



Current Trends and Thoughts

English Abstracts of Selected Works
by CASS Scholars

**Foreign Affairs Bureau
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences**

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PART 1

History

On Study of History

Tian Jujian

Guangming Daily, February 8, 1999

China is a nation with a long history, and a nation with a fine tradition of respecting history, learning from history and studying history. Knowledge of history, historical experience and wisdom of history has been nourishing the Chinese nation generation after generation like the generous sunshine and thirst quenching rain since ancient times. No matter who you are, a leader marching at the head of the tide of times or a common folk, a well read scholar or a rustic farmer, you benefit from the profound wealth of knowledge of history. The sons and daughters of the Chinese people, generation after generation, have never ceased absorbing knowledge, experience and wisdom from the never ending river of history.

Leaders at all levels in contemporary China are drawing nourishment from history consciously or otherwise. But if they wish to help realize the great blueprint of building China into a powerful country in the new century, they should be even more conscientious in studying history as a compulsory subject. No doubt there is a social division of labor and it would not be realistic to expect every leading cadre to become an accomplished historian. However, in a leading position, high or low, in a large department or a small one, you have to deal with all sorts of contradictions between man and nature and between individuals and the society. Although history will not repeat itself, some incidents in history often show a surprising similarity. Therefore history may serve as a mirror for the present. Practice has proved more than once that history may teacher people the ability of knowing the present from what happened in the past, making dialectic thinking, distinguishing right from wrong, learning what is right and avoiding what is wrong. History helps people build ideal, faith, morality and character — an undeniable role in a nation's rise or fall and a man's success or failure.

The third generation of the leaders of the Communist Party of China who

are relying on Marxist materialist concept of history to observe the human society attach a greater importance than any progressive elements of other classes to the study of history. They use history as a mirror in running the country and educate the masses and repeatedly call on leading cadres at all levels to set an example in this respect. Leading members at all levels on whose shoulders rest the heavy tasks assigned by history must rely on the study of history as a fundamental subject for the purpose of improving their own qualities and ability of running the government by conscientiously absorbing political and ideological nourishment from history. Only by so doing, can they remain sober-minded in grasping the law governing social progress, steadfastly lead the masses of people in winning new victories in the reform and opening to the outside world and in China's socialist modernization and guarantee China in a triumphant position in the fierce international competition today.

The article runs to 5000 words, first carried in *Guangming Daily*, February 8, 1999, with an editor's note, televised by CCTV in its "Morning News" and broadcast by the Central People's Radio Station in its "News and Summaries from Beijing Press". It was reprinted by *Xinhua Digest*, 5th issue, 1999. It won an award at the 7th national commendation for spiritual civilization.

Tian Jujian, male, born in 1935, graduated from and now teaching in the Department of History of Jilin University, transferred to the Division of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (predecessor of CASS) to work in the editorial department of the *Journal of Historical Studies*, later working as associate chief editor of the Journal of China Social Sciences and chief editor of *Journal of Historical Studies* and *Contemporary Chinese History Studies*, now research fellow and member of the Academic Committee of the Institute of Contemporary Chinese History Studies, and concurrently member of the Council of the Society of Chinese History and executive Council member of the Society of the History of the People's Republic of China, specializing mainly in historical theory, historical personalities and Chinese history.

Works by the author include *A Biography of Li Yu* (Contemporary China Press, 1995, revised edition, 1998), *Storms in Turmoil Years: Five Dynasties and Ten States* (Hong Kong Zhonghua Book Company, 1992), co-compiled a collection of academic papers titled *Selected Articles of Discussions on Theoretical Issues of History Published Since the Founding of New China* (Qilu Book Company, 1984), *Budding Capitalism in China* (Bashu Book

Company, 1987), and scripts of the Introduction Volume of *A Draft History of the People's Republic of China* (Chinese Encyclopedia Press, 1999). He has also published more than 150 articles in major Chinese journals.