

CHINA'S CONFUCIAN SOLUTION

对于想要了解中国的外国人来说
这是完美的礼物



**How China beat poverty, hunger, homelessness,
crime, inequality, government waste and
corruption—and how we can, too.**

GODFREE ROBERTS

INTRODUCTION

The reason the State enjoys a formidable legitimacy in the eyes of the Chinese has nothing to do with democracy but can be found in the relationship between the State and Chinese civilization. The State is seen as the embodiment, guardian and defender of Chinese civilization. Maintaining the unity, cohesion and integrity of the Chinese civilization-state is perceived as the highest political priority, the sacrosanct task of the Chinese State. Unlike in the West, where the State is viewed with varying degrees of suspicion, even hostility and regarded, as a consequence, as an outsider, in China the state is seen as an intimate, as part of the family, indeed as the head of the family. Martin Jacques, When China Rules the World.

Though the founders of Chinese civilization lived three thousand years ago, they would be quite comfortable running today's government. They might be surprised that Congress has the last word on legislation but, otherwise, would notice little change. In fact, the the PRC's problems—flooding, overpopulation, barbarian invaders, foreign trade—would be entirely familiar.

Like them, the men who run the PRC are China's smartest who, during their thirty years of public service, have transformed China from the poorest to the richest country on earth.

What do we mean by the richest?

By the summer of 2021, the lower half of income earners will all own homes and have a guaranteed income, plenty of food and clothes, safe streets, health insurance, a pension, and old age care. What's more, their children will graduate high school three years ahead of our kids and live longer healthier lives.

And here's the kicker: by 2021 will be more hungry children, more drug addicts, suicides, executions, homeless, poor, and imprisoned people in America than in China.

This is their story.

1. A LITTLE HISTORY

If rulers' own behavior is ethical, what difficulty will they have in governing? If their own conduct is improper, how can they demand lawfulness from their citizens? Confucius, Analects.

Governing is difficult, and governing well requires intelligent, honest, competent officials yet, in our political tradition—which dates to Ancient Rome—governance takes a back seat to politics. We have always elected¹ selfish, shallow, irresponsible, glib con artists, then wondered why they make such a mess of things.

The Chinese tradition, equally ancient, takes the opposite approach. They weed out selfish, shallow, irresponsible, glib con artists and painstakingly select officials with track records of brilliant governance—and thereby hangs this book's tale.

Three thousand years ago, in the intensively agricultural Yellow River Valley, in an already ancient land the size of modern France, literate Shang people, who called themselves 'the Middle Kingdom,' used currency to trade in silks, jade, and exquisite bronzes. In one Shang State, the Duke of Zhou, regent for a child prince, governed compassionately, extended the realm, taxed the rich, and enriched the poor. When the young monarch came of age, the Duke retired to compose music, revise the legal code, and edit the still-loved *Book of Poems*. His name remains a household word and his legacy, the Mandate of Heaven, is the bedrock of Chinese politics: governments earn the right to rule by improving people's lives.

Five centuries after the Duke's death, Confucius, a political scientist and sometime government official, provided a tripartite formula for success which governments still follow: treat the entire nation as your own family;² transform the family's dreams into concrete goals, and *only* appoint people like the Duke of Zhou to lead them towards those goals.

Confucius further proposed two stages of familial wellbeing. First, a *xiaokang*³ society in which everyone has a home, plenty of food and clothes, education, medical care, old-age support, and sufficient leisure for arts and contemplation. Then build on that foundation a *dàtóng*⁴ society so egalitarian and compassionate that no one needs to lock her outer doors at night. His vision of social health is radically democratic, since *xiaokang* and *dàtóng* can exist only if every member of the family prospers and none is left behind.

¹ *The Sociopath Next Door* by Martha Stout 2006.

² Perfect strangers still address one another as "aunt," "uncle," "sister," and "grandfather."

³ Chinese translators call it 'a moderately prosperous society' and we call it 'the Chinese Dream'.

⁴ From *Datong Shu*, Book on the Great Community, a commentary by Kang Youwei, which Mao memorized in its entirety.

He advised political leaders to begin by setting a personal example, “Rulers who led their people to a *xiaokang* lifestyle were pillars of courtesy, sincerity, justice, and virtue. Those who were not lost power, and everyone regarded them as pests”.

He also recommended replacing the aristocracy with virtuous officials, “Morally upright superiors relate to ordinary people like wind to grass; grass bends when the wind blows over it”. Like Plato’s Philosopher Kings⁵, they would establish a chain of respect—from dutiful children to parents, through grandparents, clan heads, upright officials, to the Emperor himself. Citizens, by gladly emulating their example, would vastly simplify law enforcement. “I have yet to see anyone create disorder who is respectful of superiors”.

But rulers of the day were comfortable with the chain of command, and nobles rejected meritocracy⁶ and Confucius, convinced that he had failed, died. For three centuries, corrupt eunuchs, scheming regents, dowager empresses, usurpers, concubines, wicked uncles, and rebellious generals continued their massacres, kidnappings, beheadings, infant stranglings, sibling drownings, poisonings, torturing, dismemberment, taxing, warring, and oppression while Confucius' disciples persistently advocated his plan until, in 188 BC, they persuaded Emperor Wen of Han⁷ to stop imprisoning parents, wives, and siblings of common criminals.

Encouraged by the popularity of this policy and intrigued by the advantages of meritocracy, he began examining the literacy and moral maturity of nobles seeking high office, lowering taxes, abolishing *corvée* labor, and giving monthly pensions to widows, orphans, and retirees. When his mother fell ill he nursed her for three years, tasting her soups and medicines himself. If things went awry, Emperor Wen wrote [Letters of Public Apology](#) acknowledging his role as the people's servant. As Confucius had predicted, peace and prosperity prevailed.

Today, Chinese children know Emperor Wen as one of Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars, their parents measure every government against his, and modern officials still write Letters of Public Apology when things go astray—because they, too, studied Emperor Wen at school.

When the Emperor’s grandson tried to extend Wen’s reforms, his grandmother, Grand Empress Dowager Dou, sidelined him and banished the reformists. But the young man—the future Emperor Wu of Han (157 BC–87 BC)—secretly recruited scholars of humble birth to enter the civil service, used his limited influence to help them win promotions to mid-level positions and, upon the death of the Empress Dowager, called for proposals to renew the empire.

A Confucian scholar-official, Dong Zhongshu, responded by outlining a beguiling ‘new broom’

⁵ “Until kings are philosophers or philosophers are kings, neither cities nor the human race will ever cease from ill, nor will our ideal polity ever come into being”. Plato. *The Republic*.

⁶ Britain’s upper House of Parliament is reserved for the nobility, and Baroness Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen recently followed Count van Rompuy as President of the European Council.

⁷ (203 BC – July 6 157 BC) was the fifth emperor of the Han dynasty of ancient China. His reign brought much needed political stability that laid the groundwork for prosperity under his grandson, Emperor Wu.

scheme that placed the Emperor at the center of the universe, controlling the World through sacred rituals⁸ and, lest they imply imperial negligence, promised that officials would take responsibility for earthquakes, floods, comets, and famines. Intrigued, the young Emperor asked who would administer the scheme. Dong replied, “Your Highness, since not one man in the entire empire is currently qualified to respond to your call, I beg You to build an academy and appoint enlightened teachers to nurture, test, and goad young men to the limits of their ability. Do so, and you will recruit the flower of the empire’s youth”.

Emperor Wu established the Imperial College of Confucian Studies, banned competing ideologies, dismissed non-Confucian officials, burned their books, and required every child to study Confucius daily, as they still do. In 140 BC, he made Confucianism the imperial doctrine, established competitive civil service examinations, personally examined aspiring scholars, and commanded that examinations become the sole avenue to social advancement, as they still are.

While his selfless officials inspired and enriched the masses, the Emperor expanded the empire, centralized its administration, and created the Chinese script, the oldest writing system still in use. He fixed the cart axles' length to fit his extensive road network, dug canals between provinces to reduce freight costs, standardized weights, measures, and coinage, unified provincial walls into the Great Wall of China, and commissioned a tomb that is still guarded by his terra-cotta warriors.

Families sent promising offspring to Confucian cram schools, the Ivy League of their day, and, within a century, thirty thousand had enrolled at the Imperial College where, as a form of meditation, they memorized the Master’s teaching on compassionate service until it permeated their feelings, thoughts, and dreams. Selected by increasingly competitive examinations at the local, provincial, and imperial levels—and forbidden to work within five hundred miles of their hometowns—they laid the foundation for a governance system that is again the envy of the World.⁹

Centuries later, in 600 AD, Emperor Yang of Sui opened the imperial examination to peasants and instructed assessors—from whom candidates’ identities were concealed—to find men with intellectual depth and moral maturity. To emphasize the importance of official integrity, he said, they should execute cheaters. Applicants answered questions on the economy, analyzed government policies, and composed original essays to demonstrate their brushwork, literacy, creativity, and knowledge of the World. The Emperor queried top candidates and listened as they quoted from memory governance case studies, extensive passages from the *Analects* and poetry, as modern applicants still do. Advancement by examination was class-blind (as it still is) because, said Imperial Censor Wang Ji, “If selection by examination is not strict, the powerful will struggle to be foremost, and orphans and the poor will have difficulty advancing”.

⁸ *Inevitable Treason: Dong Zhongshu's Theory of Historical Cycles and Early Attempts to Invalidate the Han Mandate*. By Gary Arbuckle. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 115, No. 4 (Oct-Dec. 1995)

⁹ This is why the British call their senior civil servants ‘Mandarins.’

The demand for literacy so powerful that, in 1000 AD, Song Dynasty officials distributed millions of Confucian catechisms—the Little Red Books of their day—and delivered uplifting lectures on their content. A court official, Ouyang Xiu, reported how successful scholars became national celebrities, their academic feats memorialized in family books and their homecomings semi-hysterical (as they still are¹⁰), “When a scholar rides in a high carriage drawn by four horses, flag-bearers running ahead with a mounted escort bringing up the rear, people gather on both sides of the road to watch and sigh. Ordinary men and foolish women rush forward in excitement and humbly prostrate themselves in the dust stirred up by his carriage. This is a scholar’s joy. This is when his ambition is fulfilled”. When, during Ouyang's lifetime, the invention of paper and moveable type made the Confucian Classics widely available, literacy became a national obsession and remains so to this day. Though sons of the elite still benefited from their famous names and private tutors, poor but brilliant young men gradually erased the distinction between government and governed. During Europe’s Dark Ages, Chinese civilization reached its zenith and officials’ moral authority far exceeded that of Rome’s Popes.

The poor men who ascended on talent were the Emperor’s men entirely. They could neither own land, serve in their home provinces, nor have relatives in the same government branch—prohibitions that still hold. For centuries, they competed for promotion by building public works—like the thousand-mile Grand Canal—to enrich the nation, honor the Emperor, and sustain the World’s most formidable State. Dynasties rose and fell while loyal, intelligent, entrepreneurial, disciplined—often courageous—men served in remote regions, far from family and friends, frequently under terrible conditions until, by 1000 AD, one scholar-official for every eight thousand citizens¹¹ sustained the most harmonious, advanced, and prosperous nation on earth. By 1200 AD, of two-hundred seventy-nine senior officials whose families we know,¹² forty-four percent had forebears in government. By 2020 it was twelve percent and all, high or low, then or now, graduates of the most demanding education system the World has known.

¹⁰ President Xi dampened the hysteria in 2014 by observing that it over-glorified young graduates and ignored the sacrifices their parents, teachers, and society had made for them.

¹¹ Today, there is one for every twenty thousand, and they deliver far more social goods.

¹² *China's Meritocratic Examinations and the Ideal of Virtuous Talents*. Xiao, H., & Li, C. (2013). In D. Bell & C. Li (Eds.), Cambridge.

2. EDUCATION

When the people have full bellies and warm clothes on their backs, they degenerate almost to the level of brutes if they are allowed to lead idle lives without education and discipline. This gave the Sage King further cause for concern, so he appointed Hsieh as the Minister of Education. His duty was to teach the people human relationships: love between father and son, duty between ruler and subject, distinction between husband and wife, precedence of the old over the young, trust between friends.¹³

Between 1000 AD and 1911, seven hundred top *keju*¹⁴ scorers won immortality as *zhuàngyuán*, ‘the name at the top of the list.’ Just as European nobility trace their lineage to great warriors, Chinese families trace theirs to *zhuàngyuán*, immortalize their feats in Family Books, and name landmarks for them. Selected for their academic brilliance, administrative competence, and moral probity, they formed a *just hierarchy*¹⁵ at the pinnacle of Chinese society. Surpassingly intelligent, competent, honest, and self-sacrificing, the greatest are so revered that millions still burn incense at their shrines, and parents still dream that their children will join their ranks.

Examinations were abandoned with the fall of the Manchu Dynasty and not until Mao introduced the *gaokao* in 1952 were national examinations held to select students for the handful of university places then available. Today, ten million youngsters compete for eight million positions at three thousand universities. The fiercest competition focuses on one-hundred-fifty

¹³ Mencius. Ed. and trans. D.C. Lau. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press. 2003

¹⁴ Imperial Examination

¹⁵ Just (deserved) hierarchies are earned by meritorious service, while unjust hierarchies are established by birth or trickery and sustained by violence. *Just Hierarchy: Why Social Hierarchies Matter in China and the Rest of the World*. By Daniel A. Bell and Wang Pei. Princeton. 2020.

top universities whose collective admission rate is under three percent. Even gaining admission, as Puzhong Yao¹⁶ discovered, requires near-genius ability:

It was the summer of 2000. I was 15, and I had just finished my high school entrance exam. I had made considerable improvements from where I started in first grade, when I had the second-worst grades in the class and had to sit at a desk perpendicular to the blackboard so that the teacher could keep a close eye on me. I had managed to become an average student in an average school. My parents, by then, had concluded that I was not going anywhere promising in China and were ready to send me abroad for high school. Contrary to all expectations, however, I got the best mark in my class and my school, ranking me among the top ten of more than 100,000 students in the whole city. Though my teacher and I both assumed the score was wrong when we first heard it, I got into the best class in the best school in my city and thus began the most painful year of my life.

My newfound confidence was quickly crushed when I saw how talented my new classmates were. In the first class, our math teacher announced that she would start from chapter four of the textbook as she assumed, correctly, that most of us were familiar with the first three chapters and would find it boring to repeat. Most of the class had been participating in various competitions in middle school and had become familiar with a large part of the high school syllabus already and had grown to know each other from those years of competitions together. And here I was, someone who didn't know anything or anyone, surrounded by people who knew more to begin with, who were much smarter, and who worked just as hard as I did. What chance did I have?

During that year, I tried very hard to catch up: I gave up everything else and even moved close to the school to save time on the commute, but to no avail. Over time, going to school and competing while knowing I was sure to lose became torture. Yet I had to do it every day. At the end-of-year exam, I scored second from the Bottom of the class—the same place I began in first grade. But this time, it was much harder to accept, after the glory I had enjoyed just one year earlier and the enormous amount of effort I had put into studying this year. Finally, I threw in the towel and asked my parents to send me abroad. Anywhere on this earth would surely be better.

So I came to the UK in 2001, when I was 16 years old. Much to my surprise, I found the UK's exam-focused educational system very similar to China's. What is more, in both countries, going to the 'right schools' and getting the 'right job' are seen as very important by a large group of eager parents. As a result, scoring well on exams and doing well in school interviews—or even the play session for the nursery or pre-prep school—becomes the most important thing in the World. Even at university, the undergraduate degree from the University of Cambridge depends solely on an exam at the end of the final year.

On the other hand, although the UK's university system is considered superior to China's, with a population that is only one-twentieth the size of my native country,

¹⁶ Excerpted from 'The Western Elite from a Chinese Perspective' by Puzhong Yao American Affairs. Winter 2017 / Vol I, No 4. More stories of his studies and the US at <http://ajourneytothewest.co.uk/>

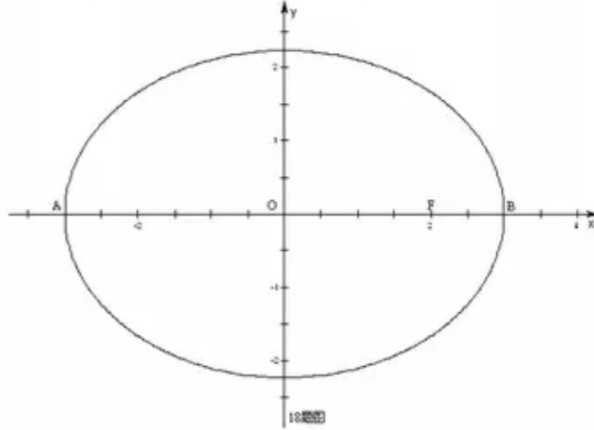
competition, while tough, is less intimidating. For example, about one in ten applicants gets into Oxbridge in the UK, and Stanford and Harvard accept about one in twenty-five applicants. But in Hebei, my Province in China, only one in fifteen hundred applicants gets into Peking or Tsinghua University.

Still, I found it hard to believe how much easier everything became. I scored first nationwide in the GCSE (high school) math exam, and my photo was printed in a national newspaper. I was admitted into Trinity College, University of Cambridge, once the home of Sir Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon, and Prince Charles, where I studied economics, a field that has become increasingly mathematical since the 1970s. My British classmates' behavior demonstrated an even greater herd mentality than what is often mocked in American MBAs. For example, out of the thirteen economists in my year at Trinity, twelve would join investment banks, and five of us went to work for Goldman Sachs.

Who can blame him for fleeing? The *gaokao*, which grants access to undergraduate study, is the culmination of a twelve-year educational marathon and the most significant affair in Chinese life. On *gaokao* day, road and air traffic are diverted and millions of relatives besiege school gates. Inside the examination room, personality, charm, community service, interview preparation, and athletic accomplishment count for nothing. All that matters is answering questions like these:

5. Math

18. (16分) 在平面直角坐标系 xOy 中, 如图, 已知椭圆 $\frac{x^2}{9} + \frac{y^2}{5} = 1$ 的左右顶点为 A, B , 右焦点为 F . 设过点 $T(t, m)$ 的直线 TA, TB 与椭圆分别交于点 $M(x_1, y_1), N(x_2, y_2)$, 其中 $m > 0, y_1 > 0, y_2 < 0$.
- (1) 设动点 P 满足 $PF^2 - PB^2 = 4$, 求点 P 的轨迹
 - (2) 设 $x_1 = 2, x_2 = \frac{1}{3}$, 求点 T 的坐标
 - (3) 设 $t = 9$, 求证: 直线 MN 必过 x 轴上的一定点(其坐标与 m 无关)



Given an ellipse $x^2/9 + y^2/5 = 1$ whose vertices are A and B and right focus F . Suppose that line TA and line TB which pass through $T(t, m)$ intersect the ellipse at $M(x_1, y_1)$ and $N(x_2, y_2)$ individually. ($m > 0, y_1 > 0, y_2 < 0$)

- 1) Moving point P satisfies equation $PF^2 - PB^2 = 4$, find the track of P .
- 2) Assume that $x_1 = 2, x_2 = 1/3$, find the coordinates of T
- 3) Assume that $t = 9$, prove that line MN must pass through a definite point on the x axis (whose coordinates are independent of m)

— 2010 Jiangsu Gaokao

6. Writing

Description: Some men see things as they are and say why? I dream things that never were and say, "Why not?" Write an 800-word essay about your thoughts on these words of George Bernard Shaw.

7. Reasoning

Description: During WWII, US and British military forces researched the distribution of bullet holes on battered combat aircraft to upgrade their protective capability. Most scientists agreed that the upgrade should focus on areas with the most bullet holes, but Ward, a statistician, prevailed over them, noting that attention should be paid to the parts with fewer bullet holes since if those parts were damaged, the planes would have a smaller chance of returning home. However, his statistics were ignored. Later investigation proved Ward's theories were, in fact, correct. Please write an essay based on this information.

When the Education Ministry proposed limiting homework, *jianfu*, parents objected, “The government used to educate our children, but now they don’t want to shoulder the responsibility, so they’re throwing it back onto us!” They insisted that their children were perfectly capable of handling heavier workloads and waxed nostalgic for ‘the nineties when the state supported students working day and night,’ and Charlene Tan¹⁷ questioned educators about this. One headmaster explained that many parents who had missed higher education “Put all their hopes in their child and devoted all their energies to the child because the child’s learning, school promotion, and choice of career determine the fate of the entire family”. Said another, “As long as a child is willing to learn, parents are willing to spend up to seventy percent of the family budget helping them”.

Says Xiong Xuan’an, who was the *zhuàngyuán* in 2017, “People like me are from middle-class families. We don’t have to worry about food or clothes. Our parents are educated. We were born in big cities like Beijing. We simply got better educational resources than the rest. Students from other places and rural areas are not able to get these benefits. It made my learning path easier, and the top scorers nowadays, generally speaking, come from upper-class families and are good at studying”.

Meanwhile, finding that children in impoverished Guizhou Province were coming to school on empty stomachs, the Ministry built canteens and provided funds to buy produce directly from poor local farmers, with which to prepare fifteen million free lunches. It added monthly stipends for two million poor¹⁸ students and focused on building their confidence in education as a way to lift their families out of poverty. Provincial administrators called on expert advice from teachers like Zhang Yan, a star principal in Zunyi City, “I’ve focused my plan on coaching teachers in poverty-stricken areas rather than giving lectures at rural schools”. Respect for teachers is high: in public, people bow and address them as *laoshi*, a title implying a status higher than our ‘professor’.

The Province relocated two million poor people from inhospitable, mountainous regions into new urban homes and enrolled their 130,000 children in 1,600 nearby schools. By 2021, it will complete three hundred nurseries and junior high schools and relocate a further fifty-thousand children. The relocated children, who are already testing as well as average EU children, are taking artificial intelligence courses.

As part of the campaign to improve national equality by 2035 the Education Ministry, over urban parents’ objections, pushed city schools to admit migrant children to their local *gaokao* exams and provide university places for them. By 2019, eighty percent of migrant children were enrolled in city schools, and ninety percent were receiving financial support that will continue through university.

Though the Ministry has doubled support for rural education since 2015, children from

¹⁷ Learning from Shanghai: Lessons on Achieving Educational Success. by Charlene Tan. 2013

¹⁸ Their families are officially enrolled in the government’s anti-poverty campaign.

underdeveloped areas were still struggling to win places in major universities so, in 2018, country schools began raising teachers' pay to match local officials', limiting primary class size to forty-five and employing at least ten senior music, fine arts, and physical education teachers for every thousand children. The Ministry gave them scholarships and favorable entry policies to seventy-five national universities and in 2019, recruited promising city teachers to relocate to impoverished areas of Anhui, Henan, Shaanxi, and Gansu Provinces. It promoted them to Chief Teachers at rural schools and encouraging them to explore their own ideas for lifting instructional quality. By 2020, the rural distance from national academic averages had narrowed says Andreas Schleicher, head of the OECD's educational testing, "Even in rural areas and in disadvantaged environments, you see a remarkable performance".

The Education Ministry is responsible for half a million schools, fifteen million teachers, and two-hundred sixty-million schoolchildren who speak thirty-five languages, and fifty million are disadvantaged. In 1979, to leverage its meager budget, the Ministry offered urbanites a pact: space your children, and we will invest the savings in better schooling. Throughout the 1980s, media urged couples to have 'later, longer, fewer, better' children and the Urban Family Planning Program, the so-called 'one-child policy,' saw parents and grandparents focus their time and resources on educating a generation of little princes and princesses.

Responding to this influx of resources, Shanghai teachers pledged, "There are no students who cannot be taught well, only teachers who cannot teach well". They rethought, retested, and rewrote their textbooks and shared their discoveries in late-night faculty sessions and found that most failures stemmed from too-wide gaps in instructional sequences. They broke each lesson into smaller, carefully spaced, tightly coupled steps and permitted classes to advance only when every child demonstrated mastery of each step.

Finding that their approach required meticulous preparation and more skillful class management, the Shanghai Education Department limited them to fifteen hours' classroom instruction each week, so they could spend time observing exemplary instructors, sharing observations with colleagues, experimenting, refining lesson plans, and publishing their findings in education journals.

When they apply for a promotion, the Education Department invites professors of education, master teachers from across the city, parents, and citizens to observe their 'public lesson.' Only Senior Teachers—curriculum innovators with outstanding test results who are expert child counselors and have led research—can apply for administrative roles and, to underline the importance of their work, the city provides its two thousand school principals with limousines, personal drivers, and regular sabbaticals abroad.

In 2009, Shanghai participated in PISA, the international test of fifteen-year-old children's math, science, and reading conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development. The OECD reported¹⁹, “Mathematics scores for the top performer, Shanghai, indicate an equivalent to over two years of formal schooling ahead of those observed in Massachusetts, a strong-performing US State”.

When Shanghai drew further ahead in the 2012²⁰, critics accused the city of cheating, of rote learning, of excluding disadvantaged children, and of subjecting pupils to inhumane pressure, but the OECD responded²¹, “Only two percent of American and three percent of European fifteen-year-olds reach the highest level of math performance, demonstrating that they can conceptualize, generalize, and use math based on their investigations and apply their knowledge in novel contexts. In Shanghai, it’s over thirty percent... We’ve tested²² twelve Chinese provinces and even in some impoverished areas found performance close to the OECD world average”.

By 2015, even poor Chinese children were outperforming Western youngsters in tasks like managing bank accounts, understanding financial risks and responsibilities, estimating income tax and discerning fraud, yet they used rote²³ memorization less than Western children. Their disposition improved with subject mastery and, when the OECD asked²⁴ if they felt happy at school, eighty-six percent of children agreed,²⁵ as did seventy-nine percent of their American cousins.

One US educator²⁶ observed, “A couple of decades ago, Shanghai’s school system was plagued by the same problems we’re facing. There were significant disparities between the achievement levels of native children and the children of migrant families, and overall educational levels were low. Today, the best international measures show that Shanghai has the highest levels of educational excellence and equity in the World, and their fifteen-year-olds are three grade levels ahead of kids in Massachusetts, our highest performing state”. And Shanghai’s schools rank only fifth nationally in *gaokao* results.

¹⁹ Shanghai tops global state school rankings, Chris Cook, FT, December 8 2010.

²⁰ Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) Results. 2012. “Among the 34 OECD countries, the United States performed below average in mathematics in 2012 and is ranked 27th. Performance in reading and science are both close to the OECD average”.

²¹ China shines in PISA exams

²² Are the Chinese cheating in PISA, or are we cheating ourselves? OECD Education Today. December 10, 2013

²³ Lessons from PISA outcomes. Andreas Schleicher, OECD Observer No 297 Q4 2013

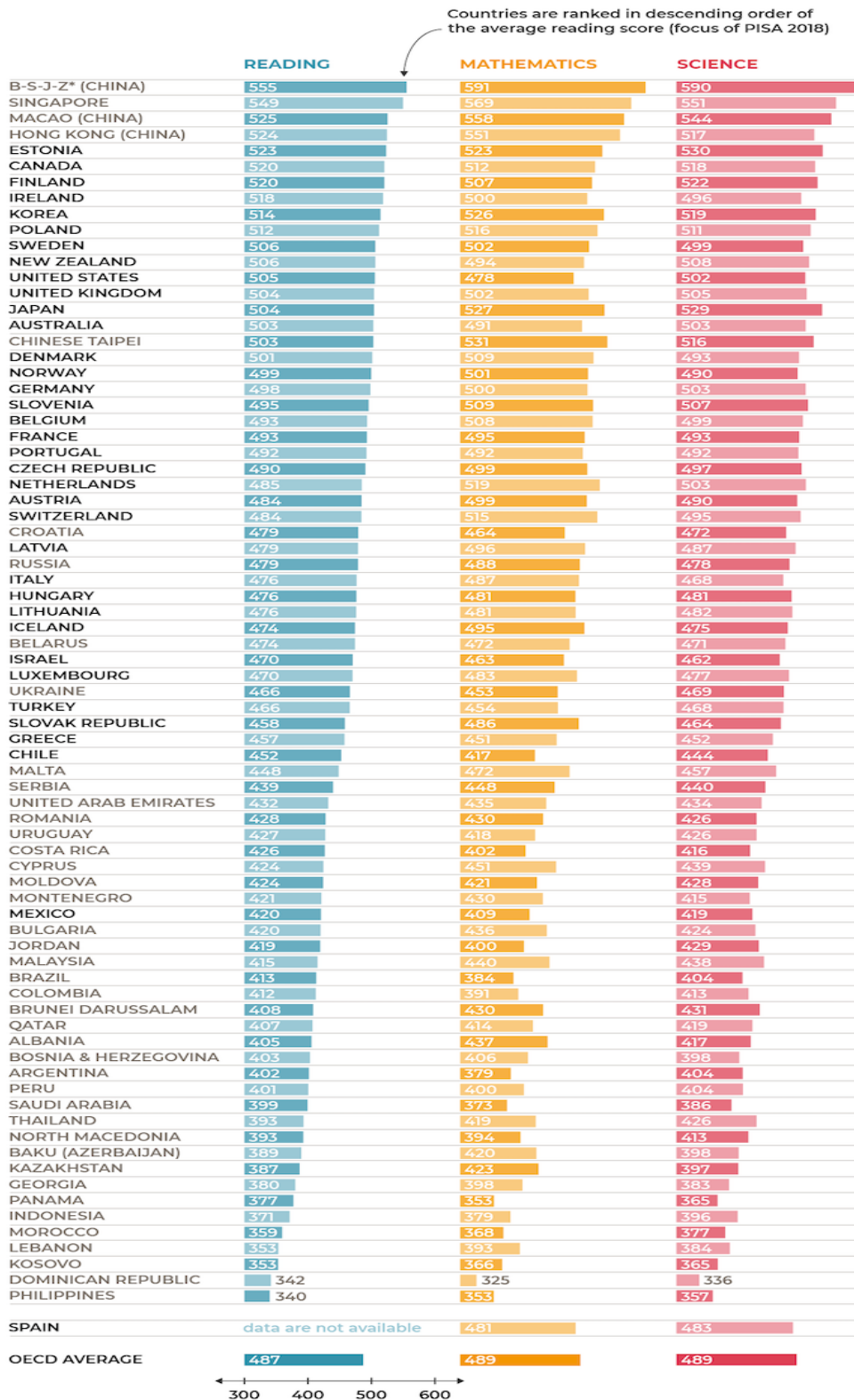
²⁴ Ready to Learn: Students’ Engagement, Drive, and Self-Beliefs. Vol. II OECD 2013. Ch. 1

²⁵ Seventy-nine percent of American youngsters agreed.

²⁶ Wendy Kopp, founder of Teach for America, to graduates. May 1, 2014

PISA 2018 results

Snapshot of students' performance in reading, mathematics and science



Source: OECD, PISA 2018 Database || *B-S-J-Z refers to Beijing, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang



In 2006, just nine Chinese universities [ranked](#) among the World's top five hundred, and none reached the top one hundred. Twelve years later, there were sixty-two in the top five hundred, three in the top ten, and one, Tsinghua, [ranked](#) first in in engineering and computer science. By 2020, forty-six percent of eighteen-year-olds were at university²⁷ and ethnic minorities, which comprise nine percent of the population, occupied nine percent of undergraduate positions.

Though we eagerly compare heritable traits like height, appearance, and athletic ability, we rarely compare intelligence, yet we boast that America's Ashkenazi Jews, one percent of the population, have won forty percent of our Nobel Prizes. Chinese women are unambivalent. For millennia, they have refused to marry unintelligent men, 'dry branches', and thus culled their DNA from the gene pool. So ancient is this process that Ron Unz²⁸ found Chinese intelligence almost immune to socio-economic factors. Healthy Swiss are fifty times richer and receive twice the schooling of ill-nourished rural Chinese children who have carried a heavy disease burden for generations, yet Chinese IQs are consistently higher, "The reported Chinese PISA scores are far above those of the United States and nearly every European country, many of which are almost totally urbanized and have incomes ten times that of China. It is almost unimaginable that any non-East Asian population of rural villagers with annual incomes in the \$1,000 range would have tested IQs very close to 100 [the US median]. We would certainly expect Chinese numbers to rise further as the country continues to develop. Still, my point is that East Asian IQs seem to possess a uniquely high floor compared with those of any other population".

What does that mean in practice?

Seventy percent of us have IQs between 85-115: we are smart enough to lead happy, productive lives. Five percent of us IQs are above 125 are smart enough for medical school, but only one of us out of two hundred, with an IQ of 140, can handle a Ph.D. in theoretical physics. And one in ten thousand have 160 IQs and can do groundbreaking work in any discipline.

The US, with an average IQ of 100, has thirty-six thousand of these super-geniuses while China, with four times more people and a national IQ of 105, has three hundred thousand²⁹. Anatoly Karlin predicts³⁰ that a combination of the Flynn effect³¹, poverty elimination and improved rural education and nutrition will lift the national IQ average to Shanghai's 108, thus doubling the pool of super-geniuses. Since virtually all Chinese super-geniuses work for the government, it is not surprising that Henry Kissinger³² concluded, "The Chinese are smarter than us".

²⁷ The figure in the US is forty-one percent.

²⁸ The East Asian Exception to Socio-Economic IQ Influences. Ron Unz. The American Conservative, July 18, 2012

²⁹ Because IQ is distributed logarithmically, and China has four times more people.

³⁰ Through A Glass Ceiling Darkly: Racial IQ Disparities and the Wealth of Nations ANATOLY KARLIN • APRIL 16, 2012

³¹ The Flynn Effect is the substantial, sustained increase in intelligence test scores measured across the World in the 20th century: when the new test subjects take the older tests, in almost every case, their average scores are significantly above the earlier norm of 100.

³² Nixon's China Game. PBS. January 31, 2000

Even better than IQ for predicting³³ academic success is working memory³⁴ and there Chinese children have another advantage. Basic literacy in Chinese demands a working memory capable of handling at least three thousand characters, and mastery requires the use of contextual variables to extract their meaning from millions of possible combinations. The implications of become clear if we compare our old reading primer, *Fun with Dick and Jane*, with theirs. *The Three Character Classic* teaches the three thousand basic characters along with Confucian history, filial piety, public morality, and, of course, the importance of study—and grandparents³⁵ still delight to hear three-year-olds recite it from memory.

I do not expect you to read it all, but rather to observe the culture’s approach to literacy and moral education:

Men at their birth are naturally good.

Men at their birth are naturally good.

Their natures are much the same; their habits become widely different.

Their natures are much the same; their habits become widely different.

If foolishly there is no teaching, the nature will deteriorate.

If foolishly there is no teaching, the nature will deteriorate.

The right way in teaching is to attach the utmost importance to thoroughness.

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Of old, the mother of Mencius chose a neighborhood;

Of old, the mother of Mencius chose a neighborhood;

and when her child would not learn, she broke the shuttle from the loom.

and when her child would not learn, she broke the shuttle from the loom.

Tou of the Swallow Hills had the right method.

Tou of the Swallow Hills had the right method.

He taught five sons, each of whom raised the family reputation.

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To feed without teaching is the father’s fault.

To feed without teaching is the father’s fault.

To teach without severity is the teacher’s laziness.

To teach without severity is the teacher’s laziness.

If the child does not learn, this is not as it should be.

If the child does not learn, this is not as it should be.

If he does not learn while young, what will he be when old?

If he does not learn while young, what will he be when old?

³³ “Children’s working memory skills at five years of age were the best predictor of reading, spelling, and math outcomes six years later. By contrast, IQ accounted for a smaller portion of unique variance to reading and math skills and was not a significant predictor of spelling performance”. Investigating the predictive roles of working memory and IQ in academic attainment. Alloway TP, Alloway RG. *J Exp Child Psychol.* 2010 May;106(1):20-9.

³⁴ Analogous to computer RAM; working memory is the part of short-term memory devoted to immediate conscious perceptual and linguistic processing.

³⁵ Google ‘Baby Genius Recites San Zi Jing’

4 Ẃ D Ć ÷

If jade is not polished, it cannot become a thing of use.

\$ P Ẃ T - ÷

If a man does not learn, he cannot know his duty towards his neighbor.

- \$; Ẃ^ á 1 ÷

He who is the son of a man when he is young

¶ U Ẃ> μ 6 ÷

should attach himself to his teachers and friends, and practice ceremonial usages.

fl đ ẂẂ. Ĩ ' ÷

HAsiang, at nine years of age, would warm his parents' bed.

İ i Ẃp v ÷

Filial piety towards parents is that to which we should hold fast.

Á œ Ẃ. J λ ÷

Jung, at four years of age, could yield the bigger pears.

Ğ i o ẂN Ỳ T ÷

To behave as a younger brother towards elders is one of the first things to know.

÷ İ Ğ ẂS y ÷

Begin with filial piety and fraternal love, then see and hear.

T ~ Ẃš ~ e ÷

Learn to count and learn to read.

W Ẃ W√ ÷

Units and tens, then tens and hundreds,

√ Wđ Ẃđ WÊ ÷

hundreds and thousands, thousands and tens of thousands.

K _ π Ẃ% A \$ ÷

The Three Forces are Heaven, Earth, and Man.

K ñ π ẂE ä ÷

The Three Luminaries are the sun, the moon, and the stars.

K 3 π Ẃİ 6 - ÷

The Three Bonds are the obligation between sovereign and subject,

Í ; Ẃĝ Ś § ÷

the love between father and child and the harmony between husband and wife.

» ˘ Ẃ» ≈ L ÷

We speak of spring and summer; we speak of autumn and winter.

1 Ẃ∞ ũ ÷

These four seasons revolve without ceasing.

» ' □ Ẃ» ç ÷

We speak of north and south; we speak of east and west.

^ Ẃô α + ÷

These four points respond to the requirements of the centre.

» f « Ẃİ B ÷

We speak of water, fire, wood, metal, and earth.

∂ c Ẃh α ¥ ÷

These five elements have their origin in number.

» 9 - Ẃμ Ô \ ÷

We speak of charity of heart and of duty towards one's neighbor, of propriety, of wisdom, and of

virtue.

∂ ε Ẃ © ^ ÷

These five virtues admit to no compromise.

7 ~ s ẂĒ` ˆ ÷

Rice, spiked millet, pulse, wheat, glutinous millet, and common millet.

· Ẃ\$ p Ô ÷

These six grains are those which men eat.

Ó · ½ ẂA σ ĩ ÷

The horse, the ox, the sheep, the fowl, the dog, the pig.

⊕ Ẃ\$ p ÷

These six animals are those which men keep.

4 · σ ẂÃ < 8 ÷

Especially of the ox and dog is the merit most conspicuous,

· z s Ẃ. N ÷

one can plough the fields, the other can guard the house.

π % Ẃ0 ≠ ü ÷

It is to obscure your natural goodness of disposition to kill them and expose them for sale.

t' Ô ẂÁ F ® ÷

Beware of eating them, and so avoid being punished.

» j J Ẃ» Ũ 0 ÷

We speak of joy, of anger, we speak of pity, of fear,

0 ¼'n Ẃ G Š ÷

of love, of hate, and of desire. These are the seven passions.

Ẃ OI ẂĪ Ĝ β ÷

The gourd, earthenware, skin, wood, stone, metal,

w ˘ η Ẃτ , J ÷

silk, and bamboo,

yield the eight musical sounds.

Z 1 † ẂL Wt ÷

Great great grandfather, great grandfather, grandfather, father and self,

t W; Ẃ; Wα ÷

self and son, son and grandson,

, ; α Ẃ“ ĩ 1 ÷

from son and grandson, on to great grandson and great great grandson.

τ đ ẂWV Ũ ÷

These are the nine agnates, constituting the kinships of man.

Ł ; ũ Ẃĝ Š Ä ÷

Affection between father and child, harmony between husband and wife,

ř Ğ U Ŵ Ğ Ğ Ń ù

friendliness on the part of elder brothers, respectfulness on the part of younger brothers,

o Ū é Ŵ U w Ç ù

precedence between elders and youngsters, as between friend and friend,

Ī Ğ Ŷ Ŵ 6 Ğ i ù

respect on the part of the sovereign, loyalty on the part of the subject.

- Ŵ \$ p k ù

These ten obligations are common to all men.

ŋ ě ū Ŵ h ŷ i ù

In the education of the young, there should be explanation and elucidation,

Ĺ ě k Ŵ q Æ ù

careful teaching of the interpretations of commentators, and due attention to paragraphs and sentences.

- P π Ŵ Œ # ě ù

Those who are learners must have a beginning.

7 P a Ŵ “ Δ ù

The "Little Learning" finished, they proceed to the "Four Books".

» ‡ π Ŵ { ù

There is the Lun Yü, in twenty sections.

ğ Ğ ; Ŵ î Đ Ū ù

In this, the various disciples have recorded the wise sayings of Confucius.

ξ ; π Ŵ Ā ù

The works of Mencius are comprised in seven sections.

ÿ N Ć Ŵ 3 ° - ù

These explain the W Y and the exemplification thereof and expound charity and duty towards one's neighbor.

m + v Ŵ ; ... ĩ ù

The "Chung Yung" was written by the pen of Tzu-ssu;

+ † Ŵ v æ ù

"Chung" (the middle) being that which does not lean towards any side, "Yung" (the course) being that which cannot be changed.

m (P Ŵ τ 1 ; ù

He who wrote "The Great Learning" was the philosopher Tsêng.

, ž Ŕ Ŵ “ ð Ĥ ù

Beginning with cultivation of the individual and ordering of the family, it goes on to government of one's own State and tranquilization of the Empire.

Ī b Ŵ Δ Ć ù

When the "Classic of Filial Piety" is mastered, and the "Four Books" are known by heart.

X b Ŵ ° 4 ù

The next step is the "Six Classics", which may now be studied.

Ĺ Δ æ Ŵ μ ˘ ≈ ù

The "Books of Poetry", of "History", and of "Changes", the "Rites of the Chou Dynasty", the "Book of Rites", and the "Spring and Autumn Annals",

≥ b Ŵ v ŷ • ù

are called the Six Classics, which should be carefully explained and analyzed.

À Ω Ṃ# | ċ w̄

There is the "Lien shan" system, there is the "Kuei tsang",

" æ ṂK æ | w̄

and there is the system of Changes of the Chou Dynasty; such are the three systems which elucidate the Changes.

ε ' Ṃ# ě π w̄

There are the Regulations, the Counsels, the Instructions, the Announcements,

α < ṂΔ V t w̄

the Oaths, the Charges; these are the profundities of the Book of History.

" z Ṃm " μ w̄

Our Duke of Chou drew up the Ritual of the Chou Dynasty,

8 fi Ṃ Ĥ Ñ w̄

in which he set forth the duties of the six classes of officials, and thus gave a settled form to the government.

(7 ũ Ṃ° μ î w̄

The Elder and the Younger Tai wrote commentaries on the Book of Rites.

Ě á Ú Ṃμ g Ì w̄

They published the holy words, and Ceremonies and Music were set in order.

" > Ṃ" Ī - w̄

We speak of the "Kuo feng", we speak of the "Ya" and of the "Sung".

≥ | Ṃv 1 Я w̄

These are the four sections of the Book of Poetry, which should be hummed over and over.

| IJ O Ṃ' ≈ m w̄

When odes ceased to be made, the "Spring and Autumn Annals" were produced.

β , \ Ṃx Đ ¼ w̄

These "Annals" contain praise and blame, and distinguish the good from the bad.

K π π Ṃ# z ½ w̄

The three commentaries upon the above, include that of Kung-Yang,

I Ṃ# ÿ s w̄

that of Tso, and that of Ku-Liang.

b IJ d Ṃ^ ; w̄

When the classics are understood, then the writings of the various philosophers should be read.

° É & Ṃî É L w̄

Pick out the important points in each and take a note of all facts.

∂ ; π Ṃ# ` I w̄

The five chief philosophers are Hsün, Yang,

e + ; Ṃ^] Ó w̄

Wên Chung Tzu, Lao Tzu, and Chuang Tzu.

b ; Ṃ ö w̄

When the Classics and the Philosophers are mastered, the various histories should then be read,

m | j ṂT ° w̄

and the genealogical connections should be examined, so that the end of one dynasty and the beginning of the next may be known.

, ^ ö Ṃ" u w̄

From Fu Hsi and Shên Nung on to the Yellow emperor,

≥ K ŵ W̄ ' | ÷

these are called the Three Rulers, who lived in the early ages.

5 # ° W̄ ≥ { u ÷

T'ang and Yu-Yü are called the Two emperors.

} í J W̄ S T | ÷

They abdicated, one after the other, and theirs was called the Golden Age.

. W̄ · # N ÷

The Hsia dynasty had Yü; and the Shang dynasty had T'ang;

.. e Ĩ W̄ S K ÷

the Chou dynasty had Wên and Wu; these are called the Three Kings.

TM; W̄ @ % / ÷

Under the Hsia dynasty the throne was transmitted from father to son, making a family possession of the empire.

√ Ü W̄ ε μ ÷

After four hundred years, the Imperial sacrifice passed from the House of Hsia.

N 6 W̄ > ≥ · ÷

T'ang the completer destroyed the Hsia Dynasty and the dynastic title became Shang.

√ Ü W̄ “ ; ' O ÷

The line lasted for six hundred years, ending with Chou Hsin.

.. Ĩ W̄ ° / ; ÷

King Wu of the Chou Dynasty finally slew Chou Hsin.

√ Ü W̄ < o f ÷

His own line lasted for eight hundred years; the longest dynasty of all.

.. 0 ç W̄ 3 ° ÷

When the Chous made tracks eastwards, the feudal bond was slackened;

· Ë 2 W̄ 1 ã 3 ÷

the arbitrament of spear and shields prevailed; and peripatetic politicians were held in high esteem.

° c ≈ W̄ a ¬ > ÷

This period began with the Spring and Autumn Epoch and ended with that of the Warring States.

∂ ó W̄ s ? ÷

Next, the Five Chieftains domineered, and the Seven Martial States came to the front.

e δ I W̄ ° 2 ÷

Then the House of Ch'in, descended from the Ying clan, finally united all the States under one sway.

TM { | W̄ O Ď ÷

The throne was transmitted to Erh Shih, upon which followed the struggle between the Ch'u and the Han States.

Z t | W̄ O û ~ ÷

Then Kao Tsu arose, and the House of Han was established.

“ Ĩ ö W̄ ' ° ÷

When we come to the reign of Hsiao P'ing, Wang Mang usurped the throne.

ñ Ĩ | W̄ - ç O ÷

Then Kuang Wu arose and founded the Eastern Han Dynasty.

√ F W̄^a i " w̄

It lasted four hundred years and ended with the emperor Hsien.

9 3 W̄D̄ O φ w̄

Wei, Shu, and Wu fought for the sovereignty of the Hans.

≥ K > W̄~ Y Í w̄

They were called the Three Kingdoms and existed until the Two Chin Dynasties.

ψ R̄ Ò W̄_s R̄ h̄ w̄

Then followed the Sung and the Ch'i dynasties, and after them the Liang and Ch'ên dynasties.

- ' E W̄) β χ w̄

These are the southern dynasties, with their capital at Nanking.

α i W̄: ç w̄

The northern dynasties are the Wei dynasty of the Yüan family, which split into Eastern and Western Wei,

σ e " W̄ | Z R̄ w̄

the Chou dynasty of the Yü-wen family, with the Ch'i dynasty of the Kao family.

w̄ " " W̄ σ w̄

At length, under the Sui dynasty, the empire was united under one ruler.

1 TMW̄ £ D̄ Ó w̄

The throne was not transmitted twice, succession to power being lost.

5 Z † W̄9 - ¶ w̄

The first emperor of the T'ang dynasty raised volunteer troops.

Ω " ¾ W̄ý > Í w̄

He put an end to the disorder of the House of Sui and established the foundations of his line.

{ TMW̄ K √ Ü w̄

Twenty times the throne was transmitted in a period of three hundred years.

8 ∅ V W̄ > τ ' w̄

The Liang State destroyed it, and the dynastic title was changed.

8 5 Í W̄^ O " w̄

The Liang, the T'ang, the Chin, the Han, and the Chou,

§ ∂ ∅ W̄₁ # " w̄

are called the Five Dynasties, and there was a reason for the establishment of each.

A ψ | W̄â " 8 w̄

Then the fire-led House of Sung arose and received the resignation of the house of Chou.

TMW̄' α ó w̄

Eighteen times the throne was transmitted, and then the North and the South were reunited.

ω w β W̄_u ≥ E w̄

Under the Liao and the Chin dynasties, there was confusion of Imperial titles,

Å ∅ ω W̄ψ 'Y w̄

when the Liao dynasty was destroyed, the Sung dynasty still remained.

" i | W̄B Ó ζ w̄

When the Yüan dynasty arose, the line of the Chin Tartars came to an end,

ψ | W̄ k ∅ w̄

and the House of Sung was destroyed together with it.

+ > W2 ˘ h w

It united the Middle Kingdom and attached to the empire the tribes of the north and west.

d R t W f ¶ w

The founder of the Ming dynasty was for a long time engaged in warfare.

TM e W ^ - w

He transmitted the throne to Chien Wên only four years,

e □ U W A g h w

when the capital was transferred to Peking, and Yung Lo succeeded the latter.

A U ˘ W € Ω 9 w

At length, Ch'ung Chêng died on the Coal Hill.

ω i β W1 § u w

The Liao Tartars and the Chin Tartars all took the Imperial title.

i ∅ β W ψ | w

The Yüans (Mongols) destroyed the Chin Tartars and put an end to the House of Sung.

.. + > W2 ˘ h w

They governed the Middle Kingdom, and also the wild tribes of the north and west;

d F W > j r w

after ninety years their mandate was exhausted.

R t | W > (d w

Then T'ai Tsu arose, his dynasty being known as Ta Ming.

≥ JB I W) β χ w

He took as his year-title Hung Wu and fixed his capital at Chin-ling (Nanking).

A D t W ε Y U w

At length, under the emperor Ch'êng Tsu, a move was made to Swallow City (Peking).

| W " U ˘ w

There were seventeen reigns in all, down to and including Ch'ung Chêng.

g ^ ü W X C w

The hold on the people was relaxed, and rebels sprang up thick as forests.

" k é W Ø C a w

Then came Li Ch'uang, and the Imperial regalia were destroyed.

R t W ô Ž < w

The founder of the Ch'ing or Pure dynasty responded to the glorious summons;

• ^ W (r w

he tranquilized the four quarters (N,S,E,W), and achieved the final settlement of the empire.

, { W α " · w

The Twenty-two Dynastic Histories are all embraced in the above.

Ü H ¾ WT | η w

They contain examples of good and bad government, whence may be learnt the principles of prosperity and decay.

Δ W m s ° w

Ye who read history must study the State Annals,

² O W H 0 w

whereby you will understand ancient and modern events, as though having seen them with your own eyes.

o W W2 W4 w

Recite them with the mouth and ponder over them in your hearts.

E i a W6 i a w

Do this in the morning; do this in the evening.

U b E W¶ 3 H w

Of old, Confucius took Hasiang T'o for his teacher.

² a p W1 O P w

The inspired men and sages of old studied diligently nevertheless.

S + E W 7 » w

Chao, President of the Council, studied the Lu text of the "Lun Yü".

R IJ · W P - O w

He, when already an official, studied, and moreover with diligence.

0 d U W7 η U w

One opened out rushes and plaited them together; another scraped tablets of bamboo.

R MΔ W- T o w

These men had no books, but they knew how to make an effort.

u x s W^ j G w

One tied his head to the beam above him; another pricked his thigh with an awl.

R z W, O, w

They were not taught, but toiled hard of their own accord.

X t · W X J I w

Then we have one who put fireflies in a bag, and again another who used the white glare from snow.

@c a W P Y w

Although their families were poor, these men studied unceasingly.

X i o W X κ l w

Again, there was one who carried fuel, and another who used horns as pegs.

t c O W Y, 7 w

Although they toiled with their bodies, they were nevertheless remarkable for their application.

r] H W { w

Su Lao-ch'üan, at the age of twenty-seven,

o B u W Δ v w

at last began to show his energy and devote himself to the study of books.

R IJ] W Y T U w

Then, when already past the age, he deeply regretted his delay.

7 6 W N O ... w

You little boys should take thought betimes.

H s I W, { w

Then there was Liang Hao, who at the age of eighty-two,

C (s W^ * Y w

made his replies in the great hall and came out first among many scholars.

Ṙ IJ D WÉ Š 1 w̄

When thus late he had succeeded, all men pronounced him a prodigy.

7 6 WŃJ ~ ɓ w̄

You little boys should make up your minds to work.

⁵ 5 œ W̄. Я L w̄

Jung at eight years of age, could compose poetry.

ó œ W̄. Ъ ɔ w̄

Pi, at seven years of age, could make an epigram on "wei-ch'i".

Ṙ È ĩ W\$ Š L w̄

These youths were quick of apprehension, and people declared them to be prodigies.

U P W̄v „ V w̄

You young learners ought to imitate them.

ĩ e ˘ W̄. Ъ 3 w̄

Ts'ai Wên-chi was able to judge from the sound of a psaltery.

≤ N ɓ W̄. Я ɛ w̄

Hsieh Tao-yün was able to compose verses.

Ṙ Q; W̄⁻ æ ɪ w̄

They were only girls, yet they were quick and clever.

Å ; W̄v , ǵ w̄

You boys ought to rouse yourselves.

⁵ ẏ ˘ W̄[^] œ w̄

Liu Yen of the T'ang dynasty, when only seven years of age,

d' Ø ˘ W̄m / w̄

was ranked as an "inspired child" and was appointed a Corrector of Texts.

Ṙ ˘ U W̄t I ˘ w̄

He, although a child, was already in an official post.

U P W̄ó WĀ w̄

You young learners strive to bring about a like result.

- π W̄Ū H! w̄

Those who work will also succeed as he did.

σ Ṙ Σ W̄A È ɪ w̄

The dog keeps guard by night; the cock proclaims the dawn.

ff P W̄ɪ - \$ w̄

If foolishly you do not study, how can you become men?

IOŋ ˘ W̄⁸ K ij w̄

The silkworm produces silk, the bee makes honey.

\$ P W̄ X w̄

If man does not learn, he is not equal to the brutes.

U WP W̄Z Wc w̄

Learn while young, and when grown up apply what you have learnt;

' Ā ĩ Ŵ / ŷ ð

influencing the sovereign above; benefiting the people below.

Ž q ± Ŵ - Ĺ ð

Make a name for yourselves, and glorify your father and mother,

ñ i n Ŵ ĩ H ð

shed lustre on your ancestors, enrich your posterity.

\$ ĩ ; Ŵ ß Ű ε ð

Men bequeath to their children coffers of gold;

ç ; Ŵ⁴ b ð

But I teach you children only this book.

Ō # Ā Ŵ — M Ŝ ð

Diligence has its reward; play has no advantages,

ť V s Ŵ Ŋ ó ` ð

Oh, be on your guard and put forth all your strength.

3. Leadership

The art of governance lies in attracting men of moral integrity, the kind who are only drawn to rulers who demonstrate moral integrity in their own lives. And how do rulers demonstrate moral integrity? By doing their duty and practicing compassion. Confucius. The Doctrine of the Mean.

As has been the case since the birth of Christ, China is governed by a Confucian *just hierarchy* that is designed to weed out sociopaths and recruit able, compassionate people willing to sacrifice their lives in service to the people.

So it is not surprising that, instead of viewing the State as intrusive, untrustworthy, and threatening, the Chinese see themselves belonging to a family-state and view their politicians as family patriarchs. Under such leadership, they value collective over individual wellbeing, the future over the present, pragmatism above ideology, and outcomes over promises—a value system that provides social cohesion and has made China the richest, strongest nation on earth for most of its existence.

Today, in place of the Emperor, morally outstanding people guide the nation's destiny: the ninety-three million Communist Party members whose code of conduct resembles Rotary International's: service, integrity, world understanding, goodwill, and peace. They have sworn³⁶ "To bear the people's hardships first and enjoy their comforts last," despite the fact that membership in the Party is no more profitable³⁷ than in Rotary International's, and admission is more restrictive.

During the three-year application process, candidates explain their motives for applying; attend weekly classes in Party history and ideology; volunteer for local chores; list their shortcomings; detail their families' personal, financial, and political information; earn recommendations from two Party members; and supply character references from two non-relatives who guarantee their moral integrity for life.

³⁶ From *Advice to Officials*, by an eleventh-century chancellor, Fan Zhongyan, a famous altruist.

³⁷ Economic Returns to Communist Party Membership: Evidence from Urban Chinese Twins. Hongbin Li, Pak Wai, Liu Junsen, Zhang Ning Ma. *The Economic Journal*. Vol. 117.

Most university graduates apply, but only one-tenth gain admission. “I was very excited,” said Allen Lin³⁸, a twenty-three-year-old college senior who credits his admission to his high grades, service to student government, and assistance to classmates, “Joining the Party is not easy—of the forty students in my class, only five were admitted”. “It took me two years,” said another graduate, “There were seventy-eight people and my party branch only recruited three. I wanted to join because it is really rare, a small group of people, and because I have a deep faith in the Party”. Yet the People’s Daily regularly laments³⁹ the shortage of youthful altruists and quoted one disillusioned applicant, “Many student members have little rigor and only a very shallow understanding of Party discipline. I was taught when I was young that the Party represents justice and that cadres are more dedicated in their jobs, but I found that students join because they want to work for a state-owned company or become an official”.

Forty percent are women, one-third are ‘exemplary farmers, herdsmen, and fishermen,’ one quarter is white-collar workers, one-sixth retirees, one-eighth civil servants, one-tenth are ethnic minorities⁴⁰. Between them, members contribute a billion dollars in annual dues and billions of volunteer hours, usually conducting surveys on rainy Sunday afternoons. They declare their membership on job applications because private firms appreciate the Party’s thorough vetting. Though one-tenth will become officials, professors, generals, CEOs, or celebrities, most will simply mobilize support for new policies or volunteer in emergencies.

Their ability to mobilize is impressive. In 2000, China’s application to join the World Trade Organization triggered public demonstrations since membership would disadvantage agriculture⁴¹, undermine cherished industrial policies⁴², and destroy eleven million jobs.

For the first time, the Party invited exemplary capitalists to join⁴³ its ranks and taught them the Five Unifiers: unified understanding so that everyone knows why China needs the WTO; unified policy so that everyone understands the local problems WTO membership cause; unified planning to coordinate different interests in applying WTO provisions nationally; unified direction so that leaders take direction from the next unit above; unified action so that, once consensus is reached, everyone at every level simultaneously applies their energy to solving WTO-related problems. The capitalists committed to hiring displaced workers, which swayed popular opinion, and China joined the WTO.

The Party is equally impressive in local emergencies. One night in 2010, a Shanghai high-rise fire killed fifty-eight people. Before dawn, members had coordinated twenty-five fire stations, a

³⁸ Membership in the Communist Party of China: Who is Being Admitted and How? | JSTOR Daily. By: R.W. McMorrow December 19, 2015

³⁹ Chinese students flock to join the Communist Party. The Telegraph. Malcolm Moore, August 9, 2013.

⁴⁰ Ethnic minorities make up a twelfth of China’s population.

⁴¹ WTO rules prohibit them from subsidizing domestic food production, even for local consumption.

⁴² Policies that advanced countries themselves used during their development phases.

⁴³ There are currently thirty-one billionaires in the NPC, whose average wealth is \$3.35 billion.

hundred fire trucks, and a thousand firefighters along with police, hospitals, finance, insurance, housing, donations, counseling, criminal investigators, and schools. Forty-eight hours later, state-owned insurers compensated families for lost property and wrote \$250,000 checks for each death. Ten days later, Shanghai mayor Han Zheng confessed, “Our poor supervision of the construction industry caused the fire”. He implemented new building codes, fired or demoted thirty officials, and indicted twenty-two, most of whom went to prison, two for sixteen years. The contrast with London’s Grenfell Tower fire is stark⁴⁴.



The Party’s principle responsibility, however, is the nation’s future. Its 2015 report⁴⁵, abbreviated here, reveals priorities rarely discussed in the West [emphasis added]:

1. Sustainability Led by Science and Technology: the overriding mission of early-stage socialism is liberating and developing the forces of production. Socialism requires a minimal foundation of material and technological development, so science and technology's determining effect needs to be fully understood. We should recognize the strategic importance of science and technology in allocating scarce resources.

⁴⁴ The first responders to the 2020 Coronavirus epidemic from outside Wuhan were 48,000 Party volunteers—mostly health specialists.

⁴⁵ Bulletin of a conference on China’s economy from the Communist Party Central Committee, December 2015. Quoted in [4 Theory of China’s Miracle](#) by Cheng Enfu and Ding Xiaoqin.

2. Orienting Production to Improving Ordinary People's Livelihood: the principal contradiction in socialism at its earliest stage is between people's increasing material and cultural needs and the backwardness of social production. This can only be overcome by the speedy, steady development of productive capacities—socialism's primary task in its initial phases. Improving people's livelihoods is an endless task, and new challenges continuously emerge... We should realistically assess the effects of our actions on living standards and ensure that public services create a reliable social safety net. Our objective must be a society in which all people contribute to the satisfaction of human needs to the extent they are able while enjoying access to the material, social, and spiritual resources they need for the full development of their human potential in accord with the needs of sustainability⁴⁶.

3. Public Ownership Takes Precedence in National Property Rights: The institutional guarantee for all Chinese people is that they will share the fruits of development... This principle highlights a fundamental difference between the socialist economy and the modern capitalist economic system, in which private ownership is dominant. We should learn from past errors of state-sector reform that allowed a narrow elite to amass huge fortunes by misdirecting funds. The collective and cooperative model of Chinese village economies needs further investment. New policies must be introduced to enhance the vitality, competitiveness, and risk management of the public economy⁴⁷.

4. The Primacy of Labor in the Distribution of Wealth. In any capitalist economy, wage laborers are paid only for their labor power expenditure—not for the value of the commodities they produce. Under these conditions, the specific wage a worker earns is associated with their position and performance... The distribution of wealth in our Chinese socialist economy must be guided by the needs of labor, not capital. We must strive against exploitation and polarization, bridge the income gap, and increase income for all citizens coincident with economic growth and labor productivity. It is vital to establish a sound, scientific mechanism for determining wage levels and a means for regular wage increases⁴⁸.

5. Market Principles Steered by the State. The anarchic character of the capitalist market combined with individual capitalists' drive to innovate to reduce labor costs leads to periodic crises of overproduction in which workers suffer most... The government's responsibility is keeping macroeconomic policy steady, strengthening public services, guaranteeing fair competition, reinforcing market supervision, promoting collective prosperity, and rectifying—or compensating for—market failures.

6. Speedy Development with High Performance: A low growth rate with insufficient resource use inhibits full employment, wealth accumulation, and public welfare. A higher growth rate with extensive rather than intensive resource utilization is equally detrimental to ecological sustainability and distributive justice. We need a

⁴⁶ Everyone now has a home, an income, plenty of food and clothes, education, safe streets, health insurance, and old-age care.

⁴⁷ Inequality has fallen each year. Public ownership is the highest in the World.

⁴⁸ Real wages continue to double every decade.

dialectical analysis⁴⁹ of indices based on the gross domestic product, GDP.

7. **Balanced Development with Structural Coordination:** We must abandon the persistent misconception that, if we eliminate economic surplus caused by administrative intervention, excess production capacity, and product surplus formed by marketization can be balanced automatically without government intervention. This neoliberal fallacy and its consequences explain the large structural excess capacity in the economy and go against the spirit of Chinese socialism.

8. **Economic Sovereignty and Openness:** A final principle is to open the economy to trade and investment because it is beneficial to economic growth at home and abroad, optimizing the allocation of resources and improving interactions between industry and technology. However, developing countries should devote particular care to their strategies and tactics when opening up to developed countries, given the risks and uncertainties inherent in such an unequal relationship.

Critics may carp about its pervasive presence, but the Party keeps its promises. By 2021, the centennial of its founding, everyone in China's lowest income bracket will own a home and have a guaranteed income, plenty of food and clothes, safe streets, health insurance, a pension and old age career. Their children will graduate high school three years ahead of ours and live longer healthier lives.

In addition to the moral uprightness required for Party membership, officials must demonstrate extraordinary intelligence, competence, and self-discipline. They earn their positions in a relentless competition that begins in primary school and ends when—out of eight million annual university graduates—the brightest apply for the civil service. The top thirty thousand scorers spend weeks in interviews to demonstrate their capacity to learn and solve problems using logic, intuition, creativity, experience, and wisdom. The twenty-seven thousand who succeed (most with IQs above 140) will earn their first promotions after they have lived in poverty-stricken villages and raised local incomes by fifty percent.

Why the Communist Party Sent Me to the Desert

by Heng Xiao⁵⁰

My adventure began with a phone call late one summer night. It was my boss, the deputy director of the state-funded Institute of International Studies. He had some unexpected

⁴⁹ Dialectical analyses probe the significance and limitations of ideas and values. If a dialectical analysis is sound, conclusions will be, too.

⁵⁰ *The Gobi Diaries*, Part 1, by Heng Xiao. <http://www.sixthtone.com/news/623/gobi-diaries-1-why-communist-party-sent-me-desert>

news. The personnel department of our Academy had selected me as a candidate for its Grassroots Service Program (GSP) in one of China's most underdeveloped provinces, located some 1,500 miles from where I was living in Beijing. Before hanging up, he gravely informed me that all of my peers had refused to join the program—leaving me with little choice but to accept the offer. What followed was an incredibly difficult decision for me. As a sophomore researcher, I had spent the past year doing staff work instead of academic research, and I feared I might have fallen behind my colleagues. After consulting my wife, we agreed that my boss's call was to inform me of my participation in the program, not to ask my opinion on the matter. I reluctantly called back and accepted his offer. In hindsight, most of us—the 17 researchers who accepted GSP posts—wished we had never received that call.

The GSP's Chinese name is *guazhi*. *Guazhi* means “to hang your position,” in the way one hangs a coat, and it is a common phrase among China's state-sponsored entities, including research institutes like the one I was part of. It involves temporarily moving to a new position for at least a year, while your old job is guaranteed upon your return. At the time, it was common practice for young China Communist Party (CCP) members to take on this responsibility at some point. This temporary job sometimes has no relation at all to the cadre's previous field of work. For example, it would not be unusual for a researcher on US foreign policy to be asked to manage rural development in the Gobi Desert. The *guazhi* program is based on the traditional Chinese belief that different experiences lead to real knowledge and make a man competent. In its most radical form during the Cultural Revolution, this traditional belief was manifested as the “Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside” movement. During the Cultural Revolution, universities and colleges in China were closed, and urban youth were sent to poor, remote rural areas to, in the words of Mao Zedong, “learn from ordinary people”. Although far removed from the modern-day GSP, the intention is similar: namely, a notion that the most thorough education comes from diversified experiences...

Local officials were waiting for us at the airport when we landed at our destination on December 1. After a short rest and a dinner full of animated speeches, we—the 17 exhausted researchers—were dispatched to our new homes by town officials. Upon getting in the car, I was told that I would be working almost 13 miles from the urban area. During our drive along the rugged country road, I had a good talk with one of my future colleagues, the town's Party committee's vice-secretary. At one point, he asked me a strange question, “Secretary, where will you live in the city? Will the municipal government rent you an apartment?” It seemed that my future colleagues did not even know I was required to live where I worked. I began to realize that there would be no bedroom, no bathroom, and no nice furniture waiting for me. It was immediately apparent upon arriving at the town hall that I had been right in my premonitions, which did not make me happy at all. There was no breakfast or dinner provided, and I wasn't allowed to cook in the office. There was no hot water and no heating at night, despite temperatures of minus 20 degrees Celsius. I later reflected that the outdoor toilet I had noticed upon entering was the least of my worries compared with the other problems. On the plus side, my office was bright”.

As Heng Xiao rises—from section chief, deputy division chief, division chief, deputy director and director of general office, vice-minister, minister, deputy-state leader to state leader—his demonstration of the Confucian virtues—compassion, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and fidelity—will be increasingly scrutinized. Zhao Bing Bing⁵¹, a mid-level official in Liaoning Province explained the process to Daniel Bell:

I was promoted in 2004 through my department’s internal competition (30 percent on written exam results, 30 percent on interviews and public speaking, 30 percent on public opinion of my work, and 10 percent on education, seniority, and my current position) and became the youngest deputy division chief. In 2009, Liaoning Province (pop. 44 million) announced an open selection of officials in the national media. Sixty candidates met the qualifications, the top five of whom were invited for further interviews. Based on their test scores (40 percent) and interview results (60 percent), the top three were then appraised. The Liaoning Province organizational department sent four appraisers who spent a whole day checking my previous records. Eighty of my colleagues were asked to vote—more than thirty of whom were asked to talk with the appraisers about my merits and shortcomings—and they submitted the appraisal result to the provincial Standing Committee of the CCP for review.

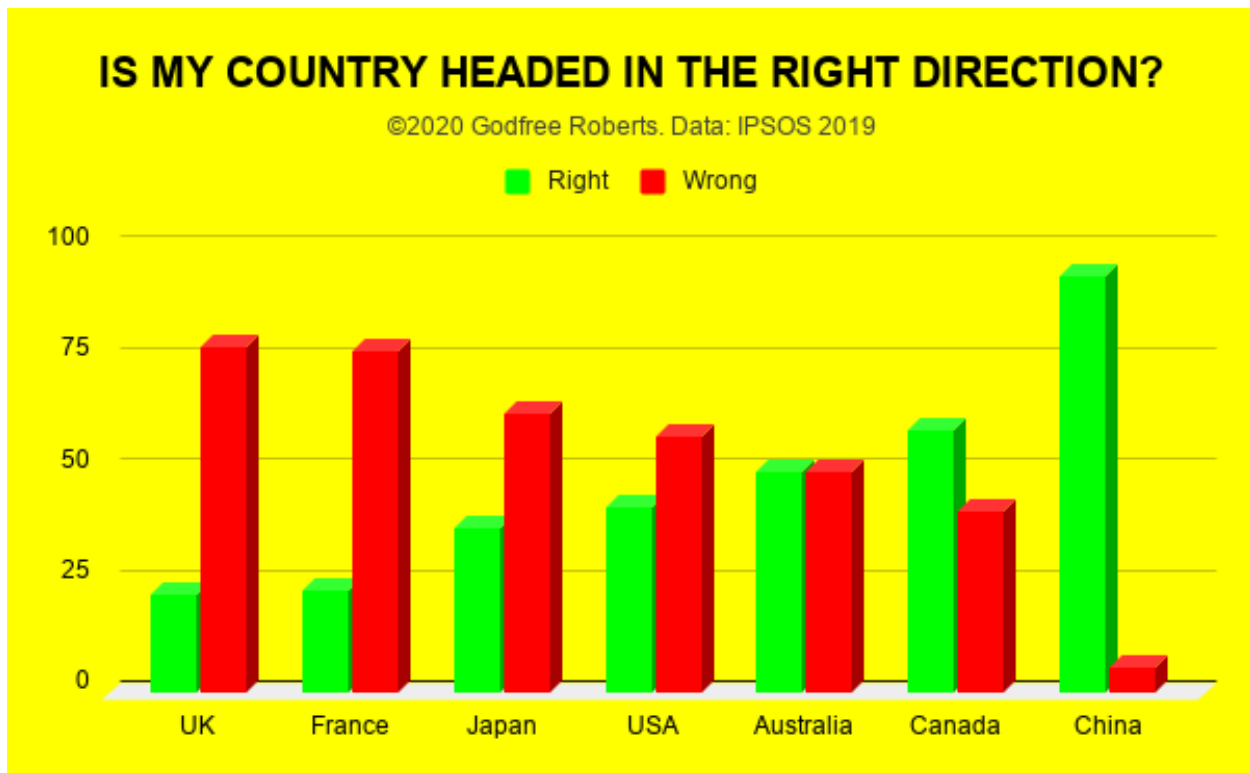
In principle, the person who scored the highest and whose appraisals were not problematic would be promoted. However, because my university major, work experience, and previous performance were the best fit for the position, I was finally appointed department chief of the Liaoning Provincial Foreign Affairs Office even though my overall score was second-best [the government discriminates positively in promoting women—ed]. Before the official appointment, there was a seven-day public notice period during which anybody could report to the organization department concerns about my promotion. I didn’t spend any money during my three promotions; all I did was study and work hard and do my best to be a good person.

In 2013, thanks to an exchange program, I worked temporarily in the CCP International Department. The temporary exchange system offers opportunities to learn about different issues in different regions and areas like government and SOEs. In a famous quote, Chairman Mao said, “Once the political lines have been clearly defined, the decisive factor will be the cadres [trained specialists]”. So, the CCP highly values organizational construction and the selection and appointment of specialists. There is a special department managing this work, The Organization Department, established in 1924, and Mao was its first leader. The department is mainly responsible for the macro-management of the leaders and the staff (team building), including the management system, regulations and laws, human resource system reforms—planning, research, and direction, as well as proposing suggestions on the leadership change and the (re)appointment of cadres. Also, it has the responsibility of training and supervising

⁵¹ Daniel Bell and Zhao Bing Bing, *The China Model*.

cadres. The cadre selection criteria are: a person must have ‘both ability and moral integrity and the latter should be prioritized’. The evaluation of moral integrity focuses mostly on loyalty to the Party, service to the people, self-discipline, and integrity. Based on different levels and positions, the emphases of evaluation are also different. For intermediate and senior officials, the focus is on their persistence in faith and ideals, political stance, and coordination with the central Party. High-level cadres are measured against great politicians, and, among them, experience in multiple positions is very important.

Though their perquisites—overseas education for offspring who flunk the *gaokao*—improve as they rise, salaries are niggardly: the President’s salary is sixty-six thousand dollars⁵². The track records of the top one thousand politicians, available online, are impressive. Most began their careers in the late sixties as manual laborers in dirt-poor villages. After doubling the incomes of those they served, they were promoted to run huge provinces; Fortune 500 ⁵³, Universities and space programs. They spent sabbaticals on the leafy, lake-studded campus of [The Academy of Governance](#), earned PhDs, met the World’s leading thinkers, critiqued senior officials' policies, and studied at Harvard, Stanford, Oxford, Cambridge, or the University of Tokyo.



⁵² After deducting income tax, social insurance, occupational pension, and housing provident fund, enough to purchase a home and a car and support a family of five.

⁵³ China is home to more Fortune 500 companies than any country. Most are state-owned.

4. What Next?

China is just getting started. Its goals for 2021 (ending poverty), 2030 (ending ill-health), 2035 (ending inequality) and 2049 (leading the world towards a common destiny for all mankind) are ambitious.

If you want know more, *Why China Leads the World*, from which these chapters are excerpted.

And if you want to follow the story as it unfolds, subscribe to [Here Comes China!](#), the weekly newsletter.

