

The background of the cover is a deep red color. It features a faint, semi-transparent portrait of Mao Zedong in the upper left quadrant. The Chinese national flag, with its red field and five golden stars, is visible in the lower right and bottom center. The title 'ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP' is written in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters, with 'ADAPTIVE' on the top line and 'LEADERSHIP' on the bottom line. The word 'ADAPTIVE' is partially overlaid by the word 'LEADERSHIP' in a smaller, semi-transparent font.

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

Communist Party of China's Selection,
Grooming & Renewal in the 21st Century

Lu Cheng-Yang

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A Research Project Report presented to Lien Ying Chow Legacy Fellowship
Lu Cheng Yang, 2011 Singapore Lien Fellow

20th August 2012



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FOREWORD

The Lien Ying Chow Legacy Fellowship aims to promote greater understanding between China and Singapore, through people-to-people exchange programmes that foster intellectual and cultural sharing in each other's social and economic development.

It is set up in honour of Dr Lien, who has close business and personal links with China while contributing enormously to the development of Singapore. The Fellowship fulfils his wish to build bridges between the two countries. As an exchange programme, it provides cross-border exposure, generating goodwill and deepening understanding among senior officials. One of the key features is the opportunity for Fellows to network with renowned experts in their fields of interest, and among past and present alumni.

As the Chairman of the Legacy Fellowship Steering Committee, I am pleased to note that the Lien Fellows' research has met the desired objectives. Some Fellows have decided to turn their research and interactions into a publication so that even more people can exchange and share views to benefit both Singapore and China.

"Adaptive Leadership" has made an initial exploration into the concepts and thinking behind the Communist Party of China (CPC) leadership selection, grooming and renewal processes, as studied by Lien Fellow, Mr Lu Cheng Yang. Written in the English Language, it is accessible to English readers who are unfamiliar with the Chinese Language.

The strong human resource (HR) orientation of the CPC in building organisational capacities and individual capabilities, as seen from Mr Lu's perspective, helps us to understand the attention CPC has paid to the selection of Party members and cadres, and training and grooming them to take on positions of authority in the CPC and government leadership in China. I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in China to observe the development of Communist leadership in the 21st century.

This publication will be of interest to anyone who wants to know more about the development of Communist leadership. Mr Lu's effort to publish his research is commendable, and I encourage more Lien Fellows to follow in his footsteps.

Happy reading!

Mr Wong Kan Seng

Chairman, Lien Ying Chow Legacy Fellowship Steering Committee

PREFACE

In exploring the issues of leadership selection, grooming and renewal of the Communist Party of China (CPC¹), we enter the complex web of the Central Organisation Department (COD²), peek behind the façade of the Central Party Schools (CPS) and gain a better understanding of why China is still ticking and will continue to function well.

I have discovered the three principles that guide the Party and its cadres in the way they govern. I have summarised these three ideas as:

- Serving the people
- Striving towards ideals
- Doing the right things in practice

The way the CPC governs has continued to evolve, experiment and develop over time, but it has never deviated very far from these three ideas. This book is about the origins of these ideas and how the CPC's model of governance continues to adapt itself as the world situation, the whims of the Chinese people, and the needs of the modern Chinese society change.

Our 12-chapter leadership journey begins with brief history to better grasp how these timeless principles originated. Chapter One takes us back to 1927 in Jinggangshan (井冈山, or JGS), where some of these ideas germinated as Mao went about leading his band of revolutionaries in a time of great turbulence. In Chapter Two we explore Yan'an, where these principles were practised, refined and consolidated across the Party and the Yan'an region.

Chapter Three is set in the present to enable comprehension of the current Chinese state structures and how they continue to adhere to these principles. The Party serves the people; at least, the idea and theory are still abided by the government. The National People's Congress (NPC), or the Chinese Parliament, is the way for the future.

In Chapter Four, we look at the cadre selection process and how it has changed over the years. Now, being a full-fledged Party member is not enough. You should be a village official (村官, or VO) to start your career on the right track. Written tests, case analyses and structured interviews, as rigorous as the imperial examinations of the past, are present at every turn.

This initiation is continued in Chapters Five and Six in serving the people better. We examine how “serving the people” varies with economic development, accompanied by examples from Xi’an, Chongqing, Zhoushan (in Zhejiang) and Liwan district in Guangzhou (Guangdong). We also explore the way cadres are nominated, surveyed and promoted – all with a strong flavour of transparency and grassroots orientation.

Chapters Seven and Eight delve into the current Party School situation. Starting with its reform in the early 2000s, we see a clear picture of a Party resolute in adapting and winning over the hearts and minds of the people. Party Schools have been thoroughly revamped and are taking their rightful place as the crucible of learning, generation of ideas and network of opportunities. It is a side of China one rarely sees.

In Chapter Nine, we look at the preparations prior to the 18th Party Congress, held in the autumn of 2012, focusing on the next generation of leaders after Xi and Li came to power. More regulations, more transparency measures and serious anti-corruption efforts are par for the course.

Finally, in the last three chapters, we explore some of the less palatable issues. In Chapter Ten, we examine the valiant fight against corruption. In Chapter 11, we conquer the menace of cyberspace and challenge of picket lines by staying close to the masses. In the last chapter, we reflect on adaptive leadership and the role in capability, capacity and culture that human resource (HR) plays. We conclude that the adaptive leadership of the CPC is alive and well.

For easy reference, I have tabulated the structure of my book as follows:

Chapters	Titles	Serving the People [为人民服务]	Striving Towards Ideals [与时俱进、 艰苦奋斗]	Doing the Right Things in Practice [实事求是]
1	Early Beginnings at Jinggangshan	Initial land reforms	First attempts to govern	Guerrilla warfare and propaganda
2	The Spirit of Yan’an	Cooperatives, schools and Xinhua	The Nanniwan experience	The Yan’an rectification movement
3	Structured to Serve	The Party	The Government	The NPC
4	Selection for Service	The village official	Only the best in exams	Case analysis
5	Grooming, 21st Century	Practices that reach out: Xi’an	Practices that reach out: Chongqing	Practices that reach out: Zhoushan & Guangzhou
6	Grooming II: Promotion, Getting it Right	See Chapter 5	Promotion regulations	Municipal media chief selection in Gansu

7	Party Schools Reborn	Party schools reform	Party schools work ordnance	Rebirths
8	Schools Leading from the Front	Policy-practice nexus	Modern instructional methods	Spiritual reinforcement the key
9	Renewal 2011-2012	Young turks analysed	Cadres in reserve	Anti-corruption measures and institutions
10	Adapting to Serve	Are people being served?	Singapore's 3-in-1 antidote	CPC 2022
11	Serving Beyond Spaces and Lines	Spaces and lines	Weibo governance with quality service	Party schools serving the people
12	Those Who Serve, Lead	Future of history	Annual appraisal exercise	CPC ranking penal system

Enjoy!

IN APPRECIATION

It has been a very exciting journey of discovery and learning. However, this sojourn of new understanding and appreciation would not have been possible without the help of many friends, supporters and sponsors.

Sponsors and supporters

My first gratitude is to my main sponsor, Lien Foundation, for giving me this Lien Legacy Fellowship opportunity to research on this topic of personal interest. Thanks are especially due to Mr Wong Kan Seng, my former boss at Home Affairs and the current chair of the Lien Yin Chow Legacy Fellowship Steering Committee; Mr Ngiam Dong Tow, our eminent retired civil servant who previously chaired the Committee and the selection process; Mr Michael Lien, who is on the Fellowship Committee; and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Board of Governors, which has been most supportive of this undertaking.

The assistance from the Chinese Embassy in Singapore was a pivotal part of the research process. Former ambassador to Singapore, His Excellency, Wei Wei, has been most supportive. The former Education Counsellor Zhou Jian Ping, whom I have had the pleasure of working with over the years, was more than earnest in her liaison and linking up. Leveraging on her old school ties, I have had the honour of meeting with Mr Wang Er Chern, the Deputy Minister for the Central Organisational Department (COD) in Beijing in April 2012.

Part of the eye-opening experience would not have been possible if not for the COD graciously allowing me to visit the Central Party School (CPS) and its four Party Schools (Pudong-Shanghai, Dalian, Yan'an and Jinggangshan), as well as some of the provincial- and city-level CODs and Party Schools (Shaanxi, Shanghai and Dalian). The people I met at the Party Schools have been more than helpful in hosting me and telling me their side of the story.

In particular, I would like to thank the four female liaison officers, Yu Jia from Beijing, Xia Wei from Dalian, Zhou Yi from Pudong, and Lin Rong from Jinggangshan (JGS).

I must also mention the school masters who have painstakingly taken me through the intricacies of the Party School system.

S/No	Organisation	Name	Appointment
Beijing			
1	CPS, Beijing	Professor Shi Hong	Economics Department
		Professor Xie Chuntao	History Department
		Professor Zheng Quan	Research Department
		Wang Chengzhi	Teaching Affairs Department
2	Bureau of Senior Officer Training, COD	Wang Xintang	Deputy Director
Shanghai			
1	China Executive Leadership Academy, Pudong (CELAP)	Jiang Haishan	School Vice-President
		Zhang Shengxin	Director, Human Resources Department
2	Shanghai Party School	Yang Junyi	School Vice-President
		Zeng Jun	Director, Teaching Affairs
Shaanxi province			
1	Shaanxi Party Organisation Department	Feng Lijun	Vice-Minister, Organisation Department
2	Shaanxi Party School	Xue Yin Er (薛引娥)*	School Executive Vice-President
		Zheng Zhifeng (郑志飏)*	School Vice-President
3	China Executive Leadership Academy, Yan'an (CELAY)	Professor Chen Yannan	School Vice-President
		Cheng Lizhuang	Vice-Minister, Exchange and Training Department
		Assoc Professor Wang Tao	Teaching and Research Department
Jinggangshan, Jiangxi			
1	China Executive Leadership Academy, Jinggangshan (CELAJ)	Mei Liming (梅黎明)*	Executive Vice-President
		Zhou Jintang	Deputy President
Dalian City			
1	China Business Executives Academy, Dalian (CEABD)	Dong Dahai	School Vice-President
2	Dalian Party School	Yang Qi	School Vice-President
3	Dalian City Party Organisation Department	Wang Naipo (汪乃波)*	Vice-Minister, Organisation Department

* Chinese names are given as official pinyin names are not available

Another key part of the support network is my mentor, Mr Chan Soo Sen, Singapore's Chinese affairs expert. Mr Chan has provided many interesting points of view and helped to make the book more reader-friendly.

Friends in academia

A research undertaking only has academic credibility if leading academics in the field are consulted. For this, I am grateful for the professors at both NTU and National University of Singapore (NUS) who introduced and gave me access to their university resources. Appreciation goes to the Chair of the Lee Kuan Yew (LKY) School of Public Policy and East Asian Institute (EAI), NUS, Professor Wang Gungwu, who never fails to illuminate a hazy situation and set clear perspectives. My appreciation also goes to Professor Kishore Mahbubani, who helms our LKY School of Public Policy as well as his key academic staff in this area, Professor Wang Jing. In addition, EAI Director Prof Zheng Yongnian needs no introduction, being the expert in China affairs in his own right. I must also thank Professor Zheng for introducing me to Prof Wu Guoguang (See www.wuguoguang.com), who was doing a one-year fellowship at EAI in 2011, from University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

On the administrative side, I must not forget Mr Hu Rong who singlehandedly organised the activities related to the Lien Fellowship, ranging from study trips and family days to the inaugural bilateral Lien Forum in Beijing in November 2012. Staff at the NTU Nanyang Centre for Public Administration (NCPA) must also be commended for their excellent support. They are Christina Wong, Huang Shuang, Mr Otto and Dr Wu Wei, the Centre Director.

Closer to home

My superiors at the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ms Yeoh Chee Yan, Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, formerly PS [Education Development]) and Dr Mimi Choong, Deputy Secretary (Service) have been most understanding during the period of this research project. I thank my two staff officers in HR Group, Grace Ho and Seet Wen Hao, who are both on the China Development Programme, for helping out in note-taking and research efforts, as well as going through parts of the manuscripts. Appreciation also goes to English teacher experts Caroline Yeow, Carol Anne Martin and Assoc Professor Low Ee Ling for vetting some of my chapters.

Family-wise, my Dad, who now resides in Shanghai, and his longtime boss Mr Wu Hsioh Kwong have provided very interesting insights over this period.

Last but not least, my wife, Isabella, who has been a constant inspiration in this whole undertaking.

Thank you all!

NOTES:

- 1 I have decided to use the official version rather than the traditional Chinese Communist Party (CCP).
- 2 In Mandarin, it is fondly called the 中央组织部 or 中组部, i.e. Central Organisation Department (COD). In this book, I will use the acronym COD for all the county, municipal, provincial and central (中组部) organisation departments (组织部), as the organisation departments at the different levels play crucial roles in personnel and talent matters.

IN DEFENCE OF HONESTY

I know that in writing a positive piece on the Communist Party of China, I will encounter strong concerns ranging from outright criticism to subtle hints that I have been taken for a ride. Thus, I want to clarify that this book has been written with a clear conscience anchored on the following three bases:

Firstly, I write based on the Chinese articles that I have come across, which are primary sources. They are not just Party mouthpieces, but also critics and third-party neutrals. Too many of us read about China through a different language or filter – can the angle be truly objective?

Secondly, I write based on my interviews and interactions with the actual people running the show. These are the party officials, the academics and even the man in the street. While they may want to strongly influence me in one way or other, I see a group of very eager people passionate about their cause and the path they wish to pursue. Their voices should be heard.

Thirdly, my arguments are based on actual events happening, or have happened in China. These are documented in blogs, China's YouTube equivalents and the newspapers. Say what you like about propaganda, but if something really happened, it did.

All I ask is for you, the reader, to give China and the Chinese people a fair hearing.

Thank you.

