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During the past century, China has experienced a series of significant historical events, namely, the initiation of the “third-stride” developmental strategy (Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of People’s Republic of China, 2001), the Gross National Product (GNP) surpassing a trillion, successfully bidding for the 2008 Olympic Games, and joining the World Trade Organization (WTO). All indicate that China has entered into a new historic era and is proceeding towards modernization. This new era will see comprehensive development in China, which includes profound and innovative institutional changes. The changes in governmental administration will be vital at this stage, as administrative organizations are vastly different in power, decision-making, responsibility, and behavior. The Chinese government has implemented a long-term economic development program, relying on the developmental style of “government-domination” for more than 20 years. China’s gradual reform strategy of “going through river by touching stones” and long-term economic development under governmental domination require that Chinese administration play a “dual” role: one role as the direct object of the country’s great innovation and development, and another as its forerunner and leader. The Chinese administrative system must, therefore, fluctuate dynamically between administrative development and development administration.

The Chinese government, however, faces unprecedented difficulties in implementing its public administration. As for public policy, a first challenge for the Chinese government is to choose and determine the criteria for public administration in China under changing circumstances.

Administrative criteria mainly refer to basic value standards and behavioral norms of government administration, i.e. the country’s administrative system. Then comes governmental function, decision-making, and the implementation of public policies, supported by a set of fundamental categories: political principles, managerial ideas, behavioral manners, and moral boundaries. Regarding administrative criteria, essentially the public value standards of society are relatively stable in the democratic countries, and are integrated into the country’s ideology by various kinds of public and social power instrumentalities, including administrative institutions. The value of these criteria lies in rectifying, prompting, restricting, and correcting the administrative behavior of government and providing basic values, which orient administrative reforms.
Universal ideas have dominated throughout the history of Chinese political culture.

Regular Administration: Institutional Basis of Chinese Public Management in the New Era

Theoretically speaking, government regulations can be regarded as public rules. To some extent, public rules mean institutions and laws, which coincide with the soul of the country and administration. In order to sustain development in the new era and foster changes in international and domestic conditions within China, the Chinese government should convey the notion that rules are paramount. This should be done through effective institutional arrangements and public policies embodying the country's dominant ideology. Public rules consist of market rules in the economy, rules on social behavior applied to corporations and individuals, and political rules that restrict public institutions. Under modern democratic conditions, the country's administration has never been considered the sole body responsible for the enactment and execution of public rules; moreover, the validity of public rules enacted by administration institutionally requires deliberation and validation by the highest body in the system of public power. But the administration still takes responsibility for enacting and executing public rules because it has the legal status as a public body above others. Therefore, it assumes indispensable governmental functions in China's modernization, and its public policies profoundly affect the development of the country and the society. Within this new era, public rules of the Chinese government should have the following elements:

Validity

As the basis of public rules for every government, validity implies that administrative codes and public policies must accord with the principles, spirit and rules of the law (content), their generation must accord with legal proceedings (form), and administrative rules
must reflect the common desires and fundamental interests of all. First of all, on the question of increasing citizen obligation or limiting civil rights, it is essential that public policies comply with the laws of the country, especially with the constitution. Moreover, it is imperative to install effective institutional arrangements that prevent individuals from circumventing administrative rules and regulations, which has proven to be a recurrent theme. Thus, the validity of the rules government establishes is an important component of constructing and maintaining the country’s institutions.

**Universality**

Public rules of the government should be applied to all social bodies, the only exceptions of which are clearly statutory. In this case, the principles of the World Trade Organization such as non-discrimination, fair citizen treatment, free trade, fair trade, third-part arbitration, reasonable protection, and so on, should be incorporated as important administrative principles of the Chinese government in these new times. Other administrative ideas, like “the public interest is paramount,” “the private property sacrosanct,” “equality for everyone in front of laws,” “equal benefit,” “open policy,” should also be identified as public administrative criteria.

**Publicity**

Rules of government, including rules about administering government, are public information, which should be disseminated to the public in time by way of mass communication. Theoretically speaking, the only exception to publicity pertains to special information protected by the country’s law of secrecy. Through public information of public management, citizens are not only able to join discussion of public affairs and effectively supervise government, but also the cost of “fact-seeking” is also increased, thereby improving the country’s political integrity (Angang, 2000, p. 103). On the other hand, according to legal principles, governmental policies that have not been published cannot be considered law.

**Stability**

Public rules generally surface after a period of gestation, remaining stable once publicized. However, conflicts occur alongside rapid development in this first modernization effort in China, and will challenge policy-making in the Chinese government. Dilemmas are readily apparent in the following areas: equity and efficiency; economic development and natural environment; humanistic development; international rules and historic Chinese culture; tradition; domestic conditions; centralized political power and market economic power; national, local, and private interest; and Southeast regions and Midwest regions. The Chinese government must continue adjusting public policies to changing realities. Yet, there is also the concern that the Chinese government further requires constant propaganda and the enforcement of public policies and the dominant ideology in order to accomplish the target of national development under the principle of constant “keeping amid changes.” Therefore, adhering to public policies for the sake of their stability and continuity is another form of normalcy in public policy. The estimation of two kinds of normalcy discussed above rests on the valuation and judgment of reality, interaction forms of Chinese government as decision-making parts.

**Credit Administration: Behavioral Rules of Public Management of the Chinese Government in the New Era**

Credit administration assumes that government should advance and execute public policies identified and supported by the public. The government’s credit, the core
of credit administration, is based on whether the government’s public rules conform to public interest, public benefit, and public morals. It is imperative that these rules are accepted and maintained consciously. The government’s credit combines with the public power the government holds, as the government could formulate and execute public policies without public power. Public credit has nothing to do with power politics. It does, however, have a direct relationship with public authority. Under a democracy, public credit is not only the core of credit administration, but it is also the basis of public authority.

“No credit, no respect” is an important Chinese tenet regarding state government. It proves to be consistent with the ideas of “benevolence, justice, courtesy, wisdom, credit” which are also identified as supreme ethics to civilize the public, especially officials and even emperors. This was a moral tradition of cultivating these officials or scholars. Unfortunately, such tradition had resulted in destructive outcomes, culminating in the Cultural Revolution. This tradition has been further undermined by contemporary mammonism associated with Chinese market economy. This is one of the reasons for the current credit crisis in China. In order to cultivate a sustained and socially balanced development strategy, the Chinese credit system must be reconstructed.

The credit system of society consists of different levels of subsystems, which include commercial credit, educational credit, individual credit, and state credit. In this institutional framework of social credit, state credit (government credit) is the foundation, and it is decided by Chinese cultural tradition and political institutions. In the political power structure of the state, ministerial parties — assured by the constitution — dominate and practically decide public policies. In the system of state government, the government widely takes on the public functions of promoting the national economy, stabilizing the social orders, and improving people’s standard of living. In the social system of value standards, the government usually occupies the active and powerful status of having control over one’s ideology, which profoundly influences traditional values such as “officer standard.” In this new era of China, reconstructing the social credit system must begin with building up the public credit system within the state (government) credit system, gradually establishing and solidifying the whole social credit system upon which promoting state modernization depends. Constructing credit administration is also one of the political responsibilities of the Chinese government in the new era.

Actually, some serious credit crises have manifested at all levels of Chinese government, especially in some local governments. These crises include the following:

1) In some places, important index and statistical data of economic and social development heavily lose consistency with the facts, and are often fabricated.
2) Some local governments make arbitrary decisions, informed only by official political positions; many decisions are never implemented; performance often falls short of scheduled targets; and there is much public dissatisfaction with government performance.
3) Because of frequent turn over of many key personnel, there is often a break in the credit of some local governments. This is caused by such approaches as “new officers don’t pay for old debts.” These breaks engender governmental credit loss in eyes of the public.
4) Some local governments improperly intervene in the local economy, vouch for enterprises with public funds, or set up impact projects without regard to local financial capacity, all of which indirectly result in local government getting into fields and even violating court orders.
5) Some departments of local governments lose their honesty and credit for departmental interests, and debase the whole credit image of the government.
6) Some local governments defy the central govern-
ment’s policies, carry out local protectionism, and condone and even encourage illegal and irregular behaviors. Government, as a whole, loses its credit before the public (Yu, 2002). In reference to this question of credit in China, Premier Zhu spoke out, announcing that officers should abide by morality and rules, and not false accounts (Jie, 2001). Scholars directly point out, "the construction of a credit system should first begin with governments themselves (Furen, 2001, p. 9). These questions have aroused the serious consideration of the Central Government (Gang, 2002), as well as some local governments, such as the Zhejiang provincial government (Hongjun, 2002) and the Beijing city government (Wei and Aimin, 2002). These governments have, therefore, begun to establish relevant public policies that will address existing credit problems.

**Civil Administration: The Ideology of Public Management of the Chinese Government in the New Era**

If "yi min wei ben" (centered around people) can be thought of as a basic political idea, civil administration would be the application of this idea in public administration. In the whole course of Chinese civilized history, even though feudal emperors did not have genuine democratic notions about God-given human rights and equality, "yi min wei ben" was always a central precept for state management and stable governance. Such ideas as "civilian heaviest, state heavier, and emperor lightest" (Mencius, 1962), have influenced rulers across the dynasties. They did have different interpretations of the "yi min wei ben" idea at different times, and these should be a valuable historic heritage for Chinese public administration in these modern times. Of course, it also needs a new and more relevant definition.

Good governance is fundamental to state management, and every government of a democratic country values it as a supreme administrative idea. Even in the age of feudalism, it was understood that good administration was the root of peace and order. Good administration, when it successfully combines theory and practice, understands that public interest is the starting point and destination of all public policies. In practice, government can neither attain legitimacy, nor sustain development, until it dispenses good governance.

As a classical theory of public administration, the idea of good governance has taken on numerous meanings, which differ based upon the era and country. In China, for example, "serving the public," "yi de zhi guo" (governing the country by ethics) (Jie et al., 2001), can be regarded as a form of good governance. Under modern democracy, even though government promotes good governance expressly for political reasons, i.e. to serve its interests, good administration is a kind of basic public value standard for government officials. Good administration has inter-related premises. They are as follows:

1) Country interest is paramount. Operating on the democratic theory of "people's sovereignty," the government, bound by political rules that are essentially contained within the constitution, takes the responsibility for serving the public. Therefore, civil interest should be the springboard for all public policies of government. Group or sector interests must be secondary.

2) The public will is paramount. As such, administration is one of institutional rules. Also, based on the democratic political theory of "people's sovereignty," the government, under representative democracy, must conform to the public will and be supervised directly or indirectly by the public. This is ensured institutionally in the form of general elections, the tenure principle, balance of power, and so on. Therefore, the most important value standard for measuring whether public policy coincides with good governance is whether it reflects the will of and benefits the people. According to this stan-
In Chinese government administration, the obligation of the Chinese government in the new era is to continue economic expansion. It is further imperative to maintain social equity and justice. Apparently wasteful "impact projects," and a deceitful "numeral economy," do not belong to good governance.

**Professional Administration:**


In the interest of Chinese modernization, it is necessary for the government to honor professional administration, which will quicken the development of Chinese society. This ultimately encompasses the following:

1) From a theoretical perspective, professional administration encompasses professional elites, thoughts, theories, methods, and techniques that help to improve the quality of public policies, and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration. On the one hand, governmental management faces the challenge of resolving conflicts between traditional managerial ideas, thoughts, principles, functions, institutions, methods, and measures. While on the other hand, management must resolve conflicts between the market economy and social development. The conflict is so prominent that the government is likely to impede economic development. It must, therefore, expedite self-reform by reconsidering and reconstructing administrative criteria, and enhance its ability to enact and execute public policies. China's future is dependent upon modernization. Throughout the course of modernization, China has widely participated in international communication and exchange, which in turn has resulted in scientific activities, maximum substance manufacture, and diversified social life for China. Complexities in science and substance manufacture have ensued from these developments, and so have an increase in public affairs and lawful activities (Aberbach et al., 1981). Furthermore, problems have emerged regarding public management.

That is, "Because of the government's tasks, ... increasingly complex in quality and broader in range, it needs for more skilled persons" (Stillman, 1980, p. 330). From international experience and Chinese public administrative practice, it is apparent that professional administration is a priority in public policy in order to continuously raise the level of governmental public management under the circumstance of rapid change.

2) The range of professional administration. Professional administration personnel: (a) They span an explicit professional range; (b) they usually receive higher education, having attained not less than a bachelor's degree; (c) they hold a lifetime occupation. (Mosher, 1968, p. 336). Professional administration means raising the quality of civil servants. Since the establishment of the temporary regulations of civil servant in 1993, the standardized management of civil servants has seen great progress. There are, however, many areas in theory and policy in need of urgent resolution, such as job security, the process of examination and selection, motivation, performance evaluation, and promotion. As a matter of fact, as early as 20 years ago, the Chinese government had mapped out its strategy of searching for talents on the bases of "knowledge, youth, specialization" (Deng, 1980, p. 320). Throughout the course of this new historic time, the specialization of public management officers has become more indispensable. The Chinese government has a relatively clear recognition of the demands of professional public management. Currently, China is "building a highly-qualified team of professional administrative officers" (Peng, 1998, p. 373). The Chinese government has started education for Master of Public Administration (MPA). In addition it has commissioned influential domestic and international universities to train senior civil servants (Zujiun, 2002), established schools of government or public management in universities (Tao, 2001), and carried out the policy of publicly testing and selecting public management officers. Despite the enormous number of civil servants in China, the Chinese government has not kept pace with the process of modernization thus far, especially when one considers
local governments below the province level. The task of professional administration is still heavy, and requires that the Chinese government actively and resolutely impact professional civil servants by every possible means.

b) Professional administration and specialists. For professional administration, China must attract experts willing to serve in the government. China needs large numbers of specialists holding certain types of professional knowledge, and talented individuals possessing administrative acumen. Ideally, these individuals would serve the government by tenure or contract, and not under the condition of lifetime occupation. A remaining concern for public policy, however, is how to avoid tension among the experts.


Keeping in step with world development, China will address three realities more pointedly in the new era: (1) Development and change happen rapidly. Thus, there are a plethora of new phenomena, new techniques, new discoveries, new inventions, new products, new thoughts, new theories, and new fortune. And, consequently, there are numerous new questions. (2) There is a condition of uncertainty. People have no control over the consequences of many things. For example, how does cloning impact on human ethics and human reproduction? Or, what are the long-term effects of transgenic diets on people’s health? (3) The connections among things tend to be more complicated. Abounding now are nonlinear relations, along with the sharp increase in human activities. Faced with new challenges, the Chinese government is required to mobilize its administrative spirit and accomplish historic tasks on the basis of a strong sense of obligation and mission.

Administrative spirit is a value embodying the idealistic accomplishment of government and officers towards the performance of official duties. It reflects a commitment to professional ethics and self-discipline. Governmental officers that fulfill obligations and share responsibility for the country’s well-being comprise a government possessing administrative spirit. The Chinese government is being challenged greatly in this new era. China is in need of an administrative spirit that will engender innovative development.

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In the pursuit of development, the government and its officers must possess intense job motivation and a spirit of sacrifice. This is the essence of administrative spirit. For the Chinese government in these new times, it is important to pursue development and move forward, given the complexity of Chinese politics, its economy and society. Nevertheless, China is simultaneously living through the violent shocks having resulted from institutional transitions, and it has paid greatly for this transition. Among these are a lack of social equity; (according to international standards, China has joined the ranks of countries with very unbalanced earnings, with a Gini Ratio over 0.45 (Tingting, 2002). Problems include a worsening environment (Ying and Tinggang, 2001a, 2001b) and confused economic orders (State Department of People’s Republic of China, 2001). These circumstances may have been inevitable, proving to be endemic to the process of development, a notion that Samuel P. Huntington has described (1968). The uniformity of society becomes increasingly formidable, and Chinese public management has come into the dual-stage where internal and external processes simultaneously impinged on it (Jun, 2000). This is the case especially as the Chinese government has entered the World Trade Organization and is roundly re-entering the mainstream of international community. All these demand that the Chinese government consider the new situation and, with alacrity, pursue further institutional innovations and push “explorative tasks” (Louise, 1955, pp. 515,
520). Only then can China successfully consolidate a valid base for governance, and intensify the country’s comparative advantage and capacity to compete (Yifu et al., 1999). And with this, it can finally take up the undertaking of national revival in the new age of information and globalization.

**Conclusion**

Challenges and opportunities coexist in China in this new century. As far as the matters of choosing a developmental strategy at this stage, a “government-dominated” style of economic development is the reasonable choice. The state will still carry out macroscopic adjustment and control; consequently the functional transition of government and market will be actualized in the process of gradual reforms, a typical Chinese style. In this sense, Chinese governmental reform is still the biggest historic challenge in the development of Chinese society and economy in the new age (Zhang, 1994). On the other hand, reconsidering and reconstructing the national ideology, China has selected the market-economic system, and has clearly applied market principles on resource configuration (Communist Party of China Central Committee, 1993). The continuous advance of the market economy is another important reason why Chinese governmental reform is presently the most significant challenge. Consequently, the success or failure of governmental reforms, to a large extent, rests upon whether the Chinese government has the desire and the capability to execute the country’s criteria of public administration in the following areas: institutional administration, legal administration, democratic administration, effective administration, regular administration, credit administration, civil administration, professional administration, and development administration.

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