

Dialectics Applied in Driving Safely

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AFTER joining the army in 1968 and going through a short-term driving course, I began to carry out the task of transport by driving a truck on my own. With specific problems in mind while doing my duty, I studied and applied in a living way Chairman Mao's great theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, controlled the steering-wheel under the guidance of Mao Tsetung Thought, constantly summed up experience by way of "one divides into two," and had a record of driving over 35,200 kilometres without any mishap. As a result, I was cited a "five-good fighter" for two years running.

Our great leader Chairman Mao teaches us: **"Ideology and politics are the commander, the soul in everything. Economic and technical work are bound to go wrong if we in the least slacken our ideological and political work."** From practice for more than the past year, I came to realize deeply that driving involved the struggle between the two ideologies — the proletarian and the bourgeois. Only by giving prominence to proletarian politics, doing a good job of ideological revolutionization, putting politics in command of technique and revolutionization in command of mechanization, can we deal with various complicated situations, overcome all sorts of difficulties and successfully fulfil our tasks.

Prepared and Unprepared

Our company is stationed in a big city where there are many streets and countless pedestrians. When I began doing my job on my own, I often met with unexpected incidents. Someone said: "Using a machine naturally involves some danger and a sudden accident is unavoidable." I myself felt this statement to be true and I was worried that an accident would happen someday.

From what I had learnt in Chairman Mao's works, I became aware that this way of thinking did not conform with Chairman Mao's teaching. Chairman Mao teaches us: **"When you do anything, unless you understand its actual circumstances, its nature and its relations to other things, you will not know the laws governing it, or know how to do it, or be able to do it well."** Whether one can avoid an accident occurring depends on whether one knows and masters the laws

governing the work. When one drives a vehicle in a city, one has to deal with the pedestrians practically every inch of the way. Often I deliberately observed the layout of the streets and the pedestrians under different circumstances. I made a mental note of whether they were villagers who had just arrived or were city dwellers, whether they were hurrying somewhere or engrossed in thought, where I should slow down and what gear I should use in this or that place. In this way, with a picture of the different kinds of people and a "living" map in my mind, I can tackle things according to different situations.

When I saw a man lost in his own thought, I'd blow the horn to warn him from a distance. If I sounded it when I got near him, he would be startled and not know which way to dodge. If this happened, the situation in which the man tried to dodge the truck and the truck tried to avoid the man would arise and this would only cause him to get entangled with it. I saw children walking along a zebra crossing at an intersection. A child doing this by himself usually followed an adult; but if children did this in groups, so long as one of them had crossed, the others would run in a line after him. If the people's policeman urged them at this point, they would run even faster. Should this happen, I'd pay special attention to the one running at the head. Once when I approached an alley, an iron hoop suddenly rolled out, in a flash I was aware that someone must be following behind and so I immediately put on the brake. As soon as my truck stopped, a boy ran out of the alley chasing the hoop. After I knew more about the situation, I mastered the laws governing my work and met fewer unexpected incidents and was able to have much initiative in driving.

However, there invariably was something beyond my knowledge and I would get involved in unexpected incidents while driving. Once, I found a peasant riding a bicycle in front of me on the right. When I sounded the horn and warned him to make way, he suddenly turned to the left and fell down in the middle of the road. It was too late for me to put on the brake, so I gave the steering-wheel a violent twist and turned the truck off the road and came to a halt.

From that time on, I was prepared at all times to cope with emergencies in the way I deal with surprise attacks. On the one hand, I kept myself mentally

alert in all circumstances: When I drive on a wide road, I do so as though I'm on a narrow road; on a good road as though I'm on a bad road; on a road with few people as though I'm on one teeming with people; on a road without a pedestrian as though I'm on one with pedestrians, and I drive an unloaded truck as though it's one with a full load. When I'm driving, I always keep my vehicle at a distance from pedestrians or vehicles ahead of me so as to leave leeway or room for manoeuvre.

On the other hand, I make every material preparation. I work hard lubricating the parts, tightening the screws, maintaining the truck and checking its performance. I have made it a rule to check the truck before leaving the depot, while on the road and after returning to the depot. I keep the truck in a good state of being prepared against war so that I can start up or halt when necessary and prevent any of its parts from giving troubles.

It makes a world of difference whether or not there are preparations. Being prepared, we shall be able to deal properly with all kinds of emergencies and secure a position which gives us the initiative.

Favourable and Unfavourable Conditions

Drivers are usually fond of driving on wide and flat roads. They are afraid of driving through alleys with many turns or riding along rugged mountain roads. They want to drive new vehicles and not old ones. They feel that with favourable conditions they can do their job well, otherwise accidents are likely to occur. I once saw an overturned vehicle on an asphalt road while driving my truck to a city. I thought this probably was due to careless driving. It was at this point that a speeding car came towards me, trying to overtake a tricycle, but it could not get the tricycle to make way and so it forced a passage and crossed over to my side of the line. I realized this a bit late because I had not been as careful at that moment as I should have been in driving. The danger of an imminent collision with the car loomed. I quickly gave the steering-wheel a hard turn and got the truck from the road to a side walk. A likely accident was thus avoided.

This incident made me realize that **“external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes.”** Objective conditions as regards whether road conditions are good or bad and whether vehicles are old or new may affect the safe driving, but it is man who plays the decisive role. If a driver is guided by the idea of wholeheartedly serving the people and always bears in mind Chairman Mao's teaching **“Our duty is to hold ourselves responsible to the people. Every word, every act and every policy must conform to the people's interests,”** and shows an unbounded sense of responsibility when stepping on the accelerator, handling the steering-wheel and put-

ting on the brake, then such unfavourable conditions as a bad road or an old vehicle can be transformed under certain conditions and safe driving can be ensured. If a driver doesn't have such an attitude there is no guarantee that an accident may not happen even if he's driving a new vehicle on a good road.

Consequently, every time I drove on wide roads with few pedestrians, I always raised vigilance, kept my speed at a certain limit and didn't drive too fast. Some comrades liked riding in vehicles going at a fast speed. Under such circumstances, I still kept a cool head, not carried away by emotions, always maintained an enthusiastic but calm state of mind and worked intensely but orderly. I never accelerated just for the sake of speeding.

If the road or the weather was bad I made every effort to overcome the difficulties on the road ahead to make a success of my job, acting on Chairman Mao's teaching **“This army has an indomitable spirit and is determined to vanquish all enemies and never to yield,”** which was contained in his writing *On Coalition Government*. Once another comrade and myself delivered timber from a county to a “May 7” school in another county. It was pitch dark, with strong winds, and the road was a rough one. Even with the headlights on, you couldn't see the road clearly. A momentary slip of the mind would cause the vehicle to fall into a gully. We had to stop sometimes as we drove on. We went round quite a number of dangerous bends and crossed more than one stream. Then a newly built dam was in front of us. Because of the steep slopes and the slippery road we twice failed to make our way up. As the lights shone skywards and nothing could be seen below when the truck climbed the slope, we had to stop and survey the road surface with our feet and hands. After this hard struggle we finally got up the steep slope and reached our destination.

Another time it was snowing when I drove out on a job. The road was narrow and slippery and there were many pedestrians. This kind of road was a tough going for a driver. While going along one street, I saw about 20 metres ahead of me a worker on a bicycle trying to keep away from the car behind him. I figured it out that quite possibly the worker would fall down and so I kept a wary eye and drove with extraordinary care. Sure enough, he fell down in the middle of the road about 6 metres from me. Because I had readied myself in advance for what would happen and took bold steps to cope with it, what might have been a major accident was avoided.

Chairman Mao teaches us: **“In his endeavour to win a war, a military strategist cannot overstep the limitations imposed by the material conditions; within these limitations, however, he can and must strive for victory. The stage of action for a military strategist is built upon objective material conditions, but on that stage he can direct the performance of many a drama, full of sound and colour, power and grandeur.”** This

is the case in fighting and also the case in driving. Even with unfavourable objective conditions we can still ensure safe driving and get our work done successfully if we give prominence to proletarian politics and bring the drivers' initiative into full play.

Experienced and Inexperienced

When I started carrying out transport tasks by driving on my own, I was not bold enough in doing my work because I felt that I had acquired only a scanty knowledge of driving in my short training period and had no practical experience. What should I do about it?

Chairman Mao teaches us: "Reading is learning, but applying is also learning and the more important kind of learning at that. Our chief method is to learn warfare through warfare." Acting on Chairman Mao's teaching, I took the initiative in asking for work. In carrying out the jobs assigned to me I paid attention to constantly summing up experience, and modestly learn from other comrades, so as to draw experience from a comparison of what had been done by others and what I had done myself. When an accident caused by others occurs, it is also necessary to make a conscientious analysis of it and find out why such an accident takes place and whether there are indications that a similar accident might be caused by myself, so that experience and lessons can be drawn from all this. If one fails to learn advanced experience from others he certainly cannot make progress, and if one fails to draw lessons from accidents caused by others, it is difficult to guarantee that a similar accident might not be brought about by oneself.

Having studied Chairman Mao's brilliant philosophical thinking, I deeply realize that one can speak of "experienced" or "inexperienced" only in a relative sense, and that under certain conditions "inexperienced" may be transformed into "experienced." The key to this question lies in whether one has a correct idea about it. When I first worked as a driver on my own, I was rather timid in my work because my technique was far from advanced and I had no experience and was afraid of accidents. Then I substituted boldness for fear, emancipated my mind and took the initiative in doing my work. Nothing happened as the days went by. A sense of pride and self-conceit grew in me. Because I was inclined to think that driving a vehicle was nothing special and there was not much to it, I was eager to drive fast. Trouble might easily arise if this was not overcome in good time. So I began to get a good hold on any indication that might lead to the growth of self-conceit, pondered over the danger this might involve and tried to find the root cause. And with the help of other comrades I worked out concrete measures to correct my errors.

With the elapse of time, improvements in my technique and the accumulation of more experience, I was capable of handling situations at my discretion. At

such a time it was easy to be content with the existing state of affairs, to give little thought to making continued progress and to seek no more technical improvements. I studied Chairman Mao's teaching "Many things may become baggage, may become encumbrances, if we cling to them blindly and uncritically," and made every effort to cultivate a working style of modesty and prudence and guided my action with the idea of continuing the revolution. I took the cabin as a kind of classroom to make a living study and application of Mao Tsetung Thought. I carried on this study wherever I drove, turning my driving into the course of making a living study and application of Mao Tsetung Thought and one of transforming my world outlook and tempering my boundless loyalty to Chairman Mao through actual struggle.

Through my own practice and by learning from others' experience in the past year, by and large I am always able to keep the following in mind: always bear in mind our great leader Chairman Mao, regard doing a good job of driving as a concrete action in being loyal to Chairman Mao and a contribution of what I can do to the Chinese revolution and the world revolution; always bear class struggle in mind, use vehicles as an instrument for class struggle and see to it that driving is in the interests of consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, sharpen vigilance at all times and deny the class enemies any loop-holes for making trouble; and always keep in mind the defence of the motherland, use the viewpoint of preparedness against war to observe, check and implement everything so that my thinking, working style, work and way of life are marked by a fighting spirit to meet the needs of preparedness against war. Also I am always able to steadfastly remember that our duty is to hold ourselves responsible to the people, and that every word and every action must conform to the people's interests and that my sole purpose is to defend the people, love them and wholeheartedly serve them. If by any chance an unavoidable accident occurs while I'm driving, I am determined to give my life without hesitation and defend the people's interests with my life and blood.

