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Speeches/Documents

Title: Implement the Correct Policy in Dealing with Doctors of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Author: Mao Zedong

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The medical lore of our country has a history of several thousand years. It is rich in content and contains valuable clinical experience, and it has played an immense role in the people's struggle against disease through the ages.

To inherit and to develop this cultural heritage, to study it earnestly and to research its theories and its practical experience, in order to organize and summarize it with scientific methods, and thus gradually to raise its scholarly and clinical standards so as to make it become of even more effective service to the people--this is an immensely glorious and arduous task facing the medical profession in our country. If this work is done well, it will not only greatly facilitate the development and enhancement of our people's health care and medical enterprise, but will also further enrich the contents of the medical science of the world.

The Chinese Communist Party and the People's Government have always held our homeland's cultural legacy in esteem; the policy adopted by the Party and the People's Government with regard to doctors of traditional Chinese medicine has always been clear. The Party has consistently appealed to doctors of both Chinese and Western medicine to unite and cooperate, to help and encourage each other for the general purpose of raising the standards of modern medical science and clinical capabilities and to even better serve the interests of the people and make a joint effort to study and research the medical heritage of the homeland so as to develop it unceasingly and to make it play an even greater role. Over the last several years, however, the leadership in the departments of the administration of health care has consistently failed to carry out this policy adopted by the Party and the People's Government seriously and has not concretely implemented the accurate principle of uniting doctors of Chinese and Western medicine. ¹ Obviously, in the mobilization and organization of doctors of traditional Chinese medicine to take part in the hygiene and vaccination programs and in organizing clinics of Chinese doctors or joint clinics of doctors of Chinese and Western medicine, it has done some work and has had some achievements. Nevertheless, such work has not fundamentally resolved the problem of giving play to traditional Chinese medicine and certainly has not represented the adoption of an effective method in mobilizing and organizing doctors of both Chinese and Western medicine to jointly research and develop the homeland's medical heritage and to enrich the contents of modern medical science. Furthermore, the leadership in the departments of health care administration has often even violated the Party's and the People's Government's policy and adopted an attitude of disdain, discrimination, and exclusion toward doctors of traditional Chinese medicine, using all sorts of restrictive methods in dealing with them. This has been an attack on the positive attitude of the doctors of Chinese medicine in their work, has abetted the cadres in health care work and doctors of Western medicine in their erroneous mentality of despising Chinese medicine and Chinese pharmacology itself, and has adversely affected the development and improvement of the profession of traditional Chinese medicine severely. Other related work departments and

public opinion in society have also shown insufficient regard or concern for Chinese medicine. These mistakes must be rectified.

The reason that the leadership cadres in health care administration are unable to implement the Party and People's Government's policy toward Chinese doctors is that they have been afflicted by the remnant poison of bourgeois ideology and consequently look down upon the medical legacy of the homeland. They do not realize the importance of inheriting and developing the homeland's cultural heritage to the construction of a new culture; they do not realize the importance of enhancing the medical legacy of the homeland to the raising of the standards of modern medical science and clinical ability and to the development of the people's cause of health care and medical treatment. Consequently they are also unaware of the importance of uniting with doctors of traditional Chinese medicine, enhancing it, and thus allowing it to take its full effect. They neglect the practical needs of the broad masses of the people for Chinese medicine and Chinese pharmacology; they ignore the traditional Chinese doctor's rich experience and obvious clinical effectiveness; they do not study or investigate in earnest; they do not carefully analyze and sum up the situation, but they jump ahead and make the generalization that Chinese medicine is "backward" and "unscientific" and negate it wholesale. Such an attitude of not recognizing facts and not emphasizing practical experience is an attitude of extremely "unscientific" arbitrariness. This erroneous attitude adopted by the leadership cadres in health care administration toward Chinese medicine and Chinese pharmacology concretely manifests gravely sectarian mentalities and sentiments. Such mentalities and sentiments of looking down upon Chinese medicine and Chinese pharmacology have not, over a long period of time, been fundamentally turned around. This has caused the situation in which there has been no apparent change in the serious and persistent backwardness in the work in traditional Chinese medicine.

Therefore, if we are to make a serious effort to improve the work in Chinese medicine, we must first resolutely correct the serious mistake that exists within the leadership of the departments of health care administration and other related areas in that they look down upon the homeland's medical heritage and neglect the role played by Chinese medicine and Chinese pharmacology in our people's health care, and we must actively call upon and organize doctors of Western medicine to study and research Chinese medical science. This is the immediate key to the resolution of our problem.

There can be no doubt that it is necessary to appeal to and organize doctors of Western medicine to study and research Chinese medical science. This is because the enormous and arduous task of developing the homeland's legacy of medical science can be accomplished gradually only through the long-range cooperation between doctors of Chinese and Western medicine. The irrefutable clinical effectiveness of Chinese doctors and Chinese medicine has proved that Chinese medical knowledge has a rational and useful content. Its major weakness is that it has lacked a systematic scientific theory and has not yet taken hold of a reliable methodology of chemical experimentation and scientific inspection. This has greatly limited the scope of its development and enhancement. Therefore, the basic problem of developing the homeland's medical heritage is a problem of gradually integrating it with modern scientific theory through serious study, research, and practice. This means that we must, based on the theories of modern science, organize the principles of traditional Chinese medical science and summarize its clinical experience by scientific methods and absorb from it the essentials and eliminate the dross, so as to gradually channel it into modern medical science and turn it into an important component of modern medical science. Thus we should gradually establish a modern school of medicine of this nature. It should reflect the special characteristics of

China's geography and climate, reflect the special characteristics of the application of pharmaceutical material produced specially in China, and reflect the particular features of the life and labor of the various peoples of China. This is the long-range and grand goal of our development of the medical legacy of the homeland. In order to attain this goal, doctors of traditional Chinese medicine will naturally have to make an arduous and sustained effort over a long period of time, but doctors of Western medicine, who are endowed with relatively rich scientific knowledge, also have their especially glorious assignment in this as well. In the current situation, in which the medical heritage of the homeland is not regarded with esteem or comprehended in general by doctors of Western medicine, the emphasis on the importance of having doctors of Western medicine study and research Chinese medical science has a particularly great practical significance. It is only through their own study and research of the medical heritage of the homeland that doctors of Western medicine can promote the role played by modern medical scientific knowledge in organizing and enhancing that heritage.

To identify the promotion of the medical heritage of the homeland with the development of modern medical science makes perfect sense. To constantly discover, by the combined effort of Chinese and Western medicine, scientific truths from this invaluable cultural legacy will surely bring about daily enrichment of the treasury of modern medical science. In the last few years, some doctors of Western medicine have achieved some success in their study and research of Chinese medicine. This is illustrated, for example, by the accomplishments in the study of Chinese acupuncture treatment on the basis of the scientific theories of neuropathology. In general, doctors of Western medicine are willing to apply methods of treatment and prevention that have a scientific foundation both in theory and in practice; this is correct as far as it goes. However, they have cast aside the several thousand years of practical experience of Chinese medicine and do not excavate new knowledge, new medicines, or new methods from the experience of Chinese medical science, and this is very wrong. In this way, certain limits have been placed on the development of modern medical science itself. For example, if we were to delve into the method of acupuncture treatment, possibly we could write a new page in the history of modern medical principles; we might therefore be obliged to revise existing theory about the mechanical mobility and neuro-adaptation of healthy and sick people alike. As long as we launch the work of studying Chinese medicine and Chinese pharmacology in a well-planned, well-organized fashion and with good leadership, we are bound to make a major contribution to modern medical science and to the cause of the people's health care. To the individual doctor of Western medicine, to study and research Chinese medicine by scientific methods not only does not pose any danger to the medical knowledge or clinical technique that he or she possessed to begin with, but indeed it can bring about enrichment and enhancement of this knowledge and technique.

In emphasizing the importance of having doctors of Western medicine study and research Chinese medical science, we have not removed in the slightest from the broad ranks of doctors of Chinese medicine the great task of promoting the medical heritage of the homeland. In the past, some doctors of Chinese medicine have carried out organization and research in the art and science of Chinese medicine by applying relatively modern viewpoints and methods, and their accomplishments have been considerable. The majority of doctors of traditional Chinese medicine, however, neglect research work. This situation should be reversed now. In order to strengthen their own research work in cooperation with doctors of Western medicine, doctors of Chinese medicine will not only have to constantly dig into the principles of Chinese medicine and have a good grasp of their clinical experience, but they must also learn the necessary fundamental scientific knowledge so as to play a greater role in organizing and summarizing the principles and experience of Chinese medicine.

In order to unite doctors of Chinese and Western medicine in a combined effort to promote effectively the medical heritage of the homeland, the leadership organs in health care ought to base themselves on the spirit of Premier Zhou Enlai's *"Report on the Work of the Government"*² and penetratingly examine the conditions of the past within their own departments regarding the issue of carrying out the policy adopted by the Party and the People's Government toward Chinese medicine and earnestly correct the erroneous attitudes toward Chinese medicine and Chinese pharmacology. At the same time they must meticulously carry out ideological work and policy education among doctors of Western medicine, remove their ideological obstacles, and on the ideological basis of their own awareness and voluntarism, stir up their enthusiasm for studying and researching the medical legacy of the homeland. Furthermore, they must adopt, in a well-planned and methodical way, a series of organizational measures and utilize necessary systems and structures to ensure an improvement in the work of Chinese medicine.

Naturally, to do this work well is very complicated. The methods of treatment are different for doctors of Chinese and Western medicine, and to make them support and complement each other, to direct them toward one goal, one result, when they begin with different paths, we must have a powerful ideological and organizational leadership, one that will guarantee that they will constantly maintain a high level of initiative and activism and will struggle for a common goal. The principle of the integration of theory and practice must be carried out; in all things we must proceed on the premise of practice and conduct research work for the purpose of resolving practical problems. The special characteristics of doctors of both Chinese and Western medicine, and particularly those of doctors of Chinese medicine, must be given attention. The preliminary experience of certain clinical units in carrying out consultations between doctors of Chinese and Western medicine must be summed up, and new experiences must be carefully planned and assigned clear priorities to serve as a basis for directing work in general. We must make realistically solid and reasonable arrangements for the cooperation between doctors of Chinese medicine and doctors of Western medicine on the basis of their practical circumstances in all areas in each locality, so that they will not have to worry, and, cooperating in a friendly and intimate atmosphere, each can fully develop his or her own special skill. Only this type of cooperation will succeed in constantly reinforcing the unity of doctors of Chinese and Western medicine, and only then can they effectively carry out the enormous task of promoting the medical heritage of the homeland.

The work of Chinese medicine covers a very broad area. Not only does it call for the positive and active effort of the departments of health care administration; it also requires the close coordination of all other related departments and the resolute support of public opinion in society. In particular, it requires the unified leadership of the Party; this is the greatest guarantee of the successful implementation of this task. Party committees in every locality must shoulder their responsibilities seriously, constantly instruct and urge all related areas to implement the Party's policy toward Chinese medicine, and actively make improvements in this major area of work that concerns the life and death as well as the general health of the people.

Notes

1 See text July 30, 1954, note 1.

2 Mao is referring to the Report of the Work of the Government delivered by Zhou Enlai, premier of the Government Administrative Council, on September 23, 1954, at the First Session of the First National People's Congress of the PRC. See RMSC (1955), pp. 129-141.