

## **Chinese Perspective about Work**

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Everybody likes to enjoy good life. Chinese are no exception. Good life has two pillars: work and leisure. Chinese are hard-working people. Because they believe it's the work that creates wealth. And the wealth enables people to have more time for leisure. For human being, the work is indispensable. No work, no wealth, no leisure. This is Chinese conviction.

When I was Chinese Ambassador to France, French Parliament passed a law on the 35 hour-week. When I explained the law to Chinese delegations which came to France, they all laughed. They laughed for two reasons:

- They believe that the French put the cart before the horse.
- In a globalized market, any company has to do its best to keep its competitive edge for its survival. The new law would undoubtedly reduce French competitive edge. Consequently, it would be suicidal.

The consequence of the 35 hour-week law has confirmed our worry. I'm glad to see the French are now having second thoughts about it.

We are on the eve of worldwide transformational change, which is characterized by the explosion of innovations and inventions. A gigantic wave of entrepreneurship has just started in China. So many young people decide to start up new business. I have been in touch with some of them. What impressed me is their passion for the work. They work maybe 15 or 17 hours a day. They don't regard the work as a burden, but as a pleasure. They believe hard work will lead them to success.

China and France are at different stages of economic development. France is a developed country; China is still a developing country. French and Chinese have different mindsets. Many Chinese were lifted out of poverty not long ago. If they don't work hard, poverty may come back. This is an important urge for them to keep working hard.

The past 36 years have witnessed the fast growing middle-class in China. Many people have become millionaires and even billionaires. They started from nothing. But through their hard work and ingenuity, they made it. Their example is a source of inspiration for many young people today.