

## *A Chinese Kaleidoscope; An American Mosaic*

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China puts friendship first in its relationships with small and weak counties. China often gives aid to such countries because China is a sort of leader amongst developing nations.

Whenever Western leaders make official visits to China, China's opposition groups, such as followers of Falun Gong, will make a fuss. The mindset of these people is feudalistic; they put themselves below these foreign officials like they are the imperial envoys of ancient times, asking them to petition the Chinese government and telling them everything they think is wrong with China. In reality, these officials are going to China to make a friendly visit, to see China and perhaps sign some agreements. They do not have any means to petition the government. Therefore the thinking of these petitioners is very feudal. If you turn the situation around, you will notice that there are no American or European people asking Chinese officials to petition Western governments when they make official visits. This is because the citizens of Western countries understand that Chinese officials cannot help them solve their own domestic problems.

In China, central government leaders and leaders in local government are not elected by the citizens. Central government committees and local government committees select them. Most of them are capable people and have good interpersonal skills. They also need to have a mind for government - how to deal with common people, and how to be smooth with subordinates and bosses. Dealing with colleagues and superiors is especially important. You do not want to meddle in other people's business, since if things become hostile between one of your colleagues and your boss, than it will be difficult to stay out of the situation. It is especially important to ingratiate yourself with your superiors if you want to be promoted.

Every person who is promoted has some person of high rank helping him or her. For example a third or fourth generation official will have a very easy time getting promoted. For such a person it is not difficult to differential him or herself from the masses. In the United States and Europe however, it is not possible to separate yourself from everyone else in such a way. This is because the politicians are held accountable by the common people, and every year need to meet with them and hear their opinions.

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No matter whether it was during the republican period, the war of resistance against Japan, or the civil war, the Chinese Communist party has always relied on propaganda and feelings of dissatisfaction amongst the workers and poor that constitute the majority of the population. Since the Communist Party advocated lower rents and lower interest rates, redistribution of land, and fought for better worker welfare and wages, they of course received vast broad support from the nation's farmers and workers, who were all very poor.

After the success of the revolution, farmland was redistributed amongst the peasantry, and enterprises owned by capitalists were first reorganized as joint public private operations, and then later fully nationalized. In the new society, no one held any private property. After some time, the economic reforms were enacted because everyone was so poor, and people's lives began to get better. People's moods improved and things were freer from worry. Fewer people argued in the street over small matters. From the Communist Party's point of view, originally the goal was the emancipation of the workers and farmers, but now they have become good friends with big entrepreneurs instead. Although there are now unions for workers, these unions are not actually led by workers, but are instead controlled by the Communist Party. Ostensibly this is for the benefit of the workers, but in reality it is to prevent the workers from causing problems.

In the Chinese bureaucracy, the two most powerful groups are the Communist Party and the government. Amongst both small and important officials, there are some that are cultured and some that are not. However, it is no problem if the official is uncultured because there is always the secretary to do something in his or her place. Nevertheless, with the advancement and modernization of China, Chinese leaders have become more cultured. At the least they have undergraduate degrees, and have a definite intellectual capacity. According to the current government retirement system, Central government leaders retire at seventy, Committee members and provincial government leaders retire at sixty-five, and common cadres retire at sixty.

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### **Twenty-four: Western officials are elected by the citizens; China's officials are appointed by senior leaders**

In developed countries in North America and Europe, all officials, from the president to small town mayors, are elected in public elections. The section of society with the most participants in elections is the common poor. Candidates must curry favor with the electorate in order to win an election. How do politicians curry favor with the electorate? One method is through education. The government already provides free schooling for everyone from kindergarten through high school. Some politicians endorse efforts to make class sizes smaller, which increases costs, but helps win votes. Politicians also propose measures to do things like provide universal health care coverage, raise wages, increase welfare, and provide nursing care to the elderly. These campaign promises will not necessarily be fulfilled however, which can invite criticism from the people. The officials have no option but to listen and take the scolding. A special thing about democratic nations is that the common people are free to criticize the government, including the president, governors, and mayors, who are not able to retaliate. In China things are not the same. Not only is it not necessary for officials to curry favor with the people, but they can also use the supposedly independent judiciary to their advantage.

In Western countries, government officials, from the heads of state to the town mayors, all work together as a team; they are not restricted by the strict discipline of other systems. Since central government officials are elected in national elections, local government officials are elected in local elections. The president does not have the power to dismiss or demote local government officials. For example, the president cannot fire a country mayor, or demote a governor to the position of mayor. However, the president does have control over central government departments, such as appointing and dismissing department heads.

The Chinese system is different; all officials, from the national chairman to provincial governors are appointed by the central government. All officials can be demoted or dismissed. Nevertheless, government positions are very attractive. As long as the official does not do anything wrong, he or she can stay in the government until retirement.

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When the PRC was founded, officials carried out their duties and obeyed the laws. Since the economy was so undeveloped, there were few opportunities for corruption. All the officials were honest. After the economic reforms, officials started accepting bribes. This was actually not their fault because local and foreign businesspeople made the temptation too great to resist. Many businesspeople would automatically send all manner of gifts to relevant government officials when bidding for a project, trying to buy land, or do business. There were some high level officials who did not accept bribes, but other officials whose positions were less stable did accept them. Generally speaking there were very few officials who actually opened their mouths and requested bribes; the majority of businesspeople took the initiative themselves to give the bribes, and such offers were very hard to refuse.

The Taiwan issue is a difficult problem left to us by history. After the communist liberation of Mainland China, there were a thousand things waiting to be done. Economic resources were very strained. Immediately following was the eruption of war in Korea. Following that was the Vietnam War, and then war with India. These pressing matters made leaders set the liberation of Taiwan to the side temporarily.

China exhausted a great deal of resources and manpower in these several wars. Although China was victorious in its war with India, China did not occupy any Indian territory afterwards. The military strategy in this case was correct, but another important issue has yet to be resolved – the Taiwan problem.

The Taiwan problem is becoming more and more complicated. One reason is that Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party clamors for independence. A second reason is that the United States, England, and other European countries all try to keep China from uniting. China also wishes to maintain international peace so that it can get a chance to develop; uniting with Taiwan by force could possibly invite international war. Uniting peacefully is an even harder task to carry out, so for the time being China can only maintain the current circumstances.

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In the quarter century before China enacted economic reforms, China's bureaucrats, or cadres, were integrated with the common people. Being an official was no cause for arrogance; they were like brothers to the people and worked earnestly. There was one official in particular who had been born a farmer and truly exemplified officials in those days. His name was Chen Yonggui. Since he was very practical and down-to-earth in his work, he was promoted to vice prime minister of the local cadres. Nevertheless he was never arrogant or boastful, and he was always practical, seeking truth from the facts. Moreover he was always the first to serve the needs of the people. Nowadays these types of officials are few and far between.

Why? In present times, officials all have at least a college degree. They possess scholarly knowledge and very good theories, but they lack practical knowledge. Another reason is that officials must pay particular attention to working in the background; such politicians advance very quickly. The distance between these cultured officials and the common is getting larger and larger. On the other hand, in the United States both central and local government officials are close to the common people. This is because they are elected by the people, and so they control whether they win office. In China, it is your superiors who decide whether you get a position. The most important thing is to obey orders and listen to commands; only then can you advance in the ranks.

Officials are very powerful in China. Why? One reason is that officials have the power to decide whether to approve special development projects. They need only decide that a certain area can be developed, and then approve it themselves. Many businesspeople call on officials expressing desire to receive official approval for their development projects. When they have received official approval, they can then improve the economic efficiency in that industry.

For this reason there are some dishonest businesspeople who try to use social connections with officials relatives to influence the official approval process. In the past thirty years since China's economic reforms were enacted, high-level officials have permitted local governments to develop special economic districts autonomously. This has given businesspeople certain loopholes to exploit, and after receiving official approval, many have operated monopolies and made a great deal of money.

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China's government cadres are often transferred from position to position, but so long as they do not break any laws or rules, their jobs positions will be relatively stable. However, since there are enormous numbers of government employees not doing any work, the majority of officials put their own hide first.

For those traveling the road of officialdom in China, there are three types of circumstances. First, there are those who advance through the ranks at a steady pace. They start at the lowest level of government, and work with discipline for ten years or more, slowly climbing higher and higher. For such officials to reach a provincial level office is quite common. Second, there are others who look for promotions through personal connections. This is not always successful. Even if they do advance, they must deal with strict inquiries. If they are found out and apprehended, then not only will they not advance, but they will in fact be demoted. The third type is the riskiest, those who rise very quickly straight towards the top as if on a helicopter. This is because when their colleagues become jealous, they will perhaps break the law to advance further. Then other people will bring even more problems, and if found out, he or she will perhaps go to prison. Powerful officials in China are famous and have advantages and special rights. Such positions are therefore very attractive, and there are always many people struggling for them.

Government officials often engage in political tricks and use their political positions for personal gain. Every year there are mid-level and high-level officials who fall from grace when the media implicates them in wrong-doings. Before the wrongdoings are revealed in the media, or in government reports, the officials are very well-regarded before they are found out. The exterior they project is one of an honest public servant. They are seen as brilliant officials with outstanding political achievements, who are praised as they advance in position. They are seen with respect by the citizens, and positive evaluations flow in as though carried by the tide. If the official is revealed to be a fraud, then the media's treatment of him or her will be completely different. The media will denounce the people involved. When candidates in the United States or Europe run in an election, they will criticize their opponents and struggle for the position, but such positions carry no special economic benefits or rights.

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### **Twenty-five: Was it fair for workers, farmers, and soldiers to become judges before the economic reforms**

Although China has a judicial system with both a constitution and local laws, the legal code is very simple. With all the changes of the past three decades, the legal code is no longer robust. New legislation has not met the needs of the modern age. The legal code really only covers core issues in a general manner, and is lacking in detail. Therefore when two parties are engaged in a lawsuit, those charged with enforcing the law can understand the laws differently. Imagine if a judgment that was not in keeping with the law was handed down to a defendant. Since different judges have different interpretations of the law, it is often the common people who suffer from such judgments and receive inequitable treatment at the hands of the law.

In addition to the laws not being robust, there is also influence in the legal system from central government and local government leaders. Since senior officials can do as they like with regards to the legal system, they can therefore also conduct business in any way they please. Only when such officials have ended their term or been investigated for corruption will they realize that it is the root of corruption. Then why can such officials improve things? This is because at this point they have already reached the end of their term and must step down. Speaking out against corruption would have no effect at that point. The new leaders that fill their places are then only just accepting those powers, and so have no desire to give them up. Currently China's lawyers and judges are not very qualified because China is only in the initial stages of establishing rule of law.

Western countries established rule of law a long time ago, and therefore the necessary qualifications for becoming a lawyer or judge are quite strict. Very good grades are required to enroll in famous law schools, and after graduating you must first pass your state's bar exam before you can practice law in that state. The laws of each state in the United States are different. Judges are required to have several years of experience as a lawyer. On the other hand, in China once students graduate from university they are free to practice law. Not every province has an exam that you must pass before receiving your license. The requirements for judges are also very low. Sometimes even people who have not worked as lawyers or do not even have any legal knowledge can become judges.