, and intimate relations with the people as the symbols that clearly distinguished the CPC from any other political party. He used “plac[ing] problems on the table” as a method for facilitating communication among leadership and preventing problems from becoming more complicated. He said: “Place problems on the table. This should be done not only by the ‘squad leader’ but by the committee members too.”

“Placing what you want to say on the table” is both an important method for the leadership to resolve its internal conflicts, improve internal supervision, and maintain unity, and an effective method for colleagues to reach consensuses, clear up misunderstandings, and resolve conflicts. Sincere criticism delivered in person can eliminate the impact of mistaken thinking, clear up nagging issues, and pool forces.

This method is easy to understand, yet difficult to accept and employ. There are many reasons for this, the main one being that both parties to the dialogue have great apprehensions, absence of mutual trust, and a lack of consensus on resolving problems. In some leading groups in particular, some people have observed weaknesses and mistakes of

others, or have had disagreements with colleagues over work. Instead of openly coming out with their views, plainly explaining themselves, and figuring out what is really going on, they grumble behind others' backs, prattle incessantly, fault-find, and complain, slowly forming an undesirable situation in which "nothing is said face to face, but anything is said covertly, and no opinion is expressed at the meeting, but accuse others after the meeting."

"Placing what you want to say on the table" involves an easily understood principle: faultfinding is not the goal. The fundamental goal is to resolve problems, fix flaws, improve the overall quality of Party members and officials, and better serve the people. It also shows that problems cannot be swept under the rug, but rather exposed to the sunlight so that colleagues within the Party can treat each other's "illnesses." As the old saying goes, "Good medicine tastes bitter but cures the disease, and true words are jarring to ears but improve your actions." We cannot improve ourselves and truly resolve our problems without being able to listen to the criticisms and opinions of others. "Criticism and self-criticism is good medicine; it shows true affection for oneself and one's colleagues." Also, criticism does not mean taking revenge. Criticism within the Party is "good medicine," and not "poison," and time for criticism cannot be used as an opportunity for "sticking it" to someone. Just as Xi Jinping said, "Party life requires sharing views, and colleagues within the Party must be candid, bosom friends. Criticism must be done for the common good, with an earnest attitude and a good method. It must be based on facts, uncover the truth, and in no case be motivated by sentiments, personal gain, individual interests, or personal relations."

"Placing what you want to say on the table" has another level of meaning: the decision-making of the leadership on matters of great importance must be transparent and not take place "behind the curtain," be entirely up to the decisions of the "big boss," or be made through private colluding of a few individuals. The Party must stick to democratic centralism, uphold democracy, fully deliberate ideas, collectively discuss

issues, form consensuses, and make scientific decisions democratically. This is a necessary requirement for scientifically improving the quality of Party building.

Apart from making full use of its role among Party leadership, “placing what you want to say on the table” also plays a positive role in the daily lives of ordinary citizens. This phrase is grounded on a sense of social fairness, justice, and openness, and is an extremely important part of improving the all-round development and overall civic consciousness of the Chinese people. In the future, China’s development will get faster, it will become more open, and it will face more challenges and problems. To balance all the various interests and make all groups of people get along, everyone must uphold the “placing what you want to say on the table” mindset, and trust and support one another. In this way, an entirely new outlook will wash over society.

Chinese leaders must comprehensively plan for the big picture while keeping proper balance of all important parts, and all of this is predicated by having a correct understanding of China's situation. They must sometimes focus on the forest and sometimes on the trees. Figuratively speaking, they must play the piano with all ten fingers.

— *Interview given by Xi Jinping to a Russian TV station in Sochi, Russia, February 7, 2014*

Playing the Piano with All Ten Fingers

— *Comprehensive planning and working to keep all parts moving in unison*

“Playing the piano with all ten fingers” means that to play a melody well on the piano, all ten fingers must work in unison. It implies that all aspects of the situation must be considered when you set out to do something, and work on each aspect must have a central focus so that the big picture is considered, while key points are emphasized as well. Xi Jinping quoted this common phrase to show that governing a country requires comprehensive planning and maintaining an overall balance of all parts.

“Comprehensive planning” means planning with an eye on the big picture that uses systematic thinking, making advance preparations for planned development, and coordinating all involved interests. The hope is that this will reduce conflicts and problems to the greatest extent and facilitate healthy project development. China has long employed such methods of planning. For example, *Draft History of Qing: Annals of Emperor Muzong I* states, “Zeng Guofan was ordered to comprehensively plan all military affairs north of the river.” China is a large country with a lot of problems to deal with, and comprehensive planning is a fundamental method for following the Scientific Outlook on Development. Now, for example, China must comprehensively plan for the development of cities and the countryside, an assortment of different regions, the economy and society, and man and nature. This requires comprehensively fine-tuning the relationships between domestic development and opening up, central and regional authorities, personal and collective interests, local and overall interests, and current and long-term interests.

Since the adoption of reform and opening up policy, China has

undergone more than three decades of rapid development and formed its own set of methods for handling problems. On the whole, it has tackled “impossible task” after “impossible task” while continually improving its comprehensive planning and coordination. Some people believe that comprehensive planning in China is a remnant of the era of the planned economy, and that it should have been ushered off the stage of history long ago because it cannot adapt to the development needs of the current era of the market economy. This is clearly an extreme conclusion that fails to distinguish between the concepts of comprehensive planning and ordinary planning. Comprehensive planning requires overall coordination to ensure healthy, sustainable development. It is a dynamic process that is adjusted as the situation changes. Ordinary planning is a static process inclined toward stability that to a certain extent prevents change. It requires following the rules of the overall plan from the start and rigidly adhering to it without adding needed flexibility. It lacks a coping mechanism for new problems, which results in negative consequences.

China is a large country with a huge population and there are great differences from place to place, so one method of governing cannot be rigidly adhered to, nor can everyone move along at the same pace. This demands that leaders clearly recognize which problems — and aspects of a given problem — are primary and which are secondary, and then comprehensively plan and coordinate their work. Mao Zedong frequently referred to “nine fingers and one finger,” in which the “nine fingers” are the main achievements that we should focus on and “one finger” refers to problems that we cannot allow to distract us. Therefore, we must be good at finding the main aspects of the main problems. Since the nature of things is determined by the main aspects of the dominant problems, when observing and handling issues the main problems and lesser problems must be distinguished.

China has all sorts of complex problems, large and small. Having observed this, a foreign leader once joked that China’s leaders are not in charge of just one country, but rather a “United Nations.” With such a

large area and enormous population, China's regional economies are very unbalanced in their development. The challenges and problems China's leaders face are immediately apparent, and this requires "playing the piano with all ten fingers," not "mashing all the keys with all ten fingers." If one location has an issue that affects everyone, the central authorities have to give it their full attention. Some problems are entirely regional in nature, and the local authorities can be left to handle these themselves. Playing a beautiful melody requires subtle variations — sometimes you play a little faster and sometimes a little slower, sometimes a little louder and sometimes a little quieter. Comprehensive planning and coordinating development are key measures to resolving these complex problems, and this is the key meaning of "playing the piano with all ten fingers."

“The last one tenth of the journey demands double the effort.” The closer we are to achieving the goal of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the more we should redouble our efforts and not slacken our pace, the more we must mobilize all young people to this end.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping to outstanding young representatives from all walks of life, May 4, 2013*

The Last One Tenth of the Journey Demands Double the Effort

— *Young people must work hard without slackening in the least*

During the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-25 AD), Liu Xiang wrote in *Strategies of the States (Zhan Guo Ce): Book of Qin V*, “The ode says, ‘The last one tenth of the journey demands double the effort.’ The end of the journey is hardest.” This line describes how the closer we get to completing something, the more effort we need to put into it. In real life many people start out with lofty ambitions and grand plans, but as time passes, they slowly lose motivation, will power, and resolve, and haphazardly finish up to get it done with. Xi Jinping used this classical phrase to show that the closer we get to realizing the goal of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the more we must guard against slacking off and redouble our efforts.

In management studies, there is the “law of giving the extra ounce.” As John Templeton pointed out, successful people put in nearly the same amount of effort as ordinary people — the difference is just “giving the extra ounce,” but the results are worlds apart. In 1950, Florence Chadwick became world famous for being the first woman in the world to swim across the English Channel. Two years later, she wanted to set another world record by swimming from Catalina Island to the California shore. She became utterly exhausted after 16 hours of swimming in the bone-chilling ocean, and looking ahead she only saw dense fog, making it seem like her goal was still far off. She thought there was no way she could make it to the shore on this try and she told the people following her in a boat, “Pull me into the boat.” After repeatedly begging them, they finally pulled the shivering Chadwick into the boat. In the time that it took

to drink a cup of hot soup, the boat suddenly reached the shore. She realized then that she had only been half a mile from success! She later recognized that the fog did not keep her from being successful — her own doubts did. Two months later, she challenged herself again. Despite being surrounded by dense fog and swimming in bone freezing water as before, she pushed on this time. She knew that land was up ahead; it was always in her mind. She finally realized the importance of belief. Looking at the long course of history, many people have attempted to reach their goals, but very few actually made it. Did all of those people lose on the starting line? Not necessarily. Success is often based on having firm convictions and “giving the extra ounce.”

The path to success is often full of hardships and turns. This is true for individuals pursuing their own goals and for countries pursuing national dreams.

China is currently on a high-speed track to reform and opening up and furthering the socialist cause, and to make this cause brighter and give it more hope, more aspiring and promising youth must join this historic journey. Mao Zedong once used “like the sun at eight or nine in the morning” as a metaphor for the youthful spirit. Today, Xi Jinping used “the last one tenth of the journey demands double the effort” to encourage the young generation to hold tight to the current great opportunity to develop their talent, fight tirelessly to get ahead, and offer their youth and power to develop and build the country.

“The last one tenth of the journey demands double the effort” reminds us that we should always be aware that as long as our task is not yet finished, we cannot slacken our steps or underestimate our difficulties. The closer we get to success, the more we must step up our efforts.

Actually, it is not hard to overcome this problem: First, be clear of your own goal and set your sights high. Just as “all good Chinese make it to the Great Wall,” have lofty ambitions, use your goals as motivation to fight fiercely and push forward, and make your goals reality through real actions. Also, never let up and give it your all from start to finish. “All things have beginnings, but few come to a good end.” It is not hard

at all to get off to a good start, but to keep it up and finish strong is not easy. As the saying goes, "With feet planted firmly on the ground the seas will make way; with steadfast persistence mountains can be moved." Finally, be full of self-confidence and yearn for success. There is no guarantee you will reach your goal even though you are confident, but without confidence you will surely fail. Confidence is the psychological basis for victory, and deep-down thirst for success is the continual motivation toward success. You must believe you can make it, and never give up easily.

With your youthful energy, you can create a country
of youth and a nation of youth.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping to outstanding young representatives from
all walks of life, May 4, 2013*

Creating a Country of Youth with Youthful Energy

— *Making the best use of our youth*

In 1916, Vol. 2-1 of Shanghai's *La Jeunesse* (*New Youth*) published "Youth," a magnificent work by Li Dazhao that signified the start of a new era. In this essay, he called for "using youthful energy to create youthful families, a youthful country, a youthful nation, a youthful humanity, a youthful world, and a youthful universe in joyfully offering your limitless life." This was written in the spring of 1916 when China faced disaster as Yuan Shikai stole the fruits of the 1911 Revolution. Even though Li Dazhao was in Japan at the time, his heart was in his homeland. He shut himself away and devoted himself to composing this essay. Today, this poem remains a shining work of art that inspires youth to keep on fighting and make great contributions.

On the May Fourth Youth Day holiday of 2013, when Xi Jinping met youth representatives from all walks of life, he quoted this line to inspire everyone and show the great hope he places in the country's youth.

The youth are the future of the country no matter what era it is. In "The Young China," Liang Qichao wrote, "Wise youth make for a wise country, well-off youth make for a well-off country, strong youth make for a strong country, independent youth make for an independent country, free youth make for a free country, progressive youth make for a progressive country, youth who surpass Europe make for a country that can surpass Europe, and youth who are among the best in the world make for a country among the best in the world."

The CPC has had a close relationship with all youth since the day of its founding. Development of Party causes is inseparable from the

youth, and the healthy development of the youth is inseparable from the Party. The modern transformation of the Chinese nation also proves that “when the youth prosper the country prospers and when the youth are strong the country is strong.” After China was reduced into a semi-colonial, semi-feudal society, millions of energetic youth called far and wide for rescuing the country and revitalizing China, actively exploring principles and paths to that end. The start of the May Fourth Movement signified that China’s youth had become the vanguard of the Chinese people in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism. After the establishment of the CPC, the idealistic revolutionary youth charged forward in the struggle led by the Party for national independence and liberation of the people. They laid down their lives in their outstanding contribution to achieving victory in China’s revolution.

The establishment of the People’s Republic of China opened a new world for the youth to grow in. China’s legions of youth labored selflessly for the socialist cause. Their enterprise, contributions, and outstanding achievements served to protect and build the New China. As Mao Zedong said in the 1950s when meeting young intellectuals: “The world is yours, as well as ours, but in the last analysis, it is yours. You young people, full of vigor and vitality, are in the bloom of life, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning. Our hope is placed on you.”

Since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, the Party provided a broad space for China’s youth, and in particular its intellectuals, to become the pillars of economic development and social progress. The youth shouted out the call of the era to unite and revive China and threw themselves into reform and the building process. They united to progress on all fronts, working hard, seeking out new opportunities, and contributing to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

As the waves on the Yangtze River push those in front of them, the young will take over for the old in the world. After Deng Xiaoping stepped back from the leadership in the early 1990s, he sincerely urged the Party’s third generation of core leaders: “More young people must

be...allowed to grow. When they reach maturity, we shall rest easy.” After that, central leaders such as Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao stressed over and over the importance that “winning over the youth means winning over the future.” When people started saying that the “80s generation” was a “lost generation” or “disintegrating generation,” the leaders said, “Facts have shown that the Chinese youth who have grown up over the great course of reform and opening up are worth our complete trust and are up to the task.”

It is true of every era that the youth are in their prime and nimble in their thinking. They are the group with the most energy, creativity, and vitality in society, quick to adapt to new things. They always lead the way when it comes to new fashions. But at the same time, the youth lack worldly experience and the taste of failure. Therefore, in order to keep on innovating, one must have the spirit of never giving up and boldly moving forward as well as the attitude of exploring the truth and seeking the facts. To become the pillars of society, the youth not only must gain solid professional knowledge and capabilities, but also must fully recognize China’s situation in a complex social and international environment. This will give them an advantage in scientifically driving development. They need to be able to both better adapt to society and take on the responsibility for leading social advancement. With this belief, China’s youth will apply their knowledge, employ their talents, and realize their life worth as they realize achievements worthy of the era and the people on the stage of national rejuvenation.

Your value orientation will decide the values of the whole of society in the years to come. Besides, young people are at the time of life when they form and establish their values. It is therefore very important to offer some guidance. That reminds me of something that happens in our daily life. When we button up our coat, we may inadvertently put the first button in the wrong button hole, and that will result in all the other buttons being put in the wrong holes. That's why we say that our lifetime of buttoning must be done well right from the start.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at a seminar with teachers and students of Peking University, May 4, 2014*

Our Lifetime of Buttoning Must Be Done Well Right from the Start

— *Cultivation of values must start at a young age*

Everyone needs to wear clothes — there is no avoiding it. And everyone is taught by their parents to learn how to button their own clothes. This is a basic skill and an action that we repeat every day. It is also an everyday principle that buttoning must be done properly from top to bottom, otherwise our clothes will be all crooked. However, there is a deeper meaning to this commonplace occurrence, as Xi Jinping told the youths: “Our lifetime of buttoning must be done well right from the start.”

Xi Jinping’s “lifetime of buttoning theory” is very enlightening for cultivating values in young people. Truly, our lives are like a row of buttons — if we start out buttoning wrong, we will keep on buttoning wrong. For example, if someone connects becoming an official with striking it rich, he has already got the first button wrong, and he will keep on buttoning wrong until he falls from grace and disappears in the end.

Our youth is the most important period for growth and maturity. It is during this period that our values, life views, and worldviews are established, which will play the most important role in guiding the rest of our lives. Our youth is a golden age of learning and the period in which we are most susceptible to influence from all kinds of ideas. During a visit to Peking University, Xi Jinping asked that the college students be “diligent, virtuous, analytical, and upright” to guide and direct them to cultivate and practice socialist core values. This can help young college students understand the world, clarify their thinking, and establish correct values — the first buttons needed for a lifetime of buttoning. The values

we establish when we are young will directly impact the rest of our lives. Under the guidance of correct values, young people build their character, grow into pillars of the nation, and do good things for the people.

In Book 4 of *The Analects*, Confucius said: “Don’t worry that you have no position — worry about how you can qualify for one. Don’t worry that people don’t know you — look for some reason to become known.” This is telling young people not to worry about getting a fancy job, but to worry about being a good match for the job they want to get. Young people should be like the Confucian gentleman and not worry about not being understood by others, but rather only yearning for self-improvement, as what is inside will shine through to the outside, and everyone will know how talented you are. Qian Xuesen, the “people’s scientist,” was faced with national calamity when he was young, and he determinedly chose the path of serving his country through his knowledge of aeronautics. With his single-minded focus, he hoped the efforts of just one man could be multiplied to realize enormous results, and he served his motherland through the power of science. In his view, one’s country took precedence over family and his responsibility was immense. Guided by these values, even though he had lived in the United States for more than 20 years and enjoyed a reputation and status that ordinary people could only dream of, he resolutely chose to leave behind everything he had in the United States, and returned to his beloved country after overcoming a series of obstacles. He never worried about what kind of job he would get in China, let alone whether his return was worth it from a utilitarian perspective. He only thought of whether his knowledge could contribute to the construction and development of the New China and whether he could do his own small part for the people of his motherland. This is the most simple, most genuine thought, and it was the values he established during his youth — the first button of Qian Xuesen’s life — that led him to make that decision.

Our youth is a great time for storing up energy. “I want my dear youth to live in their youth and die in their youth,” wished Li Dazhao. Young people should keep their youthful fervor and youthful pursuits,

have greater demands on building their own character, and have greater standards when shouldering their mission. In particular, people need to get that first button right in their lives, find their own coordinates in life, and form correct values. Then they can boldly refine themselves, dare to try their own hand, gradually mature their thinking through hardship, and slowly solidify their beliefs through their pursuits. In work and when faced with difficulties, we need to think more “how can I get through this” and less “woe is me”; think more “I can handle this” and less “not my problem.” This is the only way to fully prepare ourselves for life, step up to the plate when it really counts, and succeed in the tasks given to us by our country and the people.

The first step is always hard no matter what you are doing, and the difficulty lies in choosing the correct first step: What kind of life values do you want to have, and how do you want to live your life? You cannot get on the right life path without making the right first step and getting that first button right.

Life is colorful and the world is diverse. The key is in choosing the right path for yourself and getting the first button right in your life. This first button is intimately related to the needs of the country, expectations of society, and your own personal values. Getting the first button right is necessary for having a brilliant life.

**Quotations
from the Classics**

We must hold on to the practice and experience of the Party and people over the last ninety-some years as the foundation that we stand on, never to be lost or forgotten. We must be neither self-abased nor over-confident. We must hold fast to the straight road which has been forged through the long-term practice and exploration of the Party and people.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the symposium to commemorate the 120th anniversary of Mao Zedong's birth, December 26, 2013*

We Must Be Neither Self-Abased nor Over-Confident

— *Confidence in and commitment to China's experience*

“Self-abased” and “over-confident” are familiar words in the Chinese language. “Self-abased” is attributed to Zhuge Liang (181-234) in “A Statement to the King Before Setting Off for War,” recorded in *The Records of the Three Kingdoms: Book of Shu*: “[Your Majesty] should not be self-abased or make inappropriate remarks that would discourage people from giving good advice.” As a bit of background, Zhuge Liang was assisting King Liu Shan and endeavored to rejuvenate the royal Han family, but Liu lacked ambition, much to Zhuge’s concern. So prior to embarking on a northern expedition to fight the state of Wei, Zhuge submitted a letter to the young king urging him not to think too lowly of himself.

“Over-confident” first appears in the “Biography of Ma Yuan” from *The Book of the Later Han*, a historical work compiled by Fan Ye (398-445) during the Song period (420-479) of the Southern Dynasties (420-589). The original statement reads, “Ziyang is over-confident, though he is but a frog at the bottom of a well.” The backstory takes place during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) when Liu Xiu reigned as emperor. The empire was fragmented and ruled by various despots, among whom Gongsun Shu (courtesy name “Ziyang”) was the most powerful. Wei Xiao, the ruler of Longxi, sent Ma Yuan to meet with Gongsun Shu and discuss the long-term maintenance of separatist regimes. Gongsun Shu, however, was full of impudence and acted in an emperor-like manner. Ma Yuan returned, displeased, and said to Wei Xiao, “Gongsun Shu is a frog at the bottom of the well. He is so full of himself that he fails to see the vastness of the world around him.”

Xi Jinping used these two phrases in a speech to caution China

against two errors that flank the path of Chinese socialism: a nihilistic sense of self-abasement on the one hand and the rigid, closed-door posture of over-confidence on the other.

This sort of self-abasement manifests itself in people's tendency to judge present-day China in light of the prevailing conditions of developed nations in the West. In so doing, they exaggerate the developmental gap between China and these Western nations as well as the social tensions that have arisen in China's development. Moreover, they view Western civilization as though it were the only form of human society, a "one-size-fits-all" template for all nations. They maintain that unless the Western model is adopted wholesale, the developmental gaps will be impossible to fill and societal issues and tensions will remain unresolved; hence, all they envision for China's future is doom and gloom.

Those who are self-abased in this sense err in that they overlook China's historical narrative, particularly China's war-torn history from the 1840s to the 1940s. They are not willing to come to terms with the reality of China's massive population and weak economic foundation, much less the achievements and progress that China has wrought over more than thirty years of reform and opening up. In short, such self-abasement is a symptom of historical nihilism.

In order to overcome self-abasement, it is imperative that we maintain confidence in the path, theories, and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. China's path is different from Stalin's model for the USSR and the history of capitalism. China's system enables us to maintain consistency, stability, and continuity between our overriding policies and long-term plans as well as efficiency in formulating and implementing decisions. As Deng Xiaoping put it: "The greatest advantage of the socialist system is that when the central leadership makes a decision, it is promptly implemented without interference from any other quarters... From this point of view, our system is very efficient. The efficiency I'm talking about is overall efficiency. We have superiority in this respect, and we should keep it — we should retain the

advantages of the socialist system.” That is the confidence that we ought to have. In this day and age, having confidence in China’s experience means that we are committed not to walk down the dead-end path of changing our colors, but rather tenaciously adhering to the road of Chinese socialism.

The opposite of self-abasement is over-confidence, which plays out in one’s complacency, self-satisfaction, and self-amusement. This mindset is the product of a Pollyannaish celebration of China’s achievements over its thirty years of reform and opening up. Now that our GDP ranks second in the world and we are stronger, wealthier, and in a better position globally, some have come to believe that it is no longer necessary to work hard and continue along the road of peaceful development. Such people fail to understand what are known as the “three things that have not changed” in China: one, we are still in the primary stage of socialism; two, the principal struggle continues to be between people’s increasing material and cultural demands on the one hand and society’s lagging productivity on the other; third, we remain the largest developing nation in the world. Those who are given to such over-confidence tend to whitewash social issues and tensions. They grow smug and complacent and lose the motivation to drive reform to a deeper level; they pursue vain ambition and extravagance; they ride on their high horse and assume that they are second to none. All of this involves a refusal to learn from and draw upon the achievements of other civilizations. The result: rigid isolationism.

In order to fight against over-confidence, it is imperative that we become more aware of ourselves. Self-awareness means being alert of potential dangers and remaining on guard against adversity in times of peace. Chinese socialism is positioned at a new historical starting point. Its theories are still evolving, and our basic system still needs to be refined. Deng Xiaoping, when speaking of our institutional superiority, pointed out the drawbacks of a highly centralized system — “bureaucracy, over-concentration of power, patriarchal methods, life tenure in leading posts and privileges of various kinds” — which he believed would

“seriously impede the full realization of the superiority of socialism.” Self-confidence divorced from self-awareness is essentially blind; “the man who knows nothing fears nothing.” In this day and age, exhibiting awareness of China’s experience means that we are committed not to walk down the old path of a rigid, closed-door policy, but rather tenaciously adhering to the road of Chinese socialism.

Self-abasement and over-confidence may appear to be two extremes, but they are simply what happens when one disregards history and reality. They are the result of looking at issues from a perspective that is one-sided, detached, and incomplete. They are thus harmful to society. What Chinese people are in need of today is self-confidence and self-awareness — unshakable confidence in the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and sober awareness of the issues and conflicts present in China’s development. We must not bury our head in the sand. We must unite as one with the resolve to build a moderately prosperous society and achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

We Chinese are a people of great ingenuity, known around the world for our tremendous creative faculties. As Confucius said: “If you can in one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day. Yea, let there be daily renovation.” These words are a perfect description of the Chinese ingenuity.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the New Year’s Tea Reception of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, December 31, 2013*

If You Can in One Day Renovate Yourself, Do So from Day to Day. Yea, Let There Be Daily Renovation

— *Description of Chinese ingenuity*

“If you can in one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day. Yea, let there be daily renovation.” Xi Jinping included this quote, taken from *The Great Learning*, at the New Year’s tea reception of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference at the close of 2013. The broader passage reads thus:

On the bathing tub of Tang, the following words were engraved: — “If you can in one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day. Yea, let there be daily renovation.” In the Announcement to Kang, it is said, “Stir up the people to seek what is new.” In The Book of Poetry, it is said, “Although Zhou was an ancient State, the ordinance which lighted on it was new.” Therefore, the superior man in everything uses his utmost endeavors.

This is evidently where the Chinese word for “innovation” comes from.

The Great Learning used to be a part of *The Book of Rites*, until Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, brothers from the Song Dynasty (960-1279), extracted the text and arranged it into chapters and verses. The Confucian scholar Zhu Xi later provided annotations and included it in what became known as *The Four Books* of Confucianism, along with *The Doctrine of the Mean*, *Confucian Analects*, and *The Mencius*. *The Great Learning* was thus canonized as a Confucian classic.

“If you can in one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day. Yea, let there be daily renovation.” These words were inscribed on the bathtub of Cheng Tang, the founding monarch of the Shang Dynasty

(1600-1046 BC), to signal the physical renewal that comes from washing the body each day. The saying is taken to refer to ideological cleansing, moral cultivation, and the pursuit of spiritual newness. It emphasizes continuous innovation. If renovating oneself “in one day” is thought of as a relatively easy task, then doing so “from day to day” is harder, and “daily renovation” is harder yet. China is a nation with an ancient history, and yet “the ordinance which lighted on it is new.” Chinese culture has traditionally placed a high value on innovation and discourages one from taking the beaten path. It directs society to strengthen itself through continuous reform, and it calls on those in authority to renew their minds through constant moral cultivation. Thanks to this tradition, the Chinese people have been able to make indelible contribution to humankind by furnishing countless creations, innovations, and inventions throughout history.

That is what Xi Jinping was getting at when he said this Confucian quote is a perfect description of the spirit of Chinese ingenuity. He also included the quote in his speech on May 4, 2013 to encourage young persons to lead the way in innovation: “Innovation is the soul driving a nation’s progress and an inexhaustible source of a country’s prosperity. It is also an essential part of the Chinese national character. This is what Confucius meant when he said: ‘If you can in one day renovate yourself, do so from day to day. Yea, let there be daily renovation.’”

Today, in a world where challenge and opportunity go hand-in-hand, innovation is a matter of unquestionable importance. It is a powerful engine that drives social progress, and has doubtless played a crucial role in China’s rapid development in the 21st century. Xi Jinping’s use of this Confucian quote not only bears testimony to the fact that the Chinese people have been marked by innovation and tremendous creative faculties from of old. Even more, it highlights the fact that China needs to continue its tradition of innovation in order to keep up with the times.

“Daily renovation” requires that one must be committed to constant self-improvement and a life of learning, both of which have always

been part and parcel of the Chinese narrative. As we face the winds of constant change and the fires of fierce competition, China will be prepared to take on every challenge and will continue to shine on the global stage — so long as we keep the spirit of ingenuity alive.

In such a big, populous and complicated country as ours, we the leaders must have an in-depth knowledge of the national conditions, and learn what the people think and what they want. We must act self-consciously and with the utmost care “as if we were treading on thin ice, and standing on the edge of an abyss.” We must cultivate an attitude of “governing a big country is as delicate as frying a small fish,” never slackening our efforts or being negligent in the slightest, and always devoting ourselves to work in the public interest.

— *Remarks given by Xi Jinping in a joint interview with the press of the BRICS countries, March 19, 2013*

Governing a Big Country Is as Delicate as Frying a Small Fish

— *Understanding China's conditions and governing in a scientific manner*

The expression “governing a big country is as delicate as frying a small fish” comes from chapter 60 of Laozi’s *Dao De Jing*:

“Governing a big country is as delicate as frying a small fish. When the empire is ruled in accordance with the way, the spirits lose their potencies. Or rather, it is not that they lose their potencies, but that, though they have their potencies, they do not harm the people. It is not only they who, having their potencies, do not harm people, the sage, also, does not harm the people. As neither does any harm, each attributes the merit to the other.”

This well-known saying of Laozi (c. 570-500 BC), Chinese ancient philosopher living in the late Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC), has deeply influenced the minds of Chinese statesmen. Many scholars and statesmen have interpreted it differently throughout history. But whether the point of comparison in the Chinese text is to be rendered as “a small fish” or “delicacies,” the gist is that governing a nation is like preparing food. A fish that is being pan-fried must not be carelessly flipped about. Seasoning must be carefully added to taste, and the heat source must be properly controlled. Otherwise, the fish may turn out mushy or charred, or too salty or bland. The same idea holds true for governing a nation. There is no room for political flip-flopping or acting hastily in order to gain political points. There is no room for slack or slop in carrying out one’s responsibilities.

The saying “governing a big country is as delicate as frying a small fish” is a vivid depiction of the philosophy and spirit that one ought to embody when leading a nation. The fact that Xi Jinping quoted these

words during a joint interview with the press of the BRICS countries is quite telling in terms of his philosophy of governance. In order to fry a fish properly, one must first become familiar with its features, and then he or she may add seasoning and adjust the heat accordingly. Governing a big country applies the same basic logic: One must first get in touch with a nation's conditions and the pulse of its people, and only then will it be possible to put the people first, respect the laws of development, achieve sound government, and govern the country in a scientific manner. Frying a small fish may be a menial task, but doing it well requires concentration. So much the more when it comes to governing a nation. Governance is a massively important task that involves the future of a nation and the fate of its people; as such, it calls for the strongest sense of historical mission and responsibility.

Laozi's fish-frying analogy gives expression to his philosophy of "governing by doing nothing." To be clear, this concept does not refer to a passive or *laissez-faire* approach to government; rather, it means following the natural course of things. A government ought to respect the laws of history, the natural social order, and the consensus of its people when making decisions. A country will not be able to grow strong and prosperous and its people will not be able to live a comfortable life if the government operates on whim and is carried about by every wind of policy with the desire of scoring political points. That is why Xi Jinping made it clear that "leaders must have an in-depth knowledge of the national conditions, and learn what the people think and what they want." That is the foundation of governing a nation.

There is evidence that suggests that, next to the *Bible*, *Dao De Jing* is the world's most translated and widely distributed classic to date. In Western countries, Laozi is widely regarded as the progenitor of free thought. As he wrote: "I do not force my way and the people transform themselves. I enjoy my serenity and the people correct themselves. I do not interfere and the people enrich themselves. I have no desires and the people find their original mind." Many of Laozi's one-liners have struck a chord with leaders from all over the world, including Ronald Reagan,

whose State of the Union Address given in 1988 contained the quote “govern a great nation as you would cook a small fish,” as well as Dmitry Medvedev, who recited “people will not be in danger if they stop where they should stop” at an international forum in 2010. Needless to say, the analogy that Xi Jinping used in his joint press interview represents a philosophy of governance that is well appreciated by the world at large.

This philosophy of governance bears the unique thumbprint of traditional Chinese culture. Indeed, the deep influence of traditional Chinese culture is evident in a whole host of Xi Jinping’s philosophies of governance — such as putting the people first, pursuing sound government and social harmony, holding persons of talent in high esteem, and building a resource-conserving society. Xi has quoted extensively from the Chinese classics, which has given China and the rest of the world an opportunity to notice and appreciate the inimitable charm of the traditional Chinese culture.

As the saying goes, “If brothers are of the same mind, their edge can cut through metal.” The people of both sides of the Strait, regardless of their parties, social strata, religions, or localities, should support each other in achieving national rejuvenation and the Chinese Dream as quickly as possible.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping when receiving a delegation from Taiwan comprised of people from all walks of life, February 18, 2014*

If Brothers Are of the Same Mind, Their Edge Can Cut Through Metal

— *Linking arms across the Taiwan Strait to achieve the Chinese Dream*

At the invitation of the Chinese Mainland, Lien Chan, honorary chairman of the KMT of China and chairman of the Cross-Strait Peaceful Development Fund, led a delegation from Taiwan to Beijing to take part in an exchange on February 17-20, 2014. During his meeting with Lien Chan, Xi Jinping delivered a speech entitled “Together Fulfilling the Chinese Dream of National Rejuvenation.” At the close of the speech, he quoted the line “If brothers are of the same mind, their edge can cut through metal” to express his vision of a beautiful future on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

The saying “If brothers are of the same mind, their edge can cut through metal” originated in *The Book of Changes*. This Chinese classic, known alternatively as *Yi Jing* (*I Ching*) or the *Changes of Zhou*, keys off the Chinese character “Yi,” which carries the three-fold meaning of variability, simplicity, and regularity. The book was authored by men of the Zhou Dynasty (1046-221 BC, hence the name “*Changes of Zhou*”). The work is divided into two sections: “Yi Jing” and the “Ten Wings.” The book is structured around 64 hexagrams — abstract arrangements of horizontal lines — which represent the various changes that can occur within any kind of two-way relationship. Xi Jinping quoted from the following passage: “When two people are of the same mind, their edge can cut through metal; when two people are of the same heart, their words are sweet like the fragrance of orchids.” The idea here is that a powerful synergy — in deeds and words alike — is created when two individuals operate on the same wavelength. This verse is often quoted to describe the strength that grows out of solidarity.

Xi Jinping's speech focused on four points. First, people on both sides of the Strait are of the same family; no one can cut the veins that connect us. Second, we share the same destiny, and there is no knot that cannot be unraveled. Third, we should join our efforts in promoting peaceful cross-Strait relations. And fourth, the people of the two sides should work hand in hand towards the Chinese Dream, the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

We on both sides of the Strait are of the same flesh and blood. We share the same history and culture. Despite the Strait that lies between us, our destinies have always been inextricably linked. A prosperous Chinese nation will result in our common good; a feeble Chinese nation will bode ill for both of us. It is our singular hope that we would draw closer and reunite, and that no power would be able to pull us apart. Xi Jinping drew particular attention to the fact that people on the Mainland side of the Strait empathize deeply with our brethren on the other side for the pain they have suffered. The best therapy for emotional scars is true kinship, as it promises to bring healing, reconciliation, and a deep sense of mutual understanding. That is the power of fraternal affection.

The year 2008 signaled a positive turning point in cross-Strait relations, ushering in important developments such as the restoration of the "three direct links" (trade, transport, and postal services). Compatriots across the Strait agreed to pursue peaceful development, an unprecedented move that has brought benefit to both sides. Achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation by creating prosperity for the country and happiness for the people has been the long-cherished wish of Sun Yat-sen, the CPC, and, in modern times, the Chinese people as a whole. The Chinese Dream that we speak of is a vibrant description of China's long-cherished wish. It is a dream shared by Chinese on both sides of the Strait and, as such, it calls for our joint efforts.

It is only when brothers on both sides of the Strait "are of the same mind" that we will be able to "cut through metal." If we all take an active part in the work of national rejuvenation, we will be able to create a bright future for all of us and make our common dream a living reality.

As the saying goes, “Numerous grains of earth make a mountain, numerous drops of water form an ocean.” As long as we keep advancing China-Africa cooperation, we will make even bigger achievements.”

— *Remarks given by Xi Jinping at a joint interview by the press of the BRICS countries, March 19, 2013*

Numerous Grains of Earth Make a Mountain, and Numerous Drops of Water Form an Ocean

— *Joining hands with Africa to fulfill our common “dream”*

During a joint interview held by the press of the BRICS countries on March 19, 2013, Xi Jinping quoted the line “Numerous grains of earth make a mountain, numerous drops of water form an ocean.” His point was that as long as China and Africa continue to engage in broad collaboration, we will continue to make sure that steady progress, which, over the long haul, will usher in even greater achievements.

A variant of the saying “Numerous grains of earth make a mountain, and numerous drops of water form an ocean” appears in two of Xunzi’s works—*An Exhortation to Learning* and *The Teachings of the Ru*. As a prominent materialistic thinker of the late Warring States Period (475 BC-221 BC), Xunzi (c. 313-238 BC) generated ideas that tended to be more pragmatic and people-oriented. Xunzi spoke about the need for social order, rejected mystical beliefs of fate and superstition, emphasized the importance of natural laws, and encouraged people to effect change through subjective initiative.

In *An Exhortation to Learning*, Xunzi wrote: “If you accumulate enough to build up a high hill, rain and wind will flourish because of it. If you accumulate enough water to fill a chasm, dragons and scaly dragons will be born within it.” The image of building mountains and filling up chasms points to the idea that qualitative change happens slowly after years of unspectacular growth.

Book 8 of *Xunzi*, entitled *The Teachings of the Ru*, discusses the role played by Confucian scholars in society. Here is an excerpt: “Accordingly, by accumulating earth you can create a mountain; by accumulating water you can make a sea. The accumulation of mornings and evenings

is called a year; the extreme of height is called heaven; the extreme of lowness is called earth; the six directions of space are called the poles. A man in the street, one of the Hundred Clans, who accumulated goodness and achieves it completely is called a sage.” The argument is that anyone who has the desire and drive to “accumulate goodness,” so to speak, can become a “sage,” or ideal person. Xunzi evidently believed that the only way to attain an ideal state, whether in one’s knowledge or conduct, is to begin small and faithfully persist till the end.

All development follows the same progression from quantitative growth to qualitative change. Xunzi held to this basic idea, which is reflected in the saying, “Numerous grains of earth make a mountain, and numerous drops of water form an ocean.” This strain of dialectic thought is also evident in another ancient Chinese thinker, Laozi, who wrote, “A terrace nine storeys high rises from hodfuls of earth.” Such ideas hold pedagogical value for our lives in the present day. They assure us that insofar as we have a clear trajectory and follow through with our pursuits, we will gradually move from quantitative growth to qualitative change and thereby accomplish great things. The same principle is true in all circumstances, whether as small as an individual acquiring more knowledge or growing in character, or as significant as governing a nation or navigating state-to-state relations.

China is a developing country, and Africa a developing continent. The two share a common destiny, bound together by similar historical experience, common development tasks, and shared strategic interests. Bringing benefit to the people of China and Africa by promoting balanced and comprehensive development in China-Africa relations forms an integral part of China’s foreign policy of peace. Indeed, in his first state visit after taking seat as the nation’s president, Xi Jinping wended his way to various African countries, including Tanzania, thus sending a strong signal that China’s new leadership cares deeply about Africa and China-Africa relations.

Mutual respect, equality, support, and benefit are defining features of China-Africa relations. In earlier years, our African friends essentially

“escorted” us into the UN and, since then, we have always done everything within our power to promote peaceful development in Africa, even while we attended to our own development. Over the years, China’s socioeconomic success and its long track record of aid efforts and economic collaboration with Africa have shown that China’s development is a benefit not only to itself, but also to Africa and the world at large.

“Numerous grains of earth make a mountain, numerous drops of water form an ocean.” By applying the ancient wisdom of Xunzi, China and Africa will be able to realize their dreams as they link arms and pursue common development.

The renowned Mexican writer, Octavio Paz, translated into Spanish the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi (c. 369-275 BC), ancient Chinese philosophers living over two millennia ago. Zhuangzi once said, “If water is not piled up deep enough, it won’t have the strength to bear up a big boat.” Let’s work together to enable the large boat of China-Mexico friendly cooperation to ride the wind and forge ahead in the vast ocean of China-Mexico friendship.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Senate of Mexico, June 5, 2013*

If Water Is Not Piled Up Deep Enough, It Won't Have the Strength to Bear Up a Big Boat

— *Let an ocean of friendship carry the boat of Sino-Mexican cooperation*

On June 5, 2013, during his visit to Mexico, Xi Jinping addressed the Mexican Senate with this line from Zhuangzi, “If water is not piled up deep enough, it won’t have the strength to bear up a big boat.” This quotation conveyed his aspiration that the ocean of friendship between the people of China and Mexico carry the boat of friendly cooperation between the two nations.

The quotation is from Zhuangzi’s “Free and Easy Wandering.” The original text reads:

If water is not piled up deep enough, it won't have the strength to bear up a big boat. Pour a cup of water into a hollow in the floor and bits of trash will sail on it like boats. But set the cup there and it will stick fast, for the water is too shallow and the boat too large.

Zhuangzi used the metaphor of the boat and the water to illustrate the dependence of all things. A large vessel depends on the sea to sail. The Peng, that giant mythical bird, depended on the wind to soar to great heights. All things are dependent to some extent, and are restricted by subjective and objective conditions.

Zhuang Zhou, better known as Zhuangzi, was a famous thinker, philosopher, and writer who lived during the Warring States period (475-221 BC). A chief representative of the Daoist school, Zhuangzi is referred to as “Lao-Zhuang” along with Laozi, and their system of thinking has become known as “Lao-Zhuang philosophy.” “Free and Easy Wandering” is a renowned literary work that embodies the

philosophy of Zhuangzi. Through the use of allegories and vivid metaphors, it sets forth the position that nothing can be depended upon, and advocates for the absolute freedom of the spiritual world. Widely known for its unusual imagery and romanticism, it is a masterpiece that emerged from ancient China.

The “free and easy wandering” that Zhuangzi sought was a spiritual outlook of absolute freedom that transcended everything and depended on nothing. When examined within context, however, we can still detect the simplicity of dialectical thinking in the quote, “If water is not piled up deep enough, it won't have the strength to bear up a big boat.” Indeed, Xi Jinping chose to refer to this line from Zhuangzi because of its dialectical thinking. Furthermore, the people of Mexico had some familiarity with *Zhuangzi* because it had been translated into Spanish by the celebrated Mexican writer Octavio Paz. Xi Jinping compared China-Mexico cooperation to a “big boat” that would be borne on the ocean of friendship between the people of Mexico and China.

A long history of friendly interaction exists between China and Mexico, which are both home to ancient civilizations. According to *The Book of Liang*, Buddhist disciples from China reached parts of Mexico and other Latin American countries as far back as the fifth century. The two states formally established diplomatic relations at the end of the 19th century and reached an amicable agreement on trade and maritime navigation in 1899. In 1972, Mexico became the first country in Latin America to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. Since then, the two governments have had a tradition of good cooperation in international affairs, the heads of state have frequently exchanged visits, and areas of cooperation and exchange have continued to grow. Mexico is China's second largest trading partner in Latin America. It conducts more cultural exchanges with China than almost any other country in the region.

In his speech, Xi Jinping described the deep friendship that has developed over the years between Mexico and China by alluding to their long histories and rich cultures, and underscoring their extensive

interaction in political and economic affairs, trade, science and technology, culture, the arts, and sports. This deep friendship is the “vast ocean” that carries the boat of friendly cooperation between the two countries. In this new era, China-Mexico relations will be upgraded to a comprehensive strategic partnership. As long as there is mutual respect, equal treatment, sincere cooperation, and joint progress, the “big boat” of friendly cooperation between China and Mexico will surely brave the waves to sail toward a glorious future.

“A tree that can fill the span of a man’s arms grows from a downy tip; a terrace nine storeys high rises from hodfuls of earth.” To ensure that the tree of China-ASEAN friendship remains evergreen, the soil of social support for our relations should be fertile.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the People’s Representative Council of Indonesia, October 3, 2013*

A Tree That Can Fill the Span of a Man's Arms Grows from a Downy Tip

— *Enriching the soil from which the tree of friendship
between China and ASEAN grows*

October 2-8, 2013, Xi Jinping visited Indonesia and Malaysia before attending the APEC CEO Summit in Bali, Indonesia. During his tour, he delivered a speech before the People's Representative Council of Indonesia entitled "Work Together to Build a China-ASEAN Community of Shared Destiny," in which he cited the following quotation, "A tree that can fill the span of a man's arms grows from a downy tip; a terrace nine storeys high rises from hodfuls of earth." This vivid imagery expressed his vision of developing friendship and cooperation between China and ASEAN member states by enriching the soil of bilateral relations.

The above quotation was taken from chapter 64 of *Dao De Jing*. The full text reads:

It is easy to maintain a situation while it is still secure; it is easy to deal with a situation before symptoms develop; it is easy to break a thing when it is yet brittle; it is easy to dissolve a thing when it is yet minute. Deal with a thing while it is still nothing; keep a thing in order before disorder sets in. A tree that can fill the span of a man's arms grows from a downy tip; a terrace nine storeys high rises from hodfuls of earth; a journey of a thousand miles starts from beneath one's feet. Whoever does anything to it will ruin it; whoever lays hold of it will lose it. Therefore the sage, because he does nothing, never ruins anything; and, because he does not lay hold of anything, loses nothing. In their enterprises the people always ruin them when on the verge of success. Be as careful at the end as at the beginning and there will be no ruined enterprises. Therefore the sage desires

not to desire and does not value goods which are hard to come by; learns to be without learning and makes good the mistakes of the multitude in order to help the myriad creatures to be natural and to refrain from daring to act.

Laozi had the surname Li and the given name Er. He was also known by the courtesy name Dan. The founder of Daoism and the reputed author of *Dao De Jing*, Laozi is considered one of the greatest philosophers and thinkers in Chinese history. *Dao De Jing*, which is also known by the titles *Laozi* and *Five-Thousand-Character Text by Laozi*, consists of 81 chapters. It is an important source of Daoist philosophy and is believed to be the first full-length philosophical work in Chinese history. *Dao De Jing* presents many simple examples of dialectics and materialism, and advocates the concept of governing by doing nothing. It has had a profound influence on the development of Chinese philosophy.

“A tree that can fill the span of a man’s arms grows from a downy tip; a terrace nine storeys high rises from hodfuls of earth.” The next line in the text is better known, “A journey of a thousand miles starts from beneath one’s feet.” Based on the concept of “big from small,” this quotation sets forth the pattern by which things develop and transform: All things start out small. In order to achieve great success, one must first do little things.

China and ASEAN member states are friendly neighbors linked by land and sea. Since 1991, by which time China had established diplomatic relations with all ASEAN countries, bilateral exchanges and cooperation in political, economic, and cultural areas have continued to deepen and grow. In his speech, Xi Jinping proposed building a “China-ASEAN community of shared destiny,” which would allow us to enjoy closer relations that encouraged concerted efforts, mutual development, and shared prosperity.

Relations between friendly countries are similar to relationships with family and friends: Close contact and frequent interaction deepen emotional ties and prevent the parties involved from drifting apart.

Xi Jinping used statistics to illustrate the close contact between China and ASEAN member states. In 2012, 15 million visitors traveled between China and ASEAN countries, and more than 1,000 flights shuttled between the two areas every week. This frequent interaction is evidence of the close ties. While high-level officials engaging in diplomacy, economics, and trade account for some of the exchanges, a significant portion is simply ordinary citizens going sightseeing—China and ASEAN countries are each other's major tourism source markets. As interaction grows, it will naturally lead to greater understanding at the social, economic, and cultural levels. With such understanding, it is possible to form stronger bonds that lead to deeper friendships. This is the "soil for bilateral relations" that Xi Jinping discussed in his speech.

For the friendship between China and ASEAN countries to mature into a towering tree, it must first grow "from a downy tip" and rise "from hodfuls of earth." Exchanges and cooperation of all kinds form the "downy tip" and "hodfuls of earth" in this friendship, which prompted the Chinese government to propose designating 2014 as China-ASEAN Cultural Exchange Year. China is willing to send more volunteers to support the development of cultural, educational, health, and medical endeavors in ASEAN countries. If the tree of friendship is to remain evergreen, it is necessary to nurture the "downy tips" and gather "hodfuls of earth" for the future. Over the next three to five years, China will offer 15,000 government-sponsored scholarships to people in ASEAN countries, thereby increasing the talent pool to support the development of China-ASEAN relations. Young people represent the future. Increasing meaningful communication and interaction between them creates more opportunities for friendship to take root. Only then will the friendship between China and each member of ASEAN have enough fertile soil to grow "a tree that can fill the span of a man's arms" or to build "a terrace nine storeys high."

“The sea is fed by all rivers; it is vast because of its capacity.” In the long course of human history, the people of China and the ASEAN countries have created great civilizations renowned throughout the world. Ours is a diversified region where various civilizations have assimilated and interacted with one another, and this has provided an important cultural foundation for the people of China and the ASEAN countries to gain from each other’s experience.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the People’s Representative Council of Indonesia, October 3, 2013*

The Sea Is Fed by All Rivers; It Is Vast Because of Its Capacity

— *Encouraging interaction between different cultures
so they may assimilate and advance together*

“The sea is fed by all rivers; it is vast because of its capacity” comes from a motivational couplet written by Lin Zexu (1785-1850):

*The sea is fed by all rivers; it is vast because of its capacity.
The cliffs soar high above; they stand tall because they yearn for nothing.*

Lin Zexu, who is considered a national hero in China, composed and then displayed this couplet at his government office during his tenure as governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi. Xi Jinping quoted this famous line to express his conviction that the people of China and ASEAN member states can learn from one another, draw on each other's experience, and promote mutual development.

Born in Houguan (modern day Fuzhou) in Fujian Province, Lin Zexu was a famous statesman, thinker, and poet who lived during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Over the years, Lin Zexu served as governor-general of Hunan and Hubei, Shaanxi and Gansu, and Yunnan and Guizhou. He was appointed an imperial commissioner twice. His strict opposition to the opium trade and courage to stand up to Western aggression secured Lin Zexu's reputation as a national hero in China.

The concept of the sea being “fed by all rivers” has appeared in many Chinese classics. In “Autumn Floods” of *Zhuangzi*, Zhuangzi wrote, “Of all the waters of the world, none is as great as the sea. Ten thousand streams flow into it.” In *An Analytical Dictionary of Chinese Characters*, Xu Shen from the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) wrote, “The sea is the

reservoir of heaven. It accepts hundreds of rivers.” In “Biographies and Praises of Renowned Officials of the Three Kingdoms Period,” the Jin Dynasty (265-420) writer Yuan Hong wrote: “The absence of physical limits enables a tiny space to accommodate the sea.” Li Zhouhan noted, “Just as the sea accepts water from a thousand rivers, the capacity of the heart is beyond measure.” The concept of vastness, or greatness, flowing from one’s capacity, comes from “Jun Chen”, a chapter in *The Book of History*: “Do not cherish anger against the obstinate, and dislike them. Seek not every quality in one individual. You must have patience, and you will be successful; have forbearance, and your virtue will be great.”

“The sea is fed by all rivers; it is vast because of its capacity.” In other words, the sea can accommodate water from thousands of rivers. Its greatness flows from having such an open “heart.” When people allow their hearts and minds to open, they become great, too. “The cliffs soar high above; they stand tall because they yearn for nothing.” That is to say, steep cliffs are able to rise thousands of meters up in the air because they have no desires to pull them in other directions. Therefore, only when people behave without selfish motives will they have the courage to be undaunted.

While the quotation above may be applied to personal conduct and government administration, it is even more pertinent to international relations. At the 1955 Asian African Conference in Bandung, Chinese premier Zhou Enlai proposed a foreign policy to “seek common ground while shelving differences.” “Seeking common ground” refers to searching for shared ideologies, needs, and interests. It is the foundation for building harmony. “Shelving differences” refers to setting aside differing viewpoints, positions, and interests. It is a prerequisite for building harmony. In his speech before the People’s Representative Council of Indonesia, Xi Jinping quoted Lin Zexu’s couplet as a way to promote the spirit of China’s foreign policy announced at the Bandung Conference.

There has been a long history of friendly relations between China and ASEAN member states. An important milestone in this friendship

was the signing of the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Co-Operation Between ASEAN and the People's Republic of China by ten state leaders in November 2002. This framework determined that the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area would be established by 2010, marking the first official step in setting up the free trade area and elevating relations between China and ASEAN member states to a new level. For more than a decade, China and ASEAN have deepened and expanded cooperation in political, economic, social, and cultural areas, and promoted common development.

Xi Jinping indicated in his speech, "We should draw on the experience of other regions in development, and welcome countries from outside the region to play a constructive role in promoting development and stability in the region. Other countries should respect the diversity of our region and do their part to facilitate its development and stability." We must be vigilant against countries from outside the region attempting to divide or sow discord between China and ASEAN member states. We have always adhered to the principle of "peaceful development," yet as our strength has grown, some countries have developed a distrustful, even hostile, attitude toward China. They consider our development a threat, which they play up in an attempt to divide us from neighboring countries. In his speech, Xi Jinping used the quotation, "The sea is fed by all rivers; it is vast because of its capacity," as a response to this "China threat theory."

China has always championed the pursuit of common development and prosperity with neighboring countries. For this goal to come to fruition, we must have the "capacity" to accept the similarities and differences that exist in the cultures of this diverse region, as well as the development and progress of developing countries. The China-ASEAN community of shared destiny is closely linked to the ASEAN Community and the East Asian Community. We should maximize our respective advantages, embrace diversity and coexistence, and create a more inclusive future for the common benefit of people in the region and the world.

“Boundless is the ocean where we sail with the wind.”
Like a vast ocean, the Asia-Pacific region offers enough
space for us to make progress together.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the APEC CEO Summit on October 7,
2013*

Boundless Is the Ocean Where We Sail with the Wind

— *There is enough space for the common development
of all partners in the Asia-Pacific region*

“Towards Resilience and Growth,” the theme of the 2013 APEC CEO Summit, called on APEC economies to focus on global business and to commit to inclusive and sustainable growth on the road to economic recovery. In his keynote speech at the summit entitled “Deepen Reform and Opening up to Build a Better Asia-Pacific,” Xi Jinping described the glorious future he envisaged for the region with the verse: “Boundless is the ocean where we sail with the wind.” It epitomized the atmosphere inspired by the venue and held far-reaching significance.

The quotation is the opening line from the poem *Farewell to a Korean Hermit Returning Home*, written by the Tang Dynasty (618-907) monk-poet Shang Yan (dates unknown), who lived in Jingmen, Hubei Province. The poem in full reads:

Boundless is the ocean where we sail with the wind.

Misty crags mark half the journey and familiar woods remind us of home.

*In the distance, the heavens emerge from calm waters and sandy beaches stretch
as far as the eye can see.*

Friendship seeks refuge in the rosy glow breaking in the East.

In the first line, the poet wishes his friend a pleasant journey sailing in the vast expanse of the open sea. In the next two lines, the poet paints a picture of the view his friend will soon enjoy from the ship. In the last line, the poet laments the distance that will separate him from his friend.

Farewell poems such as this were common in ancient China. Shang Yan’s gift of poetry upon seeing off his Korean friend, Hermit Park, is a

reflection of the relations between China and APEC member economies. Indeed, the poem is about the deep friendship between individuals, but it also applies to the friendly relations that China has nurtured with friendly neighboring countries since ancient times.

Gazing northeast from the Island of Bali in the Indian Ocean, far off in the distance, are the vast blue waters of the Pacific. Delivering his speech in Bali, Xi Jinping seemed inspired by his vantage point to quote Shang Yan's poetry. When sailing on the open sea, we let our vision expand as we find our bearings, search for navigational markers, and judge the wind. Then, we are prepared to hoist sails for a smooth, swift journey to our destination. When setting out on the path of development, APEC members should also be prepared to accommodate a broader view as we navigate toward our goal of coordination and positive engagement. We are in the same boat. Let us hoist sails and begin our journey together.

Bali has long been witness to economic and cultural exchanges between Chinese and other nationalities. When the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) navigator Zheng He (1371-1433) sailed the South Seas, which were known as the Western Oceans at the time, he brought exquisite craftsmanship and promoted prosperity on the island. Indeed, evidence of the various ways his voyages influenced Bali can still be seen today. The expeditions he led 600 years ago encouraged trade and development between China and foreign lands, and strengthened economic ties with countries that bordered the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Pursuing a foreign policy of shared peace, Zheng He helped China develop friendly relations with countries in Asia and Africa. It is significant that Xi Jinping chose to recite the line "Boundless is the ocean where we sail with the wind" when discussing the future development of the Asia-Pacific region. In the "boundless" world of economic environment, partners in the Asia-Pacific should "sail with the wind" and work together to create a region that leads the world, favors all parties, and benefits future generations. This is the vision that Xi Jinping proposed for the region and the glorious future that is within the grasp of all countries in the Asia-Pacific.

“Worms can only grow in something rotten.” In recent years, long-pent-up problems in some countries have led to resentment among the people, unrest in society and the downfall of governments, with corruption being a major culprit. Facts prove that if corruption is allowed to spread, it will eventually lead to the destruction of a party and the fall of a government. We must keep up our vigilance.

— *Speech by Xi Jinping at the first group study session of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Committee, November 17, 2012*

Worms Can Only Grow in Something Rotten

— *Stamping out breeding grounds for corruption*

The quotation above is based on a line of Xunzi in “Encouraging Learning”, the first book of *Xunzi*: “Meat when it rots breeds worms; fish that is old and dry brings forth maggots.” In his essay “On Fan Zeng,” Su Shi (1037-1101) of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) wrote, “Insects will appear only after things are rotten.” In other words, worms can only live and feed on things that have begun to rot. In his speech, Xi Jinping used the above quotation to warn about the danger that corruption poses to the Party and the country. Indeed, the long-term development of the Party and the state depends on officials leading honest and clean lives and remaining sincere and straightforward.

“Encouraging Learning” expounds on theories and methods of education. Xunzi was convinced that education could increase knowledge and ability, develop moral character, and ward off misfortune. Perseverance and dedication are vital. He believed that studying the Confucian classics required that one should be adept at both learning from the worthy and teaching others. Once begun, studies should be followed through with vigor and never abandoned unfinished. Studies should be undertaken with the hope of attaining a complete and pure spiritual outlook. “On Fan Zeng” is an early historical work of Su Shi. In the essay, he discusses whether and when Fan Zeng should have left his position as an advisor to the warlord Xiang Yu. The essay reveals Su Shi’s unique insight into historical figures and events. “Encouraging Learning” and “On Fan Zeng” are classics of Chinese history that have great value to pass on to the world.

“Worms can only grow in something rotten” is the view the ancient wise men had toward the development of things. It conforms

to dialectical materialism: In the development of things, external factors create the conditions for change, internal factors are the basis for change, and external factors become operative through internal factors. Just as flies do not hover around eggs that are not cracked, it is internal factors that play the decisive role when misfortune strikes. Some officials who are Party members have become corrupt and degenerate. This began with their own depravity, whether they coveted power, money, or sex, or indulged in alcohol or enjoyed throwing their weight around. They were carried away by vices and their greed knew no bounds. They used their power for personal gain and let their weaknesses get the best of them. They compromised their principles and broke the Party disciplines and the state law. Ultimately, they wind up in disgrace and ruin.

Rapid economic growth has distorted the values of some people. Many leading officials fail to withstand the temptations before them, and seek pleasure and comfort instead. Caught unawares, they slide toward the abyss of corruption. Therefore, in order to be upright and stay away from corruption, leading officials should focus on strengthening convictions and resisting temptations.

On the one hand, leading officials should study Party theories in earnest. With the goal of always serving the people at the forefront, they need to establish a proper view of the world, outlook on life, and system of values. Their actions should reflect that they are “exercising power for the people, sharing people’s concerns, and working for people’s interests.” Only then will they be prepared to face temptations and scenes of debauchery without wavering in their convictions. Only then will they preserve the good traditions won through past revolutions. Otherwise, if leading officials neglect self-improvement and studying, their political consciousness will diminish, values will be misaligned, and spirits will be distorted. Ultimately, they will succumb to corruption and degeneration, and become disgraced for the rest of their lives.

On the other hand, the power entrusted to officials by the Party and the people is a tool that should be used for the benefit of the people. Government power must be used for the public good; it should never be

used for personal gain. Power is a double-edged sword. Officials should dedicate themselves to working for the people, acting within prescribed limits, and remaining cautious as though treading on thin ice. Those who adhere to principles and keep their hands clean will gain the support of the people. Conversely, officials will cause their own demise if they succumb to selfish desires, brandish power, or resort to plunder, graft, and injustice.

“Worms can only grow in something rotten.” This applies to both individuals and political parties. Only by stamping out breeding grounds for corruption within the Party and ensuring the soundness of its own “health” can the Party resist corrosive external influences. Therefore, as individual Party members or officials, we should focus on self-improvement, honesty, and self-discipline. As the ruling party and the people’s government, we should strive to improve the system, strengthen the rule of law, and close loopholes, so that corruption has no place to fester. Then, “things” will not rot and worms will have difficulty growing!

Adhering to the mass line means following the fundamental tenet of serving the people wholeheartedly. “Success in government lies in following the hearts of the people. Failure lies in opposing them.” Serving the people wholeheartedly is the fundamental purpose and outcome of all the work of the Party. It is a symbol that distinguishes our Party from all others.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the symposium to commemorate the 120th anniversary of Mao Zedong, December 26, 2013*

Success in Government Lies in Following the Hearts of the People. Failure Lies in Opposing Them

— *The purpose of the Party is to serve the people*

The title above was taken from “On Shepherding the People,” a chapter from *Guanzi*. In context, it reads:

“Success in government lies in following the hearts of the people. Failure lies in opposing them. The people hate trouble and toil, so the prince should provide them with leisure and freedom from care. The people hate poverty and low position, so the prince should provide them with riches and honor. The people hate danger and disaster, so the prince should insure their existence and provide them with security. The people hate death and annihilation, so the prince should enable them to live and propagate. If the prince can provide them with leisure and freedom from care, the people will be willing to endure trouble and toil for him. If he can provide them with riches and honor, they will be willing to endure poverty and low position for him. If he can ensure their existence and provide them with security, they will be willing to endure danger and disaster for him. If he enables them to live and propagate, they will be willing to endure death and annihilation for him.”

Xi Jinping cited this line from *Guanzi* to illustrate the fundamental role that popular support plays in determining the rise and fall of a party or a government. He emphasized that the Party should make serving the people wholeheartedly “the fundamental purpose and outcome” of all its work. The satisfaction of the people should be the standard by which the Party judges the quality of its work.

Guanzi (719-645 BC), also known as Guan Zhong, was a statesman and military strategist for the state of Qi during the Spring and Autumn

Period (770-476 BC). Associated with the Legalist school, he assisted Duke Huan of Qi in governing the state and reforming domestic and foreign policies. He also formulated policies that would enrich the state and strengthen the military. He was given the honorific title of “uncle” by Duke Huan. While *Guanzi* was named after Guan Zhong, in reality it is a monumental work completed by many thinkers. “On Shepherding the People” is the first chapter in *Guanzi*. It is a concentrated reflection of Guanzi’s ideas about politics and theories on governing a country.

Guanzi was the first statesman in Chinese history to put forward the concept of “putting people first.” He advocated that rulers obey the will of the people, act according to correct evaluation of their capabilities, and benefit their livelihoods. He reasoned, “Success in government lies in following the hearts of the people. Failure lies in opposing them.” Thus, the implementation of a government decree depends on the extent to which it complies with the aspirations and will of the people. Only by meeting this standard can rulers win popular support. Before they can comply with the aspirations and will of the people, however, rulers must know how people live and empathize with their hardships.

In “On Shepherding the People,” Guanzi conducted a penetrating psychological analysis of the people’s “hates” and “wants.” He realized that people hate “trouble and toil,” “poverty and low position,” “danger and disaster,” and “death and annihilation.” Therefore, he reasoned, rulers should keep these “hates” in mind when drafting policies to govern the state. They should enable people to live in comfort and happiness, to prosper and advance, and to survive and settle down. In turn, when the people are secure in the knowledge that their interests are protected, they would willingly share in the state’s joys and sorrows, and be ready to go through hell and high water to support the state.

The CPC represents the fundamental interests of the people. The purpose of the CPC is to wholeheartedly serve the people. The Party shares their thoughts and worries. It works to solve the problems that people care about most, problems that have the most immediate and concrete impact on their lives. It strives to meet the needs of the people,

improve their standard of living, and enable them to live happy lives of ease, comfort, and satisfaction. Causes are successful when they conform to popular sentiment. Countries are at peace when people live in harmony; countries are secure when people feel safe. After it was established in 1921, the CPC rapidly rose to power and became the ruling party in a span of just 28 years. This success can be attributed to the Party's ability to conform to historical trends and win popular sentiment. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China over 60 years ago, there have been bumps along the way, but time and again we have overcome difficulties and withstood trials because we were backed by the power of the people. The history of the CPC over the past nine decades has proven a timeless truth that "success in government lies in following the hearts of the people."

The Party and the government have always upheld the importance of the people's livelihood. The report from the 18th CPC National Congress emphasized, "To improve people's material and cultural lives is the fundamental purpose of reform and opening up and socialist modernization." While the members of the new Standing Committee of the CPC Central Committee met with the press after the closing of the 18th CPC National Congress, Xi Jinping was unequivocal: "As the new leadership, we have taken on this important responsibility for our nation." He was keenly aware of the people's expectations for a better life, including their hopes for a better education, steady work, a higher income, reliable social welfare, quality medical care, comfortable housing, and a more beautiful environment. He responded to these expectations with a solemn promise: We will strive to help the people realize their dream of a beautiful life.

Comprehensively building a moderately prosperous society and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation can be whittled down to working hard to give the people a better life. Understanding popular wish, following the people's hearts, and consolidating popular sentiment to enable them to live a happy life is the purpose of all our work. It is also the touchstone that measures whether the Party and all

levels of government have indeed governed for the people. "Success in government lies in following the hearts of the people. Failure lies in opposing them." We must regard safeguarding and improving the people's livelihoods as the purpose and outcome of all our work. We must view the people's interests as fundamental interests. We must ensure that the benefits of reform and opening up are extended to the people. Only then will we gain their genuine support.

“He sees what is good and acts as though he could never attain it, sees what is not good and acts as though he had put his hand in scalding water.” Officials must be in awe of Party discipline and state laws rather than trust to luck in the hope of escaping punishment for corruption.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, January 14, 2014*

**He Sees What Is Good and Acts as Though He Could
Never Attain It, Sees What Is Not Good and Acts as
Though He Had Put His Hand in Scalding Water**

— *Officials should have a healthy respect for the law and Party discipline*

The title above was taken from Book 16 of *The Analects*. In context, it reads:

Confucius said, He sees what is good and acts as though he could never attain it, sees what is not good and acts as though he had put his hand in scalding water — I've seen people like that and heard reports of their kind. He lives in seclusion in order to fulfill his aims, practices rightness in order to perfect his Way — I've heard reports of such people but never actually seen them.

The Analects is considered a Confucian classic. It recounts the lives and teachings of Confucius and his followers toward the end of the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC). Book 16 of *The Analects* focuses on their political activities, offers principles for making friendships, and presents theories about the moral cultivation of individuals, including “three things to be aware of,” “three things [the gentleman] stands in awe of,” and “nine things [the gentleman] thinks of.”

In the text, Confucius mentions two approaches to life. The first is for people to lead an honest and clean life, with a focus on their own integrity but no regard for that of others. The second is what Mencius later described as: “Being impoverished yet not losing hold of rightness, the scholar keeps hold of himself. Being successful yet not departing from the Way, he never loses his capacity to inspire hope in the people.” Confucius believed that the latter approach was more difficult to attain. He further

pointed out that avoiding the harmful in addition to pursuing the beneficial is a more profound approach to life, as it requires having a greater degree of awe and self-discipline toward things that are “evil.” This approach is embodied in the saying: “He sees what is good and acts as though he could never attain it, sees what is not good and acts as though he had put his hand in scalding water.” It is also described in the saying: “When you see a worthy person, think about how you can equal him. When you see an unworthy person, reflect on your own conduct.” When Xi Jinping quoted Confucius at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, he was warning officials about the anti-corruption campaign. His choice of words was profound, practical, and keenly acute.

“He sees what is good and acts as though he could never attain it, sees what is not good and acts as though he had put his hand in scalding water.” In other words, we must be perceptive and discerning in order to determine right from wrong, virtue from vice, and truth from fallacy. This insight comes from self-examination. As the ancient saying goes, “I reflect on myself thrice a day.” Only through daily introspection can we see the distance between ourselves and goodness, or between ourselves and virtue, and then use that goodness and virtue as examples upon which to model our behavior. Only through daily reflection can we recognize evil, and then guard against it so that we do not cross any boundaries.

By quoting these lines, Xi Jinping exhorted leading officials to “respect discipline.” The first part of the Confucius saying suggests a form of inner cultivation, a precondition for the self-discipline alluded to in the second part. This is because the only way to generate enough vigilance toward “evil” is by requiring ourselves to see what is good and then pursue it as though we could never attain it. Most officials are faced with temptations such as power, status, wealth, and even sex. They should have a degree of awe toward “evil.” They should realize that power comes from the people and should be used for the people’s benefit, not for satisfying selfish interests and desires. Only then can

officials draw a dividing line between themselves and power, put up a high-voltage line between themselves and money, and build a firewall between themselves and inappropriate sexual conduct.

Awe inspires self-discipline. When officials are in awe of power and the system, they are inclined to regulate their conduct, willingly accept supervision, and properly exercise the power of their office; they would refrain from illicit conduct, ill-gotten gains, and unhealthy tendencies. With resolve and determination, the central authority has opposed corruption and advocated honesty, with the courageous resolve of “scraping the poison off the bone and cutting off your own poisoned hand.” It has used a heavy fist to attack “tigers” and “flies.” The actions of the central authority stand as a warning to all: If officials lose their awe for institutional power or ignore laws and Party discipline, they are bound to drift toward the depths of corruption.

“He sees what is good and acts as though he could never attain it, sees what is not good and acts as though he had put his hand in scalding water.” Officials should learn to apply these words from Confucius to their lives, thereby replacing the luck they feel at having escaped punishment with the awe they hold for laws and discipline. Let corruption become the scalding water placed before the hands of every official, and let their hearts always remain vigilant. Results such as these cannot be achieved overnight, but we should continue to work hard toward this goal. We are convinced that with perseverance and zero tolerance for corruption, we can use Party discipline to catch small problems before they develop into big ones, treat “illnesses” promptly, resolve issues as they crop up, and stop “sores” from festering. More and more officials will become like the Confucian gentleman, who “sees what is good and acts as though he could never attain it, sees what is not good and acts as though he had put his hand in scalding water.”

The whole Party must realize that the fight against corruption is a long-term, complex, and arduous task. Just as we would take a heavy dose of medicine to treat a serious disease, we must apply powerful laws to address disorder. In our fight to build a clean government and stop corruption, we must have the courage to scrape the poison off our bones and cut off our own poisoned hands.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, January 14, 2014*

Scrape the Poison Off the Bone and Cut Off Your Own Poisoned Hand

— *Fighting against corruption to the finish*

In his January 14, 2014 speech at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CPC, Xi Jinping made use of two familiar sayings: “take a heavy dose of medicine to treat a serious disease and apply powerful laws to address disorder,” and “scrape the poison off the bone and cut off your own poisoned hand.” This showed the courage, resolve, and faith needed to build clean government and fight corruption.

The phrase “scrape the poison off the bone” originated in “Biography of Guan Yu” from *The Records of the Three Kingdoms: Book of Shu*, written by Chen Shou during the Jin Dynasty (265-420):

“Guan Yu was once struck by a stray arrow that passed through his left arm. Even though his wound healed, the bone would start to hurt whenever it rained. His physician said: ‘The arrow tip was poisoned and the poison has seeped into your bone. I can cure you by making an incision in your arm and scraping the poison off the bone.’ Guan Yu thrust his arm out and ordered the physician to cut. At that time Guan Yu happened to be eating with his fellow generals, and he ate meat and drank wine as if nothing happened while a bowl filled up with the blood flowing from his arm.”

“Scrape the poison off the bone” was later frequently used to describe someone with an iron will who was not afraid of pain.

“Cut off your own poisoned hand” came from “Biography of Chen Tai” in *The Records of the Three Kingdoms: Book of Wei*. “There is an old saying that when bitten on the hand by a viper, a hero will cut his own

hand off.” Vipers are highly poisonous snakes, and people used to say that if one bites you on the hand, you should cut it off right away to keep the poison from spreading to the rest of your body. This expression is used as a metaphor for acting resolutely at a key moment.

Both “scraping the poison off the bone” and “cutting off your own poisoned hand” require resolute action to treat the poison attacking one’s own body. Sacrificing a part of one’s body to save the whole reflects the tough mindset required to operate on oneself. While “scraping the poison off the bone” is performed by a surgeon with a scalpel, “cutting off your own poisoned hand” is your own initiative that requires even greater courage and guts.

There were three levels of meaning when Xi Jinping cited the stories of “scraping the poison off the bone” and “cutting off your own poisoned hand” at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the CPC.

First, disregard for the law and corruption are the “poison” threatening the Party. Left to develop unchecked without an effective anticorruption mechanism in place, the poison of corruption will seep into the Party’s bones, threatening its image and even its own existence.

Second, the Party must face up to the existence of corruption and see that this poison has already attacked its bones and hands. Resolving the problem requires recognizing that it exists. Xi Jinping said: “There are still breeding grounds for corruption. The fight against corruption remains a serious and complex challenge. Instances of misconduct and corruption have had an adverse effect on society, and they must be immediately addressed.” Faced with the evil and poison of corruption threatening the health of the Party and country, we cannot cover up our problems or refuse to see a doctor.

Third, removing the poison of corruption requires being like Guan Yu and the hero, which means having the courage and resolve to scrape the poison off the bone and cut off your own poisoned hand. It requires resolutely removing all “tumors” — large and small — to keep the body healthy and the team clean, thereby saving the political genes of the Party

by governing cleanly for the people.

If we say that since the 18th CPC National Congress, following the “eight rules” and carrying out the mass line education campaign was aimed at preventing the “four forms of decadence” from taking hold, then “hunting both the tigers and the flies” is a real case of “scraping the poison off the bone” and “cutting off your own poisoned hand.” This shows the solid resolve of the Party in strictly governing both the Party and the military and having zero tolerance for corruption. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, nearly 40 governor- and minister-level officials and more than 50 state-owned enterprise executives have fallen. By May 2014, 1,577 state functionaries at the county and division levels and above have been investigated and punished. They are like a “poison” attacking the Party’s bones and poisoned “hands” that must be removed. Strictly punishing them under the law shows that the Party is not only bold enough to “scrape the poison off the bone” and “cut off its own poisoned hand,” but also able to counteract the poison and purify itself to preserve its own healthy body and clean team. This is the only way to inject more vitality into the Party, and this is also the only path to realizing equality, justice, and harmonious development in the country and society.

Everyone is hopeful, but also apprehensive when it comes to the CPC Central Committee's "eight rules." We must get the first step right to "move the pole to earn the people's trust." Nothing else can be done if this task is not done well from start to finish.

— *Remarks made by Xi Jinping during a discussion with the Shanghai delegation to the 12th National People's Congress, March 5, 2014*

Moving the Pole to Earn the People's Trust

— *To win the people's trust, work styles must truly be improved*

In 2014, Xi Jinping joined a discussion of the Shanghai delegation to the 12th National People's Congress. During the discussion, Delegate Hua Bei offered her recommendation on staying true to the spirit of the "eight rules" and truly improving work styles. In his reply to Hua Bei, Xi Jinping quoted from the classic story of "moving the pole to earn the people's trust."

This story came from the time when Shang Yang (395-338 BC) wanted to enact his political reforms. Shang Yang was a well-known politician and reformer from the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). He was a descendant of the ruler of the State of Wei, his surname was Ji, and he was from the Gongsun clan, so people called him Wei Yang or Gongsun Yang. He was later rewarded fifteen cities for his contributions in the Hexi Battle, and given the title Lord Shang, hence the name Shang Yang. Shang Yang pushed through his reforms, which turned Qin into a powerful state, and history has called these "Shang Yang's reforms."

As Sima Qian (145-90 BC) of the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) wrote in "Biography of Lord Shang," *Records of the Historian*:

"Duke Xiao having employed Wei Yang, Yang wanted to change the laws but feared that the world would censure him ... The ordinances having been drafted, they were still not issued. Yang feared that the people would not trust him. He erected an eight-meter pole at the south gate of the capital's market and advertised for men able to move the pole and set it up at the north gate. He offered ten gold pieces. The commoners wondered at it, and no one dared move it. Once more Yang said, 'Fifty gold pieces to the one who can move it.' A man

moved it, and Yang immediately gave him fifty gold pieces to show that he was not deceiving them. Finally, he issued the ordinances.”

Since then, “moving the pole to earn the people’s trust” has been used to show that policies will be enacted and the people can believe in them.

Wang Anshi (1021-1086), another reformer from the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), composed a poem praising Shang Yang’s reforms: “Trust has always driven the people — words and not rewards count most. No one can deny Shang Yang’s greatness, his orders never failed to take hold.” This also alludes to the story of moving the pole. Wang Anshi’s praise of Shang Yang alluded to his regret that his own aspirations were not realized, as he also advocated for reforms during the Northern Song, but they never “took hold” as Shang Yang’s did.

All government orders are nothing more than words on paper if they are not effectively enforced. For his “orders to take hold,” Shang Yang adopted two measures: the first was “moving the pole to earn the people’s trust,” and the second was that all opposition to the new laws must be strictly punished, especially opposition from powerful officials. The only way to guarantee that his “orders would take hold” was to have the determination to carry out his orders and to have measures that ensure their full enforcement.

The “eight rules” of the CPC Central Committee were passed by the Political Bureau on December 4, 2012. The Central Committee formulated these rules not long after the close of the 18th CPC National Congress, with the objective of responding to the Party’s work style problems that the people were most concerned about. The hope was to improve the work styles of leading officials, and the Central Committee Political Bureau was required to act first as a model and rebuild the image of the Party in the minds of the people. The “eight rules” reflect the demands of the new central leadership on its own governance — a solemn promise by the CPC made to all the people of China to strictly govern the Party.

Real results were made after the “eight rules” were put into effect, and people voiced their support. But some people were also apprehensive as to whether the rules would really be enforced for the long-term. In the past, many “do-not-do lists” were made by the Party to keep leading officials in line. However, enforcement was mixed: sometimes grand pronouncements were made but not backed up; sometimes people marched to the beat of their own drummer to the detriment of enforcement; and sometimes things would get off to a roaring start only to peter out and end with no real results. Such results were a dime a dozen, and this not only eroded the authority of “rules,” but also lost the trust of the people. This is the background to Delegate Hua Bei’s recommendation to solidify the system from the start and make sure the “eight rules” were effective.

In his reply to Delegate Hua Bei, Xi Jinping wanted the Central Committee’s “eight rules” to have the effect of “moving the pole to earn the people’s trust,” meaning he wanted this solemn promise to have the same effect as Shang Yang’s preparations for reforms. He wanted to make sure laws and policies would take hold and the public would see and trust the government’s resolve.

Just as people must be true to their words, countries must have “laws and policies that hold,” and the key is in implementation and enforcement. We have all sorts of rules, but why did some people see those rules as nothing more than just “scarecrows” and ignore them? This was because enforcement was weak, and legislation was given more attention than enforcement. In Xi Jinping’s declaration that the “eight rules” should have the effect of “moving the pole to earn the people’s trust,” the Central Committee has demonstrated its resolve in the fight against corruption to make sure that “policies hold fast” and “rules are enforced,” as Shang Yang’s reforms did.

Studying history helps us recognize gain and loss, have perspective on gain and loss, and understand the course of history; studying poetry can lift our spirits, build our aspirations, and quicken our minds; studying ethics helps us learn honor and shame, understand glory and disgrace, and know right from wrong.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the celebration assembly of the 80th anniversary of the Central Party School and the opening ceremony of its 2013 spring semester, March 1, 2013*

Having Perspective on Gain and Loss and Understanding the Course of History

— *Studying history and using history as a mirror*

The saying “having perspective on gain and loss and understanding the course of history” originated from “Biography of Wei Zheng,” *The New Book of Tang*. The original text reads, “You can straighten your clothes out in a mirror of copper, you can learn the course of history in the mirror of time, and you can understand gain and loss in the mirror of man.” Xi Jinping used the saying “have perspective on gain and loss and understand the course of history” to encourage leading officials to study history and learn from the best that civilization has to offer.

The New Book of Tang was a biographical dynastic history of the Tang compiled by Ouyang Xiu (1007-1072), Song Qi (998-1061), Fan Zhen (1007-1088), and Lü Xiaqing (1015-1068), and is considered one of the *Twenty-Four Histories*. The “Collected Biographies” section narrates the life deeds of various people as a record for posterity. Wei Zheng (580-643) was a well-known statesman during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) with a forthright nature, exceptional knowledge, and knack for boldly speaking his mind to the emperor. In order to protect and solidify the feudal rule of the Tang Dynasty, he submitted more than 200 remonstrations to the throne, asking Tang Emperor Taizong to learn from the lessons of history, plan for danger in times of peace, strive to have the best governance, and employ worthy ministers and heed their words. The saying quoted above was Emperor Taizong’s fond view of Wei Zheng after losing Wei, his faithful minister.

“Histories record deeds.” History is a true record of the rise and fall of nations and countries and an accumulation of generation after generation of human knowledge, experience, and wisdom. In this sense,

history is “lessons from those traveling ahead of us.” We can imitate and learn from the gains of our predecessors, and we can also take history as a cautionary lesson. The Russian philosopher Alexander Herzen once said, “By understanding the past more fully we get a clearer view of the present; delving more deeply into the past, we discover the meaning of the future; looking back, we go forward.” The famous American futurist Alvin Toffler said, “If we do not learn from history, we shall be compelled to relive it.” These well-known sayings show from different angles the importance of learning from history: learn from history and thrive.

Tang Emperor Taizong’s achievement was “Zhenguan governance”, because he knew the importance of “having perspective on gain and loss and understanding the course of history” — he was a master of learning from historical experience, and he excelled at listening to others’ opinions.

On multiple occasions, Xi Jinping stressed making reading a part of a healthy lifestyle. As the country’s highest leader, Xi Jinping finding time in his jam-packed workday to read and turning this into a lifestyle truly makes him a model that all leading officials should learn from. Furthermore, the group study system of the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau also serves to carry on the Party’s outstanding tradition of emphasizing studying hard.

These words from Xi Jinping explain why we need to study history and culture. They provide insight into the social function and value judgments we gain from studying traditional cultural knowledge such as history, poetry, and ethics. Studying history cultivates our ability to understand and critique history and reality. Studying poetry increases our ability to enjoy and appreciate the fine things and emotions in life. Studying ethics teaches us the standards of morals and decorum we should follow when interacting with others and society.

In today’s global world, leading officials need to not only understand their own country’s history and culture, but also have global vision and absorb the best that all civilizations of the world have to offer. The

histories and cultures of all countries can give us a broad view in which to understand, tolerate, and respect others. They also give us completely new perspectives from which to approach our own cultural traditions.

Leading officials need to not only have unique views on carrying on their national culture and developing local culture, but also be confident enough to equally engage with different cultures of the world. This will truly give them border-crossing insight and a world vision, as well as the ability to carve out a place for themselves amidst fierce international competition.

We must study in order to improve our ability to work in a more scientific way, with greater foresight and initiative. This will allow us to keep up with the times, follow the law of development, and be innovative in our leadership and policy-making. We must study in order to avoid bewilderment resulting from inadequate knowledge, blindness resulting from insensibility, and chaos resulting from ignorance. We must also study in order to overcome professional deficiencies, the dread of incompetence and outdated capabilities. Otherwise, we are no better than “a blind man on a blind horse riding toward a deep pool at night” — an imprudent and inadvisable course of action, however courageous. This could lead us to failure in work, losing our way and falling behind the times.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the celebration assembly of the 80th anniversary of the Central Party School and the opening ceremony of its 2013 spring semester, March 1, 2013*

A Blind Man on a Blind Horse Riding Toward a Deep Pool at Night

— *Be more scientific, with greater foresight and initiative*

“A blind man on a blind horse riding toward a deep pool at night” comes from “Taunting and Teasing,” *A New Account of Tales of the World*, written by Liu Yiqing during the Song Period (420-479) of the Southern Dynasties (420-589). Passage 61 reads:

Huan Xian, Duke of Nanjun, was once playing a game of “sequences” with Yin Zhongkan, governor of Jingzhou, and some others and everyone was composing verses with liao, meaning “ended,” as both the rhyme and the topic. Gu Kaizhi began:

“Flames devour the level plain, and leave no trace unburned.”

Huan continued:

“With white clothes wrap the coffin round, and by it plant the banners.”

Yin added:

“Throw the fish into the deep; release the flying bird.”

Next they continued, using the wei, meaning “dangerous” as both the rhyme and the topic. Huan Xian began:

“Poised on a spear point, rice is washed, and on a sword point steamed.”

Yin continued:

“An old man of a hundred years climbs up a withered branch.”

Gu added:

“Upon the windlass o’er the well there lies an infant child.”

One of Yin’s aides who was present chimed in:

“A blind man on a blind horse riding toward a deep pool at night.”

“Hear! Hear!” cried Yin, “You’re getting too close to home!” This was because one of Yin Zhongkan’s eyes was blind.

This section, “Taunting and Teasing,” includes many playful stories full of ridicule, tricks, satire, retorts, and advice, as well as joking between friends, showing the quick, witty exchanges people engaged in at the time. The language is full of deeper meanings and far-reaching implications, which was an important part of the social style of the Wei-Jin era (220-420).

In this story, several learned men are discussing what the most dangerous situation would be, and one of them comes up with the example of “a blind man rides a blind horse toward a deep pool late at night.” This line describes an extremely dangerous situation for a blind person, but with the dramatic irony of him not knowing the danger he is really in.

Xi Jinping quoted the line “a blind man rides a blind horse toward a deep pool late at night” to show how leading officials need to study harder to avoid total ignorance, flailing about blindly in their work, and not even realizing when they are in danger.

Xi Jinping mentioned this line during his speech at the celebration assembly of the 80th anniversary of the Central Party School and the opening ceremony of its 2013 spring semester. This was in particular to shine light on the danger of leading officials not reading or studying, and instead becoming like the “blind man on a blind horse.” Making decisions while being in the dark oneself often leads to the problem of “bewilderment resulting from inadequate knowledge, blindness resulting from insensibility, and chaos resulting from ignorance.”

Since the CPC was established, at every critical juncture it has emphasized Party-wide study based on the changing nature of the historical tasks it faced. During the era of democratic revolution, the Party was mainly made up of peasants rather than the progressive industrial workers Karl Marx spoke of. But by having Party members study more, the Party preserved its progressive nature as a proletarian governing party, and gained leadership in the democratic revolution. During China’s second revolutionary war, when faced with dogmatic accusations that “there is no Marxism deep in the mountains,” Mao

Zedong did everything he could to collect works on Marxism-Leninism and devoted himself to reading. When the Red Army took Zhangzhou in 1932, he found a copy of *Anti-Dühring* by Friedrich Engels that he held on to as if it were his greatest treasure, and he even continued reading it when lying ill on a stretcher. It was study that helped the CPC improve its fighting ability and become the leader of the democratic revolution.

On the eve of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong called for the entire Party to study anew, because "the serious task of economic construction lies before us. We shall soon put aside some of the things we know well and be compelled to do things we don't know well." "We must learn what we do not know." "Learn respectfully and conscientiously." It was study that allowed the CPC to be able to master developing the economy and lead the construction of the country.

China is already in a new stage of development. The task of reform, development, and stability is immense. New situations, new problems, and new conflicts are continually appearing. We are also in an age of "information explosion" and "big data," in which the speed of knowledge updating and innovation has greatly increased. If we do not step up our studies, we will fall behind the times or even make no progress at all. If we try to fly by the seat of our pants in decision-making and act imprudently, we will be "riding toward a deep pool at night." If we do not study history, we will not know how history progresses and how great our cause is. If we do not study science, we will not know how vast this world is and how variable our environment is. If we do not study worthy figures, we will not know the potential of human character, and will not understand that "people look up to those with lofty conduct and follow those with upright actions." Studying harder is the only way that will enable us to employ more scientific methods in our work with greater foresight and initiative. There is no other way to make our leadership and decision-making reflect the times, conform to the ways of the world, and be full of creativity.

Whether or not leading officials improve themselves through study is not only a personal matter, but also critical for the development of the causes of the Party and the country. An ancient scholar expressed it thus: “Not all scholars must become officials, but all officials must be scholars.”

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the celebration assembly of the 80th anniversary of the Central Party School and the opening ceremony of its 2013 spring semester, March 1, 2013*

Not All Scholars Must Become Officials, But All Officials Must Be Scholars

— *Leading officials' study is critical for developing
the causes of the Party and country*

The phrase “Not all scholars must become officials, but all officials must be scholars” originated in *Xunzi: The Great Compendium*. The original text reads:

“If the gentleman is advanced in office, then he will be able to increase the praises of his superiors and to lessen the sorrows of his inferiors. To be unable to fulfill the duties of an office and yet take a position is to be a sham; to be of no advantage and yet accept the generosity of one's ruler is to be a thief. Not all scholars must become officials, but all officials must be scholars.”

Xi Jinping cited this line in his speech to emphasize the importance of study to leading officials.

Xunzi was a philosopher and educator from the late Warring States Period (475-221 BC), and one of the most important representative figures of Confucianism. He carried on and developed the philosophy of Confucius, and was a highly accomplished Confucian philosopher during the late Warring States Period. Scholarship has shown that *The Great Compendium* is a compilation of sayings recorded by Xunzi's students. Its contents are wide-ranging and complex in nature: “Each section conveys an essential message, and the book could not be named after just one, hence the general name *The Great Compendium*.” *The Great Compendium* is known as the “Analects” of *Xunzi*.

“Not all scholars must become officials, but all officials must be scholars” means that learned people do not necessarily have to become

officials, but officials must work hard in their studies. This makes one think of the deeply embedded concept of “study, and if you excel at studying, hold public office” in feudal Chinese society. Actually, this expression came from Zi Xia, a senior disciple of Xunzi’s predecessor Confucius. The original line reads: “Hold public office, and if you have time left over, study. Study, and if you have time left over, hold public office.” But in later generations, in particular after the imperial examination system was founded, most Chinese shortened it and misinterpreted it as “study, and if you excel at studying, hold public office” for utilitarian purposes, which resulted in the widespread argument that “the purpose of study is to become an official.” In fact, this line does not mean to say that you can hold public office if you “excel at studying,” but rather if you have the “extra energy.” Therefore, it should be interpreted as, “if you are an official and have extra energy, you can spend it on studying, and if you study and have extra energy, you can become an official.” This is a broad summary of the purpose of Confucius’s teachings and shows the strong real-world applications of his philosophy. Here “study” does not simply mean learning knowledge, but also cultivating morals. To Confucius, individual study is the foundation of becoming an official; therefore, governing officials with the energy and time should study conscientiously and improve themselves continually. Individuals who have extra energy after learning knowledge and cultivating their morals can become governing officials.

This shows us that Xunzi is just like Confucius in emphasizing that “study” is the precondition and foundation for “becoming an official.” Becoming a governing official is not the sole purpose of study, but officials cannot think that they can stop studying because they have met their goal. Instead, they must keep on studying and improving themselves to reach the ideal of “the family in order, the nation governed, and the world at peace.” Simply collecting a paycheck without the knowledge and morals required of the job is no different from fraud and theft.

Founded in 1933, the Central Party School is the highest institution training senior officials and Marxist theory officials of the CPC. At the

celebration assembly of the 80th anniversary of the school's founding, Xi Jinping used the profound saying that "not all scholars must become officials, but all officials must be scholars" to encourage leading officials to study.

In the knowledge economy of today, with breakneck technological development and knowledge updating at unprecedented speeds, outsiders have trouble leading insiders — even insiders need to keep up with the times through continuous study. If anyone is only satisfied with the knowledge they previously accumulated, they will quickly be kicked to the curb as developments rapidly progress.

Here, we cannot narrowly understand "studying" as learning knowledge, but also expand it to include comprehensively improving one's morals. Having a spiritual vacuum is even more frightening than lacking knowledge, as this means one lacks the resolve to resist all sorts of detrimental enticements from society. If we say that one's level of knowledge will affect his fate in life, then the knowledge level and morals of leading officials will affect the fate of the entire nation. This was the reason why "learning" was placed first when the 18th Party National Congress report mentioned "building the Party into a learning, service-oriented, and innovative Marxist governing party."

With a keen interest in study we will be enthusiastic volunteers rather than reluctant conscripts, and study will be a lifelong habit instead of a temporary pastime. Study and deliberation complement each other, as do study and practice. As a Chinese saying goes: “Learning without thought is pointless. Thought without learning is dangerous.” If you have problems in mind and want to find good solutions to them, you should start studying and study conscientiously.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the celebration assembly of the 80th anniversary of the Central Party School and the opening ceremony of its 2013 spring semester, March 1, 2013*

Learning Without Thought Is Pointless. Thought Without Learning Is Dangerous

—Study and contemplation complement each other

The phrase, “Learning without thought is pointless; thought without learning is dangerous” originates from Book 2 of *The Analects* by Confucius. Xi Jinping quoted this line during his speech at the opening ceremony for the Central Party School to explain the broad and important relationship among learning, thought, and practice.

Confucius was a philosopher and educator during the late Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC), and the founder of Confucianism. He dedicated his life to teaching others and answering life’s most difficult questions, and he was known as “the first sage and teacher, and a model for the ages.” After Confucius died, his disciples and their disciples passed on the records of his conversations with his students, which were compiled into the Confucian classic *The Analects* we all are familiar with today. *The Analects* is composed of twenty books in total with content ranging from politics and education to literature, philosophy, and general life principles. Along with *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, and *Mencius*, it constitutes *The Four Books* of Confucianism.

“Learning without thought is pointless; thought without learning is dangerous” means that studying without thinking about it will result in being in the dark and not learning anything at all, and empty thought without a basis in learning leads to confusion and a lack of insight. We can regard this line as a method of studying that Confucius advocated. Blind study without contemplation is like having books lead you along by the nose without forming your own opinion. Another saying, “trusting everything you read in books is worse than not reading at all,” gets at the same point. Similarly, simply thinking on your own without studying and

researching your subject is like building a tower on a base of sand — you will gain nothing in the end. The only way to gain true knowledge is by combining study with contemplation.

Leading officials need to study hard in order to gain from their studies. Chinese history is full of moving tales of hardworking students, like the student who tied his hair up to the ceiling to keep studying, the one who jabbed himself in the leg to stay awake, the one who knocked a hole in his wall to “steal” light from his neighbor, and the ones who studied by the light of fireflies and moonlight reflected off the snow. These stories have inspired generations of students, and the spirit of such hard work is worth recording for posterity. Xi Jinping quoted the line “learning without thought is pointless; thought without learning is dangerous” to explain the complementary and inseparable nature of hard study and serious contemplation.

Leading officials must not be dogmatic in their studies, and must truly combine study and contemplation. Some people take a dogmatic attitude toward Marxism, seeing it as a panacea for every problem and applying it to everything, without considering how it relates to actual problems and how to resolve them. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels sternly criticized this tendency. Marx said, “If this is Marxism, I am certain that I myself am not a Marxist.” Engels also sarcastically said, “Marx probably told these people what Heine told his imitators: ‘I have sown dragon’s teeth and harvested fleas.’”

In their course of study, leading officials must consider their actual work, with several questions in mind at any given time. They must focus on theories that can apply to these questions. In the words of Mao Zedong, this is called “shooting the arrow at the target,” and is the opposite of formalism, putting on a show, repeating empty words, writing pointless articles, and engaging in empty talk. Some people engage in “book worship,” take everything they read at face value, and do not use theory to “dispel doubts” about actual problems. They only repeat the words from books to judge the practice of reform and opening up, or they use a utilitarian approach in taking only what they

want from their studies and use it for their own purposes.

Leading officials must focus on thinking about theories that can resolve real problems. They must stand at the forefront of reform and opening up and the developing international situation, in order to learn what is going on, discover new problems, find new ways of thinking, and explore new courses of action. They should not rigidly stick to the old ways, maintain the status quo, and never move forward. So long as we always have questions on our minds, we will be self-propelled to study conscientiously and actively throughout our entire lives.

These days, there is a general public grievance that some officials do more partying than studying. “Those in the dark are in no position to light the way for others.” This will have an adverse effect on our work, and will ultimately hinder our overall development.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the celebration assembly of the 80th anniversary of the Central Party School and the opening ceremony of its 2013 spring semester, March 1, 2013*

Those in the Dark Are in No Position to Light the Way for Others

— *Improving work ability through study*

“Those in the dark are in no position to light the way for others” comes from Book 7B of *Mencius*: “It once was that the worthy would, through their own enlightenment, cause others to be enlightened. Now, there are those who try through their own benightedness to enlighten others.” This saying satirizes outsiders trying to tell experts in other fields what they should be doing, as well as those who attempt to instruct others about things in which they have little understanding themselves.

Mencius records the words and actions of Mencius (c. 372-289 BC) and his students. *Book of Han: Treatise on Literature* mentions 11 books in *Mencius*. The extant version, however, has seven books in fourteen sections. It was later included in *The Four Books* and *The Thirteen Classics* and has become one of the principal Confucian classics. Mencius was a well-known philosopher, statesman, and educator during the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), second only to Confucius in renown among Confucian scholars. He developed Confucius’s philosophy of “benevolence” into his own notion of “benevolent governance.” He was called the “Second Sage,” and Confucian teachings were known as “the Doctrine of Confucius and Mencius.”

Xi Jinping used the phrase “those in the dark are in no position to light the way for others” to criticize the current tendency of leading officials who enjoy partying much more than studying. Instead of devoting themselves to earnest study, some of them are content with stagnation of their own abilities, some keep themselves busy socializing, some engage in formalism, some just dabble in superficial learning, and some let their learning go in one ear and out the other. “Those in the

dark are in no position to light the way for others” is a stern wake-up call to such officials to warn them of the serious consequences that can result.

This phenomenon is not rare among Party members and officials. People are very familiar with these kinds of “bumbling officials” who hand down orders without being competent themselves, “chair-warmer officials” who show up but do not actually do anything, and “royal officials” who never seem to be around when the people really need them.

Xi Jinping has repeatedly warned leading officials about the “dread of incompetence,” but even more dangerous is officials not realizing their own incompetence. As the line from *Master Lü’s Spring and Autumn Annals* goes: “A person, who does not know but thinks that he knows, is the progenitor of every kind of calamity.” Thinking you know when you really do not results in “those in the dark leading the way for others,” as people pretend to understand the situation or use old methods and tricks to deal with new problems. In the end, this causes misjudgments, misunderstandings, and blind actions when it comes to critical problems, which “will have an adverse effect on our work” and “will ultimately hinder our overall development.”

The intellectual level of leading officials determines their capability to make decisions. This is because having a strong theoretical foundation helps leaders have strategic vision and far-reaching insight, and a broad store of knowledge helps leaders gather information, control the decision-making process, and ensure the success of their decisions. We are in an era of information explosion and knowledge multiplication, with new knowledge and technology advancing at such a rapid pace that even professionals have trouble keeping up with it. Where does this leave leading officials who always have a full plate of work to deal with each day? There is an even greater demand on them to have an in-depth understanding and systematic grasp of the fields in their charge, so they really become experts in what they do and know how to make breakthroughs and innovations in their work. If they cannot keep up

with the times in their studies, their knowledge will age, their thoughts will stagnate, and their abilities will decline, making it impossible for them to adapt to new situations, grasp new methods, resolve new problems, and complete their new missions.

The first of the eight obligations of Party members as listed in the Constitution of the Communist Party of China is “to conscientiously study Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development, study the Party’s line, principles, policies and resolutions, acquire essential knowledge concerning the Party, obtain general, scientific, legal and professional knowledge and work diligently to enhance their ability to serve the people.” The objective of this is to turn Party members and leading officials into “worthy and capable people” and not “those in the dark leading others.” If leading officials do not study or do not know how to study, and as a result make governing decisions that do not conform to the law, the actual situation, or reason, the image and authority of the Party and government will suffer. During this critical period of comprehensively building a moderately prosperous society, leading officials must study harder and seek the truth, stop putting entertainment above all else, and do more careful studying and thinking. This is the only way to refine and increase the overall character and abilities of leading officials, allow them to keep up with the times in their abilities, adapt to the demands of their positions, and ensure national development and prosperity for the people.

We all should bear in mind the historical lessons of Zhao Kuo of the Warring States Period (475-221 BC), who fought all his battles on paper, or the scholars of the Western and Eastern Jin dynasties (265-420) who neglected their duties for empty talk. Reading and application are both ways of learning, and the latter is more important. Leading officials should adopt the Marxist approach by combining theory with practice. In the course of our studies we should always have questions in mind. We should respect the people as our mentors, learn from work, and work on the basis of learning, making use of what we have learned and applying it to real-life situations. Study and practice should always promote each other. We should disdain empty talk and never be “fairytale tellers.”

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the celebration assembly of the 80th anniversary of the Central Party School and the opening ceremony of its 2013 spring semester, March 1, 2013*

Neglecting Duty for Empty Talk

— *Coupling theory with practice*

In “Speech and Conversation” from *A New Account of Tales of the World*, it says:

The Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420) had to settle with governing a smaller territory. The officials all loved to engage in idle talk, which upset Wang Xizhi. He was climbing up the city wall of Yecheng with Xie An, when Xie An “was bemused, with his thought far away, for he had the determination to transcend the world [i.e., to be a recluse].” Wang Xizhi said to him: “Yu of Xia ruled with such diligence that his hands and feet were worn and calloused. King Wen of Zhou didn’t even allow leisure in the day for his evening meal. And today, when ‘the four suburbs are filled with fortifications,’ every man should be exerting himself. But if instead people neglect their duty for empty talk, and hinder the essential tasks with frivolous writing, I’m afraid that’s not what is needed right now.”

Since then, “neglecting duty for empty talk” has become a common saying referring to hindering a cause with useless chatter. Xi Jinping quoted this phrase in his speech to emphasize how leading officials need to follow the Marxist approach of coupling theory with practice, getting real work done, “valuing action in governance,” and never harming the country because of empty talk.

Liu Yiqing (403-444) was a famous literary scholar of the State of Song (420-479) of the Southern Dynasties who compiled the short story collection *A New Account of Tales of the World*, which records sayings and anecdotes about the gentry of the Han (206 BC-AD 220) and Wei (220-265) dynasties through the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420). It reflects the

trends among scholar-officials at the time in their thoughts, lives, and unrestrained idle chatter. The concise language and lively description was well loved and valued by men of letters throughout Chinese history. “Speech and Conversation” of this collection records great lines from all sorts of contexts. Most are extremely concise and just one or two lines long, but they are all extremely apt, witty, and philosophically profound. Some conceal deeper meaning, some soar to loftier realms, some are incisive and penetrating, some are grand and magnificent, and some hit the mark with one saying. In any case, all are worth reflecting on.

“Neglecting duty for empty talk” took dead aim at the fashion among the gentry at the time who engaged in pointless chatter. They neglected matters of state and the people’s welfare, and instead talked about Laozi, Zhuangzi, and the *Book of Changes*. Everyone wanted to join in the conversation and show off their own views and evidence, and took great pride in refuting the arguments of others. In the meantime, they derided talk of governing the country, strengthening the army, and enriching the people as worldly affairs. But practical matters are critical. If we get into the habit of spending all day discussing the abstruse and inexplicable, or composing word games, burying important matters underneath a mountain of writing, duties in national governance are sure to go to waste. Throughout the course of history, countless officials have been ridiculed for engaging in idle talk while neglecting their work, the country, and themselves, while those who sat down and got to work have been honored so many times as constituting “the backbone of the nation.” The ancient criticism against “neglecting duty for empty talk” and “hindering the essential tasks with frivolous writing” gets right to the heart of the matter.

Success comes from doing real work, and disaster originates in empty talk. Zhao Kuo “fighting his battles on paper” and the Jin scholars “neglecting duty for empty talk” have been held up throughout history as examples of what not to do in governing the country. The CPC has also demonstrated this principle in its struggle of nearly a hundred years. In what took Western countries two or three centuries to accomplish, China’s

national independence, democratic country building, and dauntless reform took just a few decades, as the CPC led the Chinese nation through ups and downs from sorrow to glory. It did not do all of this by relying on idle talk and empty thoughts, but rather on real accomplishments. This is the outstanding tradition of our Party. Mao Zedong composed a couplet that was a “portrait” of empty talkers within the Party: “The reed growing on the wall — top-heavy, thin-stemmed and shallow of root; the bamboo shoot in the hills — sharp-tongued, thick-skinned and hollow inside.” He stresses uniting study with practice, as he views the coupling of theory with practice as one of the “three clear signs” separating the CPC from any other party.

For the great effort to rejuvenate the Chinese nation, Xi Jinping’s weighty advice to leading officials is to learn from the historical lessons of “fighting battles on paper” and “neglecting duty for empty talk.” The international situation changes as quickly as the weather, and there are tough obstacles to overcome in domestic development. Conflicts become even more apparent during key moments of development, and this requires all the more that leading officials link theory with practice. Opportunities come and go quickly, and reform requires constantly pushing forward. These times call for “uniting knowledge and action” so that we can make use of what we learn, learn more through practice, and have both learning and application grow together. The only possible result from fighting battles on paper without taking action, from neglecting duty for empty talk without seeking real results, and from not having our feet firmly planted on the ground is a failure of governance, distortion of policy, and shattering of the Chinese Dream.

You must “learn extensively, inquire earnestly, think profoundly, discriminate clearly and practice sincerely.” We should be adept at making time for study. I often hear officials say that they would love to study more, but they “just don’t have time because of their busy work schedules.” This sounds superficially plausible, but it can never be an excuse for slackening in study. In stressing the need to improve our work, the Party Central Committee has called that we spend more time thinking and studying, and cut down on meaningless partying and formalities.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the celebration assembly of the 80th anniversary of the Central Party School and the opening ceremony of its 2013 spring semester, March 1, 2013*

Learn Extensively, Inquire Earnestly, Think Profoundly, Discriminate Clearly, and Practice Sincerely

— *Valuing and being good at studying is an important
part of transforming work styles*

The phrase “learn extensively, inquire earnestly, think profoundly, discriminate clearly, and practice sincerely” originates from Section 19, *The Book of Rites: The Doctrine of the Mean*. The entire passage reads:

This involves broad learning, extensive inquiry, careful thought, clear discrimination, and earnest practice. When there is anything one has not studied, or has studied but been unable to understand, one will not give up. If there is anything one has not inquired into, or has inquired into but not understood, one will not give up. If there is anything one has not thought about, or has thought about but not understood, one will not give up. If there is anything one has not discriminated, or has discriminated but not been clear about, one will not give up. If there is anything one has not practiced, or has practiced but without being earnest, one does not give up. What another person can do through a single effort, one will accomplish in a hundred, and what another person can do in ten efforts, one will accomplish in a thousand. If one can follow this way, though ignorant, one will surely become intelligent; though weak, one will surely become strong.

Xi Jinping quoted this phrase in his speech to demonstrate the principle of advancing through study.

The Doctrine of the Mean is one book in *The Book of Rites* written by a descendant of Confucius, and revised and edited by scholars in the Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC). It is an important early Chinese work discussing the theory of education. The entire book takes the “Doctrine of the Mean” as the greatest moral standard and natural law. During the Song

Dynasty (960-1279), it was included as one of the “Four Books” along with *The Great Learning*, *The Analects*, and *Mencius*. The central thought of *The Doctrine of the Mean* is the Confucian way of the mean, which is not the same as neutrality and indifference as it is generally understood today, but rather in cultivating one’s own character. The main idea of the Doctrine of the Mean is teaching people how to cultivate, supervise, educate, and improve themselves, to turn themselves into the “ideal person” with utmost kindness, benevolence, sincerity, morals, virtues, and sageliness. In doing this, a “peaceful and harmonious” realm can be created in which “once centrality and harmony are realized, Heaven and Earth take their proper places and all living things are nourished.”

“Learn extensively, inquire earnestly, think profoundly, discriminate clearly, and practice sincerely” describes several layers of studying and several stages of advancement. “Learning extensively” means we must cast our net wide when we first start to study, and cultivate a mind full of curiosity. If we lose our curiosity, we lose our desire to study, making extensive learning impossible. That is why it is the first stage of learning. Without this first stage, there will be no roots or wellsprings for learning. “Inquiring earnestly” is the second stage, and it means pursuing something we do not understand to the end and being critical of what we learn. Once we have a question in mind, we must carefully consider and analyze it, otherwise we will not be able to use what we learn — this is “thinking profoundly,” the third stage. The fourth stage is “discriminating clearly.” The more we discriminate in our studies, the clearer the picture becomes. Without discrimination, “learning extensively” will result in a vast jumble of knowledge, the true will become indistinguishable from the false, and good knowledge will be mixed in with bad knowledge. If we say that “thinking profoundly” is self-interrogation and self-criticism, then “discriminating clearly” is mutual interrogation and criticism. “Practicing sincerely” is the final stage of learning. It means working hard to put into practice what you have already learned, turning learning into realization, and achieving “unity of knowledge and action.”

There was practical significance in Xi Jinping telling certain officials

who say they cannot study because they “just don’t have time because of their busy work schedules” that they must “learn extensively, inquire earnestly, think profoundly, discriminate clearly, and practice sincerely.” This is because it is not only an attitude towards study, but also an important part of transforming work styles. The only way to improve our moral outlook and have firm ideals and convictions is to continually study harder.

Mao Zedong once said that he read three Marxist works, including *The Communist Manifesto*, when he was young. This experience left a particularly deep impression on his mind and established his belief in Marxism as the correct interpretation of history. His conviction never wavered after that. During the early 1930s, after he was criticized and removed from his position by “Leftists,” he simply said, “I’m going off to study.” Through study, he further solidified his conviction in uniting Marxism with China’s revolution. Deng Xiaoping also said: “When we become absorbed in day-to-day work to the neglect of study, we can easily get bogged down in the mediocrity of routine and become low-minded. This is a dangerous situation which could lead to political degeneration.” During his removal from power during the “ten years of turmoil,” when he was sent to labor in a tractor repair factory in Xinjian County, Jiangxi Province, Deng Xiaoping read many books, both contemporary and ancient, Chinese and foreign, in particular a lot of works by Marx and Lenin. He would think about them as he walked to work every day and after work, contemplating China’s past, present, and future, and this solidified his convictions and will even further. After the international communist movement reached a low point, he still firmly believed that more people in the world would approve Marxism because of its scientific nature.

Xi Jinping brought a case full of books with him when he was sent to work in a production team in Liangjiahe Village, Yanchuan County. The maxim he gave himself was “Now I will start to refine myself. Knowing nothing about a certain issue is deeply humiliating, so I must quest for knowledge like a thirsty man seeking water.” He read books

while tending his sheep, and the local villagers all said he “loved to read” and “loved to study.” Xi Jinping also said, “I learned a lot of fundamental knowledge during that time.”

Being good at studying and continually improving one’s study methods is the only way to continually advance and improve one’s ability to serve the people. Being good at studying is why the CPC has been able to overcome all obstacles and maintain its vitality over time. Leading officials must have broad knowledge to give them a world vision and open mind — “The sea is fed by all rivers; it is vast because of its capacity.” The only way to learn true theory and knowledge and scientifically analyze real-life problems is to ask in detail, contemplate carefully, and discriminate clearly, while always keeping in mind problems in society, theory, and the people’s lives. The only way to see true results in our studies is through solid practice and finding solutions to existing problems.

An ancient Chinese saying goes like this, “Prime ministers must have served as local officials, and great generals must have risen from the ranks.” Our mechanism for selecting officials in China also requires work experience at local levels. For instance, I once worked in a rural area as a Party secretary at a production brigade. Later I served in various posts at county, municipal, provincial and central levels. Extensive experience gained from working at local levels can help officials develop a sound attitude towards the people, know what the country is really like and what the people really need, be better versed in various jobs and professions, and become more competent and effective for meeting future requirements for good performance.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping during a joint interview by the press of the BRICS countries, March 19, 2013*

Prime Ministers Must Have Served as Local Officials, and Great Generals Must Have Risen from the Ranks

— *Experience at the local levels is necessary for the growth of all officials*

During an interview with media from the BRICS countries, Xi Jinping quoted the phrase “prime ministers must have served as local officials, and great generals must have risen from the ranks” to show that outstanding leading officials need to have extensive experience at the local level to be able to have a proper view of the people and actively serve them.

The line “prime ministers must have served as local officials, and great generals must have risen from the ranks” originates in “Eminence in Learning” from *Han Feizi*. Originally, a prime minister came from the head servant of the ruler. The word “prime minister” in Chinese is made up of words meaning “ruler’s head servant” and “to assist,” so it means the head family servant may govern the affairs of state. This phrase reflects Han Feizi’s view of promoting officials: both civil and military officials — in particular senior state officials and generals — must have real grassroots work experience. Because these people came from the grassroots, they have a better understanding of the battlefield situation and troubles of the people and better formulate policies. The alternative is having officials who end up fighting battles on paper and hindering major affairs of state in their inept governance and military leadership.

As the saying goes, “A craftsman who wants to do his job well must first sharpen his tools.” Therefore, even those with brilliant talent, immense knowledge, soaring vision, or lofty ambitions still need to sharpen their “tools” at the grassroots level to be successful in their future jobs. Mencius said, “When Heaven is about to place great responsibility upon a man, it will first temper his heart and mind,

fatigue his bones and muscles with toil....” This means that before people make great achievements, they must work through hardship and refine themselves. For leading officials, the first step to refinement is the grassroots.

Throughout history, many successful people have worked their way up from the bottom. Xi Jinping also started his career by slowly building upon his solid grassroots background, further demonstrating the necessity of hands-on practice for one’s future growth.

Our Party has always stressed the importance of promoting officials from the frontlines and encouraged young officials to start their budding careers at the grassroots. Our Party trains its officials by having them grow, refine their character, and improve their work styles in difficult, complex environments. Young officials not only refine their character, abilities, and talents by rolling up their sleeves and getting down to work at the grassroots, but more importantly, they have their ears to the ground and see with their own eyes how the people really live. They learn what the people think about and need, see social reality, and gain understanding in the current state of the nation. “Book learning is no substitute for hands-on experience” — this phrase is applicable to not only composing poetry and verses, but also understanding the people and country.

Refinement at the grassroots level is mandatory for young officials who are still growing, and it is a necessary path to talent and success. We cannot succeed in our causes without having feet firmly planted in the grassroots. Our achievements can only live up to what the times demand of them if we have broad vision and undergo hardships.

“Exaltation of the virtuous is fundamental to governance.” Party committees and governments at all levels must earnestly implement Party and government policies concerning students and scholars studying abroad, and train more effectively and on a larger scale all kinds of talented people badly needed by our reform, opening up and modernization.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the centenary celebration of the Western Returned Scholars Association, October 21, 2013*

Exaltation of the Virtuous Is Fundamental to Governance

— *Creating a good environment for raising the talents the country badly needs*

In his speech at the centenary celebration of the Western Returned Scholars Association, Xi Jinping emphasized the importance of having a team of top-quality people for realizing the dream of national rejuvenation. He said that China must “let those who return have the opportunity to make use of their abilities, and let those who stay overseas have a way to give back to their country.” He demanded that all levels of Party committees and government departments truly recognize that “exaltation of the virtuous is fundamental to governance,” and create a good environment for developing the talents the country badly needs.

The phrase “Exaltation of the virtuous is fundamental to governance” originated in *Mozi: Exalting Virtue I*: “In good times, virtuous officers must be promoted. When times are not good, virtuous officers likewise must be promoted. If the wish is to follow the Way of Yao, Shun, Yu and Tang, it is impossible not to exalt the virtuous. Indeed, ‘exalting the virtuous’ is the foundation of governance.” This means respecting and praising talented individuals and employing them to work for the country.

Among pre-Qin (prior to 221 BC) thinkers, Mozi (c. 468-376 BC) had a special talent as he excelled in both civil and military affairs. He was not only a philosopher, thinker, and educator, but also a scientist and military strategist. Among all of the philosophers of the time, his Mohist school of thought stood alongside Confucianism, as both were said to be “eminent learning,” which was reflected in the saying “if not a Confucian, then a Mohist.” The book *Mozi* was not composed by just one person at one time, but rather compiled by generations of Mozi’s adherents as a record of his words and deeds. Its content ranges from

politics and military affairs to philosophy, ethics, logic, and science.

Mozi came up with ten theses of governance. If we say that “universal love” is the core of Mohist thought, then “moderation in use” and “exalting the virtuous” are two of its other main focuses. *Exalting Virtue I* explores the relationship between governance and exalting virtue, arguing that “exalting the virtuous” is the foundation of governance. Mozi believed that the reason that rulers were unable to govern their countries well at the time was, at the root, because they did not make good use of capable people. Therefore, he proposed overthrowing the clan concept that was based on blood relations. Instead, he argued, truly virtuous people from each class rather than the ruler’s own relatives should be chosen and employed. Mozi’s philosophy of exalting the virtuous was a clear attack on the Confucian concept of “In treating relatives as relatives, there are gradations. In respecting the virtuous, there are gradations.” This was critical of the system of levels of feudal office established on the foundation of blood relations.

Mozi’s notion of exalting the virtuous represented the tradition of “employing only the virtuous” in Chinese culture, and it had a great impact on subsequent generations. *Essentials of Government of the Zhenguan Era* says, “Choosing the right person is essential for governance,” and *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* states, “The key to good government lies in employing the right men.” These all speak to the ever-unchanging principle that employing virtuous people is critical to ruling a country. Early leaders of the CPC, including Chen Duxiu, Cai Hesen, Deng Zhongxia, and Zhang Wentian, also advocated this Mohist idea, and Mao Zedong was a full supporter of the Mohist principle of only employing virtuous people. The CPC successfully traversing nearly a century of hard-fought history and sixty years of building the People’s Republic of China is proof that employing the right people is key to success in governing a rising country.

Since the launch of the reform and opening-up policy, the Party and government have focused much on building a talented team, and have continually improved its recruiting mechanism. The Communiqué

of the 17th CPC National Congress in 2007 listed “the strategy of strengthening the nation with trained personnel,” “the strategy of rejuvenating the country through science and education,” and “the strategy of sustainable development” as the three main strategies for further developing socialism with Chinese characteristics. It emphasized that we must work hard to develop world-leading scientists and top-rate innovators, in order to spark innovation and intelligent competition throughout society and raise great numbers of innovative talents.

Xi Jinping told all levels of Party and government authorities, “Exaltation of the virtuous is fundamental to governance,” to show them that they must recognize that talents are the foundation to a strong country. It is not enough for individuals to have an eye for spotting talent like the legendary Bo Le, pursue talent doggedly just like Liu Bei who sought out Zhuge Liang, and show sincere respect to talent as the king of Qin did to Fan Ju. We must also more widely and effectively cultivate all types of talents that are urgently needed for reform, opening up, and modernization, and create a healthy environment in which they can grow. To allow the “sea turtles” who studied abroad and “local turtles” who studied in China become the talents needed for China’s modernization, we not only need to attract more and better people, we also need to keep reforming the education system and innovate in our ways of cultivating talent. Throughout this entire process, we must discover and employ talents, train and refine talents, and attract and empower talents. This will give us an unending source of momentum for building an innovative country.

“Talents are needed to govern the nation.” Talent is an important indicator for measuring a country’s overall strength. Without a full team of top-quality talent, the goal to comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society and Chinese Dream of revitalizing the nation will be difficult to smoothly come to fruition.

— *Speech given by Xi Jinping at the centenary celebration of the Western Returned Scholars Association, October 21, 2013*

Talents Are Needed to Govern the Nation

—*Talent is an important indicator for measuring a country's overall strength*

The Western Returned Scholars Association is a group formed in October 1913 by students in China after they had returned from studying abroad. The founding members included Wellington Koo, Liang Tun-yen, Tien Yow Jeme, Cai Yuanpei, Wei Ching Williams Yen, C. T. Wang, and Zhou Yichun, and their motto was “learning, arts, friendship, encouragement.” They aimed to bring together students who had studied abroad, and to use advanced scientific and cultural knowledge and progressive philosophies and concepts learned overseas to contribute to the strengthening and revitalization of the nation. The Party and government have always valued those who have studied abroad, and past presidents Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao spoke at the 80th and 90th anniversary celebrations of the Western Returned Scholars Association. At the centenary celebration of the Western Returned Scholars Association, Xi Jinping quoted the phrase “talents are needed to govern the nation” to show the importance of talents in building the country. Moreover, he emphasized the fundamental nature of respecting knowledge and talent to rejuvenate the nation.

This phrase comes from Hu Yuan's *Record of Learning in Songxi County* from the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127): “Talents are needed to govern the country, education is needed to raise worldly talents, and schools are the foundation of education.” Hu Yuan (993-1059) was a philosopher and educator, and one of the founders of Song Neo-Confucianism. Wang Anshi (1021-1086), a renowned Song Dynasty statesman, called him the “greatest of all exceptional people in the country,” Fan Zhongyan (989-1052), a Song Dynasty prominent politician and literary figure, respected him as “the successor of Confucius

and Mencius and leader of Suzhou and Huzhou,” and Zhu Xi (1130-1200), a Song Dynasty Confucian scholar who became the leading figure of the School of Principle and the most influential rationalist Neo-Confucian in China, said, “a hundred generations could imitate him.” Hu Yuan dreamt of further developing the country through education and he dedicated his life to teaching. The phrase “talents are needed to govern the nation” explains the importance of education in the three-way relationship among talents, education, and schools, and the two-way relationship between “talents” and “governing the nation.” It shows his unique insight into the key role of talents in ruling a country—when talents prosper, the country flourishes; when the country flourishes, talents can be found far and wide. The course of history throughout the world has proven this conclusion: Those who win over talents win the country, and when the virtuous and capable are employed the nation will prosper.

In his speech, Xi Jinping looked back at the past hundred years of Chinese students studying abroad and the Western Returned Scholars Association. He pointed out that the recent history of studying abroad had been a history of struggling to “seek out our ideal China.” “Wave after wave of our best and brightest have gone abroad and returned to serve. So many have returned to devote themselves to the great causes led by the Party. They have written extremely moving and glorious chapters in the history of China’s revolution, construction, and reform.” He emphasized how valuable such individuals are to the Party and the people and how great their power is in helping to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In the global age, competition for talent crosses international boundaries, and a country’s overall competitiveness is based on the competitiveness of its talents. That is to say, competition for talent has already become the center of overall national competitiveness. It was in this sense that Xi Jinping said, “Talent is an important indicator for measuring a country’s overall strength.”

Since the launch of the reform and opening-up policy, and especially over the past decade, more and more students have taken the path of

studying abroad. As China's overall strength has increased, more and more Chinese students have returned to their motherland to offer their services. Indeed, "talents are needed to govern the nation." China highly values its talents and counts on them in its strategy to strengthen the nation. A number of policies have been issued to attract talents, "letting those who return have the opportunity to make use of their abilities, and letting those who stay overseas have a way to give back to their country."

Even though Xi Jinping was speaking to the Western Returned Scholars Association, he was not only talking to "talents" overseas, but "all great talents of the world." This is because the dream of national rejuvenation will only be smoothly realized if we truly make good use of all talents of the world, with the recognition that talents are treasure and foundation of the country.

Images have been losslessly embedded. Information about the original file can be found in PDF attachments. Some stats (more in the PDF attachments):

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