

But India has one important characteristic, namely, the legacy of the British. British colonialism wasn't all bad nor all good, but one thing it did do was provide India with a civil service of trained and relatively honest civil servants. This is a remarkable thing and is one of the major legacies of Britain.

China on the other hand is in almost every respect different. The people who preserved Chinese culture and a civilized way of living associated with cultured Chinese were the landlords. These fellows have been eliminated. They are gone. Liquidated means shot. The land was taken away from them. The Chinese were mostly farmers on the land. These were tenants working on the land. The hold of the land is described in Pearl Buck's famous book, The Good Earth. The hold of the land on those people was absolutely unbreakable, people said.

Then it was broken, first by the impact of Western society through the British and other people who did trading and set up trading cities, then by the Japanese invasion, and then by the Communists. But the Chinese, unlike the Hindus, are flexible, pragmatists. They never stand on principle. They are in a sense so unprincipled that there are many people who don't appreciate the Chinese sufficiently who say, "These people are dishonest in business deals." They are not dishonest. In the Chinese society what you do is flow around an issue. You don't go through it. You don't stand on principle but you adjust yourself to the situation as demanded.

The result is that today in Singapore, who can say which side the