

Fang Yi on Coke in China

The recent deal worked out between China and the Coca-Cola Corporation to bottle small amounts of Coke in China has stirred some controversy among *Call* readers (see last week's "Letters" column). Fang Yi, China's minister of science who accompanied Deng Xiaoping on his U.S. tour, offered some insights to reporters on this and other questions during a visit to Los Angeles.

"This is a very simple matter," said Fang concerning the Coke deal. "We want to have foreign visitors in great numbers. And these tourists want to drink Coca-Cola. They are accustomed to it. As for us Chinese, we prefer our green tea."

Fang Yi was also asked if importing Western technology would exert bad influences on China's revolution. He replied, "In introducing Western technology we will import only those features which are useful to us, and not those which do not suit the conditions in our country. These were fears when China was very weak. That's no longer true now."

The science minister also explained that China would continue to be mainly self-reliant but would also "learn from abroad." "We are internationalists," he said. "Our Chairman Mao taught us that there should be no contradiction between self-reliance and learning from others."

At the same time, Fang Yi acknowledged that dangers lay ahead in China's fast-paced efforts to modernize. "It is quite possible that mistakes of one kind or another may occur," he noted. But overall, the drive to modernize by the year 2000 is being well-coordinated. "We have a State Planning Commission that has worked out long-term as well as immediate plans," he said.