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Chindia

From Political Interface to
Spiritual Dialogue

中印合璧的政治交接与灵性对谈

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Edited by Tee Boon Chuan
郑文泉 编

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MALAYSIAN CENTRE FOR ETHNIC STUDIES (MCES)

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Chindia: From Political Interface to Spiritual Dialogue
中印合璧的政治交接与灵性对话

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Preface

Tee Boon Chuan

How do we deal with the co-emerging and co-rising China and India in this era? The new word 'Chindia', a combination of 'China' and 'India', was first found in the books of Jairam Ramesh's *Making Sense of Chindia: Reflections on China and India* (2005). Following Ramesh's step, this small anthology presents an effort to promote more dialogue and co-operation between China and India for a better tomorrow of the world. The only difference to other Chindian anthologies is that the present one offers understanding from a non-economic perspective, ranges 'from political interface to spiritual dialogue', as pointed out in the book's sub-title.

I myself have the experience in both China and India, and just came back from a Confucian conference in Beijing in last December and a religious conference in New Delhi in last January. From the urbanization's point of view, India (as I observed in Delhi and Tamilnad) is less modernized and inconvenient than China (as I saw in Shanxi, Beijing, Fujian, Guangdong and Taiwan). From the Chindia's point of view, I feel that China also has more Indian institutions, scholars and publications than India's Chinese institutions, scholars and publications in spite of the incomparable flourishing and attractive academic environment in both countries. It seems to me that India should give more effort to the understanding of China if Chindia is to be realized as a real entity in the world.

This anthology was not initiated as a small book from a few papers on Chinese-Indian dialogue, or 'India-China' or 'Indo-Chinese' from India's point of view as Haraprasad Ray suggested in the Prabodh Chanda Bagchi's *India and China: A Thousand Years of Cultural Relations* (3rd ed., 2008), one of the substantial steps toward Chindia. The original proposal was to invite more authors from India, China and Indian-Chinese of Malaysian origin to engage into a wide range of discussion, from the contemporary issues of comparative studies of international influence between Chinese and Indian/Hindu diasporas to the old issues like the similarity and difference between Chinese and Indian Buddhism. The proposal came out eventually as the present small anthology due to some unavoidable but understandable linguistic and editorial reasons.

My innumerable thank to the authors whose paper have been selected into this anthology. I am very sorry to Prof. Tridib Cakraborti particularly because of the late publication of this book. This is just our first effort and a fresh start for a new deal of Chindia.

T.B.C.
New Era College
February 2009



Revisiting the Ancient Indian and Chinese Leadership Wisdom from the Perspectives of Kautilya and Confucius

Balakrishnan Muniapan & M. Rajantheran

Introduction

Leadership is one of the main research subjects within the disciplines such as management and politics; it is also one of the interesting topics of discussions around the world. Over the last two centuries, the leadership ideas, theories and concepts from the West have dominated the world. One of the main reasons attributed to this dominance is the widespread use of English language. However, a careful analysis reveals that several western leadership ideas, theories and concepts popularized today has been in existence and has been in practice in Asian countries especially in India and also in China for centuries. These leadership practices were not in the context of business management but in the context of state or political governance, with kings playing major leadership roles.

Leadership is culture specific subject as its study practice are deeply attached to culture. Sharma argues an effective leadership has to be rooted in the cultural soil of the country, where it is practiced.¹ Owing to the crucial role played by culture, cross-cultural leadership studies have also caught the attention of many researchers in the last fifty years. Nevertheless, as most leadership studies and theories are originally from western countries, these theories might not be suitable to be applied on a worldwide basis, especially in cultures, which differ significantly from the western culture. Studies of leadership styles have also revealed that there are not only differences in the styles preferred by followers in different national cultures, but the specific behaviors.² National culture could be considered the culture which

1 Sharma, G.D., *Management and the Indian Ethos*, New Delhi: Rupa and Company, 2001

2 Shahin, A I. and Wright, P L , 'Leadership in the context of culture An Egyptian perspective', *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, Vol 25, No 6 (2004), pp 499-511

differentiates one society from another. According to Erez and Early, members of the same culture are more likely to interpret and evaluate situational events in a similar way than those from different cultures.³ The national culture could be considered from a social perspective, a historical perspective and an individual perspective. The social perspective considers culture from a social point of view as culture here is a feature of social life.⁴ Recognizing this importance of culture in leadership, many communities and countries in the world are now trying to discover and explore their own system of leadership. In Malaysia, the current Prime Minister is promoting a leadership system based on Islamic principles which is called 'Islam Hadhari' or civilized Islam.

Apart from the studies of western leadership, the interest in studies of Asian leadership is also growing due to the growth of Asian economies especially Japan, the four tigers (Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong, which is now a part of China), China and India. Both China and India, in terms of geography, population size and regional cultural influence, are currently to be the most important nations in Asia due to the consistent high economic growth rates over recent decades. In view of this, an interest in studying management and leadership systems in these countries are growing.

In recent times, Maruyama was one of the authors who explored the Asian context of managerial leadership beginning with wide understanding of Japanese management three decades ago.⁵ As for the Chinese management, the discussion and the studies are also growing in recent years especially based on the literatures on Confucianism and *Sun Tzu Art of War*. Today, the *Sun Tzu's Art of War* and the teaching of Confucius are used widely in the management. Several studies have been conducted to integrate Confucianism in human resource management and also use the war strategies of Sun Tzu in the context of strategic management. Besides China, a large part of tradition of Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and Singapore are also derived from Confucian heritage.

Similarly, Indian leadership also has a strong philosophical tradition which continues to sustain the interpersonal world in Indian organizations.⁶ The Indian civilization, with recorded history of more than 5000 years is one of the oldest civilizations in the

3 Erez, M. and Early, P.C., *Culture, Self-Identity and Work*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

4 Geertz, C., *The Interpretation of Culture*, New York: Basic Books, 1973.

5 Maruyama, M., *Mindscapes in Management: Use of Individual Differences in Multi-Cultural Management*, UK: Aldershot, 1994.

6 Chatterjee, S., 'Challenging the Dominance of Western Managerial Models: Reflections from the Wisdom and Traditions of Asia', *International Conference on Integrating Spirituality and Organizational Leadership*, University of Delhi, India, February 8-10, 2007.

world and the contribution of India and Indians to this world is enormous in various fields of knowledge. Several ancient Indian classics such as the *Valmiki Ramayana*⁷, the *Mahabharata*⁸ (includes the *Bhagavad-Gita*⁹), the *Puranas*¹⁰, etc, which are more than 5000 years ago and were written in Sanskrit, offer several leadership lessons which can be useful even in the modern context, although many of these literatures.

In this paper we will revisit some of the ancient Indian and Chinese managerial leadership lessons and its contemporary relevance. From time to time there is a need to look and re-look at the ancient literatures and provide intelligent interpretation and re-interpretation to apply effectively in the context of modern management.¹¹ Although the research works in analyzing ancient Indian and Chinese leadership wisdom in the context of modern leadership are increasing, yet in terms of the application and the practice of leadership, several research findings indicate otherwise. The present generations of both Indian and Chinese organizational leaders seems to focus on the applications of western leadership models due to the abundance of western leadership literatures and concepts available. Besides, there are many Indian and Chinese leaders in new generation have received their education in management from western countries (especially in the UK and USA).¹²

The main purpose of this paper is to highlight some of the leadership ideas and concepts from the ancient Indian and Chinese literatures. References in the Indian context are made with the *Arthashastra* wrote by Kautilya and other ancient Indian literatures while the reference in the Chinese context is made from the teachings of Confucius from the *Analects*. As these literatures are vast and pregnant with thousands of leadership lessons, it is beyond the scope of this paper to provide insights into every aspect of leadership lessons and morals provided. Only glimpses of these ancient

7 The *Ramayana* was written by Sri Valmiki Muni and contains 24,000 verses in seven *kandas* (books) The *Ramayana* is about a Raghuvamsa prince, Rama of Ayodhya, whose wife; Sita is abducted by demon Ravana. The *Ramayana* provides the essence of the *Vedas*.

8 The *Mahabharata* is one of the two major ancient *Sanskrit* epics of India, the other being the *Ramayana* The *Bhagavad-Gita* contains in *Bhisma Parva* of the *Mahabharata* The *Mahabharata* was composed by Sri Vyasa Muni and written by Sri Ganesa. The full version contains more than 100,000 verses, making it around four times longer than the Bible and seven times longer than the *Illiad* and the *Odyssey* combined

9 The *Bhagavad-Gita* is a philosophical dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna before the commencement of the war between the Pandavas and Kauravas in Kurukshetra, India more than 5000 years ago It is a part of *Bhisma Parva* of the *Mahabharata*.

10 *Puranas* in the Indian context means stories from the ancient times There are 18 major *Puranas*, which are classified into 3 categories

11 Chinmayanda, S., *The Holy Geeta*, Mumbai: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 2003

12 Munianpan, B, 'Can the *Bhagavad-Gita* be used as a Manual for Management Development of Indian Managers Worldwide?', *5th Asia Academy of Management Conference on Asian Management Convergence and Divergence*, Tokyo, Japan, December 19-21, 2006.