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# Exploration of Chinese Television Historical Comedy Drama *Li Wei the Magistrate* from the Perspective of Management

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**Abstract** From the perspective of management, this paper sorted out the management thoughts of the Chinese Television Historical Comedy Drama *Li Wei the Magistrate*. Then, on the basis of the sorting, it analyzed and summarized the management ideas and actions of characters in the drama. Finally, it summarized the application of management measures in the management of organizations, including making clear management responsibilities, using limited resources to maximize benefits, being strict with relatives, and practicing forbearance all the time, to improve the overall efficiency and benefits of enterprises and organizations.

**Key words** *Li Wei the Magistrate*, Management thought, Management efficiency, Management benefits

## 1 Introduction

The Chinese Television Historical Comedy Drama *Li Wei the Magistrate* (also known as *Li Wei Becomes an Official*) is a play deeply favored by the audience. Li Wei was an illiterate county magistrate who would become one of the most prominent officials during 18th-century Qing dynasty. Li Wei's evil spirit revealed his inner righteousness. It was his righteous evil spirit that made him win many corrupt high-ranking officials. When many corrupt officials fell at Li Wei's feet, we clapped our hands and applauded. It was really satisfying. But after excitement, we should take some consideration. From the perspective of managers, we can see many management ideas that are connected with reality. This is helpful for improving the management level of China.

## 2 Connotation of the management

Fundamentally speaking, management exists in all aspects of human activities. As long as there are people, there will be man-

agement. Management is reflected in life and work all the time. Literally, the term management includes "administer" and "manage". In Chinese language, management originally referred to objects in the shape of a tube, such as wind instruments and ancient keys. In the 32th Year of Xigong in Zuo's Zuo Tradition or Commentary of Zuo, Zheng people let me take charge of its north gate. Here, the management means the key. With the further understanding of management, the meaning of the key became extended to the connotation of pivot, custody, guardianship, and control. In *Confucianism of Hsun Tzu* (Xun Zi), the saint is the pivot of doctrine. Here, the pivot referred to the manager. A word closely connected to this is the administration which denotes a critically important place (*Etymology*, Commercial Press, the first revision in August 1980). *Kangxi Dictionary* (1958 version of Zhonghua Book Company) extended its meaning and pointed out that taking charge of affairs is the management. Common words include house keeper and administrator, etc. The management originally referred to texture. Later, it was extended to the texture of the object or the order of things. Further, it was extended to the rules and principles. And just in this sense, it has the meaning of management. In summary, the management concept has a long history in China.

In a broad sense, the objects of management are people, finances, things, affairs, etc. It can be said that management is responsibility, coordination, problem-solving, team leader, and choice. Through management, personal goals that cannot be achieved can be realized. In a narrow sense, management is mainly a process based on holistic, innovative, and systematic requirements to achieve established goals through a series of activities such as plan preparation, organization and implementation. The main body of management is the manager and the managed, and the specific operation method is leadership and control. This definition regards planning, organization, leadership, control, and innovation as the five basic functions of management. A plan is the action necessary to set goals and actually achieve these goals. All

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managers in the organization must perform the planning function. Organization is to combine the characteristics of the managed personnel and the position situation, through a reasonable division of labor, to make the best use of people, to achieve constraints on the job responsibilities through the system, and then make the management organization form a coordinated organic whole. Leadership mainly participate in the management of internal personnel in the organization through coordination, communication, and commands, and make directional decisions, enhance internal mutual understanding, and achieve unity of behavior and thinking, so as to be able to better motivate every member of the organization to actively work for the common goal. The essence of control is to make the practice activities conform to the plan, and the plan is the control standard. Innovation is different from the above mentioned types of functions. As far as it is concerned, the innovation does not have a special form of expression, but it can form its own value through close integration with other functions.

### 3 Management thoughts revealed from the *Li Wei the Magistrate*

The *Li Wei the Magistrate* is an excellent television series. Its content reflects not only how to be an official and how to behave in the officialdom, but more importantly, we can extract some management thoughts that can help enterprise managers improve their management level. With the development of the times and changes in economic models, the comprehensive management capabilities of Chinese enterprises have been significantly improved. The application of modern management theory plays an increasingly prominent role in the market economy. Many companies have become world famous enterprises through scientific management, shaping their brands into brands with high market awareness and reputation. However, related practices have shown that compared with developed countries and regions, there are still large deficiencies in the management of Chinese enterprises. For example, resource and talent bottlenecks have become important factors restricting the corporate management. On the whole, due to the low comprehensive strength of enterprises, China's products with independent intellectual property rights are relatively scarce, accordingly leading to the lack of innovation in the international market. In other words, Chinese enterprises lack modern management talents with high levels and also lack modern management teams.

**3.1 Making clear responsibilities in management** Management is the process of pursuing efficiency and benefit. In this process, it is worth noting that, it is necessary to fully explore the potential of every individual and properly divide labor through various channels, so that each department and each staff member can maximize their functions. Fundamentally speaking, division of labor is an inevitable requirement for the development of productive forces. Reasonable division of labor is the core of making clear positions, and then determining responsibilities. Responsibilities are strictly stipulated rules of action in terms of quantity, quality, time, efficiency, etc. The boundaries of responsibilities must be clear, the

content must be specific, and the responsibilities must be assigned to individuals. In addition, rewards and punishments should be clear, fair, and timely, so that rewards and punishments can meet the psychological needs of the managed personnel, and the rewards and punishments should be institutionalized and standardized. Carrots and sticks are an indispensable tool for the effective implementation of the principle of responsibility.

**3.2 Using limited resources to maximize benefits** Benefit is the eternal theme of management. The management of any organization is to obtain certain benefits. Benefit is a key factor in the development of an enterprise or an organization, and the benefit reflects the effective investment level of the enterprise to a certain extent. Combining the social and economic perspectives, benefits can be divided into economic benefits and social benefits. In the process of enterprise or organization management, while pursuing economic benefits, enterprise or organization must also pay attention to social benefits. From this perspective, management must combine economic and social benefits. From economics, resources are scarce, and management is to properly use limited resources to maximize their benefits. Li Wei asked for 500 000 liang of silver from the emperor to repair the river, but he only obtained 250 000 liang. In the face of limited resources, one side was large area of land for the common people, and the other was the land of the Prime Minister Gao. Li Wei wanted to transport all the stones that were transported to the side of the Prime Minister Gao to the common people. At that time, the officialdom was very dark, and this was obviously inconsistent with the mainstream practice. Li Wei really worked for the common people and first repaired the river beside the common people. From the economic perspective, this is to use limited resources to the most valuable places to maximize benefits. From the management perspective, Li Wei achieved both economic and social benefits, which gave a heavy blow to the officialdom at that time. Finally, the common people changed the idea that there was no good official in the officialdom, and Li Wei won the title of "umbrella of the common people".

**3.3 Being strict with the relatives** Being strict with the relatives means strictly restraining relatives around. Trouble arising at home can be said to be related to the corruption of many leading cadres. Failure to restrain family members, such as their spouses, children, relatives and friends, etc., they often resort to the leadership of their relatives to seek improper interests or engage in illegal acts. The leading cadres themselves also let them go and finally they would embark on a path of no return. Therefore, leading cadres must strictly require their families and strengthen management over their family members. Leading cadres must do two "preventions." One is to prevent themselves, their relatives, and family members from using power for personal gain, and the other is to prevent the temptation of gains or moral and behavioral defects that make lawbreakers find gaps in themselves. Judging from the investigation and handling of cases in recent years, more and more criminals are seeking personal gain through secret exchanges with relatives of leading cadres. If the "internal help" and rela-

tives of leading cadres are not vigilant, uncorrupt, and cannot withstand the "sugar-coated bomb" attacks of lawbreakers, they will definitely help the criminals eventually open up the "gap" from their families. Therefore, a harmonious family is a "firm line of defense" against corruption. The "disharmony" of the family's ideological and moral concepts and value orientation has caused the eternal regret of leading cadre. That is a single slip may cause lasting sorrow. In summary leading cadres must strictly manage their families, popularize legal and moral awareness, and prevent them from using their powers for the benefit of others and themselves.

After Li Wei was awarded the post of Yangzhou magistrate, Chairman Huang gave a golden "Lord Lao Zi of the Great Monad" to Li Wei's mother. Li Wei firmly rejected and dealt with this "time bomb" in his own manner. On the way to Yangzhou to take office, just outside Yangzhou, Li Wei used his unique way to educate his family: he got under the carriage by himself and let the carriage pass over his head, thus giving his family a warning. Through such family education, management, requirements, *etc.*, and family members obtained consistent values and built a "harmonious family." Li Wei built a solid line of defense for his integrity.

**3.4 Practicing forbearance all the time** In *Shuowen Jiezi* (a dictionary discussing writing and explaining characters), forbearance is related to heart and blade, and refers to being capable; in ancient times, being capable is connected with patience, so forbearance has the meaning of patience. Besides, forbearance has the meaning of firm or strong heart, so it means being capable of bearing hard things. A real hero must have the spirit of forbearance all the time. Only through forbearance, can a man protect himself and succeed in doing things. Forbearance is a great wisdom and also a great blessing. A man with the spirit of forbearance is invincible. The Chinese character forbearance consists of a knife on the heart. The sharp blade stabs the heart, the heart still can bear. This is forbearance. Some people consider that the forbearance is the manifestation of negative and cowardly character, is the self-repression. In their opinion, we must strive for any thing and do not tolerate anything. In fact, the forbearance is active and positive. It is open-minded and farsighted. Only the knowledgeable can deeply understand this. As Confucius said, a little impatience spoils great plans. Shao Kangjie also stated that, a gentleman can bear what others can't bear. Hu Anguo stated that man can be at ease if he is always patient and practices forbearance. In *Records of Ethical Acts* (Jingxinglu), there are words such as, patience for a moment and comfort for many years; take patience, and then trouble will go. In ancient times, many accomplished characters showed the forbearance character. Emperor Shun endured the hard work of farming. Min Sun (a student of Confucius) endured the cold of unlined clothes. Han Xin forbore the humiliation of being forced to crawl between another's legs. Liu Kuan forbore the silt clothes. Lou Shide drained the cup of humiliation. There were many examples of practicing forbearance in ancient times. All these showed that endurance and forbearance are important factors of success.

For us ordinary people, the forbearance is also accompanied with us in our whole life. At the moment of birth, we have to endure the pain to survive. During our student time, we should endure challenges of various courses and numerous days of hard work, to obtain brilliant achievements. When we step into the society, we still have to withstand the baptism of wind and rain, and we must be able to tolerate the temptation in the face of the colorful world, so as not to become depraved. After getting married, we also have to learn to tolerate each other and build happiness in tolerance. When we get old, we may have to tolerate pain of sickness. Particularly in the most difficult life, the harmony of people comes from mutual tolerance and equal treatment. Even in the face of injury and insult, the wise can self-examine and make introspection, resolve grievances in forgiveness and patience, and always improve themselves with gratitude during the hard time. All of these depend on the strong perseverance and firm conviction. Only being patient and practicing forbearance, can we ultimately get succeed.

## 4 Conclusions

From the Chinese Television Historical Comedy Drama *Li Wei the Magistrate*, we can know the importance of practicing forbearance. In the most unfavorable condition, Li Wei retreated to advance and paralyze the enemy, practiced forbearance to kneel down to Magistrate Mr. Ji. This showed the wisdom of Li Wei. Finally, he obtained the most convincing evidence of salt smuggling. In summary, any great achievement is connected with the forbearance. Little forbearance brings small achievement, and great forbearance brings great achievements. That's the saying the forbearance is the door of perception. As for the management of an organization or enterprise, it is also like this. Managers of an enterprise or an organization must be patient and practice forbearance in the face of hardship or humiliation. Only in this manner, enterprise or organization may get succeed in the market. As for the common people, we should learn the spirit of Li Wei and learn his perseverance and forbearance. Take patience and practice forbearance in anything, then we may obtain a happy life. These are the thoughts after watching the Chinese Television Historical Comedy Drama *Li Wei the Magistrate*.

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