

FOR FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES ONLY

NOT FOR SALE

CHINA'S ARDUOUS JOURNEY TO EARN ITS PLACE...

FROM MR Q TO PRESIDENT XI JINPING

LIM YU-BOOK
林有木

FOR FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES ONLY
NOT FOR SALE

From Mr Q to President Xi Jinping
China's arduous journey to earn its place...

Lim Yu-Book

林有木

May 2022

FOR EYES ONLY,

DEDICATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is dedicated to my wife Hwa (Teh Saw Hwa) who has put up with me since we first courted in 1967 – when I was doing my Lower Six and she her Form Five in Penang. We got married in 1974 – after university. She gave me two children – Shen-Yang, who is now a professor in Neurology; and Monica, a lawyer-turned-music enthusiast. Without Hwa’s companionship, I would not have picked up a decent command of English, let alone any interest or ability to write in that language. But Hwa has this phobia – a hidden fear regarding the issues I write. She thinks my views are either too radical or controversial, which may get me into trouble unnecessarily (which has actually happened on several occasions). But she is not discouraging; she just does not want to see what I write, even though she will always brag to friends that “I write well!” But when I told her about my intention to write about Joe Biden’s hypocrisy, she was all for it, having convinced herself that the US and its allies are trying to bring China down without any qualms, shame or reflection.

The images of several teachers, some of whom may have already passed on, from my primary school years remain vividly in my mind. They helped shape the way I conduct myself in life. I love to recall their names – 黃愛娟 Huang Ai-Juan, 林成遙 Lin Cheng-Yao and 劉興 Liu Xing. It must be they who have indoctrinated me in Confucianism! Ironically, however, it was a certain Rohyai Nonaka, who was a JETRO (Japanese External Trade Organisation) expert in Malaysia, who showed me the more philosophical aspects of Kung-zi 孔子 and Sun-zi 孫子. From university and graduate school, I only have these names to fondly reminisce: Prof Goh Sing Yau at the University of Malaya, Prof Victor Limlingan and a certain Prof Reyes at the Asian Institute of Management.

Several people have influenced me to write, significantly: renowned engineering titan Datuk Lee Yee Cheong (whose 500-page autobiography *Think Malaysian, Act Global* takes us through his journey of selfless devotion to the promotion of science and engineering in the region) and his former

colleague Rocky Wong, who took pains to give me feedback; a dear friend Anthony Oei, who has the uncanny gift of being able to read sentiments and trends; Ho Swee Huat, Tan Jin Hwee and Ronald Lim, and fellow ex-Muareans and dear friends Lau Chee Eng, Prof Hong Hai, Lilian Low (author of *The M-Quotient*) and schoolmate Prof Heng Siam Heng; as well as loved ones like my sister Lian Bee and nephew Kong Eng, who were proud to point out that the author of several articles that had been routed to them on WhatsApp was in fact their brother and uncle respectively.

Even though I have spent hundreds of hours in writing this book, I am not going to ask anyone to pay for it, for I wish to leave this book as my gift to whoever treasures my thoughts on the hypocrisy of politicians we see day-in day-out now.

I was particularly inspired by several great entrepreneurs and great corporate leaders from whom I had the opportunity to learn what is the university of hard-knocks and “wisdom” – people like the late Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong, the late Tan Sri Lee Loy Seng, Engku Alias (now Tun) the late Tan Sri Rashdan, the late Tan Sri Tan Yuet Foh and his brother the late Datuk Tan Kim Hor, the late Tan Sri Frank W. K. Tsao, and the late Tan Sri Low Yow Chuan. And during the last couple of years, I had the rare opportunity of “rubbing shoulders” with great scholars like E/Prof Cham Tao Soon, E/Prof Robert Pho, and E/Prof Henri-Claude de Bettignies. They inspired me to think things differently.

There are also many other friends to thank, several of whom were classmates in school or university. They took the trouble to correct the mistakes I made in my blog, or give me constructive feedback, and, in no particular order, they are: seniors like Larry Tan, Chu Yat Sun, Chan Yew Min and Tan Nai Seng; university/schoolmates like Major (Rtd) Ng Chun Ho, Leong Yue Peng, Kwok Chu Chin, Lee King Kong, Ang Lay Chong, Anthony Nelson Ng, Chiam Soon Hock, Cedric Tan Chin Wah, Chee Kim Mang, Dan Kok See, Low Swee Seng, Chin Mee Poon, John and Amy Wan, Lim Huat Seng, Lim Seng Teck, Tan King Huat, Jason Woon, Tan Kheng Chiong and several others who prefer not to be mentioned; and great friends like Arthur

Law, Datuk Nik Kamaruddin, Azlan Hussain, Low Ai Yun, Darren Kee, David Lai, Dr Koh Hock Kiat, Fong Swee Keng, Jennifer Soars, Low Gee Soon, Ng Soon Kuan, Peter Wee, Sherman Mak, Yeow Teck Chai, Ng Wai Peng, Dr Wang Wenbin, Dr Tan Sew Hoey, Captain David Woon, Maurice de Alwis, Dr SS Chong, Dr Fok Kuk Fai, Ling Kah Seng, C. D. Liang, Vignesh Naidu, and Xiao Feng.

Finally, my special thanks to a benefactor who does not want to be named here. Even at the age of 73, I am still gainfully engaged. His thoughtfulness and generosity have made my wildest dreams come true!

Without Foo Chen Loong's master touches, this book would also be littered with typos and bad grammar.

FOR EYES ONLY; NO!

CONTENTS

PREFACE

Chapter 1

FROM AH Q TO PRESIDENT XI

Chapter 2

CHINA REEMERGES

Chapter 3

THE AMERICA I THOUGHT I KNEW...

Chapter 4

TRUMP'S AMERICA FIRST POLICY

Article:

[Sunday, April 26, 2020: A Bipolar World in the Making?](#)

Article:

[Sunday, August 2, 2020: The Naked Emperor, His Jesters and Hyenas](#)

Chapter 5

A FALSE DAWN

Article:

[Saturday, December 8, 2018: Taiwan Ditches Tsai Ing-Wen](#)

Article:

[Thursday, January 21, 2021: Trump's Send-off – A Pathetic Sight, and a New Dawn for the America-China Relationship?](#)

Article:

[Friday, September 3, 2021: Hope This Wounded Lion Is Not a Dangerous Animal](#)

CHAPTER 6

BIDEN AND HIS HOODLUMS

CHAPTER 7

THE MAKING OF AN EVIL EMPIRE

Article:

[Tuesday, August 4, 2020: The "Jakarta Method"](#)

Article:

[Saturday, August 14, 2021: The Biden Administration's Policy on China: McCarthyism 2.0?](#)

Article:

Tuesday, January 11, 2022: An America Gone Rogue

Article:

Tuesday, February 22, 2022: Pinocchio Joe

CHAPTER 8

PREPARING FOR A NEW *XIONG-NU*

Article:

Wednesday, August 4, 2021: The Dragon has been Awakened!

Article:

Friday, May 8, 2020: Only Resilience Will Prevail

Article:

Thursday, May 20, 2021: Taking up the West's Gauntlet

Article:

Saturday, August 21, 2021: Wisdom versus Might: Time to Try out the Dragon

Article:

Sunday, September 12, 2021: The Roots of Global Paranoia about the Awakened Dragon: The Western and Pro-West Politicians

Article:

Monday, November 8, 2021: From Trade Wars to COVID-19 to AUKUS

CHAPTER 9

DILEMMAS AND VULNERABILITIES

CHAPTER 10

WHY IS AMERICA LIKELY TO FAIL?

Article:

Monday, May 17, 2021: A Word for Biden

Article:

Thursday, June 3, 2021: Shooting Oneself in the Foot!

Article:

Monday, July 26, 2021: What do the Tokyo Olympics 2020 Say about America?

Article:

Tuesday, July 27, 2021: Hi Antony and Wendy, Why So Ill at Ease?

Article:

Thursday, August 26, 2021: Neo-Sun-zi's Crystal Ball

Article:

Tuesday, August 31, 2021: 21st Century Physiognomy

CHAPTER 11

NEW BALANCES IN GEOPOLITICS

CHAPTER 12

BUT HAVE THE CHINESE REALLY “ARRIVED”?

Article:

[Thursday, January 12, 2017: China and the Ballpoint](#)

Article

[Tuesday, December 25, 2018: The Key to Changing Perceptions about China: Seriously Train Its Tourist Guides!](#)

Article:

[Sunday, January 26, 2020: A Letter to CGTN](#)

Article:

[Friday, June 19, 2020: Some Loose Thoughts on China](#)

CHAPTER 13

THE BATTLES AHEAD

Article:

[Friday, July 30, 2021: China’s International PR Strategy, or the Lack of It?](#)

CHAPTER 14

CHINESE DIASPORAS, QUO VADIS?

Article:

[Thursday, August 19, 2021: Chinese Diasporas: In the Wake of the Dragon’s Beckoning](#)

Article:

[Sunday, April 11, 2021: Proud of Our Heritage, But Concerned over Kinsmen’s Safety](#)

CHAPTER 15

CRY FOR AMERICA?

EPILOGUE

CHINESE CONCEPT OF THINGS UNDER HEAVEN

A GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES IN THE BOOK

PREFACE

人不犯我、我不犯人，
人若犯我、我必犯人。
中国人民不惹事，也不怕事。



*He who doesn't disturb me, I don't disturb him;
He who wants to fight me, I will definitely fight back.
Chinese people do not create trouble for others, but they are not afraid of trouble.*

I believe the above was pronounced by **Wang Wenbin** [汪文斌] in one of China's Foreign Ministry's press conferences when he fielded a question from a foreign correspondent. It might also have been stated by his colleagues **Zhao Lijian** [赵立坚] or **Hua Chunying** [华春莹]. (They have been collectively branded by the West as China's wolf-warriors.) I am not sure. Anyway, it is not important who said it, but the message is a statement of China's foreign relations philosophy.

Wang is an ex-ambassador. I love to see him speak. His answers are always definitive, and he delivers them like a judge. Those who have raised "clever" or ill-intentioned questions must have felt very silly after they got the answers from Wang.

I have also fallen in love with Hua Chunying because of the way she tackles the foreign wordsmiths. The line that I particularly treasure from her is "Democracy is not Coca Cola, for it can't taste the same everywhere", or something to that effect. This simple logic itself should put the leaders of the so-called Free World to shame. And she smiles sweetly each time she fields questions, a rare gem in Chinese diplomacy.

The term wolf-warrior diplomacy was perhaps coined in the wake of Zhao Lijian's style of engaging foreign correspondents. He delivers answers with the most patronising or even condescending approach, as if to say, "You silly fellow, can't you just use your little brain to reflect on what's right or wrong?" Actually, I was never a fan of his, especially when he said, "We 坚决反对 (*jian-*

jue fan-dui, or “resolutely oppose”) the action by that *so-and-so* party.” To me, you are not in any debate, what is there to oppose, or who are you to oppose? I wish he would just say, “We totally reject *so-and-so*’s action”. Or just answer, “Rubbish!” Period.

But now I think many in the audience do deserve his contempt. 

China has awakened, or has been awakened, depending on context. But it is not taking the path the Western colonisers used to take. It treats every country as equal, not only in words but also in deeds. Its leadership’s wisdom and benevolence are clear; unfortunately, they are being seen by many as China’s screwdriver in its diplomatic toolbox.

Ethnically I am Chinese. Except for six years in a Chinese elementary school, my education was largely in English. From young, I already knew how damaging racial prejudices were to one’s ethnic self-esteem. My second oldest brother, the late **Yu Tee**, who was my *de facto* guardian, had to suffer the indignity of being discriminated when he joined the teaching service because of his “Chinese” qualifications. He was drawing roughly one-third of what an English-educated teacher would get, even though the latter needed only five years to complete his secondary education, versus my brother’s six years. It took many years before the disparity was corrected. Because of his own situation, he decided that I should have my secondary education in English. I was promptly offered a place in Muar High School’s “Remove A” class because of my Standard Six public examination results. Muar High School is one of the oldest colonial-era schools in the country. We would have to spend one year before we could join Form One proper. Four classes streamed in Muar High School’s feeder primary school. Our Remove A became Form One E. One year later, three classes from another school were streamed in. We were unceremoniously demoted to Form Two G! (My senior cousins were always curious that despite what my father had boasted to them about my “outstandingness”, I was always placed in “last” classes!) And the afternoon school’s supervisor, a certain Singh, would often condemn us for no good reason, “... especially those from Chinese schools, blah, blah, blah” when he felt like having someone to pick on. And because of the

“segregation”, *Hokkien* (a dialect widely spoken in the southern coastal regions – Changzhou, Quanzhou and Xiamen – of Fujian Province, where the majority of Chinese Muareans can trace their ancestral origin) was the *lingua franca* of the class. Shakespeare was dreaded and Jin Yong most loved. I quit the school after my Form Three examinations. Ironically, on a *per capita* basis, this Remove class was Number One in terms of university enrolment amongst that year’s batch from the school. Notwithstanding, in me, that trauma remains until today.

After the May 13 riots, Malaysia introduced an affirmative action policy to bring up the Malays. But being professionally qualified and not threatening to my Malay colleagues in workplaces, I did not quite feel the impact and was generally quite happy in my various career stations, even though I was quite a job hopper because of my restless nature. Maybe I was able to stay close to the top band of the food chain?

In my career, which spanned five decades, I had the opportunity to travel and meet people from many corners of the globe, some of whom were pretty senior in their stations in life. However, I did not get to visit China until the late 1980s, when it was just opening up. The China I saw then was drab but not uncultured. It reminded me of my native country (Malaya then) in the 1950s and 1960s. the Chinese there were respectful of overseas Chinese. We certainly had a better life than them. But you could already feel the country’s formidable collective intellect.

I made several visits to China after that. It was progressing rapidly. Tall buildings began to spring up, but I was still sceptical. Orderliness was absent. The spitting habit was common and toilets were atrocious. And I didn’t like the air I seemed to be breathing in many public places; there was a kind of odour that refused to go away. While I generally found the people I met not unpleasant, the general level of etiquette I witnessed was certainly not to my liking. Being the “can’t tolerate nonsense” type, I used to reprimand, to the dismay of my wife, people when I saw them behaving inappropriately. Fortunately, most took my rebuke well. Maybe I looked like Justice **Bao Zheng** to them!

In the 2010s, I began to see more rapid transformations. By the time Xi Jinping took over, I was convinced that the true China had returned. It is now a country even a yellow banana like me can be proud of. So, when Joe Biden is still voicing his concern (certainly fake, of course!) about China's human rights, I think it is time for me to do my part to help tear down Western politicians' hypocrisy. And the straw that broke the camel's back was when he said to the effect that under his watch, he would never allow China to be America's equal. Hence this mission.

However, for an amateur like me, writing a book or even an article on contemporary issues is greatly beset by this difficulty: no sooner have you finished your manuscript, you might already have been overtaken by new developments rendering your observations obsolete.

I have been blogging from time to time. Although much of what I have written may already be out-of-date or of little interest, I have decided to include many of these pieces here – partly to fatten the book and partly to show how I have evolved on issues over time. I will attempt to explain their relevance in the context of my pursuit here.

Feel free to disagree!

A Reality...

When China was weak, Chinese in foreign lands could only be buried in third class sites...

"The 1850's gold rush saw many Chinese diggers converge on Beechworth seeking their fortune. At one time, some 7,000 out of the town's total population of 30-40,000 were Chinese. Colonial prejudice meant that the Chinese were not allowed to live in Beechworth and had large camps on the outskirts of town. There were many additional controls, enforced regulations and licence checks against the Chinese miners with anti-Chinese sentiment widespread during the Gold Rush.

The town had a permanent Chinese camp, temple, shops and burial ground with the distinctive burning towers which can still be seen today at the Beechworth Cemetery where some 2000 Chinese were buried. The Burning Towers at the Beechworth Cemetery were built in 1857, and were used by relatives and friends for burning paper money in memory of the dead. The shrine in front of the Burning Towers was not built until 1883-84."

After a friend Lau Chee Hong alerted me of the existence of a Chinese burial ground in Beechworth, I made it a point to take a detour to pay it a visit on my way back from Canberra to Melbourne recently. Beechworth is about 200 km north-east of Melbourne.

I have visited several similar legacies elsewhere. And invariably, the Chinese plots in western countries are always tucked in the lesser corners of public cemeteries, the Beechworth is a case in point. Fortunately, it is better preserved than others.



1850s was a dreadful time in China. It was ruled by by Qing 清 (1644-1912) where Han Chinese were second-class citizens in their own land. (The other non-Han dynasty was Yuan [元, 1271-1368 AD]). Qing was dealt a big blow by the British in the First Opium War and in the aftermath, unrests sprang up. The Taiping Rebellion began to launch insurgencies in many parts of China. There were famines everywhere and many Chinese set out to earn a living overseas, only to die with hopes unfulfilled.

Might this not happen again?

The “China-is-evil” rhetoric by Western and pro-West (some of whom are ironically Chinese ethnically!) politicians and journalists is increasingly

deafening. Now we often read about Chinese-looking Asians being deliberately targeted in Western societies for abuse. Several victims have lost their lives. Would such moulded prejudices perpetuate if China is ultimately acknowledged as an equal to the US? (And a country whose government is indeed more responsible to the world than the US?)

FOR EYES ONLY; NOT FOR SALE

CHAPTER 1

FROM AH Q TO PRESIDENT XI

Many should have heard of ***The True Story of Ah Q*** [阿 Q 正传] written by **Lu Xun**¹ [鲁迅] (1881-1936), perhaps the greatest awakener of a self-destructive China in the first half of the 20th century. But how can I juxtapose someone like Ah Q and President **Xi Jinping** [习近平] in the same breath?

Readers may wonder why I have used Ah Q here instead of Mr Q as in the title of this book. Maybe this requires some explanation. When I alerted friends that I was ready with the manuscript for this book, one of them immediately responded to express his unhappiness to see that I had chosen to call this ridiculous Q character “Mister”. “He doesn’t deserve it!”, he seemed to scream. I could understand his protest. Doesn’t the letter Q say a lot about this character? Q amply caricaturises a head that wears a pigtail! The Century of Humiliation! (But there is really more to it than meets the eye on “Ah” as a component of given names in Chineseness. It can be endearing, like my older folks would always call me “Ah Bok” (Book is not Chinese per se; rather an Anglified version of Bok when my father registered my birth.) (Maybe President Xi has been called Ah Ping by his elders?) And in this Lu Xun context, it might simply mean “that Q fellow”. Enough said.

The novella (1921/22) is about a character called Ah Q, a delusional, illiterate peasant, who, devoid of any certain livelihood or occupation, was symptomatic of the Chinese national character of his time. Ah Q is a bully to the less fortunate but fearful of those who are above him in rank, strength, or power. He persuades himself mentally that he is spiritually "superior" to his oppressors even as he succumbs to their tyranny and suppression.

¹ Lu Xun (real name Zhou Shuren, 1881-1936) writing in vernacular Chinese, was born in Shaoxing, Zhejiang. Lu went to medical school in Japan but later dropped out. He worked for several years teaching at local secondary schools and colleges before finally finding a job at the Ministry of Education. After the 1919 May Fourth Movement, Lu Xun’s writing began to exert substantial influence on Chinese literature and popular culture. Mao Zedong is said to have been a lifelong admirer of Lu Xun’s writing. Lu Xun never joined the Communist Party of China.

Lu was exasperated by the then Chineseness he saw. China was in a warlord era (1916-1928). Everything went by might. Poverty was the order of the day, and the society was collapsing. Everything was pathetic. China was indeed a basket case. Western missionaries had a field day. And Japan was waiting to pounce.

When Xi became China's president in 2013, the country had already cemented its place as the second largest economy in the world. Xi could continue to grow China in the manner his predecessors had done. But Xi had a greater vision for the country, which he called the **Chinese Dream** [中国梦, *Zhong-guo Meng*] – an attempt to rejuvenate China, to something like the *Renaissance* in Europe between the 14th and the 17th centuries. Xi's Chinese Dream was no sloganeering. His **China 2025** mission is being pursued with such a zeal that it defies many odds. Today, his policy has alleviated some 100 million Chinese from poverty. Its advances in science and technology have frightened the West, and within a couple of months, it was able to contain a pandemic which is still causing havoc in many parts of the world, particularly in the US.

Xi is now held by many as a kind of sage ruler that only appears in Chinese history once in a couple of centuries. (However, I see that the Chinese government machinery, especially on its CCTV news channels, is now trying to “institutionalise” his thoughts and policies the way they did with **Mao Zedong** [毛泽东] before! My opinion is that this cult creation may do more harm than good to Xi's legacy.)

Ah Q personified the sickest part of China in its modern history. Xi, on the other hand, represents a hope. In the wake of the phobic West's onslaught, even an ethnic overseas Chinese like me is also plagued by a sense of an inferior complex by virtue of the prejudices we have long been subjected to. We also want to be treated as EQUAL by all.

This is how I propose to write about China's arduous journey to earn its rightful place – the evolution of a country that was generally considered backward, filthy and what-have-you, to a country that is now held in paranoia by the most powerful nation on Earth, namely, the United States of America.

I am totally sick of the hypocrisy of many Western leaders now. I am determined to help tear down their mask, in a factual and civil manner, of course. I have many friends in the Western world. I certainly owe them no apology in writing this book.

What's or Where's China's Rightful Place?

The title of this book reads: *China's arduous journey to earn its place...*

What's that place I am talking about?

The Chinese regard **Huang-di** [黃帝], or the Yellow Emperor, as the founding father of their civilisation. Huang-di is said to have reigned from 2698 to 2598 BC. China was basically an agrarian society, or a rice culture. Militarily, it was quite uneventful until the latter years of **Zhou** [周, 1046-771 BC] and its succeeding mini-dynasties and fiefdoms. Territorial wars were fiercely fought by the lords or pretenders during the **Warring States** and the **Three Kingdoms** periods [战国時代, *Zhan-guo Shi-dai* c. 475-221 BC and 三国時代, *San-guo Shi-dai* 220-280 AD respectively]. Other than that, much of China was trying to defend itself against the marauding tribes from the north, hence the construction of the Great Wall by the “first” emperor of a “unified” China then – **Qin-Shihuang** [秦始皇, 220-206 BC]. Even during **Ming** [明, 1368-1644], when it had the capability to subjugate the whole of Southeast Asia, it acted like Father Christmas, showering gifts to countries as long as they recognised the **Great Ming** as their overlord, albeit only in form. Less discerning people may argue that China had in fact threatened Eastern

Europe and tried to invade Japan during the 1200s. But that China was **Yuan** [元, 1271-1368 AD] China, a China that was ruled by the Mongols.

But the informed world would know that China until about two hundred years or so ago had always been a country that was rich in culture and philosophy, advanced in science and technology, but benign or even benevolent in handling its external relations. But it loved to keep to itself.

A large part of this cultural mindset has been shaped by its belief in *yin guo* [因果], or “cause-consequences”. *Yin guo* is largely a Buddhist-Daoist-Confucian concept somewhat similar to sayings like “you reap what you sow” or “what goes around comes around”, except it also includes an element of divine punishment in its core, like the Hindu concept of *karma*. It is small wonder that people who have become wealthy through ill-gotten gains would make every attempt to redeem themselves, lest they court the wrath of Heaven and be severely punished in their afterlife. Decent Chinese would therefore always refrain from trying to do harm onto others.

Xi thinks China has finally arrived, so do most of us of Chinese descent.

Xi made a speech some years ago declaring that it was time for China to be able to look at the rest of the world “eye-to-eye” [平视, *ping shi*], or at the same eye level. It simply means that you, whoever or whatever you are, have to treat us Chinese as equals.

And that's it. China just wants the world to treat it as EQUAL, no more and no less. It is not interested in exporting its form of governance, or ideology; it just wants to make its people live a better tomorrow.

Is that a tall order for the West, especially the Anglo-Saxons to accept? And you call it a threat to the world?

Yes, you do, of course. All because you have become so paranoid and so fearful of truth.

The Root of the Prejudice

Qianlong [乾隆, 1711-99] has always been romanticised as one of the most cultured rulers of the Qing dynasty. Qianlong had confined all foreign maritime trades to Guangzhou. He was wary that unrestricted foreign access would do harm to the Chinese society and therefore even decreed that no Chinese subjects were permitted to teach the Chinese language to foreigners. The British had a huge appetite for Chinese tea (along with porcelain and silk) and the East India Company had to pay for them in silver. But they were running out of silver. They had a solution: opium! In 1793 **George Macartney** was dispatched to China. The British had hoped he could persuade China to open new ports to them and allow them to establish an embassy in Beijing. Qianlong rejected both the requests and the British went back empty-handed. Nonetheless, they were able to learn enough about the country for them to make a nasty comeback.

Because of its inward-looking policy and misplaced confidence, China soon declined, and declined fast. In no time, China was totally at the mercy of the Western powers and also, of all countries, Japan.

The sign below was put up by the British in Shanghai's Huangpu Park during the foreign concessionaires' heyday in China. **NO DOGS AND CHINESE ALLOWED**. Look at how they despised the Chinese! It is said that the ban was rigidly enforced at least for the first three decades of the 20th century.



How could the Chinese in the eyes of the West have degenerated into such a “dog-equivalent” state? We might have high cheek bones and some of us

might have more pronounced slit-like eyes, but we as a race are certainly not uglier than most of the rest in the world. Many of our women are great beauties; Westerners love to “tackle” them! And four great inventions that have impacted the world greatly are also credited to the Chinese: (1) the compass around 200 BC, during the Han dynasty; (2) paper, by the Han court official **Cai Lun** [蔡伦] in 105 AD; (3) gunpowder probably in 142 AD during the Eastern Han dynasty; and (4) movable-type printing by **Bi Sheng** [毕昇] around 1040 AD during the Song dynasty. (Much of Europe between the 5th and 10th centuries AD was in the Dark Ages, and nobody had heard of the Americas then!)

China was already a unified nation under Qin-*Shihuang* [秦始皇] who ruled as the first emperor of the Qin [秦] dynasty. But the empire came under constant attack by the nomadic tribes in the north. He embarked on a monumental project, that is, the construction of the Great Wall.

China was largely an insular country. It considered itself the “centre” of the world. Anything beyond China’s borders was deemed uncivilised or barbaric [野蛮 *ye-man*, 夷 *yi*, 蕃 *fan*] – until they discovered Buddhism, even though their cosmology – the **Ru** [儒] and **Dao** [道] schools of philosophies, the spiritual beliefs and superstitions and so on – had long shaped their culture. **Sui-Tang** [隋, 唐] was the golden era of Buddhism, and from China, it spread to Korea and Japan.

Every Chinese worthy of his upbringing was always thinking of becoming a bureaucrat [官 *guan*] through the pursuit scholarship [士 *shi*]. Such attainments would bring great honour to the family and the community. A military career was usually a lesser choice, for one might end up in one of the remote and hostile corners of the vast Chinese empire, far away from loved ones and running the risk of getting killed by the barbarians.

Because of its defensive stance, China's contribution to the science and technology of weaponry has been quite insignificant, hence its constant vulnerability dynasty after dynasty. (Their gunpowder was for celebrations!)

China was ruled by non-Hans for two periods. The first was after Song [宋, 960-1279], which some have described as the era of the world's first industrial revolution. It was militarily weak and plagued by corrupted officials towards the end of the dynasty. The Mongols saw the opportunity and swept across China to establish the Yuan dynasty. The second was during the 1600s, when the Manchus saw the void and literally walked into China. Didn't the Portuguese do the same thing in Macao? History tends to repeat itself – when leaders are corrupt or inept.

The world first came to fancy China after Marco Polo's sojourn in China – again, as you can guess, because of its silk, tea and porcelain.

There was another period of China going beyond its borders. The Ming under Admiral (actually, a military officer-eunuch) **Zheng He** [郑和] made many voyages to the south seas, to as far as Africa. His armadas were said to be the most advanced of the time. (British author **Gavin Menzies** claimed an even more fantastic feat – saying Zheng's fleet actually reached America and even Australia. I have difficulty accepting his contentions and arguments, though.)

The Chinese under Qing was a passive lot, at least for some three hundred years of the Manchu rule. There were several attempted uprisings, the most famous (or infamous?) of which was the **Taiping Rebellion** [太平天國之亂, *Tai-Píng Tian-guo zhi Luan*, 1850-1864]. By then Christianity had already gained a good foothold in China. Its leader **Hong Xiu-Quan** [洪秀全] even styled himself the younger brother of Jesus Christ. Anti-foreign sentiment led to the terrorising rounds meted out to foreigners by government-supported boxers (the **Boxer Rebellion** 义和团运动, *Yi-He-Tuan Yun-dong*, 1899-1901).

These Chinese fighters were deemed crude savages in the eyes of the West. Subsequent direct foreign intervention dealt a crippling blow to the Manchu rule.

Two palace-friendly reformers **Kang You-Wei** [康有為] and his disciple **Liang Qi-Chao** [梁啟超] tried hard to introduce reforms – primarily based on the Japanese model – through the then-reigning emperor – but their efforts were thwarted by the very conservative dowager empress. **Sun Yat-sen** [孫逸仙], who had the opportunity to experience the American political system during his Hawaiian stay first-hand, was more revolutionary in his advocacy. He wanted China to become a modern republic. He was well supported by Chinese all over the world. (Unfortunately, he was less successful with the foreign governments which he had tried hard to court, particularly the Japanese, British and American.) He attempted to overthrow the Qing court; unfortunately, Sun was not an effective organiser and had to depend on others to execute several of his not too well-conceived plans, which resulted in many people being sacrificed in the process. Nonetheless, he did help make China a republic and is generally revered as the founder of modern China. He was frustrated many a time by ambitious ex-imperial generals-turned warlords like **Yuan Shi-Kai** [袁世凱]. (Yuan had the audacity to declare himself emperor, but only for a few months.) Warlord years followed, and soon after that China was overrun by Japan.

The world had also begun to cultivate a twisted view about China – rural, exotic, but extremely poor; men with pigtailed and women with feet ridiculously distorted from years of forced binding – through the writings of **Pearl S. Buck**. Buck followed her missionary father to China in 1934 and lived there for some 42 years. She was fond of China, but her portrayal of the China then was that of a pitiful mess whose people were constantly hungry and in need of help, which was a fact.

The Chinese could not get their act together even when they were fighting a war with the Japanese. **Chiang Kai-Shek's** [蒋介石] Kuomintang and Mao's Communist Party were vying for the people's support for legitimacy. (Chiang's regime was generally regarded as corrupt and ineffective.) The atrocities committed by the Japanese are well-documented; unfortunately, until today Japan just cannot bring itself to show remorse. Readers may want to read **Iris Chang's *The Rape of Nanking*** to see the type of cruelty Military Japan was capable of inflicting. And **Emperor Hirohito** was certainly not unguilty of the crimes committed by his armies.

Many were plagued by abject poverty and began to seek a new life in **Nanyang** [南洋], the Southern Ocean during this period.

The period from the **First Opium War** (1839-1842) to the fall of China to Japan marked the saddest part of the history of China as a nation and the Chinese as a people. Those 100 years were the century of humiliation for all Chinese. And it was during this period that the West and Japan cultivated the taste of extreme contempt for China and the Chinese – for the outlandish pigtailed men wore, for their cluelessness, for the filth of its rural poor, for the *Ah Q* spirit of its sub-urban lot, for their corruption and ever-readiness to sell out, for the exploitation by the rich of the poor, for their warlords' loud uniforms, for their gambling and opium dens and prostitution joints, for their soldiers' cowardice, and for their inability to get their act together. And what-have-you! Everything was ugly about China during this period.

Mao finally made China stand up! But the damage had been done.

Pity, Disenchantment, and Reproach

In late 1945 **President Harry Truman** dispatched **General George Marshall** as his special envoy to China to try to bring Chiang and Mao together to form a non-Communist unity government that he hoped would

serve as the bulwark against the encroachment of the Soviet Union. Marshall had a decent agenda; he wanted to help rebuild China, like what he had done for Germany. ***But no way!*** Chiang had by then already lost his “mandate of heaven”. The failure of the Marshall mission signaled the renewal of the Chinese Civil war. But it didn’t take long for Mao to seize control of the country and declare the inauguration of the People’s Republic of China.

As we all know, China soon entered the Korean War (1950-53) and held the Americans at bay. This led directly to **General Douglas MacArthur** blaming Marshall for the “loss” of China. China became an enemy, and Japan was courted to be the “example” of American benevolence and tutelage instead.

Readers may still remember **ANZUS**. It was a vehicle to fight Communism. The treaty was signed in 1951 by Australia, New Zealand and the US, hence the acronym, to cooperate on military matters in the Pacific, which formed part of their collective response to the threat of Communism, aka China, there. (We all know it is now being replaced by **AUKUS**. Unfortunately for the US, the UK and Australia, New Zealand under Prime Minister **Jacinda Ardern** is not an ever-willing party to such a dubious cause.)

Readers may also remember **SEATO** – the **Southeast Asia Treaty Organization** – which was formed in 1954. Again, it was meant to check Communist China in Southeast Asia. It was developed by American diplomat and Soviet expert **George Kennan** and driven by **John Foster Dulles**, **President Dwight Eisenhower’s** Secretary of State. The members were the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, France, Pakistan and – of course, the mastermind - the US. Although SEATO had no joint commands with standing forces, the US membership in the SEATO alliance served as the platform for a large-scale military intervention in the region during the **Vietnam War** (1955-1975). As it was aimed at containing an imaginary enemy, sure enough, SEATO was dissolved in 1977 without much fanfare.

There was no more formal relationship between China and the US until **Richard Nixon** came around. (The two sides did meet at the ambassadorial level from time to time, first in Geneva and later in Warsaw.) In the meantime, to the dismay of overseas Chinese, China went through the **Great Leap Forward** and the **Cultural Revolution** campaigns. Mao was seen as a revolutionary radical. Fortunately, he had a prime minister who was seen as the sane figure in China – the legendary **Zhou Enlai** [周恩来]. Otherwise, everything was madness to overseas Chinese like me.

Nixon and **Henry Kissinger** helped bring China to join the world. And China took its place in the United Nations. China looked harmless and everybody was happy to accommodate it diplomatically or otherwise.

FOR EYES ONLY; NO

CHAPTER 2

CHINA REEMERGES

Deng Xiao-Ping [邓小平] went through a hard time during the Cultural Revolution. Fortunately, he was rehabilitated to lead China. He is the one who famously said it did not matter whether the cat was white or black, all he wanted was that the cat must be able to catch mice. His visits to the US and Singapore convinced him that he needed to shake China up. The then-prime minister **Zhu Rong-Ji** [朱镕基] finally succeeded in getting China to join the **World Trade Organization**, even though the US under **President Bill Clinton** was not too welcoming about this. The Chinese economy exploded. But China was producing largely low- and middle-end goods for the world.

Despite the economy's apparent success, I suspect Xi Jinping was very concerned that China would fall into the “middle-class” trap. This fear must have prompted him to initiate, in 2015, the ***Made in China 2025*** plan. His “***Chinese Dream***” defines ten core industries, such as robotics, power engineering, and next generation IT, in which China aims to achieve breakthroughs and create globally competitive companies. Nothing was secretive about his intention; he openly spoke about it. But he also knew that no one country could produce everything by itself and therefore there must be areas of complementarity in a world that was moving fast towards globalisation. A case in point is the semiconductor industry, where he was happy for China to excel in chip design and leave the foundry work to others. (This later proved to be a miscalculation when the US became determined to destroy China technologically. What can be more effective than choking off its huge appetite for advanced chips?)

Alas, **Donald Trump** became the President of the United States of America! And he could not stand his predecessor **Barack Obama**! Everything the latter did must be dismantled! *He is **Black** and a Muslim!* (A false accusation on the latter!)

Sudden Realisation, and the Screw Tightens...

At the beginning, like many Americans, Trump thought China was an easy target – a mediocre country that was quite incapable of doing anything original. But a state visit to China in November 2017 opened his eyes. What he saw in China must have shocked him to the core.

Huawei phones overtook **Apple** in 2017; Trump began to initiate a trade war with China in January 2018 and later, on 6th December, he instigated the Canadian government to arrest **Meng Wanzhou**. Huawei was said to have the most advanced 5G technology then. It was swiftly placed under America's **Security Entity List**. Even then, this did not stop Huawei from becoming the top-selling phone in the world. And at that time countries like the UK also did not rule out the use of Huawei in its 5G rollout.

Trump failed to get re-elected. There was hope that **Joe Biden** would be a more reasonable man to handle the relationship. But it is this very Biden who would go on to land the cruellest blow on China – by denying it access to any chip-making technology, especially the procurement of foundry equipment from monopolies like **ASML**. This would retard China by at least a couple of years. And this man is completely capable of saying one thing in front of Xi only to do the exact opposite the next day. (I just wonder why Xi bothers to take his calls now. Even several Arab leaders are not doing it lately.)

China could NO longer trust America!

FOR

CHAPTER 3

THE AMERICA I THOUGHT I KNEW...

I first got to visit the US in the 1980s – on a company trip to New York in winter. The road was icy. I promptly slipped and landed on my butt the first time I ventured out of an art deco hotel which overlooked Central Park. I was awed by all the skyscrapers in Manhattan. I booked to go up the Empire Tower; unfortunately, the tour had to be cancelled because the weather was bad. I had to make a couple of trips to the US when I was with the holding company of the **Genting Group**. The group was trying to build a mini-China just across from Disneyland, and China was dead against it and therefore did everything to kill it. Genting was also helping the **Pequots** to build a gaming complex in their “sovereign” land near Ledyard, Connecticut. My job required me to visit several cities – Los Angeles, Orlando, New York and Dallas, among others. I was very interested in MBA stuff those days. As I was an admirer of management gurus like **Peter Drucker**, **Michael Porter**, **Tom Peters**, **Rosabeth Kanter** and several others, and a regular reader of *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Fortune*, and *Forbes*, everything about America’s businesses excited me. I learned about Reaganomics, Milton Friedman’s Monetarist School of Economics, and the like. They were the knowledge pool of my references and pseudo-academic pursuits. (I was a part-time course leader at the **Malaysian Institute of Management**, helping the institute to conduct some diploma and MBA programmes.)

I was so pro-America that when my nephew got a place in an American university, I advised him, “Sam, go there and make good. It is a land of countless opportunities.” Sam now lives in Houston with his wife and two children. He works for a huge fertiliser company owned by a China SOE. He is now anxious about his children’s future and wants to return to Asia to work. However, his wife is reluctantly to relocate. Familiarity, familiarity, familiarity.

When **George W. Bush** beat **Al Gore** to become the 43rd President, I began to harbour a dislike for the American politicians, especially his deputy **Dick**

Cheney and Defence Secretary **Donald Rumsfeld**. But **Colin Powell** was still a hero to me. (I loved his autobiography.) America had my sympathy when the 9/11 Terror struck. To me, these radicals had to be punished. I had no difficulty in accepting America's invasion of Afghanistan because to me the Taliban were such a cruel and primitive lot. But his going into Iraq on the pretext that they had weapons of mass destruction was totally disingenuous to me, even though I was also not a fan of Saddam Hussein.

When Barack Obama won the presidency, I thought greatness would return to America. I had read his earlier books. He was such a humble and thoughtful man, a character that I could relate to easily. *Mei-guo* [美国] was true to the name the Chinese gave it: **the** beautiful country!

Then the Neo-Cons struck. They never gave Obama a chance, largely, I believe, because he was Black. And Obama also got sucked in by the system. Nonetheless, he still had my great admiration. If not for the unrelenting attacks and sabotages by the Neo-Cons, Obama would probably have left his mark as one of the greatest American presidents. And I believe America would not have degenerated in the manner we are seeing now.

Although Obama was already acutely aware of China's reemergence, he did not adopt a "*you die, or I die*" policy towards China. I reckon Obama has a much higher IQ and EQ and WQ (wisdom quotient, my own creation!) than his successors. He certainly knew the Asian culture well, having lived with his mother in Jakarta during some of his formative years. His half-brother Mark Ndesandjo holds degrees in physics from Brown and Stanford, and now lives with his Chinese wife in Shenzhen. His brother-in-law, Konrad Ng has had roots in Malaysia. Konrad's father was born in Sandakan and his mother in Kudat. They migrated to Canada and Konrad was born there. Obama's half-sister is Maya Soetoro, daughter of an Indonesian businessman.



Many have contended that America has had ill intentions towards China for a long, long time. I do not quite buy that kind of conspiracy theory. (Maybe their think-tanks do; after all, they have to justify their existence with fear-mongering scenarios.) Yes, in the 1950s, it began all out to stop China from spreading its Communist ideology to Southeast Asia, under the so-called *Domino* belief. But **President Lyndon Johnson** handled the Vietnam War badly. The fall of Saigon and America's ignominious retreat from Vietnam put paid to that ambition. Nixon became President. He thought it was time for the US to re-engage China.

A honeymoon period followed.

Subsequent presidents like **Gerald Ford** and **Jimmy Carter** were benign in their relationship with China, and **Ronald Reagan** and **George H. W. Bush** were consumed by different priorities that presented themselves at the tail end of the Cold War and the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern Europe. **Bill Clinton** saw the breakup of the Balkans. Many believe the bombing of the Chinese embassy was not an accident but an act intentionally carried out to intimidate China. Yes and no, to me. Chinese anger did arouse America's awareness that the country was not a push-over. George W. Bush was totally bogged down by the two wars he initiated – Afghan and Iraqi – after the September 11th Terror. He had no time to worry about China.

Yes, America was aloof to China, but it did not harbour any serious military designs towards the country – until Trump became President. Otherwise, it

would not have allowed the economic, technological and military gap to be narrowed so much during the period concerned.

FOR EYES ONLY; NOT FOR SALE

CHAPTER 4

TRUMP'S AMERICA FIRST POLICY

I began to harbour a strong contempt for America's leaders after Donald Trump became President. How could a great country vote in such a charlatan? To me, he was the fabled emperor who did not know that he had no clothes on! He was also surrounding himself with a herd of nincompoops. And the bunch of Neo-Con Republican senators and congressmen, *yuck!*

And soon, he was initiating a trade war with China...

We are entering a world that is going to be basically caught between two systems – America's and one that is surely and slowly emerging from China – a people-focused government practising a form of capitalism that is strongly guided by a strong central authority. This is in fact not new. Singapore under **Lee Kuan Yew** resembled that. It can be easily understood and accepted by a society that has long been influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism and some idealistic aspects of Communism or Socialism.

But China is not interested in “exporting” its system to any country. It says theirs is unique to its history, culture and geography. But the West will not buy this fact. It now takes every opportunity to demonise China and its every move. The West has the global media as its weapon, and it is all mighty. Unfortunately, China does not seem to have the “gift” of the gab to neutralize them. And, ironically, many who have the “gift” to whack China are ethnically Chinese! Fortunately, there are also non-Chinese who are prepared to speak up. Below is an article of my lament on this matter. Take serious note, China!

Sunday, April 26, 2020

A Bipolar World in the Making?

China's rise has created a great deal of adverse feelings towards China by many in the Western world, particularly in the US, the UK and Australia. The outbreak of COVID-19 has intensified the sentiment. In the US, you have people from both sides of the political divide fighting head over

heels to outdo one another to bash or demonise China at every opportunity, regardless of truth. The very notable ones in politics are Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senator Marco Rubio, not to mention the very POTUS himself. In Australia you have Peter Dutton. There are also many in the UK, largely from the Conservative Party, and Europe. The *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and my once must-read *The Economist* are constantly churning out China-bashing articles, so are the Fairfax presses in Australia. John Garnaut is the standard bearer there. And from the TV channels, you have CNN, Sky News, Fox News, BBC and Al Jazeera to throw stones. BBC's Tim Sebastian and Stephen Sackur are the obvious ones. Of course, we know some are controlled by billionaire China-hating puppeteers like Rupert Murdoch and George Soros. And very sadly, many of the people behind the articles or news coverage are ethnic Chinese! Amy Qin of the *New York Times* is a case in point, so are a couple of others in Al Jazeera.

Sure, sometimes China has been less forthcoming in many things. But they have their reasons which can only be appreciated by people who understand Confucianism. But by adopting a defensive posture, they allow these attack dogs to pounce even harder. And with their ability to reach readers and audiences all over the world, the Western media shape opinions.

You cannot change the West's prejudice about China and the Chinese unless we act with greater dignity and exemplariness. We must beat them at their game; no amount of self-thumping can help. It is time for China to learn how to manage media relationships. Apart from Liu Xin and Zou Yue and a couple of others, most of CGTN's presenters and reporters are not quite equipped to take on the world. Their narration can hurt your ears! (I hate to hear Tian Wei's voice!) Since CGTN is an English language channel, they should learn from Al Jazeera or NHK or KBS. Hire the best anchors and presenters!

Unfortunately, most of the guest commentators they bring in to speak are also unable to articulate their views well. They tend to begin their sentences with unnecessary baggage like "I think, you know". And their arguments or explanations can be quite incoherent, though we know many are great thinkers and scholars. They are several outstanding ones, though. Einar Tangen and Victor Gao are such examples. I still remember watching with great delight how Victor Gao literally tore Tim Sebastian into pieces during one of the Hard Talks the latter hosted.



Left: CGTN host Liu Xin; Right: No-nonsense Einer Tangen.



Dr David Nabarro.

I hate to see Stephen Sackur, another anchor in BBC's Hard Talk series. I happened to tune into one of his programmes earlier this week. I would usually change channel after seeing who his guest was. But this time, I had a pleasant surprise and watched until the end. His guest of the day was the WHO's Special Envoy Dr David Nabarro. Sackur's biases and ill-intention towards China – centering on his accusation of China's lack of transparency when the coronavirus first broke out and China's revision of the fatality figures – were completely neutralised by Dr Nabarro, who was so cool and objective. Sackur looked very ill-prepared. China should have people like Dr Nabarro. It does not have to be defensive; just let the facts and figures speak for themselves.



Left: *The attack dog*; Right: *Some sanity, Daniel Dumbrill of Canada.*

I had plenty of time to watch podcasts that are being circulated in WhatsApp during this lockdown period. I was particularly impressed by some from these two fake news slayers: Nathan Rich and Daniel Dumbrill are more effective than China's CGTN!

Many friends must also be following the posers and answers in Quora. There are many anti-China/Chinese rabble rousers there. But it is heartening to see many have taken pains to explain and clarify. Unfortunately, prejudices are so deep-rooted, and they are thought to be agents of China!

I am a Malaysian Chinese and because of social and economic realities, I was largely educated in English, and my wife and I speak English at home and with our children and grandchildren. (None of them can handle Mandarin or any of the dialects.) But we are proud of our Confucian upbringing. There are both merits and demerits in both the West's insistence on liberal democracy and the East's emphasis on strong governance. There can be cross-fertilisation, and not necessarily a "West-versus-East" false binary that is being championed by many in the West now.

The bipolar world that may result because of the West's fear of China's rise is indeed disturbing!

As recently as 2020, China seemed to be swimming alone in a huge, dangerous ocean – somewhere like the waters near Darwin – where there are great whites, bull sharks and salt-water crocodiles waiting to zoom in anytime for a kill, and besides these, also all sorts of carnivorous fish and creatures looking for prey. On top of that, China had had haters who were once-Chinese themselves.

In the following article, I write about the threats China is facing, and its apparent lack of international PR skills to handle distorted images coming out of situations such as the Hong Kong riots. I take the liberty to reproduce an article by a Chinese Canadian Philip Yeung, who speaks so passionately about China's predicaments.

Fortunately, things have changed quite dramatically. Many world leaders have wised up to all the fake and ill-intentioned news that is being churned out to demonise China. Even the Muslim countries are not buying the genocide and forced labour stories in Xinjiang.

Sunday, August 2, 2020

The Naked Emperor, His Jesters, and Hyenas

The 2020 American presidential election is less than 100 days away. As Donald Trump continues to wreak his frustrations and incompetence on China, I see the whole world's attitude towards China has panned into the following streams:

1. The "Fear China's Growth" World

These are the policy-makers and opinion influencers in the Five Eyes (the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and to a lesser extent New Zealand), Japan, India and Vietnam.

In the case of the Five Eyes, the hardline stance from the US is obvious, but why the UK, Canada and Australia?

The UK's handling of the pandemic has demonstrated abundantly the shallowness of Boris Johnson's leadership. His flip-flop on China in general and Huawei in particular speaks volumes of his vulnerability to the influence of his Cabinet. It is no joking matter that many Indians are telling the world now they are ruling the UK. And we know Indians all over the world are generally not friendly to Chinese, even those outside China. Their BBC and *The Economist*, two of the standard bearers of British world-class pretensions, have also thrown away journalistic principles and resorted to badmouthing China. Canada's Trudeau is a lightweight in international politics. He has also demonstrated his inability to stand up on issues against the wishes of the US government. As for Australia, most of the politicians and journalists there are really a bunch of American bootlickers. They do have enlightened political leaders like Daniel Andrews, business leaders like Andrew Forrest, and many world-renowned academics who understand the true China.

Historically, India has always been a source of spiritual enlightenment to the Chinese. Both countries were friendly to each other during the Non-Aligned Movement days – until they fought a border war! Now many Indians harbour a cultural and intellectual complex and most have this at heart: anything good about China or Chinese is bad news for us. If both countries could work together, Asia would be calling the shots in the world.

2. The “Chinese but Devoid of Chinese-ness” World

These are mainly Taiwan-born Chinese and Hongkongers who will do the Five Eyes’ bidding. They love to demonise China even without prompting from the Five Eyes. They deserve my utmost contempt.

3. The “Happy to Live/Compete with China on Equal Terms” World

I would include leaders in the developed world such as Germany and some other European countries and Korea.

4. The “China-Friendly” World

Here the obvious parties are Russia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, several member states of ASEAN and the countries in Central and West Asia, Africa and Latin America. But there also lie some anti-China currents amongst their citizenries, especially in countries like Russia and Iran.

5. The “Play Safe” World

Singapore is a case in point – by virtue of its role in international trade and geographical position. It cannot afford to be seen to be too friendly to China, when about 70% of its population is ethnically Chinese. Its decision to opt for Nokia-Ericsson for its 5G roll-out clearly demonstrates this reality. Maybe it is the best?

6. The “China Ambivalent” World

China is too far from them; they are only interested in trades with China. The countries in this category are generally in Latin America and Africa.

I read Quora on a regular basis. The questions and answers in Quora are very revealing about world opinions on China and the Chinese. I would say about 70% of the question posers are very ignorant about China and Chinese. Many are actually from America, a country where knowledge and information are so readily available and yet a large percentage of its people hardly think or read things. To these people, China means the Communist Party of China. To them, CPC is evil, running a polluted country, always trying to steal intellectual property from the West, bent on aggression towards its neighbours and what-have-you. The outbreak of COVID-19 from Wuhan has also done a great deal of damage to the image of China. Even though China is the only country that has achieved impossible success in the fight against the pandemic, no developed country is humble enough to say it out loud and clear.

I can see that about 80% of the answers in Quora are provided by people who have actually visited China or are quite authoritative about what’s happening in China. They are usually objective and enlightening and do a great deal to correct misconceptions. Notwithstanding, many

readers don't seem to read, and the same lines of questions would come up again and again. This is the reality that China and we ethnic Chinese have to contend with.

Having read so much about Trump's concepts of things, or the lack of them, and his callousness in life, including those betrayals dished out to his very own family as revealed by his niece in her recent book *Too Much and Never Enough*, I have resigned myself to the fact that it is really not worth our while to get angry with someone whose mindset is totally twisted beyond any sense of human decency. I have stopped reading what he says or writes and would switch channel each time he speaks on TV.

But Trump is not the politician I dread most...

Those I dread most are the hyenas, charlatans and crackpot experts who are adding fuel to Trump's fire.

The Number One hyena is Mike Pompeo. To me he is a thug and a liar of the highest order. He has no qualms in spewing out all sorts of venom against China. (I read somewhere that his principal advisor on China-bashing is none other than a professor who hails from China!) The second American I am disgusted with is Peter Navarro, the charlatan who is really a crackpot economist. There are a couple of others like Bill Barr and Larry Kudlow. But these are merely parrots.

My greatest contempt goes to Chinese who have forgotten their heritage and civilisational history – the Taiwanese who think they are Japanese and follow whatever America says and the Hong Kongers who still think they are British. Don't they see what the colour of their skin is?

Unless there is war between China and the US in the next 100 days, I believe Trump will lose the presidency and the US will return to pre-Trump rationality. The hostility from the Five Eyes will ease and the world will see some semblance of order again. However, the crack between China and the Five Eyes has already grown to such an extent that China, because of the uniqueness of its political, economic, and cultural/social systems, coupled with its relentless pursuits in technological fronts, has to be always on its guard against future Trumps.

I love this open letter written by a Chinese Canadian **Philip Yeung**, which I am taking the liberty to reproduce in its entirety...

A Misunderstood Country

Diplomacy is dead—between China and the US. When US agents broke down the doors of the Chinese consulate in Houston, all pretenses of diplomatic nicety vanished.

These days, when America opens its mouth, it is to insult, vilify and lash out at China. In the good old days, America used to adopt a “stick and carrot” approach to China. Now, it is all stick.

What exactly has China done to deserve this fire and fury?

Frankly, the world is getting sanctions fatigue, trade war fatigue and China-bashing fatigue. In fact, China-scapegoating is becoming a game of diminishing returns; it is just red meat for Trump’s base. While America is busy making trouble everywhere, China has been busy making money, and the US suddenly gets spooked by the size of the China Dream.

The US wants the world to believe China’s dream is the world’s nightmare, that it is the free world against communist China.

The depth of America’s willful ignorance is frightening. Today’s China is not the China of the Cultural Revolution or even of 1989. Yes, China has made its share of mistakes (which country hasn’t?). But after 40 years of economic open-door policy, China is an utterly transformed country. China is not Cuba or North Korea or even socialist Venezuela. It is governed collectively and rationally like a giant corporation where efficiency prevails. If you judge by the results, China is better run than many Western democracies---just look at divided America and directionless Britain. In fact, Trump has so thoroughly discredited democracy with his boasts about grabbing women’s genitalia and clocking up lies at the rate of over 20 per day in office, that we have the right to wonder: where are the checks and balances promised in the system?

America is making a fatal miscalculation. If you want to take on your enemy, you should at least take his measure. They are treating China and the Chinese government as one entity, minus its people. But if you live in China, you will see that there are no cracks in national unity. After all, 750 million of them have been lifted out of poverty by their government. These days, the Chinese are shoppers, buyers of Mercedes Benz, lovers of LV and globe-trotting, cash-splashing travelers. They are no longer the gun-toting, book-burning revolutionaries of old. It shows you how dangerously outdated America’s knowledge of the country is.

I often marvel at the economic energies of the Chinese people. They are pure economic animals. They want respect, not domination. They flaunt their economic clout, but seldom flex their military muscle. China’s wars are wars of defense; her intentions in the South China Sea are to protect its freedom of navigation in this region for its vital commerce. Unlike America, China doesn’t do regime change.

There is one fact the Americans cannot ignore: The Chinese have never had it so good. It is producing billionaires faster than anywhere else in the world. Zhou Qin-Fei is a female

entrepreneur from a dirt-poor family and left school at 15 to work at a factory where she remained on the assembly line for 8 years, until she struck out to start her own business. After 30 years of blood, sweat and tears, she is today the founder and CEO of a tech company. Her net worth is estimated at \$9.5 billion US. Behind every Chinese business success story is a flesh-and-blood human being, not a faceless government establishment. And do you think they will betray a government that has given them opportunities to succeed? By contrast, there are no such rags-to-riches stories in Cuba or North Korea. When it comes to the outside world, the Chinese people are at one with their government. America is a divided country, China is not. If you demonize China, you demonize its people.

With each eye-poking provocation, the two world powers inch closer to war. There are three things the US must know about its enemy. First, China is the birthplace of Sun-tzu, the world's most famous military strategist. China fought the US to a standstill at the Korean War when it was dirt-poor. Today, it is prosperous and nuclear-armed. Unlike Iraq, China does have weapons of mass destruction. If the US intends to bomb China back to the Stone Age, China is likely to return the favor. The US limped out of Vietnam not knowing its foe. It will do so again when the fight with China is finished.

Second, China is a country burdened by history, with the Hundred Years of Humiliation hovering over them. Peaceful rise, yes, but it is determined never to be humiliated again, over Taiwan or Hong Kong.

Third, if the war is purely economic, remember that China is so large and populous that it will thrive on domestic consumption alone. There are signs that China is now being turned economically inwards. China has kept the cost of living low for America and the rest of the world. Expect hyperinflation when Chinese manufactured goods no longer reach Western markets. Besides, who's going to buy America's pork, corn, or soya beans?

Trump's all-out war against China is doing it a big domestic favor, by uniting the people solidly behind their government. What does America gain by taking on one-sixth of the planet's human population?

I am not saying that China is a perfect country. No country is. China is accused of human rights violations in Xinjiang. I don't know enough about the situation there to comment intelligently on it. But I do know two things: One, Chinese cities have been spared terrorist attacks in recent years, unlike Boston, New York, Paris, or London. And two, if you accuse China of genocide, then you must first explain why this ethnic minority is exempted from China's strict one-child policy, to allow its population to reproduce quickly.

As for the US, why doesn't it close its Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp where suspects are detained indefinitely and subjected to torture? Why detain children of illegal immigrants? They are dying or sick and separated from their parents at the border. What's happened to their human rights? And what about America's use of waterboarding as a torture technique? Before you work up your righteous indignation, please clean up your own act, in your own backyard.

If there is one issue that unites the West against China, it is over its enactment of National Security Law for Hong Kong. This partly speaks to Hong Kong's popularity as a world city. But this Hollywood nostalgia disguises a dark fact. The place has been misgoverned for 23 years. City officials are living in a bubble, protected by perks, privileges and the world's most generous pensions, with ridiculous education allowances that let them send their kids to Britain or other overseas destinations for education at public expense, with each family enjoying 5 air-tickets per year. Officials have completely deserted the public-school system. They did nothing to prepare the young for handover of sovereignty to China, teaching them no Chinese history, such that China remains a total stranger to those born after 1997.

In short, Hong Kong has never been successfully decolonized, unlike Macau which is enjoying peace and prosperity without officials spoiled by ridiculous special privileges. City officials are just marking time, while collecting their largess. It is downright criminal.

There are some disturbing statistics. Of the nearly 9000 arrested in the past year during the street riots, over 30% are students, more than half of them high school students and even primary school pupils. If you ask them what the so-called five demands they are fighting for, they can't tell you. Yet they have gone on the rampage, terrorizing non-protestors, trashing universities, shops and even Beijing's office in the city. The burning and violence went on for nine months. Beijing stood by and did nothing.

Would Washington or London have shown the same restraint? Trump would have sent in the federal troops on the first sign of trouble. The West has never willingly recognized China's sovereignty over Hong Kong. They embrace two systems, but they forget there is one country. Beijing gave Hong Kong 23 years to enact its own national security law, but unlike Macau, it never did. In the meantime, someone must explain why the US consulate in Hong Kong has a staff of well over a thousand. What do they do in the city? I think you know what the answer is.

Throughout, Hong Kong people are free to take to the streets and call for the downfall of the Communist party. On average, there are 19 protests a day. It is a city in chaos. A city of little hope for the young, despite its glittering skyscrapers. There is no universal pension. No unemployment insurance, no inheritance tax for the rich, no rent control for the poor. It has become the world's most unaffordable city, thanks to property prices artificially driven sky-high by developer-favoring

policies. It is a totally misgoverned city, but poor Beijing is getting the blame. People outside know little other than what the biased Western press has fed them.

There is a quick solution to the Hong Kong mess: revoke all the special perks and privileges enjoyed by officials whose family members all hold foreign passports. They lack commitment and empathy. They are unfit to govern. This is the root of Hong Kong's problem. Beijing's fault is in giving them too long a leash, religiously respecting the two-systems concept and allowing incompetent and heartless locals to run the place. As Sir David Aker-Jones, the former number two in the colonial government said before he died: "I wish Beijing would simply send someone able to run Hong Kong, just like Britain did before 1997."

There is no doubt Beijing is losing the propaganda war. Does it have a global image problem? I guess it does. This is because its spokespersons are often tied to a script and have never learned to speak the language of the West. Telling America or Britain to stop meddling in China's "internal affairs" over Hong Kong falls on deaf ears. They should learn to use humor, irony, or other subtle forms of rebuttal. They should learn from Chester Ronning, Canada's China-born ambassador to China. When his political opponent accused him of growing up on the milk of a Chinese milk mother, implying that he had Chinese blood in his veins, Ronning retorted, "but my opponent grew up on cow milk." And when an Iraqi reporter threw two shoes in succession at George W Bush, missing both times, the US President deadpanned: "I think it's a size 10."

China needs professional assistance of lobbyists to argue its case, instead of relying on its citizens to do the job, leaving them open to the charge of espionage, as recently happened in Australia.

China's misfortune is that the world will not let it forget its past. They have never outgrown their preconceptions. Forty years after its economic opening up, China is still seen as an old-fashioned Communist country. China may have learned to trade with the West or talk technology with it, but it has yet to learn to speak English persuasively or authentically. A global power needs three things: hard military power, economic clout plus the soft power of diplomacy and communication. In the information age, words may matter just as much as guns and dollars.

China has failed to argue its case over Hong Kong, and the West has chosen to see this misgoverned city as an underdog bullied by Beijing. The truth is that America has brilliantly leveraged the Hong Kong mess to help the Taiwan separatist president win re-election and tarnish China's global reputation. America has successfully parlayed the twin story of a misunderstood country and a misgoverned city into a false narrative that has found legs around the world.

FOR EYES ONLY; NOT FOR SALE

CHAPTER 5

A FALSE DAWN

Three major global shifts were very apparent as the world entered the second decade of the 21st century – the Internet Revolution, Globalisation and the arrival of the Asian century. Everyone was looking forward to an even better and more prosperous world. The middle class was expanding fast. Big ticket white goods were becoming more and more affordable. Many had no hesitation in signing up for a holiday in countries our parents could only dream of, or even taking up a part-time or distance-learning degree, thanks to laptops and smartphones. The energy crisis appeared to be a thing of the past and the wealthier ones could invest in real assets all over the world.

Things might be produced in the various parts of the world, but everyone had China to thank for its formidable supply chain.

Alas, how short-lived our optimism can be! It was a false dawn!

Trump brought us down to the real world. To him, there is only one lion in the world, and that lion must be the United States of America. And make no mistake about it, it must be White America!

China has totally neglected the chips industry, thinking it has Taiwan to complement them. In a globalised world, this is just natural. No country can produce everything itself. It was happy to do all the design and leave the foundry work to TSMC's Morris Chang.

2019 changed everything.

If not for the Hong Kong riots, the West Pacific would have been quite uneventful except for the occasional tantrums thrown by the Philippines and

Vietnam on China's occasional presence in the South China Sea. The South China Sea is believed to be rich in resources. China says it has “historical” claims to all the waters within the nine-dash line shown in the map below. To a layman, this claim does appear unreasonable to its neighbours and can hardly be justified under any circumstances. But many islands within this line had belonged to China before. Some were annexed when China was weak, but they were supposed to be returned at the end of World War II. Unfortunately, the US reneged on its earlier undertaking and allowed Japan to keep several militarily strategic pieces. (Isn't this the same excuse that the UK is using to claim its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands? Or Diego Garcia, or French Polynesia?)



China had already begun bilateral negotiations with its neighbours, primarily to see how they could share the wealth of the waters involved. America has strong military and/or presence in Korea, Japan and Singapore, and it was happy to play low-key until Trump came to power, and Hong Kong got engulfed by the pro-democracy riots. (We all know who were behind the rioters, don't we?) All hell broke loose after Tsai Ing-wen openly showed her defiance.

Taiwan provided the necessary spark to start the China-US wildfire. And this prompted the US and its allies to think themselves the Crusaders of the 21st century!

My son Shen-Yang was invited to give a plenary talk to a congregation of Parkinson's Disease neurologists in Taiwan in 2018. He asked me and my wife to join him and his partner for a holiday there. We went at a time when Taiwan was holding its country-wide mayoral elections. I spoke to our tour guide-cum-driver. I walked away convinced that Tsai would be voted out in no time. I thought reunification was only a matter of time.

Below is a post I put up after the visit. Alas, how wrong I turned out to be, thanks to the riots in Hong Kong!

Saturday, December 8, 2018

Taiwan Ditches Tsai Ing-wen

I have not been to Taiwan for years. The last time I was there was in the mid-1990s when I had to accompany the late *Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong* of Genting to meet some leaders there. There was a crisis between China and Taiwan then; *Tan Sri Lim* wanted to play Kissinger. Of course, he couldn't do anything to help. We flew in and out the same day. Nonetheless, we did have time to share a meal of Taiwanese porridge in one of the hotels there!

When Chen Shui-bian became the country's President, I shunned Taiwan completely. I just could not understand how the people there could elect such a clown to be their President. And his Vice-President Annette Lu was equally obnoxious to me.

When Shen-Yang (my son) suggested that we joined him for a visit to Taipei where he and his partner would be speaking at an international conference, I was not too keen at first, but being a harsh father to Shen-Yang when he was young, I felt I should try to make up for the wound that I had inflicted on him. "Sure, let's go!", I said to my wife.

I now hold a different opinion of Taiwan, thanks to this latest visit!

When we were there, the country was in the midst of electing new mayors to their cities. Freedom of speech is virtually absolute in Taiwan today; it is frighteningly democratic. Policies don't mean much. If you cannot deliver, you are out! Chen Shui-bian was promptly replaced by the Kuomintang's Ma Ying-jeou. But the Kuomintang lost ground in 2016 and Tsai Ing-wen was elected President. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) under her suffered massive defeats in these latest mayoral elections. She promptly resigned as President of the DPP, which means she is unlikely good for a second term. Tsai is academically brilliant. And this is one example of how

great academics are usually not effective leaders. Politics in Taiwan moves in a pendulum fashion. Tsai is pro-Independence. But I think China should not gloat over the results!

The people of Taiwan are not embracing the Mainland anytime soon! They truly understand Realpolitik. The country's economy is not in great shape. Instead of counting on an erratic Trump, they know it is time to work with your own big brother China, even though he is too patronising for your comfort.



Perfect co-existence in Taoyuan Airport, Taiwan.

Unlike many of our Mainland kin, the Taiwanese by and large conduct themselves with a very high level of etiquette. The exhortations of Chiang Kai-shek have largely been forgotten. Today, Taiwanese speak not only Mandarin, but are also at home with the *Ming-nan* dialect (similar to Fujian's *Xiamen* variety). They don't harbour hostility towards the Japanese, for Japan had indeed been quite benevolent to the island when it was under its occupation. Mainland China therefore doesn't mean much to them, save for the investment opportunities they used to take advantage of when China first opened up, and the large number of Mainland Chinese tourists that have been pouring in after China became rich. Be that as it may, Taiwanese are still steep in Confucianism in culture. Our driver-cum-tour guide says Taiwan can boast to be Number One in these three things: the greatest number of motorcycles, the greatest number of temples and the greatest number of 7-Elevens. A cursory look convinced me that he was not wrong!

The visit was not without disappointment, though. Saw Hwa and I thought we should revisit Sun-moon Lake. We tried the high-speed train. The ride was perfect. But I just could not believe that the resort had degenerated so much. It looks more like a third-world holiday spot to me.



Left: 7-Elevens everywhere; Right: Taiwan is Number One in temple counts.



Left: Labour shortage in Sun-Moon Lake; only paper bowls and cups are offered. Right: Time to get rid of this sheriff!
A life-size statue in Grand Hyatt, Taipei.

When Trump exited from the White House and walked towards the presidential helicopter at the South Lawn, I felt no sadness. I thought America had at last got rid of their worst president in history. It prompted me to write the following article. And I held hope that a better world could emerge – if everybody strived to make it happen. How wrong could I be! The one that was going to be inaugurated was even worse!

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Trump's Send-off – A Pathetic Sight, and a New Dawn for the America-China Relationship?

I was watching the send-off of Donald Trump on CNN yesterday evening. What a pathetic sight.

The size of the crowd that had gathered on the South Lawn of the White House must come as a big slap to Trump. It was so thin! He did pause to speak with some of them, but that was very brief. As he and the First Lady walked to Marine One, you could feel the weight of their legs. They felt so reluctant to leave!

At the Andrews Air Force Base where Air Force One was already waiting for them on the tarmac, the sight was no better. Maybe a hundred or two? Of course, most of his immediate family members were there. That would be their last opportunity to travel on Air Force One.

He looked totally dejected. Notwithstanding, he still must make the last dig at the country he blames most for the loss of his throne. "China virus", he blurted out, though without much energy or spirit.

Many said his ascendancy to the throne was an aberration. The mightiest "democratic" country in the world should not have elected someone like Trump as their President in the first place.

Really?

After reading Barack Obama's latest book *A Promised Land*, I thought the seed had already been sown earlier.

Bush Jr.'s second term in office marked the beginning of the decline of America's prestige on the world stage. By 2007, he was a lame duck. Obama was the right man at the right time – racial prejudices were a non-issue at that time; Americans just wanted their world back. Obama seemed to be able to deliver that hope.

But Obama is not White. And not a mainstream politician.

Obama had both a good head and a good heart. He had a strong sense of purpose. He could not manage the underlying racial prejudices against Blacks and the Coloured in the Republican Party. The ability of its tea parties to sway the neo-Cons to the fore is deadly. His presidency not only cost many Democrats their seats in the Congress, but also the party's significant majority in the Senate. With the loss of control in the Senate, he could only plod on lamely. He was sabotaged left, right and centre by Mitch McConnell and several other Republicans. The fear that had awakened the Whites in the Republican Party was most devastating to America. It ushered in a fake. Although Trump lost the election, some 75 million American had voted for him. And these people are emotionally more hardcore than the people who voted for Biden.

It would not be easy for Biden to realign the mindsets of Trump's followers to the real world. Many are firm believers of conspiracy theories, notably that of QAnon's. Fortunately, Biden is a

wise grandfather figure. He may succeed to some degree. However, China, which has been punching bag for Trump and his team, should not feel too optimistic.

Most Americans are not well-travelled; few have been to China, including the influential politicians and senior bureaucrats. Because of its Stalinist legacy, Communism has always been thought of as evil, sinister, anti-Christian, anti-Islamic, and what-have-you. On the other hand, China is most proud of its ruling party – the CPC, Communist Party of China. To the uninstructed and untrained lot all over the world, China is an evil empire. And every Chinese a Fu Manchu!

So, many Whites, Blacks, Latinos, non-Chinese Asians in both parties are still hostile to China and Chinese. “China steals from us, and the Chinese steal our jobs” rings loud in their ears.

But what I am concerned about in the legacy of Trump is the fact that many leaders have been through and through hypnotised by Trump, not just amongst the leaders in the Five Eyes, but also those in countries like Brazil, India, Japan, Africa and Europe. You can understand the fear by the Whites and Japanese – of being overtaken economically and militarily by China – but why the Indians and the Blacks?

Much of the latter’s is cultural.

India has always been touted as one of the oldest civilisations in the world. But that is only true in the Indus Valley, not the subcontinent as a whole. Many parts were tribal, even at the time when Buddhism was flowing into China. The Mughals had a great reign, but they were Muslims. It was not until the time of the British that it became an aggregation. The earlier leaders opted for non-aligned policies. Even Narendra Modi was prepared to be identified with BRICS – the fraternity comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, until Trump came on the scene.

Trump triggered the ambition and the psychological complex of Modi and Indians. ***If China can do it, surely we can do better!*** This self-confidence is certainly not without basis.

Many of the *Fortune 500*, especially those in high-tech, are headed by Indians. So are some of the top universities, including, ironically, the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore, which was started as a Chinese community-funded university. Several of the ministers in Singapore are Indian. So, too, with Boris Johnson’s Cabinet. India has more Nobel Laureates than China. Some of the wealthiest men in South Africa are also Indian. Whereas Chinese thinkers and scholars are usually quite ill at ease in public speaking, Indians are a class of their own in English fluency and articulation. The citation can go on and on.

But anyone who has visited both India and China can tell you that India as a nation still has a long way to catch up with China. There are simply too many impossibilities to make this happen in the near future – the caste and religious divides, not to mention the antiquity of beliefs and practices; the extremes between the rich and the poor; the state of their infrastructure; the apparent lack of adherence to promises and undertakings that is often perceived of them in dealings; the disregard for personal and public hygiene amongst their lesser lot; the unions and their obstinacy, and so on.

Emulation is the best way to bridge social-economic gaps. If only the Indians, the Japanese and the Chinese can work together; the region will certainly roll out to become the most affluent part of the world! (Taiwan is not an issue; the moment America lays its hand off, it will just become another prosperous province of China.) Maybe the East needs people like Trump to stay ahead?

Friday, September 3, 2021

Hope This Wounded Lion Is Not a Dangerous Animal

Each time Joe Biden spoke about the China threat, he reminded me of my late father-in-law.

My father-in-law was a through-and-through *Peranakan* – a local born Penangite, totally English-educated, who worked his entire life for the Penang Port Commission. Besides English, he spoke only Penang *Hokkien*, and did not know how to read or write a word of Mandarin.

After his retirement, he and my mother-in-law came down to Kuala Lumpur to live with us. They helped bring up our two children. He loved to read newspapers. I used to subscribe to both *The Star* and *The New Straits Times*; he read almost everything in them, including the classified advertisements. I also subscribed to magazines in those days – *Newsweek*, *Fortune* and *The Economist* – which he would also read if they were around. He also kept to his “office” hours – religiously at one of the stockbroking houses in town. He brought back many stories and gossip from there.

However, as he grew older, I noticed that he tended to repeat things with a strange frequency. On a piece of misinformation about a politician which I had taken pains to explain to him was not true, he would still say the same old thing when the politician’s name came up each time. Other than that, his mind was as sharp as ever. As he aged into his 80s, another phenomenon surfaced. He would many a time insist that my eldest brother-in-law was going after his life. But this brother-in-law of mine, a retired engineer, must be the mildest, most harmless person in this

whole universe. No matter how hard my wife tried to correct him, her father would repeat this fear from time to time! Of course, by then we knew he was in the early stages of dementia. He lived to a ripe old age of 95.

Doesn't Biden sound like my father-in-law when he talks about China? No matter how much the world or his intelligence community told him about the falsehoods about the genocide and forced labour situation in China, and about the need to leave it to science on the origin of COVID-19, he would point his finger at China regardless. ***China is your enemy which you must destroy at all costs***, Donald Trump seems to be whispering into his ear all the time, even though Trump is his enemy Number One.

When a person is entering into a pre-dementia stage, I suppose the neurons in his or her brain will rearrange themselves to give him outlandish conclusions and fears. Isn't Biden going into this phase now?

I was most perplexed when he hailed America's withdrawal from Afghanistan as a great success. **What success?** And what sort of twisted logic is that?

We all have heard that amid chaos at Kabul airport, CIA Director William Burns had to fly all the way to meet Taliban leaders ahead of the August 31st deadline. If not for the courtesy extended by the Taliban, the evacuation would surely have been a disaster. Yes, some 6,000 Americans and 120,000 others were flown out. But could it be said to have been a great success? It was an operational feat given the way he shot himself in the foot with the timing of his withdrawal announcement, thanks to the resources that the US had at their command. **Nothing more than that.** Yet Biden could go on TV to crow "success" to the world. This speaks volumes of the state of his mind and the competence of his "world-class" team like Antony Blinken, Jake Sullivan and Lloyd Austin. To us in the orient, aren't these a bunch of "*fun-shis*" or sweet potatoes?

By any standard, the US's capitulation from Afghanistan will surely go down in world history as one of the most glaring defeats of American exceptionalism. On America's response, I only watched CNN and read the bits and pieces from its papers. I seemed to sense that the burden of humiliation has yet to be felt by the American masses. Of course, no sooner than the Afghan debacle was over, they were hit by Hurricane Ida and now floods in New York and New Jersey. As if this were not enough, they also have their Supreme Court's decision on the Texas abortion law to debate.

On Afghanistan, Blinken had also telephoned Wang Yi. The State Department's readout on the matter apparently was a one-sentence statement to say there was a need to rein in the Taliban in view of the development there, hence the exchange. However, the Chinese Foreign Ministry's

readout was a tongue-lashing record of what Wang Yi had reiterated to Blinken. It bluntly stated to the effect that ***“the call was requested by you, Blinken, you came to us when you needed our help, and if you were sincere and genuine, you should first and foremost do what we had requested you to do in the list which we had given to your Sherman earlier on.*** Period. I have not really read the two readouts; but the fact has been disclosed by a credible source. Anyway, they should be on the relevant websites for anyone who cares to check.

And we are now reading that John Kerry has flown to China to talk about Climate Change. Obviously, these Americans don’t even understand body language let alone rebukes. After flying all the way, he could only meet with Wang Yi on Zoom. The Chinese must have felt a little bad, since Kerry has always been thought of as a decent man. It was subsequently arranged for him to see the redoubtable Yang Jiechi and later Vice Premier Hang Zheng. However, the message was the same: ***Don’t waste our time unless you do what is expected of you first. We know what we are doing.*** He left for home empty handed. How embarrassing!

If their reaction to world opinion on the recent Afghan capitulation debacle is reflective of their ability, or the lack of it, to form good conclusions, let alone learn anything, then I suppose to these top guns in the Biden administration the meaning of humiliation is definitely not in their vocabulary. Or thick-skinned-ness is actually a part of their collective DNA. Remember the lecture given by Yang Jiechi and Wang Yi to Blinken and Sullivan in Alaska, and the protocol that was accorded to Sherman in Tianjin? Luckily, Lloyd Austin’s request to visit his Chinese counterpart has gone unanswered, lest he gives us another case in point to cite.

Nonetheless, a wounded lion is always a dangerous animal. A humiliated Biden can also be one. The only consolation I take is that judging from those incidents that I have enumerated above, I suspect he might not possess that sense in his faculty.



Let’s hope it is the case.

Dear America, stick to what you can do best for the world, that is, continue to help the world with your universities' fundamental and cutting-edge research. This also means you must welcome the best and the brightest to your soil. And trying to teach the world what democracy is all about will surely bring you nowhere. It takes a mere spokesperson from China's Foreign Ministry to explain this: Coca-Cola indeed tastes the same everywhere. But democracy is **NOT** Coca-Cola. It has to be different for different countries.

The world will certainly be safer without America going around preaching and upholding Democracy.

Look into your backyard first; there is much to be cleaned there in the first place.

FOR EYES ONLY; NOT

CHAPTER 6

BIDEN AND HIS HOODLUMS

Trump was always the butt of jokes when world leaders gathered and giggled behind his back during breaks and pre-dinner cocktails. They all looked down on him. And his *America First* insistence certainly did not go down well even with natural allies like **Boris Johnson** and **Justin Trudeau**. **Scott Morrison** and **Narendra Modi** were happy to humour him, though. **Shinzo Abe** was a little ambivalent, but very diplomatically so. But Trump did not give a damn whether his trousers were of the see-through type or not.



Something juicy about Don; like to hear?

If Biden could claim achievements, it must be the hoodlums he has successfully assembled to poke China in its eyes. All the names I have just mentioned above have become his hyenas or attack dogs. (Shinto Abe is gone, so is his successor **Yoshihide Suga**, and it is now **Fumio Kishida**, who is happy to become one as well.) He has also roped in Lithuania and Slovenia. With **Rodrigo Duterte**'s departure, who knows if the new Filipino president will also jump into his bandwagon? Ditto for South Korea, whose new president **Yoon Suk-yeol** has already expressed his determination to set a "new" relationship with China. The outgoing Moon Jae-in is China-friendly.

Most of us can perfectly understand Australia, Canada and the UK's stance regarding the US-China tension. Their leaders do not need a reason to justify

their all-out preparedness to die for America. It is in their Anglo-Saxon DNA to stand together come what may.

Nonetheless, Australia's die-for-you stance appears to be odd to me. Bad blood started to flow when the Morrison government insisted that China should allow international investigators to trace the origin of the coronavirus. *Per se*, this is a reasonable request since many countries also called for China to do that. The only difference is this: China was totally bogged down by the pandemic; they knew it was NOT their deliberate doing. They would welcome an international team, but not "experts" from countries who had already pronounced them guilty, as the US and Australia seemed to have already done. Chinese by nature are sensitive to such accusations, and they were not helped by an ambassador there who was not very articulate in explaining. They were convinced Australia was trying to poke them in the eyes.

And one also cannot understand the logic of several of Australia's key cabinet members. They openly brand China as a security threat. On what grounds? China is Australia's Number One trading partner; it buys the bulk of the iron ore, coal and much of its agricultural produce, including wines. The Chinese have also invested heavily in Australia's real estate, farms, and enterprises. Would it want to invade Australia, like what Japan intended during World War II? Sure, there will always be some espionage here and there. But aren't these common even amongst friends? Angela Merkel's phone was hacked by the US, wasn't this true? If you want to make an enemy out of someone, he will certainly become one. Isn't it just natural for China to seek a place for them to refill in the South Pacific? The Solomon Islands knows that here is a good money-making opportunity not to be missed. China is not going to use it to attack any country in the region. Period.

If the paranoia is removed, is there a need for the Chinese navy to call on the Solomon Islands?

But most people are less willing to accept Japan and India's unconditional offer in issues concerning a relationship with China. (India has chosen not to join the US in sanctioning Russia in the present Ukrainian crisis, which is not

surprising, given the fact that it has been relying on Russian arms for several decades.)

Japan

We have to go back to history to try to understand the relationship. It has recently been confirmed that mainstream Japanese carry some 70% of *Han* Chinese genes.² Does this come as a surprise?

Legend already has it that the “first” emperor of China Qin-*Shihuang* dispatched some of China’s young people across the eastern sea to search for an elixir. They never came back. They probably marginalised the natives there and became the forebears of the modern Japanese. Buddhism began to spread across the eastern sea around 300 AD. Together with Confucianism – a philosophy to which the Japanese have long subscribed – and other beliefs, Buddhism evolved to become Shintoism, as we understand it today. The Mongols in the name of Yuan tried to invade Japan in the late 1200s, but the latter was said to have been saved by the Divine wind or *Kamikaze*. But many believed that one of the major contributing factors was the seaworthiness, or the lack of it, of the Yuan fleet: shipbuilders who were still loyal to the Song heritage did everything to render the structures incapable of withstanding strong winds.

The Japanese continued to admire and learn from China until the appearance of the Western seafarers. There was no looking back after that. **Emperor Meiji** transformed the country from an insular feudal society to a modern, industrialised nation, based on the West’s scientific, technological, political, legal and aesthetic ideas. It soon became a world power. It could even take on and defeat Russia.

It began to develop a contempt for the Chinese under the Qing courts. And in the name of creating the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere [大東亜

² Reuters, 18th September 2021. A study by Trinity College Dublin and published in Science Advances, which says that 71% of the ancestry of modern Japanese was found to come from an ancient population with East Asian origins that arrived roughly 300AD to launch what is called the Kofun period. These migrants appear to have had ancestry mainly resembling the Han people who make up most of the China’s population.

共榮圈 *Da-Dong-Ya Gong-Rong-quan*], it invaded China and Southeast Asia, which were the Pacific components of World War II. After its surrender, when its atrocities were widely known throughout the world, Japan was at first remorseful. The US guilt (in dropping the two atom bombs) saved Emperor Hirohito's neck and helped make Japan into a great industrial power again. Arrogance returned. With the reemergence of China, some Japanese politicians did try to work with China to achieve common prosperity, until Trump and Biden came into the picture. The latter's hoodlum strategy to halt China has emboldened Japan to poke China's eyes whenever it is asked to, more than they dared to during Trump's presidency.

Before Shinzo Abe (Prime Minister from 2006-07 and 2012-20) came to power, Japanese prime ministers had always sought mutual accommodative relationships with Chinese leaders. Some were in fact very pro-China. Even though Abe was no admirer of China, he did not openly advocate hostility against China, until Donald Trump became President. And even though he has retired, Abe, with Biden on the throne, is still openly talking about defending Taiwan against China! Abe is a right-wing nationalist. He was born to a prominent political family with significant economic influence throughout the pre-war, wartime and post-war Japan. His family hails from Yamaguchi Prefecture, which is well known for its nationalistic, Samurai mindset. His maternal grandfather **Nobusuke Kishi** was the de facto "economic" king of occupied China and Manchukuo. At the end of the war, Kishi was to have been tried as "Class A" war criminal by the US Military Occupation of Japan but was somehow released. Kishi went on to help found the Liberal Democratic Party in 1955 and served as Prime Minister of Japan from 1957 to 1960.

Kushida, however, is dangerous to China. Just within a couple of months of his ascendancy, he has already demonstrated his "die-for-you-under-whatever-circumstances" loyalty to Biden. China went out of the way to support Japan in the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics, only to be "boycotted" by Japan in the former's Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. And Kushida now has the audacity to say that Japan will also get "involved" should anything

happen to Taiwan! And he has the cheek to condemn China for “human rights” violations in Xinjiang when Japan has yet to demonstrate its remorse to the region for all the atrocities it had committed in China and several Southeast Asian countries during World War II.

Readers are encouraged to read ***China and Japan: Facing History*** by **Erza Vogel** (2019) for a good understanding of this love-hate relationship since time immemorial.

On the other hand, Korea knows its place. The Korean Peninsula had always been a vassal state of China until the Japanese annexed it in 1910. After World War II, Korea was basically partitioned and both sides sought to “unite” the peninsula. The Soviets did not respond to North Korea’s appeal when the Americans crossed the 38th Parallel; China swept in and nearly succeeded in driving out the American forces. South Koreans generally know that it is important for them to have a good neighbour no matter what colour shirt it wears. South Korea has been able to benefit from the emergence of China. But with the new president, everything is up in the air again.

Yoon is a product and beneficiary of the K-pop culture. Common folk find it natural to relate themselves to anti-establishment or Robin Hood inclinations or behaviours. And Yoon fits that mould well. Only time will tell if he can use that magic to solve inter-governmental relationships.

India

India was amongst the first countries to recognise the People’s Republic of China. Zhou Enlai and **Jawaharlal Nehru** were the best of friends during the Non-Aligned Movement days (founded 1st September 1961). The failure of the 1959 Tibetan uprising caused many in India, especially its press, to advocate Tibet independence. Nehru began to establish military outposts along the frontier, some of which were north of the McMahon Line, and this irked China, which on 20th October launched a major attack and dealt a major defeat for India. And India just has not been able to overcome this humiliation since then. As long as this dispute stands, China and India will always be at

loggerheads. And the present US-China tension is not an issue: it is just an opportunity for India to get even, no matter what that means.

The McMahon Line was drawn up by British India and agreed to by Tibet in 1914. China was not a party to the agreement. Since China contends that Tibet was not a sovereign state, it has always refused to recognise the line's legitimacy. The line spans 890 kilometres, largely along the crest of the Himalayas. Chinese maps show some 65,000 sq. km. (25,000 sq. miles) of the territory south of the line as part of its Tibet Autonomous Region. India, which became independent in 1947, had declared the McMahon Line to be the boundary of its borders with China. It was not an issue in the 1950s, when India-China relations were cordial, Nehru promoted the slogan *Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai* ("Indians and Chinese are brothers"). Nehru, of course, had hoped that China would accept the *fait accompli*. It was never to be.

There was another near-war situation in 1986. And in May 2020, Chinese and Indian troops again engaged in face-offs at locations near the disputed Pangong Lake. Some lives were lost in the skirmishes.

Borders are usually determined by watersheds or ridges that are formed by a chain of mountains, or by the geographical middle of a river separating two countries. Of course, there are also other determinants, for example, if your country is invaded by another nation, then you obviously have to accept the military or political realities, for any part that is annexed beyond the ridges, or the river would no longer be yours. Israel has been a master in this in recent years. The Palestine can only protest, so can Ukraine.

In the case of the McMahon Line, when China was weak and Tibet was largely independent, the watershed would obviously be the apparent border between India and Tibet, since geographically it had to be that way. However, the argument behind China saying that the areas they are disputing have historically been theirs – possibly because some Tibetans had lived there for centuries – is to me a little shaky in terms of argument. India has inherited the McMahon Line, and Tibet has agreed to it. I think China should just move on. Once the dispute is settled, there will be no good reason for both sides

to stare at each other. After all, a great deal of Chinese territory up north has been annexed by the Russians. Does China want to fight with Russia over it?

Maybe China and India should work towards a compromise; after all, nobody but McMahon is to be blamed.

In the present Ukraine war, India has parted company with the US. It is not quite unexpected. India had always been close to the Soviet Union and sourced much of its military gears from the latter. And Modi has been very comfortable with Putin. Ironically, India's sworn enemy Pakistan was an ally of the US for many years, until it found a new buddy in China. (Nixon and Kissinger were instrumental in the breakup of Pakistan into two countries. And the US was behind the military dictatorships that followed in Pakistan. Millions were killed in East Pakistan, now known as Bangladesh.) Hence the strange type of relationships amongst the four. However, the war in Ukraine must have made India realise how dangerous a "friend" the US can be. The US takes and doesn't give! (Some argue this is all tactical; India's stance may shift once it thinks it have secured more concessions from the West.)

China must have understood the sensitivity of India and has recently dispatched its foreign minister Wang Yi to visit New Delhi. If both countries can come to the realisation that neither is a real threat to each other in geopolitics, then the relationship should improve and India will certainly return to its clear-headedness in dealing with the West in no time. After all, India had been exploited by the British under colonial rule for almost a hundred years (1858-1947).

Be that as it may, I would not count too much on India's present prime minister. Modi is a wild card, geopolitically speaking.

The Other Clueless Hyenas

After the US had recognised the People's Republic of China as the sole government that represented China, many followed suit, significantly Japan and key Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. However,

until today there are still a couple of countries which continue to have full diplomatic relations with Taiwan – chiefly some micro-states in the Pacific Ocean and a few in South and the Central Americas – largely because of American pressure. We recently read about an attack on the Chinese embassy and workers by a separatist faction on one of the Solomon Islands. Everyone knows who was handing out the envelopes. Today, the government of the Solomon Islands is feeling strong and independent enough to sign a security pact with Beijing – to the displeasure of some in the region.

The US is obviously encouraging some of these irrelevant or lesser states to irritate China, including countries like Lithuania, Slovenia and the Czech Republic and many of the clueless parliamentarians of the EU.

FOR EYES ONLY; NOT

CHAPTER 7

THE MAKING OF AN EVIL EMPIRE

The fear of the domino effect prompted the CIA to go all out to destabilise countries which wanted to have their own ways of life. Indonesia was amongst the first to be targeted. Around one million Indonesians were killed during the purge against the Communists by the Suharto regime. The CIA's destabilisation efforts all over the world was documented by an author called **Vincent Bevins** in a book called ***The Jakarta Method***.

Below is what I have learned from the book.

Tuesday, August 4, 2020

The "Jakarta Method"

I had never heard of the term until I read Vincent Bevins's latest book: ***The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anti-Communist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program that Shaped Our World*** (2020, PublicAffairs). Bevins is an American journalist who has worked in Brazil, the UK and Indonesia.

I have been to many parts of Indonesia and have even stationed myself in Jakarta for a couple of months, but nobody has ever mentioned this term to me, even though what did happen to Indonesia in the aftermath of Suharto takeover is known to all. Bevins says that some one million Indonesians lost their lives during that period, just because they were members of the Communist Party of Indonesia or were identified to be sympathisers of its ideology.

Apparently, the seed of the slaughter was sown during Sukarno's rule. And the US's success in Indonesia was quickly adopted far and wide.

In 1961, Sukarno hosted a seemingly successful conference for non-aligned nations in Bandung. It was supposed to unite the newly-independent countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia, to stand up to their former colonial masters and the US. Socialism appeared to be their rallying cause. But amongst them, many were already Communist countries. The ideology was gaining ground in many parts of the world, thanks to the developments in the USSR and its satellites in East Europe and China. This awoke the US.

The CIA immediately started to systematically and ruthlessly undermine these fledgling governments. It openly funded their militaries and soon they seized power and turned their countries into military dictatorships. The CIA sponsored their extermination of anyone, no matter how remotely, who was said to be associated with Communist or left-wing activities in these countries. Indonesia was its first target, hence the term the Jakarta Method.

Some one quarter of Indonesia's population was said to be sympathetic to the Communist Party of Indonesia. Even though the Communists there were against armed struggle, the Suharto regime went on to liquidate some one million of them in cold blood. Many who were posted or studying overseas were cut adrift and some are still languishing in countries like the Netherlands, Brazil and even Cuba today.

Extermination exercises were conducted everywhere, many were totally ruthless. Bevins documents in good detail some of these: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Columbia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Venezuela in Latin America, and Iran, Iraq, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam and East Timor. In Africa, he lists only Sudan, but I believe many African dictatorships would not have happened without US money and efforts.

Uncle Sam, you have so much blood on your hands! Yet you want more!

Adolf Hitler was once seen as a messiah by many economically-deprived Germans before the onset of World War II. His obsession against the Communists and the Jews led him to build concentration camps – first to incarcerate and later to exterminate them. The Gestapo, the SS and the SD were his extrajudicial arms that gave the Nazis their reputation as the most dreaded criminal organisation in modern history. The Swastika is now the symbol of universal evilism. It is said that Nazi Germany produced a huge quantity of deadly sarin which was enough to kill millions of people. Strangely, Germany did not employ it against the Allied Powers. In Asia, Imperial Japan was more ruthless. It was already running a biological weapons enterprise in Manchuria as early as the 1930s – headed by a military physician named Lieutenant General Ishii Shiro – to attack Chinese cities with plague-infected fleas, and later dispersing disease agents by aerial spraying, bombing and sabotage.

Today, the US is running hundreds of biological laboratories around the world to do precisely the same thing.

When the coronavirus first broke out in Wuhan, many were pointing their fingers at the wildlife trade in the wet markets there. *Oh, the virus had jumped species, thanks to the Chinese love for exotic food!* I too felt bad being a Chinese! But as more and more evidence began to surface, especially about work that was going on in Fort Detrick and the occurrences of a similar illness in the US and Europe weeks or months before the outbreak in Wuhan, and now with what the Russians are seeing in the laboratories run by the US in Ukraine, I am now quite convinced that the real culprit of the present COVID-19 pandemic is unlikely to be China.

Hasn't the US begun to look like an evolving evil empire – with the likes of Mike Pompeo and Joe Biden around?

A messiah mission to eliminate Communism in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in the liquidation of millions, and the replacement of many civilian governments with military dictatorships. Another messiah mission to destroy Terror in the wake of the 9/11 attack led to the removal of the Saddam regime and the destruction of Afghanistan. Neither party was directly involved in the 9/11 incident. Today, Iraq is hardly a nation, and Afghanistan, thanks to the American exit, is now back to square one: Taliban control.

A visit to the Plain of Jars in Laos will tell you how cruel Americans can be to innocent people. Americans love to carpet-bomb the hell out of anyone! There are many other examples. Do the Americans really care? And have they saved any country *per se*?

Two recent events convince me that the US is on the path to becoming an evil empire.

First is the expropriation of the foreign reserves of Afghanistan, after the US has just abandoned it and left the war-savaged Afghans to fend for themselves. Where is Biden's sense of basic humanity?

Second is the war in Ukraine now. Let's admit it: the knife to inflict bloodshed was provided by none other than Biden. I am not saying this alone; many Americans do.

Biden's grand design is crystal clear to people who have a discerning or informed mind: to subjugate China. And to do it, America has also to destroy Russia, since the increasing camaraderie of the two will definitely leave the US in the dust in a matter of years – economically, technologically and even militarily.

His containment of China wasn't making much headway. Taiwan is increasingly vulnerable, but Biden knew it is not tenable for the US to defend Taiwan, despite all his assurances and reassurances. Before the Americans set out to sabotage Hong Kong with the "pro-democracy" protests, Taiwan's President Tsai was in deep trouble. She did not seem to stand a chance to get re-elected. America's propaganda worked well with the naiveté of many men-in-the-street in Taiwan. In the wake of Hong Kong's unrest, she was returned with a huge landslide. This is emboldening her to try to breach China's bottom line – with a declaration of Independence by Taiwan.

But Biden's and his secretary of state Antony Blinken's rhetoric against China has not been cutting ice with China's southern neighbours. Blinken keeps repeating America's rules-based principles, without defining what they were all about. "*You do it my way*" seems to be what he really means. The flotillas that America uses to flex its muscles in South and East China Seas are contemptuously shadowed by China. Something else has to be done.



Saturday, August 14, 2021

The Biden Administration's Policy on China: McCarthyism 2.0?

A mentor of mine, academician Datuk Ir (Dr) Lee Yee Cheong, after reading my recent articles on Biden Administration's assault on China, suggested that I bring to my readers' attention the reemergence of McCarthyism in the US today.

I have known Datuk Lee since the late 1970s when the late Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong of the Genting Highlands fame was trying anxiously to electrify his resort by tapping into the national grid from

the foothill of his resort. Hitherto he had had to depend on generators which greatly impeded the resort's potential. Datuk Lee had just resigned from the national electricity authority to start an electrical engineering consulting firm. The 132/33kV lines his firm designed helped transform Genting Highlands into an international resort.

By the time I caught up with Datuk Lee again, he was already a renowned authority on infrastructure matters and a recognised champion of STEM education, not only in Malaysia but throughout the region. In fact, he was already an international figure, having helped many parts of the world organise institutional support to beef up their development efforts. In Malaysia alone, he helped the government to start the Academy of Sciences Malaysia and was its founding Secretary-General. Datuk Lee is a former president of the Institution of Engineers Malaysia and the founder president of the ASEAN Academy of Engineering & Technology, amongst many other credentials.

Datuk Lee has just released the second edition of his autobiography: *Think Malaysian, Act Global*.

I saw the dots he wanted me to connect and was happy to make an attempt.

What does McCarthyism have to do with China and the Chinese?

A little background...

World War II ended in 1945. The US became the world's new top dog and China took its place at the victory podium in a hardly breathing condition. But Joseph Stalin was not content to play second fiddle to the US.

The Soviet Union successfully tested an atom bomb in 1949 and the world entered a new war. This time it was a cold war between two of the most formidable powers in the world. And their ideologies are diametrically opposite.

And despite George Marshall's unstinting efforts to reconcile the Kuomintang and Mao Zedong's ragtag army of Communist peasant-soldiers, China fell to the latter in 1949. (Daniel Kurtz-Phelan, *The China Mission*, 2018.) It was just inevitable. The Kuomintang was simply too corrupt and inept to win the hearts and minds of the huge masses in a country that had been totally ravaged by the Japanese and the subsequent civil war.

Mao was seen as the liberator. Chiang Kai-Shek and his remnants fled to Taiwan. Many of these subsequently ended up in America.

Joseph McCarthy, a charismatic US senator, was an anti-Soviet crusader. A Red Scare which was already in place under President Harry Truman was brought to the fore. Hitherto only federal employees were screened for possible association with organisations deemed "totalitarian, fascist, communist, or subversive", McCarthy spearheaded a witch-hunt campaign instead and it began in 1950. The primary targets of McCarthyist persecution were government employees, prominent figures in the entertainment industry, academics, left-wing politicians, and labour union activists. Many of his victims were only remotely associated with Socialist or Communist causes or movements, nonetheless, they were deemed treasonous and persecuted.



Joseph McCarthy

Although McCarthy was discredited in 1954, the second Red Scare had already been ingrained in the American psyche. (President Dwight Eisenhower actually strengthened and extended Truman's loyalty review programme. Even Robert Oppenheimer, the scientific director of the Manhattan Project that built the first atomic bomb, was stripped of his security clearance.) And the henchman in all this: J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

When Senator Joseph McCarthy started, he and his allies paid no attention to Chinese Americans. He only blamed George Marshall for "losing" China.

Then came the Korean War. General MacArthur's huge army was subdued by the Chinese forces. The humiliation was unbearable. China and the Chinese became American's new enemies.

When China entered the Korean War on the side of North Korea, Chinese American communities suddenly attracted public attention in unwelcome ways. Chinese Americans were "numbed with fear" and had to wrestle with the feeling that "being Chinese is itself a crime". Even children felt the need to prove their loyalty in school. Pro-Kuomintang thugs often beat up local Chinese who were perceived to be supporters or sympathisers of Mao's China. In one incident, some fifteen of these "supporters" and "sympathisers" were singled out for liquidation. A reward of USD5,000 was offered for anyone willing to do the job. (These goons remind me today of Mike Pompeo's China advisors like Miles Yu Maochun and author Gordon Chong, amongst many others.) It is said that the Kuomintang supporters soon discovered that their previous collusion with federal

officials to persecute community leftists won them no reprieve from investigation themselves. How ironic!

The Chinese had to lower their heads and tiptoe their way around to earn a living.

And in the eyes of many Chinese today, McCarthyism is synonymous with the persecution of Chinese in the 1950s in America, even though there were more villains other than McCarthy. President Harry Truman was certainly one of them.

Going a little back in history...

The 1840s saw thousands braving the journey to the gold mountains in America, Australia and even New Zealand in search of gold, despite the known dangers and hardship. From 1863 to 1869, roughly 15,000 workers went to America to help build the transcontinental railroad there.



Above: Chinese gold diggers in California; Below: Building cross-continental railroad in the US.



Unfortunately, their efforts were hardly recognised or appreciated. In the Truman years, the Chinese had often been depicted as Fu Manchu-types or sub-humans to be bullied or kicked around. (See pictures below.)



The portrayal of Chinese, Top: Christopher Lee as the sinister Dr Fu Manchu, Right: Chinese as sub-humans.

What was the West's image of China and the Chinese?

The man with a ridiculous pigtail!

The Chinese had already been humiliated in their own countries for almost three hundred years! Wearing a pigtail was a symbol of subservience to the Manchu court. Slowly it also came to be accepted even by the high officials of Han descent; it was a way of life. But it was the perfect focus of Western cartoonists' creativities. For decades, it was the symbol of Chinese evilness, ugliness, lowliness and what-have-you.

This was followed by the Mao suits in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, which became a symbol of Chinese isolationism. Fortunately, China has become strong, and wearing Mao suits no longer raises eyebrows. It is even a fashion statement!

Datuk Lee is concerned that the present Biden administration seems to be bringing back McCarthyism, consciously or subconsciously. In his words, *"What was so insidious of McCarthyism was the widespread use of lies, half-truths, fake news and misinformation and manipulation of the media by McCarthy and his cohorts. The same methods are being used by the Biden administration, US Congress and mass media in the US."*

I totally agree with him. Shall I call Biden's Policy on China "McCarthyism 2.0"?

To me Trump kindled the new McCarthyism. His effort, like Version 1 McCarthy, was somewhat narrow – mainly concerning the trade imbalances with China and to some extent an alarm over China's prowess in high-tech. (Hence his sanctions on Huawei and several Chinese technology firms.) But Biden is different. His is on an all-out attack to cripple China. There is enough coverage for all and sundry to come to this conclusion and there is no need for me to enumerate here.

I just want to say a few things on this new McCarthyism that is not only taking root in America today, but appearing to spread across Canada, the UK, many countries in Europe, India, Japan and Australia.

And this has made Chinese feel insecure all over the Western world. Fortunately, the leaders of the non-Western world are largely aware of the situation and are happy to either remain neutral or help tell the truth. The wisdom amongst the leaders of Southeast Asia is particularly comforting.

I always say this: there is a racist in every one of us. But much of our racism is premised on prejudices that we have built up mentally over acts or behaviours that we have seen in people whom we consider “not us”. We don’t usually say we have the divine- or birth- or colour-right to act in a superior manner. Biden may have initiated congressional bills to protect “Asians”, and many countries in Europe might have supported the recent UN resolution on human rights, but to me all this may be too little too late. This cold truth remains: as long as these efforts are not borne out of heart but only of head, they are not genuine and helpful. This is amply demonstrated by his administration’s high officials each time they seek to speak to (rather than with) China. *Fu Manchu, we are talking from our position of strength!*

The world needs to wake up. They need to see the news footages showing how Biden has left the Afghans to fend for themselves again – if they have not already done so!

I am not a supporter of the Taliban. But the rate they are seizing territories reminds me of the dying days of the Kuomintang in China. After almost a trillion dollars has been spent and thousands of American lives lost, Biden still thinks American can walk tall. The Afghan government that America helped build has turned out to be a house of cards. It is without any foundation.

Come on, hardly 300 years of history as a nation and 50 years as a superpower, in the context of the history of humanity, America’s glory is just a flash in the pan. Moreover, the nation is founded on slavery and built not with a unanimous mission to improve the lives of all in the country, but is actually a patchwork of divisive interests to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Take away the glue that has been binding it – the strength that was constantly being infused into society by quality immigrants from all over the world – it will surely decline in no time.

I love America, but I just cannot stand the short-sightedness of its present breed of leaders. Period.

The following is the rejoinder from Datuk Lee:

I want to stress I also love America growing up on movies of Frank Capra like Meet Joe Doe, Mr Smith Goes to Washington, Mr Deeds Goes to Town and believing USA is a land of opportunity for ordinary folks.

I have an abiding adoration for President Franklin Roosevelt for founding the UN; supporting the then downtrodden China as a great power deserving of a permanent seat in the Security Council and opposing Churchill's desire to restore the British colonial empire after the Second World War.

I do not like or dislike the Taliban that was built up by USA in fighting the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Remember Tom Hanks in Charlie Wilson's War!

As always, the US has never won friends and influenced ordinary people through efforts to make their lives better. Instead, they installed puppet regimes that are friendly only to their military and business interests.

Let Afghans and Afghanistan alone do what they want with their country. Are their actions against women any worse than those of Saudi?

Let us not interfere with affairs of other countries and make things worse. US should realise every action has an equal and opposite reaction!

I am optimistic that the US will realize they are no longer the supreme power to overlord every country on the face of this Earth, neither are they Richard the Lion Heart with sword in one hand and Bible in the other. If COVID-19 has any salutary effect, it may well be that the worst country in managing the pandemic will get to realise it is but a part of common humanity.

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

An America Gone Rogue

The more I see and read about Joe Biden, the more I am convinced that he is another run-of-the-mill American politician. His latest antic being America's decision to diplomatically boycott the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics. This is in the wake of the seemingly chummy conversation (but the flip-flop days later) with Xi a couple of weeks earlier. To me, this is also the straw that breaks the camel's back as far as his credibility goes. The use of human rights as an excuse is most

disingenuous to the core. That silly accusation has long been debunked, but like a demented old man, he keeps parroting it regardless. And his minnows and sycophants in Canada, Europe, Japan and Australia were quick to chorus him notwithstanding. Despite its preeminence, the US is a world that is full of deep-well frogs – people who are ignorant, or uninformed, or disinterested or outright bigots. These people don't quite exercise their brains. They believe wholesale everything from CNN or Fox News. As a result, charlatans and half-bakes like Donald Trump, Joe Biden, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz and Nancy Pelosi get voted in to assume high office. On the Olympics issue, Biden and his coattails would certainly have sounded more credible if they had simply said this: ***We don't like Xi or China.*** Period.



In the first place, the Olympics is about sports, and not about politics. Why didn't the US boycott the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing? What has changed during the last 14 years?

Of course, these politicians do have a bigger agenda. It is certainly not their love for human rights, but China's phenomenal progress that is the issue! It is all about their fear of a reemerging dragon. Basically, it is their paranoia!

The ghosts they see in China

American politicians and their sycophants in the Five Eyes, QUAD and AUKUS fraternity are helplessly staring at a China that will be Number One in terms of GDP maybe in 2026. Militarily, China is likely to beat the US and its allies if there is a war and it is fought in its front yard, with its formidable strength in its missile arsenal, not to mention its hypersonic capabilities. They also fear that if Taiwan returns to China, they will also be deprived of the chips which are so essential to their survival. We shall have more of all these later, but suffice it to say that these are the ghosts they see in China and Xi. China has already made it abundantly clear that it has no territorial design outside what is legitimately theirs. But instead of committing China to this undertaking and allow both spheres to prosper, they want China to go back to subserviency. But the horse has already bolted; there is no way they can make China yield.

Wrong start from the very outset...

Everything boils down to the weakness of the American system in choosing leaders in a new global paradigm. I remember reading somewhere about Barack Obama saying this about his Vice-President: *Don't underestimate Joe's capability to fxxk things up*. In his book *A Promised Land*, he hardly credited Biden for anything, which speaks volumes of the latter's relevance in his administration.

From his performance since he took over the presidency, Biden has certainly lived up to Obama's true sentiment about his former deputy.

I, like many others, was full of hope when Biden was finally declared President of the United States of America in January 2021 – after some nail-biting counts and recounts. Donald Trump was a universal joke. He was a president who was totally devoid of substance and is likely to go down in history as a president many future Americans – if they ever get to climb out of the deep well – would be very ashamed of. His incompetence and spurious pronouncements and claims, often ridiculed by the Western press themselves, knew no boundaries; it stretched to every issue you can think of.

I was actually not impressed by Biden's credentials from the very outset. Had Trump been less idiotic, Biden might not be President today.

He had spent his entire public life in the US Senate before he became Obama's Vice-President. We all know those Congressional roles were basically all talk but no action. I particularly remember during the run-up to the presidency, he had on one occasion labelled Xi Jinping as a thug to a question from the audience. That was totally uncalled for. Xi had played host to him before; surely he knew nobody in his or her right mind would say Xi could be one! Nonetheless, I was prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt, since the choice, though not mine to exercise, was between an "idiot" and someone who appeared decent. To win the American election, he, as someone who had no better foresight or strategy, had to be seen to be more tough than Trump on China.



A thug in Biden's mind!

No wisdom, foresight, nor strategy

True enough, Biden doesn't have what it takes to make a great president. He doesn't even know how to mobilise a great team to change America for the better, when the present window is so opportune for him to do so.

At the beginning, he did look good on the domestic front, especially in his exhortations to his fellow countrymen of the need to fight the coronavirus more seriously. However, his attempts to steer the economy were certainly less convincing. He didn't see fit to stop the money printing press, nor did he think through the trillions that he planned to spend to rejuvenate America. But these are America's problems, not ours.

I am particularly irked by his foreign policies, which are not only a continuation of what Trump has already failed to do, but executed more cluelessly, like the ones on Iran, Ukraine and Syria, or more antagonistically, like those on China and Russia. As for North Korea and Venezuela, they are largely non-existent to him. He fumbled on America's withdrawal from Afghanistan, which also sent a clear signal of America's ineptness to its allies. His hoodlum approach to contain China has obviously disturbed America's long-term allies in the Middle East, like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, who are now seeing China in a different light. Iraq has now asked China to build some 1,000 schools payable in oil, even though America has not totally withdrawn from the country.

His slogan "America is back" is a mission to kill off China as an equal – politically, economically, technologically and militarily. China's Huawei and high-tech companies are the obvious targets. Not surprisingly, the CIA couldn't find a shred of evidence to pin down Wuhan as the source of the coronavirus pandemic, otherwise, China would never have been able to shrug off the mud that has been constantly hurled at it. (Watch out, China, America is still trying!)

Politically, he managed to enlist Lithuania, some corrupt officials in the Solomon Islands, and the ultra-liberal Greenie newbies in EU politics (like the new German foreign minister) to irritate China. And militarily, he has also persuaded India to join the QUAD.

But no matter how hard he tries, he is simply unable to persuade the ASEAN leaders to jump onto his anti-China bandwagon, even though Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia are not entirely happy with the map that China has drawn for the South China Sea. Ditto with the leaders in West Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and South America, they have already seen America's true colours.

In management studies jargon, Biden's "America is back" is a mission statement, the objectives of which are blurry, and the strategy incoherent and inconsistent with what he is trying to achieve. It is utterly airy-fairy in the first place, or rhetorical in essence.

All boils down to leadership with little concept and with an inept team to steer a rudderless boat.

I suspect Biden is being nose-led by a couple of key advisors and the White House spokesperson Jen Psaki. Apparently, no off-the-cuff questions are allowed during press conferences. Much is stage-managed for him, as his nonsensical utterances, despite the big teleprompter right before him, are a source of embarrassment to these “key” staff. Biden might not be in complete control of the White House today.

An inept team...

I was listening to Charles (Chas) Freeman’s speech made at Brown University’s Watson Institute some weeks ago. He was talking about the tension between the US and China over Taiwan. Freeman, an ex-diplomat, reminds me of Kissinger. There is so much wisdom in this man. He spoke dismayingly of America’s total ignorance of the history and the cultural realities of East Asia in general and China in particular. He was very critical of Biden’s team in handling basic diplomacy. Even though he did not mention names, who he had in mind was obvious to the audience.

An effective leader does not have to be very brainy. All he needs to do is to have a team of good lieutenants to make his ideas work. Richard Nixon might have been disgraced, but he is well remembered for some lasting diplomatic feats. He was prepared to do things differently on China, and he shook the world. He made good use of Kissinger. The rest is history. Indeed, America has many great thinkers – people like Charles Freeman, Jeffrey Sachs and Graham Allison. But Biden chooses nincompoops.



Left: Charles Freeman; Right: the two great Jeffreys – Cheah on the left and Sachs on the right.

The people whom Biden are counting on to help him bring America back are really a bunch of novices, despite their academic credentials. The most incompetent of them is none other than State Secretary Antony Blinken. Fresh from that false sense of triumphalism in the wake of Biden’s victory and too lazy to do any homework, Blinken assumed Yang Jiechi and Wang Yi were easy targets whom he could throw his weight at when they called for that meeting in Alaska. He got walloped instead. At least Jake Sullivan was clear-headed enough to act more appropriately, diplomatically speaking. Blinken’s lack of finesse and his inability to overcome his emotional weakness were again demonstrated during his meeting with Wang Yi during the G20 Summit in

Rome a couple of months later. Blinken didn't even see fit to reciprocate when Wang Yi extended his hand, even though he was the one who sought to see Wang Yi in the first place. In our part of the world, we have a term for it: ***Kurang Ajar*** – or lacking in upbringing in the Indonesian/Malay language. Didn't he know that Yang and Wang are two of the most seasoned diplomats in China?

Blinken's recent attempt to persuade Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand to distance themselves from China was another diplomatic disaster. The US embassies in these countries had obviously fed him only things he loved to hear. And like an emperor who did not know he had no clothes on, he went about criticising China in these countries, like what Kamala Harris had done in Singapore and Vietnam. He should know the leaders of ASEAN countries are no simpletons. Having to govern in a very contentious region, they have already acquired a great degree of wisdom. They may not like China, but they certainly know they need to show good neighbourliness with China. This is the way their cultures treat neighbours at home.

And forget about Kamala Harris. Biden has obviously decided to confine her to his closet after her visit to Singapore and Vietnam. Ditto Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin, who has largely gone quiet. (His bungling of the Afghanistan pull-out, making the US the laughing-stock of the world, and the failures of his 2021 South East Asian tours are recent conspicuous examples of his "substance", or the lack of it.)

I am afraid Nicholas Burns, America's ambassador-designate to China, will also turn out that way. During the Senate confirmation hearing, he talked as if he was all ready to slay an evil dragon. Obviously, he knows little about the eastern world. Let's wait and see.

There is a common denominator in all these Biden stars. None has gone through the university of hard knocks. Antony Blinken and Jake Sullivan were largely armchair policy wordsmiths before. Gina Raimondo has yet to prove herself a worthy state governor, and she is a Donald Trump when it comes to China. Lloyd Austin's elevation, I suspect, was largely a symbolic gesture because of the colour of his skin.

As for Katherine Tai, it is a classic case of using poison to fight poison.



Left: Antony Blinken, doesn't he look totally stressed out? Right: Katherine Tai, poison to fight poison?



Left: Gina Raimondo, how much does she know about international trade? Right: A window dresser?

And now take a look at China's team... I have extracted some information about the two teams from Wikipedia (Appendix 1). Do form your own conclusion.



How Biden (or his team?) is stirring the pot to save his presidency...

Biden is obviously nervous about the mid-term elections, not to mention his second term re-election chances. His popularity is low, and the Republicans are like silkworms munching their way into the mulberry leaf in him. It looks like the Republicans will take back control of the Senate and the House of Representatives in 2023. In his perverse logic, he thinks that by being tough on China and Russia, he can reverse the trend. America did succeed in breaking up the Soviet Union, but that was largely because the Soviet Union then had a drunkard by the name of Boris Yeltsin who was happy to shoot himself in the foot just because he was anxious to be the President of Russia. This strategy cannot work on China. Biden should have known better. You cannot fight China's resolve to stay as one nation. The CIA went all out to tear Hong Kong apart. After months of riots, its lackeys finally caved in. With the national security law now in place, Hong Kong is regaining its footing. And he certainly knew that there was no genocide or forced labour in Xinjiang. Yes, the Chinese did smash the terrorising separatists there, but you don't expect China to give these terrorists flowers, do you? What China did was to try to rehabilitate

them so that they can return to society, hence those “jails” Australia’s ASPI was talking about. Remember the first thing Bush Junior did to the terrorists was to send them to Guantanamo Bay. Were the terrorists given any VIP treatment?

I believe the US is always trying hard to find new causes to attack. Tibet is the next one maybe, but I suppose the Dalai Lama is too smart to get himself dirtied.

The Uyghurs and the Tibetan on the street know life is so much better now than any time before. They certainly do not need pseudo-champions, whose intention in the first place is to use them to destabilize China and not fight for them. By boycotting Xinjiang’s products and produce, America hopes to deprive the Uyghurs of livelihoods and in the process turn against China.

Containment of China and Russia is beyond Biden or America. The home issues will drown him in no time – principally the economy, the persistency of the coronavirus, and the great parochial divide between the Republican and the Democrats over everything, especially spending. There is no way the infrastructure bills and his brand of “silk road” which he wants to build with the EU in the Third World can save him, for they will take decades to happen, if they ever can. His hoodlum approach has brought Xi and Putin to a level of relationship that will survive all sorts of instigations or sabotage, internal or external, direct or indirect.

After World War II, the US has fought many wars. It did win many battles, but America has never won a war, despite its industrial-military might! And you are angling for a war with China?

Leaders come in all shapes. Countries like India and Australia can be great in their own rights. Unfortunately, instead of emulating China, Narendra Modi chooses to grow green eyes. Indians have many great minds, unfortunately, they do not have the leaders to help them make things happen. Even one of its industrial patriarchs Ratan Tata was helpless when he tried to help build businesses and industries in his own country. A case in point is *Air India* which has degenerated into a casualty. Scott Morrison sees Australia's biggest trading partner as a security threat, how strange! The federal government cancelled several agreements with China, of which two were related to Victoria’s Belt-and-Road Initiative with China. These agreements would have benefited Australia a great deal by being able to weave its expertise and goods and services into the network, since its quality is generally trusted all over the world. Foreign Minister Marise Paine said the move was not intended to target China! Who can believe that? And now Australia has signed up with Japan for a reciprocal access defence pact. Has Australia forgotten that Japan was virtually right in Darwin when World War II broke out? Has it forgotten that its soldiers had to fight the Japanese in the then Malaya and Singapore theatres, only to be shipped to Myanmar and North Borneo as POWs?

Both Japan and South Korea are shackled to America. American soldiers are “defending” them. Whereas the latter knows its station, Japan is still harbouring ambitions on China and wants America to help make China weak. Canada’s Justin Trudeau’s handling of the Meng Wanzhou detention demonstrates abundantly clear that he is politically, morally and ethically a midget. Yet, he has the cheek to point a finger at China’s human rights record. Lithuania and many “green” MPs of the EU Parliament are basically a bunch of hare-brained politicians. And Biden knows the South China Sea is where he can drive a wedge between China and its neighbours in the region – Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei all have some claim to the sea there. Singapore says it will not take sides, for its fortune is too tied to a friendly China and happy America. The US cannot count on Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar to do any of its bidding. It can only pay some parties to create animosity towards China, like what they have done to one of the factions in the Solomon Islands.

I have mentioned earlier that the US is already losing its grip in the Middle East. Maybe its next target will be Mongolia, one of China’s immediate neighbours, on whom China depends a great deal for its iron ore supply. But Mongolia needs China’s money. It has few options.

A country that has little history to anchor on

The US has only a short history to shout about. The Europeans rushed to colonise the continent in the late 1500s. But it was the British who became the sole masters. They went about systematically exterminating the natives. To build the country, they brought in slaves. It declared Independence from Great Britain on 4th July 1776. But it was not until 1865 that slavery was outlawed. The Chinese who went there to mine gold and help build railways were discriminated against and treated harshly.

The Americans think their concept of Democracy is the ultimate system of governance. In the 1960s and 1970s, they went about destabilising legitimate foreign governments and installed corrupt military dictatorships in lieu, as long as any of the former was not to their liking. The campaign started in Indonesia first, after Sukarno championed non-Aligned movements. An author used the term Jakarta Method to describe their misdeeds all over the world – in Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Iran, and many many countries in Africa and Latin America.

But the world has changed. America is no longer the beacon of good democracy; what is being practised is really chaotic democracy. The Anglo-Saxon sense of superiority breeds and sustains racism – Blacks, Native Americans, Asians, Hispanics are lesser beings to them. Double standards appear to be the order of the day now. (Some top-of-the-food-chain Chinese were indulged for window dressing or for countering China purposes.)

Why the paranoia now?

In 2021, the US's GDP in nominal terms stood at USD22.68 tn and China's USD16.64 tn. But China is catching up! It has already surpassed the US in terms of PPP GDP in 2017. It is set to overtake the US in nominal terms in 2028 or even earlier (see Appendix 2). A projection made by the IMF in 2021 shows the US is leading by USD6.0 tn or 1.36 times on an exchange rate basis. However, the economy of China is USD4.0 tn or 1.18x of the US on a purchasing power parity basis.

On a per capita basis, China is still far behind. But Americans should not bet on this. Productivity "potential" per capita in China is well ahead of that in America. China has awakened (or has been awakened), and the per capital GDP gap will close in a matter of time, certainly sooner than most Americans would imagine. China is already well ahead of the US in Agriculture and Industry. Agriculture Output of the US is only 17.58% of China and 77.58% for the Industry sector. The services sector of the US is still more than double of China, though.

Rank ♦	Country	♦ Value exported in 2020 (USD thousand) ♦	Trade balance in 2020 (USD thousand) ♦	Share in world exports (%) ♦
-	World	18,754,622,247	-310,645,547	100
1	 China	2,496,569,886	429,619,611	13.3
2	 United States	1,645,174,335	-623,222,114	8.8
3	 Germany	1,486,462,772	250,164,041	7.9
4	 Netherlands	721,301,065	74,548,537	3.8
5	 Japan	705,842,013	-15,122,432	3.8
6	 France	555,100,606	-82,848,463	3
7	 South Korea	542,333,337	38,073,910	2.9
8	 Hong Kong	536,711,619	-42,879,132	2.9
9	 Italy	532,683,665	59,121,415	2.8
10	 Mexico	472,272,871	4,979,704	2.5
11	 United Kingdom	468,159,554	-224,420,509	2.5
12	 Canada	446,562,311	-6,594,914	2.4
13	 Belgium	445,214,433	18,725,346	2.4
14	 Russia	422,777,167	178,996,614	2.3
15	 Singapore	390,366,234	31,377,976	2.1
16	 Spain	337,215,114	-38,270,066	1.8
17	 Taiwan	329,512,433	43,606,152	1.8
18	 India	323,250,726	-155,633,003	1.7
19	 Vietnam	318,268,388	47,147,176	1.7
20	 Switzerland	314,145,207	36,937,609	1.7

Source: WTO

The US national debt stands at about USD31.4 tn at the end of 2021. Japan is the largest US holder of US debt (1.31 tn), followed by China (1.07 tn).

All this speaks volumes of the economic health of the US. On top of that the US Dollar is under unprecedented challenge now.

In 2020, China's value of export was USD2.50 tn, or 13.3% of the world's total, versus the US's USD1.65 tn or 8.8% of the world's total. But look at the trade balance, in the case of China, it was USD429.6 bn, compared with a US deficit of USD923.2 bn. The US's position vis-à-vis China and the major trading countries of the world is likely to continue to decline as the decade progresses. This, together with the decision to digitalise currencies by many others, simply means one thing: the accelerating of the dethroning of the US Dollar as the global monetary hegemon in no time, which will not only save countries like Russia, Iran, North Korea, Venezuela but also welcomed by America's long-suffering friends like Japan.

Even then there is now fear by association in American academia, especially if you are doing something with China. National security is cited each time it decides to sanction a Chinese high-tech company. (In Australia, the desire to shoo off the Chinese from the Darwin port under the same pretext was, however, thwarted by their own Defence Ministry's assessment which concluded that *no national security issue was at stake!*) Nonetheless, these embargo measures are many a time a double-edged sword. The rollout of 5G in the Western world has stalled, or has to be done at a much higher cost. Coercion and pressure on companies not to supply technology to China kill off hundreds of billions of revenues from companies like the Dutch's ASML, Korea's Samsung and Taiwan's TSMC, not to mention the suppliers in the US.

On the military front, America is leading in most sectors (Appendix 3). (But if a war were to break out, you can be quite sure that many of the naval vessels involved would end up at the bottom of the East and South China Seas, thanks to China's Dongfeng missiles.)

No wonder the Chinese ghost is lurking in every politician's mind in America.

Is the Chinese ghost for real?

I have attached in Appendix 4 a brief write-up on the parts of Chinese history which I think is relevant for my contention that the American fear of China is largely misplaced. Despite its long history, China was not quite unified until 221 BC when Qin *Shihuang* (秦始皇, 259-210 BC) declared himself the first emperor after he had conquered all of the other warring states. The Song (宋) dynasty (960-1279) was particularly prolific in inventions. But the dynasty was very weak militarily and had to bear the brunt of many invasions from the neighbouring tribes. It soon fell to the Mongol khans; Yuan's (元) Kublai Khan extended his conquest to as far as Hungary, but they had very little to do with the Chinese way of life. Being a foreign occupation power, it could not last long, given the nationalistic nature of Han Chinese. Soon they were driven out. The Ming

(明) emperors (1368-1644) had the opportunity to make China the top dog of the world during their era. However, its inward-looking policy soon prevailed and within a hundred years, China lost its skill in making great ocean-going ships. And thanks to Admiral Zheng He, who was a Muslim, China helped Islamize Southeast Asia, which hitherto was very much Hindu/Buddhist in culture.

Qing (清) (1644 -1912) was Chinese complacency at its worst. False belief in its superiority made China a laughing-stock. Great humiliation followed even after the 1911 Revolution. Until Mao Zedong came along to make China stand up.

What can we conclude out of the last two millennia of China's history? Answer: A people who have shown that they have no territorial design against others, even though they had the ability and opportunity to do so. Will they do that under Xi?

The mandate of the Chinese heaven

China had been a feudal society for much of its existence, until Sun Yat-sen overthrew the Qing court. Legitimacy of an empire's reign had always been based on the concept of the "Mandate of Heaven". The Chinese heaven is not the abode of an all-powerful god that created and sustains the universe; rather, it is a court up in the clouds that comprises a timeless emperor and his entourage and detail, from both the literary and the military ranks, who had risen to heaven because of their great deeds in life. If an earthly emperor lost the trust of his subjects, then his mandate would certainly face termination by this court up in the sky, and soon, someone would be given a new mandate. Chiang Kai-shek "lost" his mandate and Mao rose to the occasion. All this may sound archaic or superstitious, but it is no different from how the legitimacy of other forms of governments is thought of. If you lose an election, you have to give way to someone who has given new hope to the people. Xi has done a great deal for the people. He has the mandate, which the US and others are really in no position to question. After all, his approval rating, no matter how you want to discount it, is higher than any leader in the world. I tuned into CCTV to watch Xi address the nation on the eve of the 2022 New Year. He had only one mission in mind: to make China better. On no occasion did he attack any world leader.

Xi's poverty alleviation success in China is for real. And the rural villages are undergoing makeovers on a massive scale. People are learning good etiquette in terms of table manners, the use of public toilets and are refraining from jumping queues and spitting indiscriminately, many of which are the sources of shame felt by fellow Chinese outside China before the coming of Xi. China is leapfrogging in STEM. It is already ahead on many technological fronts.

In a report by the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center entitled *The Great Tech Rivalry: China vs the US* dated December 2021, the executive summary states:

- In AI, China is now a full-spectrum peer competitor;
- In 5G, "... America's 5G infrastructure rollout is years behind China's...";
- In quantum information science, China has already surpassed the US in quantum communication and has rapidly narrowed America's lead in quantum computing;
- In the semiconductor industry, China is now a serious competitor and may soon catch up in two key areas: semiconductor fabrication and chip design;
- In life sciences, China is competing fiercely across the full biotech R&D spectrum. Its researchers have narrowed America's lead in the CRISPR gene editing technique and surpassed it in CAR T-cell therapy;
- In green energy, today China is the world's leading manufacturer, user, and exporter of these technologies; America's green push relies on deepening its dependence on China.

In short, the US is no longer the global science and technology hegemon! But instead of seeing how it can co-exist, it is looking from the angle of zero-sum competition, meaning, ***I will kill or disintegrate you, for I am determined to be the sole victor.***

The way China is managing the COVID-19 pandemic should have served as a good example how a disaster of this nature should be handled. Instead, the West is consumed by distorted logic spewed out by its mass media. Even if a success is obvious, it would be tempered with grudges and "but..." undertones (CNA's Beijing correspondent Olivia Xiong's trademark?). Even *The Straits Times* and Channel NewsAsia of Singapore and *The South China Morning Post* of Hong Kong are also reporting China in similar veins. It is a kind of bad breath from people whom you tend to think should have a set of good teeth about Eastern culture!

What is driving the US-China tension?

You use tariff as a weapon basically to protect your own industries. But the US is using it to stall China. It simply does not have the industries that are producing the stuff Americans need day in and day out. They still have to buy from China even though prices are now heading drastically north. But instead of unwinding what Trump had done, Biden appointed China antagonists Gina Raimondo and Katherine Tai to put up more hurdles and blockades. Tai wants to prove that she is more American than Trump! The US is also urging firms to leave China to either return or relocate in other countries. But business is all about making money. It will be a long time before Vietnam and Indonesia can reach China's scale. And forget about India; I just couldn't help thinking how shallow many other Western presses can be when they evaluate capabilities. (Maybe they don't have that capability in the first place!)

a) The Western and pro-West presses...

Someone coined the term “presstitutes” to describe the present breed of journalists in the Western media. The root word of it, I suppose, is “prostitute”. Biden has decided to hand out billions to wage a media war on China. I suspect many are already enjoying the largesse of Biden’s generosity, which is causing them to lose their souls, ethically and morally. You can disagree with what you see, but you also need to lay out your arguments to support your disagreements. You may not agree with what China was doing and had done in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, but to parrot the distortions of ASPI (Australian Strategic Policy Institute) or pseudo-scholars like Adrian Zenz, Gordon Cheng and Peter Navarro is not only sheer laziness but an insult to one’s intelligence or outright dishonesty, which many are doing in the West, even with the supposedly authoritative publications and channels like *The Economist*, the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, CNN, Al Jazeera, *South China Morning Post*, *Nikkei Asia*, *The Straits Times* and Channel NewsAsia. Many would have noticed that some of these authors are actually ethnically Chinese – Nectar Gan, Helen Gao, and Muyi Xiao, just to name a few. I suppose they have to justify their existence by writing more provocatively on China. (I would particularly like to single out Elizabeth Neo who anchors CNA’s business section. China would have collapsed many times if what she “feared” each time was a statement of fact!) These mercenaries are the Qin Hui of modern China. (Qin Hui 秦桧, 1090-1155, a chancellor of the Song Dynasty, generally regarded as a traitor for his part in the persecution and execution of Yue Fei (岳飞), a general who fought bravely for the Song against the Jin dynasty, during the Jin-Song Wars of the 12th century.)

b) The war on chips...

Caught in the great power struggle is TSMC. It is being forced to lay bare all its secrets to the US government. Billions of dollars of revenue from sales to Huawei have also been killed. On top of that, it is being coerced into building plants in the US, knowing that it is the last place an efficient plant should be located. A similar fate is also being experienced by Samsung, AMSL and other semi-conductor niche giants. How would this pan out? China’s advances would certainly be held back but the deprivation also makes China more resolved to be self-sufficient on this front. The US should realise that many of the people working in these embargoed companies are Chinese. The companies will stagnate if their products cannot sell well. The reverse migration has already started. Yes, it may take a couple of years for China to catch up, but once they catch up, the trend is irreversible. America forgot that their progress was a result of talent flows from all over the world, especially from China.

c) The tool in Tsai Ing-wen

Taiwan was once one of the leading tigers in the world economy. MIT stood for “Made in Taiwan” in those days. It is still a very prosperous island today. But it is caught in an untenable situation following Tsai Ing-wen’s hostility to China. She is happy to be used by the US to retard China.

There is really no good reason for Tsai to antagonize China, which has all along been prepared to live with a Taiwan under the one-country-two-systems advocacy – as long as Taiwan acknowledges it is a part of a greater China. But Tsai wants a different destiny for Taiwan.

Tsai's PhD controversy reflects her true character. You don't need to have a PhD to run for political office, but she was proud to wave it high as part of her solid credentials. It is quite clear that she did not complete her PhD at the London School of Economics. Notwithstanding, she had the audacity to claim that the university had in fact considered to award her one-and-a-half PhDs! (No one in the academic world would understand this contention!) That was not only a blatant lie but a criminal act, since it was based on this claim that she secured a tenured academic position at National Chengchi University. This might explain her insistence to pursue a course for Taiwan that is fake in the first place. (Before that, another Democratic Progressive Party president Chen Shui Bian had also tried to champion independence for Taiwan. They were all protégés of Lee Teng Hui. Chen spent time behind bars for corruption. But none was as audacious or blatant as Tsai.)

What Biden should be looking at

The conditions in many of America's subways reflect what the country is today – archaic, unsafe, grubby and decaying. Walls are usually full of graffiti, floors covered with rubbish everywhere, toilets broken, trains tired-looking and what-have-you. Between cities, it doesn't have any high-speed trains. (The one between Los Angeles and San Francisco has yet to be completed.) Although its airports, roads and bridges are adequate, they are certainly not the type you would like to see in the First World, let alone the Number One country on Earth. If the Japanese management system can be hailed as a model for adoption by top graduate American business schools, why can't China's advances in infrastructural engineering be sourced to help transform America's landscape (its road- and bridge-building machines like the Kunlun SJL900, its tunnel boring machines like the CRCH 1, or its rail track laying machines like the CKP500, just to mention a few)? No one can produce steel, aluminum and other engineering materials more cost-efficiently than the Chinese.





And look at how China has rolled out its Road and Belt projects:

How China is changing the world...



Left: *The Yunan-Laothian high-speed train*; Right: *The port of Piraeus in Greece.*



Left: *The road in Kenya*; Right: *The Padma bridge in Bangladesh.*

And how it is helping to vaccinate the world...

FC



The vaccines to Argentina.

If all these had been done instead...

The US keeps telling the world that it is the standard bearer of democracy. But all you have to do is to listen to China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying's common-sense Coca Cola analogy: ***Democracy is not like Coca Cola where it should taste the same everywhere!***

Biden should think more like a statesman than a parochial politician. He could have learned from history's many greats. Of course, he would not want to learn anything from the East. But there are so many others he could take a leaf off – leaders like Angela Merkel, or even South Africa's Nelson Mandela. Mandela was released after years in prison, he could have turned on the Whites, instead, he talked about forgiveness and reconciliation. And despite the setbacks inflicted by his successors, South Africa remains one of the few viable nations in the African continent.

Upon Biden's winning the presidency, he should have declared Trump's policy on China quite misplaced. He should have drawn upon the US's relationship with China during World War II, and the Chinese contributions to the US when thousands were enlisted to help build railroads in America. Planet Earth is certainly big enough for the US and China to co-exist, especially when China has demonstrated that it has no imperial design against any country. The US can continue to provide leadership in basic Sciences, and China can help bring products out of them. This is the theory of comparative advantage at its best.

Biden should have declared all this after he won the election: ***Yes, we have dropped the ball for too long; let's pick it up and move forward. Yes, we have been looking silly everywhere – Internally the pandemic, our aging infrastructure, our gun violence and deaths (I just read the latest statistics: 20,000 gun deaths and some 20 million guns were retailed in America in 2021), our racism, our rich-poor and class divides, our homelessness, our declining education, the QAnon stupidity, etc.; and externally, our misplaced holier-than-thou wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and our silly sanctions of Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea, which have made the***

people there poorer, the fake news about genocide and forced labour in Xinjiang, and our double-speaks on Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the silly trade war with China. Yes, we shouldn't blame anyone but ourselves. And surely, we can learn something from China and East Asia! Yes, let's use their affordable steel and aluminum to help rebuild our infrastructure. Yes, let's sell them more chips and have them build cheap phones and consumer products for us. Etc., etc., etc. All we must do is make sure they don't become aggressive militarily. Yes, let's each strengthen our own sets of comparative advantages. Give me eight years and I will deliver a great America back to you. World trade will soar, ditto our stock markets, and even our industrial-military complex. And Americans will enjoy the highest quality of life!

A new dawn will certainly emerge...

The US should send more delegations to visit China, to see for themselves the workability of other systems and cultures. Surely there are many lessons to be learned from the way China manages its Xinjiang and Tibet regions. Ditto the Confucian values that America can adopt in many instances. As it is, there are already many Westerners living in China. Judging from the people who are doing business, or working, or even learning martial arts in China, we certainly can conclude that such a proposition is not unfeasible or untenable. Cross-cultural exchanges will always result in creating an equilibrium in terms of acceptances of things hitherto foreign to one. Americans should take a good look at how the Muslims coexist with the Han Chinese in regions like Xi-an, Ningxia, Lanzhou, and many places elsewhere. (The Confucian institutes can help pave the way!)

China is still far from being a perfect society. Its people's individualism and boundless entrepreneurship can be ugly. You often hear of internet scams from China; the runaway greed of the real estate players like Evergrande, Kaisa, Shimao, etc.; the billions lost by ordinary people in P2P lending; a potential bomb in Jack Ma's Ant Group attempt; still some shoddy products and fake TCM medicines and teas being churned out despite crackdowns; the nouveau riche mentality; outlandish architecture and showoffs; and provincial-, city- and county-level corruptions. But Xi and his team are losing no time to transform the Chinese society to usher in a new China.

Without American intervention, Taiwan would melt into the greater China quite seamlessly. It can continue to excel in semiconductors and sell its chips to any country. Once the Taiwan irritant is removed, there is no reason for the two countries to fight each other anymore. And Japan will certainly know its place in the Pacific. The other minnows are irrelevant, nonetheless, they will also benefit from China's import of their resources and produces.

A reminder of how far American politicians can go...



See the attachment on her left ankle!

Appendix 1

The Global Olympics... The US Team

Antony John Blinken (born 1962). His father was once the US ambassador to Hungary. He followed his mother to Paris and attended École Jeannine Manuel. He attended Harvard University from 1980 to 1984. He entered Columbia Law School in 1985 and earned his Juris Doctor degree in 1988. He previously served as Deputy National Security Advisor from 2013 to 2015 and Deputy Secretary of State from 2015 to 2017 under President Barack Obama.

From 2009 to 2013, Blinken served as Deputy Assistant to the President and National Security Advisor to the Vice-President. During his tenure in the Obama administration, he helped craft US policy on Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the nuclear program of Iran.

Jake Sullivan (born 1976) attended Yale University, where he majored in international studies and political science and won a Rhodes Scholarship to attend Oxford. He graduated with a Juris Doctor from Yale Law School in 2003.

He was previously a senior policy advisor to Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential election campaign and her Deputy Chief of Staff at the Department of State. He worked in the Obama administration as Deputy Assistant to the President and the Vice-President's National Security Advisor, when Biden was US Vice-President.

Gina Marie Raimondo (born 1971) previously served as the first female Governor of Rhode Island from 2015 to 2021.

Of Italian descent, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from Harvard College. She was also a Rhodes scholar and later received her Juris Doctor degree from Yale Law School.

Katherine Tai (born 1974) is the first Asian-American to serve as Trade Representative. Tai grew up in Washington, D.C. Her parents, who were both born in mainland China, grew up in Taiwan and later immigrated to the United States. In 1996, Tai graduated from Yale University in history. Tai went on to study at Harvard Law School, where she earned a Juris Doctor in 2001.

After her undergraduate education, she taught English at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou as a Yale-China Fellow for two years from 1996 to 1998.

Nicholas Burns (born 1956) is a professor of diplomacy and international politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. During his career in the State Department, he was Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs during the Bush administration.

Burns was in 2020 a Fulbright scholar at Queen Mary University of London. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in history, with a concentration in European history, from Boston College. He also studied abroad at the University of Paris. He received a Master's degree from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in 1980.

China's Team

Xi Jinping (习近平; born 1953) has been President of China since 2013. His late father was Chinese Communist veteran Xi Zhongxun. He was exiled to a rural county as a teenager following his father's purge during the Cultural Revolution. He studied chemical engineering at Tsinghua as a worker-peasant-soldier student and rose through the ranks and became Governor of Fujian from 1999 to 2002, before becoming Governor and Party Secretary of neighbouring Zhejiang from 2002 to 2007. In 2008, he was designated as Hu Jintao's successor.

In 1985, as part of a Chinese delegation to study US agriculture, he stayed in the home of an American family in Iowa. This trip, and his two-week stay with a US family, is said to have had a lasting impression upon him and his views on the United States.

Former Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew said he felt Xi was "a thoughtful man who has gone through many trials and tribulations". Lee also commented: "I would put him in the Nelson Mandela class of persons. A person with enormous emotional stability who does not allow his personal misfortunes or sufferings to affect his judgment. In other words, he is impressive." Former US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson described Xi as "the kind of guy who knows how to get things over the goal line." Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said that Xi "has sufficient reformist, party and military background to be very much his own man."

Li Keqiang (李克强; born 1955), China's Prime Minister is an economist by profession. Li rose through the ranks through his involvement in the Communist Youth League. From 1998 to 2004, Li served as the Governor and Party Secretary of Henan. From 2004 to 2007 he served as the Party Secretary of Liaoning. From 2008 to 2013, Li served as the senior Vice-Premier under then-Premier Wen Jiabao, overseeing a broad portfolio which included economic development, price controls, finance, climate change and macroeconomic management. Li has also been a major force behind the implementation of the "comprehensively deepening reforms" announced in the fall of 2013. Made in China 2025 is a strategic plan issued by Li and his cabinet in May 2015.

Li read law at Peking University and received his PhD in economics in 1995.

Liu He (刘鹤; born 1952), the man who is always in Xi's entourage, is a current member of the Politburo and one of the Vice-Premiers. He is also the Director of the Central Financial and Economic Affairs Commission.

Liu graduated from Renmin University-Beijing Union University in industrial economics. He later studied at Seton Hall University and and received his Master's in Public Administration from Harvard University.

He has published widely on macroeconomics, Chinese industrial and economic development policy, new economic theory and the information industry.

Beginning in 2013, Liu began advising Xi on a series of economic initiatives and is believed to be one of the primary architects of Chinese economic policy at the time. In May 2018 Liu was also appointed top trade negotiator with the US.

Yang Jiechi (杨洁篪; born 1950) spent much of his professional life in the US, where he was China's Ambassador from 2001 to 2005. He served as Foreign Minister between 2007 and 2013. Since 2013, he has been the Director of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission, the highest

diplomatic position in China. He is generally regarded as one of the foremost contemporary architects of China's foreign policy.

Yang Jiechi was admitted to the Shanghai Foreign Language School in 1963. Affected by the Cultural Revolution, he dropped out in 1968 and entered an electric meter factory as a worker. During the four years in the factory, he continued to learn English. Yang was selected in 1972 to attend Shanghai Foreign Language School and later the University of Bath and the London School of Economics. In 2006, He received his PhD from Nanjing University through distance learning while serving as Ambassador to the US.

Wang Yi (王毅; born 1953) has been China's Foreign Minister since 2013 and a state councillor since 2018. He served formerly as China's Vice-Foreign Minister, Ambassador to Japan and Director of the Taiwan Affairs office.

Wang was born in [Beijing](#). After graduating from high school in September 1969, he was sent to Northeast China. He subsequently served in the Northeast Construction Army Corps in Heilongjiang Province for eight years.

In December 1977, Wang returned to Beijing, and in the same year was enrolled in the Department of Asian and African Languages of Beijing International Studies University where he studied the Japanese language, graduating in February 1982 with a Bachelor's degree. He is known to speak fluent English and Japanese.

Wang Huning (王沪宁; born 1955) is China's leading political theorist. he has been a member of the Politburo Standing Committee since 2017. He is also the Chairman of the Central Guidance Commission on Building Spiritual Civilization and served as the director of the Central Policy Research from 2002 to 2020.

Widely regarded as the "Grey Cardinal", Wang is believed to be the chief ideologue of the Communist Party and principal architect behind the official political ideologies of three paramount leaders since the 1990s. He has held significant influence over policy- and decision-making over all three paramount leaders, a rare feat in Chinese politics. Wang was regarded, along with Wang Qishan, as one of the two primary advisors and decision-makers for Xi.

A former academic, Wang was a professor and Dean of the law school at Fudan University. He entered Shanghai Normal University in 1974 to study the French language. He was enrolled in

the Department of International Politics at Fudan University in 1978 to pursue his postgraduate degree while conducting research for the Shanghai Academy of Social Science. He received a Master's degree in law from Fudan University.

After graduation, Wang stayed at Fudan University as an instructor, associate professor, and professor (1981-89). He was named professor of law at age 30 in 1985, becoming the youngest law professor in the history of the university.

Wang served as Chairman of Fudan University's Department of International Politics (1989-94), and as Dean of the law school (1994-95).

In 1988, Wang was a visiting scholar in the US for six months, spending the first three months at the University of Iowa, three weeks at the University of California at Berkeley, and visiting many other universities. During his time in the United States, Wang visited over 30 cities and close to 20 universities. This experience led to his 1991 book *America Against America*.

Source: Wikipedia

Appendix 2

China's GDP in PPP terms (Source: IMF)

Projections by IMF										
Year *	Nominal GDP (billions \$)		PPP GDP (billions Int. \$)		Nominal GDP capita (\$)		PPP GDP capita (Int. \$)		Growth (%)	
	US	China	US	China	US	China	US	China	US	China
2020	20,932.75	14,722.84	20,932.75	24,142.83	63,416	10,484	63,416	17,192	-3.505	2.270
2021	22,675.27	16,642.32	22,675.27	26,656.77	68,309	11,819	68,309	18,931	6.386	8.437
2022	24,003.70	18,013.40	24,003.70	28,779.53	71,896	12,763	71,896	20,392	3.515	5.574
2023	24,892.61	19,423.48	24,892.61	31,031.00	74,130	13,736	74,130	21,945	1.410	5.439
2024	25,790.12	20,910.47	25,790.12	33,351.27	76,362	14,765	76,362	23,549	1.481	5.273
2025	26,719.63	22,481.43	26,719.63	35,748.12	78,660	15,855	78,660	25,212	1.607	5.121
2026	27,659.15	24,127.83	27,659.15	38,189.88	80,959	17,003	80,959	26,913	1.610	4.863

Appendix 3

Relative Military Strengths (Source: SCMP 12th July 2021)

Military expenditure in 2020

US : USD778 billion

China : USD252 billion

Total manpower

US : 1.35 million active US military personnel and 800,000 in its reserve

China : 2 million active personnel in 2019

Technology and equipment are more important than weight of numbers in modern warfare and both countries are reducing the emphasis on manpower.

Ground force

China has been adopting lighter and more powerful automated weapons for its ground forces, shifting much of the operational burden from physical grunt work to digital technology. The United States, with its 6,333 tanks, has the second-largest armour holdings in the world, while China is third with 5,800 tanks, according to Forbes.

Air power

America maintains its edge with more than 13,000 military aircraft, 5,163 of which are operated by the US Air Force. Its forces include the F-35 Lightning and F-22 Raptor, which are among the most advanced combat jets in the world.

China's aviation force is the third largest in the world with more than 2,500 aircraft, of which around 2,000 are combat aircraft.

China's most advanced stealth fighter jet is the J-20. It is producing its own high-thrust turbofan engine which could speed up mass production of the planes.

The two countries are also working on new bombers, with China developing its Xian H-20 strategic bomber.

Meanwhile, the US Air Force released new images and details of its next-generation B-21 Raider stealth bomber on Friday.

Naval power

China now has the world's largest navy, with about 360 ships compared with the US fleet of 297.

But China's numerical advantage is down to smaller vessels, such as coastal patrol ships. When it comes to larger warships the United States has the advantage in numbers, technology and experience.

The US has 11 nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. The carriers are able to accommodate 60 or more aircraft each.

China has just two carriers – the Liaoning and Shandong. Each can carry 24 to 36 J-15 fighter jets.

However, China has plan to equal US naval strength in the Pacific region, launching two dozen large warships – from corvettes and destroyers to huge amphibious landing docks – in 2019 alone. It plans to launch a third aircraft carrier equipped with the most advanced electromagnetic launch catapults and start work on a fourth this year.

Nuclear warheads

The US has the second-largest nuclear arsenal in the world after Russia.

China has not disclosed how many warheads it has; it is believed it has 1,000 in 2021.

Missiles

While the US has far more nuclear warheads, China has a virtual monopoly in one area: ground-based ballistic missiles that can carry out both nuclear and conventional strikes.

Based on the latest intelligence report, China’s hypersonic technology is years ahead of the US’s.

Appendix 4

China – A Threat to the West?

China was not a unified state until Qin *Shihuang* (秦始皇, 259-210 BC) declared himself the first emperor, after he had conquered all of the other warring states. But the Chinese have been proud of their common culture since time immemorial. They always consider themselves the children of the Yellow Emperor, a legendary figure who is said to have ushered in China’s civilisation some 5,000 years ago.

But much of China was, save the silk that was coveted, not known to the Western world – until Marco Polo bragged about his visit and influence on the court of Kublai Khan (1260-1294). (I personally am not convinced that he had been there, since there was no record of his stint in Chinese history during that period.) Before the Sui-Tang (隋-唐) era, China was largely an insular culture, even at the height of its great literary roll-out during the Spring & Autumn period (*Chun Chiu* 春秋, 771-476 BC). It was very much a “middle” kingdom to its people, meaning, anything outside was peripheral. Regardless, the philosophies that sprang out of the period have influenced the way the Chinese conduct themselves as a culture since then. The first sections of the Great Wall of China – for defending against the northern and central Asian tribes – is said to have been built at that time. Qin *Shihuang* joined them up.

During the Sui-Tang period (581-618-907), thanks to the eagerness to learn more about Buddhism, China began to look out in earnest, even though there were already monks like Fa Sien (法顯) (trav. 319-413) and Xuan Zang (玄奘) (trav. 629-645). Yi Jing (義淨) did it during Tang-proper (trav. 671-695).

The Song (宋) dynasty (960-1279) was particularly prolific in inventions. One British scholar even contended that the world's First Industrial Revolution actually began there. (*The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization*, J.M. Hopson, Cambridge University, 2004). But the dynasty was very weak militarily and had to bear the brunt of many invasions from the neighbouring tribes.

After that, Yuan's (元) Kublai Khan extended his conquest to as far as Hungary, but that had very little to do with the Chinese way of life. China under Yuan (1271-1368) was largely a foreign occupation of the country. It could not last long, given the nationalistic nature of Han Chinese.

The Ming (明) emperors (1368-1644) had the opportunity to make China top dog of the world during their era. Unfortunately, the opportunity was squandered and within a hundred years, China had lost its skill in making great ocean-going ships. On top of that, thanks to Admiral Zheng He, who was a Muslim, China helped Islamize Southeast Asia, which hitherto was very much Hindu/Buddhist in culture.

Qing (清) (1644-1912) was Chinese complacency at its worst. While Japan understood the prowess of Western technology, Qing's pseudo-scholar emperors blew their chances. False belief in its superiority made China a laughing-stock. Great humiliation followed, until Mao Zedong came along.

(China weakness prompted two vassal states – Korea and Vietnam – which were largely contemptuous of China after it was weakened by the foreign forces to do away with Chinese characters in their writing. While the Koreans had developed their unique form, Vietnam chose to Romanize Chinese to suit their local phonetic form of *lingua franca*.)

Mao Zedong might be the Zhu Yan-Zhang (朱元璋, or Ming's founding Hongwu Emperor) of China's 20th century, but if the trend continues, Xi Jinping is likely to go down in history as China's Zhou-gong (周公 Duke of Zhou, circa 11th Century BC, the brother of the emperor who solidified the power of the Zhou dynasty (1046-356 BC) and who was esteemed by Kung-zi (Confucius) as the paragon of great governance. If there is going to be a sage-ruler in China's history, he would certainly be the one.

What can we conclude from the last two millennia of China's history? A people who have no territorial design against others, even though they have the ability and opportunity to do so.

	Iraq (& Syria*)	Afghanistan	Yemen	Other Countries**
2001	214	17,500		
2002	252	6500	1	
2003	29,200			
2004	285	86		1 (Pk)
2005	404	176		3 (Pk)
2006	310	2644		7002 (Le,Pk)
2007	1708	5198		9 (Pk,S)
2008	1075	5215		40 (Pk,S)
2009	126	4184	3	5554 (Pk,Pl)
2010	8	5126	2	128 (Pk)
2011	4	5411	13	7763 (Li,Pk,S)
2012		4083	41	54 (Li, Pk,S)
2013		2758	22	32 (Li,Pk,S)
2014	6292*	2365	20	5058 (Li,Pl,Pk,S)
2015	28,696*	947	14,191	28 (Li,Pk,S)
2016	30,743*	1337	14,549	529 (Li,Pk,S)
2017	39,577*	4361	15,969	301 (Li,Pk,S)
2018	8713*	7362	9746	84 (Li,Pk,S)
2019	4729*	7423	3045	65 (Li,S)
2020	1188*	1631	7622	54 (S)
2021	554*	801	4428	1512 (Pl,S)
Total	154, 078*	85,108	69,652	28,217

Numbers of bombs and missiles dropped on other countries by the United States and its allies since 2001. Grand total = 337,055 bombs and missiles. **Other Countries: Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia.

Source: Pearls & Irritations

Biden's prestige has headed south since his inauguration. It is likely that he will lose his second term bid. So has Boris Johnson's in the UK. Weak but Machiavellian leaders have always got to count on crises to stay afloat. Ukraine's **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** comes as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for both Biden and Johnson to steer north again. So they believe.



I might be biased about the origin of the spark in this Ukraine crisis. To me, it started because Ukraine was offering itself to be a member of NATO, a no-no “bottom line” for Russia, and Biden keeps stringing Zelenskyy on, even though not all members of NATO are for it. Do listen to a widely circulated March 2022 interview with John Mearsheimer. Mearsheimer, despite his formidable academic credentials, is someone I hate to watch because of his normally anti-China rhetoric. (I remember watching his debate with Kishore Mahbubani; he was so condescending to a fellow scholar!)

Mearsheimer concluded it is the US that has to bear the primary blame for this crisis. Can you believe that? This interview was hosted by Fox News. Mearsheimer is no saint; I believe there is also a Republican agenda in this interview. (Because of this interview and maybe a subsequent article in *The Economist*, Mearsheimer has been “praised” sky-high by some friends. My response to them: *One swallow does not a summer make!*)

Biden found a willing knife in Zelenskyy. (Biden’s son Hunter has a long association with Ukrainian businesses.) Zelenskyy is ethnically not an East Slav; he is Jewish. And many Ukrainians, like many anti-China Taiwanese, are hostile to their cultural cousins. Biden keeps throwing sweets at Zelenskyy. “*Do come and join NATO.*” And this makes the silly comedian excited. The rest is history.

The following is an article I posted on my blog. Some of the events have long been superseded, but Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is not quite done yet. The sufferings of ordinary Ukrainians are horrendous, my thanks go to Biden.

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

[Pinocchio Joe](#)



Prologue

You can see from the above map that 14 countries joined NATO after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Some were parts of the union; others were members of the Warsaw Pact, which were the satellite states of the union, albeit independent in name. In recent years, Ukraine under Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been clamouring to join NATO. But like Belarus, much of Ukraine is culturally **Rus**. After the 1988-91 Soviet Union dissolution, Ukraine was happy to be aligned with Russia to move forward. But repeated misrules soon gave way to fatigue syndrome and eventually resulted in the election of Zelenskyy, a strongly anti-Russia Jew, to be its President.

Of course, Russia will never allow a country like Ukraine, which is at its doorstep, to be part of NATO. It demands that the US and the Western Europe collectively guarantee this.

Some countries like the leaders of France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Serbia, Hungary, Portugal and Spain understand the gravity of Russia's concern, but leaders who are devoid of a good knowledge of the region's history, like the NATO secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg and the European Union president Ursula von der Leyen, are anxious to enlist Ukraine. The UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is another kettle of fish. He is one who will follow what the US does, no matter who the president is.

The US's grand design is clear for many to see. It sees China as its Number One competitor and it is determined to kill it. And Russia appears to be an accessory in China's rise. Ukraine is a great opportunity for the US to weaken Russia. This is the time to stoke the fire, so Biden thinks. Russia will be weakened, economically at least, even though it may win the war. As for Ukraine, it is a small price for the US to pay.

And for all Biden's diplomatic rhetoric, it is all a big show.

Little does Biden realise that he is about to mount a dangerous tiger.

Pinocchio or Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde?



I was observing Biden's nose the last couple of days, trying to see if it had grown a little longer.

"Russia will invade Ukraine on February 16th." He warned the world. The attack happened a couple of days later, though.

Biden spoke as if his whole heart was with the Ukrainians.

What happened next was not a surprise to many observers, though not as predicted by Biden. Russia officially recognised the two republics bordering Russia - Donetsk and Lugansk - in Eastern Ukraine and launched attacks on several fronts.

Biden and NATO have been completely outmaneuvered by Putin. It is indeed not surprising, since you have nincompoops occupying the White House and the NATO secretariat. (Oslo-born Jens Stoltenberg has been NATO's Secretary-General since 2014 and under his watch President Emmanuel Macron of France was blunt enough to say NATO was brain-dead in an interview in November 2019.)

Even the Ukrainian president Zelenskyy, whose shortsighted anxiousness to join NATO has precipitated Russia's agitation, was incredulous about Biden's "definitive" February 16th call. As the President, how could he not feel it if there was an impending attack? *And hey Buddy Biden, where is the evidence?* he asked. The havoc that has been created is doing much damage to the country's economy; notwithstanding, Biden and his cry-wolf boy Blinken are now insisting the invasion has now been slightly delayed – because Putin is afraid of the "all out" punishment the US will mete out to Russia if it fires a shot!

As if! America has sanctioned Russia umpteen times! It is still surviving. Biden is welcomed to do anything he thinks fit. Biden and his nincompoops do not understand the concept of 声东击西 (*sheng-dōng jī-xī*) or make a feint to the east but attack in the West, a strategy which Putin has employed before – in the annexation of Crimea.

The world knows Biden's recent bravos are all Pinocchio talks. He and his allies are taking the world on a merry-go-round. (There is also no need for us to talk about these minions. We all know they will dance to his tune no matter how bad he plays it.) All his talk about seeking a diplomatic solution to solve the crisis are just a smokescreen; he really hopes Russia will invade Ukraine. His crocodile tears can fool few men. There is an old Chinese proverb that goes back to the Warring States Period (approx. 476-203 BC) – *yù-bàng xiāng-zhēng, yú-wēng dé-lì* (鹬蚌相争 渔翁得利), or when a snipe and clam quarrel, the fisherman benefits!



Make no mistake; Biden needs the war badly. The invasion will cause Americans to be distracted from their domestic woes – chiefly the Trump/Republicans challenge, the uncontrollable coronavirus pandemic, and the inflation – and the opportunity to regain the hegemony of the US Dollar, make the American military-industrial complex richer and more powerful, and ultimately, deplete and consume Russia to such an extent that it would not be of consequence in China and Russia's unwritten alliance.

Biden's mid-term blues are obvious, unless he can do something fast. But everything seems to be slipping out of his hold. It is a situation that has largely been created by Biden himself, for a lack of foresight and wisdom. He creates bush fires everywhere.

When Ukraine first became independent, it was happy to count on Russia economically and militarily. (It chose to destroy its own nuclear stockpile and capability.) Ukrainians and Russians are East Slavs; they share cultural affinities. By itself Ukraine had hardly been a nation *per se* before. Unfortunately, corruption and autocracy of its earlier pro-Russia leaders put paid to that trust or affinity; many began to throw their support to the Western-funded anti-Russia orange uprisings. Zelenskyy's installation effectively turned Ukraine into an enemy of Russia.

But Russia's stance has been clear from Day 1. As long as Ukraine remains non-NATO, it will leave it alone, for it is simply unable to accept a huge NATO member right at its doorstep. (Remember the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 – when President John Kennedy also caused the Soviet Union to remove all its ballistic missiles in Cuba for a similar

reason?) Zelenskyy is allowing himself to be used as a pawn by Biden in the game. Few ask why. I always think the fact is that Zelenskyy is not thinking like an East Slav (being Jewish).

Unlike the peanut states in the Baltics, Ukraine is substantial enough to stand as equal to Russia. But good neighbourliness must prevail. It must not allow itself to be a member of an anti-Russia alliance which NATO is. NATO is a Cold War creature; with the collapse of the Soviet Union, its shelf life has already expired but America just wants to use it to control not only Russia but also Europe. As the situation evolves, Ukraine might have no choice but to allow the Donbas region to become independent. *What is the big deal since most of the people are not loyal to Ukraine anyway?* Was it not because of this that Ukraine, Georgia and the Baltic states had their day in the first place?

China is a friend to both Russia and Ukraine. To deescalate the tension in Ukraine, Russia wants the West to respect the Minsk agreements (Minsk Protocol and Minsk II). But these agreements were meant to stop the fighting in Ukraine's Donbas region, not to solve the bigger Russia-Ukraine conflict. (Donbas is a region where the communities mostly speak Russian; small wonder the separatists are so loyal to Russia even to this day!) China has also asked for the spirit to be upheld. However, this is not going to work. The crisis is bigger than that, but the solution is in fact easier for all well-wishers to see, a *sine qua non*, in other words, Ukraine must remain non-NATO!

There is a political commentator by the name Li Jian-Nan in Taiwan. To me he is one of the shrewdest political observers/philosophers I have come across. He frequently talks about the China-Taiwan relationship and world affairs in general. He appears often on Facebook's "Watch" platform.

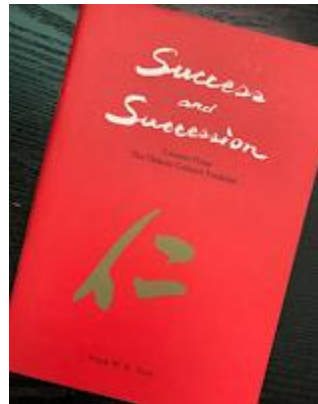


On the Ukraine "crisis", he spoke about the physiognomy of Biden. He says Biden lacks the "qi" [气] that a winning fighter would always exude in a contest. (*Qi* is abstract; practitioners of *qi* would tell you that it is a form of mystical force that would stream through the body's meridians and gather at their palms for instant mobilisation to help fight or heal something. Its manifestation – good or bad – can also be observed from the face of the person.) He says Biden's facial *qi* appears to be that of dead *qi* – the type that manifests in the face of a to-be loser.

The fortune-teller in me says Biden is going through a period when his facial giveaway is not **wāng** [旺] (showing capacity for great breakouts in terms of luck or fortune). Indeed, his "tiger-general" Blinken has the look of a defeatist – someone who appears and speaks like a sheep that is being herded to a slaughtering house. How can their faces

exude *wāng*? To many of us, Bliken is the classic example of the boy who cried wolf. Who can believe all his rules-based rubbish?

The late *Tan Sri* Frank W.K. Tsao who, together with Robert Kuok, helped the Malaysian government to start the Malaysian International Shipping Corporation (MISC) had authored a little red book called ***Success and Succession***. He wrote about the traits or virtues that are necessary in entrepreneurship and leadership. They anchor around eight Chinese characters for the former and five for the latter. The eight for entrepreneurship are: 認 (*Rèn* – education, knowledge, understanding); 忍 (*Rěn* – patience, commitment); 銀 (*Yín* – capital); 人 (*Rén* – people, human resources); 慎 (*Shèn* – prudence, critical thinking, careful and realistic planning); 誠 (*Chéng* – mutual obligations and responsibilities, sincerity, commitment, integrity); 勤 (*Qín* – diligence, perseverance); and 儉 (*Jiǎn* – thrift). They are self-explanatory, and I do not propose to talk about them here since they are not relevant to this discourse.



He also singles out these five traits as *sine qua non* of great leadership, namely, 智 (*Zhì* – wisdom); 信 (*Xìn* – credibility); 仁 (*Rén* – compassion); 勇 (*Yǒng* – courage); and 嚴 (*Yán* – discipline).

Biden and his team fail in every one of these categories. Despite his age, Biden has little wisdom to show, whether in domestic issues or foreign affairs. He is unable to close the Republican-Democrat divide, rein in violence, convince non-allies of his genuineness in solving global issues. His administration constantly flip-flops over foreign policies and this has destroyed whatever is left in their “sincerity” 信 (*Xìn*) 誠 (*Chéng*) piggy bank. And his recent decision to appropriate or confiscate half the Afghan foreign assets has also put paid any virtue, or 仁 (*Rén*), in him. I would even venture to add another missing human goodness in them: 善 [*Shàn*]. The US has destroyed the country. Most of the people are dirt poor. Yet, he can be so heartless. I have no sympathy for the Taliban, though. My heart goes out to the millions who are now being punished because they are Afghans! The people who were guilty of the September 11th Terror were not Afghans!

Was he able to exercise 勇 (Yǒng – courage) when he said he would not send American troops to fight for the Ukrainians? He has even asked all Americans, including its embassy staff, to leave Ukraine! Does not this speak volumes of his courage, or the lack of it? In Chinese, 勇 is complemented by another character 敢 (Gǎn), which denotes daring. *Ha-ha!* Yet, he says he will do everything to stop Russia from invading Ukraine! Words are cheap, Joe!

I am happy to leave it to the Americans to decide who they want their commander-in-chief to be. But in the international arena, every silliness of his affects all of us.

America was a Camelot to many of us in yesteryear. America's democracy was that of exemplariness. During the Soviet days, it was "hope" to many. But its present breed of politicians has destroyed all that. And its brand of democracy, according to Prof Hong Hai, is chaotic to the core now.

Biden is a through-and-through low-end American politician – devoid of principles and morality, not to mention wisdom.

I believe the Chinese leadership has already concluded that Biden is most dangerous and untrustworthy. Whereas Trump is only egoistic, Biden is the proverbial body of still water that runs deep. Trump acted according to his instinct and was prepared to back down if he had personal gains to make. (His administration granted many waivers to the chip makers to supply to China!) Biden is cold and calculating. He takes counsel from think-tanks like the Rand Corporation, whose highly paid armchair strategists are forever doing all sorts of scenario planning to frighten incumbent presidents so that they will do what they propose to retard China. Knowing that they can no longer fight China intellectually and transparently, they have to resort to hitting China below the belt. And Blinken is a bad student in trying to employ this strategem, for his inadequacy is written all over his face each time he speaks. He doesn't even know how to pull a straight face!

Apart from the diehards, many countries are already distancing themselves from the US foreign policy on China. Are Biden and his hyenas not aware of this? Obviously, the answer is no. He says he would not compromise on his brand of human rights, aka liberal democracy. His mission to subdue China

sounds like a religious crusade. But I suspect it is all anchored on Machiavellianism and not on any truth. To me, he and his team simply have a very sinister design. All they want is to ask others to die for them! And they are talking of saving the world from China's autocratic rulers.

Be that as it may, the war in Ukraine is also telling China a cold truth. When push comes to shove, all the Western nations and poodles all over the world will fall in line with the US. Sanctions will be crippling, because these hyenas do not play by the rules which have been set up by them in the first place. Even the supposedly neutral Switzerland has also jumped onto the bandwagon to sanction Russia in this Ukraine crisis. And by cutting Russia off the SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) system, and by freezing or confiscating its as well as its citizens' overseas assets, America and its allies are in fact telling the world that assets outside one's home country can be expropriated from you just because your country is being sanctioned the way Russia has been subject to. *Chinese billionaires take note!*

FOR EYES ONLY,

CHAPTER 8

PREPARING FOR THE NEW *XIONG-NU*

The *Xiong-Nu* [匈奴, which itself is a pejorative term meaning “fierce slaves”] were a tribal confederation of nomadic peoples who inhabited the eastern Eurasian Steppe from the 3rd century BC to the late 1st century AD. They were also active in areas which are now part of Siberia, Inner Mongolia, Gansu and Xinjiang. Around 209 BC Modu Chanyu, their supreme leader founded the *Xiong-nu* Empire.

The *Xiong-nu* were fierce mounted warriors who were said to be able to muster as many as 300,000 horseback archers on their periodic intrusions into North China, and they were more than a match for the much less-maneuverable chariots of the Chinese. The completion of the Great Wall along the whole of China’s northern frontier during the Qin dynasty slowed but did not stop the *Xiong-nu*. *Xiong-nu* raids against China continued periodically until the Han emperor Wu-di (reigned 141/140-87/86 BC) initiated a fiercely aggressive policy against the nomads, sending expeditions into central China to outflank them and to negotiate alliances with their enemies.

Today China faces a new *Xiong-nu* threat! This time, the new *Xiong-nus* are not from its northern frontiers. Some are in fact far flung. The new *Xiong-nu* confederation comprises principally the US, the UK and Japan, with several other small “tribes” in tow. If China does not prepare for this new threat, it may spell the beginning of another century of humiliation.

The First Salvo – The Detention of Meng Wanzhou

On 1 December 2018, Huawei’s Meng Wanzhou was detained upon arrival at Vancouver by Canada on a US extradition request for fraud and conspiracy to circumvent US sanctions against Iran. She was held until 24th September 2021. A Chinese princess was held captive by the new *Xiong-nu*!

Technological blockades followed. At the beginning, Trump was still “negotiable” and some of his officials were sympathetic to the commercial

needs of China. Soon reality sank it; the new president was even more determined to subjugate China.

China has been awakened!

I had wanted to write a “masterpiece” about the reemergence of China. Command of English was not my strong suit, even though my education, save for the primary school years, was in English. Even until now, I have always had to check with my wife on spelling and basic grammar. Hwa was educated totally in English, and she obtained an A1 in her Overseas School Certificate, which was a rare achievement those days. To court her, when both of us were in our sixth form years, I obviously had to learn better English! I was struggling between “The Dragon has been Awakened” or “The Dragon has Awakened”. I consulted my good friend Lilian Low, a Malaysian-born Singapore author who has written a book called ***The M Quotient***. It is all about the successful fellow Muareans in Singapore. Yes, I should use the former, for it was the US politicians who had jolted China to be aware of this big bad wolf. I was gratified that it clocked more than a hundred thousand visitors. Below is the post.

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

The Dragon has been Awakened!

Let China sleep. For when she wakes, the world will tremble.

This line has always been attributed to Napoleon Bonaparte, circa 1816. (No scholar, however, is certain that he actually said it!)

* * * * *

Even though most of the stuff they use in their everyday life carries a “Made in China” product origin line in the package, many people around the world still think China is a poor Third World country. You ask an average Joe in Australia, chances are that he has not heard of BeiDou, neither does he know that China has landed a craft in Mars, or that its space station is now orbiting the Earth. I am pretty sure that he also does not know his Wi-Fi router carries a Huawei logo. Before the current trade tension, roughly one-third of Australia’s exports went to China. Yet, this average Joe will tell you China is a big bad wolf. *Has he visited China?* No.

This is not peculiar to Australia; this ignorance is everywhere – right from the US heartland to Modi's India.

In the Nancy-and-Ted (House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senator Ted Cruz) world of America, the only China they know is their Chinatowns, the dragon dance, or the noisy tourists from China they see in downtown malls. Many don't even realise the gadgets they pick up from the local DIY outlets are from China, save that they appear to be very inexpensive compared to those from yesteryear! Otherwise, China is the yellow peril that CNN and Fox News are constantly calling out: the genocides in Xinjiang (when perhaps three quarters of America do not know where on Earth it is), the suppression of democracy in Hong Kong, the risk posed by Huawei, and the theft of American knowledge by Chinese scholars and students in American universities, etc. Sooner or later, they will also add Tibet and Macau to their "concern" list.

There is a common denominator in this demonisation of China: their news media. I have already written much about its mercenariness, suffice it to say it is getting worse by the day and the paranoia has begun to cascade down to non-Western reporters and journalists, who have, advertently or inadvertently, become a tool of the politically and financially powerful anti-China forces in the US, Australia and Europe. (Several who write for the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal* and CNN, or host for Al Jazeera, for example, are Chinese, ethnically! You can also discern subtle scepticism – borne more out of political biases than objective reporting – from the *South China Morning Post*, CNA and *The Straits Times* from time to time.)



Left: Remains of the Summer Palace today; Right: Opium addicts.

Where does all this anti-China zeal come from?

During his presidency Bill Clinton was already conscious of the need for America to contain China. He didn't give China an easy ticket to join the World Trade Organization. By Barack Obama's time, that awareness had already been cemented; his Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement was an obvious attempt to marginalise China. But the world at large was still a little benign about China's reemergence. Everybody was happy that household goods that were once considered "once-in-

a-lifetime" treats had become totally affordable. And Chinese tourists were filling up their hotels and swarming their souvenir shops. And although many may not like it, the value of their homes had shot up, thanks to the influx of wealthy Chinese who bought into their neighbourhood to house their schoolgoing children, or park their money.

Even then, there was this live-and-let-live atmosphere until Donald Trump came around...

Trump is a through-and-through zero-sum businessman. He entered politics not because he had a strong ideological inclination. He did so to prove that he could run America the way he ran his business, a business which we in Asia would describe as one that has "ten shit tanks but with only nine covers". Nonetheless, American press loves superficialities. The "Apprentice" series that he starred in became the K-pop of the mentality-shallow class there. What he saw during his official visit to China must have frightened him. China must be stopped! Trump's global perspective is narrow. He focused on trade, and he felt America could bring China to its knees. Nonetheless, the leaders of the UK, Canada, Japan and Australia were happy to echo him. The Five Eyes alliance was an intelligence-sharing vehicle between the five English-speaking countries of the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which evolved during the Cold War to keep an eye on the world in general and the Soviet Union in particular. *How handy it is to use it against China!* But New Zealand is not fully committed to this cause. *Never mind, we have a ready replacement: Japan! And to ring-fence China, we invite India!*

The QUAD was born.

Overnight, the Chinese government is demonised as the Chinese Communist Party. And soon, protesters-turned-rioters surfaced in Hong Kong to fight for democracy, and a Uyghur genocide badge was pinned on China.

Many in China had thought Joe Biden would be voice of reason when he became President. Alas, how disappointed they are now.

Biden is in fact more Trump than Trump. He is now a Sinophobia by any yardstick. He knew he couldn't do much harm to China in the area of trade. He is rallying the Five Eyes and the QUAD to halt China on the technological and military front. I believe all of us have read enough about his actions to either agree or disagree on this description of him and there is no need for me to elaborate further.

But it may be good to reflect a little on history...

First, the British...

The British and Germans have an intimate knowledge of China and the Chinese, thanks to their 19th century gunboat diplomacy in China. However, unlike Angela Merkel, whose stateswoman stature is admired well beyond Germany regardless of race, creed or colour, Boris Johnson is a parochial politician. His flip-flop over Huawei is a clear-cut case of the man's indecisiveness and ever-readiness to please America at any cost. And the British and Irish ought to take note: the South Asians are returning to rule them! (I flew into Birmingham Airport not too long ago; I thought I was flying into an India of the 22nd century. I Hope my South Asian friends take this as a compliment! I understand Johnson is also one-quarter Turk.)

Joe Biden is making every attempt to provoke China in the South China Sea, and this is an opportunity for Johnson to ingratiate himself further with the former. A show-of-might fleet there is the British's nostalgic walk down the memory lane of an era when they were exercising gunboat diplomacy at will on China. But this is 2021! They have forgotten that their HMS Repulse and HMS Prince of Wales were sunk by Japan without much ado. Can their HMS Queen Elizabeth and its flotilla now loitering right in front of China's front yard stand a chance if China decides to test its DF-21D missiles on them?

Second, the Japanese...

The terror that was inflicted by the Japanese army in China and Southeast Asia, especially to their Chinese populations, is still vividly remembered by some who are still alive today. China was in a sorry state for more than a hundred years before Mao Tze-tung took over in 1949. The later Manchu government was totally inept, and the country was constantly ravaged by natural disasters. The warlords and the Kuomintang were happy to see the country burnt while they fought for territories and looted the masses. Whereas in Japan, the Meiji Restoration had already propelled the nation to be on par with the Western powers in terms of sophistication.

The Japanese had a grand design to rule East and Southeast Asia and even Australia under their Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere ambition. In their process of invading China, they began to cultivate a contempt for the Chinese – borne out of the filth they saw in Chinese lives. To the Japanese, Chinese were sub-human, hence the slaughter without conscience.

And the US...

To the US, the tens of thousands who died at their hands – the Afghans, the Syrians, the Libyans, etc. in the Middle East, and the Vietnamese and Laotians in Indochina – and the millions they caused the local regimes/dictatorships to exterminate in Indonesia, Thailand, Korea, Taiwan, Central and South America and Africa, all in the name of fighting Communist dominos (see Bevins, V, *The Jakarta Method*, 2020) are just inconvenient collateral damage in their mission or zeal to uphold their concept of goodness to the world.

And Down Under...

For years there was a White Australian policy until it was formally dismantled by the Whitlam Government in 1973. Successive governments have been friendly until the present one came into power. Even then, Scott Morrison did not lend himself as an attack dog at the beginning, even though several of his cabinet members were already making strong anti-China statements from time to time. Things came to a boil when Trump came to power and Morrison was happy to lend a big hand to help Trump contain China. There has been no looking back since then. Australia is now a staunch American ally. Many would ask, why would Australia do it when one-third of its goods are shipped to China? But if you look into history, Australia has always been a willing partner to the UK and the US: during the First and Second World Wars, the Vietnam War, and more recently the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

And day in day out, you read and watch incredulous stories about China spun by the Murdoch papers and channels!

The Real Winners of the Genocide/Atrocity Medals..

If there is such a thing as a Genocide medal to be awarded in modern history, I am pretty sure the US, Canada, and Australia with their treatment of natives would have made it to the podium. And if there is such a thing as an Atrocity Olympiad, then Japan with its deeds in China and Southeast Asia during World War II would certainly qualify to be Number One, with Germany as a close second. But in the Unconscionable Killing category, the US is surely the undisputed champion for the last fifty years. Whereas Germany and to some degree Australia and Canada have expressed their guilt, Japan is still most reluctant to admit what they have done during World War II. To their misplaced mind, they were trying to do these victims a good deed!



Left: Cotton slavery in America; Right: Who has not seen this picture?



Left: Courtesy of King Leopold II; Right: Australian guilt?



Left: Miserable China; Right: Where have these Canadian children gone?

And the last of the QUAD: of all people, Modi's India!

And in Narendra Modi's India, it is all about tall poppies. *How can China be more successful than us?* The most formidable names in the world are headed by Indians – Google, Microsoft, Pepsi, Harvard Business School, and even the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore, which was founded by Chinese. *We were the first Asians to reach the Martian orbit. How can China be more advanced than us?*

China has already moved on, yet in Modi's India, their image of China is not different from the Americans': Blue ants and sweatshops. Hope more Indians will visit China. Seeing is believing.

I remember when I was in sixth form, many of our science textbooks were from India. When I was doing my Engineering degree, we knew many of the pioneers of our *Keretapi Tanah Melayu* (Malaysia's railway authority) came from the Indian Railway.

And there was this Non-Aligned Movement (NOM) during which China's Zhou Enlai and India's Jawaharlal Nehru were together at the forefront to resist "imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference or hegemony as well as stand against great power and bloc politics. More recently you had the BRICS Summits where the leaders of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa would meet to promote political, commercial, and cultural cooperation between the five nations. No one doubted India's non-aligned mindset.

However, the recent border skirmish with China and its inability to manage the coronavirus pandemic must have jolted Modi and turned him into an anti-China fanatic. *Your enemy's enemy is your friend*, how true this is! The US became an overnight friend, hence the formation of QUAD hoodlums.

Many scholars contend that India was never a nation until it gained independence from the British. A nation as defined by the Cambridge Dictionary is “a country, especially when thought of as a large group of people living in one area with their own government, language, traditions, etc.” In another dictionary, it is “a large body of people, associated with a particular territory, that is sufficiently conscious of its unity to seek or to possess a government peculiarly its own.” To a hair-splitter like me, India is not a nation in the strictest sense of the word. It is a country of many peoples – in terms of religion, culture, language, history and what-have-you. In the Tang Dynasty, circa 600-900 AD, there was already a strong bond between China and "India". The glue of this bond, as we all know, was Buddhism. I honestly believe most Indians today do not think that historical foundation is significant enough for posterity.

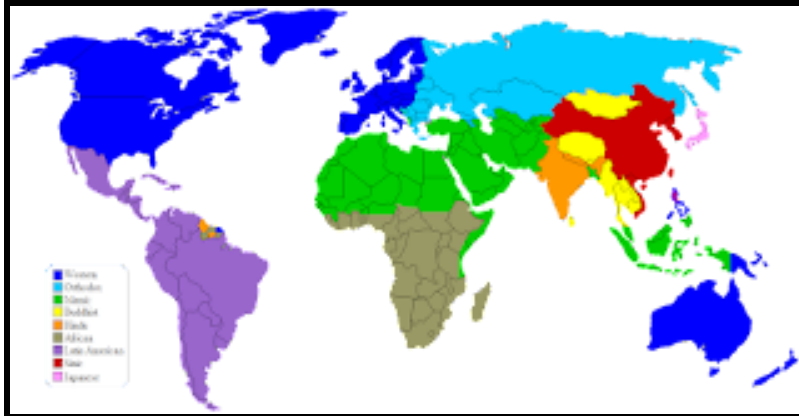
How do the Rest of the World See China today?

Far away in Africa and Central America, the China and Chinese they notice or understand come in the form of images of quiet and hardworking technicians putting up infrastructure in their towns or running the mines in their outback. The West is saying that the Chinese are there to strip Africa's resources. Yes, the minerals are being mined and stacked at ports waiting for shipment to China. But do the Chinese exploit them like what the colonial powers had done? Remember how cruel King Leopold II of Belgium was to the Africans? And the number of slaves that ended up in America's cotton fields?

Come on, Americans and Europeans, you should not just parrot what your government and armchair journalists say about genocide or forced labour to China! You need to go there if you want to know the truth!

Waking up China...

Samuel Huntington talks about the looming clash of civilisations (2003). His argument, if I remember correctly, is based on the incompatibility that he sees in many aspects of the cultures of the nine distinct civilisations that he has mapped out. I supposed he was more alarmed about the widening of the value gap between the Judah-Christian West and the Islamic world than the rest. That was the prevailing concern then; for Islam was increasingly being seen as a new world destabilising force. The emergence of China was not apparent then.



Clash of Civilisations.

However, after the ascension of Obama, the pivot was shifted to a rising China. Only two civilisations are in danger of clashes – the Western one, led by the US; and China's. That need to check China became Trump's political capital. And instead of rationalising the whole need, Biden went on to build on it. He wants to outdo Trump, lest he becomes a one-term president.

The clarion call has been issued. At one corner is the US's brand of evangelism, and at the corner is the reluctant China, guided by its Before-Christ, principally Confucian, philosophy.

Had Trump and Biden not burnt the dragon's whiskers, China would have been content to just plod on to fulfil its *xiao-kang* (小康) or "moderately comfortable" ambition. Since time immemorial, save the century of humiliation in the 1800s to 1900s, China had always been an advanced nation of its time, but it had never wanted to go beyond the Himalayas in its southwest, the Steppes and deserts in its west and north, and the seas in its east. *It was an agricultural nation! People have to till the land!* It built the Great Wall to deter the constant threat posed by the Mongols and the central Asian tribes. If the Chinese had had the Western mindset, many parts of Southeast Asia, Australia and East Africa would have been China's colonies for a long time. The three hundred years after the Ming dynasty were an aberration in China's nature to better themselves.

Now China realises it needs more than its formidability in supply-chains to do so. It cannot count on anyone anymore. It has to build its own capabilities in chip-making, advanced jet engines, military, and space explorations, among others. The US is going all out to choke China off on all these fronts, particularly the chip supplies. But it fails to basically understand this reality: many of the scientists and engineers in chip-making industries, from machines to design to production, are ethnically Chinese. Now that China has made up its mind to be self-sufficient in this field, it is only a matter of time before this DNA returns to China and helps make it Number One in this technology.

Ditto on military capabilities. The way the US is rallying its partners to demonstrate their naval power right at China's doorstep – all in the name of navigational freedom and “protecting” Taiwan – forces China to invest in defence and space capabilities and to strengthen its resolve to take back Taiwan. Had the West and Japan not been encouraging Taiwan to go independent, China would have been happy to allow Taiwan to prosper under the one-country-two-systems arrangements. And Hong Kong would not have had to pass those laws to ward off Western hypocrisy.

America is seeing a Chinese ghost everywhere it goes. It is gripped by hallucinations. And this has made its policy totally incoherent. So far, only Canada, the UK, Japan, Australia and some minion countries in Europe are happy to become America's blood brothers. Much of the rest of the world is paying lip service. They simply must think where the food on the family table is going to come from.

While Trump's focus was on trade and technology, Biden's is all out blockades. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is like an ant on a hot plate – right behind Wangi Yi everywhere the latter went. But he is not achieving much of what Biden has asked. Wendy Sherman looked ill at ease in China, despite her formidable reputation. Lloyd Austin looks as clumsy; he simply does not know the protocols. A case in point is their visit to the ASEAN countries. There is a cultural wisdom in these countries, having lived side by side with China for hundreds of years. America has never paid much attention to them, and now it is trying to woo them to its cause or mission. These countries have millions of people of Chinese descent in their midst. They are loyal to their respective countries, but many are also proud of the civilisation they belong to. And they know only a strong China can help them to stand tall. And the silliest of all America's diplomatic attempts – to try to influence Russia to go against China. Vladimir Putin easily puts Biden into his pocket! Putin is a leader extraordinaire. He is made of solid steel!

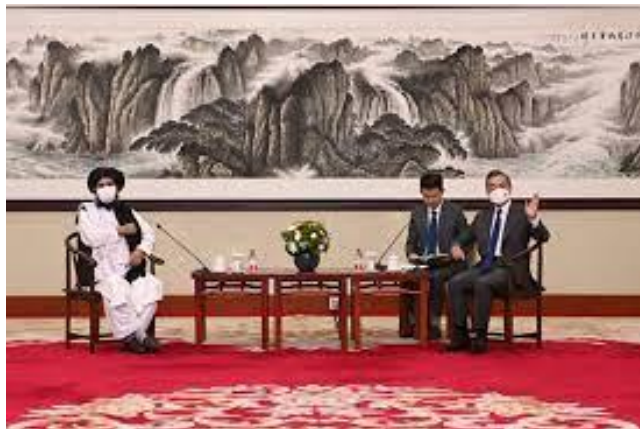
The US is a country that is deeply divided – between Democrats and Republicans, between races, and between extreme wealth and abject poverty. Its very foundation is indeed at risk of crumbling. Its cities and infrastructure are decaying. Its finances are in deep sinkholes. An important pillar of the economy, namely, Chinese talents, is having second thoughts about their future in America. A pandemic is still ravaging. Yet, it keeps looking back to whack China, just because it is pacing behind in the run.



Just another Black life?

The "Way-of-Nature" Forward

Look at the picture below. Maybe it can offer us some wisdom. Few had heard of the Taliban, despite the fact that not even the mighty Soviet Union could subdue them – until September 11th, 2001. Afghanistan was blamed for the al-Qaeda terror. The country was duly invaded. At that time, the world was on America's side.



No Tuxedo?

However, after spending a trillion US dollars and sacrificing some 2,500 American lives in Afghanistan, America is now calling it quits. The Taliban have always been thought of as a bunch of medieval Islamic fighters who are incapable of institutionalised governance. That may be so, but they are certainly not idiots. They must have thought very deeply about their future before they made this trip to China, which has been branded anti-Islam by the West in the first place.

It is time for the leaders in the West, Japan and India to realise the world has changed. In this Internet world, no lies can stand long. America's hegemony is going to be a thing of the past. No ideology can last forever. Neither can any doctrine. To the Chinese, nothing is set in concrete. The Ying and Yang forces are at work all the time. Its *I-Ching* (Scripture or Sutra of Change) has for millennia advocated the constant need for one to adapt – when the situation arises. And their concept of crisis is written in these two characters: 危机 (*Wei-Ji*), literally risk-opportunity. The Western paradigm tends to be linear; the Chinese, multi-dimensional.

The world economy has largely been a zero-sum game in the past – one country would gain at the expense of the other, or vice versa. The Chinese believe in win-win, which they have abundantly demonstrated since their joining of the World Trade Organization.

The West can never change China, neither China is interested to change the West or the rest of the world, as it has declared time and again. What you are seeing in China today is just the emergence of another Confucian dynasty in Chinese history. Its rulers are not emperors; they emerged through a multi-layered filter – from village functionaries to city bureaucrats to provincial and finally national decision-makers. The "emperor" is simply the most hard-driven, the *crème de la crème*, of the lot. And most importantly, Xi is not vulnerable to short- or even long-term political pressures or threats, from both within the country or outside. He has cemented his place.

Thanks to the failure of the Soviet Union, Communism has always been thought of as an evil system which the masses will naturally reject when they are liberated, like what has happened with East Germany. This has also held true in hitherto satellite states of the Soviet Union in west and north-west Europe. However, the chances of that happening to China are NIL. If the West understands the two characters that define Communism in Chinese, namely 共产, taken together, the term simply means "produce together [for the greater good of society]". Who can fault that sense of a mission?

Japan understands Confucianism and much of its people's lives also revolves around the ethos of this philosophy. Chinese forgive but do not forget. If Japan can own up to their World War II guilt and make it a point to live with China without playing the US card, then the future of the region is certainly assured, thanks to East Asia's great strengths in STEM. South Korea is a very strong part of this equation, and its unification with North Korea should be genuinely encouraged.

If Modi can shake off his pseudo-sainthood and humble himself to learn a little from China and the Indians in Singapore, then Indians can also look forward to a better life faster. It is now lulled by the West's constant pats on their back. No, *The Economist's* praises are shallow; you need to

transform your country and society and that's a long haul. Who else can show you the way? Think about it. Deluding yourself and acting beyond your paygrade is the surest way to fall flat.

The West has their niche. Its universities will continue to be the incubators of great scientific ideas and breakthroughs. But the US is in a precarious position. Biden says he protects Asians, but perception is everything. The Chinese simply don't feel safe in America and many parts of the Western world today. The US needs to reconcile itself to the fact that it is no longer able, or that it is even necessary, to contain China. It should just live in the world as a prosperous and don't-bother-me gentleman in the upmarket neighbourhood of the city, just as they did before World War II.

As for the rest of the world, be yourself. You don't have to join or attach yourself to any alliance or coalition. Slavery and subserviency are things of the past, and nobody can exploit your resources anymore. *You want? You pay.* Some may still harbour delusions about themselves, about their faith, about their race, or about their destiny, no one is going to give two hoots what they think – if they don't work hard enough to earn them.

* * * * *

Acknowledgement

My good friend Lilian Low, who is the author of *The M Quotient: From Muar to Singapore* (2017), helped me to put many pieces together. Without her input, the message I wanted to send would have been quite incoherent. My many thanks to Lilian.

In my May 2020 article, in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, I write about China's resolve in combating a pandemic, even as it has to fight with a prejudiced world on the origin of the virus. The article is obviously dated, but I hope its inclusion will give readers a sense of the timeline and a contrast of the state of preparations of countries and societies during that very trying time.

China was already showing the world that it would not be cowed by anyone or anything. But the world prefers to wear blinkers...

Friday, May 8, 2020

Only Resilience Will Prevail

The date the earliest known person to have fallen ill with symptoms of coronavirus in Wuhan is said to be 1st December 2019; however, some believe that the first case happened about two weeks earlier, on 17th November 2019. China officially alerted the World Health Organization about the outbreak on 31st December 2019. The first death occurred on 11th January.

The WHO declared the outbreak a pandemic on 30th January, after some 8,000 cases with a death toll of 170 were reported. And within a few days new cases were detected in many countries.

To date, confirmed cases stand at 3.8 million and the number of deaths about 270,000. The numbers are still climbing by the day. The worst hit is the US, where the respective figures are 1.3 million and 77,000. The UK is another sad story. Its deaths have surpassed 30,000; yet the light at the end of the tunnel is still so dim. Italy, Spain, and France appear to be recovering, but the toll has been very heavy. Iran, once thought to be a basket case, has also fared not too badly compared to these first world economies. The outlook is still uncertain, given the conditions and politicians' mentality in many parts of the US and countries like Brazil.

In China, where the COVID-19 is said to have first occurred, the figures are 84,000 and 4,643 respectively. No death has been recorded for many days. South Korea and Taiwan have done well to contain the spread. Ditto many countries in Southeast Asia and Australia and New Zealand. Japan appears to be a disappointment, so is Singapore, which at one time was hailed as the gold standard in the management of this pandemic. There is still a big question mark in the case of Indonesia even though President Joko Widodo is a very enlightened leader.

Save the need to wear a face mask when venturing out, life is more or less back to normal in China, South Korea and Taiwan. East and Southeast Asia and Europe are also easing up on their lockdowns. Politicians in the US are still unable to get their act together; on the issue when to open up again, each state is left to its own devices, although Donald Trump had earlier pretended that he was the one calling the shots.

How each country has been managing the containment of COVID-19 speaks volumes of the resilience, or the lack of it, of that society.

China had Wuhan completely locked down by 23rd January, when the whole nation was about to celebrate Lunar New Year (25th January), less than a month after the outbreak was officially reported to the WHO. When the top Beijing official was interviewed about the need, I could see her professionalism. Personal freedom simply has to give way to the greater good of society, something that many in the West, especially its media, just cannot understand. The people of

Wuhan have emerged with greater thoughtfulness for neighbours and the community. If not for the timely decision, China would have suffered hundreds of thousands, if not millions, in terms of death numbers.

Italy, Spain, France and the UK are amongst the most sophisticated societies in the world. They have many world-class medical researchers and clinicians. Yet, they fall flat on this count. Why? They have a large percentage of elderly in their population and these people are most vulnerable to such virus attacks. Their hospitals, though world class, are quite ill-equipped. They did not even have enough personal protection equipment to handle sudden outbreaks. More importantly, they had lost too much precious time to flatten the curve! Some of their leaders had also been quite apathetic when the outbreak was first announced. Boris Johnson is a case in point. Simply put, the Europeans have been too complacent for too long.

Donald Trump should go down in history as the most inept leader of all time. I do not think he has any feeling for those who have tragically died from this virus. Americans are dying by the thousands each day, yet, his appearance for his media briefing every day is all for his re-election bid. Publicity, publicity, publicity. And China is his bogeyman, for he knows the Pareto Theory well. 80% of Americans do not bother to think. Even amongst the elites and scholars, everything about China is bad. This is not helped by what is coming out from China. By nature, Chinese tend to be defensive when confronted, even though they do not need to be. And many of its diplomats and thinkers are not able to articulate well in English. Of course, they needed time to ascertain that COVID-19 was in fact a new deadly outbreak. Of course, there are speculations (and studies done by respected researchers) that Wuhan may not be the source of the virus. Of course, they have not understated the infection and death numbers, save for some initial mis-tallies. (Why should they?) They should just sit back and allow Science to speak and not succumb to Trump's bait. By denying, you add fuel to Trump's and his sycophants' furnaces. You can REJECT CATEGORICALLY when the evidence is there for all to see.

Kishore Mahbubani in his latest book *Has China Won?* has painted both the US and China very well. The US thinks it can behave in any manner it wants; on the other hand, China seems to be losing its cool.

Only two Western countries are managing the crisis well – New Zealand and Australia. I would attribute this to their understanding of Asia. The two societies are also generally more intellectual than their American counterparts. Of course, there are also many China haters and xenophobes there.

Singapore was the poster boy in the initial days. But strangely, they have totally overlooked the conditions in their foreign workers' dormitories and thus have allowed the situation to explode. With some 20,000 cases already in the books and with the number still climbing, its hands are certainly full even though it says it is very well equipped to cope. These migrant workers are key to many of its industries. With them having to be quarantined and Singapore's desire to get everything right before they restart each engine, the country may also have lost precious time in returning the economy to normalcy early.

Many argue that normalcy will return if a vaccine is found, I am a little pessimistic about this hope. By the time a vaccine is available, I believe many many more thousands would have died. The US and many countries in South America are particularly at risk, not to mention the refugee camps all over the world. I am afraid flattening the curve as a measure is already past its shelf-life use. The economy has to get restarted, lest the depression will be so deep that the less resilient economies or societies will be incapable of rising from the ashes for a long long time. The only solution left is for authorities to keep enforcing the Social Distancing rule. And sadly, this need is seen by many in the West as an affront to their right to exercise personal freedom!

I wish what has been predicted by an Israeli mathematician (Prof Isaac Ben-Israel) will come true – that COVID-19, like many pandemics before, it will finally die out by itself.

I am afraid few societies are as resilient as those in East and Southeast Asia to emerge stronger after the crisis. China is one, unfortunately, nobody wants to look at WHY it works!

It is time for the rest of the world to put America in its rightful place – a country that does not have the right to tell the world what to do. China has started it! But it has to show to the world that it is not going to be another America. The following are my two posts on this subject.

Thursday, May 20, 2021

Taking up the West's Gauntlet

The president of Iran Hassan Rouhani is stepping down soon. Rouhani is generally considered a moderate. I read somewhere that an ex-President of Iran is making a comeback. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is an anti-American and anti-Israel hawk. Obviously, he must have received the blessings of Iran's present supreme leader Ali Khamenei to return to the political scene.

This development again demonstrates the short-term nature and short-sightedness of the American foreign policies. Barack Obama succeeded in reining in the nuclear ambition of Iran by having it sign the JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action). His efforts were destroyed by Donald Trump with only a stroke of a pen. Trump has let the genie out. Joe Biden knows that was a bad mistake, but he is not bold enough to repeal all the silly sanctions for Iran to halt its uranium-enrichment activities. The Iranians are a very smart race, they can easily produce nuclear weapons if there are no external constraints.

The situation is prompting Israel to do the pre-emptive thing – attacking the Hamas. Soon it might train its guns on Iran and Iran's allies in the region. If left unchecked, the war will spill over and the whole Middle East will be in turmoil again. Silly America!

America is indeed delusional. A couple of months before the outbreak of COVID-19, my wife and I took a month-long coach tour of America, from New York to San Francisco. The country has stood still for a long time, many parts have actually deteriorated and become unimaginable for a superpower to have. People looked laid-back; many were outright obese. New York is no longer vibrant; homelessness is third world-like in San Francisco. But instead of gathering the resolve to do something to rejuvenate America, politicians there are fighting head over heels to gang up with sycophants to make use of every opportunity to retard the rise of China, to threaten Moscow and to coerce lesser leaders in many countries not to work with China.

American hegemony began after the US emerged at the end of World War II as the undisputed superpower of the world. The USSR tried to challenge it, but its brand of Communism simply could not make it happen. And Boris Yeltsin shot himself in the foot by dismembering the union. Russia is a shade of its former self in terms of influence now. There was no challenger to the US, for many many years.

Deng Xiaoping unleashed the dragon. Unlike Mikhail Gorbachev, he did not blindly copy the West. He set free the entrepreneurial spirit of Chinese. China continued to take pride in saying it was a Communist country. But its Communism is very different from that of the USSR's or that the world has all along understood – totalitarian, lack of human rights, so on and so forth. They did not (and still do not) know what was deeply embedded in China's political system is "Confucianism" – rulers must do good for their people, people must respect law and order, and public good must take precedence over individual rights – and the innate appetite of the Chinese to learn, especially in STEM. Its millennia-old cultural philosophy became the bastion against superficial democratic beliefs and practices. China began to leap-frog.

However, it was not until the inauguration of Xi Jinping that China became a formidable challenger to the American hegemony. Xi fights corruption head-on, expedites the country's

infrastructure development, goes all out to alleviate poverty, and, in the eyes of America, the most “sinful” of all, advances the Road and Belt programmes to change the world order!

Xi has succeeded in most of these endeavours and this has led America and the West to fear that if they do not do anything now, their lordship over the world will soon be over. This is delusionary. China will rise regardless, but it will be a nation that is happy to coexist with the world. It will not try to change the world in any way, for it understands that no single race, culture, religion, ideology or system can claim supremacy; each is unique to its own needs and future.

However, China still has some distance to cover. Much of the country is already “intellectual”, again thanks to its Confucian heritage. The *nouveau riche*, on one end of the social yardstick, to the more rural simpletons on the end, are already conscious of what constitutes proper etiquette, thanks to the “education” that its TV channels are introducing. Now you often see campaigns to ask people to exercise good “chopstick” practices, road courtesies, public space behaviours, etc. All these measures may look mundane, but they are transformational in essence.

Pro-independence Taiwanese should wake up. By running China down, you are only giving the West the opportunity to make yourselves subservient to them in the long run. Only with a strong China, will all the yellow- and brown-skinned people be safe in every part of the world. I do not mean to be a racist; but that appears to be the reality in front of us.

The Common Denominator in Chinese Leadership

Most of them have their first degree in Engineering! And they have gone through the mills! Few are charismatic; as a matter of fact, they are quite colourless, save for the ICI hair some of their earlier leaders seemed to like to wear.

Jiang Zemin (江泽民; born 1926), an alumnus of Jiaotong University, was China’s President from 1993 to 2003. He studied Engineering in university. Under Jiang’s leadership, China experienced substantial economic growth with the continuation of market reforms, saw the return of Hong Kong from the United Kingdom in 1997, and Macau from Portugal in 1999.

Ditto Hu Jintao (胡锦涛; born 1942), who was President from 2003 to 2013. He was a Tsinghua alumnus. He was a political conservative. Along with Premier Wen Jiabao, Hu presided over nearly a decade of consistent economic growth and development that cemented China as a major world power. Throughout Hu's tenure, China's influence in Africa, Latin America and other developing regions increased.

Xi, too, is a Tsinghua alumnus for his undergraduate degree! (Chemical Engineering, Tsinghua University.)

In China, you don't become President by winning debates. One has to start from the village level and slog one's way up the ladder – county, city, and occasionally to the SOEs, before returning to the provincial and finally the central government positions. I suppose there are also patronages involved, but there are so many checks and balances that no charlatan is able to escape the scrutiny of the system. You might have noticed that those who speak on behalf of the state in press conferences or public functions always read from prepared texts. Few do it off-the-cuff. They take pains to prepare themselves, for mistakes relating to policy pronouncements or interpretations are not well tolerated. If a leader can become a provincial party secretary or governor, it is unlikely that he is incompetent. Colourless maybe, like Hu Jintao before Xi. Hu possessed a modest and reserved leadership style. His tenure was characterised by collective leadership and consensus-based rule. His administration was known for its focus more on technocratic competence than persona. At the end of his tenure, Hu won praise for retiring voluntarily from all positions.

Some have even caricatured Xi as Winnie the Pooh in the *Hundred Acre Wood* cartoon series. He doesn't have any Stalinist look, or Hitler's, or Saddam Hussein's, or Muammar Gaddafi's, or Kim Jong-un's, or Idi Amin's. He looks like a typical bureaucrat in China. There is hardly any air or gravitas in him. But why is he so hated and feared in the West?

When he first assumed the highest office in China in 2013, and started to clamp down on high-level corruption which was too rampant in the country, many said he was only trying to weed out political rivals – like Bo Xilai – to consolidate his power base. These people simply did not understand how sage-like Xi is. His performance during the last nine years or so reinforces what the Chinese want in their leaders: 礼义廉耻; 光明正大 [lǐ-yì-lián-chǐ; guāng-míng-zhèng-dà – lǐ: exuding good matters, conducting oneself with great diplomacy; yì: upholding what is right, moral, proper, reciprocating gratitude and good deeds; lián: conducting oneself with humility; chǐ: shaming ourselves. guāng: transparency, míng: clean, zhèng: straight; upright, dà: big-heartedness].

If you don't see him briefing or discussing with officials, he is visiting remote villages and seeing what the villagers do and eat, with his entourage mostly dressed in standard office attire, no huge welcoming ceremonies or banquet. How many other national leaders would conduct himself or herself that way? He has never been caught in any compromising situations with women, or the like. Same for his very elegant wife and beautiful daughter. Absolutely no scandals.





One comment that I got from a reader of my blog reads, “He (referring to me) is full of adoration for China.” Sure, it is where my cultural roots lie. We should be loyal to our adopted country, but why can’t I be proud of my ancestral land?

China as a cultural identity has been in existence for some five thousand years. The Greeks, the Indians, the Persians and the Romans can also make that kind of claim. But Chinese society has been and is still being shaped by values that have been passed down for millennia – chiefly the Rice culture, the Confucian school of philosophy, and the motherhood exhortations of hard work, thrift, humility, benevolence, scholarship, and several other virtues that are not quite emphasised, or are even frowned upon, in the West. The West’s territorial growth and wealth have been largely based on conquest and exploitation, especially in the last couple of centuries. China’s growth model is totally different.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin understands the West better than anyone else. He himself is Caucasian. After the fall of the Soviet Union, he was in fact looking to the West for fraternisation, but they spurned him. Without Russia, where is the need for NATO? And without NATO, how does the US exert its overlordship in Europe?

At students' formative level, in the International STEM Olympiads, the US has ranked first or second in informatics six times, first or second in mathematics five times, first or second in biology five times and first or second in chemistry two times. But America's dominance is fast fading. In 2021, students from China rank first in the Index of Excellence, with the US third.

In 2000, American colleges and universities awarded about 503,500 Bachelor's degrees in science and engineering fields. The same year, China awarded about 359,500.

Fifteen years later, the US's figure was 750,000, and China, 1.7 million!

China is rapidly catching up with the number of PhDs in STEM. Between 2016 and 2019, the number of students entering STEM doctoral programmes at Chinese universities increased nearly 40%, from 59,670 to 83,134.

A report by Georgetown University said that currently Chinese universities graduate roughly three STEM PhDs for every two graduated by US universities each year. By 2025, the report predicts, China will produce 77,000 STEM PhDs. And if international students are excluded from the US count, Chinese STEM PhD graduates would outnumber their US counterparts by more than three to one, the report said. (International students made up about 42% of STEM PhD graduates in the US between 2010 and 2019, with especially high shares in computer science and engineering.)

It can always be argued that a country isn't necessarily going to become a dominant player in a particular field of technology simply by virtue of having more STEM PhDs, but the signs are telling. Much of China's current PhD growth comes from high-quality universities. Approximately 45% of Chinese PhDs graduate from Double First Class (A) universities – the country's most elite educational institutions – and about 80% of graduates come from universities administered by the central government.

The quality and quantity of a country's doctoral graduates is an important indicator of its future competitiveness.

The 2018 statistics compiled by a Japanese source said China had most researchers with 1.87 million (2018), followed by the United States with 1.43 million (2017), Japan with 680,000 (2019), Germany with 430,000 (2018), and South Korea, which had 410,000 (2018).

Rank ▲	Country ◆	Number of published articles (2018) ◆
1	 China	528,263
2	 United States	422,808
3	 India	135,788
4	 Germany	104,396
5	 Japan	98,793
6	 United Kingdom	97,681
7	 Russia	81,579
8	 Italy	71,240
9	 South Korea	66,376
10	 France	66,352

	Number of Researchers
China	1,870,000
United States	1,430,000
Japan	680,000
Germany	430,000
South Korea	410,000
	Total R&D Expenses (¥ trillion)
United States	60.7
China	58.0
Japan	17.9
Germany	14.8
South Korea	10.3

Its For-People Bureaucracy

There is nothing Communistic, nepotistic, or sinister about China's bureaucracy. It has been practised since the Confucian days. Public examinations determine whether a person is fit to join the civil service or not. (In the old days, cheaters ran the risk of having their head chopped off, if caught!) Whereas if you are born into a rich family in America, as long as you are not an idiot, you can always get a place in one of the top universities through your old man's donations. And after that, it was a long journey in terms of career progressions (or demotions in between if one stumbled). Some degree of corruption was indeed tolerated, if the incumbent's merits outweighed his lapses. (Interestingly, the word "official" in Chinese 官 (*guan*) does have two 口 (*kou*), or "mouths", in its construction.) By the time an official entered the imperial court, he would have spent years in the county or provincial administrations.

Whereas in America, each time a new President is inaugurated, his new broom would sweep clean the old slates of top officials. He is free to bring in his men or women, many of whom are not up to scratch at all, as we have recently seen in the Trump and now the Biden line-ups. There is much dislocation in policies and executions. Blinken is a case in point; his amateurship is for all to see all the time. No wonder he is so ill at ease!

The Power of Overseas Chinese...

Lin Pan has written extensively about early Chinese diasporas, and there is no need for me to say more, suffice it for me just to make a few pertinent points.

There is a Confucian saying: Within the four seas, all men are brothers. (四海之内皆兄弟 *si-hai-zhi-nei-jie-xiong-di*). But this “philosophy” is not really unique to the Chinese; the Jews are very good at it. In places where there are Chinese immigrants, you will always see clans or associations where the diasporas of the same ancestral heritage help each other out – loans for business starts-ups, scholarships for the young, benevolent help to those who fall on hard times, or for families in bereavements.

There are some 46 million ethnic Chinese living outside China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau. Many are already in their fourth or fifth generations and are no longer Chinese-speaking anymore. But most of them still observe Chinese culture in some ways, notably in the celebration of the Lunar New Year, and the need to “sweep the tombs” of their forebears during *Qin-ming* [清明节]. Many were anti-Communist before, but now they are proud of the China they see. They will not hesitate to help China when it is in need. Period.

In the following couple of articles, I write on the need for China to rise to its rightful place in the wake of the US’s hypocrisy...

Saturday, August 21, 2021

Wisdom versus Might: Time to Try out the Dragon

The channels and papers are full of news about the fall of Kabul these days. I don't propose to bore readers with more. I just want to draw out the ironies that are rolling out of Afghanistan in the wake of Biden's decision to withdraw the American forces – after 20 years, four Presidents, USD2.3 trillion, and 2,300 American lives, not to mention tens of thousands of Afghan lives.

Aiyoh, what have I done?

First, look at the following picture. It was President Joe Biden meeting the press soon after the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban. *Look, how lost he is!*



Aiyoh!

This man represents the most powerful country in the world. Yet he can look so helpless! Shameful indeed. Where can Americans hide their faces, with all their “mighty” threats to the world? This is a man who is 78 years old and has spent his entire career in politics. But his wisdom is close to zero. No wonder! I have always said this, a defensive man will never learn. This is exactly what is happening to him. In the aftermath, he blames everyone except himself. This man never had to take accountability all his life. When it is time to do that, he doesn't.

And where are the NATO commanders? And how do the leaders of the Five Eyes/QUAD feel? And Tsai Ing-wen still wants to count on this man! Very sad indeed.

A piece of Cake!



Spare us the Long March.

You don't need a military genius to tell you what would happen to Afghanistan once American forces capitulate under the circumstances and in the manner Biden had ordered. His genius (or should I say common sense) in this case is incredible to fathom.

He reminds me of Ming General Wu Sangui [吳三桂] who opened the Shanhai Gate (山海关) to the Manchus in 1644.

Within weeks, the Taliban literally swept the whole country and entered Kabul with a ragtag army. Now they have an air force and ultra-modern military gears.



Left: Desperation at Kabul Airport; Right: What can I do? Below: Ashraf Ghani, Afghanistan's Wu Sangui?



One for the album... Thank you, America! Certainly more comfortable than the caves!

Crisis [危机, Wéijī] – Risk and Opportunity!

Afghanistan is barely a patchwork tribal country, let alone a nation – Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazara Shiites and Pashtuns. Despite this, America's latest humiliation reinforces this fact: no power can hope to subdue it.

It is a land-locked country. To the north, it has several Central Asian ex-Soviet Union satellite countries as neighbours. To the east and southeast, it is Pakistan, and to the west, Iran. China is a neighbour too; they are separated by a 91-km border. Nonetheless, it is a country that is said to be rich in minerals, many of which are of strategic importance. But being land-locked, it is as good as without.

Afghanistan has been a hotbed of support for Uyghur's East Turkestan Independence Movement. The movement has largely been neutralised by China's development efforts in Xinjiang. However, as we all know America and its allies remain steadfast in destabilising the situation with the usual rubbish – genocide and forced labour allegations. This makes China's relationship with these Muslim neighbours a very delicate affair.



The geopolitics...

Time to Count on the Dragon

When the US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman was anxiously fidgeting in her plane for news on whether she could meet China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi, the Taliban representatives were already on the way to Tianjin. They were accorded due diplomatic status for their 18th July meet. The setting of the venue where Wang Yi received Sherman was probably meant for the Taliban VIP; I suspect Sherman was just a "by-the-way" guest.



Left: 26th July: "Thank you, thank you for seeing me on such a short notice. If I don't get to see you, my boss will not allow me to go home!"

Right: 28th July: The intended guest visits!

Notice the way Wang Yi sits. He fully understands Islamic etiquette. Not cross-legged!

The Taliban began their assault on 1st May and by 15th August, they had literally driven into Kabul to occupy the presidential palace. As late as early August, Joe Biden and his key advisors and

generals still thought the 300,000-strong Afghan army would be able to put up a good fight. They were vaporised! How competent their intelligence people are!

Many cynical of China are now coming up with a new line: Afghanistan is going to be China's new graveyard.

How shallow these people can be!

I just watched a video clip on Hua Chunying's reaction to a question about an accusation about the lack of democracy in China. I thoroughly enjoyed her rebuttal: *Coco-Cola tastes the same everywhere, but Democracy is not Coca-Cola!* The formula must be country specific. Readers interested in the full reply can access and enjoy Hua's wit via this link: <https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcReeNh2rdE9os8fXRCt01I27i1v-CsxOLut-Q&usqp=CAU>

China knows the destructive nature of warlordism; it has experienced it many times over its entire history. Suppression and sanctions will surely fail. America's first instinct is to sanction the country if it fails to kowtow to America's wishes, just like what they have done to Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea, Iran and even Russia at one time. People suffer and they would hate America more. The US forgets that they still have tens of thousands of Americans and many thousands of other friends in Afghanistan, not to mention that many many thousands of Afghans who have been working for them. They are potential hostages if America tries to be difficult.

Tribal parochialism is best managed with firm and benevolent economic reforms. Respect their religion and culture but more importantly give them the opportunity to earn a decent living and they will lay down their arms. This is what China has been doing with all its minorities.

The vacuum left by America gives China an incredible opportunity to showcase this possibility or even wisdom. China is friendly with all the countries surrounding Afghanistan. Now is the time to help to bring the tribal forces together and work with them to introduce the Road and Belt linkages in Afghanistan. In no time every country in the region will have access to the Indian Ocean and the Chinese market. A right co-prosperity zone will then be born!

And to the cynics, keep your spanner! Or learn to throw it at the leaders of America!



Sunday, September 12, 2021

The Roots of Global Paranoia about the Awakened Dragon: The Western and Pro-West Politicians

It pains me to pen this article. Much of the information you are going to read below is extracted from published sources. But I think it is important for me to bring it up again – basically to remind ourselves of the need not to be complacent about our future, if you are of Chinese descent. This call is made in the wake of the relentless efforts by the West and pro-West forces to demonize China and the collateral damage arising therefrom – on a future Chinese both inside and outside China, in particular, the ethnic Chinese in East and Southeast Asia, may have to live with.

I always argue that all of us are racist to some extent. But the decent ones in us would keep our prejudices – born principally out of disagreements or unfamiliarity with the way people “not our kind” seem to be acting or behaving under circumstances that we think they should – to ourselves. We don’t go about throwing punches at them. Racists make up stories to hurl accusations. Even if a fact is already known, they will still twist and distort it to make people whom they do not like look bad. China is the West’s relentless target now. I do not suppose there is a need for me to cite examples, since I have already done so many times before.

I have American, European, Australian, Japanese and Indian friends. On a one-to-one basis, I find friendships with even the more off-colour ones tolerable. I still cherish my friendship with an old Japanese man by the name of Rohyai Nonaka even though he passed on many years ago. Nonaka-san was an expert in electro-plating. He came in the mid-1970s to help the Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) do some development work under the sponsorship of the Japanese External Trade Organisation (Jetro). He was already in his late 50s. I was a young desk officer in MIDA then. At that time, there was a strong anti-Japanese sentiment, and nobody

would go near him. Somehow, we became friends, even though he was about thirty years older than me. He would come to me each time an office circular was handed down, for his command of English was too rudimentary for him to fully understand the message, and his understanding of Malay totally nil. He would share his Japanese-style management concepts and practices with me. From him, I had an early understanding of what made Japan and the Japanese different. (This was well before several Japanese management books became must-reads in business schools.) His hobby was to go around the country looking for samurai swords. He knew a great deal about Chinese history and classics, especially those parts on the Warring States and the Three Kingdoms. He was also an expert in watercolour painting. (I still have the two paintings he did for me when he visited me at home). We became lifelong friends and communicated even after he returned to Japan. My colleagues must have thought I was crazy to be so friendly with an “enemy”!

Back to the subject. What I am seeing in the West and pro-West countries is disturbing – if history is our teacher. I would like to share what a *da-jie* (big sister-like friend) once said to me.

This *da-jie* says even as third or fourth generation diasporas in a seemingly harmonious country like Malaysia, we cannot afford to be too complacent about our future. But she laments that her very successful corporate lawyer daughter would always tell her not to worry too much, saying that most of us are “on top of the food chain” here. Maybe, but I prefer to take my *da-jie*’s wisdom seriously.

It is not the people *per se* we are worried about, no matter what colour his or her skin is, or what religion he or she professes. It is the Western and pro-West POLITICIANS and their accessories that I am most unhappy about. By accessories, I mean their journalists and reporters.

But politicians are not born evil or untrustworthy. They got sucked in over time. I read Barack Obama’s own account of his earlier years. He was not brought up in a political family. I could see that he just wanted to do good even when young. In many ways he was to me a through-and-through socialist. But the moment he entered the White House, he had to realign himself. There are too many traditions or “must observe” conventions, systems and practices that a President already has to follow, let alone try to change. And largely because of his inability to change the “institution”, he ended up not having done too many great things during his presidency, despite his formidable intellect. I believe Joe Biden was also a decent man; but the moment he became the President of the United States of America, he had to act more aggressively or stupidly than Donald Trump, lest he go down as a one-term president (even if his health allows him to run for a second term). Be that as it may, some, if history is any guide, *were* actually born evil, as Mer-zi argued two thousand years ago.

America was the John Wayne to many Chinese during World War II. Its Flying Tigers did a wonderful job in helping to bring supplies over the Himalayas when Nanning was cut off by the Japanese. George Marshall tried to reconcile Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao Zedong and introduce a “Marshall” plan to help China rebuild after the war. And in the 1970s, Richard Nixon’s visit paved the way for China to return to the world stage.

However, if the worldviews of America’s last three Presidents, and the way the country has abandoned Afghanistan to its own devices, is any guide, then the pro-Independence young in Taiwan and the misguided Hong Kongers should think more deeply about their beliefs. It is still certainly not too late for them to come to their senses.

Let’s be reminded of the following chapters in history and if possible, let our young know about them, especially about the background events that led to them, to see that my *da-jie*’s advice is timely:

(1) The Boxer Uprising by the Eight-Nation Alliance (1899-1901)

The Boxer Uprising was an armed insurrection against the increasing foreign intervention including Christian missionary work in China towards the end of the Qing dynasty. The ruling Manchu court was ambivalent about the movement. However, after a siege of the Legations by the Boxers, a 20,000-strong Eight-Nation Alliance of American, Austro-Hungarian, British, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Russian troops was organised to lift the siege. They whacked the Qing Imperial Army in Tianjin and went on to plunder Beijing and summarily executed those suspected of being Boxers. The Boxer Protocol of 7th September 1901 saw the execution of government officials who had supported the Boxers, the provision for foreign troops to be stationed in Beijing, and the payment of indemnity of 450 million taels of silver – about USD10 billion at 2018 silver prices and more than the government's annual tax revenue at that time – over the course of the next 39 years to the eight nations involved.

Many of us were led to believe the Boxers were a bunch of ugly Chinamen going around the country looking for foreigners and Chinese Christians to slaughter. But weren’t they Chinese patriots in their own way, albeit misguided in some respects – like believing in their impenetrability by firearms and their anger at Christianity?



Let's carve out China

(2) The First Opium War (1839-42)

There were two opium wars. The first was fought between China and Britain and the second, by Britain and France against China.

The first was: British traders had been illegally exporting opium mainly from India to China since the 18th century. The trade exploded from 1820, resulting in widespread addiction and causing serious social and economic disruptions in China. In 1839 the Chinese government confiscated and destroyed some 20,000 chests (about 1,400 tons) of opium that were warehoused at Guangzhou by British merchants. In the same year, some drunken British sailors killed a Chinese villager. The British government refused to turn the accused men over to the Chinese courts. Hostilities broke out. The British conducted several campaigns against the inferior Qing forces which finally ended with the former's capture of Nanjing.

Under the Treaty of Nanjing, China had to pay Britain a large indemnity, cede Hong Kong Island to the British, and increase the number of treaty ports where the British could trade and reside to five. Other Western countries quickly demanded and were given similar privileges.



The Treaty of Nanjing, cession of Hong Kong.

(3) The Second Opium War (1856-60)

While the Qing government was trying to quell the Taiping Rebellion (1850-64), the British took the opportunity to look for new concessions. Over a relatively minor incident in 1856, a British warship sailed up the Pearl River and began to bombard Guangzhou. In December, angry Chinese

in the city burned a foreign warehouse and hostilities escalated. The French decided to join the British, using the murder of a French missionary in the interior of China in early 1856 as an excuse. They quickly captured Guangzhou. Upon their reaching Tianjin, the Chinese were forced into negotiations.

The treaties of Tianjin, signed in June 1858, saw more trade, travel and residence concessions to the foreign powers, including the freedom of movement for Christian missionaries. In further negotiations in Shanghai later that year, the importation of opium was legalised.

However, the Chinese subsequently refused to ratify the treaties, and the two allies resumed hostilities. In August 1860 a larger force of warships of British and French troops captured Beijing and plundered and then burned down the Yuanming Garden (Summer Palace).

China had no choice but to sign the Beijing Convention, in which they agreed not only to observe the treaties of Tianjin but also to cede the southern portion of the Kowloon Peninsula to the British.



The plundering and burning of the Summer Palace.

(4) First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95)

The war marked the emergence of Japan as a major world power. The war grew out of conflict over Korea which had long been China's client state. Its strategic location opposite the Japanese islands and its natural resources of coal and iron attracted Japan's interest. In 1875 Japan forced Korea to open itself to foreign, meaning Japanese, trade and to declare itself independent from China. Japan was welcomed by Korea's more radical modernising forces, while China continued to sponsor the conservative officials gathered around the royal family. In 1884 a group of pro-Japanese reformers attempted to overthrow the Korean government, but Chinese troops under Yuan ShiKai came to their rescue. Both sides signed a convention to withdraw troops from Korea.

But In 1894, Kim Ok-Kyun, a pro-Japanese Korean leader, was lured to Shanghai and murdered. His body was then put aboard a Chinese warship and sent back to Korea, where it was quartered and displayed as a warning to other rebels. The Japanese government and public were outraged.

The situation was made more tense later in the year when a rebellion broke out in Korea, and the Chinese government, at the request of the Korean King, sent troops to help to disperse the rebels. The Japanese considered this a violation of the convention agreed upon earlier and duly sent in 8,000 troops to Korea. When the Chinese tried to reinforce their own troops, the Japanese sank the British steamer which was carrying the reinforcements, further aggravating the tension.



War was finally declared on 1st August 1894. Japanese troops scored quick and overwhelming victories on both land and sea. By March 1895 the Japanese had successfully invaded Shandong province and Manchuria. They blockaded the sea approaches to Beijing. The Chinese sued for peace.

In a treaty, China recognised the independence of Korea and ceded Taiwan, some adjoining islands, and Liaodong Peninsula. China also agreed to pay a large indemnity and to give Japan trading privileges on Chinese territory. This treaty was later modified under the combined intercession of Russia, France, and Germany, which forced Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China.

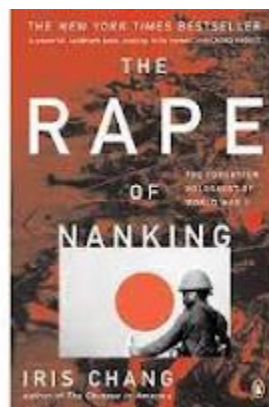
China's defeat encouraged the Western powers to make further demands of the Chinese government. It also hastened the demise of the Qing dynasty.

(5) The Second Sino-Japanese War (1931–1945) [Part of World War II]

In 1931, Japan detonated a small bomb close to a railway line owned by Japan near Mukden (now Shenyang) to create an excuse to stage a full invasion. This incident led to the occupation of Manchuria where Japan established a puppet state called Manchukuo where the Qing court's last Emperor Pu-Yi was installed as its Emperor.

Six years later, Japan again cooked up a somewhat similar pretext to wage war against China. A Japanese soldier was found missing from his unit opposite Wanping, a town southwest of Beijing, and the Japanese commander demanded the right to search the town for him. This was refused and when the Chinese army fired on the Japanese army, all hell broke loose. (The Japanese soldier later returned to his lines.) This is the Marco Polo Bridge incident (or the 7-7 incident because it happened on 7th July) which many historians regard as the actual beginning of the second Sino-Japanese War or the start of Pacific theatre of the World War II.

Following this incident, the Japanese captured Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing. Widespread atrocities were committed by the Japanese army, the most horrendous of which was described by Iris Chang in her book *The Rape of Nanking*. After failing to stop the Japanese in the Battle of Wuhan, the Chinese relocated its government to Chongqing.



With some Soviet help, China was able to put up strong resistance against the Japanese offensives. The war had reached a stalemate by 1939, after the Chinese scored victories in Changsha and Guangxi. The Japanese were also unable to defeat the Chinese communist forces in Shaanxi. But the Japanese ultimately succeeded in the year-long battle to occupy Nanning, which effectively cut off the last sea access to the wartime capital of Chongqing. While Japan ruled the large cities, they lacked sufficient manpower to control China's vast countryside. In November 1939, Chinese nationalist forces launched a large-scale winter offensive, and in August 1940, Chinese Communist forces started a counteroffensive in central China. The United States' Flying Tigers also lent support to China. However, Japan's surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 sealed its fate. The United States declared war. After the two atom bombs were dropped, Japan formally surrendered on 2nd September 1945.

The Second Sino-Japanese War accounted for the loss about 15 million military and civilian lives in China. Some put the figure even higher.

(6) Japanese Invasion of Southeast Asia during World War II (1941-45)

Conflict in this theatre began when Japan invaded French Indochina in September 1940. It simultaneously attacked Pearl Harbor, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaya and Singapore in early December 1941. However, Thailand chose to ally itself with Japan.

The Allies suffered many defeats in the first half of the war. Two major British warships, the *Repulse* and the *Prince of Wales*, were sunk by a Japanese air attack off the coast of Malaya.

Japanese forces overran Malaya by the end of January 1942. The Allied forces in Singapore, under the command of Lieutenant General Arthur Percival, surrendered to the Japanese on 15th February 1942. About 130,000 Allied troops became prisoners of war. The fall of Singapore was the largest surrender in British military history.

The Chinese living in Malaya suffered particularly from the Japanese occupation: some 100,000 were killed. (Japan actually favoured the Malays; many of the latter's elites were made sword-carrying officers under the Japanese administration. Some were even encouraged to massacre the rural Chinese.)

The Japanese were less successful in its Indian Ocean raids, but it did force the British fleet to relocate from British Ceylon to Mombasa in Kenya in 1942.

Japan occupied the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) from March 1942 until after the end of the war in September 1945. Japan overran the entire colony in less than three months. Initially, most Indonesians welcomed the Japanese as liberators from their Dutch colonial masters. The sentiment changed after several million Indonesians were made forced labourers. Hundreds of thousands were sent away from Java to the outer islands, and as far as Burma and Siam. Of those taken off Java, not more than 70,000 survived the war. Four million people died in the Dutch East Indies as a result of famine and forced labour during the Japanese occupation, including 30,000 European civilian internees.

During the 1944-45 period, the Allied troops largely bypassed the Dutch East Indies and as such, much of the colony was still under occupation at the time of Japan's surrender in August 1945.

The occupation led to the end of Dutch colonial rule in December 1949.

It is believed many ethnic Chinese suffered under the Japanese rule.



Left: *The Tiger of Malaya: General Tomoyuki Yamashita*; Right: *Japanese atrocity in Malaya.*

Stocktaking...

Had China been the aggressor in any of the above conflicts, I would certainly withdraw the title of this article and apologise for it. All the pains were inflicted in China or on the Chinese by extension. Some may argue that the Boxers were barbaric and deserved condemnation. Yes, maybe, but the West did use it to extract out-of-proportion reparations and concessions from China. They should not be in China in the first place!

Now that China has been awakened, it is time for Chinese all over the world to keep it awake. The Chinese will only be safe in the Western and pro-West world if China is strong and respected. To us this is simply a no brainer!



Left: *Spiritual, mythical... soaring high to help bring better living and prosperity to the world.* Right: *Real, gentle... looking keenly to help build trust and create harmony...*



Left: *From the horse's mouth: We Lied, We Cheated, We Stole.* Right: *End of an empire.*

Monday, November 8, 2021

From Trade Wars to COVID-19 to AUKUS...

America's Determination to Subjugate China

The Genesis of an "Ugly" China

Chinese society's preeminence had always been held in awe by the rest of the world until the mid-1800s, when the Qing dynasty was severely weakened by the Taiping Revolution. The two Opium Wars sealed China's fate as the man-to-be-bullied of Asia.

Two periods in Chinese history were ruled by non-Han Chinese. The Qing dynasty was one of them, the other is the Yuan dynasty from 1271 to 1368. Thanks to Marco Polo, the world was allured by China for centuries. (I personally am not convinced that Marco Polo had really visited China; he might only have seen its fringes.) It was all hype; the Buddhist monk Fa xian, on his sea-route return from India in 409, left footprints in the islands along the way. Obviously, Europeans were sold by the story because of their own parochialism. Some scholars even argued that the world's First Industrial Revolution actually started during the Song dynasty (960-1279) – inventions like gunpowder, the compass, the printing press and what-have-you.

By then, the abject poverty that was ravaging the Chinese masses was eliciting no pity. The attitude of the world towards them bordered on contempt, thanks to the images of opium-smoking and pig-tailed Chinese men.



Pig-tailed and ancient-looking, no wonder!

The Wuchang Uprising on 10th October 1911 led to the *Xin-Hai* Revolution [辛亥革命] and the abdication of Puyi (and the end of the Qing dynasty) a few months later. Unfortunately, the father of modern China, Sun Yat-sen, was too weak to unify the factions. Soon the country was plunged into warlordism. Even though Sun's anointed successor Chiang Kai-Shek was able to turn the tide somewhat, his Kuomintang government came increasingly under attack by the Communist forces under Mao Zedong. Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. Chiang and Mao did join forces intermittently to fight the Japanese. Japan surrendered in 1945, after two atom bombs were dropped by the Americans on its soil.

A Fake Love Affair

The US was only a marginal player in Asia before World War II. But well back in the late 1800s, it was already riding on the bandwagon to force China to open its ports to the West. Because of the pathetic conditions in China, the US had always harboured a very patronising attitude towards the country. Pearl S. Buck (1892-1973) wrote indulgently about the misery of lives in China during the dying years of the Qing dynasty. Her writing won her a Nobel prize. Her father was a missionary; they were there to spread Christianity. Building schools and hospitals was part and parcel of their stock-in-trade to win Chinese hearts and souls. Many were of course genuine in their zeal. But Imperial America was no saviour, remember they also joined in the Eight-Nation Alliance to sack the Summer Palace and petrify China?



Left: *Pearl S Buck's China*; Right: *Who wouldn't feel bad for these people?*

During World War II, the US “volunteers” did help to fly in supplies from Burma. And after the war, General George Marshall tried to mediate between Chiang Kai-Shek and Mao Zedong. But Chiang’s regime was too inept; Mao won the civil war and gave China a new dawn. It was all hostilities after that – until Richard Nixon decided to play ping-pong with China.

In the intervening years, they fought a war in Korea, and China went through Mao’s Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution madness. Few Chinese outside China were proud to be identified with a poor, communistic China. To be able to emigrate was seen as an opportunity of a lifetime.

After the Nixon visit, China did become a novelty (some say darling) to the Americans for several years. It was poor, but its history was rich. (Chiang’s wife Soong Mei-ling had already charmed many political leaders in America with her sophistication, hence their head-over-heels anxiousness to aid China during the war). Chinese women were greatly fancied. Leaders like Zhou Enlai were admired for their intellectuality and political savviness. The hardworking “blue ants” always appeared deferential. *They could not be a threat to us!* America was therefore happy to act paternalistically to China, thinking it would eventually embrace its form of democracy.



How not to charm the Yankees?

China Awakened...

The world was too far ahead of China. Setting out to transform China, Deng Xiaoping made this hard truth clear to the Chinese. Upon his assumption of helmsmanship, he lost no time in awakening China. Chinese began to roll up its sleeves and toiled away. They did not have an aspiration to be Number One in the world. Their only goal was to live a better life.

But Bill Clinton soon saw the “threat” in no time. He knew China had awakened. He made China sweat it out when it applied to join the World Trade Organization. But it was still not a threat to the US militarily.

A Clash of Two Cultures

Samuel Huntington wrote about the clash of civilisations in 1996. He wrote that that the different civilisations would ultimately lead to clashes. But I got the feeling he was more concerned about the great divide between Judeo-Christianity and Islam, rather than the other possibilities. (The roles of Eastern cultures and philosophies appeared to be just incidental.) We all knew the score then. Islamic radicals were threatening the very foundation of Western cultures in America and Europe. Even though the concern is still valid today, it is not seen as a life-and-death struggle, largely because of the Islamic world’s lack of strength on these two fronts: Economic and Military.

But the re-emergence of China, especially during the last five years, is seen by the West as a direct challenge to its hegemony, hence the total intolerance of China’s rise. And this trend appears unstoppable. It is happening to China today, but it may happen to any non-White nation in the world – once Uncle Sam thinks you want to be its equal economically, technologically or militarily. (As a matter of fact, this intolerance has already happened to Japan (Toshiba and the Plaza Accord), France (Alstom) and more recently, Taiwan (TSMC) and Korea (Samsung).

The values of the two cultures are diametrically opposite. In the world order, it is zero-sum in the West, but co-existence in China’s Confucian philosophy.

During his presidency, Barack Obama spoke about the need for the US to pivot its might in the Pacific region. Whom he had in mind to target was obvious, but humanity was largely in a benign state. Thanks to China, goods and services became affordable and plentiful. People could go about their routines or venture out with few concerns or fears. The rich could have their Porsches, lesser mortals could have their Hyundais. You could travel in private jets, but I could also arrive quite comfortably on Air Asia. No big deal. There was no great drama – until Donald Trump became President.

Trump thought White Americans were different. That they had the divine right to lord over the world.

America’s Modus Operandi

Sketching a ghost

Soon Trump demanded that China unilaterally correct the huge trade deficit the US was facing. This was soon followed by the imposition of stiff tariffs in January 2018 on Chinese goods. Both countries did sit down to hold several rounds of talks, and just as the Phase One agreement was

about to roll out with some degree of hope, the outbreak of COVID-19 put everything back to square one. Or worse.

Then, early in 2019, “pro-democracy” protestors emerged in Hong Kong, and for months this SAR (Special Administrative Region) of China had to suffer the indignity of being ravaged by its own friends and neighbours. Many kept pointing their fingers at China, even though China was not a party to the issue that was behind the protests in the first place. We all know who were behind these riots.

The coronavirus struck later in the year. And it was first detected in China, which added fuel to the finger-pointing frenzy. While China was able to control the spread of virus in the country, the US, largely due to its own complacency and the indiscipline and the rejection of science by many, became the epicentre of the outbreak. Millions became infected and the death toll climbed alarmingly. Hospitals were overwhelmed, and millions lost their jobs. And 2020 was the election year! The Fed had to pump in huge amounts of cash to stay the economy and put money in every American’s pocket. Soon, lockdowns, movement restrictions and border closures became the order of the day in virtually every part of the world. The world was consumed by statistics of infections and death tolls on a daily basis. The pandemic became a political issue, and China was the natural scapegoat.

Hitherto highly respected press began to run articles about genocide and forced labour in Xinjiang. All this gelled well into the worldview of many in the less discerning world that China was indeed a nation devoid of human rights for its minorities. The misconception strengthened.

Trump began to sanction Chinese enterprises and urge American businesses in China to return home to make America great again. Some responded and moved their production facilities to Southeast and South Asia. Does this really work? We shall talk more about this later.

The inauguration of Joe Biden in January 2021 did not help improve things; instead, the relationship between China and the US is in a free fall today. Biden has gone on record to say that he would not allow China to surpass America under his watch. Is China aiming to do that? Didn’t it say it just wanted to create a “*xiao-kang*” or moderately prosperous society [小康社会] for its people?

I don’t normally subscribe to conspiracy theories, but obviously there is a maestro behind all this. Of course, the maestro is more than a single individual; it is an anti-China cabal drawn from many parts of the world, probably loosely coordinated by the US. (Remember the huge allocation passed by the US Congress to fund anti-China stories or advocations?)

Believing in the power of hoodlums

Despite its ignominious exit from Afghanistan, the US thinks its “Coca Cola” democracy will win them the world.

The Caucasians – from America to Europe to Australia – need no selling from the US. China is a clash-of-civilisations threat to their supremacy in the world. (Only a few of the Caucasian leaders think otherwise. You can count them with your two hands: Serbia’s, Russia’s, Greece’s, Hungary’s and maybe New Zealand’s.) And it must be stopped. And there is no way you can change this mindset in the foreseeable future. It is best that China and Chinese all over the world recognise this.

This is perfectly racist in nature. (We are all racists; the difference is only a matter of degree.) Unfortunately, what the Caucasians want is total subjugation from China.

But what is most ironic is this: We have also non-Caucasians who are also riding on this anti-China bandwagon!

The most disappointing of the lot are the anti-China **Chinese** in the US, Australia, Taiwan and Singapore. Many were or are holders of senior policy positions. Others are journalists and correspondents in influential media. Some are subtle in their approach; but any discerning listener can tell you what their agendas really are. I often tune in to listen to a neighbouring country’s channel for its prime-time news every evening. If you believe what the business reporter says, China would have collapsed many times over. Ditto the channel’s correspondent in Beijing. Pathetic indeed.

The West’s brand of disinformation is downright blatant. I suppose if you keep throwing mud at a clean surface, it would in no time look dirty too. The US approach is downright disgusting. China would find that Katherine Tai or Janet Yellen or Jake Sullivan, and even President Biden himself, would appear reconciliatory after each engagement only to see that a hostile policy is dished out the next day by their administration.

Next are the leaders in the non-White world.

Unlike Germany which was prepared to do soul-searching and put the Nazi atrocities behind them and move forward, Japan has been stuck with the not-guilty mindset about their horrible deeds during World War II. Some of the past leaders have expressed remorse, but the new breed of Japanese seem to think they don’t owe their victim countries anything. And in the US-China conflict, they are happy to be the Americans’ cheerleaders. Japanese have always harboured a sense of superiority over Chinese anyway.

The most bizarre behaviour comes from India, despite the humiliation they have suffered under their British colonial masters. Early Indian leaders were strong advocates of non-aligned policies. Prime Minister Modi has instead chosen to be a member of QUAD and is happily joining the US in showing their flags in the South China Sea. You just have to shake your head each time you see Modi exhibiting his complex. Recently the *Financial Times* claimed that China had tested a hypersonic missile. Soon everyone was talking about this “threat”. China did not boast to anyone; as a matter of fact, they denied it. Not to be seen to be falling behind, India declared to the world a couple of days ago that they had successfully tested a 5,000 km range ballistic missile that could hit any part of China! I thought China already has some that can do 14,000km? Separated by the Himalayas, China and India are no threat to each other. It is only the McMahon line that is causing the friction. If people will keep their cool and not be emotional, the dispute is really a non-issue. After all China has concluded border agreements with 12 out of the 14 countries that neighbour it. And because of a defeat suffered in 1962, India will do anything to spite China, even at the expense of sacrificing its economic interests. Strange really. Was the 1962 defeat such a hard-to-swallow part of their pride?

The ASEAN countries, hitherto deemed unimportant, are now being heavily courted. But their leaders are wiser than the Americans’ and their allies’. *You don’t irritate your neighbours!* Of course, the ownership of many islands is still being disputed, but you don’t resort to arms. And you certainly cannot count on the US to fight for you.

Disrupting the supply chain...

America’s prompting to manufacturers to move out of China is unlikely to take the latter out of the global supply chain equation. Its deep entrenchment is growing by the day. There are simply too many factors that will make America’s dream impossible to realise.

India, Vietnam and Indonesia have often been touted as the viable replacements to China’s manufacturing prowess. But those who argue for this obviously do not quite understand the complexity of supply-chains vis-à-vis a country’s cultural, religious and political complexities.

No country enjoys the type of comparative or competitive advantages China possesses – resources, infrastructure, markets, etc., not to mention the two most important of all, namely, the innate ability of the Chinese to “*eat-bitter*” (endure extreme hardship) and its leadership’s wisdom and strategic capabilities.

India appears to have the right “qualifications” to take China’s place. Its labour base is huge; its population is young and energetic. But one just has to learn from Ratan Tata how difficult it is even for an Indian to start a world-class business in India – the caste system, the parochial political interests, just to mention two reasons. And on Indonesia, the lack of competency in

English and high-tech knowledge, need for religious and cultural accommodations, and the virtual non-existence of critical supply-chain linkages, amongst others. Vietnam is a good bet, but it may turn out to be another China.

Exclusionism in technology...

Come what may, the Biden administration is going to continue to treat China as its worst adversary. It is strengthening its resolve to deny China of its access to American technology. It is restricting exchanges on intellectual, scientific and academic exchanges with China. One immediate impact is the availability of high-end chips to China and the roll-out of 5G, which is crucial to the much-anticipated arrival of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The blockade retards innovations, resulting in fewer new products and services that would otherwise emerge from China, which has been the cradle of this phenomenon for the past decade. Exclusionism is a two-way sword. Every clear-headed mind will tell you that this will only strengthen China's resolve to wean themselves of their dependence on Western technologies.

Wishing China to fail...

Several recent policy decisions by China made many doomsayers of China all excited. First was the last-minute abortion of the Ant IPO. Second was the clampdown on property speculation. This has resulted in huge Chinese real estate enterprises like Evergrande Group turning almost belly up. Third was the clampdown on the elitist private tuition business and the restrictions placed on children accessing computer games. Fourth was the energy squeeze on low-tech industries. The decisions are deliberate; they have been made to address some very fundamental issues which are potentially damaging to its culture and economy. To the West, they are intrusions into "free enterprises" and "personal freedom". All a question of lenses!

If Ant had been allowed to proceed, China would become a nation of compulsive debtors! People who are hitherto not bankable will have easy access to credit. Just imagine China turning into a nation of financially-saddled zombies, struggling to stay afloat? Jack Ma appeared unstoppable; fortunately, the regulators did learn something from the disaster that the P2P business had inflicted on Chinese society just a couple of years earlier. President Xi has already warned that houses are for people to live in. You can invest in the property business, but you must have the means. Greed has prompted many to borrow heavily to invest, and this obviously has to be stopped in a country that preaches socialism. Games-addiction is opium-like. Many argue that the restriction infringes on personal freedom. My answer: good to nip bad habits in the bud. As for the energy squeeze on marginal industries. High time, China!

The opportunity to play up "everything Chinese leadership does is bad" is not to be missed even with people around us, particularly in English-medium TV channels and newspapers. They literally gloat that China may not be able to survive these rounds of "upheavals". I suspect America's

money for anti-China journalism is already making an impact in the region. There will always be hardships and pains in such measures. You can only achieve your desired goals through proactive leadership. And only China has it!

But You Can Only Cry Wolf Once...

What has happened to Nancy Pelosi's "beautiful faces" of Hong Kong's protesters? And the forced labour in Xinjiang's cotton fields and mills? And yes, there are still confessions from a high-ranking police officer from Xinjiang about China's genocide there. The CNN reporter interviewing was too lazy even to check his identity!

Former Goldman Sachs president John Thornton's low-key visit to China must have put paid to a lot of the rubbish churned out by the US administration. And Biden's 90-day intelligence team on coronavirus origins must have thrown out the real Pinocchio in the whole affair.

All this will not be possible if truth is not with you.

Buy Yourself a Good Mirror

Own backyard burning...

A good friend says he loves to watch Fox News. His reason makes me laugh: *Fox News tells you how divided Americans are!* How true it is. Until today, many of Trump's followers still insist the election has been stolen from them. The Blacks are being bullied; yet many choose to vent their anguish at Asians. Wearing masks and vaccination are serious personal freedom issues. Deaths figures are just for statistical interest. Downtown San Francisco is full of homelessness. Gun deaths are highest in the world. Yes, they have high school or college diplomas, but few can tell you where Malaysia or Singapore is; or add 10 and 110 without a calculator. Yes, they have the best universities and colleges in the world, but take out the non-White faculties or student cohorts, their ranking would go South immediately. They can hardly produce anything that is truly cost-competitive now.

The amateurism in Biden and his team

For someone who has spent his entire life in politics, Biden certainly disappoints. Obama in his book *A Promised Land* was polite but not complimentary at all about his Vice-President. I suppose he was not impressed at all with Biden. I even read somewhere that Obama had privately uttered this: Don't underestimate Joe's ability to "fxxk" things up.

This is an era where Biden can exercise statesmanship and leave great legacies behind; unfortunately, he has totally engulfed himself in parochial politics at home and hoodlum politics internationally. America is mired by internal divides. Morale is low. Its economy is in a sad state; the task of making it work is beyond Jeremy Powell and Janet Yellen now. Biden wants to

rejuvenate its infrastructure, but who is going to foot the bill? On the international front, he wants to outdo Trump on China. But America has lost much of its weapons, save the technology blockade. You can't fight a trade war with China if you yourself do not produce much. The Europeans are tired of America's self-interest'ism – with Germany on the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline, with France on the sale of nuclear submarines to Australia, etc. Biden sent out his lightweight Vice-President Kamala Harris and defence secretary Lloyd Austin to try to coerce the ASEAN countries to take side. But these people do not understand the oriental wisdom its leaders possess. He sought to use the “poison to fight poison” stratagem on trade negotiations with China. Katherine Tai has to show that she is more American than Americans. But can this work, since you cannot keep crying wolf all the time?

Has the world seen the true colours of Biden? I believe so. He was supposed to be the star of the recent G20 meeting in Rome. Try to spot where he stands in the picture below. Again, no prize for the right answer.



Where is Joe?

As for his master diplomat, does he really understand diplomacy? Blinken must have felt very humiliated after his encounter with Yang Jiechi in Alaska. In the Zurich meeting with Yang, it was Jake Sullivan who represented the US. And now in Rome, Blinken refuses to shake Wang Yi's hand. Yet, he was the one who went to the Chinese delegation's hotel to meet Wang Yi. The Indonesians have a term for this behaviour: Kurang ajar (lack of adequate upbringing by one's parents). Enough said.



Hi there, I am not going to shake your dirty hand! Kurang ajar!

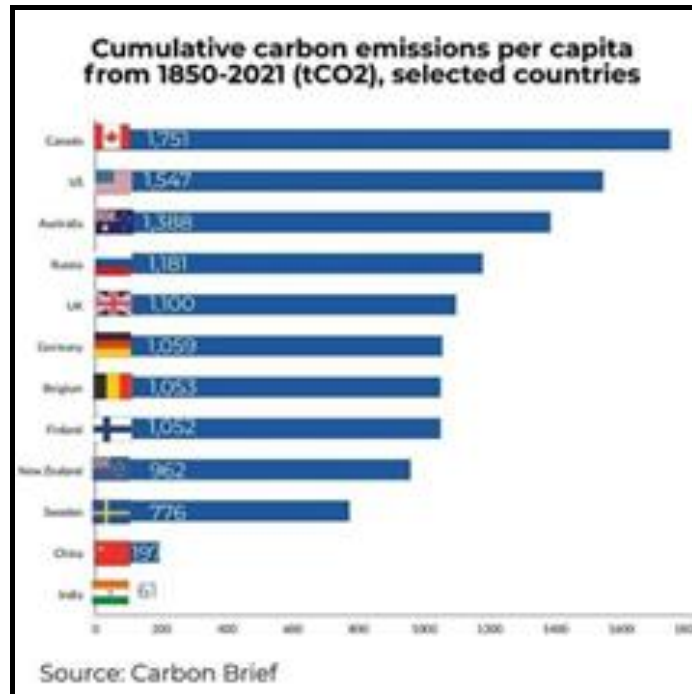
Besides Blinken, you also have Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo, Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin, Ambassador-designate to China Nicholas Burns, who in the physical absence of Chinese opposites love to delude themselves with their “talking from the position of strength” assertions to their home audiences.

The Green Hypocrisy

Climate change issues have also been increasingly used politically to demonise China. The COP26 conference is a case in point. Trump withdrew and Biden is re-joining all these platforms. But is he genuine? Or is it a reaction to America’s own paranoia about China?

The table below shows the cumulative carbon emissions per capita from 1850-2021. No explanation is needed. (This is notwithstanding the fact that much of the carbon burden has been outsourced to China by virtue of the latter’s “factory of the world” reality.) Of course, every country must take climate change seriously. And Biden is not the only angel in town. Cutting emission is one thing, one should also plant more trees, and this is precisely what China has been doing. China certainly does not have to feel guilty on this front. And read what John Kerry, Biden’s Climate Change czar, has written in *The New York Times*. Hypocrisy of the highest order indeed.

FOR V





Taiwan, the Willing Pawn in the Game...

The Biden Administration's double talk on Taiwan is most incredible. It says it upholds the one-China policy. On the other hand, it will "help" Taiwan if it comes under attack. This has emboldened Tsai Ing-wen's blatant brushoff of China's call for reunification. She is bent on taking Taiwan down an Independence route. The stances of both Xi and Tsai could not be clearer in their respective speeches made on this year's 10th October celebration.

Chiang Kai-Shek fled the mainland for Taiwan in 1949 but vowed to recapture the mainland. Mao considered Taiwan a renegade province. Both sides claimed to represent China, until mainland China took its place at the United Nations. Lee Teng-hui began to sow the seed of separate nationhood for Taiwan.

Mainland China was behind Taiwan in every aspect of life well into the 2010s. The mainland Chinese and the Taiwanese were generally happy with the "1992 Consensus". (Understandably, its existence was denied by Lee who was Taiwan's president then.) Regardless, cross-border exchanges were a happy routine even under Tsai's first term in office.

No more today! Tsai treats China like a sworn enemy! Thanks to the riots in Hong Kong, an about-to-lose president suddenly won the second term handsomely. This is despite the fact that everyone knows her claim of a London School of Economics PhD is tantamount to criminality.

But the China of today is a formidable nation even in the eyes of the Americans – whom Tsai is counting on to deter China. Xi's speech carries a subtle ultimatum. I believe the reunification-by-force countdown has begun and Tsai's fate has been sealed. A toad that is being boiled? And who is stoking the fire? No prize for the correct answers.



A toad being boiled?

Unfortunately, just like the younger generations of Hong Kongers, few Taiwanese are proud of their Chinese heritage or identity. While China has finally reined in the Hong Kongers, the horses in Taiwan have already bolted.

Many of the older thinkers and scholars there are in fact pro-unification. They take great pride in being “Chinese”. But the younger generations have little inclination to learn Chinese history. The population harbours a complex psyche. The benevolence shown by Japan during its half-century rule, as compared to the neglect inflicted by the Qing court, has “nipponized” a high percentage of native Taiwanese, many of whom have Japanese heritage. (Some 300,000 Japanese were said to have stayed behind after World War II. Lee is said to be one of those with Japanese heritage.) Chiang did bring many mainlanders over, but his White Terror had traumatised many and damaged his legacy. China was a distant cousin at best. Today many of the young in Taiwan do not know who Sun Yat-sen was. They don’t even know why they are celebrating the Double-Ten holiday!

Tsai Ing-wen and her Democratic Progressive Party are counting on America to alienate China. China can never allow that, for its front yard will be totally patrolled by Alsations which are all out to harm the country.

Its nine-dash line in the South China Sea is drawn precisely to prevent this from happening. In their twisted logic, the US and its allies are using it as the excuse to collectively roam the South China Sea, all in the name of upholding freedom of navigation in the area, and to deter China should it move to unify Taiwan by force.

At first, they had the Five Eyes, then the QUAD, and now the formation of AUKUS, or the Australia, UK, and US security pack. Countries have been coerced to take sides, and the South China Sea has become perhaps the most dangerous region in geopolitics today.

One outcome arising from all these challenges is the loss of trust the Chinese all over the world had not only for the Americans and its allies, but also for Caucasians in general.

Taiwan has to be reunited with China, sooner or later.

Sooner or Later?

China should not harbour any hope that the US and its blind and quasi-allies will change their attitude to them. Its spokespersons should not waste their breath trying to oppose or condemn or insist on “corrections” from the latter and its allies. It should just continue to do what it is best at, i.e., improving the lives of its 1.4 billion people and strengthening its military might to deter the West’s reenactment of what happened to China in the late 19th century. Stereotyping your approach will only make China seem defensive in the eyes of the rest of the world.

Removing Taiwan from the equation will solve all the problems.

Conclusion

Xi says it is time for China and the Chinese to cast their sights at an “equal level” when speaking with others. Indeed, it is!

Some may still remember how the Chinese in the 1950s were caricatured as Dr Fu Manchu – the sinister pig-tailed “Chinaman” who tried to inflict harm on the Caucasians. After that, China was tolerated as a source of cheap goods. Now that China has achieved wonders on many fronts, a new campaign has been created to make China look bad, i.e., Chinese are uncaring polluters and technology thieves.

Of course, some Chinese are still producing snake oil and shoddy consumer products. This should stop. Many also need to shake off all those old habits that they have generally been associated with.

Once the Taiwan thorn (and the fear of losing TSMC’s facilities to China) is removed, the West will have no arsenal to irritate China. And it will have to treat China differently. And this will allow all Chinese in the world to walk tall.

CHAPTER 9

DILEMMAS AND VULNERABILITIES

A political observer in Taiwan was asked, when could the war in Ukraine end? He said you could either listen to Abhigya Anand, India's phenomenal child astrologer, or to him. He says this simple observation can tell you the outcome: the respective approval ratings of both Biden and Putin. If the former's is low and the latter, high, the war will go on. Which seems to be the case now.

America's mid-term elections are looming, Biden is desperate to improve his approval rating. He has few achievements to brag about, except his hard stance on China. He has successfully created a bogeyman that is feared by both sides of America's political divide. To survive politically, he must sustain his attack on China; yet his attention is now consumed by the war in Ukraine. Everyone knows he was the one who egged Zelenskyy on to seek NATO membership, which resulted in Putin sending his army across. He is a classic case of one who wants to have his cake and eat it too. And having helped start the war, he does not know how to end it. He is riding on a tiger!

Be that as it may, Biden will certainly return to haunt China. He has painted Russia as a short-term enemy, perhaps for the next five years, but China is America's enemy for the century ahead, a vision that baffles China completely.

But because you have labelled me as your enemy, I simply must be put on my guard!

China faces several dilemmas in its relationship with the US. It wants to be a good and responsible economic partner to America – healthy trade ties, mutual investments, and even providing support for America's treasury bills.

But what it got back was more tariffs, sanctions, abrupt cancellations of its enterprises' operating licences in America, and having their US-listed firms kicked out of the stock exchanges. I suppose China will still be able to grow despite all these setbacks. However, there are two issues which are difficult for China to swallow. One is in respect of Taiwan, which China wants to see returned in a peaceful manner, and two, the vulnerability of China under the US government's chips embargo policy. These two thorns in the flesh must be removed for China to remain safe and to progress.

The Taiwan Potato – Fanning the Fire to Keep it Hot

Once Taiwan returns to China's fold, all the sharks and crocodiles will disappear, and America's influence will certainly wane. And its hyenas will have to look up to the Middle Kingdom once again.

Can this happen?

It is not uncommon to see a politician label someone a traitor just because the latter betrays him, or another comrade, or a cause or principle that he or she believes in. This is not the definition of traitor in the context I am now arguing. A traitorous act is one that undermines or destroys one's own country and people. A dissident may turn traitorous if his own beliefs are not being heard. He or she may later succumb to temptations that are offered by people who have agenda. A good example would be Joshua Wong of Hong Kong, who is not a very intelligent individual in the first place. By the same token, we can also classify Jimmy Lai in that category. But I personally believe Jimmy Lai is more dangerous. The former is a question of vulnerability, but the latter is an issue of evangelism. Jimmy Lai champions, and he has the resources to do so. On the other hand, Joshua Wong lends himself to act, but the moment his financial backing is removed, he surrenders. His cause is built on thin ice.

There are plenty of traitors in China's long history. Qin Hui 秦桧 must be the most "legendary" of all. Qin was an official during the Song dynasty and he

is said to have caused the death of General Yue Fei. I was googling for more examples and one source throws up a list, complete with images of statues in a museum in China: Bai Xi-pi 伯喜否, a treacherous minister during the late Spring and Autumn Period who contributed to the downfall of the State of Wu in the hands of Yue; Tu An-gu 屠岸贾, a treacherous official during the Spring and Autumn Period; Zhao Gao 趙高, an official who contributed to the downfall of the Qin Dynasty; Hua Xin 华歆, another Han dynasty official who forced the abdication of the last Han Dynasty Emperor; Yang Su 杨素, a military leader during the Sui Dynasty who was said to have contributed to the death of Emperor Wen; Lai Jun-chen 來俊臣, a treacherous official during the Tang Dynasty; Pan Ren-mei 潘仁美, a Northern Song Dynasty Official vilified in novels as traitor who led to the death of Yang Ye 杨业; Jia Si-dao 贾似道, another Song Dynasty official who was blamed for the downfall of the Song at the hands of the Mongols; Yang Song 严嵩, a corrupt official during the Ming Dynasty; and He Shen 和珅, a corrupt official during the Qing Dynasty. Others who are said to be worthy of the “traitor” badge include An Lu-shan 安祿山, who was a Tang general who rebelled against the empire, causing 30 million casualties and directly leading to the fall of Tang; and Wu San-gui 吳三桂, who was a double traitor – he betrayed the Ming government, opened the Great Wall, and helped the Manchus conquer the entire Ming China. Wu later betrayed the Manchu Qing government and tried to establish his own dynasty.

But I honestly think many of the above were not as treasonous as some of those who have appeared in the recent history of China or whom we are seeing now.

Wang Jing-wei 汪精卫 collaborated with the Japanese during the Second Sino-Japanese War, which saw millions of Chinese perish. He headed the puppet “National” government in Nanjing. His cohorts were Chen Gongbo 陳公博, Zhou Fo-hai 周佛海, Liang Hong-zhi 梁鴻志, Ding Mo-cun 丁默邨. Wang Ke-min 王克敏, among many others. One interesting name that came out is

Chen Bi-jun 陈璧君, who is described as the Number One female traitor in the anti-Japanese war. Chen was born in Penang! Apparently, she met Wang and went with him to study in Japan. They married in 1912.

Earlier, we have Yin Ru-geng 殷汝耕 who fits the bill. He was the first chairman of the puppet regime in North China. Yin studied in Japan in his early years and got in touch with the Japanese military and political circles through his Japanese wife, hence his loyalty to Japan.

Liu Xiao-bo 刘晓波, who became the first Chinese citizen to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, was also branded “traitor” by many for saying that China needs three hundred years in order to be “civilised”. I would say he is a silly dissident, not really a traitor *per se*.

Two names come immediately into my mind when I talk about Chinese traitors with friends – Yu Mao-chun 余茂春 and Tsai Ing-wen. I believe history will judge them even more harshly than they judge Wang Jing-wei.

I suppose Yu’s motivation is more material than ideological in substance. His behaviour is not very different from many Chinese who lived in countries like Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar and Indonesia, when these countries were practising discriminatory policies against ethnic Chinese. They were not allowed to practise Chinese culture and celebrate Chinese festivals. No Chinese signboards were allowed. They must change even their names to locally acceptable ones. Notwithstanding, many were able to make good. Some even became very powerful politically. How did they do it? The “Yu Mao-chun” route! They ingratiated themselves with the powers-that-be, converted to the latter’s religions, and betrayed their own kinds. There will always be Yu and Katherine Tai. But you cannot really fault them. They are NO LONGER Chinese.

However, in the case of Tsai, the roots go deeper. Her mentor was Lee Teng Hui (1903-2020), Taiwan's president after Chiang Ching-kuo 蒋经国. How did he fool everyone in the Kuomintang?

Many authoritative parties are convinced that Lee was ethnically NOT Chinese. His primary loyalty was to Japan. In 2015 he openly said Japan was the "motherland". He was known as Iwasato Masao when young.

I often like to quote this book by a certain Leo T. S. Ching: *Becoming "Japanese" – Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (2001). Taiwan came under Japanese colonial rule in 1895 after Qing lost the First Sino-Japanese War. It was returned to China in 1945. Soon it was ruled with an iron fist by Chiang Kai-shek after he had to retreat to the island in the aftermath of Mao's victory in the mainland. The 28th February incident (1947) saw tens of thousands of Taiwanese exterminated by Chiang's military apparatuses.

But before Chiang came, Taiwan was enjoying some 50 years of benevolent rule by the Japanese. Many actually volunteered to join Japan's Imperial Army and fought in Southeast Asia. A high school friend of mine did not know he was the son of one of these soldiers until he was in his 50s. His grandmother had refused to allow the daughter to follow her lover when he returned to Taiwan.

My son's sub-specialist training in Movement Disorders was done in Toronto and he had a fellow trainee from Taiwan. This young lady came to Kuala Lumpur for a holiday, and we invited her to stay with us. We naturally spoke about ambitions and marriage. She confided that her father wanted her to marry a Japanese gentleman! Doesn't that say a lot about the Taiwanese attitude towards Japan and the Japanese?

My good friend Azlan Hussain spent several years in Taiwan as head of Malaysia Airlines there. He possesses an in-depth knowledge of the demographics there. He warned me earlier that the "political mindset" he saw

in Taiwan's north was very different from that he saw in the central and the south of the island. Frankly, I was not quite convinced then (circa 2005). I must now admit that he was right. He could already detect some realities there. Many in the north were offspring of the mainlanders who followed Chiang Kai-shek to the island. They were Chinese not only in blood but also in soul, even though they might be anti-Communist. However, the rest of the island were local born, whose parents held little hostility towards Japan, which had benevolently ruled the island for about fifty years before they were shaken up by the arrival of Chiang. They are mainly of the Mingnan or Hakka ancestry. They were generally staunch followers of traditional Daoist-Buddhist practices. Many still do so today, but their appreciation of their Chinese roots has largely been systematically eradicated, thanks to the emergence of the Democratic Progressive Party under the patronage of Lee Teng Hui. Chen Shui-Bian started to advocate Taiwanese independence. Because of his character flaws, he could not make much headway. The relationship with China improved under Ma Ying-Jeou. Although the presidency fell into the DPP's Tsai Ing-Wen again, she was considered "hopeless" until the riots in Hong Kong sent her star shooting high again. But during these years, the young in Taiwan had begun to think that they were NOT Chinese anymore. The island's people were doing much better than the mainlanders.

Similarly in Hong Kong, China did not do anything to change the island after it took over the British colony in 1997. It was committed to make the "one-country-two-systems" work. Tung Chee-Hwa was the first chief executive. He was happy to maintain status quo. So were his successors. They inherited the same old bureaucracy and adopted the same old capitalist model to rule Hong Kong. What could you expect? The housing problem was largely swept under the carpet. Like everywhere else, soon people took to the street. The only difference is this: foreign powers saw the opportunity, and they lost no time in using it to destabilise China – with the help of people like Jimmy Lai and Joshua Wong.

The Macau chief executives were more enlightened. They knew they had to do something to blend their residents to eventually become Chinese! Period.

Taiwan under Tsai is the perfect tool for the US to hold back China to earn its rightful place.

The US hegemony is anchored on two pillars: the Dollar and its Industrial-Military Complex. They are also like a pair of Siamese twins. The latter needs plenty of the former to sustain and feed politicians; and the former needs the power of the latter to maintain its formidability. The financial crises over the last quarter-century have boosted America's confidence to print whatever they need without much impunity. The world can protest, but they have little choice but to go along. And its Industrial-Military Complex needs wars and fears of threats to prosper.

America did not want Russia to be pally with the Europeans. Ex-Soviet client states in Eastern Europe, the Baltics and the Balkans had suffered a great deal under Communism. They naturally want to enjoy their new-found liberty by being part of the EU and coming under the protection of NATO. The US was happy to promote and fund all sorts of "colour" revolutions to make this happen. If not for Putin, Russia might have already been broken up further. Putin's Russia gives all the impetus for America's Industrial-Military Complex to laugh all the way to the bank.

There are now not too many new opportunities for the US to exercise its muscles in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. But they see China's ghost in all these regions, and they must try to stop it.

I was discussing geopolitics with Prof Goh Sing Yau, who was my lecturer in the University of Malaya, over a meal recently. He describes China as America's "perfect" enemy – it will not cause America to lose any life and yet, it will make billions and billions out of Taiwan. China has openly declared that it wants a good relationship with the West. It has no interest in exporting its brand of governance to any country, and only wants tomorrow to be better

than today for its people. Yet, it is labelled by the US and its allies as their Threat Number One in the world.

China wants to see the peaceful return of Taiwan to its fold. It would have been perfectly achievable if not for the riots in Hong Kong. The reunification will pave the way for the creation of a region of great prosperity in the western Pacific. North and South Korea will unite and Japan will have to co-exist and prosper with the rest of East Asia. This is poison to America's Industrial-Military Complex!

The generations that appreciate the roots of their culture are fast disappearing in Taiwan. 70% of young Taiwanese do not consider themselves Chinese *per se*. Tsai's incumbency and the irony of *status quo* are tall hurdles for reunification to be realised. Fortunately, there is now a growing circle of intellectuals who see the great merit in a unified China. These intellectuals are proud of their Chinese philosophical and cultural roots and they know that to be able to stand up, even as individuals, to the West, you need to have a well-regarded and strong China.

The Chips Industry - Amputating China's Legs

China imported some USD432 billion of semiconductor chips in 2021, which is as much as what it spent on grain and crude oil combined that year. Its appetite is in fact much bigger, but thanks to the US policy, it is caught in a Catch-22 situation. Because of its earlier belief that the world was heading for full globalisation, it had let its guard down and was happy to count on others to provide much of the foundry services. They understood the markets and were content to do the designs to suit applications.

To Trump, globalisation was dirty work. The US government began to initiate steps to obstruct China's ascendancy in the semiconductor industry. Denial of technology to China is obviously the easiest and most effective way to start the ball rolling, given America's preeminence in political and military food-chains. An Entity List – in the name of upholding national security – was swiftly handed out. And now with Biden holding the steering wheel, the US

government is pursuing an even more sweeping and preemptive policy to kill China's semiconductor industry, including the country's growing military capabilities.

Hitherto, China's chips industry was said to be strong and had benefited from interdependence in the value chain. Biden's policy has set off a sense of urgency in Beijing, motivating China to accelerate its plan towards self-reliance and its ambitious target of producing 70% of its own semiconductors in 2025 – before new targets are released with the adoption of the 14th Five-Year Plan. But being denied access to foreign semiconductor technology, it is going to be a hard slog ahead.

There are three main stages in the production chain: (a) Design, (b) Manufacturing (the most formidable of which is TSMC, which accounts for 50% of the world's market), and (c) Assembly, Testing and Packaging. The giants who integrate all the three phases are Intel, Samsung, SK Hynix, and Micron; others stay in their niches. The Chinese can handle the first and third stages, they find themselves choked in the lithography segment of the second stage. Without ASML's EUV lithography equipment, it is simply unable to cross a major threshold, which is the 7-nanometre hurdle. (High-end smartphones need at least 7-nanometre chips. Even though Huawei has demonstrated to the world that it is the undisputed leader in 5G technology, the access issues has raised serious questions regarding its capacity to maintain their network equipment vis-à-vis high-end smartphone needs.)

There is immediate collateral damage to America. The disruption has created a persistent industry-wide shortage of chips that has disrupted production in the automotive and electronics industries, forcing some firms to scale back production.

US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo laments that two decades ago, the United States were producing nearly 40% of all chips, and today it accounts for only 12% of global production. America now wants to revitalise semiconductor manufacturing, secure its own critical supply chains and bring

home good-quality manufacturing jobs. The US Senate has just approved a bill to provide USD52 billion in US subsidies for this purpose. And lately, the US has been requesting South Korea, Japan and Taiwan to join a Chip-4 Alliance aimed at keeping China out in the global chip supply chain.

I think the thinking is totally misplaced.

A case in point is South Korea's Hynix, which has a chip factory in China's Jiangsu Province, and its plan to import advanced equipment has been obstructed by the Biden administration and in response to the arbitrary ban, none other than ASML's CEO Peter Wennink has come up to say that export controls against China will not only fail to halt its technological progress but also hurt the US economy. Even the US Chamber of Commerce is unhappy with Biden's policy. But Biden is stone-deaf to such warnings.

My argument of America's flawed policy is simply based on market realities. Without China as the factory of the world, without its hundreds of millions of consumers, without its SME's entrepreneurship and innovativeness, where is the market for the huge quantity of chips that South Korea, Taiwan and now America hope to produce? And without production, how can foundry equipment manufacturers like AMSL embark on their next generation of machines? The US loves to shoot its own foot, perhaps thanks to its gun culture?

The war in Ukraine is giving China many pointers as to what the new *Xiong-Nu* can do if it uses force to bring Taiwan to its fold, a sacred mission which China's leaders have vowed to do regardless of cost. Llyod Austin publicly said that the US's objective is to weaken Russia. But the US's grand design is certainly much more than that. Everyone knows their ultimate goal is to subdue China for good. It is clear from the stances of its allies that even if Biden were to lose the reelection, the next torch bearer would continue with the anti-China momentum that has already been built up.

The US knows there is no need for them to dirty their hands to achieve its objective on Russia, given there are so many silly pawns around. Ukraine's Zelenskyy is the most willing piece now. Several ex-Soviet states are happy to be on the stand-by. The US will apply the same strategy on China – comfortably sitting at the ringside and egging on Taiwan to resist with arms supplied and paid by the Tsai government. And like in Europe, it also has Japan in East Asia to throw punches at China.

The US has gone beyond the normal bounds of international ethics to inflict great pain economically to Russia – chiefly in causing it allies and supporters to freeze Russian assets and denying its access to SWIFT. How can you trust “NEUTRAL” countries and institutions anymore? Fortunately, it has the natural gas that many EU countries cannot do without. Russia is also a significant exporter of grains and many strategic resources. China has few of these aces on hand. Sanctions of this nature will cause great damage to China's economy, even though the new *Xiong-Nu* and their allies and supporters will also suffer as a consequence of China's paralysis. Goods that have long been taken for granted will stop flowing.

The sinking of the cruiser *Moscow* in the Black Sea is certainly bad for Russia's image and morale, even though Russia has made some good gains in the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine. This underlines the weakness of a modern-age army where recruits are less equipped mentally and even physically to fight or die for their country. There must be complacency or lack of training somewhere for this to happen. It also shows the need for China to be vigilant about the US's power in satellite surveillance capabilities. I suppose China's earnest pursuits in space technology reflects this concern.

With their formidable PR machine, the US and its allies will certainly portray a war or the conflict between China and Taiwan as a fight between Good and Evil, or simply authoritarianism versus democracy, and many will fall in line. There is an urgent need for China to devise a strategy to fight the West's

disinformation efforts. Its present approaches are not effective and many a time counterproductive.

In the contemporary world, Europeans have always been viewed as the more “intellectual” Whites, for they seem to possess a better sense of proportion on geopolitics. But this may not apply if there is a military conflict. China can no longer count on Europe. Wise leaders like Angela Merkel who believes in China-Europe accommodation are a rarity now. Even if they are, their influences are quite inconsequential, and they also may be voted out or replaced in no time, given the volatility of their constituents. (We are increasingly seeing people who believe in “liberal” democracy charting Europe’s destiny now. Even hitherto “neutral” countries like Finland and Sweden are now applying to join NATO, whose long-term prize we now know is China.)

Japanese have always considered themselves superior to other Asians. When South Africa was under apartheid rule, Japanese were treated as honorary Whites. And many despise Chinese. I remember reading some background history of the Japanese attack of the then Malaya during World War II, they had a strategist called Col Shoji, who penned the “code of conduct” for the Japanese soldiers when engaging the people in the Peninsula. He asked them to act benevolently to all natives and Indians but to show no mercy towards Chinese! Many Malays and Indians were made sword-carrying officers. Former President S R Nathan of Singapore was a beneficiary of that goodwill. No wonder Radhabinod Pal, who was the Indian judge appointed to the International Military Tribunal to try Japanese war crimes committed during the Second World War, submitted a judgment which concluded that all the defendants were not guilty. He is still remembered in the Yasukuni Shrine today. China can forget about seeing another Kakuei Tanaka. Many South Koreans are also too pro-Japan for China to explain its cause.

No matter how much Russia is weakened, the US will not take on the former face-to-face. Russia's nuclear arsenal is simply too formidable, and Putin is one who is entirely capable of pressing the button. This is one area China should continue to advance.

The second thing to remember is the world still believes in the might and safety of the Dollar. Despite the inflationary pressure, the Dollar is still king. All the Fed needed to do was to raise interest rates and money all over the world began to flow back. The Euro, the Yen and the Yuan have weakened against Dollar since Fed made the announcement. The Yen appears to have suffered the most.

Equipped with the mighty Dollar and the formidability of the West's mass media, which have perfected the art of brainwashing the world with disinformation, the new *Xiong-Nu* will prove more effective than the 8-army alliance that cause the decline of the Qing court during the 19th century. For almost a hundred years, China was touted as the evil Fu Manchu. China must not allow this to happen. Without a good strategy, China will lose out in the publicity front. It will always be portrayed as the bad force, and the new *Xiong-Nu* there to uphold democracy! Of course, many have wised up to all this lies of the new *Xiong-Nu*, but there are simply too few Joko Widodo around to help sway the course.

China is bent on seeing Taiwan return to its fold, but the new *Xiong-Nu* is bent on stopping that. The only way out is for China to deter the new *Xiong-Nu* in every front in the West Pacific – militarily, economically, and intellectually.

CHAPTER 10

WHY IS AMERICA LIKELY TO FAIL?

Stop Press

Wang Yi attended the foreign ministers' meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held in Islamabad on 22nd March 2022. The OIC is the second largest organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents of Asia, Europe, Africa and South America, which covers almost all Muslim countries.

Earlier, there were also reports of progress in FTA negotiations between China and the Gulf Cooperation Council and Saudi Arabia to price some of its oil sales to China in Yuan.

The Wall Street Journal also says Saudi Arabia has invited Chinese President Xi to visit the kingdom and the visit could happen as soon as May. In an interview with The Atlantic published earlier this month, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman said he did not care whether Biden misunderstood things about him. "The crown prince and Xi are close friends and both understand that there is huge potential for stronger ties. It is not just 'They buy oil from us and we buy weapons from them'."

Blinken must be the most ineffective Secretary of State America has had in recent years. The above developments show the US efforts to hype rumors about Xinjiang have failed to split China and the Islamic world. Instead, the two worlds have chosen to explore deeper cooperation.

But Biden appears blind to all this. Just a few days after he asked to speak to Xi – basically to ask China not to support Putin in the Ukraine war – this

pseudo-saint announced that Washington would impose visa restrictions on Chinese officials. On what grounds? Repressing religious and ethnic minorities in Xinjiang! Blinken is urging China to “end its ongoing genocide and crimes against humanity” in Xinjiang. He criticised efforts by China to “harass, intimidate, surveil, and abduct members of ethnic and religious minority groups, including those who seek safety abroad.” Where is his mirror?

The US is now a competitor to the Middle East in oil exports. On the other hand, China is the biggest importer of energy resources from many main energy exporters in the Islamic world. It is just natural for the Islamic world to want to build a good relationship with China. And they all know Xinjiang narratives from the West are largely concocted.

Xinjiang is the starting point of the Silk Road and they know the US is bent on using all these tall tales to destabilise the region to ruin China’s Road and Belt initiative. Nothing to do with America’s love for the Muslims there!

One observer puts it this way: especially with the US and its Western allies' role in the "Arab Spring" that caused a huge amount of instability and humanitarian crises, these US-promoted new "crusade" offensives have made the Islamic world lose faith and a sense of security toward the West. This makes Muslim countries believe that developing deeper ties with China serves their interests to withstand US and Western hegemonic acts.

The US is now pushing the countries that chose not to follow its sanctions against Russia on the Ukraine crisis to take sides, and the West-led sanctions against Russia have also created greater uncertainty across the world. But this brand of "power politics, bullying and unilateral sanctions" is increasingly being spurned by the non-Western world. Even America’s QUAD buddy India is now gravitating towards Russia.

Let’s talk about all this in greater depth...

Internal Issues

Let me wake you wake you up with a few pictures first...



Peeing in a subway!



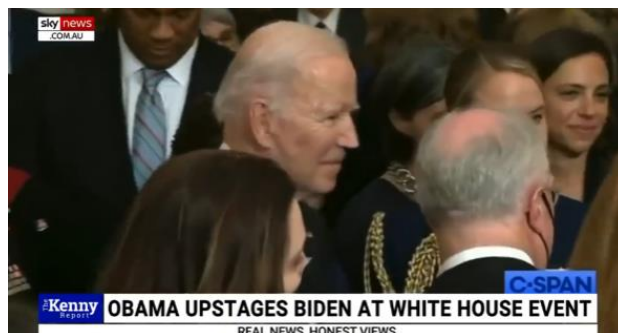
Looting culture



Homelessness in California

And Biden's lucidity...

Someone forwarded me a piece of video footage in April 2022 about an event in the White House. What is most disturbing to me is the state of Biden's mental health. He looked like a demented man, quite loss in his own castle. Is he in control of the White House, or is the White House that is controlling him?



I believe much of Biden's "intellectuality" was fed by Blinken, who spent many years as the former's political aide. I do not know much of Blinken's academic brilliance, but on geopolitical issues, I can only conclude that he is a novice, and also not a good learner. His pronouncements are quite devoid of coherency, consistency or credibility. They appear shallow most of the time. As I have argued before, a leader does not need to be brilliant himself, all he needs is to have good people assisting people. Blinken is a disaster to Biden. It may already be too late, they are not complementing each other, instead, they are mutually reinforcing in beliefs and actions which are detrimental to America realigning itself as a responsible power in the wake of the new political realities that are unfolding in the world now.

The US is so divided that no one is able to bring it together – unless there is an external factor to rally everyone. And that's the paranoia about China.

First the US is not a nation *per se*. There is a complete absence of cultural (aka racial) homogeneity in this country. The Statue of Liberty no longer symbolises the early spirit of the country. The Native Americans are largely irrelevant, save for the casinos they run in some of their so-called "sovereign" enclaves. Its Black population is mostly marginalised or deprived. The police love to target them, many a time for reasons the Blacks invite upon themselves. Yet, they usually vent their frustrations at Asians, especially Chinese-looking ones. This behaviour is not peculiar to the Blacks; many neo-Cons are also targeting Chinese-looking men-in-the-street to bully.

And America's gun culture is shocking. Anybody can buy a gun and start shooting!

The Federal and the state governments are largely dismissive of each other. Politicians usually take parochial stands. Few care for issues that involve the public's greater good, if they affect the politician's next election chances. By not being able to get their act together, everything suffers – infrastructural needs, schools, welfare and what-have-you.

My wife and I did a month-long coach tour of the US a couple of months before the outbreak of the pandemic. It brought back many memories; we had always loved to visit America. New York had hardly changed, save for the area that was devastated by the 9/11 terror. Nonetheless, the great skyscrapers and Central Park were still as alluring as ever. So were many of the beautiful cities on our way west. But I could certainly see the decline in the industrial belt, and the not-so-wealthy feel of the average American. San Francisco gave me a shock with respect to the level of homelessness there. It was like a Third World scene. How could this situation happen to the greatest country on Earth?

No wonder you see their COVID-19 cases are the highest in the world, as is the death numbers. To wear a mask or to be vaccinated is a huge ask and can even reach the higher courts for decisions! Ironically these decisions can go in circles.

External Dilemmas

The American Dollar is the biggest con currency in world history. Their printing press works as they feel like it. Thanks to its *de facto* world reserve currency status, much of America's prosperity is anchored on the debts it owes the outside world. Yet most lender countries are so shackled that few can do much about it. They have to keep buying America's treasury bills. Whenever there is a crisis, people will rush to buy the Dollar. *It is the safe haven currency!* everyone screams. Really?

But with China reemerging and once it has cemented its position as the Number One trading nation in the world, this American Dollar hegemony will likely fade earlier than expected. Several countries are already using the *yuan* as the settlement currency in some of their foreign trades. That is why the US is making every effort to kill China.

Biden is no longer credible in foreign policy. From the way he caused America to exit from Afghanistan you can see his decisions were slipshod.

And from his handling of Iran to his teams' non-stop visits to shore up support for his "Rules-based" rubbish, including his convening of a mickey-mousy world democracy do, it is enough to convince keen observers of his shallowness. He has revealed his true form for all to see.

Virtually every American politician of significance has sold himself or herself to the country's mighty defence contractors. America's Industrial-Military complex is too powerful for anyone to check or audit. America possesses the most modern and lethal fighting gears in the world, but the effectiveness of its military might on the ground is suspect. They are certainly good in first strikes – like bombing the hell out of poorly-equipped enemies in Iraq and Afghanistan. But when they had to fight with people who were defending their homeland, like in Korea and Vietnam, and later in Afghanistan, America usually lost their wars at the end of the day. Would one fight to the last man under these circumstances? You often hear of mishaps in their warships and fighter aircraft. But their crews' commitment is also suspect. Soldering is just another "no choice" job for many. You need conflicts and wars to sell arms and make wild money. The US loves to have people like Ukraine's Zelenskyy and Taiwan's Tsai. Coming to the question of Taiwan, Biden and Blinken love to assure Tsai that they will do everything to stop China from invading Taiwan. But is that for real? Will the Americans die for Taiwan?

Die for Taiwan?

Tsai Ing-wen's hold of Taiwan is increasingly shaky. Her questionable PhD speaks volumes of her character, or the lack of it, if it is indeed fake. Her Democratic Progressive Party is able to survive because the alternative (Kuomintang) is also not popular. By and large the intellectual lot there knows the island's future is with the mainland. I reckon once its chips industry is no longer strategic to the Americans, or when China can show the Americans that they will get wiped out in the former's front yards if a war were to break out, Taiwan is likely to return to her motherland. Once this irritant is removed, what are America's aircraft carriers going to do in South China Sea? Protect Japan? Or protect the Philippines?

Personally, I have no bad feelings towards the Taiwanese. Ethnically, I speak more or less the same dialect as the Taiwanese. I have visited Taiwan several times and find the Taiwanese generally warm. I also love to see their temples, which look so alike to those we have in Southeast Asia. And they appear to be more “traditional” in the way they honour the deities.

To me, Biden lacks something that can save his presidency, which is likely to go down as one that is mediocre or even a monumental failure in American history. That something is what I call “Wisdom”.

People can be academically or intellectually brilliant, but a lack of wisdom will inhibit their ability to deliver great accomplishments even though opportunities are there. Unlike knowledge and skills, wisdom is something that can hardly be learned or taught or trained in. Many a time, it is either you have it or you don’t have it. It exudes simultaneously from your heart and your head. Period.

Dr Mahathir Mohamad was the Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1981 to 2003 and again from 2018 to 2020. When he became Prime Minister the second time, he was already 93 years old. His record was mixed during his first term. There was no doubt that he had raised the profile of Malaysia, but actual achievements were only so-so. Many of his grandiose projects became white elephants. When he stepped down, there was hope that the country could do better. His successor Abdullah Ahmad Badawi proved ineffective, and Mahathir was still very powerful in UMNO (the United Malay National Organisation, the senior partner in the Barisan Nasional coalition government). He soon engineered to pave the way for Najib Razak to be the next Prime Minister. Unfortunately, Najib, who is a populist politician, soon succumbed to the mother of all corruptions: the 1MDB scandal, where billions were siphoned into private pockets. Dr Mahathir formed an against-Najib vehicle Parti Bersatu and joined forces with Anwar Ibrahim *et al* to form a Harapan alliance which went on to win the general election comfortably. He became Malaysia’s seventh Prime Minister. But instead of bringing back the spirit of goodwill amongst the three main races in the country, he started to play racial politics again. He refused to honour his commitment to make

way for Anwar Ibrahim. (It is a known fact that he cannot stand Anwar Ibrahim. He also would not want the Chinese-dominated DAP to be a part of the government.) And early on, Muhyiddin Yassin, who was the Deputy President of Parti Bersatu, plotted with Barisan Nasional to overthrow the Harapan government. The ring leaders gathered in the Sheraton Hotel, hence the Sheraton Move. Mahathir could have gone down as a great Prime Minister; instead, his legacy has now been destroyed by a lack of wisdom on this occasion. He has shot himself in the foot! In a recent state election, the party which he founded lost all the seats it contested. To add salt to the injury, they also lost the deposits, since none was able to garner the minimum number of votes that was required for the deposit to be refunded.

Biden has had the opportunity to make a great President. However, instead of working with China to strengthen America internally and externally, he chose to embark on a mission to subjugate China...

Biden has spent his entire career in politics. But the roles he has been playing, largely in the Senate, are not rooted on real-life experiences in managing “real” people. He did not have “line” accountabilities, as management students will tell you, nor the grassroots charisma that is needed to complement operational inadequacies. Nelson Mandela was also a political fighter and despite the fact that he had spent much of his life in prison, he was a wise man. He could look beyond parochial interests or vendettas to forgive and accommodate the Whites when he assumed power after years of imprisonment by the latter during its long Apartheid rule in South Africa. (Unfortunately, even though his successors have a great mentor to emulate, none has the type of wisdom that is needed to make South Africa a great country. They were too consumed by political needs or personal greed.

And Biden should sack Blinken! Blinken is likely to end up as one of America’s weakest Secretaries of State. He looks lost most of the time. He is making America look ridiculous and stupid. He must still be nursing the wound from the punch that he got from **Yang Jiechi** in Alaska.

Monday, May 17, 2021

A Word for Biden

With a good education, many can climb the “intellect” ladder. Intellect has the “knowledge” as well as the “discerning, distilling or differentiating” dimensions. An intellectual does not see and interpret things in a linear fashion; he or she is able to extrapolate or see beyond the obvious. However, there is another level in cognitive grading that few can attain. That is WISDOM.

Wisdom is something that can hardly be learned. It grows in a person – through exposure to, and more importantly his own cognition to absorb from, people who have plenty of it. University professors are equipped intellectually, but not many have wisdom to offer. Wisdom is missing in most politicians.

Dr Mahathir is my favourite example. He is all by accounts a formidable intellect. But I would not rate him “wise” in the context of my understanding of the word. His Machiavellianism on race management when he had all the aura and resources to do a better job for posterity is the red card I think he deserves. Tunku Abdul Rahman was not a brilliant man; he was hardly known for his intellect. But most Malaysian would agree that he was indeed a great wise leader.

On the world stage, I held some high hopes for Joe Biden when he was campaigning for the presidency. I thought he was only trying to play to the American gallery when he labelled President Xi of China as a thug. Maybe he will talk and walk differently when he becomes President, this is what I thought. This is despite what I had read about him in Barack Obama’s *A Promised Land*. I could sense that Biden was not held in high esteem by Obama, even though the latter wrote fondly of him. Much of his counsel was not adopted by Obama. Nonetheless, he did strike me as a reasonably fair-minded man during his presidential campaign. (Maybe I was too influenced by my contempt for the conman Donald Trump, hence the good score for Biden without seeing him in action first!)

Notwithstanding, I was happy to give him the benefit of the doubt.

Alas, Biden shattered my confidence in him no sooner than when he took office!

Despite his age, and his long years of public service, Biden’s Wisdom Quotient is close to ZERO! His foreign relations behaviour beyond America’s sycophants borders on infantility. He is even more vicious than Trump when it comes to China. He is behaving like a school bully and is rounding up the leaders of Australia, Japan, the UK, Canada, India and several European countries to hurl mud at China. Of course, these lesser mortals have their own political agenda to chorus along. But sadly, many people in these countries have also lost their ability to think and are blindly

believing in the lies and distortions his team is spewing about Xinjiang and Hong Kong. The Asian hatred that has been unleashed by Trump has continued, even though he has promised otherwise. Unable to take on the Whites, the Blacks in America, few of whom have the benefit of civilisational history and culture to shape their thoughts, are increasingly turning to the Yellows on which to vent their frustrations. And in India, neighbourhood jealousies have prompted many to spurn anything Chinese, even the help China is offering in the wake of the out-of-control COVID-19 situation the country is facing at this time.

But I believe the most dangerous act of Biden's is his decision to send his naval flotilla to the South and East China Seas. His act has emboldened Taiwan's present pro-independence leaders to think China will not dare to act even though China has made it abundantly clear that the island's leaders have already breached their red line. Australia, Japan and the UK are most keen to join the US to beat the drum. One can understand Japan's design to help the US keep China and Taiwan apart, but for Australia to do so is surely folly, for China is its biggest trading partner. What threat does it pose to Australia? is a question the leaders must surely ask themselves. And as for the UK, Boris Johnson is totally delusional; he thinks Hong Kong is still his!

Biden has also aggravated both the trade and tech wars between the US and China. He is not scaling back on the stupidities of Trump in the former. And by appointing Katherine Tai as his Trade Representative, he is using a blatant poison-to-fight-poison strategy on China.

The US is depriving China access to chips and chip-making equipment made even by non-US companies, all in the name of safeguarding its national security. How absurd America can be? Its action has strengthened the Chinese resolve to work harder. And by denying Huawei's participation in their 5G rollout, the US and many others are simply shooting themselves in the foot.

Over the past couple of months, you have also seen the Xinjiang cotton issue. Now that much of the mud has been washed away, it is spinning stories about forced labour being used by China there to produce solar panels. Even though the WHO has set much of the record straight, the US continues to insinuate China's role in the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic. China had shown the world how the pandemic should be fought, yet few in the Western world would give it any credit. The Western world just loves to wear blinkers. Recently it even used the return of the Chinese rocket to Earth as an issue to find fault with China. The statements by NASA and its Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin reinforce how low they have stooped. Anyone who has a high school knowledge of rocket trajectories will tell you they were talking rubbish. The US has obviously forgotten that China, like them, has the capability to shoot a space object if they want to.



Clueless?

The US-China “wars” have also shown how mature many of the ASEAN leaders are. Ditto some of the leaders in West Asia, Serbia and Hungary in Europe, and South America. They can see the hypocrisy in the US leadership and have acted rationally and objectively, despite the persistent pressure from the US government. The European Union is particularly disappointing; they easily caved in.

I had always held great admiration for people who were educated at Harvard. Not anymore – after what I have seen in Mike Pompeo and Antony Blinken! The former is a thug, and the latter, an incoherent jackal trying to be statesman-like.

Biden is now giving the Americans a sense of false security. He has obviously done a better job in the country than his conman predecessor. (Anybody would be able to do that!) But the US’ own race relations are in deep shit. Biden is also “printing” money feverishly to move the country forward – investments in infrastructure, education and what-have-you. But the bottom line is simply that it has forgotten how to produce things competitively. Soon, inflation will return and if the US Dollar’s decline accelerates, it will soon have to bite the dust.

A wise leader will not follow conventional wisdom. He must bite the bullet and do the difficult things. But most American presidents cannot see beyond the tip of their nose, even though theirs are pretty long. And Biden is no different. China’s rise is inevitable. But China's rise is not going to threaten the West, let alone the US. Biden needs to think beyond his presidency. The country is so divided, and majority of the Americans hardly read and travel; most are intellectually deficient. Its infrastructure needs a generation’s efforts to improve, its rich-poor divide is like heaven and hell, so on and so forth.

And it really pains me each time I see Huawei’s Meng Wanzhou leaving her cage to go to the Canadian court. How cruel the West can be? Yet, they are shouting about human rights!



A victim of American tyranny?

My advice to China and Chinese all over the world is this: hold dear to your Confucian values and course; things will work out for you finally. In the meantime, as the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' spokeswoman Madam Hua Chunying has suggested, we should present the US with a huge mirror for them to take a good look at themselves.

Maybe wisdom is something that one cannot really learn?

Biden may not understand this, China's wisdom is not Xi Jinping's alone. It is a culmination of thousands of years of learning, fighting, searching, tinkering, enduring, persevering, etc. Little has come easy for the Chinese.

Thursday, June 3, 2021

Shooting Oneself in the Foot!

American superiority – economically, scientifically, and thus militarily – was founded largely on its open-arms welcome of usually well-educated and highly productive immigrants and students from all over the world – initially Europe and later East, South and West Asia. I am afraid this competitive advantage is being hastily thrown away, started by Donald Trump, and now pace accelerated under Joe Biden.

When my nephew was offered a place to study Engineering in the US in the 1990s, I advised him, "Sam, America is a great place to live. Try to get your green card after you graduate." What bad advice from me!

Sam and his wife did get their green cards. They have two children now. He works in a senior capacity for a substantial fertiliser company. But he is now seriously considering his employer's offer to relocate to either Singapore or China. He does not feel safe in America!

I now see video clips of vulnerable Asians being physically assaulted – for no apparent reason – by strangers on streets and in public transport. The perpetrators are invariably Blacks. (Somehow the Blacks always want to vent their underclass anger on Asians!) I do not know if most Americans of Chinese descent are feeling that way now. But I am fairly sure most Chinese parents in East Asia are now quite hesitant to send their children for education in America. Chinese students usually go there to pursue STEM courses. Devoid of their enrolment, how competitive will American universities remain, especially now that they must compete with some of the most “afraid-to-lose” institutions of higher learning in China?

The West loves to characterise Chinese as copy-cats. Few have bothered to read the history of China and know the prolific nature of that civilization in inventions and innovations. Indeed, China lost its bearings during the later part of the Manchu rule, when it was totally blind to the superiority of Western gunboats and their global dominance designs. But China is simply a giant that was forced into temporary submission.

Mao Tze-tung made the Chinese stand up. But the backwardness of China after his takeover was too immense for his Great Leap Forward clarion call. Fortunately, Deng was rehabilitated, but devoid of modern infrastructure in toolmaking, China simply could not advance much on the engineering and technology front, hence the need to copy and innovate. But the giant had indeed been awakened.

Within two decades, China became the “factory” of the world. No country could challenge its formidable supply chain infrastructure once this critical mass was reached. But the progress over the last five years or so has been even more mind-boggling; there is no need for me to repeat what it has achieved.

Much of this collective human capital, hitherto much of which would have gone to and stayed in America, is now locked in China. This, in my opinion, is marking the beginning of the decline of American hegemony in this world.

Joe Biden can say, “We still have our traditional intellectual constituents – the Caucasians, and the Jews, and the influx of the Latinos, South and other Asians, etc. – to count on.” I am not sure about the strength of that argument. The racial divide has not improved much since Martin Luther King, Jr's march on Washington in 1963. Few Blacks think hard about their future. The Caucasians and the Jews are cruising on a plateau; few need to go beyond their traditional turfs.

And coming to South Asians, particularly Indians, you see many *Fortune 500* companies and great universities headed by them. They also have their fair share of Nobel prizes. Many are world-class managers and scientists, but few are entrepreneurs or product/service disruptors in their own right. And millions of economic refugees are trying to enter America. It will take at least a generation or two before these immigrants can really contribute to the brain capital of America.

Chinese have yet to leave great footprints on fundamental research. But once they get to know the ABC in a certain field, they will collectively push all frontiers not only to extend their prowess all the way to XYZ linearly, but also to stretch the alphabet along the way concentrically in three dimensions like an expanded balloon. Yes, just like the Western world, China also has many high-tech billionaires, but unlike the West, they would be reined in if their actions were deemed compatible to the greater good policies seen in Chinese society.

Instead of working with China to benefit the world, the US seeks to contain China by demonizing it. The US can scream until its lungs collapse about the Uyghurs and forced labour in cotton fields in Xinjiang, the security laws in Hong Kong, and laboratory leak in Wuhan, and earlier, the plight of Tibetans. But are they the real champions? Anyone who is capable of distilling information will conclude it is all hypocrisy. This bad-mouthing strategy simply is no longer workable in this cyber world, when information and knowledge are all available with just a couple of clicks.

Indeed, Trump has let out the Genie, and Biden is making it roam wild. Who is the loser at the end of the day?

Someone recently forwarded me a video about how America has created a formidable foe in Vladimir Putin. Isn't this a worse nightmare?

I don't normally want to share my views indiscriminately even though my blog is open to anyone who cares to access it. But I was increasingly disturbed by the US's unrelenting effort to demonise China. And I could see America was already accelerating its own decline. And its performance in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics amply demonstrated that. The following article was my first attempt to help tell the world this. To my pleasant surprise, the post attracted close to fifty thousand visitors.

Monday, July 26, 2021

What do the Tokyo Olympics 2020 Say about America?

24th July 2021 was the first day of Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Naturally I was enthused over the roll-out of the events and anxiously kept tabs on the medal count for the day. At the end of the day, I noticed that the US had failed to win even a single medal. I didn't think much of it then, since it was the first day, until I saw the following headline on CNN: "US fails to win medal on first day of Summer Olympics for the first time in nearly 50 years".



Then I woke up on the morning of the 26th to read "USA Basketball defeated in first Olympic loss since 2004".

Sure, the US will certainly emerge as the top dog in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. But these two pictures also speak volumes of the state of America today!

Donald Trump and Joe Biden can scream until their throats explode that America is Number One, or is going to be back as Number One, but I for one am totally convinced these are not coincidental incidents but a precursor of what is already on the way – America's decline, albeit a long-drawn-out one.

My wife and I were fortunate enough to be able to tour the entire breadth of the United States just months before the outbreak of COVID-19. We used to like America. There was so much to learn from them. But the America we saw during our trip was no longer the America we thought we knew. Its country towns and national parks are still very breathtaking, but its cities are a far cry from their former selves. Not only did we not seem to see the whoa factor in its people, but we were also totally saddened by the degree of homelessness we saw in downtown San Francisco.

Much of this downward trend is self-inflicted.

Sure, the world was shocked by the September 11th terror attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001. But the sympathy America received from the world soon faded. First you had the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, followed by interventions in Syria and Libya, and sabotages in Venezuela and what-have-you; America has been too consumed by its self-righteousness and the interests of its military-industrial complex. It has revived its 1960s ultra-anti-Communist doctrine during which its CIA went round the world to topple governments. (Some term it the “Jakarta” method.)

But despite possessing formidable intellectuality at so many levels, the US hardly bothers to define and build its nationhood. It thinks its love and championship for “freedom and democracy” alone can overlord the world. A nation is defined by the cohesiveness of its people. The American society lacks homogeneity in terms of racial make-up. It is a country with hundreds of different ethnicities. Whites are dominant, but Blacks are also numerically strong and, as all know, because of their history in the country, they will not hesitate to stage unrests each time they feel they are being bullied. Hispanics and Asians, though significant in numbers, are meeker and the latter, especially, tend to suffer the brunt of the underclass anger felt by the Blacks.

Let’s be realistic on this fact: all of us are racists; it is a question of degree. But we keep our prejudices to ourselves. Our prejudices are usually not anchored on assumptions that we are superior to another race, but rather, as a reaction to hard-to-believe or hard-to-accept behaviour exhibited by individuals or groups of another race. Many call it stereotyping.

But the racism as practised by Whites like Donald Trump is different. They think they are superior and are therefore entitled to be deferred to by the lesser non-Whites. Of course, there are Whites who genuinely believe in racial equality but, by and large, some superiority complex is always evident even amongst them.

There has been no serious attempt in the US to bridge this superiority-inferiority gap. Lip service is often offered, but this is quite hollow in nation-building. Only a culturally integrated approach based on shared beliefs or philosophy can make this work, which is not possible under the racial and religious mix of the American society today. The Blacks also do not have champions to rally their community to develop a culture that is worthy of sustainability and respect through education, behavioural change, etc. Hispanic politicians like Ted Cruz think they are as white as Whites.

Secondly, much of the American transformation in the past has been driven by its open-arms welcome to talents from all over the world. The Whites dominated this phenomenon before the advent of ICT. However, this has changed a great deal since then. Much of Wall Street is still White or Jew, but the productive forces in ICT and the digital economy today are very Asian-driven – the Chinese from Greater China and Southeast Asia, the Indians, Pakistanis and

Bangladeshis from South Asia, the Japanese and the Koreans. The Chinese are particularly good in applications, which translate into markets and money for the ICT and digital economies, which help them to scale even higher planes in product research and innovation. Starting with Trump's anti-China-ism and Biden's continuation of playing to the home gallery, many Chinese who want to make America their home are beginning to have second thoughts. Some exodus will happen; this will certainly create an intellectual and entrepreneurial vacuum which will be quite irreplaceable for a long time.

I take pride in the fact that I read widely, not only from the mainstream media, but also from social media, academic journals, professional publications and even writings from not very credible organisations. But I hold dear to this belief: keep an open mind about what you read or see.

Many from the American and Western intelligential world are world-class in thought and concepts. They know exactly what is ailing America and have voiced their concerns often. However, politicians in America and their sycophants in Europe, the QUAD/Five Eyes fraternity and many Chinese in Hong Kong, Taiwan and even Singapore choose to be blind and deaf to realities and continue to subscribe to the cold war mentality that Trump and Biden are preaching. Many of these politicians and their sycophants were educated in the best universities, yet they continue to help Biden spew lies about China on issues like democracy in Hong Kong and genocides in Xinjiang. In this ICT age, nothing can be hidden. No one has come up with evidence, which is most fundamental in Science, Law and what-have-you.

Hong Kong was under Britain's colonial governors for almost a hundred years. Which governor has given Hong Kong the democracy the West has been preaching? I was reading an article written by a Nepalese Gurkha some days ago. Has Britain helped these Nepalese after they had served their purpose? Hong Kong is just a convenient ground for the West to sabotage China; their concern has nothing to do with democracy. The unfortunate part is that the successive Chief Executives of the Hong Kong Administrative Region have failed to address two things – one: the need to reeducate the Hong Kong young – through the education system – that they are Chinese and NOT British, and two: the need to solve the housing problems there.

Next is the genocide and forced labour claims in Xinjiang. Can any one of us believe that America and the West care about the Muslims there? Come on...

In his life Trump has never done an honourable piece of business. Do read his niece's book to know who this man really is. Biden's record may be cleaner; but he has never played a role which he has to be held accountable for. You may not like Xi Jinping, but he certainly had to slog hard all his life – from administrating villages to managing hundreds of millions at city and provincial levels – to be what he is today. And the people in the Politburo are there not because they have

a great university degree, or are scions of a great fortune, or because their father is so-and-so. In China they must work like crazy to earn their stripes.

In America, all you need is to be able to articulate or debate well; it doesn't matter whether you have substance or not. You have Blondie like Nancy Pelosi (she is not blond, though) who speaks as if she has forgotten to bring her brain along, and people like Mike Pompeo, who has a Harvard MBA, who openly admits he can lie and lie. So what, he says? Yet people like Jimmy Lai and Joshua Wong will travel all the way to worship them. And you have pseudo-scholars like Peter Navarro who can generate fictitious bibliographies. And I suppose there is no need for me to single out America's minions in Canada, Europe, Australia and many parts of Asia for this citation.

What is disturbing to ethnic Chinese like me is America's newfound paranoia against China and by extension Chinese. Nations are like participants in a perpetual marathon. Over a specific span of time, you will see a leader, followed by close pacers, the bulk of also-rans and, finally, a bunch of laggards. In the past, you had great civilisations in Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, India and China. Some have disappeared; others are just a pale shade of their former selves today. Then came the colonialists in the 1500s and the British became the undisputed leader until the end of World War II. Now the US is leading the pack. But this spoilt brat has a problem. He thought no one could possibly or should overtake him. All of a sudden, he realises someone is pacing very closely behind him. That someone is the "old hack" he used to take pity on. How dare he, he roars! Instead of pulling himself together to keep ahead, this brat slows to pick stones to throw at the old man. He also rallies his goons to floor the old man. But this old man, having survived the last five thousand years, is only interested to keep running!

I chanced upon a recent book by S. Condemi called *A Pocket History of Human Evolution* and am taking the liberty to reproduce one of her diagrams here:

FOR EYES

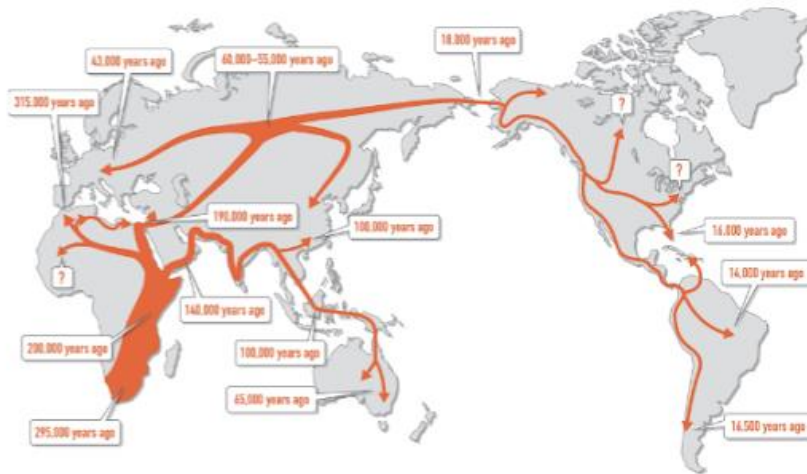


Figure 13

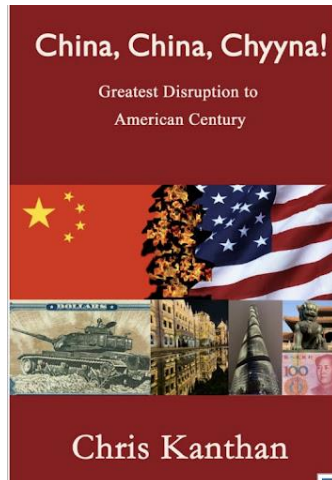
Sapiens's migration out of Africa

The scientific consensus is that *Homo sapiens* left Africa about 60,000 years ago. However, the latest research shows that earlier migrations took place, one reaching China more than 100,000 years ago and another reaching Australia more than 65,000 years ago. *Homo sapiens* entered preglacial Europe, Siberia, and northeastern Asia around 45,000 years ago, which shows that they needed time to grow accustomed to the cold.

Contrary to earlier belief that *Homo sapiens* left Africa some 60,000 years ago, the latest research seems to show that the migration reached China more than 100,000 years ago. I do not want to speculate, save to say that there must be something more to it than meets the eye!

I read questions and answers posed in Quora frequently. Much of the world is still suspicious about China and the Chinese. This is a failure on the part of China to tell its stories.

Readers may want to read a recent book written by Chris Kantha called *China, China, Chyyna*. To many in the West, I am sure he will be regarded as a China apologist. But he really writes things that the West should know about China. He also highlights China's failure in its inability to do a good international PR job. This deficiency has been highlighted by many, significantly by Singapore's Kishore Mahbubani and even by yours truly in several of my earlier postings.



Again, the following articles were written to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the US leadership vis-à-vis their relationship with China. Gratifyingly, some attracted tens of thousands of viewers.

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

Hi Antony and Wendy, Why So Ill at Ease?

Friends may remember this picture. It is Colin Powell telling the UN Security Council in March 2002 that America has found Saddam Hussein in possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Many believed him. Powell had the prestige to sway even non-believers. But it was a big lie. How could someone of Powell's standing do that? many would ask.

Look at how confident Powell was.



Fast forward to 19th March 2021, Antony Blinken and Jake Sullivan played “hosts” to China’s Yang Jiechi and Wang Yi in Alaska. Blinken obviously looked very ill at ease at the meeting. Only Sullivan was more composed.



Left: *We don’t buy that stuff from you...* Right: *Jake, what should we do with this Chinaman?*

And ditto Wendy Sherman at the 25th and 26th July meetings with Xie Feng and Wang Yi.





Your seat is actually meant for our Taliban guest!

Why?

I do not propose to talk about the substance, or the lack of it, of their allegations against China. Everyone who reads knows about them.

I will try to explore from the common sense angle.

First, in the case of Powell's assertion. Many in the world were indeed convinced that Iraq had WMDs. Hussein gave the impression he had them. Even though the UN inspectors were not able to find them, the US was keen to invade Iraq, thinking it was a piece of cake. Powell was prepared to sacrifice his prestige to do that for George Bush.

As for Blinken and Sherman, if you read their CVs, you would know that their intellect is very formidable. They know from their PhD pursuits everything must be evidence-based. What has been said about the genocides and forced labour concerns in Xinjiang and the democracy issues in Hong Kong can never hold water for them. They went to these meetings without any conviction, hence their discomfort. Period.

In Yang, Wang and Xie's case, they know what they are talking about. They know they owe it to the Chinese people to unmask America's hypocrisy in all these issues. Lies are easy to take down. And they are well-read, well-travelled, seasoned diplomats. Hence their confidence.

I remember I had to help IMC Pan Asia Alliance's Fred Tsao sell Family Business Network (FBN) to some of the rich men in Singapore, Bangkok, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur. FBN is a Lausanne-based billionaires' fraternity, which Fred was trying to introduce to the Asia Pacific region. I am a man of modest means and personally do not feel at ease with rich men and rich kids. But it was a task that I had to perform as Fred's employee. But I could feel my own discomfort each time I spoke to guests on FBN's mission. I was not convinced of the mission myself!

Thursday, August 26, 2021
Neo-Sun-zi's Crystal Ball

Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan was speaking to CNA during the US Vice-President's visit to Singapore on 23 August.

He cautioned Chinese not too be too carried away with the belief that the US's decline is inevitable, and that China would soon be the Number One power of the world. He said because of its ability to attract migrants, the US has had a much bigger talent base than China.

That might be the case in the past, but does it hold true in the future?

I reckon as much as 20% of the US talent pool comprises Chinese from China and Chinese from many other parts of the world, particularly Southeast Asia. In the wake of the perceived hostility towards China and the Chinese, I suspect this flow will run its course soon. Russia may also account for 5% of this talent pool. I doubt this flow will sustain either. And when support for the great universities and think-tanks in the US becomes thinner, will their rejuvenation of great minds be as prolific as now?

And I do not mean to be racist – with the constant influx of economic refugees, the average IQ will certainly be impacted, at least during their first generation's struggle to find their livelihood bearings. I also argue that there is a kind of Wisdom DNA that is unique to East Asian culture. If there is such a thing as a Wisdom Quotient (WQ) score, then America's score will likely also trend downwards. The latter represents cultural progress and is something that is not easy to reverse. It is a generational effort which, in a society like America's (huge diversity in race, great disparity in income, etc.), is close to impossible.

My son is a professor in Neurology; he publishes quite widely, often in world-class journals. Before the pandemic, he travelled several times a year to speak at international and regional conferences. Unfortunately, he does not write or speak Chinese, save for some *Hokkien* (South Fujianese dialect). I recently sent him some of the articles I have blogged. It carried a subtle message that maybe it is time for him to know China and our Chineseness. This is what he responded to me:

"In our professional circles, there is often unease about our colleagues from Mainland China. They publish tons of papers, often of very poor quality. They tell you that they have 100K neurologists, but struggle to get in <2K participants to a major international neuro conference (after roping in

scores of their students). There is often a lack of sincerity, which I can give you examples of in private. (BTW, I do not think this has much to do with my inability to communicate in Mandarin)."

I can fully understand his contempt for his counterparts from China. My son's scholarship is strictly Western, that is, at the highest level of research; ideas must be original, and plagiarism is strictly NO-NO.

Until it was exposed to the West, China had no real concept of Masters or PhDs. If someone was admitted to the *Hanlin* Academy after he had scored well in the imperial examinations, he would continue to do lifelong "research" and rise in hierarchical grades and enjoy lifelong emoluments and trappings of office. Much of this research was to correct bad learnings and build new knowledge and attitudes. There is therefore a very fundamental philosophical difference between Western research and Chinese scholarship.

Imperial scholarship was still practised during the Qing era. However, when the Chinese republic was born in 1912, there was already a sizeable pool of students returning from Japan, Europe and America who were equipped with modern concepts of higher education. Unfortunately, between 1912 and 1990, when Deng's reform started to take root, scholarship in China was in a very fluid state. The last thirty years marked a period of extreme anxiousness to catch up. Those who understood the importance of "degrees" began to clamour for higher recognition. Hence all the plagiarism in China.

Fundamental research is still not widespread in China. Instead, the mindset is largely a "build-on" one – *you have an idea, good, I will use it to bring out a product or service from it*. Many do not believe in "wasting" time on fundamental research efforts.

But I believe the Chinese government is already aware of this innate Chinese characteristic. From the Intellectual Property Protection laws to anti-trust measures, you can see its determination to bring China to a different plane.

Changing cultural traits is usually a generational effort. Fortunately, the present line-up of Chinese leadership has the benefit of civilisational wisdom to take early cognisance of this need. This will make the change process shorter. This inculcation is already reflected in the corporate culture of Huawei. And the wrong trend that is being exhibited by the likes of Jack Ma has been nipped in the bud before it becomes a source of cancer. One thing good about Chineseness, Jack Ma and his like have now "understood" the overall mission of the Chinese leaders and are happy to rein in their "law-unto-themselves" ambitions to help China progress.



Hua Chunying is the modern-day Hua Mulan of China. Her greatness is not in battles but in the press room of the ministry. Her remark about democracy is so common-sensical, yet few of the politicians in the West understand or want to understand. She says, “Yes, Coca-Cola tastes the same everywhere, But democracy is not Coca-Cola; it has to be specific for each country.” This is what I call a perfect score in WQ.

Can’t the West learn some WQ from the East?

Tuesday, August 31, 2021

21st Century Physiognomy

Physiognomy or **anthroposcopy** is the practice of assessing a person's character or personality from his or her outer appearance – especially the face. The practice was well accepted by the ancient Greek philosophers. It is a pseudoscience to many, an opinion which I largely share. But when it comes to American politicians, I think this pseudoscience does hold water.

During the run-up to last year’s presidential election in the US, many of us were banking our hopes on Joe Biden. He did seem “lost” many a time during public appearances and engagements, but Donald Trump was so obnoxious to us then. When Biden was finally declared the winner, I am sure most of us breathed a sigh of relief!

I for one was for him, thinking he should have the courage and wisdom to correct the wrongs of Trump. The first couple of weeks of his presidency were reassuring. Alas, my respect for him soon took a sharp turn south.

Then I remembered Barack Obama's 2020 book *A Promised Land*. Biden was hardly credited for any decisions Obama made during his presidency. If at all, Obama appeared dismissive of his Vice-President's counsel on most issues.



Obama's A Promised Land.

And I dug deeper. This is what I unearthed: A Politico report said well before the nomination of the Democratic Party's candidates for the 2020 presidential election *"Barack Obama has privately voiced doubts about the ability of Joe Biden ... to beat President Donald Trump ... Don't underestimate Joe's ability to f... things up... said to be concerned privately that Biden does not have an intimate connection with the electorate."*

Even with the benefit of hindsight, we wouldn't have done otherwise, would we? It was Hobson's choice to armchair observers like me.



Left: *Shit, what have I done?* Right: *"Oh, God, forgive me!"*

The left picture of Biden was taken when the Taliban entered the Kabul presidential palace without firing a single shot. Afghanistan was conquered by the Taliban in a matter of weeks. The picture on the right was taken immediately after 13 American soldiers, together with many desperate Afghans, were killed by suicide bombers during an attack at Kabul Airport. What do these pictures tell us?

For the picture on the left, I can only surmise Biden's thoughts as: *"Shit, what have I done"*; and for the right picture, *"Oh, God, forgive me!"*

I am not here to argue whether his decision to quit Afghanistan was sound. But most would agree that his execution was outright stupid! Obviously, it must have been conducted without the advice of any military, logistics or even administrative professionals. Judging from Antony Blinken's clueless performances so far and his relationship with Biden, he must also be the cheerleader behind Biden's "go" decision. Clueless is as Clueless does. Period.

I was watching Blinken's live address on CNN this morning (7am, 31st August 2021, Malaysian time). This man obviously was trying to salvage his reputation. From the very outset, he was crowing about America's feat in being able to evacuate some 6,000 Americans and 120,000 others from Kabul Airport before the deadline. He talked about America's commitment to help those Afghans who want to build new lives outside their very own country. This chap is a real nut. Some 100-200 Americans are still in Afghanistan, yet he threatens sanctions. If America has the wellbeing of Afghans at heart, they should encourage Afghans to stay behind to help rebuild the country. That's where American help will be greatly welcomed. The billions of dollars of military helicopters and vehicles and weaponry left behind may also potentially end up elsewhere. If I were China and they are offered to me, my answer would be *Why Not?* Stupid is as Stupid does again!



The clueless cheerleader...

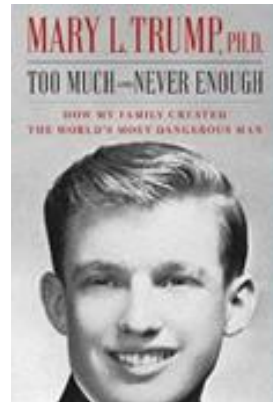
What has all this got to do with physiognomy or anthroposcopy? I believe a person's mental and moral characteristics, if they persist, will in no time transform his or her facial features physically

to reflect those characteristics. We tend to stereotype when we come across these features – evil- or sadistic-looking, dishonest, treacherous, advantage-taking, etc., amongst them. Of course, we can also be fooled by such prejudices.

Biden strikes me as “*sor-cai*”, a Cantonese term which I often used in junior school to poke fun at some of my mates who could not solve simple problems. It means “stupid fellow”. Or one who doesn’t use his or her brain. He could have used his presidency to leave a legacy, after all, who could go down as the most useless president in American history. Now it looks as though he and Trump might be fighting for the same title.

Blinken’s face reflects cluelessness, charlatanism, timidity disguised as intellectuality and all the pretensions you can think of. Feel free to disagree!

Coming back to Trump’s physiognomy or anthroposcopy, those of us who have done some graduate studies in business or management would have already known Trump was largely a conman even as far back as the 1980s. I remember there were plenty of stories on him in *Fortune* or *Forbes* those days about his unscrupulousness and failures in business dealings. So, when his niece Mary Trump published her volume in 2020 *Too Much, Never Enough*, I said to my wife, “Didn’t I tell you all along that this man is a conman?”



His unscrupulousness is written all over his face and carried in his gestures. Below is a picture of the conman receiving the president of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić. How would you feel if you were Vučić? This conman has absolutely no concept of decency, let alone the understanding of international diplomatic protocol.



Left: *China, China, China*; Right: *Interview for next season's Apprentice?*

Now let me touch on some of the lesser mortals. First, Kamala Harris.

Her face mask hides her total lack of knowledge in anything outside California. I read from Wikipedia that before she assumed Vice-Presidency she had only been to Jamaica and India for family visits and not much beyond these two places. Given her career background, I suppose before she embarked on her recent Singapore and Vietnam trip, she also did not know much about Southeast and East Asia. The way she blasted China in Singapore and Hanoi underscored the fact that the lines were written by someone else. (And it is simply bad manners or poor upbringing to scold your host's neighbour when you do not know the true feelings of your host.) It is an open secret that her office is a dysfunctional one. But her physiognomy has still not fully developed yet. Give her a couple of years, her shallowness will be written all over her face if she keeps believing in her own misplaced logic.



An Irony: Enemies from Own Kind

I always argue that the greatest enemies of China are some Chinese – foreign-born or migrant – all over the world. I would just name three below.

The most notorious of whom is none other than China-born Miles Yu Maochun, who was advising Mike Pompeo on how to humiliate China.



The other is Vicky Xu Xiuzhong who is now an “analyst” with ASPI Australia. Her expertise is listed as being in “China’s overseas influence campaigns, Chinese nationalism, Xinjiang and Uyghur issues, and Chinese diaspora communities”, amongst others. With her tall tales on China’s genocide and forced labour in Xinjiang, she became an instant darling of the West’s pseudo-scholars and politicians. Privately, it is said she leads a very decadent life in Australia.



Vicky Xu Xiuzhong

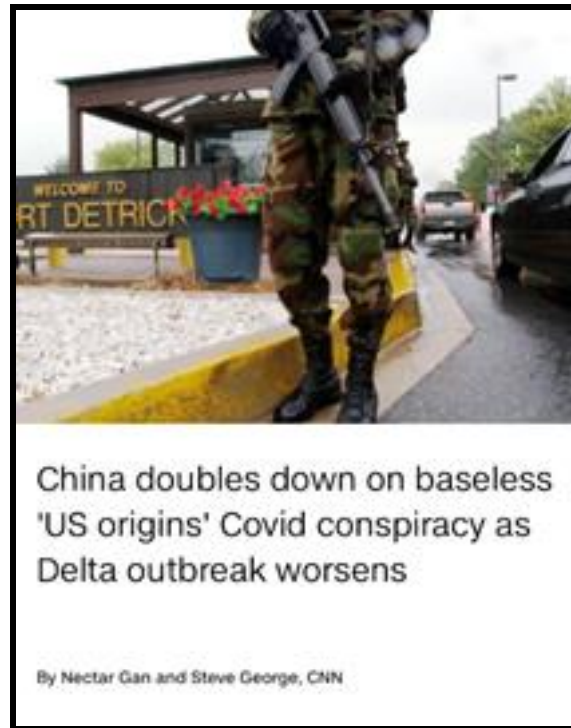
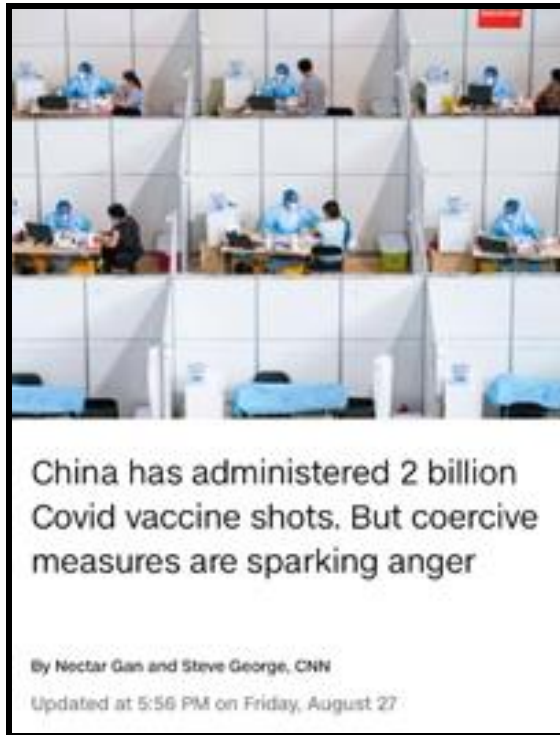


Nectar Gan

A new star is emerging at CNN. She is Nectar Gan. Before joining CNN in 2020, Nectar was a China reporter at the *South China Morning Post*. She has covered a wide range of topics from diplomacy to the environment, and written extensively on politics and religion, according to CNN’s website. She is said to be based in Hong Kong since 2010.

I was trying to Google where she hails from. I had no luck; there was close to zero information on her background. Nonetheless, I saw that a PhD candidate at the London School of Economics listed her work in his bibliography. She must be quite smart to be cited at that level. However, from her surname Gan, I have a hunch that she must hail either from Malaysia or Singapore. Or she might be an ABC (American- or Australian-Born Chinese).

The following are two recent articles which have listed Nectar Gan as the first author. I leave it to readers to judge her sanity or her going all out to gain brownie points with her new bosses at CNN.



What Do All these Qin Hui [秦桧] have in common in physiognomy?

Qin Hui is generally regarded as the greatest traitor in Chinese history. In a museum in Zhejiang, one can go and “spit” at him and his wife, although he died about a thousand years ago. Qin was a chancellor of the Song dynasty and was the man behind the persecution and execution of Yue Fei, a general who fought against the Jin army.



Kneeling Statues of Qin Hui and wife.

Miles Yu, Vicky Xu and Nectar Gan are modern-day Qin Hui!

And what do they have in common in facial features? My answer: Shades of greed, and ever readiness to ingratiate with the modern-day *Jins*, aka Western Masters.

Of course, I am just joking about the discernability of these features in their faces. Theirs are just as normal as yours or mine. But their actions are certainly those of Qin Hui and they truly deserve our contempt.

There are many modern-day Qin Hui out there. Watch out for them!

I love America. They have great universities and thought leaders. Columbia University's Jeffrey Sachs is one of my favourites. But I have a very low opinion of their politicians.

Acknowledgement

As usual, my good friends Lilian Low and Chew Hai Hong helped me to make this into a readable article.
Thank you Lilian and Hai Hong!



CHAPTER 11

NEW BALANCES IN GEOPOLITICS

Untenability of the Status Quo

When Ukraine first broke away, it appeared to be happy to work with Russia, but obviously this was not what the US wanted. We all know the instigator behind the Orange Revolution. And now they have a comedian who is helping NATO to cook up hysterics to heighten tension in the Black Sea. Putin also knows the US hoodlum against China is not based on his love for democracy or human rights or Taiwan. It is simply the US's determination to maintain its hegemon status in the West Pacific. There is only one sensible thing for Russia to do: team up with China to resist the US nonsense.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain have long been America's buddies; yet in January their foreign ministers, together with the Secretary-General of the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC), visited China to discuss a China-GCC free-trade agreement, besides strengthening energy ties with Beijing. At the same time, Iran's Foreign Minister was also in town. (Iran has already signed – on 27th March 2021 – a 25-year Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with China.) Under Trump, the US quit the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOC) with Iran and now Biden is negotiating with Iran again. For what? Only Blinken knows.

I have already written before about the wisdom of leaders in the ASEAN countries, some of which are not totally comfortable with China, especially those who have competing claims on some islands in the South China Sea. But by and large they know how to manage their relationships with China. China's claim of the waters within the nine-dash line may sound absurd, but it is a call that they have to make in the wake of the US's constant show of force in the region, which is joined in by some of its far-flung allies and pseudo-supporters. I always believe that once the US threat is removed, China will be more than happy to treat the South China Sea as a resource pool for all involved to share.

Elsewhere in the region, Iraq, which America has poured in tens of billions to rescue, has asked China to build some 1,000 schools for them. And Afghanistan is also talking to China to help rebuild its country, after America's ignominious exit from the country. Ditto Syria.

Just imagine, all these countries are through-and-through Islamic. How could they welcome a Communist, Uyghur-exterminating Satan to help or do business with them? (China has built an 18.5km metro line across Mina, Muzdalifah and Arafat, and was involved in Saudi's 453-km Haramain High-speed Railway linking Mecca and Medina.) How can they be so unkind to their fellow Muslims in Xinjiang? Obviously, what the West is claiming about China cannot be true.

All this means only one thing: America has lost its credibility and clout in West Asia. But you have an ostrich who prefers to keep its head beneath the sand.

Elsewhere in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, China has helped build bridges for the former and a port for the latter. Are all these debt-trap projects, as the West wants you to believe?

Similarly, in North Africa China is helping Egypt to build a new capital. And in many parts of Africa, yes, China is mining their minerals, but it is also helping them to build infrastructure (roads, hospitals, railways in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Nigeria), unlike the exploitations by the European colonisers during the dark days of Africa.

Even in America's backyard, China's stock has soared. Barbados Prime Minister **Mia Motley** had this to say when she was pressured by BCC to condemn China: *We don't call ourselves America's backyard. We established relations with China 44 years ago, and China has investment across the world. For you to focus on Caribbean or Africa with China, without*

recognising the role China is playing in Europe or in other North Atlantic countries, is a bit disingenuous, and really reflects more that we are being seen as pawns, regrettably, rather than countries with equal capacity to determine our destiny.

Two countries in Europe stood up for China on many occasions. Both are members of the EU; they are Serbia and Hungary. Readers may remember Serbia's president **Aleksandar Vučić** who had to suffer the indignation of having to sit in front of Donald Trump in the White House like a guilty executive in September 2020. Vučić has met with Xi on several occasions and was amongst the first Europeans to use China's coronavirus vaccine.

Hungary's Prime Minister **Viktor Mihály Orbán** was the first EU country to sign up for China's BRI. Under Orbán, Hungary's economic and political ties with China have grown increasingly strong. Its utilisation of Huawei and the construction of the Belgrade-to-Budapest railway have raised unity and security concerns for the transatlantic alliance. It has now allowed Fudan University to set up a branch campus, which has caused many Hungarians to take to the streets. But in the first place, the Chinese are not interested in indoctrinating foreigners. They don't do that even to foreign students studying in China. There are 30,000 Chinese people living in Hungary and there are major Chinese corporations and banks in that country. As China continues to develop its higher education sector, it will always want to see what it can learn from abroad.

Both Vučić and Orbán are not overwhelmingly popular in their own countries, which is inevitable, since both are newbies in the brand of liberal democracy that their countries have embraced after the fall of the Soviet Union. And as these two leaders are being painted as autocrats, they will always be forces, both within and from outside, that are trying hard to topple them. And you can take my wager: the US's hand is always there. (Stop press: both have been returned in their recent elections.)

China has shipped out billions of doses of coronavirus vaccines to more than 100 countries across the globe. Many love to deride them as inferior to Pfizer,

Moderna and AstraZeneca. Come on, as the saying goes, the test of the pudding is in the eating. Which country has done better than China in terms of coronavirus containment? Everyone knows who is the champion in the reverse ranking order, right?

The Communist leaders in the then Soviet Union always held a very patronising and condescending attitude towards Communist China. In the 1960s, Nikita Khrushchev did not hesitate to pull the rug from under the Chinese feet when he saw that Mao was bent on having his own brand of Communism. And before that the Czar Russia had swallowed much of China's Northeast. But things have changed under Putin. Needs have brought China and Russia together; but I think the friendship between Xi and Putin is no-longer skin-deep. They seem to admire each other and understand that to fight against the American hegemon, they need to stick together, economically, politically, militarily, and even emotionally.

China, through deeds, has also cultivated some genuine friendships in South America, Africa, West Asia (or Middle East), South Asia and the Caribbean, besides the neighbours in Southeast Asia.

It is too late for America to undermine these friendships. With Blinken in charge, it simply does not know what to do. He can only blink!

FOR EY

CHAPTER 12

BUT HAVE THE CHINESE REALLY “ARRIVED”?

I do want to make a distinction about China and the Chinese in general. This chapter is about the Chinese in general.

Maybe Not Quite Yet

Soon after the Beijing 2008 Olympics, a horrible scandal involving milk and infant formula broke out like wildfire in China. It soon spread across the world since the country exported a wide range of food products. Six infants died from kidney stones and other kidney damage and many hundreds had to be hospitalised. Melamine had apparently been added in order to cause milk to appear to have higher protein content. The milk was produced by an enterprise called Sanlu (三鹿) in China. The issue raised worldwide concerns about food safety and political corruption in mainland China and damaged the reputation of China's food exports. A spokesman for the World Food Organization said that the scale of the problem proved that it was "clearly not an isolated accident, but a large-scale intentional activity to deceive consumers for simple, basic, short-term profits."

My daughter Monica was quite an up-and-coming businesswoman a couple of years ago. She used to own and run two boutiques in Melbourne – an upmarket one called Fashion Agenda in Central, which is one of the CBD's premier shopping arcades, and the other one called MYL in Burke Mall, which was for mid-market apparel shoppers. She was even featured in the *Herald Sun*. Young and ambitious, she wanted also to start a *ramen* (Japanese noodle) outlet in Melbourne. After months of searching, she finally located an Italian restaurant in the General Post Office building which was looking for someone to take over its premises. She promptly approached the General Post Office's agent/manager to negotiate for a takeover.

“Japanese restaurant is fine... But we don’t want to see it in the cheapee, cheapee Chinese type...” Apparently, this was what the agent said to her – in the most patronising matter – when they met.

My first reaction was that she should have told him off. She is not a *cheapee*, *cheapee* Chinese woman! She has been living in Australia since she was 16 years old. Holden even used her house in Toorak as a background to introduce one of its higher-end cars in full-page advertisements in the local papers – without even asking for her permission! But on second thought, could I really blame this agent/manager? He was just stereotyping Chinese – based on what he has seen and heard. My daughter, unfortunately, has to live with this “branding” of Chinese-ness in this part of the world.

Prejudice against the Chinese runs deep. In October 2019, human traffickers arranged for some men, women and boys to be smuggled into the UK in a refrigerated container truck. They were Asian-looking. All perished. Without checking, BBC assumed they were Chinese and insinuated accordingly. They were later identified to be Vietnamese. BBC did not make any attempt to apologise.



Source: *The Age*, 16th January, 2005.

This picture appeared in Melbourne’s *The Sunday Age* (16th January 2005) – after Mark Latham, the then leader of Australia’s Labor Party, decided to throw in the towel following Labor’s disastrous showing in the 2004 general elections.

But what has it got to do with the Chinese?

Look very carefully: Inside the **shrunk** shirt is a label which reads: MADE IN CHINA, GARMENT MAY SHRINK.

This was how the Chinese were being seen by the world even when it had become the world's factory. To most markets in the developed economies, Chinese products are perceived to be inexpensive but low in quality. This is also the perception the world had for Japanese products in the early 1960s when they began to appear in the world market. But within years, the Japanese manufacturers have leapfrogged many rungs and now their products are rated higher than the Americans' and even Europeans', except perhaps the Germans'.

Today, every Chinese can be proud of the images they see inside the cabin of China's Tiangong space station. And many brands of the smart phones made in China are highly coveted. But has that quality consciousness cascaded down?

I am afraid the answer is still no.

Three recent experiences: first, my son's apartment in a suburb near Kuala Lumpur is constantly being intruded by the neighbourhood's pigeons. They dirty the balconies with their droppings. I recently ordered a gadget that was supposed to use ultrasonic sound to repel pigeons from Lazada. It was totally ineffective. Second, I was looking for a good towel rack and saw one, again on Lazada's platform. It looked good. But when the package arrived, one of the screws was missing, and the rack was not able to hold a standard size bath towel. (Its width was good only for a hand towel!) Third: An Ag home test kit which my wife picked up at the Mr DIY store. When the packet was opened, there was no test fluid, for the tube was obviously defective! All had travelled all the way from China. I promptly had them returned! Why are they still in the stone age on issues of quality and claims?

When I chanced upon a book *The Ugly Chinaman and the Crisis of Chinese Culture* [丑陋的中国人 *Chou-Lou de Zhong-guo Ren*], I like most Chinese was scornful of the way we had been portrayed by the author – noisy, chaotic, self-centred, crude, dubious and what-have-you! *How can he, a Chinese, say all these things about Chinese? Who is this idiot Bo Yang (柏楊)*³? I had always been very proud of our history and culture. But this book is full of sarcasm and blunt criticism about many things deemed ‘Chinese’. Bo Yang compared the Chinese culture to a “sauce jar”, in which foodstuff is preserved in sauce – the sauce can store foodstuff for a long time, but that is only because it is already rotten to begin with.

I moved to live in Australia in 2001. As the saying goes, in Rome, live like the Romans. I suddenly became very conscious of etiquette. I was the owner’s representative and the executive director of two hotels in Sydney – one an art deco hotel in the CBD and the other, a hotel designed for celebrities in one of the most sought-after bays there. Business had become lousy after the Sydney Olympics; we had no choice but also to welcome group tours. Many of these group tours were from China – the *nouveau riche* there. My colleagues were passing remarks about their lack of etiquette – throwing their cigarette butts everywhere, packing goodies away after their breakfast helpings, and the way they weaved in and out of service queues. Clearing one’s throat and spitting “what came to the mouth” into the hotels’ refuse bins appeared to be a natural thing to do. I suddenly took offence at the way they dressed – so outlandish! Some even left the manufacturer’s label on their jacket’s sleeves, as if to tell you that it was “expensive, you know”. In lifts, they talked to each other as if there were miles apart, totally oblivious to the discomfort of fellow passengers.

I had also attracted many cold stares – when I was trying to cut into traffic lanes that appeared smoother, or stood on the right side of escalators or tried to move ahead of pedestrians in zebra-crossings. My first instinct was that

³ Bo Yang passed away in 2008. He landed in jail for his portrayal of Chian Kai-shek as the cartoon character Popeye the Sailorman.

these people were a little racist; weren't they? But I soon realised that I was not being singled out. These people simply kept a very high level of social etiquette. *They even observed speed limits – this doesn't happen in the place I came from!* It suddenly dawned upon me that Bo Yang was a “messiah”! His objective was to rouse Chinese people to reflect and change. Most of us don't see it that way because we are all living in our own community. We are used to habits and conditions that we have already come to accept as the norm – picking our noses in public, weaving in and out of traffic, dirty toilets, and so on.

I took Bo Yang's message as my personal wake-up call!

I was flying back from Sydney to Melbourne on Virgin Australia one evening and decided to watch Sky News, which was provided free on an otherwise “pay if you want to use or see anything” airline.

The anchor newsman John Mangos was reporting a piece of news about a man who had won big in a lottery in China. Apparently, this man was trying to hide his identity by wearing a Spiderman mask over his face. (I suppose he didn't want to be a target of kidnap gangs there.) Of course, he looked ridiculous, and this prompted this TV personality to very spontaneously exclaim, why should this Chinaman bother to hide his identity since he has “black hair, yellow skin, and squinty eyes!” In 2001 when China was already the second largest economy in the world, we still had a national TV personality in Australia deriding Chinese as such. He forgot that he was working for Rupert Murdoch, whose Mrs Murdoch then was formerly Ms Wendy Deng! (I lost no time in writing a complaint to the relevant authority in Australia and I must give him credit for tendering an unreserved apology immediately. He was suspended.)

Many a time, we Chinese inflict all these ridicules, contempt and scorns upon ourselves. Not too long ago, a bun-maker in China was said to have used old paper cupboards to make the inner ingredients for his buns. The news was generated in China; it was beamed all over the world – CNN, BBC, and the like. The story turned out to have been engineered a local reporter. By

the time the truth emerged, damage had already been done. Hardly any of these global news channels bothered to retract the story. Why do we ourselves have to do such a thing?

China-bashing is fair game in the Western media. CNN's Jack Cafferty is most blatant about it. At the height of the street violence against ethnic Chinese in Tibet just before the Beijing Olympics, he placed the entire blame on the Chinese leadership and called them a bunch of goons. Chinese diplomats attempted to put on a more balanced perspective in the global media; but they didn't sound convincing, largely because of their inability to articulate their cause in good English, a concern which I will discuss again later.



In Australia, we used to have one John Garnaut who wrote a regular column on China in *The Age* in Melbourne. This chap was once stationed in China, yet little of what he has written is positive about China. He was forever talking about human rights and democracy, or the lack of it, in China – events like the Tiananmen incident, and his belief that there was really little or tangible in China's so-called growth. Even though these issues were pretty stale, undiscerning Aussies thought all was gospel truth, whatever rubbish he wrote. He went on to become a top adviser to the government.

We Chinese like to talk about our 5,000 years of history – our great culture, our inventiveness, our industriousness, our immense capacity to overcome great odds and adversities, and our innate ability to outsmart even the West in many instances. We boast of our Kung-zi [孔子] heritage, our Yueh Fei [岳

飛] and Qu Yuan [屈原] patriotism, our Li Bai [李白] scholarship, our Bao Zheng [包拯] sense of justice, our Zhu-ge Liang [諸葛亮] genius, our Guan Yu [關羽] principles, so on and so forth.

But the cold truth is this: to some extent, we are a very self-centred people! And indeed, we can still be very ‘ugly’, in the manner Bo Yang has cautioned.

To those who do not have any knowledge of the Chinese language, finding your way or driving in Chinese cities can be a nightmare. *Huangpu Xilu*, *Huanan Kuaisu Ganxian*, *Huadi Beidadao*, *Haizhu Qu* and *Huajianghuayuan* were some of the road signs I came across in Guangzhou during one of my visits several years ago. I believe they still exist. Of course, if you can read Chinese characters, they mean *Huangpu West Road*, *Huanan Expressway*, *Huadi North Highway*, *Haizhu Precinct* and *Huajiang Garden*. But if you know Chinese characters, you certainly don’t need the Romanised names to help you, do you? This “phenomenon” is not peculiar to Guangzhou; it true everywhere in China, including Beijing! It is also *Lu* here and *dao* there. It boils down to one simple explanation: we Chinese are simply not capable of putting ourselves in other people’s shoes. No wonder every non-Chinese is either a *gui-lao* [鬼佬] (foreign devil) or a *fan-ji* [番仔, originally huan-a, a derogatory term in South Fujianese dialect – uncivilised little fellow) to us!

Some Sad Ironies

There is really more to all this than meets the eye. To many in the West, we Chinese are still “*Fu Manchus*”. We seem to be habitually dirty and socially crude to them. True, we have been sleeping for the last 400 years or so and we have only woken up recently. But their observations are not without merits.

The fact is that we have strong complexes. When their men win the hearts of our prettiest girls, we think they are stealing these girls from us. And it is a fact that most of our boys are not able to make much headway with their girls. But like all sour grapes, we say their girls are morally “loose”. If this is not an inferiority complex, what is?

We refuse to look at ourselves carefully in the mirror... Maybe it is time we do so now.

The high degree of self-centredness

As I observed before, to many a Chinese, every Caucasian is a foreign devil. Everyone seems to be some kind of a *guǐ* (鬼 ghost) or *jī* (仔, little fellow) to us. We must be one of the most racist races in the world. We should do some soul-searching. Are we that superior? Or are we just trying to hide our inferiority complex? I think it is more of the latter, but there is really no need for it. On the average, we are less articulate in the way we express ourselves; we are either more over-dressed or under-dressed, and are either more over-groomed or under-groomed. We are *less straight* than Caucasians.

Have Fengshui will travel!

A TV interviewer was going round soliciting for opinions when Malaysia was besieged by the *Nipah* virus some years ago. Everybody had some point to make. But this one was most mind-boggling...“*You know what Nipah is in Chinese?*” one person excitedly asked. Interested only in saying his piece, he went on to explain, “*Bai* [白] in Chinese means hundred. One hundred people will die.” He said it in such a manner as if the figure was written in the stars already! Despite all the sciences, numerology still commands a large following. No wonder Lillian Too’s books on *fengshui* are still selling like hot cakes. You have to go for the number ‘8’, which rhymes with *fatt* 发 in Cantonese, if you want wild fortunes to drop on your lap. For high status, you have to seek out the number ‘6’, which rhymes with *loke* 禄 in Cantonese or even in Southern Fujianese]. And if you are the forever rejuvenating type, then the number ‘3’ [*which rhymes with* 生 in Cantonese “sum” or liveliness] is pretty good. But the Fujianese will bet on the number ‘9’ (*kao*) [搞] – I suppose it stands for “almost perfect”; Cantonese will say it is also not a bad number – “chance to play on”? Ethnic Chinese will want to steer clear of the number ‘4’. When I was a schoolboy in Muar, my family used to live near the

late Othman Sa'at's⁴ *kampung*. I remember all his personal cars carried number plates of "4" (*sei* in Cantonese)', which sound like [死, *sǐ* or death]. Othman Sa'at went into political oblivion. Maybe Lillian Too will say this: I told you so! One day I casually asked the late *Tan Sri* Lim Goh Tong's *fengshui* consultant about his true feelings about the belief. He said he was very sceptical about it for many years. But there is something mystical about it that makes him now a practitioner; he calls it *ao miao* [奥妙], a Chinese term for mystique. A good friend David Koh is a master in the practice of Fengshui and has lectured in some renowned universities in China (selling ice to Eskimos?) and is widely consulted by builders, interior decorators and home movers. He even coined a more scientific sounding term for it: Environology! I suppose it pays to be vigilant; it is a little like insurance, *don't regret when things happen!* It looks like I am almost sold on Fengshui!

Lack of Social Etiquette

What you are going to read below may no longer be true in many parts of China now. These observations were picked up by me over a period before Xi came to power. He has indeed transformed China. Now their state channels exhort viewers to use "common" chopsticks if they share dishes, observe traffic rules and good personal and public hygiene, and so on. (When I was attending a forum in Boao three or four years ago, I noticed that every driver there was very speed-observant. When asked, one said, "Look at all the lights that are flashing above us!" Yes, they had cameras all over and across the highways! Nonetheless, such behaviour does take time to correct. It has to be culturised.)

When there is a traffic crawl or snarl, see who is trying to squeeze you out from your left or your right, or even out of nowhere. Invariably, he is an impatient young Chinese man! I was visiting New South Wales's Blue Mountains one day. My wife and I took the tram-cum-cable car ride. There were not too many of us going into the cabin, which was quite large. Yet, a grossly overdressed Chinese man still saw it fit to elbow his way to the front, totally oblivious to the scornful expressions of other passengers. *Chinaman, no wonder!* This must have reinforced their prejudice.

⁴ A chief minister of the state of Johor in Malaysia.

In Fuzhou Airport, I diligently followed the queue leading to the check-in counter. One Johnny-come-lately saw an old friend right at the head of the queue. He conveniently went to join him. Nobody seemed to care. I was totally flabbergasted by his attitude and decided to tell him off. “Lao-xiong [老兄, Hi, big brother], I am a *nan-man* [barbarian from the south sea 南蛮] (Barbarian from the South) and I also know how to queue up. Why are you jumping the queue?” He started to mumble but his friend must have understood that I was not a local and decided to ask him to respect the order. Not wanting to queue up is indeed a very natural instinct to the Chinese.

Few Chinese care about table manners. Punctuality is only for fools. Check this out at dinner functions, especially at weddings. Many also do not care two hoots about hygiene – just look at the way they use their chopsticks looking for the best morsels. Could this be a reason for the high incidence of Hepatitis B infection among the Chinese?

The late *Tan Sri* Low Yow Chuan had invested substantially in Sydney. He was kind enough to make me an executive director to help oversee his Australian assets. Among other things, he owned a boutique hotel at the picturesque Rushcutters Bay in Sydney. The hotel was built for Sydney’s 2000 Olympics. After the Games, business took a tumble and we had to welcome low-end tour groups from China, even though it is supposed to be a lifestyle hotel. For less than AUD100 per room per night, we had to also offer complimentary hot breakfast. I often witnessed guests from China taking out containers to load with all the goodies even though they had already eaten a mountain out of their plates.

There is this cynical saying: behind every wealth there is a sin. It is not without foundation. Many of the monarchs of today are descendants of pirates, plunderers and the like. Many tycoons’ first million might also not be clean. Corruption is quite universal. The only “difference”, if any, about corruption in the Chinese is that the ill-gotten wealth is usually used to bootstrap enterprises – instead of going into gaming houses, expensive cars

or luxury holidays. The Chinese are a very resourceful lot; those who are in employment are able to identify gaps, loopholes or niches for themselves to break out. It is therefore just natural that they think everybody is *like* them. Hence, the lack of trust in others.

Many also feel very insecure about their jobs. You may be replaced by your subordinate – if the boss thinks the latter is better, and maybe cheaper, to maintain. There is, therefore, a general reluctance to show your subordinate all the ropes – at least not until you are about to retire!

I remember when I broke my leg when I was about 10 years old, my father had a village friend who had a secret formula which had been handed down for many generations. The formulation could work wonders, so everyone believed. But don't count on his giving you the prescription; he can only help you to source and mix the herbs! True to the belief, I could almost walk a couple of days later. (Maybe there was a strong dosage of steroid, for all I know!)

One can imagine how much knowledge and progress have been lost through this mindset over millennia!

The *Manchus* who ruled China for about 400 years helped paint the Chinese as *Fu Manchus* – sinister-looking, opium-loving creatures from a very strange world in the *Far East*¹. Mao's China, with its Cultural Revolution and *Tiananmen* incident, was for decades also a *pariah* to the developed world. Despite their omnipresence (there is usually a Chinatown in most great cities), Chinese entrepreneurship is hardly understood. Thanks to Hollywood, Chinese entrepreneurship has always been equated with drugs and triads. But China has finally awakened. It is now being touted as the 'factory of the world'. One can hardly be ambivalent about Chinese entrepreneurship anymore. It pays to understand its past and potential, regardless of whether one likes it or not.

Fortunately, Xi has awakened the country to change all this. Even China's TV channels are constantly exhorting the need for good etiquette.

Tendency to Romanticise

There is a culture of romanticising amongst the Chinese – not every Chinese, of course. Thanks to Luo Guan-Zhong [罗贯中]’s *San Guo Yen Yi* [*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, 三国演义, *San-guo Yan-yi*], Guan Yu [关羽] (or Guan-gong 关公 to the devotees) has become one of the most revered deities amongst ethnic Chinese. You see Guan Yu, with his red face and pole-held chopper, staring down on you when you walk into many Chinese homes. He was canonised for his “Yi” [义], or “great principle”. But militarily, he was the one who “lost” Liu Bei [刘备]’s once-in-a-life-time opportunity to capture Cao Cao [曹操]! (During the Three Kingdoms era, Liu Bei was the king of Xu [蜀], Cao Cao was the king of Wei [魏] and Sun Quan [孙权] was the king of Wu [吴]. Amongst the three, Xu was the weakest of the three; however, it had the service of a supposedly great military strategist called Zhu-ge Liang [诸葛亮] or Kung Ming [孔明]. Liu Bei, Guan Yu, and Zhang Fei [张飞] were blood brothers.) Cao Cao, who was a military genius, ironically, was made to be a great manipulator or villain by Luo Guan-Zhong. Many have forgotten that it was Cao Cao who helped to make *Sun-zǐ Bing-fa* [孙子兵法, The Art of War] famous!

The Chinese also relished in the tall tales of the Zai-Kong [濟公] – the beggar-drunkard monk who could humiliate corrupt officials with his blend of wits and martial art, and Bao Zheng [包拯] or Bao-Kong [包公], the incorruptible circuit appellate judge, who seemed to be able to right any wrong, no matter how political the situation could be, with his subtle genius. It doesn’t matter the former thrived on filth; or the latter used less-than-above-board ways to convict criminals, so long as the bullies were humiliated and the weak came up triumphant.

There is also the Monkey God [*Sun Wu-Kong* 孙悟空], again thanks to Wu Cheng-Si [吴承思]'s *Xi You-ji* [西游记], or *The Journey to the West*) who could commute between heaven and earth with impunity. Only Ru Lai [如来], or Buddha, could contain him; even the Supreme Jade Emperor of the Chinese Heaven was not able to do that.

Many Chinese also subconsciously want to identify themselves with the fun-loving, carefree Gu Bao-Yu [贾宝玉], or the perpetually-ill Lin Dai-Yu [林黛玉], or even uninhibited country-bumpkin Liu Lao-Lao [刘老老], thanks to Cao Xue-Qin [曹雪芹] with his *Dream of the Red Chamber* [红楼梦 Hong Lou Meng].

Other literature which impacts heavily on Chinese culture is *Swee Fu Chuan* [水浒传] or *The Water Margin*, also by Lor Kwan-Chong, where Soong Chiang [宋江] waged a war of attrition against the corrupt officials of the day.

My point is simply this: many Chinese are suckers for romantic and outlandish tall tales. Soon many of the characters in Jin Yong [金庸]'s martial arts series will become deities too, judging from the fact that we have already *sinophied* Buddha and *Guan Ying* [观音] (the Goddess of Mercy), and deified Monkey God and Guan Yu.

J. P. Huang, who runs JPI, a mergers and acquisitions boutique, puts this to *The Economist*, "We Chinese like the romance of memorising Confucius. The discipline of the laboratory is not in our blood."

Bravery is a Rare Commodity

Yue Fei [岳飞] has been honoured for generations. Millions of Chinese visit his mausoleum in Zhejiang every year. But bravery is really a rare commodity amongst the Chinese. There are very few *per capita* Yue Feis in Chinese history. The *Manchus* literally marched unchecked into Beijing. Instead of fighting the Japanese, Chiang Kai-shek was turning his guns at fellow warlords and peasant Communists. It didn't matter that the Japanese were

conquering China, and he actually had more troops than the Japanese. The Japanese ran over China with impunity. Asked why they could kill the Chinese without any remorse or degree of conscience, their answer was that they considered the Chinese *inferior* beings! To them, Chinese were cowards! **Colonel Shoji** prepared a manual for the Japanese military contingent before it was dispatched to conquer the then-Malaya. He wrote, “The Chinese are a very treacherous lot, they have no sense of loyalty, they will yield if you treat them harshly.” I leave it to readers to make their own conclusion lest I am said to be very un-Chinese!

When I was project managing the construction of Bank Pertanian Malaysia’s (now Agro Bank of Malaysia) 26-storey head office building at Lebuhr Pasar Besar (a downtown street) in Kuala Lumpur, I used to wander to the Central Market nearby for lunch. There were many stalls selling food and all sorts of sundries along the alleys there. I could see young Chinese thugs going round collecting protection money from the Chinese kiosk- or store-owners, but none dared approach the Malay traders. I see; these people preyed only on their own kind! This fact also holds true in many Chinatowns all over the world. The triads bully only the local Chinese.

Too Much Snake Oil Mentality

I am sure many readers have experienced this if you have travelled through China on packaged tours. Chances are the tour leader would take you to a medical factory where super feats were demonstrated – palms rubbing red hot steel chains... and with an application of their proprietary ointment, look, it cured my palms before your eyes! But much of it is really trickery. When China was first opening up, I was introduced to Li Xiao-Hua [李中华] who, in the early 1990s, was the first Chinese in China to buy a Ferrari. Baldies could become Elvis Presley again by applying his “101” hair formulation, so he boldly claimed. But you don’t hear much of it or him anymore, do you? Chinese herbal medicine is highly regarded, even by the most respectable medical schools, but the way some of these Chinese go about promoting their formulations will only do more harm than good to the Chinese identity. (I recently fell prey to an advertisement on Facebook. It talked about a

wonder tea concoction that could help diabetic patients. I am marginally diabetic. I placed an order. The tea I received was totally useless. Later I saw they kept using doctored images of VIPs to promote the tea. I have written an alert of this in my blog. Notwithstanding, you still see its advertisements on Facebook day-in-and-day-out. It must be making a big fortune from suckers like me.)



The great cure for diabetes?

Michelle Yeoh and Chow Yuan Fatt's *Crouching Tiger* movie was a box-office hit, thanks to some awards it had won. I urged an Australian friend to watch it for himself, since he had also heard much of it. He thought it was outright "stupid". "It insults your intelligence," he said. You read all kinds of tall tales about martial art exponents scurrying up vertical walls, leaping from tree to tree, going airborne and walking over water...They are so ridiculous; how can we sell to the world audience? If you have not watched any Korean dramas, I suggest you go for one and see for yourself. Theirs are very well-researched; there is always a theme in them. The Koreans are changing how the world is thinking of them. They are no longer the "rough" type that many of us used to stereotype!

Credibility is therefore an issue. We tend to mix fantasy with facts. Bruce Lee's movies took the Western world by storm. "Kung-fu" got into their vocabulary in no time. Bruce Lee's killer strokes were for real. We need people like Bruce Lee to go into the world, not Chow Yuan Fatt or Michelle Yeoh's *Crouching Tiger*, even though it has won some awards. (My wife says it is entertainment; I should not keep fretting over it!)

Masters Versus Smiths

Some years ago, I was invited to officiate at a Chinese painting exhibition. Naturally, I had to do some research since I was expected to say a few words during the ceremony.

I found that it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that Chinese artists started to adopt Western techniques. It was also during this time that oil painting was introduced to China. By then, the world was already prepared to pay millions for works by masters like Leonardo, Rembrandt, Renoir, van Gogh, Picasso, Matisse and the like. But until today, very few Chinese painters have scaled the heights of Leonardo, van Gogh, Renoir or Picasso. I happen to have some catalogues from Christie's and Sotheby's. Zhang Da-Qian [张大千] is perhaps the only artist whose works command seven figures (low seven though). The other masters like Lu Yan-Shao [陆严少], Ren Yi [任颐], and Luo Zhong-Li [罗中立] are far, far behind. Compared to what a Picasso would fetch, they are peanuts. Why?

Coming from a country where there is a tradition of cultural diversity, I can perhaps contribute a few explanations. Malaysia was also ruled by the British for about 200 years. It has some Portuguese and Dutch influences as well. The Chinese began to settle there after Zheng He's visits. Today, Chinese account for slightly more than 20% of the population. But Chinese arts are still quite "foreign" to the non-Chinese. Our traditions die hard. Even until today, most of the paintings we see in souvenir kiosks are still based on the *Tang-Soong-Ming* [唐宋明] school of brush and colour art. To the non-Chinese, the lack of contemporariness presents a tall barrier: they just cannot relate them to present-day Chinese. They are simply unable to

appreciate the uniqueness or characteristics of that bygone era. Yet, many artists today still persist in that tradition or convention. For Chinese paintings to gain universality, the subjects, objects and emotions must also become more universally understood and appreciated – so that the non-Chinese can relate to them. This is just my view; many differ.

There may also be a weakness in the way we Chinese teach art to students. Students tend to perfect their skills by imitating masters' pieces. We, therefore, see good paintings but not great works of art. More crudely put, we tend to be good in creating art smiths [匠, *jiàng*], rather than masters [师 *shī*]. Lack of originality is a major handicap. This also gives rise to an imitation culture. At the end of the day, you see the likes of Zhang Da-Qian, Ren Yi, and Chen Yi-Fei [陈逸飞] everywhere.

It is necessary for Chinese artists to go beyond conventional wisdom and ideology. We need more artists like Chen Yi-Fei. Credibility is also an issue. Many Chinese paintings portray things that are impossible in reality. It took the West 500 years to dominate the world. How much time do ethnic Chinese need to catch up with the West?

You cannot take on the world with such mentalities!

What do Japanese and Koreans see in Confucianism that we Chinese miss?

The Chinese like to think Kung-Zi belongs to them. I believe the Chinese as a whole have not quite grasped the fineness of Confucianism. To them, Confucianism is the embodiment of a culture that values education, advocates filial piety, demands respect for hierarchy or generational seniority. And really not much else...

A Japanese or Korean ritual is boring and rigid to an average Chinese. Why do you spend months or years just to learn how to beat the *gu* [鼓, traditional drum]? Why do Japanese ladies have to act like robots and behave a little

childishly to serve tea? What is the big deal about going to the temple to pray? How do you bow so low? Why do Japanese queue up like penguins? Why do Japanese men have to sit straight like schoolboys?

The Japanese understand Confucianism like no Chinese do. Remember Kung-zi's *Six Arts*? Two of the arts are none other than *Li* [礼, rituals or rites, protocol] and *Yue* [乐, music, entertainment]. Kung-zi was a strong proponent of these two arts. Rituals, rites and music to complement the former were very important to him. The Japanese understand them; the Koreans do as well, but not ethnic Chinese, who treat these arts, at best with casualness and at worst with contempt. *These arts are for actors, or people who have nothing better to do.*

But there is an underlying paradigm in these arts. They help develop cultural discipline and an extremely high level of quality performance expectations. Everything has to be done perfectly. Is this not what the Chinese miss about Confucianism?

Strategy and Tactics

Sun-zi and **Gui Gu-zi** [鬼谷子] have generally been acknowledged as geniuses on the employment of Strategy in Chinese history – the former in warfare and the latter in the art of diplomacy. Much has been written about Sun-zi; however, even though Gui Gu-zi is also as well revered as Sun-zi amongst Chinese readers, little of him has appeared in English. Legend has it that Gui Gu-zi was already around during the Yellow Emperor period (more than 2,000 BC) and he lived until the dying years of the Zhou Dynasty (around 400 BC). This would have meant that he had lived for more than one thousand years – a lot of tall tales! Others said he was born in the Spring-Autumn period, circa 500 BC; some put him slightly later, around the Warring Period. There was also a contention that he was a contemporary of the first emperor of unified China – Qin *Shi-huang*. I can only speculate that there was no one Gui Gu-zi, but several pretenders who contributed to his so-called words of wisdom – a 14-chapter compilation teaching the art of “ends

justifying the means". Many of the supporting stories put up by later scholars can be quite infantile or incredible even if you put your perspective well back to those days, let alone when seen in the context of modern-day lenses.

Be that as it may, the writings of these two are actually tactical devices to overcome some short- to medium-term objectives. Test them against this yardstick: are their tactics and strategies truly sustainable ultimately? To me, what they talk about are not strategies in the true sense of the word, which are basically designed to achieve long-term missions.

Are we Chinese too caught up in tactics or strategies? Being an ardent student in the subject of strategy, I do harbour a very fundamental fear of these two terms. To me, there is an implicit "deception" factor when one talks about tactics and strategies to achieve a certain end. They are meant to outwit others. It basically comes from the head. If the means and end are both noble or "clean", I suppose there is no quarrel over their usefulness. However, I do urge Chinese to premise what they want to contribute or change things on good universal philosophies. Philosophy is from the heart!

From Temples to Cemeteries

A visitor to a church in Europe or a temple in Japan, irrespective of his or religious denomination or inclination, is likely to be "awed" by the experience. The great architecture of Renaissance Europe is certainly a sight to behold. But why the Japanese temples, which are in many respects like ours? Not only do they exude an air of divinity and reverence, you seem to come out of a time capsule into a different era. The statues seem so real but serene; they seem to be trying to tell you something. You hungrily make note of the history and captions offered on the plaques.

You walk into a typical Chinese temple. You see the fierce-looking deities guarding the entrances. Colours are predominantly heavy or blood-red, gold and black; wriggling grotesquely under their feet are silly-looking creatures that these "gods" and deities were supposed to have destroyed. No doubt you are at peace with the bulging belly of the God of Prosperity, who is a source of your inspiration, or the looks of the Goddess of Mercy, who reminds

you of the need to be more benevolent or caring to the under-privileged, or the sternness of the Jade Emperor which warns you to better behave yourself. But you don't have the slightest idea of who these gods and deities are, save from some folklore! Better buy and burn plenty of incense to gain merit. One temple is no different from another, with many of the carers trying to squeeze as much as possible out of your pockets.

Ditto the cemeteries. When you stray into a cemetery in Europe, you are not gripped by any feeling of "fear". In Chinese cemeteries, you think you are walking into an eerie world – unless it is All Souls' Day, grass and shrubs can be tall, the whole place looks so desolate! You seem to be the only strange soul around.

But we Chinese learn very fast, today funeral and memorial services and after-life care are big businesses. A look at cemeteries, columbariums and the like operated by Nirvana of Malaysia is enough to convince you that time has changed. Several others are cropping up, but I cannot help feeling that their products and services are still largely marketed and sold on surviving loved ones' sense of guilt.

A friend observed that I have been pretty anti-own kind until recently. I beg to disagree. I always think Chinese have the ability to excel in any field they want to do. The only thing is many are too anxious to make good and hence the tendency to cut corners. And this kind of behaviour must not be allowed to perpetuate. Below are some of my "anti-Chinese" articles:

Thursday, January 12, 2017

China and the Ballpoint

The BBC carried this article in its 10th January 2016 release: *Pen Power: China closer to ballpoint success*. It began by saying "It [China] has sent rockets into space, produced millions of the world's smartphones and built high-speed trains. But until now, one bit of manufacturing had perhaps unexpectedly eluded China: the ballpoint pen."

Some might see it as another piece of China-bashing rhetoric by a Western medium. I thought the article was being too polite!

China is still NOT there yet; that's my point.

Apparently, making the tip of the ballpoint pen requires high-precision machinery and very hard, ultra-thin steel plates. Without that ability, China's 3,000 penmakers have to import this component from abroad. The cost to the industry is actually miniscule – something like 120m yuan a year. But the symbolic implication is tremendous.

The BBC spoke to Professor George Huang, Head of the University of Hong Kong's Department of Industrial and Mechanical Engineering, who explained that precision engineering was thriving only in certain sectors such as aerospace and defence where the Chinese government had placed a high priority. China simply lacks a culture of excellence in precision engineering.

Unless China can make watches like the Swiss do and medical optics like the Japanese, it still has a long way to go.

I visited the Three Gorges Dam a couple of years ago, many were held in awe by the scale of engineering there. But on closer examination of its control sites, you could straightaway conclude that notwithstanding the grandeur, China was still very much Third World in mentality and practice.



I spoke about this to my good friend Rocky Wong, a very distinguished engineer who has helped put up many big power plants in the region. He gave a hearty laugh.

“The Chinese can churn out 300mW turbines like making sausages. These plants work well. But if you look at their control and instrumentation, they are really not up to scratch. And their operational manuals are horrendously compiled.

“I usually had to help address these two deficiencies if the investor was happy to settle for the Chinese power plants.”

This brings me to an experience I recently had with Chinese medicine. My principal rushed me a generous supply of *Bien-tze-huang* (see picture) after I had foot surgery at Singapore’s Tan Tock Seng Hospital. I didn’t know what it was. I couldn’t make anything out of its English instruction. (My Chinese is half-baked.) The nurse cautioned me against taking it unless I had cleared it with my surgeon. A certain Dr Yong, who must have seen it many times before, just waved me to go ahead.



I must say, it really helped! The injured part began to granulate “miraculously”. And the wound appeared to heal quite rapidly. Later, a friend who is familiar with TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) told me that it is a form of natural antibiotic and is highly sought-after for its after-surgery healing properties. It does not come cheap, though; a little box for one or two days’ use costs about USD100.

But another towering figure in Kuala Lumpur related a comment he got from some Chinese when this “bad translation” issue was brought up.

“Did you find operational manuals in Chinese for the America or German or Japanese you bought?”

No wonder! Friend, you are not able to produce things like these people yet!

Of course, the quality of China-made things is better now. As much as 30% was sub-standard and ended up as throwaways soon after you bought them.

Jonathan Spence is a Yale professor who specialises in China's Ming-Ch'ing to 1949 history. He is a prolific writer. Amongst the books that he has authored are: *The Search for Modern China* (1991), *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiquan* (1996), *Mao Zedong: A life* (2006), *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-Hsi* (1998), *Treason by the Book* (2002), *To Change China: Western Advisers in China* (1980), *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, Religion, and Continuity in Seventeenth Century China* (1981). He knows China and Chinese-ness more than many of us!

Tuesday, December 25, 2018

The Key to Changing Perceptions about China: Seriously Train its Tourist Guides!

My return journey from Wuyishan, a world heritage site famous in China for its *Dahongpao* tea, had to done in two flights – a Xiamen Airlines flight from Wuyishan to Hong Kong and a Cathay Dragon Airline flight from Hong Kong to Kuala Lumpur. The Xiamen Airlines flight was not accorded apron convenience. The aircraft came to a stop somewhere on the tarmac; passengers were then ushered into two buses to go to the airport terminal for Immigration and Customs clearances.

Many of the passengers were Mainlanders. Managing the tarmac transfer must be a very frustrating task for the ground crew. Younger passengers spread out to try to take selfies and pictures of one other. Older ones tried to disembark, and some did, from the first bus when they saw that their tour guide was not amongst them. But the ground crew had to fill the first bus before they allowed more passengers to step down the ladder or go into the second bus. It was very much a chicken-and-egg situation! You could literally hear the ground crew's frustrations!

This, to me, is another classic example of "There you see, all these Mainlanders!" We hear this day-in-day-out. But it also speaks volumes about China's inability to exercise common sense despite their political clout!

Don't Chinese always pride themselves to be 文明, or "civilised people"? And the rest of the world are either 蛮 (barbaric) or 番 (native, but with a tinge of the "uncivilised" connotation)?

China has not been quite successful with its soft power endeavours, even in countries where Chinese largesse is an everyday necessity. I personally think Chinese don't quite understand what is real soft power!

Soft power is not about setting up Confucius Institutes to teach Chinese or to showcase Confucian culture to foreigners, or about handing out goodies. Soft power is about earning empathy with strangers. Only exemplary behaviour practised *en masse* can change perceptions, not isolated cases of good deeds. Take Japan, for example, I don't think anyone could dislike Japanese tourists, could you? Caucasian Americans, Europeans and Australians don't quite go in organized groups like what we do in East and Southeast Asia. Of course, some can turn rowdy once they have a drink too many. But generally, they do not lose respect.

Outbound tourists are a country's soft-power ambassadors. In China, where millions and millions of internal tourists throng sites within China, they are also reflectors of the country's behavioural norms. Tourism holds an important key that can help China change others' perceptions about its people.

Seriously train the country's tourist guides!

Train them to INSIST on a few things from their charges before they even embark on the journey:

1. Don't shout, don't jostle, don't spit, don't stare. Don't pick noses publicly.
2. Don't behave like hungry ghosts in restaurants.
3. Don't throw rubbish anywhere you like.
4. Don't hog pathways at airports, public places, etc.
5. Queue up for food, drinks, tickets, toilets, public transport, etc.
6. Don't climb, don't walk on grass, don't feed animals if there are signs that say so.
7. Don't smoke if there are no-smoking signs displayed.
8. Don't over- or under-dress.
9. Don't behave like *Liu Laolao* (country bumpkins) in museums, palaces, etc. or towards foreigners.

I am sure with this in place people would see Chinese as Cinderellas in no time!

I have always contended that one of the weakest links in China's communications with the outside world is its television networks. In this age, especially when you have already said you are the most advanced in 5G, the speed of your information dissemination is practically in 1G stage. Except for a few, most TV readers, commentators, and government spokesmen do not give the impression that they are confident and spontaneous. They tend

to read from their script. You will notice that there is hardly room for breaking news in Chinese networks and mainstream papers.

A case in point is the China Eastern MU5735 crash in Guangxi. At 10:34am of 25th March 2022, the *South China Morning Post* released a piece of breaking news, “Second black box found in Eastern crash investigation.” Hours passed, yet you still did not hear anything from CGTN or any of China’s TV channels. Why?

Although SCMP subsequently retracted the report, which China’s media should have come up to clarify but did not, I suspect Chinese newsmen and bureaucrats are very afraid to do things without clearing with higher-ups. But at which level can such a decision be given? I understand if it is a state policy, then the proper authority must be involved. However, in cases where straightforward and factual information is involved, holding back can only lead to unnecessary suspicions.

Sunday, January 26, 2020

A Letter to CGTN

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a 70-year-old ethnic Chinese calling both Melbourne and Kuala Lumpur “homes”. I know some Chinese but am unable to write well in Chinese.

I enjoy watching your News and Documentary channels. However, in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, I am dismayed to see you are still not conscious of the need to help educate the masses in cultivating better table habits. Many of the Lunar New Year celebrations shown in your broadcast still depict people using their own chopsticks to enjoy common dishes. This surely is a contributing factor in the spread of diseases, isn’t it?

Maybe you want to give a thought to this matter?

Incidentally, below is what I have just posted to Facebook:

“Bad Habits Die Hard... But High Time To Help Stop Them...

I have been watching Lunar New Year celebrations on CGTN and cannot help feeling concerned. Despite the coronavirus outbreak, Chinese are still generally not conscious of a bad table habit: using their own chopsticks/spoons to dance/swim in shared dishes! I was also surprised to see similar depictions in greeting cards that have been circulated around. I don't mean to patronise, but I think it is high time they stop this practice!

They should also stop coveting the consumption of exotic/wild animals' meat and/or organs.

A couple of other Don'ts, which are by no means exhaustive:

1. Spit on the floor and dispose of rubbish indiscriminately.
2. Dig nostrils, pick ears and pluck facial hair publicly. (Touching mouth, nose and hair unnecessarily should also be avoided.)
3. “Spray” your saliva everywhere when talking! And talk when mouth is chock-full.
4. Mess up public facilities like toilets, tables in food courts and fast-food outlets, waiting rooms, in total oblivion to the next users' plight or distress.
5. Wear clothes that exude a sour smell due to mildew.
6. Converse at the top of your voices even though you are just feet apart from one another!

We may have five thousand years of civilization behind us, but when it comes to social graces and etiquette, many are still behaving like infants!”

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,
Lim Yu Book
林有木

Friday, June 19, 2020

Some Loose Thoughts on China

Despite all our self-exultation that we of Chinese heritage are always thinking of the long-term when we plan and act, I see the reality is that many of us are also very emotional in decision-making, to the detriment of our long-term interests.

Being an ethnic Chinese, I could help feeling proud if I saw achievements coming from the Chinese, regardless of their geographic origin – Mainland, Taiwan or overseas. It is just natural that my blood begins to boil each time I see China being acted upon unfairly by any country. As we all know, the Five Eyes are going all out to demonise China. But a few other countries are also happy to see China fall – significantly India, Japan and Vietnam. The people there have forgotten what the West have inflicted upon them historically. I suppose that is their choice.

But China should act more mindfully – a combination of Sun-zi and Kung-zi. In Sun-zi, it is tactical - keep things close to your chest, spring surprises, ruffle one end but attach the other, etc. In Kung-zi, stay true to your philosophy and principles, which should include humanity virtues like magnanimity and what-have-you.

Know your enemies well is Number One in strategic lessons.

I must confess my lack of confidence in Chinese products even at this moment. The Chinese are entirely capable of coming up with world-class products, but they seem to be very weak in conveying their products' features and benefits. I recently bought a Xiaomi CCTV system. They are selling to the world. No doubt there are English instructions, but the woman's way of speaking Chinese can really irritate your ears. And the instruction was so Mickey-mousy that you feel like giving the gadget a hard knock.

CGTN is China's channel to the world. But somehow it appears not that sharp if you compare it to CNN or BBC or CAN. I thought China's ICT technology is second to none in the world. I also seem to have difficulty opening its pages in CGTN's mobile app. Many a time, it reads "Load Fail". Is it my internet or my Apple phone? But I do not seem to have problems of this nature with CNN, BBC and CNA. I had used China-made Android phones before and had never been satisfied with their features. So much has been said of Huawei's preeminence. I shall try the next time I need to change my phone. Hopefully, it lives up to its reputation. Moreover, I am a great fan of Ren Zhengfei.

My message to China is simply that they must pay more attention to detail and world feedback!

I was surprised that Mike Pompeo had requested to meet with the Chinese leadership. However, I was disappointed that China had dispatched Councilor Yang Jiechi to Hawaii for the meeting. Councilor Yang is certainly a distinguished diplomat. But he is too much of a nice uncle or mild school assistant headmaster for a wolf like Pompeo. The West only respects might and machoism. I always think you need someone like Wang Yi or one of the rougher type leaders to handle Pompeo. After all, nothing much will ultimately materialise even if Pompeo or Trump were to concede anything in the meeting. Trump is forever changing his mind.

My message to China: do not believe in what Trump or Pompeo undertakes! Just play Tai-chi with them!

FOR EYES ONLY; NOT FOR SALE

CHAPTER 13

THE BATTLES AHEAD

Dateline: 21st March 2022, The Straits Times, Singapore

Headline reads: ST CloseUp: The rise of pro-China Singaporeans and what it means to Singapore.

The paper's political correspondent Justin Ong was narrating about a certain Singaporean who sees his role as helping people to better understand China. Apparently, this man's view is shared by some 64% of Singaporeans and he concluded that Singaporeans are the ONLY ones to view China more positively than the US. In contrast, he quotes that nearly three-quarters of the people in Asia-Pacific view China negatively. He quoted a survey by Pew Research Centre to support this observation.

I think this is a classic example of the media using such survey results to shape minds. No wonder this was what I got from my 8-year-old grandson over the weekend:

Me : Tell me, Marcus, do you know what is going on in world now?
Marcus : Grandpa, yes, I know. There is a war in Ukraine.
Me : Tell me, who do you think is at fault?
Marcus : Yes, grandpa. The Russians!
Me : Why do you say that?
Marcus : They are invading Ukraine. It's all over the news.

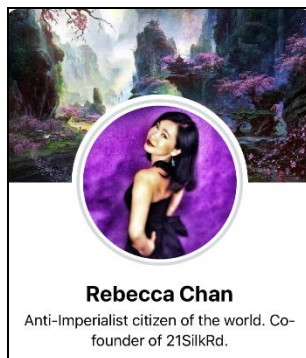
The power of Western media. And absolutely power corrupts absolutely!

Lies – the New Stock-in-Trade of Western Politicians and Media

During the Cold War era, you can understand everyone in the “Free World” would be paranoid if any Soviet Union or Chinese leader was to be mentioned, let alone praised. We didn't have the internet then; we could only rely on mainstream newspapers, or the BBC or Voice of America and a few international news agencies like Reuters or the Associated Press (which in

turn fed news to the local papers) for our window to the world. Tuning in to China's channels was an offence in my country then. The news may be biased against these Communist countries, but they were not "manufactured" in the way we are seeing now, meaning, the views could be lopsided, but they were certainly far from fake.

On Facebook, there is an active participant called Rebecca Chan from Hong Kong. She terms these manufacturers of fake news "*presstitutes*". I supposed she has cleverly and most appropriately coined it out of the word "prostitutes". And many of these pieces of fake news created by these presstitutes are used by politicians and even leaders of the so-called Free World to engage in blatant fear-mongering.



I can understand the shallowness of the *Green* politicians in Europe, but for people like Liz Truss, the UK's Foreign Secretary, to regurgitate the lies is puzzling. A case in point is her recent speeches in Australia, when she blatantly said China was trying to export its authoritarianism to the Free World. And several cabinet ministers of Australia are lecturing the public about the dangers of invasion from China and hence the need to arm the country to the teeth! (They know the elections have to be held soon!) This speaks volumes of the type of lies people are prepared to spew to stay in power. But isn't this a form of McCarthyism which has long been debunked?

Need to Fight the Wordsmiths

The media plays a decisive role in shaping beliefs. The champion of all is Rupert Murdoch, whose News Corp owns the *Daily Telegraph*; Dow Jones; Harper Collins Publishers; *Herald Sun*; *Inside Out*; *New York Post*; *News International*; *NT News*; *Post-Courier*; *Sunday Herald Sun*; *Sunday Mail*; *Sunday Times*; *The Advertiser*; *The Australian*; *The Courier-Mail*; *The Daily*; *The Mercury*; *The Sunday Mail*; *The Sunday Telegraph*; *The Sun*; *The Sunday Times*; *The Times*; *Times Literary Supplement*; *The Wall Street Journal*; *The Wall Street Journal Digital Network*; *Weekly Times*; and *Zondervan*. In broadcasting, the group owns FOX Broadcasting Company; FOX Sports; FOX Sports Australia; FOX Television Stations; MyNetworkTV; Big Ten Network; FOX Business Network; FOX Movie Channel; FOX News Channel; FOX College Sports; FOX Sports Enterprises; FOX Deportes; FOX Sports Net; FOX Soccer Channel; Fuel TV; FX; Nat Geo Wild; National Geographic Channel United States; National Geographic Channel Worldwide; Speed; STAR; Stats, Inc.; BSkyB; FOXTEL; Sky Deutschland; and SKY Italia. Besides all these, it also owns many movie and television production and distribution businesses. Murdoch is perhaps the most feared man in the Western world. Anyone who crosses his path is likely to find himself or herself out of his or her political office in no time. Without exception, all his news and channels and publications are anti-China.

So are networks like CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera, Deutsche Welle, and even Singapore's can; they are either anti- or biased against China. Newspapers and weeklies like *Nikkei Asia* and *The Economist* are not fans of China.

China has only CGTN and *Global Times* to speak to the world. But they are hardly effective outside the Chinese world. Many have production and marketing issues. I always argue that they need professionals to fix these issues.

The Western media are masters in creating and propagating disinformation. Their *modus operandi* is this: If you keep throwing mud, some will definitely stick, even if the target surface is perfectly smooth. For China, all they have to do is to day-in-day out keep talking about genocide and forced labour in Xinjiang, it doesn't matter they were created by an ASPI amateur originally

from China and a pseudo-scholar by the name of Adrian Renz in Germany. China's crackdown on pro-democracy in Hong Kong is probably about to run its course and is losing currency with readers. But other issues like China's bullying in the South China Sea and at the border with India, theft of the West's intellectual properties, or the danger posed to national security if you use Huawei's equipment (even though an ex-British minister has already stated the truth), the debt trap posed by China's Road and Belt initiatives, and so on, are still very much in the tool kit of these Western media. Another possible target is Tibet, but I suppose the Dalai Lama is too wise to fall into this Western trap. They are still waiting to pounce on the origin of the coronavirus, the detention of the Australian broadcaster Cheng Lei in China. Waiting in the wings is the Taiwan issue.

They must have felt quite frustrated seeing little to write to badmouth China in its staging of the Winter Olympics and the internal politics and the economy of China when the world is going through a rough time.

Some are obviously beneficiaries and therefore willing accomplices of the US's allocation of USD500 million for media outlets to produce journalism for overseas audiences that is critical of China. The allocation would direct funding to the US Agency for Global Media, a US-run foreign media service, as well as local outlets and programmes to train foreign journalists.

The "China is bad" belief is already etched in many Westerners' mind. A case in point is Clare Rewcastle Brown in *The Sarawak Report*. She is the one who helped expose the 1MDB plunder in Malaysia. I don't think she has any ulterior design, but in a recent posting, she rhetorically echoed the West's line about Huawei. Apparently, Ericsson, the Swedish telecoms company which has been awarded the 5G contract in Malaysia, has run into issues and there may be a need for the contract to be re-awarded. And she says, *"Meanwhile, it would not serve Malaysia to jump from the frying pan into the fire and to accept Huawei's alternative bribes, which would let China's listening services into each and every handphone in the country, with extremely unnerving consequences for the liberties of all Malaysians!"* What

a prejudiced mind! And her stock has taken the steepest plunge in my judgement of her.

The Psyche of Katherine Tai et al

I remember a well-known American-Chinese scholar was once asked about where his loyalty would go. To China or to America? I believe he said something to the effect that being an American, his primary allegiance is to the Constitution of the United States of America. He did not have to follow blindly what their politicians say. He was born Chinese, he should be proud of its civilisation, culture and tradition, and if China was doing the right thing, what was wrong for him to feel proud of what his ancestral land had now become? Naturalised Chinese in Australia, Canada and the UK should take note!

I have singled out several ethnically Chinese Americans who are holding influential or high offices in the US and who are feverishly helping its political leaders to try to kill China in the various chapters of this book. I would just repeat two here to illustrate a certain point I would like to make. First is Miles Yu Maochun. Yu grew up and spent all his formative years in China, and two, Katherine Tai, whose parents had deep roots in both Mainland China and Taiwan, and she herself has also spent time, I believe, doing some teaching in Guangzhou.

How can they be so anti-China?

I always joke about this Patricia Hearst syndrome. In 1974, Hearst, an heiress, was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army. In a twist of events, she became one of them! Neither Yu nor Tai has been kidnapped by the Americans. But they have decided to become totally identified as American. I suppose if there is a choice, they would want to have their looks changed to suit their newly-acquired DNA.

This phenomenon is in fact not surprising, especially to someone like me who grew up in Malaysia. Many Chinese have converted to become Malay,

which technically requires them to speak the Malay language and practise as a devout Muslim. I have no quarrel with their decision; however, there are several such converts who would go all out to renounce their roots. One pseudo-academic, whose PhD thesis is of a plagiarised variety, is forever writing articles to promote his twisted logic. So have several prominent politicians whose parents were actually of Chinese descent.

Turncoats are usually more dangerous than the mainstream, for they are, in the case of Yu and Tai, anxious to show that they are more American than the normal Americans. Do they bother how history will record them?

The Lie Slayers from China

By virtue of their assertiveness, they have been branded wolf-warriors by the West's press corps in the briefings conducted by China's Foreign Ministry. Yet, few would report their responses in their papers or channels. In fact, many appear to have looked foolish after being replied to by them. During these trying times, there were three spokesmen at China's Foreign Ministry: Zhao Lijian, Hua Chunying and Wang Wenbin. (Hua has since been promoted to Assistant Minister in the Ministry, but you still see her hosting from time to time.) But this may not be enough. China has to strengthen its image-building department.



Hua Chunying, and right, Zhao Lijian.



Wang Wenbin.

The other champion is Hu Xijin [胡锡进]. Hu was the former chief editor of China's *Global Times*. He speaks often on podcasts. I consider him to be the most articulate presenter of facts and figures about China vis-à-vis the world, often steep in philosophy and lessons for all to ponder. Unfortunately, I have yet to see his speeches translated or subtitled in English for the world to appreciate.



The indomitable Hu Xijin.

Ditto about these two ladies below – Li Hong [李红] and Sang Chen [桑晨] – who are the the hosts of CCTV4's China-Taiwan Relationship [海峡两岸] programme. Many male viewers must have become their secret admirers, not only because of the way they handle the discussions, which also reflects their command of the situations, but also because of their great beauty. Why no English to tell the non-Chinese speaking world?



Left: Li Hong; Right: Sang Chen.

I have already written quite a fair bit on the need to fight the *presstitutes* of not only the West but also our own kind. Below is an article I have posted on this front. They are both concerns and suggestions.

FOR SALE

Friday, July 30, 2021

China's International PR Strategy, or the Lack of it?

Many friends would disagree with me each time I criticised China's country PR shows or behaviour. They would always say, "why should China bow to the West's expectations?"

I love to tell this story.



Left: An old model of the Nissan Diesel UG780; Right: A contemporary HINO truck.

I had a short stint at Malaysia's Tan Chong Holdings, the assembler and distributor of Nissan vehicles in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei, in the early 1980s – so short that I would not even mention it in my biodata. But I would always credit a piece of my university-of-hard-knocks "wisdom" to one man: the late Tan Sri Tan Yuet Foh, the founder of the group. (You can hardly learn anything about him in Google now; how forgetful search engines can be! The late Tan Sri Tan was the grandfather of Anthony Tan, the founder of Grab.)

I had the opportunity to see him in action when Tan Chong launched the Nissan Diesel range of trucks in Malaysia. The bread-and-butter line is its UG780 dump truck model. Nissan Diesel was in fact one of the smallest truck-makers in Japan, and the UG780 was particularly “ancient”-looking. (See the picture below.) Its bonnet stood out, a feature which we called Forward Control, versus the sleeker “Normal Control” look of its competitors like HINO and Isuzu.

Sales were slow; Tan Chong had some 400 prime movers of different models stuck in its warehouses. The carrying cost was huge. Something had to be done fast.

The Advertising Department was duly asked to come up with an advertisement for the UG780. They brought it to the newly completed North Port and took a stunning picture of the truck against the tall cranes as the backdrop. The sky even had gulls hovering above. All the who’s who in the group were gathered to hear the chairman’s opinion.

For a moment, the meeting froze; the chairman looked troubled. *Something is not right; the chairman does not like it!*

He finally demanded, “We are not selling this to people who wear neckties, are we?”

It had to be redone!

He sent the advertising people to do a shot of the truck at Ganeson Quarry, which was caught in an environmental uproar then. The truck, like an overworked elephant, was loaded to the brim with aggregates. Below this main picture was a row of pictures – one depicting the cabin, as if it was a Hilton suite; another one giving the impression that it could climb the Himalayas; yet another showing how rock-solid its gearbox was, etc. And the headline boldly screamed, “Carry Sand, Carry Mud, Carry Stone, Everything Can!”

And no *Straits Times* or *Star* or *Sin Chew* (the mainstream newspapers), he declared. The mosquito press would do, he insisted. (These papers were very popular with working class Chinese those days. Insertion cost was low, moreover, they often offered “buy-one-get-one-free” bargains!)

He knew the people who bought dump trucks were usually owner-operators. During loading and unloading, they would pull out the pages of these tabloids from their trousers’ back pockets to pass the time.

Soon, the UG780 became the top seller among dump trucks in Malaysia!

I am dramatising, of course. Indeed, there were several other measures that Tan Chong took on both the tactical and strategic fronts to contribute to this eventuality.

My point is simply this: the late Tan Sri Tan knew exactly who he was trying to sell his trucks to!

Coming back to my topic...

To the China's country PR handlers, my message to them is also simply this: you must know your audiences – who are they? What type of story would they buy? How do you package your story?

On the world stage and on the diplomatic front, the anxiousness of Joe Biden to suppress China clearly shows the US is helpless in dealing with the Chinese leadership. Antony Blinken and Wendy Sherman's "talking from the position of strength" line has become a joke to Tom, Dick and Harry in China. Everyone knows that Blinken and Sherman actually ended up in Yang Jiechi and Wang Yi's pockets in the last two meetings. And nobody wants to see Lloyd Austin! An insult? Obviously! On this front, China can stand tall.

You don't have to target the Western intellectuals. Eskimos do not need you to sell them ice. Intellectuals form conclusions that are premised on evidence or logic. Scholars and thinkers like Jeffrey Sachs, Martin Jacques, Richard Wolff and many others, and scientists and editors at Lancet know all the falsehoods about China and often speak out objectively. So does Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore. More effort should be made to identify them and provide platforms for them to air their views without conditions or constraints. Perhaps China should initiate the establishment of a multi-national "Truth, Nothing But Truth" think-tank for this purpose?

There are also pseudo-scholars and thinkers like Peter Navarro and Germany's Adrian Zenz. They have long been exposed as frauds.

China's biggest challenge in international public relations lies with the Western news media.

Most Western journalists are like mercenary soldiers in the Middle East wars. You pay and they kill; no questions asked. With few exceptions, they are anti-China or China-sceptic now. American audiences are equally divided between the CNN and Fox News camps; the British rely on the BBC and the Australians on ABC. Beyond country-specific media, you have also "international" channels like Al Jazeera. In broadsheet prints, you have *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, amongst many others. In the UK, you have *The Guardian* and *The Times*, and in Australia, *The Age*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and *The Australian*. You also have magazines like *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The Economist*. You also can be sure that all Indian channels and papers are negative about China, and even Singapore's CNA and *The Straits Times*, Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*, and Japan's *The Nikkei* are seldom positive when it comes to news and developments in China. You can always detect a negative undertone or unnecessary scepticism in their reports. Many are obliged to produce wholesale whatever Reuters, Associated Press, etc. write, even though they have their own correspondents stationed in Beijing or Shanghai. And many of these presenters and writers are ethnic Chinese!

Several deserve special mentions: In my opinion BBC's Tim Sebastian and Stephen Sackur (HARDtalk) are my picks for the Oscar. I also like to single out John Garnaut of the Fairfax papers

in Australia. His father is a very distinguished scholar who was at one time the country's ambassador to China. Garnaut has spent many years in China. I just cannot believe his anti-China-ness, save to speculate he must have been jilted by a Chinese woman there!

Many are too lazy to write. Even if they do, they need to distort facts and information to suit their masters' taste or dictates.

Does China know how to handle these black mambas?

First, Chinese should avoid using the word "propaganda" to describe their "宣传" (literally, "announce-spread") efforts. Whereas adherence to Communism is national pride in China, many outside China, even among Chinese diasporas, still equate Communism to at best Stalinism and at worse Satanism. In their opinion, propaganda is part and parcel of Communism!

China's MoF (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) holds regular press conferences to keep these foreign correspondents informed. They have several spokesmen – Zhao Lijian, Hua Chunying and Wang Wenbin. They are very professional and authoritative. But perceptions are everything. Wang is no-nonsense and Hua combines wittiness with sarcasm. (Geng Shuang is another; he is now China's deputy head at the UN.) Zhao is particularly popular with overseas Chinese viewers. He personifies the type of "say it to your face" hero that the Chinese love to see. However, he does so with a "you not worthy" look. He appears harsh to many. This certainly does not go down well with the *kurang-ajar* (poor upbringing) prima-donnas from the Western press and news agencies. Another thing that often irritates me: the spokesmen's tendency to say, "we strongly oppose this..." and "the American side should correct this and that..." It is not a debate, and the question of opposition does not arise. They should just categorically rubbish all the fake accusations. *Don't waste our time. Period.* There is no need to speak like a teacher.

To gain empathy, they should have more spokespersons like Hua, Geng and Wang. There is also a need to manage information dissemination. Correspondents are too lazy to write; they would just do some cherry-picking and add some sour sauce on them to justify their pay cheque. At the end of each meeting, China should distribute facts and figures and, maybe, an accurate record of what was said. I remember Lee Kuan Yew's style: publish exactly what we have rebutted, or we only allow you to sell your magazine without the advertisements! This may not work, but it did represent an effective counter-offensive concept.

CGTN is China's mouthpiece to the West. It needs a makeover. Its "About Us" clip looks like a scene from the "Crazy Rich Asians" movie. *And what has "5000 years of history" to do with this introduction?* How many people are keen followers of CGTN amongst non-Chinese outside China? You can poke fun at CNN or Al Jazeera or the BBC, but people tune in often. And again remember, aren't you targeting non-Chinese audiences? Audiences will look to you if they find you can fill the gaps that they find missing in other channels. There is hardly anything CGTN can

offer in this respect now. And to “sell” China, you need to focus more on the softer and gentler parts of China – its people, its architecture, its geographically diverse beauties, its agriculture, its flora and fauna, etc. CGTN loves to portray China’s culture, its scientific and technological achievements. These, *per se*, may not be the right cup of tea to offer at this politically-charged juncture.

It should also not spare any effort to bring in the best and brightest – especially in their command of English – to host or act as discussants in its programmes. I feel presenters like Liu Xin and Zou Yue do fit the bill, but not Tian Wei, who appears too loud in her dress sense and has a tonal habit in her command of English.

I had the opportunity of attending a festival organised to showcase the East’s past and present in a city in Europe. Live performances of China’s traditional operas and its Shaolin martial arts were shown at a great cost, so were others like calligraphy, tea culture and even food. When guests were asked for their opinions, most were polite enough to credit the organiser for the effort. But I guess many of the things really looked outlandish to them. *Why is the face painted black? Why are they fighting with half of their shoulder naked?* So on and so forth.

Parents in the Western world have no qualms in sending their children to learn Karate and Taekwondo. Maybe those who are keen to promote Chinese martial arts should give this a deeper thought. (There are many who would travel halfway around the globe to Henan or Fujian to seek lessons. But surely, they are not the market you are targeting?)

Many have heard of Confucius, and those students of strategy, Sun-tzu. And those who love Philosophy, maybe Lao-tzu. We also have the god of supreme ethics – Guan Yu, who is worshipped by Chinese all over the world. China has many philosophers and sages. But few are known to the non-Chinese world. The West offers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle and they are universally known. Why? China should introduce them to the world in simple and easy-to-relate language, not the harsh and sometimes seemingly infantily-translated versions we often see in bookshops.

You still see atrocious translations in the most-visited museums and tourist sites in China today. Why are the curators not paying attention? I have always joked about the cure-all claims in Chinese medicines. No wonder people are sceptical of Sinovac and Sinopharm vaccines! However, having been “saved” by some of these concoctions, I truly believe in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

In the early 1990s, I accompanied Genting’s founder, the late Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong, to visit China several times. In the process, we got acquainted with their leaders at the various levels. One of them was none other than the Governor of Fujian province, who later went on to become the Mayor of Beijing and after that, the fourth ranking member of its all-powerful Politburo. I had the opportunity to accompany this VVIP around when he visited Genting Highlands. I thought I

knew him enough to write him a personal letter. I suggested that maybe we could work together to improve China in this translation gap. *Perhaps an all-purpose national Chinese-to-English translation clearing house?* Nothing was heard from him. Obviously, I didn't know my station!

Marketing Class 101: to penetrate markets, you simply need to have the right packaging, even though you have a good product.

But China has also to be aware that there are millions of Western-educated Chinese all over the world who are devoid of any knowledge about the history and cultural strengths of China or who are ashamed of their heritage. They become China's worst enemies – people like the US's Katherine Tai and Yu Maochun (Miles), Hong Kong's Martin Lee, Jimmy Lai and Joshua Wong, Taiwan's Tsai Ing-wen, etc. I am not concerned about these diehards, but rather the young and vulnerable who are being brought up in countries like the US, the UK and Australia (my Melbourne grandchildren included!). China needs to devise ways to instil cultural pride in these diasporas. However, I strongly believe that once China becomes strong and is "accepted" more kindly by the world, as they grow older, they will shake off their complex and start to be interested in their roots. Keep our fingers crossed!

FOR EYES ONLY; NO

CHAPTER 14

CHINESE DIASPORAS, QUO VADIS?

The re-emergence of China is generally a good thing for Chinese all over the world. There is a sense of fear as well as respect and admiration in their adopted lands. Fear will slowly disappear if China continues with its pragmatic policies and practices. Much of the world, especially the long-marginalised South, will certainly gain from China's system and the Chinese. I am an optimist; I always believe good will triumph over bad.

The Chinese are all over the world. Below are the several articles that I have posted which I hope will help people of Chinese origin, especially their young, understand their history and realise the strength of their culture.

Thursday, August 19, 2021

Chinese Diasporas: In the Wake of the Dragon's Beckoning

First, allow me to do some confession...

This was sometime in December 1974.

"Jab-pun?" A fellow guest in a hotel lift in Kathmandu broke the silence while we were going up the floors.

"No, Malaysian Chinese," I answered.

He took another good look at me. Sounding a little incredulous, he asked again, "China?"

And when I shook my head, he followed up with, "Where is Malaysia?"

"A country in Southeast Asia, north of Singapore."

Everyone in the world already knew Japan. It was the emerging economic power. To a Nepalese, then, every well-attired East Asian-looking man had to be Japanese, I supposed, since only Japanese could travel and stay in style then.

I had been sent to attend a week-long foundry technology workshop under a UNIDO sponsorship in Calcutta. I took the opportunity to swing by Nepal for sightseeing, since it was “just next door”. Naturally, I was in my best – a new suit, complete with necktie.

Chinese in China were blue ants then!

Nonetheless, I continued to take pride in my Confucian Chineseness – its pre-Qing (清) history, especially in the periods of Han (汉), Tang (唐) and Sung (宋), the writing of Kung-zi (孔子), Meng-zi (孟子), Lao-zi (老子), Sun-zi (孙子) and many others, classics such as the Annals of the Three Kingdoms (三国演义), Water Margin (水浒传), Romance of The Red Chamber (红楼梦), Journey to the West (西游记), Canonisation of Deities (封神榜), etc., and the more modern writings from scholars like Lu Shun (鲁迅). His “Ah Q’s Biography (阿 Q 正传)” has had a profound impact on the way I conduct myself in life. I was also fascinated by Jin Yong’s (金庸) martial arts series, even though we all knew they were outlandish tales. (I loved his mastery in connecting the protagonists in his stories to the historical facts of the time!)

Even when I had to go to China often on the Genting Group’s errands in the early 1990s, I would always attract some curiosity, probably because of the way I spoke and dressed. To those foreign visitors and locals who cared to ask whether I was Chinese or where I came from, I would always make it a point to assert, “**Malaysian** Chinese.” As if I were one class higher!

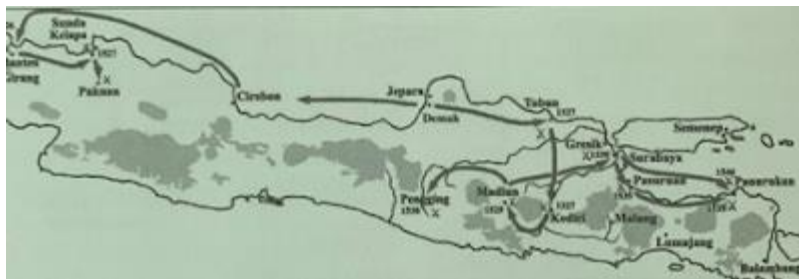
How silly I could be then!

Earlier Waves

The Mighty Ming’s Armada

The Chinese began to settle down in Southeast Asia as early as the 1400s, when Admiral Zheng He, who was a Muslim, of the Ming court made epic voyages down south and several in his entourage remained behind to transform the political landscapes in the Malay Archipelago. (Lynn Pan in her book *Sons of the Yellow Emperor* (1990) has chronicled this very extensively; however, Arab records did say that Chinese were already migrating and settling down afar in the 7th to 8th and the 10th centuries. Professor Wang Gungwu, the doyen of academic authorities on China history and culture, says Chinese have lived in the Indonesian Archipelago since at least the 13th century.)

One of the historical facts that many Indonesians today are still not aware of is the ethnic origin of a national hero of theirs: Trenggana. He was the son of the founder of the Demak Dynasty in East Java, a Muslim Chinese named Cek Kok Po who adopted the name Raden Patah. It was Trenggana who in 1521 started to expand his reign westwards. Java turned green after that. (Paul Michel Munoz, *Early Kingdoms of the Indonesian Archipelago and the Malay Peninsula* (2006).) (President Abdurrahman Wahid, popularly known as Gus Dur (1940-2009), could also trace his lineage to a Chinese Muslim missionary in Fujian.) There are also claims that the Malacca sultanate's Hang Tuah and Hang Jebat were also Chinese; however, I am in no position to verify.



The Demak expansion, thanks to Admiral Zheng He.



Borobudur, a 7th-century Mahayana Buddhist temple in Central Java

I dare argue that it was Admiral Zheng He who helped Islamise the whole Malay Archipelago, which together with the great Khmer Empire (9th-15th century) was hitherto Hindu/Buddhist.

Abject Poverty: The Driving Force

But the big wave came only when abject poverty began to overwhelm China in the dying days of the Qing dynasty, especially in the southern provinces of Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi and the island of Hainan. Hunger forced them to seek new lives in the South Sea (南洋), which was not too far from a destination down the coast. The more adventuresome ones braved the oceans and sailed further.

The 1840s saw thousands brave the journey to the gold mountains in America, Australia and even New Zealand in search of gold, despite the treacherous waters. Apparently, in 1861, almost 40,000 or 3.3% of the Australian population had been born in China! From 1863 to 1869, roughly

15,000 workers went to America to help build the transcontinental railroad there. And in World War I, some 14,000 labourers signed up to serve the British and French forces.



Left: Chinese gold diggers in California; Right: Building the cross-continental railroad in the US.



Left: Modern day gold panners (the author's grandchildren!) in Ballarat, Australia; Right: a largely forgotten Chinese temple north of Queensland. Apparently Chinese introduced groundnuts to the region.



Author in Arrow Town, one of the first Chinese settlements in New Zealand.

Many made good, especially in the South Sea (南洋) – the then Malaya, sub-continental Southeast Asia, Dutch Indonesia, even Portuguese East Timur. And they continued to look to the Qing court for recognition. They remained “Chinese” in every aspect of their social life.

The Adaptation to Local Realities

After a generation or two, some became totally assimilated to their adopted land, especially those who settled down in the Philippines and Siam (Thailand then). The Filipino national hero

José Rizal's (1861-1896) ancestry could be traced to Fujian. King Rama I (1737-1809) was partly Chinese, so was his predecessor, King Taksin (1734-1782) whose Chinese father hailed from Chaozhou.

The Indonesian Chinese went through a more tumultuous time, often at the mercy of the Dutch colonial government. Chinese in the then Malaya (which included Singapore) felt more welcome, albeit in the midst of the simmering discontent about their hold of the economy. Singapore has become a country that is predominantly Chinese, but thick with Western observances.

But in the South Sea, Chineseness stays strong...

However, after the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in China, many threw away their lot for Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙/孫中山/孫文). When then-Malaya was invaded by Japan, many local Chinese, after seeing the ineptitude of the Chiang Kai-shek regime in China, became resistance fighters and converted to Communist causes. When the British returned, they tried unsuccessfully to bring them into the fold, and this resulted in the declaration of Emergency (1948-1960) which forced them to go underground. Many young men and women packed up to return to China. However, the bulk remained, since China was no longer a motherland.

Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, this phenomenon was only visible in Indonesia when many chose to return in the wake of Suharto's purge. But today, save for some pockets where there are still underlying lurking hostilities towards ethnic Chinese, Indonesian Chinese are generally happy where they are. They are proud to be Indonesian and in their Independence Day celebrations, even those who have since migrated to Australia and elsewhere would make it a point to gather at their respective embassies or consulates to pledge loyalty to the nation.

In the Western World, the Inevitability of Anglicisation

Not so in the US, Australia, New Zealand and Europe. Here is a different phenomenon altogether.

Early Chinese settlers were largely marginalised or suppressed by the Whites, not only socially but in an institutionalised manner, in these countries. In the US, you have the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, in Canada, the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923, in Australia, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1902 (more commonly known as the White Australia Policy), and in New Zealand, the Chinese Immigrants Act of 1881.

Few could grow roots under these institutionalised situations, many therefore packed their bags and returned to China. Those who remained slowly became anglicised. In Australia, I often ran into people with Chinese surnames and upon inquiry they confirmed their great- or great-great grandfather was Chinese. But few had anything more to offer other than this fact.

No New Waves, But Dribs and Drabs to the West

Taiwan from the 1960s...

After China came under Communist rule, Taiwan actually became a favourite choice for those Chinese-educated Southeast Asian Chinese who wanted to further their studies. (Going to China was not an option; few Chinese dared to openly associate themselves with the “motherland” in the wake of anti-Communist stances taken by countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand.) However, many Taiwanese themselves were also looking to migrate to America, especially those who had followed Chiang Kai-Shek to the island, and those who wanted to do postgraduate degrees.

From Southeast Asia after the 1960s

Suharto’s New Order after he came to power in Indonesia in 1966 did prompt some ethnic Chinese there to return to China. However, most remained and became assimilated. However, they did retain their culture albeit on a low-key basis until Gus Dur became the president, when he was happy for Chinese to practise their traditions.

Malaysia’s ethnic Chinese population could roughly be divided into the English-educated and the Chinese-educated. Siblings in the same family would end up in different medium schools. Some like the author had the benefit of both – primary education in Chinese and secondary and beyond, English.

From young, we already understood the need to live harmoniously with our schoolmates. Then came the racial riot in May 1969. We became acutely conscious of our racial origin. The affirmative policy that followed was hurting. We realized we were about to become second-class citizens.

We lay low and kept to our books. Fortunately, the economy picked up, thanks to Japan’s industrialisation. American and European money was also pouring in.

Nonetheless, many had already begun to contemplate migration, the favourite destinations being Australia and New Zealand. Others just drove across the Causeway. Jobs were plentiful in Singapore and Malaysians were very welcomed. But going to destinations like Australia was not a piece of cake. A coffin-maker, or a nurse, or a hairdresser stood a better chance of getting admitted than a trained engineer!

A Story About a Friend...

This was in 1974. I remember I had a colleague who was hell-bent on migrating to Australia then. He had a first-class Honours degree in Chemical Engineering from the University of New South

Wales. Even though he had been officially offered a place to do his postgraduate studies in his alma mater, the High Commission in Kuala Lumpur would not issue him the necessary visa. Out of desperation, he camped out at the High Commissioner's official residence. At the first instance when he saw the High Commissioner's wife emerging, he rushed to approach her. He was literally on his knees. He finally got his visa!

Moving forward, this friend of mine, who has long settled down in Sydney, did not live up to his dreams. Much of his life was spent as a junior engineer in one of the state's utility authorities. He has since retired and has to count on pension to sustain his very modest lifestyle. He has two children, both of whom are totally ignorant of things Chinese. I do not believe he is happy with his circumstances.

Elsewhere...

In Melbourne I often met Malaysian Chinese who had "jumped" ship and stayed illegally to earn a living. They knew the score. Upon their exit, their passports would be stamped "No Entry Allowed for X Years." Those unlucky ones who got caught faced swift deportation.

Ditto many who went to the US, Canada, and Europe, especially the UK, under similar circumstances. They are living under the radar but what if McCarthyism 2.0 intensifies? (A distant relative and his wife jumped ship more than 40 years ago. They are now living in a predominantly Chinese quarter of San Francisco. They possess no green card but strangely, their children were able to attend Yale. Another friend disappeared suddenly but only to write to tell me months later that he had landed himself a job in London's Chinatown. I am sure many readers do have comparable stories to share.)

The bulk of immigrants are of course legal. They had done their tertiary education in these countries and were happy to return to settle there. There is also a group who were disillusioned with their existing environments and were looking for greener pastures.

This propensity to take chances to change the *status quo* leads to something I have always wanted to say about us Chinese in general.

In most societies, people who are plagued by poverty or calamities would usually be resigned to their fate and continue to stay put. Not Chinese. They would uproot and move on.

I was intrigued by what Silvana Condemi wrote in her *A Pocket History of Human Evolution* (2019). She says scientific consensus is that *Homo sapiens* left Africa about 60,000 years ago. However, the latest research shows that earlier migrations took place, one reaching China

more than 100,000 years ago. *Homo sapiens* only entered preglacial Europe, Siberia and northeastern Asia around 45,000 years ago.

People moved to look for food those days. Were these 100,000-year-old *Homo sapiens* the forebears of Chinese today? If so, does it say something about our DNA? The branch that was heading to China obviously did not wait to be “pitied” or “saved” or for food to run out.

Hua-jiao (华侨) and Hua-ee (华裔) - Need to Split Hairs?

Professor Wang Gungwu makes it a point to distinguish between *Hua-jiao* and *Hua-ee*. I began to appreciate his philosophy in making this distinction. I should not call myself a *Hua-jiao* anymore, since the term would imply that my motherland was still China. Being a Malaysian, my future was with this country. I should instead call myself a *Hua-ee* – someone whose heritage is Chinese but living in an adopted country.

Except for the diehards, most *Hua-ees* did not hold any great affinity for the China then. The China of the 1960s was turned upside down by the Cultural Revolution. News flowing back from relatives in China gave a very pathetic account of lives there.

Achievements by its *ping-pong* team, however, remained a source of immense pride to us. The “*Ping-Pong*” diplomacy was played out, which paved the way for Richard Nixon to visit China in 1972. Even then, everything about China was largely doctrinaire and *Maoist*. There was not much to be proud of really, until Deng Xiaoping got rehabilitated. The rest is history.

It was not until the late 2010s that I began to realise the China I used to frown upon had changed. It had become a nation that the world would henceforth hold in awe. Then I began to turn to the writings of Professor Wang Gungwu, to understand the background leading to the reemergence of China.

The West’s Demonisation of China – A New Awakening

Millions of Hong Kongers are said to qualify for BN(O) and there is also Biden’s offer of a “safe haven” to Hong Kong residents in the US. These were dished out by the UK and the US for only one purpose: to spite China. It has nothing to do with their “care” or “love,” or “concern” for Hong Kongers. These were political decisions of Boris Johnson and Joe Biden, not something that is popularly supported because there was a real calamity coming out of that island. Simply put, this is lip-service devoid of any “heartfelt” touch.

How many Hong Kongers will take up these offers? My guess is that only the hardcore Yellow Bananas will.

Once the fundamental issues of Hong Kongers' unhappiness are addressed, namely, (a) poor housing availability and affordability for wage earners and (b) the lack of pride in Chineseness amongst the young (as a result of years of indoctrination in the education system), Hong Kongers will surely come around to accept that they are in fact Chinese.

With the type of Sinophobia that is playing out in the US, Canada, the UK, and Australia, which were the traditional destinations for those who want to seek a new life, migration has now come to a crawl.

Putting up a Brave Front out of the *Status Quo*

To the author, the waves of Chinese immigration over the last two hundred years are an aberration in Chinese anthropology. Be that as it may, there are already at least 50 million ethnic Chinese outside China.

The Chinese in Southeast Asia are already in their third, fourth or even fifth generation. They are generally loyal to their country but are proud of their Chinese roots. Perhaps 70% of the top 20 richest men in Malaysia and Singapore are Chinese, so are many tycoons in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. And many are extremely philanthropic – greats like Malaysia's Robert Kuok and Jeffrey Cheah, Thailand's Dhanin Chearavanont (Chia Kok Min), Tahir (Ang Tjoen Ming), the Philippines' Henry Sy Sr, and Singapore's Laurence Lien and Lee Seng Tee, and many others. The societies' professional class are thick with Chinese doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants, IT experts, etc. Many of them are world-class. Most of the successful small and medium enterprises are owned by them too.

With the reemergence of China, these diasporas have generally adopted a new worldview about China. They can be more openly proud of China, even though they may not be entirely comfortable with the political system there. They no longer have to worry about natives' perceptions of the Chinese, from to-be-spat-upon coolies on one extreme to exploiters of their land on the other.

However, I cannot say this for those first-generation immigrants in the Western world, though.

The New Chinese Sin-kehs⁵ in the West

They have crossed the Rubicon and there was no way they could turn history back. Many have become reasonably comfortable in their adopted country – decent job, decent house, decent car, and decent-what-have-you. Some have made great fortunes, like David Teoh and wife of TPG Telecom fame in Australia. Many have achieved national or international recognition

5 New arrivals

professionally. But their numbers are few and far between. By and large, there is always a glass ceiling, in politics and in corporate offices.

With the way the Western politicians are demonising China now, impact on local Chinese is definitely going to be profound, even though these politicians insist they are not targeting China or the Chinese. They are just being hypocritical in declaring this.

This is likely going to create a sense of identity loss and even inferiority complex amongst their Next Gens.

And this worries me.

Most of them were born or brought up young in their parents' new adopted country. Few got to know much about China or the Chinese during their formative years. Learning Chinese in a foreign land where few speak the language is a dreadful effort to many. Many parents are therefore content to leave them to their own circle of friends or devices. And some grow up to become quite ashamed of their heritage in the process.

Besides these Next Gens, there is also another ashamed-to-be-Chinese source. These are mainly young students heading to America to do their advanced degrees. They are usually state-sponsored scholars and have come from very humble backgrounds. This would be their first-time out to a new new world. They are like Grandma Liu (刘老老) visiting the grand mansion (大观园) in the novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* (红楼梦), or Convent girls going to Hollywood, or Alice getting lost in Wonderland, or Cinderella meeting a prince.

Thus, many would succumb to the so-called Patricia Hearst^[2] syndrome. Generally, they have no compunction in buying into views which are anti-Mainland China and against their very own heritage.

They write venomously about China for the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*, they supply fake research reports to Western think tanks, or be anchormen or ladies for Al Jazeera. So on and so forth.

A New Trend in the Making?

Chinese in the Western world, even if there is no anti-Asian racism, will slowly get fully melted in the big multi-cultural pot. They may marry an Asian, but who knows – when it comes to the next generation, and the following?

Even in majority-Chinese Singapore, HSBC Bank is now running an advertisement featuring a Chinese woman getting married to a South Asian and the news was well received by her parents in China. They represent the sophisticated elites of the two societies.



The HSBC way: Born in China and India, married in London, settling down in Singapore? And producing Olympiad champions in Mathematics and other Sciences?

To me, this is perfectly fine. As long as there is no racism. Genetic strengthening through DNA exchanges is always good for the future of humanity, isn't it?

Chinese Vs Chinese: Christianity the Seed of It? Or Just Not the Right Understanding?

Let us reflect a little...

It is the intolerance of Chineseness amongst our Next Gens that I find in many about which I am most concerned. I like to put forward a thesis that many may find uncomfortable.

Old China had traditionally been a Daoist society. On philosophy and wisdom, they could count on sages like Kung-zi (孔子), Meng-zi (孟子), Lao-zi (老子), Sun-zi (孙子) and many others. Buddhism got a big boost under the Tang (唐) emperors and became the state religion after that. Despite this, Islam and even Judaism were tolerated.

However, Christianity was made illegal during the Ming (明) dynasty. The religion was thought utterly strange and incomprehensible to the Chinese. During the dying days of the Qing dynasty, the Jesuits were able to establish an enclave in Macau. They introduced Western science, astronomy and cartography, but as we all know, their primary mission was to bring Catholicism to China; They were able to convert several who were close to the Imperial court. Soon the protestants followed. By the 1840s China had become their primary destination. They set up schools and hospitals but achieved few mass conversions. It was not until the Taiping (太平) Rebellion (1850-1864) when Hong Xiuquan (洪秀全), who called himself the younger brother of Jesus Christ, established the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace (太平天国) with the capital at

Nanjing, that Christianity became widely-followed. At its height, it ruled over about 30 million people. It was eventually put down by the Qing army with a death toll of between 20 and 30 million.

It is said that Yung Wing (容闳 *Róng Hóng*, 1828-1912) was the first Chinese student to graduate from an American university, Yale College. After finishing his studies, Yung returned to China and worked with Western missionaries as an interpreter. He first gravitated to the Taiping rebels, but in 1863 turned around and was dispatched by the all-powerful Zeng Guofan (曾国藩) to the United States to buy machinery necessary for opening an arsenal in China. He persuaded the Qing court to send young Chinese to America to study Western science and engineering. With the government's eventual approval, he organised what came to be known as the Chinese Educational Mission, which saw 120 young Chinese students sent to study in the US beginning in 1872. The Educational Mission was disbanded in 1881, but many of the students later returned to China and made significant contributions to China's civil services, engineering and the sciences. Yung and most of these students were amongst the first to become intellectual Christians, which is just natural, given the decadence and the feudalism they personally had to endure at that time.

But soon foreign missionaries became a prime target of attack and murder by Boxers in 1900.

The fortune of Christianity in China took a great turn when many early leaders of the Chinese Republic converted, the most prominent of whom was none other than Sun Yat-sen (孫逸仙/孫中山/孫文). In 1915 Sun married Soong Ching-ling (宋庆龄), whose father was the American-educated Methodist minister Charlie Soong (宋嘉澍), who had made a fortune in banking and in printing bibles. He was followed by Chiang Kai-Shek (蔣介石/蔣中正), who took the hand of a younger Soong sister. Christianity in China has never looked back since then.

The earlier Chinese hostility to the missionaries was based on the fact that Western Christianity was utterly strange and incomprehensible to the Chinese. The Boxer Uprising was in large part a reaction against the spread of the religion in China.

Why have I deviated to talk about Christianity?

Following the decline of China, the elites in China began to consider the Confucian or *Ru* (儒) school of thoughts as archaic. Practices in Daoism (道教) and Buddhism (佛教) were deemed superstitious. Only Christianity could save China.

Today, maybe as many as 20% of the Chinese diasporas are Christians, the rest practise a blend of Daoism and Buddhism and the Confucian or *Ru* traditions as their guiding faith in life. But maybe 70% or more of the Next Gens in the West, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, are Christian or pro-Christian.

While many amongst Chinese Christians understand the distinction between religion and culture, some literally treat them as inseparable. To be a Christian, you have to cleanse yourself of anything deemed “traditional Chineseness”, aka superstitions, in the conduct of your life. And anything about Mainland China is no-no Communism. This mindset is now deeply etched, particularly the younger ones, in the West, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Have we wondered why overseas Japanese are so proud of their heritage? Some may be Christians, but they still pay respects to their Zen temples. And how many Chinese Christians will pick up joss sticks to honour their departed loved ones?

To rebuild the civilisational pride in them is a tall order, but without it, China will always face “subtle sabotages” from their own kind in the Western world, or in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. They are convinced of the evil of China and are more than happy to help destroy “Communist” China.

Need for Realignment and How Can China Help?

With the national security law in place, Hong Kong has finally nipped the “not proud to be Chinese” cancer (of its detractors and saboteurs) in the bud. With the right leadership, a new sense of belonging will surely grow. (The pro-West organisations are quick to realise their folly and have started to disband.)

However, the pro-Independence leaders in Taiwan are still blind to the inevitability of history. As long as they are in power, they remain the cancer in the Chinese souls. With the ignominious exit of the US forces in Afghanistan, let us hope a lesson can be learned by these leaders in Taiwan.

China can serve its *Hua-ee* by projecting a Strong but Gentle image. I am extremely impressed with its performance in the Tokyo Olympics 2020. Besides the medals its athletics won in their traditional turfs of table tennis, badminton, gymnastics and diving, they have made headway into fencing (Sun Yiwen) and track and field (Su Bingtian). Such feats exude a great deal of freshness in the minds of the *Hua-ee* young.



Sun Yiwen.

Need for Deep Reflection...

I call on all Chinese to make an effort to understand their roots. I am not asking them to be disloyal to the country of their adoption. I just want to say that spirituality is NOT incompatible with our culture. The fact that China can remain distinctively Chinese is because of the sustenance of its 3,000 years (or more) of cultural practices. No other civilisation has come close to this. Be proud even if you cannot help to sustain it, but do not sabotage it, consciously or unconsciously.

Parents amongst diasporas have had a key role to play in this. Do not just leave the things to the devices of your children.

Communication is challenging when most of Chinese diasporas in the Western world have already lost proficiency of the Chinese language. China, please take note: the means to win the hearts and minds of *Hua-ees* is through English, English, English!

English is the only language most *Hua-ees* know. The uniqueness of China's history, the philosophies expounded by its sages, and the contributions it has made in science, art and literature should be conveyed in good English. Illustrations should be done with great taste. Those moral stories that have been handed down generation after generation are often poorly depicted. They may suit traditional taste buds, but they can look very infantile or ridiculous to those who are brought up in the Western or pseudo-Western worlds. (The late Lim Goh Tong erected a temple in honour of a hometown deity in Genting Highlands. He commissioned artisans in Fujian to specifically carve out a series of granite tablets to exemplify filial piety. One of the tables depicted a son offering his arm to mosquitoes so that they would not bite his mother. How silly?)

The translations in museums and cultural sites all over China are also another case in point. They should be totally redone.

The New Good Warriors

Good stories will prompt the young to trace their roots. And discover Confucianism. Few Next Gens outside China watch CGTN channels or read *China Daily*. Apps like TikTok are the way to go to win them back.



Lai Yue Qian (赖岳谦)

I love to tune in to listen to this Taiwanese scholar-thinker, Lai Yue Qian (赖岳谦). Lai specialises in cross-strait issues between China and Taiwan. He is a regular guest commentator at CGTN. He also podcasts his analyses on world affairs via Facebook's "Watch" video links. His thoughts are incisive. He strongly believes in the unification of Taiwan. I wish all he says can be translated for the Western-educated Chinese. Any Chinese would certainly be proud of him.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to thank his *da-jie* (Big Sister) Ms Lau Chee Eng, good friend Ms Lilian Low, school and university mate Mr Chew Hai Hong and university mate Major (Rtd) Ng Chun Ho for taking the trouble to read through the manuscript and help correct many typos and grammatical mistakes. They have also made many suggestions and they have largely been incorporated.

The views expressed by the author above are strictly his. Some may find them objectionable. Please feel free to disagree. Facts are all from secondary sources. He stands corrected.

Sunday, April 11, 2021

Proud of Our Heritage, but Concerned over Kinsmen's Safety

Donald Trump had unleashed a China/Chinese-hating trend in many parts of the world, particularly in the US, Canada, the UK, Australia and India. His most vicious attack dogs, everybody knows, were Mike Pompeo and Peter Navarro. There were many lesser ones, but no less vicious. Many

thought Joe Biden would have the wisdom to unwind what Trump and his attack dogs had inflicted on China/Chinese, unfortunately, he has turned out to be a big disappointment.

As a matter of fact, Biden has proven to be more dangerous. His Cabinet and key officials are even more overzealous in going about trying to contain China.

The so-called threat from China is all hypocrisy – concerns about genocide in Xinjiang and democracy in Hong Kong, etc. The US chooses not to look at itself in the mirror! The containment is only about one thing: to stop China's progress at all costs!

Canada, the UK, Australia, some countries in Europe, Japan and India are all too happy to join in the crusade. The mainstream political leaders there know all the human rights narratives about Xinjiang and Hong Kong are largely untrue, but they will keep crying wolf for a simple reason: they know 70% of their constituencies and support bases are a very naïve lot. They are largely incapable of distilling facts from falsehoods. Throw enough mud and it will stick in no time.

I am proud of my Chinese heritage, even though I continue to be critical of some of the behaviours shown by kinsmen from Mainland China. I would not hesitate to write to correct their exultations, if I see that they are based on misplaced beliefs. But I notice that they are changing fast – great improvements are very evident in personal hygiene, in social etiquette and in tastes.

It is a fact that many Japanese and Indians do not like Chinese, but few have openly abused Chinese in public places. Ditto Canadians and Europeans, who are usually more “cultured” than to resort to violence to express their dislike.

But not this 1% or so in the US and Australia. They are the most dangerous. They will attack anyone who looks like Chinese in grocery markets, on sidewalks and in public transport. Many of the victims are helpless old people. And some attacks were fatal. Many of these attackers in the US category are Blacks. The irony is this: they get abused themselves, yet they will throw their anger at Asians. Some of the video clips of these attacks really make my blood boil!

The Americans and British are rearing their ugly heads. Instead of resorting to these below-the-belt measures, they should pull themselves together and compete with China without excuses and pretensions!

CRY FOR AMERICA?

Unlike most others, the US is a country without much commonality – in terms of nation-building glues like civilisation, culture, heritage or even religion. It used to be a country that offered HOPE to many – from the gold rushers to the victims of the potato famine in Ireland, of Stalinists facing political persecution in the Soviet Union and its satellite states, of civil wars and military regimes in South America, Africa and Asia, of racial and religious intolerance in the West Asia, and of abject poverty in China; people who respond to the lure of America's great universities or simply to the prospect of a better life there. It was the undisputed leader in the "Free World", especially in the years after World War II.

Its prestige appeared unassailable when its astronauts stepped on the surface of the moon in 1969. John and Jacqueline Kennedy personified the greatness of the nation; it was a Camelot world.

But that allure began to fade after it fought and lost the Vietnam War. It was no longer invincible! A visit to the Plain of Jars in Laos, where many are still living with prosthetic hands and legs, is enough to tell you how cruel the American military can be. And that is one of the thousands of areas bombed mercilessly by America during the war.

Nonetheless, especially in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, its voice continued to hold sway. When Bush Jr. ordered the invasion of Afghanistan after the September 11th attacks, the world was largely behind his decision to hunt down Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda followers. Nobody took any pity of Mullah Omar or his Afghanistan, even though either had little to do with the attacks. Few also mourned the death of Osama bin Laden when he was gunned down by America in his hideout in Pakistan. But, ironically, after 20 years in Afghanistan, the US had to exit in the most ignominious manner and the very people America sought to wipe out – the Taliban – are now back in control.

If I may, I would like to summarise the various points that have been raised in the above articles to support my contention that America is unlikely to succeed in holding back China to earn its place.

Today America is a broken nation. Biden cannot even get his party's senators and congressmen to give him the support he needs to push his domestic agenda. The Republicans and the Democrats are at each other's throat. There are only a few things he can count on to make him look presidential, one of which is to act tough on China and Russia.

The rich are getting richer, with the Whites dominating the top of the food chain. Many are struggling to survive. Black Americans are particularly vulnerable. Asians are a mixed bag. To the fabulously rich Asians, America is still a beautiful country to live in. But to the middle-class Asians, even if you are a professor in one of the local universities, you had better watch out each time you go out, for some Blacks would love to vent their frustrations on you! Many have no qualms in walking into a store, stripping things off the shelf and walking off without bothering to pay for the merchandise taken. There are also Neo-Nazis who have no qualms in creating a scene with you in a subway train or on a bus ride. (The Indians are viewed as non-threatening, and are able to carve out their niche in American society, especially in comfortable professions like university teachers, doctors, lawyers, and the like. They are also welcomed in politics. A Kamala Harris phenomenon, that you often see in many of the top IT companies and graduate business schools in America?)

While the top universities in the world continue to be those of America's, the general education ecosystem there has taken a big hit, many along racial reasons and lines. The tension with China also means many Chinese scholars, including those non-Mainlanders, are less prepared to stay back after their graduate degrees, out of fear for their personal safety in America. Ironically, many of the top scholars in America's universities and high-tech world are Chinese ethnically!

In short, its lack of societal homogeneity continues to perpetuate the above, and there is no feasible solution as long as the likes of Trump or Biden are holding the highest office of its land.

Externally, the US has lost its credibility with the non-hoodlum nations. Its US Dollar hegemony will wane badly in the foreseeable future. With that, its clout to bully the world will be history.

Besides its blood brothers, namely, Australia, Canada and the UK, the other members of the hoodlum are unlikely to die for America. Even things can be politically shaky for the Anglo-Saxon, once the truth begins to sink into their countrymen's minds. Their societies are generally more discerning and intellectual than that of the US's. As for India and Japan, once the benefits that can be had from helping the America to bark are dried up, they are likely to desert ship. In the first place, American forces are not very welcome in Japan nowadays.

There are also increasing numbers of the likes of Kishore Mahbubani in the world today. They are highly regarded internationally and are prepared to speak clear and loud about China. (Kishore grew up in a predominantly Chinese neighbourhood in Singapore. His relationship with Lee Kuan Yew and his career in the Singapore's civil, foreign and think-tank services have allowed him to rise above everything to have a clear view of everything about China and Chinese. He can be the best spokesman for China! He delivers his take objectively, scholarly, and humbly. Unfortunately, because of his stance on China, he has hardly been quoted by the Western press, at least for now.) Jeffrey Sachs is another gem in trying to debunk what Americans and their allies are crying wolf about. Unfortunately, all these political leaders are very determined to play ostrich. And if you don't learn, you repeat history.

Biden says ***America is Back***. Back to save the world? Or back to undermine China? And those who do not agree with him?

FOR EYES ONLY; NOT FOR SALE

EPILOQUE

My wife recently decided to give her oldest sister and her niece a holiday treat to Penang, and on the way back, a night in Ipoh. Her niece brought her two children along, one already in Form Four and the other, Form One. Their primary schools were Chinese. In Ipoh, we visited *Kek Look Tong* [极乐洞, *Jí Lè Dòng*, the Ultimate Happiness Cave], a limestone outcrop temple at Gunong Rapat). Right at the entrance to the cave is a statue of Kung-zi, or Confucius. I asked the older child if she had read any of the sage's great books. To my horror, she said she had never heard of Kung-zi! It then dawned upon me the gravity of the matter. How can I blame her for not knowing, since no one has ever mentioned the name to her, let alone the sage's great legacy to the Chinese cultural philosophy and the way they have been conducting as a continuous civilisation over the last two millennia?

Yes, our young are ignorant of our cultural history! Isn't this the reason why younger Hong Kongers and Taiwanese are so hostile to their own roots? And why the Koreans and the Japanese know so much about China's earlier history than many Chinese? (In fact, many Koreans claim that Kung-tze was theirs!)

It is time for me to help non-China Chinese young know about China and the Chinese.



Never heard of Kung-zi!

CHINESE CONCEPT OF THINGS UNDER THE HEAVEN

I would like to share my rudimentary knowledge of Chinese cosmology or worldviews of themselves based on some notes that I prepared some 20 years ago. Much of the material was plagiarised from somewhere. They are not meant for scholars; however, they should be helpful to those who want to have a general understanding of the subject.

The Dawn of Chinese Civilization

Chinese civilisation is said to have begun in **2,689 BC**, when a tribal chief, after subduing the rest at the Yellow River Basin, became their undisputed leader. He is their civilisation's founding father, and they call him **Huang-di** [黃帝], or the Yellow Emperor.

The First Written Scripts

The Chinese had their writing established as early as the **Shang** [商] dynasty (1766-1122 BC). It was inscribed on oracle bones. However, it was not until 841 BC – during the **Zhou** [周] dynasty – that the Chinese began to record their history in writing. But much of it was piecemeal.

Written History Started More than Two Thousand Years Ago

Thanks to **Sima Chien** [司馬遷, circa 145-86 BC], perhaps China's first and greatest historian, we are able to benefit from the teachings of the great sages who lived before him.

Succeeding his father as the Imperial court historian, he compiled China's first great dynastic history – **Shi-Ji** [史記, Historical Records] which is also the primary source of the Chinese understanding of the roots of their culture, the golden age of which was the period between the later part of **Ch'un Qiu** [春秋, Spring & Autumn, 722-481 BC] and the **Zhan-guo Shí-dai** [戰國時代, the Warring States, 480-222 BC].

There are many other philosophies and occult arts believed in and practised by Chinese, but few are as profound as Kung-zi [孔子], Lao-zi and on the spiritual front, Yang Chu.

THE GREAT PHILOSOPHERS

Kung-zi [孔子]

One thinker whose pre-eminence remains until this day is Kung-tze, or Confucius, as he is known to the Western world. Born Kung Ch'iu [孔丘] in 551 BC (in the era of *Ch'un Qiu* [春秋] when China, though nominally ruled by the House of *Zhou* [周], was carved into several statehoods by the barons the day) in the state of *Lu-guo* [鲁国] which was located in the southern part of present-day Shandong province. (Hence the reason many Koreans claim Kung-zi is theirs.) Kung-zi was essentially an idealist on political and social reforms. He drifted from one state to another, failing to make much headway with the various barons to whom he was trying to advance his concept of statecraft. He died a disappointed man in 479 BC.



Kung-zi

He is generally credited with the teachings behind the *Four Books and Five Classics* [四書五經, *Sì-shu Wu-jing*] which form the basis of Confucianism. But these were not written by him. The teachings were anchored on his *Lun-yu* [论语, the Analects, or Thesis), which is a collection of his scattered sayings compiled by his students or disciples, and they are said to form the basis of Confucianism on which the Chinese philosophy and culture are principally premised. His *Liu-yi* [六

艺, the Six Arts) are *Yì* [易, Change], *Shī* [詩, Poetry], *Shǐ* [史, History], *Lǐ* [禮, Rituals or Rites], and *Yuè* [乐, Music], and *Chūn Qiū* [春秋, Spring and Autumn Annals – a chronicle history of Lu-guo [魯国] extending from 722 to 479 BC].

Later historians were inclined to conclude that he was also not the author of *Liu Yì* [六艺]. It is believed *Liu Yì* had existed before his time, for it had been the basis of education for the aristocrats during the early centuries of feudalism.

Nonetheless, Kung-zi must be the first person, in Chinese history – in a private capacity – to teach students in large numbers. The students also travelled with him during his various visits. Kung-zi was a conservative and a traditionalist; to him social hierarchy and generational respect and deference [正名主义] “*Zheng-Míng Zhu-yì*” was not to be compromised. He said: “Let the ruler be ruler; the minister, minister; the father, father; and the son, son.” In other words, every hierarchical status deserves the essence or station it carries. Every rung on the social relationship ladder implies certain responsibilities and duties. Kung-zi’s own moral beliefs, which centre on his concept of the “superior man”, are the backbone of the philosophy about state and society. He is said to be the founder of the *Ru* [儒] (Literati) school. These four words *zhi*, *ren*, *zhong* and *shu* [直, 仁, 忠, 恕] are supposed to be the embodiment of Confucianism. *Zhi* [直] philosophises straightforwardness, the absence of ulterior motives in a “superior” man. A superior man abhors hypocrisy, conducts himself with genuineness and he does not take advantage of others. However, even though *zhi* [直] is an important virtue, it must be dispensed with *li* [禮] or great mannerism with humility. *Ren* [仁, kind-heartedness]: a man of *ren* is supposed to be one whose virtue has reached a stage that is beyond any level of selfishness or self-interest.

Zhong [忠] is loyalty, devotion to others, no betrayal. *Shu* [恕] is altruism, accommodation, don't do to others what you don't do to yourself.

Kung-zi believed in great exemplariness. His *Lun-yu* [论语] emphasises *xing* [性] (core character). A superior man acts with *yi* [义] (great principle, attitude that is morally right) and an inferior man thinks of *li* [利] (profit) before he does anything. And not unlike the other sages, *dao* [道] (way or truth) and *de* [德] (virtuous deeds) are also part and parcel of Kung-zi's teaching. But Kung-zi appeared to think *li* [礼] (rituals, ceremonies, proper conduct or correct protocol) should serve as the driver of all these other virtues

Readers may want to understand the background of some of the customs or traditions that are deemed Confucian, for example, a filial son [孝子 *xiao-zi*.] is supposed to mourn for a period of three years and the logic is this: "A child cannot leave the arms of his parents until he is three years old; in return he should therefore mourn for an equal length of time." (This certainly sounds archaic in the modern time.)

After his death, Kung-zi gradually came to be considered *the* teacher, superior to all others, and a sage who is the embodiment of good Chinese culture.

But Confucianism is more than Kung-zi. Two other philosophers expanded it further. The first is **Meng-zi** [孟子], or Mencius to the West. Meng-zi (371-289 BC, or thereabouts) represented the idealistic wing of Confucianism. The second is **Xun-zi** [荀子], who probably lived between 298 and 238 BC. Xun-zi represents the **realistic** wing of Confucianism.

Meng-zi's advocacy is that humans are born *shàn* [善, which some have it translated as "good"; but it is not exactly correct, a closer meaning would be "with an innate behaviour that does no harm unto

others". His is a concept about man and his obligation as a "citizen" of the "Great Nature". However, it is his concept of social organisation that carries a profound impact on the way Chinese conduct themselves. For example, he advocated the concept of love or care at different levels. To fellow humans, a superior man exercises *ren-xing* [人性] (human-heartedness); to family, it is affection. If a ruler lacks the ethical qualities, his people have the moral right to rise up, even to the extent of getting rid of the ruler. These ideas of Meng-zi have exercised a tremendous influence in Chinese history, even as late as the revolution of 1911, which led to the establishment of the Chinese republic. The right of revolution is enshrined provided the cause is just. Understanding *dao* [道] (the way or principle that leads to the elevation of the mind) is also part and parcel of his concept of the "accumulation of righteousness".

The other great Ru scholar Xun-zi argued that man is by nature *e* [惡] (not exactly "evil"; maybe with "bad motive"). His hypothesis was that man was born with inherent desire for profit and sensual pleasure. Fortunately, man possesses intelligence, which makes it possible for him to develop "goodness".

To Xun-zi, man cannot live without some kind of social organisation and in order to have social organisation, they need rules of conduct. People must live together, and in order to do so without conflict, a limit must be imposed on everything in the satisfaction of his desires. The role *li* [禮] (morality or behavioural appropriateness) is to set this social limit.

The "*Ru*" [儒] School's impact on Chinese is most profound. Take marriage for an example: the primary function of marriage, to *Ru*, is "creation for replacement" – the creation of a new "me" for the demised "me". The demised "me" hopes that the new "me" can continue the demised me's life and achievements. This would ensure the

sustenance of the family line for ten thousand generations [*wan-shi*, 万世]. Each new “me”, if he is able to uphold this hope, is termed a filial son. The way he upholds this hope is by way of a filial son.

Filial piety takes two forms: (i) material, and (ii) spiritual. There are three aspects on the material front: (a) to look after the well-being of the parents’ body, (b) for the new “me”, being the embodiment of the parents’ legacy, to look after his own body as well, and (c) to continue to create new “me”s. To Meng-zi, the consequences of being non-filial are grave and there are three outcomes, the paramount of which is the deprivation of any male offspring. One is therefore unable to perpetuate the ten thousand generations [万世] of family line. Kung-zi in *li* [礼] said: Shuen [舜, believed to be the sixth tribal leader after Huang-di; during that period, the tribe was still very much a matriarchy), because of his filial piety, collected enough merits to be a sage, commanded respect to be the son of heaven, accumulated wealth that equalled four seas, brought prosperity to its courts and people, and was blessed with the offspring to protect these fortunes. In *li*, Kung-zi illustrated, Zhou’s [周] King Wu [武王] was a perfect practitioner of filial piety. In his ancestors’ temple, there were routine offerings of clothing, amenities and food. He honoured them with respect, humility, and music. He treated the deceased as if they were still alive.

Although Kung-zi and Meng-zi both advocated filial piety, they did not consider it the fundamental of *dao* [道] and *de* [德]. *Ren* [仁] is supreme in *dao de* [道德], and *xiao* [孝] (filial piety) naturally follows if one is *ren*.

✐ In a story, a non-main line son was made to head the funeral ceremony of a deceased person when he had a main-line grandson. To Kung-zi, this was inappropriate. The head of the ceremony should be the legitimate successor of the family line and, in this case, the correct person to assume this role would have to be the main-line grandson. To Kung-zi, to do otherwise would be inconsistent with the tradition

of *Zhou* [周], which Kung-zi regarded as the “proper” order of the day, even though a previous dynasty had practised the tradition of passing the imperial baton by an incumbent to a younger brother upon the oldest male sibling’s demise.

The mother Zi Ser [子思], a descendent of Kung-zi had got remarried someone in the Barony of *Wei* [魏]. On hearing that his mother had passed away, Zi Ser was overwhelmed by sadness and was seen by his students to have mourned his loss in the Temple of Kung. He admitted that he should have grieved over her in his private quarters. According to Kung-zi’s teaching of *li* [礼], if a widowed mother passes away, the son has to mourn her for three years. However, if the father is still alive, then the mourning period is one year. If the parents were divorced, the mourning period for the deceased mother is also one year, provided she has not remarried. If the mother remarries, then the mother-son relationship is as good as terminated. He should no longer mourn her death.

Lao-zi [老子]

There is a strong misconception that Lao-zi the founder of ***Daoism***. Lao-zi’s philosophy is in many respects the opposite of what modern Daoists subscribe to and practise. Lao-zi is all about abstracts, the latter is concerned with materialism.

There is no authoritative record on the life of Li Er [李耳], the man behind the name Lao-zi. He is generally believed to be the older contemporary of Kung-zi [孔子]. He is credited with the authorship of “*Dao-De-jing*” [道德经, Scripture of the “Right Path” and “Good Deeds” or “Virtues”]. It is regarded by some as the first Chinese philosophical work, albeit an abstract one. However, some scholars believe the system of thought in the book as a whole cannot be the product of a time either before or contemporaneous with that of Confucius.

It is a law of nature. If anything develops certain extreme characteristics, these characteristics will invariably revert to become the opposites. It is upon calamity that blessing leans, and upon blessing that calamity rests. Those with little will acquire, those with much will be led astray. His concept of *wu wei* [无为] does not mean “having no-activity”; it is actually acts that are carried out without artificiality or arbitrariness. All very *yin-yang* [阴阳, absurdly opposite, contrasting to the undiscerning, but full of great wisdom!

Lao-zi appeared contemptuous of the Confucian virtues as human-heartedness and righteousness, for according to him these virtues represent degeneration from *dao* [道] (the Right Path) and *de* [德] (Good Deeds). Ceremonials are the degeneration of loyalty and good faith, and are the beginning of disorder in the world. There is no disaster greater than not knowing contentment with what one has; no greater sin than having desire for acquisition. In essence, people should have few desires. Wisdom (*zhi* [智]) and ignorance (*yu* [愚]) are two sides of the same coin. The *yu* of the sage is great wisdom, and not the *yu* of the child or ordinary people. The latter kind of *yu* is the gift of nature, while that of the sage is an achievement of the spirits.

Lao-zi is a household name amongst the Chinese; however, few really understand his philosophy in depth. It is abstract – this is “the way and this is also not the way” – however, his concepts are very popular with intellectual Chinese.

Some Other Philosophers

 There are also the lesser schools: the “*Xia*” School [侠, the champions of the oppressed] and the “*Fa*” [法] or Legalist School of philosophy.

The sage in the *Xia* School is Mo-zi [墨子] and the Legalist School, Han Fei-zi [韓非子]. These thoughts were subject to varied interpretations in the ensuing centuries.

Mo-zi probably lived sometime within 479-381 BC. He is regarded as the founder of the *Xia* School. Although he was not unsympathetic to early *Zhou*'s [周] traditional institutions, rituals, music, and literature, Mo-zi questioned their validity and usefulness. He tried to replace them with things that were simpler or utilitarian. A large part of Mo-zi's teaching was an extension of the "*you-xia*" [游侠] (knight-wanderers) ethics – sincerity and honour in their promises, and decisiveness in their actions, even to the extent of endangering their own lives. And unlike Meng-zi, his concept of love is without scale. While the students of *Ru* [儒] were mainly from the upper or middle classes, the *xia* attracted followers from the lower classes.

Confucianist practices to *Xia* School followers were indulgences in unproductive ceremonies, rituals, music and the arts. However, the followers did agree with Confucianists on the virtues of *ren* [仁] and *yi* [义], but on the principle of all-embracing love (*jian-ai* [兼爱]). However, Mo-zi's principles are more rigorous; all principles, according to him, must be examined by three tests: (i) basis, (ii) verifiability, and (iii) applicability. A sound and right principle should be based on the will of Heaven and the spirits and on the deeds of the ancient sage-kings. Then it is to be verified by the senses of hearing and sight of the common people, and, finally, by whether its application by the government is beneficial to the country and its people. Of the three tests, the last is most important. The core culture is that the authority of the ruler must be absolute, after all, he is supposed to be the most virtuous and able of men and his mandate is derived from the will of the people and the will of God. Obedience and discipline are the attendant expectations, which are not surprising, given the troubled political conditions of Mo-zi's time.

However, Mo-zi's importance in Chinese history has been largely eclipsed by Confucianism. It was not until late Qing [清] that scholars began to revisit the philosophy of Mo-zi.

ON THE SPIRITUAL FRONT

The most famous is Daoism, which is commonly attributed to Lao-zi, when, in actual fact, it should not be. The pioneers were **Yang Chu** [杨朱] and **Zhuang-zi** [莊子].

The starting point of the spiritual Daoism is the preservation of life and the avoidance of injury. Yang Chu's belief represents the first phase of this Daoism. The life of Yang Chu is not clear; he is believed to have lived between the time of Mo-zi and Meng-zi. His principles are: "Each for himself" as opposed to Mo-zi's "all-embracing love." Here was a hermit who would not take the world; even it was given to him for free.

Zhuang-zi lived from 369 to 286 BC. He represents the later phase of Daoism. He opposed the idea of governing through formal machinery, and maintained instead that the best way of governing was through non-government.

Zhuang-zi and Lao-zi both advocated government through non-government, but for somewhat different reasons. Lao-zi emphasised his general principle that "reversing is the movement of the *dao*." The more one governs, the less one achieves the desired result. Zhuang-zi emphasised the distinction between what is of nature and what is of man. The more the former is overcome by the latter, the more there will be misery and unhappiness.

The traditional Chinese respect for the past stems from the nature of their overwhelmingly agrarian population. Farmers were rooted to the soil and travelled rarely. They cultivated their land according to seasonal changes which repeated themselves year after year. Past experience was their beacon. Whenever they wanted to try something new, they had first to look back for precedents.

Since the time of Kung-zi, most philosophers have appealed to ancient authority to justify their own teaching. Kung-zi's authority was based on King Wen [文王] and the Duke of Zhou [周公] of the beginning of the Zhou [周] Dynasty. Mo-zi based his authority on the legendary Yu [禹], who supposedly lived a thousand years earlier than King Wen and the Duke of Zhou. Meng-zi cited Yao [堯] and Shuen [舜], who were supposed to have antedated Yu. The advocates of Daoism drew upon the authority of Fu Hsi [伏羲] and Shen Nung [神農], who were reputed to have lived several centuries earlier than either Yao or Shuen.

Most of these philosophers lived either in the *Ch'un Qiu* [春秋] (Spring and Autumn) Period (722-481 BC) or *Zhan-guo* [战国, the Warring States) Period (480-222 BC). Qin [秦] unified China in 221 BC and China's "first" Emperor – Qin Shi-huang [秦始皇] – began his rule. During his reign, he ordered all historical records (except those of Qin's and works of these philosophers) burned. Books of medicine were also spared.

However, the very violence of the Qin [秦] dynasty led to its speedy downfall (213 BC).

The demise of Qin paved the way for Han. The Han dynasty's Emperor *Han Wu* [漢武帝] (140-87 BC) approved Dong Zhong-Shu [董仲舒] (179-104 BC)'s recommendation and formally announced that Confucianism, in which the Six Classics [六藝] held a dominant place, was to be the official state teaching. Thus, in these apocrypha, Kong-zi was gradually being regarded as a super-human being, a god among men.

(*Zi* in these names can loosely be translated as “Master”. Thus, Kong-zi is simply Master Kung. Kung was the family name; their full names would contain another given name.)

Ancestral worship has been practised by Chinese well before Huang-di (the Yellow Emperor)’s time. Being an agrarian society, early Chinese naturally took spirits and ghosts seriously. They also represented the two sides of the supernatural world – the former protective, and the latter, destructive, to one’s well-being. The former had therefore to be prayed to and the latter, bribed or subdued with the help of the former. Early Chinese had long observed that the movements of the sun, the moon and the stars seemed to dictate the well-being of *di* [地, Mother Earth] and, consequently, of human activities. There must be some form of celestial determinations and interventions! Nobody likes uncertainty, and with Chinese minds being so fertile, arts and calculations aimed at foretelling fortunes and misfortunes took roots in Chinese societies like wild weeds. *Shu-shu* [术数] (crudely translated, the arts of calculation), or *Fang-shu* [方术], which are not really occult arts *per se*, take many forms, amongst them *Tian-wen* [天文] (Astrology) – this is based on the belief that the movements of the constellations, the sun, the planets and the moon are manifestations of fortune and misfortune and have to be observed and actions taken to mitigate the latter; *Li-pu* [历谱] (Almanacs) – these serve to arrange the four seasons in proper order, to adjust the times of the equinoxes and solstices, and to note the concordance of the periods of the sun, moon, and five planets, so as thereby to examine the actualities of cold and heat, life and death, so on and so forth. Through this art, the miseries of calamities and the happiness of prosperity all appear manifest; *Wu-xing* [五行] (Five elements) – wood, fire, earth, metal and water – they are the fundamental elements of the universe. Some are complementary to one another (for example, wood and water), others are at odds and have to be avoided (fire and metal). There is also supposed to be a proper sequence or cycle of their occurrences, which should be respected. There is a very interesting distortion by modern fortune tellers, though – the concept of metal is represented by the word

“gold” in Chinese character, and Chinese have a 12-animal cycle for their lunar calendar, and this in turn is governed in sequence by the five elements. There is therefore a 60-year cycle for a year with particular animal with a particular element to occur, for example, a “metal” dragon. This occurrence will be interpreted by fortune tellers as a year of the Golden Dragon where there will be great fortune for all – as long as you heed their advice on what and what not to do! But they also conveniently forget that there is plenty of fools’ gold everywhere; *Wu-zhan* [筮占] (Divinations) – amongst them are the use of plant stalks, tortoise shell, ox bones and the like to produce configurations. The diviner would then interpret them based on guidance of *I-ching* (*Yi Ching*) [易经] or the Book of Changes. Some divinations [雜占] *Za-zhan* use dreams to interpret futures; and *Xing-fa* [形法] (System of Forms or Physiognomy) – humanity is the product of universe. Hence a person’s house or burial place must be so arranged as to be in harmony with the forces of nature. This in essence is the philosophy of *Feng-shui* [風水] – literally wind and water.

It is perhaps *Fengshui* that the mystique of the Chinese culture is most identified. It has gone beyond physiognomy to encompass astrology, almanacs, five elements, *yin-yang* [陰陽], and even science in its study and practices. Believers and practitioners, some of whom are highly regarded intellectuals, would argue that *Fengshui* is not an occult art. Its *ao-miao* [奧妙] (mystique, things quite inexplicable) are too deep for mortals to fathom.

It is believed that the Chinese practised *Fengshui* in a formal manner as far back as early *Zhou* [周] (circa 1100 BC). In the *Ch’un Qiu* [春秋] era, there was even a local magistrate called *Tu-Fang-guan* [土方官] whose principal responsibility was to determine the suitability of sites for town and country; in essence, this official was the town-and-country planner for the Imperial house.

Ironically, except for the concept of *Yi* [易], Kong-zi appeared to be a sceptic of *xuan-kong* [玄空] (the overall description of spirits and ghosts, *shu-shu* and the like) which was the predecessor of *Fengshui*. But this fact has conveniently been ignored by those who are subscribers of both *Ru* [儒] philosophy and *Fengshui*.

Working against nature will simply land one into trouble. But the belief has been so extrapolated that it is now a big business opportunity to many.

THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM

The introduction of Buddhism seems to have given many Chinese the realisation that civilised people other than the Chinese existed. Those who believed in Buddhism regarded India as the “pure land of the West”. However, Buddhism combined with Daoism has also contributed a great deal to occult arts amongst Chinese.

However, a distinction has to be made between *Fo-jiao* [佛教] and *Fo-xue* [佛学]. The former is Buddhism as a religion and the latter, Buddhism as a philosophy. Buddhism as a religion did much to inspire the institutional organisation of religious Daoism. Daoism was almost invariably opposed to the Buddhist religion, but Daoist philosophy took Buddhist philosophy as its ally. Chinese Buddhism is deeply impregnated with Chinese thoughts; it has evolved with a distinct Chinese philosophical tradition. And again, the process of its dissemination and diffusion has given rise to much distortion and idiosyncratic interpretation that Daoist-Buddhism has become an occult art of many forms by itself.

The way in which Mahayana Buddhism most influenced the Chinese has been the concept of the Universal Mind – in what may be called its negative method of metaphysics. According to Buddhism, all the phenomena of the universe are the manifestations of a person’s mind. Whenever he acts, speaks, or even thinks, his mind is doing something, and that something must produce its results, no matter how far in the future. This result is the retribution of karma. Karma is the cause [因, *yin*] and its retribution is the

effect [果, *guo*]. The being of an individual is made up of a chain of causes and effects. And this karma may be accumulated over the course of many rebirths. The result is an emancipation of the individual possessing this karma from the wheel of birth and death. And this emancipation is called Nirvana.

Why Am I Bringing Up All These Archaic Ideas?

I learned about Kung-zi even before I started school. My late mother never went to school, for some strange feudalistic reasons of the time. Her father and mother were in fact educated, but I suppose, in classical Chinese. They had only one son, the rest were daughters. My mother was the youngest. They were not poor, but only the son was sent to school. Nonetheless, my mother was able to “indoctrinate” us with many of the “virtue” stories about the sages and greats, and stories of the “treasonous” deeds of the traitors in Chinese history. Many of these moral lessons remain in my mind today. No doubt some are pretty laughable in the context of the world we are living in today, but many did help to shape my conduct in life. (My father was too busy trying to put food on the table; even though he knew a great deal about *San-guo* [三国, the Three Kingdoms]!

Lessons of this dimension appear to be missing today. In a recent “intellectual” gathering which I attended, some of the speakers spoke passionately about the importance of early childhood education. One spoke about a “games” approach for children to learn literacy and numeracy in rural areas, and another suggested the adaptation of the Finnish model to our part of the world. Nonetheless, I thought one thing appeared to be missing in all these advocations, i.e., the need to build a moral compass in early childhood education – like what the Confucian teachers had been doing for ages in China, until the modern way of teaching was introduced.

Virtues stem from values that were learned or developed from young. Every culture or religion has its own stories or holy books to exemplify them. But for children during that formative period, such lessons need to be “filtered” lest they create a malignant outcome when the children grow up – prejudices, superstitions, radicalism, and so on.

Once I had the opportunity to host Prof Tan Tai Yong, who was about to become the president of Yale-NUS in Singapore. Yale-NUS was pioneering liberal arts education in Singapore. The first slide of his presentation showed two images – of Kung-zi and Socrates. He told me, “These are the two ‘saints’ we like to honour!” How appropriate.

The Chinese community should be thankful to its generations of scholars who have painstakingly chronicled the works of their sages, scholars, thinkers, and teachers since our writing began some three thousand years ago. During my primary school days, we had a class known as 公明 (Gong-ming) which was basically meant to teach “good citizenship.” It used stories to illustrate good values and it was during such a class we came to know more about sages like Kung-zi et al and their teachings.

Unfortunately, I do not see this in education today.

You often see this term 感恩 [Gan-en] displayed in bold plaques in columbaria. It is usually translated as “gratitude” or “thanks”, but in Chinese minds, it means much more. It is an expression of children’s debt to their parents and how children would want to repay their parents for bringing them up. Parents sacrifice much for their children, and all filial children must do everything to comfort their parents during when their parents become old, and pray for them when they depart from this world.

There must be millions of books and volumes on Chinese history, culture, traditions, moral stories, etiquette, scholarship, fables, and so on, available in bookshops and online to help whoever wants to know about them. Am I not trying to sell ice to Eskimos, since many of my readers are likely to be people of Chinese descent?

I used to consider myself a Yellow Banana – yellow on the outside and white inside. Because of its humiliating existence for more than a hundred years, until Xi brought respect to Chineseness, I had always been very sceptical of China’s ability to cross the threshold to become a truly First World nation. Xi

is doing the impossible. He is transforming China. He attributes much of his success to the Communist Party of China, a party that many, even amongst Chinese outside China, are not very comfortable about. But if you look into the philosophy that he is expounding, his was talking about Confucianism all the time. Perhaps the Communist Party of China should have read the Confucianist Party of China!

The whole Chinese mindset is greatly shaped by Confucianism, even though many are Christians and Muslims. (There are millions of Hui in China; they are adherents of Islam.) Public good or service must come before or at least complement one's self-interest. China's poverty alleviation programme and the results it has achieved are miraculous, thanks to its way of developing bureaucracy. No leader can hope to helicopter someone in, no matter how powerful your father or uncle may be. Everyone starts from the village level. There are two parallel routes – policy and execution – in one's career journey. And they are not linear. A party secretary who helps to mobilise resources at a certain political level may find himself elevated to an "execution" level (say, a mayor) in his next promotion. By the time he reaches a substantial position at the national level, he would have butterflyed between the two routes on his way to the top many times. And in between, he might also have had to serve in SOEs (state-owned enterprises). This is largely a Confucian way of hierarchical constructs. The official at every level must know his "station" – his position in the hierarchy, and the authorities and responsibilities that come with it. This concept is certainly foreign to the West's emphases of individual ability and rights. If you debate well and "excel" in public opinions, you get voted in to lead. It doesn't matter if you have zero wisdom in tackling issues that are politically difficult or which may have long-term consequences. Unlike in the West, few lawyers can go to the top in China. The reverse is true in the West.

Unfortunately, wisdom and virtues are difficult to portray. Many in Chinese books tend to appear archaic and laughable in the environment we live in today. We are therefore seen as a "strange" cultural lot to many. A case in point are the Confucian Institutes China is trying to help establish in cities across the world. They are now being singled out by many Western

governments as examples of China trying to re-introduce Fu Manchu culture to them!

Earlier Chinese diasporas told of the hardship they had to face when they landed in foreign lands. They were largely discriminated against by the colonial government and suspiciously looked upon by the natives. They had to slog hard to earn a living. But they would always help the new arrivals. A walk in the Chinatown sections of Southeast Asian cities will give you a taste of how they were being helped. They would form associations and guilds to help countrymen and same-trade practitioners. Many of the banks they built are still in existence today, notably the Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation, which they now call OCBC Bank of Singapore. So are many schools. The Nanyang Technological University of Singapore was called Nanyang University. They were built with Chinese donations – not just from the tycoons, but also trishaw pullers and rubber tappers, who were surviving as the bottom feeders in society.

All these behaviours and virtues stemmed from the unique culture of the Chinese society.

I am afraid this Chineseness is fast disappearing!

End

FOR E

A GLOSSARY OF CHINESE NAMES IN THE BOOK

Chinese names and terms Romanised in English, commonly called “Pinyin”, can be very confusing to many, even to those who have a strong background in the language. I for one have a great deal of difficulty trying to fish out even very common words or characters from the Pinyin apps. As an example, if you want to ask one of these apps to dish out the term 义 (which can variously mean high principles, honour, gratitude, reciprocity, or even good causes, and many other possible uses), you will naturally type in *yi* in your keyboard, and many similar sounding characters will appear for you to choose from. One app I often use throws out 98 possibilities! Even my surname 林 is spelt in several ways, depending on one’s dialect norm. I am of *Ming-nan* [闽南] ancestry and 林 is pronounced Lim, but slightly further north in the same province, 林 can be pronounced as Ling or Ding. A little south, in Guangzhou, 林 is Lam! But up in the “Imperial” north, it is Lin.

And if you ask any Pinyin app to Romanise a term for you, you will be confronted with all sorts of symbols on the vowels that are thrown out. The structure and usage of every single Chinese character is so tonal that pronouncing it without the help of these symbols can render the speaker totally incomprehensible to his or her intended audience! Very mind-boggling indeed.

I understand that the Pinyin apps are using the version that is spoken in Beijing as their “standard”. But China is a big country, and each locality still has its own tonal slang in pronouncing Chinese words or characters, not to mention the Chinese that is spoken in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and by the millions of diasporas around the world. The wholesomeness of these apps is indeed suspect.

And going back to Chinese names. There are two components: the surname and the given names. The surname is usually single character-based, but some can have two. Many Chinese keep their genealogy generation after

generation, and some are said to be able to trace their family tree to patriarchs who lived centuries ago.

The given name can also be single character-based, like *Peng*, as in the case of Li Peng, the former prime minister of China. But most would have two characters, like in the case of *Jinping* in President Xi's given name. But there is also an issue here. If President Xi's name is Romanised in the Taiwan nomenclature, it should be Jin-Ping.

Again, using President's full name as an example – 习近平 – 习 [Xi] is his surname, and the given name 近平 [Jinping] carries two characters which independently means: “near” or “close” or “proximity” (Again, unlike in English, where nouns and adjectives are not usually interchangeable, Chinese characters have no such concern. Their appropriateness would depend on context and usage.) *Jin* and “flat” or “peace” for *ping*. And you would be a laughing-stock if you were to address him as Jin. (He might not respond to you, since it doesn't appear to him that you are speaking to him!) His father was a huge figure in the history of the Communist Party of China. I am sure by naming his son Jinping using these two Chinese characters, he wished peace would always be close to his son. (Some think it should be Jin-Ping, the secondary character being in small letter, which I tend to disagree, for the two words are usually complementary of each other, not one is inferior or secondary to the other. Some do contend that the first of the two also carries a generational signature, meaning all the brothers and cousins, near or far, would carry that character. But some choose the second character of the given name to reflect that generational divide. Quite confusing indeed!) I therefore think the write way to spell his name should be Xi Jin-Peng! I think the Taiwanese method is more representative of what Chinese culture has in mind. I was quite conscious of this need and have registered my son 林沈阳 [瀋陽 in the older form] as LIM Shen-Yang, instead of Shen-yang. Many Chinese scholars may not agree with me. But I strongly believe the logic is with me.

Beijing is the capital of China. Bei [北] means “North” and *jing* 京 means “Capital”. It simply means Beijing is the northern capital of China, and in the same token, 南京 [Nanjing], actually means “Southern Capital”. I should think Chinese by now would have thought of standardising them somehow to reflect meanings. If I were the “authority”, I would have asked everyone to Romanised them as Bei-*jing* and Nan-*jing* respectively. Have you wondered how one can pronounce and relate to Xi'an [西安] properly? Why not Xi-An or Xi-an?

Pronunciation of Chinese characters is a challenge for many. There is a standard Pinyin, based on the tones spoken in Beijing, that is supposed to be adopted by all. But China is a huge country, and local dialects invariably influence the phonetics. Shockingly, apps for Pinyin services are free-for-all to devise; there are no authorities like “Oxford” or “Collins” to facilitate or arbitrate. Maybe it is time for China to look into this gap seriously.

In order not to burden myself, I have excluded the tone marks in the text proper; however, readers may check for more exact pronunciations of the Chinese terms used in the pages below.

I have therefore decided not to be too consumed by the correctness of the form and Pinyin in the names and terms I am quoting in this book. For names like Chiang Kai-shek, Mao Zedong, Xi Jinping, Tsai Ing-Wen or Wang Yi, where they have been officially spelt as such, I will out of respect stick to them in this book. For others, I am using the Pinyin way to spell their names. I am quite sure some may sound not quite right to your ears. A case in point is Kung-zi [孔子]. 孔 has variously been spelt as K'ung or Kong, and 子, Zi, tze, Tzu, tzu, etc. (Kung-zi means Master Kung, or the great sage Kung, but zi by itself is actually, ironically, quite derogatory in addressing a person if one does not understand the context!)

Dynasties and Eras:
Pre-Writing Eras:

Huang-Di [黃帝] 2689 BC

- Revered as the founding father of the Chinese civilisation.

Yü [禹]

Yao [堯]

Shuen [舜]

Fu Hsi [伏羲]

Shén Nóng [神農]

- Five of China's legendary leaders; generally credited with controlling floods which often devastated agrarian livelihoods in the Yellow River Basin.

Dynasties with Accurate Record:

Shang [商, 766-1122 BC]

- The period during which Chinese writing first evidenced – on oracle bones.

Zhou [周, 1046-256 BC]

- The Zhou dynasty lasted longer than any other dynasty in Chinese history. During the Zhou dynasty, two periods – the Spring and Autumn, and the Warring States – the Zhou court had little control over its constituent states that often were at war with each other, until the Qin state consolidated power and formed the Qin dynasty in 221 BC.

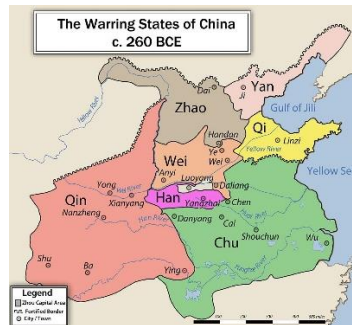
Great sages emerged during the latter period of the Zhou dynasty, notably Kung-zi and Lao-zi.

Ch'un Qiu [春, Spring and Autumn, 722-481 BC]

- As the power of the Zhou kings waned, fiefdoms became increasingly independent and the most important ones (known later as the twelve vassals) came together in regular conferences where they decided important matters, such as military expeditions against foreign groups or against offending nobles. During these conferences, one vassal ruler was sometimes declared hegemon [霸, bà]. As the era continued, larger and more powerful states annexed or claimed suzerainty over smaller ones.

Zhàn-guó Shí-dài [戰國時代, the Warring States, 475-221 BC]

- Comprised Yan (燕), Zhao (趙), Han (韓), Wei (魏), Qi (齐), Chu (楚), Qin (秦)



Qin [秦, 259-210 BC]

- Qin *Shi-huang* [秦始皇], as his name implies, is often said to be the first emperor of a unified China. He is also credited for starting the construction of China's Great Wall.

Han [漢, 202 BC-9 AD; 25-220 AD]

- The **Han dynasty** founded by Liu Bang is considered a golden age in Chinese history. Modern China's majority ethnic group refers to itself as the "Han people"

The Han dynasty saw an age of economic prosperity. The coinage issued by the central government mint in 119 BC remained the standard coinage of China until the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD).

The Xiōng-Nú [匈奴] a nomadic Steppe confederation, defeated the Han in 200 BC and forced the Han to submit as a *de facto* inferior and vassal partner for several decades. Emperor Wu launched several military campaigns against them. The ultimate Han victory in these wars eventually forced the Xiōng-Nú to accept vassal status as Han tributaries.

After 92 AD, the palace eunuchs increasingly involved themselves in court politics, engaging in violent power struggles between the various consort clans of the Empresses and Empresses Dowagers, causing the Han's ultimate downfall. Imperial authority was also seriously challenged by large Daoist religious societies which instigated rebellions. When Cao Pi [曹丕], king of Wei [魏王], usurped the throne from Emperor Xian [汉献帝], the Han dynasty ceased to exist.

Three Kingdoms [三國時代, 220-280 AD]

- Comprised Gui [魏], Wu [吳], Xu [蜀], thanks to author Luō Guàn-Zhong [罗贯中], many of the characters of the period became folklore names in the Chinese concepts of loyalty, strategy, military brilliance, etc.

Sui-Tang [隋, 唐, 581-618-907]

- The **Sui dynasty** was a short-lived, but pivotal, dynasty. The Sui unified the Northern and Southern dynasties and reinstalled the rule of ethnic Han over the entirety of China proper. A lasting legacy of the Sui dynasty was the Grand Canal. The dynasty, which lasted only thirty-seven years, was undermined by ambitious wars and construction projects, which overstretched its resources.

Historians generally regard the Tang dynasty as a golden age in Chinese civilisation. the Tang territory rivaled that of the earlier Han dynasty. The dynasty was interrupted during 690-705 when Empress Wu Ze-tian [武則天] seized the throne, proclaiming the Wu Zhou dynasty and becoming the only empress in Chinese history. The devastating An Lushan Rebellion (安史之乱 755-763) shook the nation and led to the decline of central authority in the dynasty's latter half.

The Tang capital at Chang'an (present-day Xi'an) was then the world's most populous city. Far-flung kingdoms and states paid tribute to the Tang court, while the Tang also indirectly controlled several regions through a protectorate system. In addition to its political hegemony, the Tang exerted a powerful cultural influence over neighbouring East Asian nations such as Japan and Korea. Chinese culture flourished and further matured during the Tang era. It is traditionally considered the greatest age for Chinese poetry.^[12] Two of China's most famous poets, Lǐ Bái [李白] and Du Fu [杜甫], belonged to this age. Buddhism became a major influence in Chinese culture. Ironically, in the 840s Emperor Wu-zong [唐武宗] enacted policies to suppress Buddhism.

Song [宋, 960-1279]

- Technology, science, philosophy, mathematics and engineering flourished during the Song era. The Song dynasty was the first in world history to issue banknotes or true paper money and the first

Chinese government to establish a permanent standing navy. This dynasty saw the first recorded chemical formula of gunpowder. It also saw the first discernment of true north using a compass and improved the design of astronomical clocks. Economically, the Song dynasty was unparalleled, with a gross domestic product three times larger than that of Europe during the 12th century. China's population doubled in size between the 10th and 11th centuries. This growth was made possible by expanded rice cultivation.

Social life during the Song dynasty was vibrant. The spread of literature and knowledge was enhanced by the rapid expansion of woodblock printing and the 11th-century invention of movable-type printing. Philosophers such as Zhu Xi reinvigorated Confucianism with new commentary, infused with Buddhist ideals. Although civil service examinations had existed since the Sui dynasty, they became much more prominent in the Song period.

Some argue that the world's first industrial revolution actually occurred during the Song dynasty.

The dynasty is divided into two periods: Northern Song and Southern Song. The Southern Song (南宋; 1127-1279) refers to the period after the Song lost control of its northern half to the Jurchen [女真]-led Jin [金] dynasty.

More Recent Dynasties:

Yuan [元, 1271-1368 AD]

Ming [明, 1368-1644]

Qing [清, 1644-1912]

The First Opium War [1839-42]

The Taiping Rebellion [1850-64] [太平天國之亂 *Tàipíng Tiān-guó zhī Luàn*].

The Second Opium War [1856-60]

First Sino-Japanese War [1894-95]

The Boxer Uprising [1899-1901] 義和團運動 *Yìhétuán Yùndòng*

The Second Sino-Japanese War [1831-45]

The Japanese Invasion of SEA, World War II [1941-45]

The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere [大東亞共榮圈
Dà-Dong-Yà Gòng-róng-quān]

Sages:

Kung-zi [孔子]

- Perhaps the greatest sage in Chinese history

Lao-zi [老子]

- First great philosopher of China, credited for the authorship of [道德经] *Dao-de-jing*

Han Fei-zi [韓非子]

Mèng-zi [Mencius, 孟子]

Mò-zi [墨子]

Xún-zi [荀子]

Yang Chu [杨朱]

Zhuāng-zi [莊子].

Greatest Historian:

Sima Chén [司马迁, c. 145-86 BC, author of *Shi-Ji* [史记, Historical Records]

Legendary Figures:

Bao Zheng [包拯]

- Said to be the fairest justice during the Song Dynasty (born 999 AD)

Cao Cao [曹操] of *Wèi* [魏]

Dǒng Zhòngshū [董仲舒, 179-104 BC)

Guan Yu [关羽]

Guǐ Gǔ-zǐ [鬼谷子]

Kung Míng [孔明] or Zhu-ge Liang [諸葛亮]

Liu Bei [刘备] of *Xu* [蜀]

Qu Yuan [屈原]

Sūn Quán [孙权] of *Wu* [吴].

Sun-zǐ

Yue Fei [岳飞]

Zhou-gong [周公 Duke of Zhou, circa 11th century BC]

Zhou's [周] King Wú [武王]

King Wen of Zhou [文王] and
The Duke of Zhou [周公]
Emperor Wû [汉武帝] (140-87 BC)
Zhu-ge Liang [諸葛亮] or K'ung Ming [孔明]

Legendary Traitor:

Qin Hui [秦桧, 1090-1155]
- Perhaps the worst traitor in Chinese history

Some Historical Figures Mentioned in the Book:

Bi Sheng [毕昇, c. 1040]
Cai Lun [蔡伦, c. 105 AD]
Chiang Kai-shek [蒋介石]
Deng Xiaoping [邓小平]
Fa Hsien [法顯, trav. 319-413]
Hong Xiu-Quán [洪秀全]
Kang You-Wei [康有為]
Liang Qǐ-Chāo [梁啟超]
Mao Zedong [毛泽东]
Qianlong [乾隆, 1711-99]
Sun Yat-sen [孙逸仙]
Xuan Zang [玄奘, trav. 629-645]
Yi Jing [義淨, trav. 671-695]
Yuan Shi-Kai [袁世凱]
Zhou Enlai [周恩来]
Zhu Rongji [朱镕基]
Zhu Yang-Zhang [朱元璋]
Zheng He [郑和]

Great Literary Figures Mentioned in the Book:

Jin Yong [金庸]
Li Bai [李白]

Luō Guàn-Zhong [罗贯中, author of 水浒传 *Shuǐ Hǔ-chuán* or *The Water Margin* and 三国演义, *Sān-guó Yǎn-yì*, *The Theatres of the Three Kingdom*]

Lu Xun [鲁迅, 1881-1936]

Cao Xue Qin [曹雪芹, author of 红楼梦 *Hong Lóu Mèng* or *Dream of the Red Chamber*]

Wu Chéng Sī [吴承, author of 西游记 *Xī Yóu-jī*]

Great Artists Mentioned in the Book:

Chen Yi-Fei [陈逸飞]

Lu Yan-Shao [陆严少]

Luo Zhong-Li [罗中立]

Ren Yi [任颐]

Zhang Da-Qian [张大千]

Contemporary Chinese “News” Figures:

Hua Chunying [华春莹]

Li Keqiang [李克强; born 1955]

Liu He [刘鹤; born 1952]

Wang Huning [王沪宁; born 1955]

Wang Wenbin [汪文斌]

Wang Yi [王毅; born 1953]

Xi Jinping [习近平]

Yang Jiechi [杨洁篪; born 1950]

Zhao Lijian [赵立坚]

Classics/Virtues Mentioned the Chinese “Cosmology” section:

ao-miao [奥妙]

dao [道] and *dé* [德]

Dao-dé-jing [道德经]

è [恶]

Fǎ [法]

Feng-shui [风水]

Fó-jào [佛教]

Fó-xué [佛学]

Fung-shù [方术]

Gǎn'ēn [感恩]

I-ching (Yi Ching) [易经]

Li [礼, Rituals or Rites]

lì [利]

Li-pu [历谱]

Liu-yì [六艺, the Six Arts]

Lun-yü [论语, the Analects, or thesis]

rén-xìng [人性]

Ru [儒, Literati] school.

shàn [善]

Shī [詩, Poetry]

Shǐ [史, History]

Shù-shǔ [术数]

Sì-shū Wǔ-jīng [四書五經, the Four Books and Five Classics]

Tiān-wén [天文]

Tǔfāng-guān [土方官]

wàn-shì [万世].

Wu-wei [无为]

Wu-xíng [五行]

Wu- zhān [菰占]

Xiá [侠]

xiào-zǐ [孝子]

xíng [性]

Xíng-fa [形法]

xuán-kòng [玄空]

Yi [易, Change]

yì [义]

Yì [易]

Yīn-Guǒ [因果].



yin-yang [阴阳]

Yu-xiá [游侠]

yú [愚]

Yuè [乐, Music]

Za-zhān [雜占]

Zhèng-Míng Zhǔ-yì [正名主义]

Zhì, rén, zhōng and shù [直,仁,忠,恕]

zhì [智])



The Author

The author's career has spanned more than four decades, starting as an engineer in a governmental developmental agency in 1973, to retiring as the executive chairman of a plantation company in 2010. He has held senior-level corporate and operational leadership positions at some of the most highly regarded companies in the region.

For the last twelve years, he has been doing a few things for a benefactor in Singapore and Melbourne.

The author is the author of "Strategic Management in Malaysia: Concepts and Illustrations" (MIM, 2001).

He blogs from time under yubooklim.blogspot.com. He can be reached on yblim.celebrating70@gmail.com.





As an ethnic Chinese and someone who has travelled quite extensively, the author knows the prejudices, subtle or otherwise, that many hold against China and Chinese since the First Opium War, partly because of our own makings at times. However, since Deng opened its doors to the world, China has found its bearings and done much to make the world a better place. Its leaderships over the decades have consciously acted in the most responsible fashion in world affairs. But its leapfrog in science and technology indeed have frightened Uncle Sam. And Donald Trump was the first to openly declare “war” on China. (Some argue the mission to hold back China started well back by Clinton and Obama, which I don’t quite agree.) When Trump boarded Marine One on the White House’s South Lawn for the last time, the author was watching approvingly Biden’s celebration in the nearby church. Alas, how wrong could he be!

Biden is bent on kicking China back to the Stone Age!

But Biden is not playing fair! What Biden has been acting since his inauguration disturbs the author deeply. The author has always been an admirer of America’s free-spiritedness and he is certainly no apologist for China in any chauvinistic way, but the disinformation that is being spread by the Western and Pro-West media, thanks to the Biden administration and its allies, is doing irreparable damage not only to the dignity of China and Chinese all over the world but also to a world order which has just come of age. Hence this book, which really is primarily intended to help ethnic Chinese find a sense of pride in being Chinese, even though they owe their adopted land or country of birth their undivided loyalty.