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Using Technology to Usher in a Knowledge Economy — The Sixth National Conference on Science and Technology

Science and technology have become the driving force for mankind's quest for a better society. Today the rapid development of computers and the Internet are ushering us into the knowledge economy. Key areas of research being promoted in the ROC today include: 1. basic research with profound impact—including in the areas of bioscience, computer and communications technology, and cutting-edge science; 2. research connected with government policies; and 3. research on the ethical, legal, environmental, and social ramifications of science and technology.

After weighing sci-tech development trends, the Executive Yuan has decided to schedule the Sixth National Conference on Science and Technology on January 15, 2001, in accordance with Article 10 of the

Basic Science and Technology Law. The conference, to be held at the Taipei International Convention Center, will have the theme of "Using Technology to Bring the Country into the Knowledge Economy

Age," and will discuss the four major topics of "planning the country's sci-tech development goals, strategies, and resources," "knowl-

the current state of national sci-tech development, overall goals and strategies for sci-tech development, the planning and effective utilization of

sci-tech resources, and the improvement of mechanisms for integrating sci-tech development. The second topic will include the four subtopics of creating a favorable environment for knowledge innovation, strategies for the pursuit of academic excellence, recruiting and training talented manpower, and using knowledge innovation to stimulate economic development. The third topic will include the six subtopics of key areas of industrial technology development in the next four years, R&D strategies for innovation in a knowledge economy, industrial development strategies in a knowledge economy, science-based industrial park development strategies, e-

government and industrial upgrading, and strategies for the development of military and common military-civilian technologies. The fourth topic will include the ten subtopics of balancing technology and the



The Sixth National Conference on Science and Technology Preparatory Meetings in late November and late December 2000.

edge innovation and academic excellence," "technical innovation and industrial development," and "sustainable development and the people's welfare." The first topic will include the four subtopics of

humanities, environmental protection and global changes, medical technology, agricultural technology, transportation technology, construction technology, civilian atomic energy technology, energy technology, disaster-prevention technology, and water and marine resource technology. The conference will thus discuss a total of twenty-four subtopics.

The Sixth National Conference on Science and Technology will be planned by the National Science Council and jointly arranged by the Science and Technology Advisory Group; the Academia Sinica; Ministry of Economic Affairs; Council for Economic Planning and Development; Research, Development and Evaluation Council; Di-

rectorate General of Budget, Accounting & Statistics; Ministry of Education; Ministry of the Interior; Ministry of National Defense; Environmental Protection Administration; Department of Health; Council for Cultural Affairs; Council of Agriculture; Atomic Energy Council; Public Construction Commission; Central Personnel Administration; Ministry of Finance; and Ministry of Personnel. The Executive Yuan Premier will serve as the conference chairman, while NSC Chairman Weng and Executive Yuan Minister Without Portfolio Tsai will serve as deputy chairmen. Seven coordination meetings involving deputy department heads and sci-tech chiefs have been held during the conference's preparatory period, which

began in July 1999. Close to one hundred scientists and specialists took part in these meetings and helped prepare the subtopics and discussion framework. All the government units mentioned above are playing an active role in preparations. It is expected that a review of the various topics and subtopics will be conducted between late November and late December in order to finalize the conference's discussion framework. The consensus views and conclusions reached during the January conference will serve as the country's sci-tech policies and the content of sci-tech plans. The conference will thus promote the country's sci-tech development and bring the vision of a knowledge economy one step closer.

Conference on Cultural Dilemmas during Transitions Co-sponsored by National Science Council and Polish Academy of Sciences held in Warsaw

Headed by the Vice Chairman of National Science Council, Prof. Wu Maw-kun, the Taiwan delegation consists of 13 participants. They include, among others: Professor Wang Fansen (Director of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences), Prof. Hsu Tze-chi (Director of International Programs), Professor Lin Cheng-hung (Director of Humanities Research Center), who helps put the conference together, and Professor Hu Chang-tze (of the NSC Representative Office in Europe), who coordinates the organization between the two sides in the first place. Present among their Polish counterparts in the opening ceremony are Vice President Wodzimerg Ostrowski of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and Prof. Sarnowska-Termericus, Director of the Academy's Institute of Literature.

In addition to the three keynote speeches (Mr. Tadeusz Pióro [Poland],



Prof. Maw-Kuen Wu of NSC gave opening remarks with Prof. Sarnowska-Termericus sitting on the stage.

Prof. Yu Kwang-chung [Sun Yat-sen U] and Mr. Kornelijus Platelis [Lithuania]), there are altogether session 17 papers. Almost all of them address themselves to the issues of localization and/or globalization in

an age of transitions in Taiwan, Poland and its neighboring countries (Czech, Lithuania and Latvia). These discussions can be grouped into four general areas: cultural dilemmas and transitions, issues of globalization,



Dr. Charlie Tze-Chi Hsu of NSC (right) and Prof. Ostrowski of PAS (left) and Dr. Sarnowska-Temierusz of PAS at the reception



Prof. Maw-Kuen Wu of NSC (left) and Prof. Ostrowski of PAS co-chaired the reception.

religion, and arts and literature.

Mr. Pióro, a well-known Polish poet and publisher, takes up the difficulties in the cultural field after 45 years of Communist rule, e.g. dwindling state subsidies, crises of privatization, inroads of American mass culture, rise of cultural nationalism and hostility toward Western ideas. Prof. Yu, a renowned poet, translator and essayist, gives a personal example of how challenges of globalization can be converted into opportunities for cross-fertilization between the two traditions. Based on his experience as Minister of Education and Science and, above all, a well-respected poet, Mr. Platelis highlights the Lithuanian emphasis on equal opportunity, quality education as well as internal and external systemic consonance. Prof. Yinghsiung Chou (Chiao Tung U) focuses on crises in political and cultural representations in contemporary Taiwan and concentrates on the concept of the stranger's discourse through a reading of one of Zhu Tian-xin's stories. Drs. Andrzej Mencwel and Grzegorz Godlewski (Warsaw U) provide guidelines—amidst the complex relations between culture and politics in Poland—for the establishment of paradigms that are democratic, local, active, participatory and reciprocal. Dr. Aviars Tabuns (U of Latvia) pinpoints factors that impede social integration in Latvia and stresses the need for tolerance in order to bring about respect for ethnic diversity and multiculturalism. And in his case study of the

Holocaust experience in the Polish public discourse, Dr. Jacek Leociak (Polish Academy of Sciences) enumerates different ways of representing this wounded memory and encourages more open discussions.

Among the papers dealing with globalization, those written by Taiwan scholars are rather different from those by their East European counterparts in terms of the issues they are concerned about and the interpretations of cultural transitions the two places are undergoing. While the two papers from Taiwan (Dr. Lee Yu-cheng [Academia Sinica] and Dr. Liao Hsien-hao [Taiwan U]) both reflect on how globalization is being perceived in relation to the local, they differ dramatically in tone. Dr. Lee seems to be more optimistic about the resilience of the local, whereas Dr. Liao is rather apprehensive of the complicitous relations between nativism and mindless globalism. Practically all the papers from Eastern Europe revolve around the transitions from a totalitarian regime to a new era dominated by the market. Emphasis is generally laid upon the problems of trying to reconfigure a new society as well as cultural identity after having shaken off the shackles of Communism. The problems are perceptively identified as fear on the one hand of change and on the other of the relentless assault of market forces from the West. Notwithstanding minor differences, the issue with regard to the relevancy of local culture vis-a-vis the market forces

seems to have been overestimated and the concept of culture as hybridity prematurely embraced.

There are four papers devoted to the general area of religion and myth. Prof. Kao Tien-en (Taiwan U) addresses himself to the increasingly popular Tibetan Tantric Buddhism in Taiwan. As an authentic, quintessential Mahayana Buddhism coupled with a spiritual-meditational practice, it has a history of its own in Mainland China and Taiwan. The uniqueness of the religion as an ancient "inner science" and "a fully-realized psychology" make it fully relevant to contemporary life. Prof. Shan Te-hsing's (Academia Sinica) reading of Xiao Li-hong's novel focuses on four generations of the White-water families. In one of Hong's earlier novels, Buddhist ideas surface in the form of folk beliefs. But *A Thousand Moons on a Thousand Rivers* on the other hand employs religion on a much more profound basis. Drawing upon Iser's concept of "staging politics" and "literary anthropology," Prof. Shan further explores Xiao's representation of politics, history and religion. Prof. Sung Kwang Yu's (Academia Sinica) provocative paper argues for a connection between chemical fertilizers and various degenerative diseases in Taiwan on the one hand. It also sees the prevalence of these diseases as contributive to the proliferations of Buddhist temples and Taoist shrines as providing some alternative forms of therapy. Prof. Endre Bojtár looks



The NSC delegation in front of Holy Cross Church with keynote speaker, Prof. Yu Kwang-chung in the center.



The NSC delegation in front of hotel, from left to right, Te-hsing Shan, Fan-sen Wang, Kwang-yu Sung, Maw-Kuen Wu, Ying-hsiung Chou, Cheng-hung Lin, Li-Ing Lin

into the saturation of folklore and mythology in Latvian and Lithuanian national consciousness. Of the four dimensions of meaning related to the word "Baltic"—geographical, political, ethnic and linguistic-philological—only the philological remains tenable. For that reason, the mythic dimension is particularly significant as a means of preserving tradition and continuity.

In the area of arts and literature, Prof. Aldona Jawlowska focuses on the identity patterns in Poland in the 90s, where traditional values such as religion, nation, gender and morality are under threat from the Western globalizing consumer culture. Prof. Thomáš Glanc likewise points to the similar domination of the entertainment, performing and light consumer literature and arts in Czech in the 90s. Prof. Aivita Putnina (U of Latvia) also calls our attention to the Latvian situation and demonstrates how feminist art redraws the borders between Eastern Europe and Western Europe, between the social and the artistic and between genders. Prof.

Joyce Chi-hui Liu discusses the cultural iconography of contemporary Taiwan. The visual images in a 2-28 (1947) commemorative exhibit actually speak to the complex dynamics of the Taiwan society in the 90s. Chen Chieh-jen's visual images, and especially gaze, not only serve as interpretations of the historical conditions of Taiwan; it also initiates a new culture of resistance against the domination of canonical historical narratives endorsed by the establishment. Taiwan and Eastern Europe have something in common in terms of recent cataclysmic political and cultural changes in the 90s. By bringing together scholars from two different parts of the world, the conference provides a meaningful forum for mutual exchange of ideas, and the majority of papers do address themselves to some of the most significant aspects of cultural and political transformations in the context of localization and/or globalization. The conference is unfortunately not exactly well attended and there seems to be room for im-

provement in the degree of participation from the host institution. It is also suggested that future conferences should consider the issue of compatibility and reciprocity. Last but not least, it must be noted that without the most conscientious logistic support from Ms. Cheng Tze, Ms. Jennifer Hu, Ms. Nien-yi Wei and Ms. Yuchen Chou, all from NSC, the Conference would not have been run as efficiently as it has.

Notice

- I. The Proceedings of the National Science Council, Part A: Physical Science and Engineering (ISSN 0255-6588); Part B: Life Sciences (ISSN 0255-6596); and Part C: Humanities and Social Sciences (ISSN 1018-4473) will cease publishing in the middle or at the end of 2001.
- II. The acceptance of manuscripts for publication in the above periodicals will cease on October 31 of 2000, as determined by the postmark.

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