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978-0-521-70543-1 - Leadership and Management in China: Philosophies, Theories,  
and Practices

Edited by Chao-Chuan Chen and Yueh-Ting Lee

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## *Leadership and Management in China*

With the rise of China in the global economy, it has never been more important for business leaders to understand Chinese leadership philosophies and practices. This is the first book to explain how ancient Chinese thinking and Western thought have shaped the development of leadership styles in China. Leadership theories associated with Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism, the *Art of War*, and the writings of Mao and Deng are analyzed by both Chinese and Western experts. To set this in a modern business context, the book includes interviews with top executives, who reflect on how their business values are affected by ancient Chinese philosophers, modern Chinese leaders, and Western management writers and thinkers. The book also includes research on paternalistic leadership as practiced by business leaders in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China.

*Leadership and Management in China* provides a significant step forward in understanding the complex and varied nature of leadership styles in modern Chinese business.

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YUEH-TING LEE is Professor of Psychology and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Toledo.

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# Leadership and Management in China

Philosophies, Theories, and Practices

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CHAO-CHUAN CHEN AND YUEH-TING LEE



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*To the memory of Jim Meindl: great teacher, collaborator,  
and friend*

*To our beloved wives: Wen-hua Ren and Fong Wei*

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## *Preface*

This is the first book to our knowledge that introduces, explains, and theorizes on Chinese leadership philosophies and practices. The contributors include well-established mainland and overseas Chinese leadership and management scholars such as Larry Farh from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and Kwang-kuo Hwang from the National Taiwan University. The Chinese authors were joined by Western scholars including George Graen, renowned for his Leader–Member Exchange Theory and his cross-cultural leadership research and consulting.

At a time when China is becoming more central in a globalizing world economy, business managers as well as scholars from outside China increasingly feel the importance of understanding the thoughts and views of Chinese leadership and management. As one of the oldest civilizations in the world, and with the largest population, China has produced internationally known statesmen, philosophers, thinkers, and leaders; yet, among the vast volume of literature on leadership within and outside China, we see so little on Chinese leadership, and by Chinese scholars. This book represents a significant step toward filling a serious gap in the teaching, research, and practice of leadership and management.

The book has three parts. It begins with Confucian philosophical foundations of leadership theory and practice in Ancient China (Part I). Part II presents alternative ancient philosophical approaches to leadership, such as Daoism, Legalism, and the *Art of war*. Part III consists of modern and contemporary Chinese leadership theories and practices such as paternalistic leadership, Mao's revolutionary theory and practice, and Deng's theory and practice of economic reform. An interview study led by Zhi-xue Zhang, specially designed for this book, is featured in Chapter 8, and it reports how top business executives in mainland China draw philosophical insights on leadership and management from both Chinese and Western sources. In the final chapter

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George Graen comments on the significance of Chinese leadership theories for the wider world.

The contributors were drawn to this project by a common mission to present to the world something that researchers, students, consultants, and practitioners can turn to for a better understanding of Chinese leadership perspectives. This book, we believe, has a lot to offer to those who do business with the Chinese in China, Asia, or anywhere in the world, to those who are or aspire to be multinational business leaders, and to those scholars who are seeking leadership universals or peculiarities.

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## *Acknowledgments*

The idea of a book on Chinese leadership philosophies came about six years ago in 2002 when Jim Meindl and I met at the Academy of Management Meetings (chatting with Jim was always one of the highlights at the Academy and I miss it so much now that he is gone). We continued to talk about this idea on the phone and finally decided to do it in 2003. I started to make contacts with scholars from Chinese universities, who, we believed, would bring more indigenous perspectives to the topics. After many phone conversations and email exchanges I planned to go to SUNY at Buffalo in early July 2004 to meet with Jim and talk about the book and other research interests. He had invited me several times to go back to visit my *alma mater* and I was looking forward to it. Little did I know that my trip would be to attend his funeral. Jim died unexpectedly of a heart attack. I was so shocked and saddened that I could not bear the thought of doing the book as it would be such a painful reminder of his tragic departure. The book project was shelved for a year as I was grieving for the loss of a great teacher, collaborator, and a close friend.

Time did not heal (contrary to what people usually say of personal tragic losses) because it still hurts every time I realize Jim is gone. But time did channel my sadness, regret, and helplessness into motivation to complete the unfinished work, about which Jim was passionate. I felt I owed it to him and to readers of Chinese leadership and management to carry out the book project. In the year 2006, recovered and reenergized, I picked up everything and started in earnest to work on it. During this time, Yueh-ting Lee, a friend and one of the contributors to the book, came to my aid as a coeditor. His knowledge of classic Chinese literature was reassuring to me. George Graen, a scholar of Japanese and Chinese cultures, graciously agreed to write a chapter connecting the Chinese theories to the international world, and to do that he read each and every chapter of the book and provided timely and valuable feedback. To them I am deeply grateful.

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Thanks are also due to Larry Farh, Kwang-kuo Hwang, and Zhi-xue Zhang for contributing their chapters and for their thoughtful comments on an earlier draft of the Introduction. Beside them, I wish to thank other contributors such as Jie Lu, Xin-an Lu, Yan-qin Peng, Hai-fa Sun, Xin-hui Yang, and Shi-he Zhang for their understanding, patience, and cooperativeness when the book was delayed.

I am grateful to Mary Child, a good friend and a true professional, from whom I received so much general advice about book editorship. I truly appreciate the help of Shan Haarsager, Yueh-ting Lee's administrative assistant, who gave me quick turnarounds when proofreading parts of the typescript at short notice. Thanks are also due to Caroline Murray and Paula Parish at Cambridge University Press and to Chris Doubleday, the copy-editor, for their professional assistance.

As is quite typical of my research, this book is a collaborative family effort. My wife, Wen-hua Ren, shared her time helping me search and obtain relevant literature, let me bounce thoughts and ideas off her, and shared my joy and worry. My niece, Amy Hui Wang, volunteered her precious vacation time to help me put the individual chapters into a single file for submission. I fully utilized my son, Ken Chen's, superb skill in drawing figures. All the help from colleagues, friends, and family made my first experience of book-editing so much less daunting and more fun. To all of them I extend my deepest appreciation and gratitude.

Chao-chuan Chen