

Original Paper

On Becoming an Official in Sakya's Aphorisms and Bacon's

Essays

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Abstract

Sakya's Aphorisms and Bacon's Essays make a profound observation of social reality, comment on various social phenomena, and convey their rational meditation and political views on social and political life. Here is a comparative study of the two classic literary works with a distance of more than 300 years so as to inherit and carry forward the excellent traditional culture at home and abroad, nourish and enlighten today's officials to take the right way, follow the law and the correct path of cadre growth, and reserve the corresponding competences.

Keywords

Bacon's Essays, Sakya's Aphorism, official, competence

1. Introduction

There is a Chinese saying, "You will be rich if you start a business and engage in business, and you will be promoted and even become a dignitary person if you are an official in politics". People often face the career choice of being a political official, a businessman or a farmer sooner or later in the world, especially in the developing countries. Being a government official is one of the career orientations with a profound historical and cultural tradition in the world. How to become an official? Maybe we can find the answer in Sakya's Aphorisms and Bacon's Essays (hereinafter referred to as Sakya and Bacon) which show the world rational meditation and political views on social and political life. This paper only makes a comparative study on how to become a government official in order to take in their political wisdom and empower the present cadres' world.

2. Self-cultivation

Bacon (2018, p. 157) asserts that the molding of a man's fortune is chiefly in his own hands and everyone is the designer of his own fortune, and the exercised fortune makes the able man. It is no doubt that one's fortune is much in one's self. Similarly, Sakya shows that one has to rely on his own wisdom if he wants to be happy in the present and the next life (1985, p. 4), and that people who are both smart and diligent can achieve anything (1985, p. 53). Both of them inspire people to consolidate their own growth path, achieve corresponding political competencies and fulfill their perfection out of their intelligence, diligence and courage.

2.1 *Going for Becoming an Official*

2.1.1 The Ambition to Serve the Public

Bacon(2018, p. 148) has a deep insight that honor (i.e., seeking power and position) has three things of the vantage ground to do good, the approach to kings and principal persons, and the raising of a man's own fortunes, which shows selfishness or selflessness of honor-seekers. In reality, there are more than a man in the world who is eager to become an official in politics in order to "purchase himself profit or pleasure or honor or the like" (2018, p. 15); there is many an official in the world who has gone for privatization, utilitarianism, and humanization of political power; there is certainly no lack of helpful officials who cling to the principles that the power is used for the people's interests, and their feelings are tied with the people, listening to the people's complaints and calls, attending to the people's thoughts and concerns, intending to solve the people's difficulties, and going for meeting the people's desires and demands. In Bacon's opinion, the official-admirers ought to "divide with reason between self-love and society, and be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others, specially to thy king and country" (2018, p. 92), and to remember "Men in great place are thrice servants: servants of the sovereign or state, servants of fame, and servants of business; so they have no freedom, neither in their persons nor in their actions nor in their times (2018, p. 38)". Similarly, Sakya advocates benefiting others, dedicating to society, and seeking human interests and well-being by saying, "if one wants to work for his own welfare, he should work for others first (1985, p. 92); although a sage lives far away, he can also take care of his relatives and friends (1985, p. 9)". Obviously Bacon and Sakya hint that those who aspire to politics should set up a clear political ambition, make careful designation of their own career, prepare to lose their own liberty for power, strengthen the spirit of dedication and the sense of service, and have the notion that "I will not lose myself and live up to the people".

2.1.2 The Determination to Persevere

As the folk saying goes that greatness is made out of sufferings and endurance, Bacon(2018, p. 38) tells people that "the rising unto place is laborious", and Sakya (1985, p. 54) has the similar view that one's success has to depend on his fortune although one works hard. In their opinion, success in official career originates from a good opportunity, a fit place and the harmony of people. But Bacon (2018, p. 17) exhorts people "the virtue of adversity is fortitude; prosperity is not without many fears and

distastes, and adversity is not without comforts and hopes; virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed”. And he tells people that “timing of the suit is the principal (2018, p. 148), and the ripeness or unripeness of the occasion must ever be well weighed (2018, p. 86), since a man may not look to sow and reap at once, but must prepare business and so ripen it by degrees (2018, p. 187)”. Instead, he warns people that hasty drawing of profit in the first years is unreasonable (2018, p. 132). He persuades people “If a man have the fortitude and resolution to enfranchise himself at once, that is the best (2018, p. 152), and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come (2018, p. 15); one should pass his soul in patience (2018, p. 218); a wise man will make more opportunities than he finds (2018, p. 201)”. It’s clear that Bacon hints people to be far-sighted instead of speedy profit, and strengthen people’s confidence and perseverance in seeking a political status, for the opportunity always favors those who are prepared. Likewise, Sakya (1985, p. 1) enlightens people not to be pleased by praise, nor displeased by criticism, and to maintain properly their good qualities, settle down to pursue knowledge. And he (1985, p. 2) encourages people “when a wit man suffers from a failure, he can still make more efforts”. In Sakya’s (1985, p. 10) opinion, one should have a foresight to the future, and even when obstructed, he should still be patient; as long as he perseveres in these, even a servant can become a minister. Sakya and Bacon point out that it is not easy to become an official. They encourage people to work hard and persevere step by step, they will succeed sooner or later, just as Su Dongpo (Su, 2009, p. 1811) said, “Those who made great achievements in ancient times not only had extraordinary talents, but also had perseverance”.

2.2 Improving Competences

2.2.1 Intellectual Quality

As is known, learning is the way to improve knowledge, skills and abilities, the ladder of growth and progress, and the power to enter the official career and promote career development for people. In the historical view, those politicians who could plan strategies and commanded the overall situation mostly came best from those who were learned. Only by study can one enrich his own knowledge first, and improve his abilities in lingual, literal and emotional expression, the capacity of analysis, judgment and decision as well as executive capability, all of which are just necessities for political officials.

In Bacon’s opinion, custom (i.e., education) only does alter and subdue nature (2018, p. 152), and studies perfect nature, even studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability; (2018, p. 194) men’s thoughts are much according to their inclination, their discourse and speeches according to their learning and infused opinion; there is no trusting to the force of nature nor to the bravery of words, except it be corroborate by custom (2018, p. 154). There is no other power in the world except knowledge and learning, which can establish a throne in the mind and soul, understanding, imagination and belief of human beings (Su, 2000, p. 207). Obviously, Bacon attaches importance to education and advocates learning. In the same way, Sakya thinks that learning can increase wisdom and insight and even govern ignorance, for “a fool is ignorant because he doesn’t like to learn and ignorance makes a

man simple in this life (1985, p. 9)". Sakya (1985, p. 2) encourages people to persist in studying today even if they are to die tomorrow morning. Moreover, Sakya says frankly: To judge whether one is learned or not is to see if he can tell the right from the wrong (1985, p. 1); no matter how profound knowledge he grasps, who can be good at making a good choice is a capable person (1981, p. 17). It is clear that the learned people can tell the right from the wrong and is good at making choices. Likewise, Bacon believes reading makes a full man, conference a ready, and writing an exact man, for the aims to weigh and consider (2018, p. 195) and be able to hold judgment in discerning what is true (2018, p. 129) so that discretion of speech is more than eloquence (2018, p. 131). These are just the necessary qualities to be an official in politics knowing the right and the wrong, distinguishing the true from the false, being able to balance and good at making choices. Above all, Sakya and Bacon advocate human learning to improve cultural quality, social ethics and awareness of law and discipline, to enable independent thinking and judgment, to distinguish the right from the wrong, and make sensible choices, to avoid ignorance and confusion, and to get truth in thoughts and freedom in action.

People not born with knowledge should be open-minded to seek advice. Just as Sakya says: One without wisdom should consult scholars modestly (1985, p. 68); even if one has profound knowledge, he still needs to absorb merits of others; if he can go on like that, he will understand all knowledge. (1985, p. 3) He inspires people to "get close to noble people, consult learned talents, make friends with loyal people, and in the way he can achieve life satisfaction" (1985, p. 75). We can learn that people should learn with modesty from others to enrich themselves. Similarly, Bacon warns people "in suits which a man doth not well understand, it is good to refer them to some friend of trust and judgment" (2018, p. 192). What's more, Bacon urges people to seek advice from books for "books will speak plain, it is good to be conversant in them, specially the books of such as themselves have been actors upon the stage (2018, p. 83)", and "histories make men wise, poets witty, the mathematics subtle, natural philosophy deep, moral grave, logic and rhetoric able to contend (2018, p. 195)". These are the necessary competences for people to enter successful political career. Sakya and Bacon value learning. At present, the phenomenon of "doctors or professors working in politics" reflects the idea of learning optimization to officials, and highlights the professionalization and intellectualization of cadres, which contributes to improving the officials' decision-making and governing abilities.

2.2.2 Character and Moral Cultivation

Generally speaking, if one intends to enter the official career, he should cultivate himself to be a virtuous talent.

Sakya (2015, p. 199) affirms that one must only do that which helps others if one wants to achieve stature for oneself, and he (1985, p. 92) points out the villain only regards self-interests as happiness, while the sage thinks others' interests as happiness, for when one does things for others, he is actually doing things for himself; when one does one's own things, he is actually serving others. He (1985, p. 114) assures people if one wants to seek well-being for himself, he should first strive to seek the good of others;

those who think about only themselves can never realize their dreams. We can draw from Sakya's views that to be an official in politics, one should be happy to benefit people, devote himself to society, and seek the interests and well-being of mankind, just as Sakya (1985, p. 2) says: Scholars study all knowledge, then they benefit the world. Likewise, Bacon affirms that goodness is altruism as he says (2018, p. 46) "Goodness is the affecting of the weal of men. The inclination to goodness is imprinted deeply in the nature of man, insomuch that if it issue not towards men, it will take unto other living creatures". But he (2018, p. 201) offers "To apply one's self to others is good, so it be with demonstration that a man doth it upon regard and not upon facility". He (2018, p. 3) puts forward his own ideal of morality—"it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth".

But Bacon (2018, p. 46) criticizes "the desire of power in excess causes the angels to fall. Without goodness man is a busy, mischievous, wretched thing, no better than a kind of vermin". Bacon thinks that being an official in politics should have the virtues of politeness, compassion, gratitude, self-sacrifice and forgiveness. He (2018, p. 18) appreciates "Virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed". Similarly, Sakya (1985, p. 86) points out that greed makes people shameless as those who are extremely greedy suffer from continuous pain like rain in spring, while those who can lessen desire will enjoy endless pleasure. He (Li, 2013, p. 12) admires a noble man never takes back what he has given, and can be willing to bear the insult of a mean man, and will never forget the benefits of others, which are the marks of a noble man. He (1985, p. 11) motivates people to assure if the sage is kind to his enemies, the enemies will be conquered by him and whoever is kind to people will be made the king by them. Sakya (2015, p. 197) thinks "knowing how to obtain things, giving impartially with skill, being subdued, having consideration for others' feelings, being grateful for those who quell one's fears: if one aspires to these qualities, one achieves the world". He means those who become officials should be decent, fair, modest, tolerant, selfless and grateful.

2.2.3 Down-to-earth and Self-reflection Competences

In order to realize their ideal and ambition of being officials, people must have strong abilities to solve problems and make decisions, and great capability of coordination, agglutination, reflection and correction. People show their real ideas, basic attitudes and value orientation in their own words, show their action and execution through how many difficulties they have solved and how many practical things they have done when they are faced with the important task at the grass-roots level, and show their interests and cooperation through their making friends, so as to show their adaptability to the development and change of things and so on.

Bacon and Sakya criticize blind obedience and recklessness, advocate observation and analysis, and make their own judgment and treatment in line with the actual situation through independent thinking. People should attend to matters and avoid greed. Bacon enlightens people "He that is only real had need have exceeding great parts of virtue, as the stone had need to be rich that is set without foil (2018, p. 200).

He that doth not divide will never enter well into business, and he that divideth too much will never come out of it clearly (2018, p. 98). In business, the keeping close to the matter and not taking of it too much at once, procureth dispatch (2018, p. 96)". Likewise, Sakya firmly exhorts people to learn to observe and think, "even if success is due, people still need to think thrice beforehand; to think afterwards over and again is foolish and insane; even if a scholar is cheated, he will not be deluded" (Li, 2013, pp. 5-8). But he (1985, p. 16) criticizes "a person, who can't tell the right and the good from the wrong and the bad, with no thinking and hearing, only knowing to fill the belly, is a hairless pig". Sakya (2015, p. 151) attacks one who likes to start a hundred different schemes, is unable to achieve even one success; if one does too many things, one with great wisdom will destroy oneself just as a king with too many ideas brings much degradation to the land.

In Bacon's (2018, p. 38) opinions, the rising unto place is laborious, and by pains men come to greater pains; and it is sometimes base, and by indignities men come to dignities. But he (2018, p. 92) lets people be so true to thyself as thou be not false to others, specially to thy king and country. Bacon (1983, p. 85) gives insight into that a wise man is careful in his steps, but a fool turns to deceive others. Bacon instructs people to make reflection on whether their words and deeds conform to the etiquette and law, on whether their words and deeds are recognized by the public and based on the normal intention and sincerity by a proper way to achieve their desires. Similarly, Sakya says "Although a goal may be achieved through wrongdoing, why would the wise admire it? Although something done right may go wrong, the wise may not feel ashamed (2015, p. 68). The sage will correct even a small mistake; a mean man will never care about even his worst sin (1985, p. 9). The excellent observe their own faults, while the coarse seek faults in others (2015, p. 59). A wise can eradicate faults, but a foolish can not (2015, p. 3). Even those of limited intelligence should analyze their faults and eliminate them; by implementing the antidotes in this way they increasingly enhance themselves (2015, p. 188)". It is obvious that Bacon and Sakya educate people to reflect on self-image, recognize their own shortcomings and faults, and seriously correct them, which are the expression of morality.

3. Turning to Others

Since people are unique social animals, they are motivated by social needs and fully involved in work and life. They can get along well with others around them and gain a sense of identity. A person can get into an official position mostly due to his own efforts, partially to the appreciation and recommendation from his leaders as well as the recognition and support of colleagues and friends.

3.1 Making Friends and Discussion

Sakya (1985, pp. 1-6) has an insight that a man with good moral cultivation can get along well with others, and as long as one is a learned scholar, he will be surrounded by others. Man is a gregarious animal and many things can't be achieved by himself alone. Sakya instructs people "It doesn't matter if one has no wealth and servants, and he can achieve a lot if he has intelligent and reliable friends (Li,

2013, p. 97); one can accomplish a great cause only if he must rely on his friends, just as fire can ruin the forest only if it must rely on the strong wind (2015, p. 208). People are not all rounders, and one may know quite well how to do things alone, but all tasks should be done through consultation; Those who fail to collaborate with others buy expensive regret for themselves (2015, p. 196)". Sakya advocates that wise people will consult others on even trivial thing (1985, p. 66), and further worthy wisdom can arise when two wise people engage in discussion (2015, p. 9). In Sakya's views, regarding action taken after careful analysis, how could things possibly turn out poorly (2015, p. 198)? It is possible for heated arguments to result in close friendships; usually following controversy reconciliation is observed (2015, p. 119).

Likewise, Bacon expounds the importance of making friends widely that friendship can calm feelings, develop reason and strengthen judgment, and also help and participate in all activities and affairs. He (2018, p. 93) belittles "whoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god and that it is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends, without which the world is but a wilderness". Above all hints one has very limited knowledge and scanty information without friends. He (2018, pp. 98-100) frankly illustrates that as for "anyone who thinks too much in his heart, if he can talk and discuss with others, his mind and understanding will become clear and different and even he will become smarter than ever. An hour's communication is more effective than a day's meditation. Even if you don't have a friend who can give you advice, you can increase your knowledge through verbal communication with others. Discussion is like a stone, and thought is like a blade. Two phases of sharpening will sharpen your mind". It is ever honorable to take advice of some few friends, for lookers-on many times see more than gamesters; and the vale best discovers the hill (2018, p. 189).

Obviously, Sakya and Bacon convey "peace in admonition" (2018, p. 73) and that discussion makes people wise (1983, p. 179). They enlighten one is supposed to avoid arbitrariness or self-righteousness to be an official in politics and that one should make concerted efforts, give full play to collective wisdom, guide people to learn how to get along with others and communicate and discuss and get thinking collision, mutual inspiration and complementation, and draw on the strengths of all schools of thought. Sakya and Bacon hint that those who are arrogant are in danger and single-minded. They also encourage people to be approachable, open-minded, and get friends support in democratic elections.

3.2 Recommendation and Promotion

In Sakya's (2015, p. 125) opinion, things achieved through the strength of merit, like the light of the sun, depend on nothing else; Things achieved through the strength of effort, like the light of a butter lamp, depend on everything else. Bacon (2018, pp. 188-197) represents that "mean men in their rising must adhere; ordinary followers ought to challenge no higher conditions than countenance, recommendation, and protection from wrongs; nothing is thought so easy a request to a great person as his letter. " Both of them mean that people are easy to become an official with the guide and help of others to advance in their life. Sakya (2015, p. 165) says even the lowly and weak will succeed when

they rely on others who are great. He compares one who can be promoted to the high social status relying on a great man to the vine climbing the top against the tall tree (1985, p. 50), reminds people that although the local leader is angry, he should be friendly to him just as he slips on the ground, he should rely on the earth (1985, p. 69); for it is a kind of etiquette to be praised as emperors or great figures out of kindness and respect (1983, p. 186). He encourages people if one is good at using wit and strategy, it is also easy for him to conquer the great (1985, p. 4). He hints people to become the right arm of the leaders by studying problems, solving problems, adapting and developing, and making decisions. This is just like Bacon's (2018, p. 175) intuitive judgment that friendship only exists between superiors and subordinates, because they share weal and woe and depend on each other. Saban and Bacon inspire people to be loyal to their leaders, share their worries and implement their duty, since if you work for a sage, you can get a generous reward; if you offer a sour Hawthorn tightly, you will get a prince's reward (1985, p. 11). He hints people to do well the tasks assigned by great people or those in power, and get their appreciation and reuse so as to realize the possibility of gaining power from those who are close to you.

It is an unavoidable problem for the superior leaders to know, select and employ potential officials. Sakya and Bacon highly praise the method of selecting talents only by virtue. In Sakya's opinion, if a sage is appointed to be an official, the common people can get well-being (1985, p. 8); a wise and upright minister can accomplish all the things of the monarch and the people (1985, p. 43). Bacon (2018, p. 148) says frankly Generally let princes and states choose such ministers as are more sensible of duty than of rising; and such as love business rather upon conscience than upon bravery. He says, "There be that are in nature faithful and sincere, and plain and direct, not crafty and involved: let princes, above all, draw to themselves such natures (2018, p. 82), and employ those who are willing to do things and are willing to serve (2018, p. 173); but he advises it is good not to use men of ambitious natures except it be upon necessity (2018, p. 146), and the kings and the states must not choose as servants those who do wrong things for their own self-interest, against the interests of his lord or the state (2018, p. 85). It can be seen that Sakya and Bacon advocate the wise and upright, disinterested, capable and responsible orientation of selecting and appointing people, which implies that people should understand and be familiar with the method of selecting and selecting people, cultivate themselves according to it, improve themselves in virtue, ability, diligence and performance, and become honest people with outstanding talents, so as to gain the trust, appreciation and support of leaders. Recommendation and even direct promotion help him succeed in becoming an official.

4. Conclusion

The classic works of Sakya's Aphorism and Bacon's Essays put forward many opinions on how to become an official, which have practical significance for today's cadre education. A person's success in political status is mainly based on his own subjective efforts. In addition, it is inseparable from the

cultivation of units and organizations, leaders' appreciation and recommendation, as well as the recognition, support and assistance from colleagues and friends. These internal and external conditions contribute to the speed and height of a person's growth. But Sakya (1985, p. 21) warns people "if one relies too much on others' help, he will collapse sooner or later; the tortoise raised into the sky by the raven, eventually falls down to the ground". Bacon enlightens those who want to enter the official career to follow the law of cadre growth, and practice and be down-to-earth to reserve the corresponding qualities along the growth path of cadres, instead of "short track overtaking" such as flattery and feeding humors and even "bribing someone's servant or relatives" (Francis, 1983, p. 126).

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