

Ma Ying-jeou's Leadership by Platitudes, Confucius and the MOE

Written by Jerome F. Keating Ph.D.
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Jason Hu's lax leadership may finally be catching up with him in Taichung but in another side of the nation state of Taiwan we see the repercussions of Ma Ying-jeou's leadership by platitudes. Faced with problems of widespread bullying, drug use and gang problems in the nation's high schools, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has come up with a suspect placebo cure, have the students read Confucius.

Yes, you heard that correctly, the MOE is cuing off of Mr. Ma. When faced with a problem, don't analyze it and get your hands dirty in working out a gritty solution, instead solve it by uttering a platitude.

The Four Books referenced are the "Doctrine of the Mean," "Great Learning," "Analects of Confucius," and "Mencius."

No one is questioning that the works written by Confucius for an agricultural based and isolated state society have historical value and family values albeit dependent on accepting certain paradigms of the world. No one is even pointing out that their dependence on an unchanging hierarchy in its system of values is totally devoid of today's fast paced, high tech world with all its concomitant pressures. But look at the reality.

First there is the challenge of making an agriculturally based, hierarchical anchored philosophy fit today's world. No easy task. Second there is the challenge that this had to be made interesting, exciting and clearly applicable for today's students. Today's teachers who are still themselves taught in a hierarchical copy-my-lecture mode method in their training are not prepared for those two challenges.

Then there is the fact that Taiwan's students are already overloaded with class materials and forced study with frequent tests. So is adding Confucius to this mix going to help? Will other subjects be cut out to handle this? Or will there just be more added to the pile?

Nowhere in this is an examination of how the pressures and conditions of today's society are some of the reasons why there are bullying, drug, and gang problems among the young.

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No, the MOE is following the mired leadership of the nation's president who has a long track record in uttering platitudes, but a short track record of satisfactory performance and problem solving. When many of Ma's projects have failed, he just moves on with new promises and new platitudes. I don't think that the schools will be able to follow that performance.

Source:

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