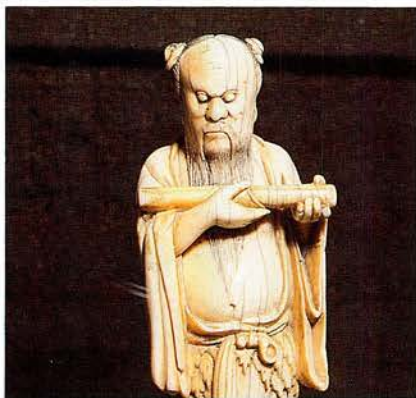


"MARKETING IS ABOUT THE GL

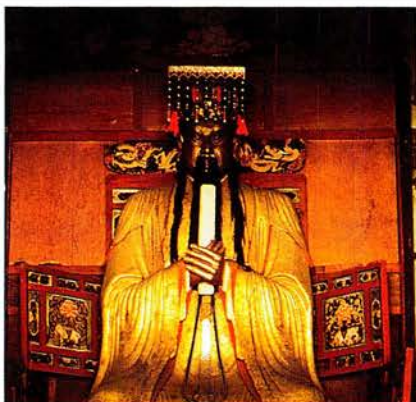
The following is an abridged version of the speech given by Mr Agha Hasan Abedi at the Beijing conference on advertising and marketing. The 2000 strong audience was composed of top-level Chinese delegates, marketing experts from Europe and the US and representatives from a wide spectrum of business and political life.



The glory of Chinese art



Confucius – the spirit of wisdom



'The King of Education'

I feel so delighted and privileged to be here with you all, this morning.

I have been visiting China ever since 1966 and every time I am here I am overcome by a deep and pervasive sense of the dimensions of time and wisdom: men have toiled, and thought, and felt, and experienced and lived and loved for so many millenia, in this great country.

Here I feel myself to be at the centre of a civilisation at once venerable and renascent. This idea of continuous rebirth is central to what I shall say a little later and I believe central to the idea, or vision, China has of itself today.

I want to devote most of the short time I have this morning to a topic of deep value and long term benefit, if discussed together with the technical and practical discussions which will fill most of the five days of this Congress. Here, I refer to what I should like to call a crusade for moral business, which in my view is something fundamental and, at the same time, pragmatic, in its real sense.

You may well ask, as you have every reason to do, what is the relevance of a discourse on the philosophy of ethics in a Congress which is assembled to deal with the subjects of marketing and advertising? My answer to this is simple. We need to examine the reasons why we do what we do. Human life, in common with all creation, has its origin in some purpose and power and exists within the framework of certain principles which we call the Laws of Nature. The principles or Laws of Nature which also constitute its spirit are the principles of interdependence, mutuality, complementarity universality and grace – together they create a harmony which constitutes existence. In my view, the laws of nature are the fundamental basis of morality which in turn is the essence of the human soul.

I believe that every human activity has a moral basis and since trading, marketing and advertising are central human activities, I believe we have a positive duty to examine their moral foundations.

Now, if we wish to live good and fruitful human lives, I believe we must recognise that all of us, as citizens of the universe are, or have the

possibility of being, small harmonies within that supreme harmony. One aspect of this idea of rebirth to which I referred earlier is contained in the notion of process and complementarity in polarity. I think it is broadly true to say of all non-Chinese cultures or civilisations that they live within a different worldview of mutually-contradictory qualities: the world of either/or, a philosophical and verbal world which is wholly dualistic: either Black or White; either Day or Night; either Yes or No; either Life or Death.

Here in China, as it seems to me, a subtler, a more illuminating and a more refreshing view of the universe is entertained. Summarising it as well as I can, in the very broadest terms, it is contained in the idea of complementarity in polarity. The idea, I believe, in Chinese terms, of Yin and Yang. Not Either/Or but Both/And.

I believe that universality is not only a desirable aim but a necessary aim for all of us, and not in the world of knowledge alone, but also in the world of feelings. We have to seek universality in our common human essence, we have to seek it in our interaction with our cosmic environment. We have, in our human environment, to set about producing a world in which we can all feel at home, and with which we can all feel at one, sharing in a common process for the common good. In other words, we are working to annihilate the distinctions between first, second and third worlds to bring about one world, in fact the world as divided by us into numbers has never existed; it is a mere verbal construct or construction. There is only one world into which we must translate the principles of mutuality, complementarity, universality, harmony and grace. This is what the truth is and this is what it demands from us. These distinctions – I mean the gross inequities between the richest and the poorest nations – are formidable in their size and sheer complexity. Yet I am confident that they can be vanquished if we approach them – and even more importantly, we approach each other – in the right spirit.

To my mind the practical spirit is, in the deepest sense the only right spirit. To harmonize business life with spiritual life; business practice with spiritual practice; business ideas with

ORY AND GRACE OF MANKIND"

spiritual ideas is not merely some cloudy aspiration of the sort so often rather vaguely and poetically expressed at conferences like this; on the contrary it makes hard pragmatic sense.

In my understanding of it, this moral complementarity is at the centre of Chinese thought and experience. In the life of business and trade, in the world of marketing and market-places, the encounter of man with man, facing each other with mutual respect and regard, and sharing a common pursuit of mutually beneficial exchange—we see mutuality of feeling and a commonality of satisfied need that forms a small perfected complementarity.

United, and considered as a whole, such jointly harmonious complementarities form larger and larger wholes as this simple principle is accepted, understood and, above all, practised through small actions, based on a shared morality. We shall gradually build up larger wholes, larger entities, in which we shall begin to see what I believe to be the universality of this moral law.

We have come here to discuss one particular aspect of our world which contains both a North and a South and it is an aspect that can bring both together in an infinitely more productive and fertile manner than we have seen in the past. This aspect is the art of marketing.

I should first like to put this term 'marketing' in its appropriate context which is that of Human Response. Marketing is one of the innumerable activities that occur in the perpetual encounter between man and man. It is, or should be a human and a humane activity.

It is at this stage that we need to encounter the point of contact between the various techniques and skills related to products, packaging, delivery and so forth, acquired by the salesman, and his intrinsic human qualities. Here we have to unite the managerial and the moral sides of man. If he is to be a man of quality he will seek to interweave his managerial abilities with his carefully-nurtured and wholly conscious moral awareness of what, in any circumstances, will constitute appropriate human response

into a fabric as gleamingly unified as the finest silk. He will, to put it concisely, have unified the visible and the invisible parts of his psyche. He will have unified the material with the moral.

This entails a daily renewal of our awareness that marketing is not about products alone.

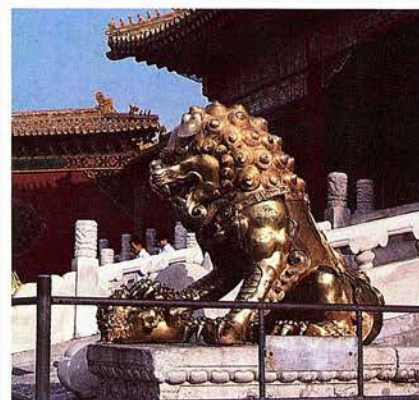
- it is about people and relationships
- it is about human needs and satisfactions
- it is about interaction and change
- it is about unity and good will
- it is about our human and moral response to our sense of, and instinct for, mutuality, universality, complementarity and harmony
- above all, marketing is about the glory and grace of mankind.

Marketing when it is practised well is holistic, treating suppliers and customers, products, services and markets, with integrity both in the sense of honesty and in the other sense of treating them as a whole.

I am a small man and BCC is a small bank but in its modest way it is an example of what I have been trying to say. Since its inception 15 years ago in 1972, and adhering to these precepts, we have achieved some success: starting with a meagre capital of \$2.5 million we have today a capital base of \$1.5 billion, assets of \$17.5 billion and a presence in 72 countries through 370 branches and offices. We are singularly proud of having a meaningful presence in China. We are truly very humble people and it is the transparency of this humility in our beings that makes it possible to see and feel the truths of life and existence which otherwise are not easy to capture.

We have come here not just for profit; we are here for love; we are here to serve; we are here to achieve harmony through the process of perfected mutuality and complementarity.

In conclusion, I would say that we are not here merely to sell our goods and secure our profits, but to offer something more, that calls for the continual engagement of our moral sensibility and sense of obligation to the wonderful people of this Great Country which has been for hundreds of years the heart of trading and marketing.



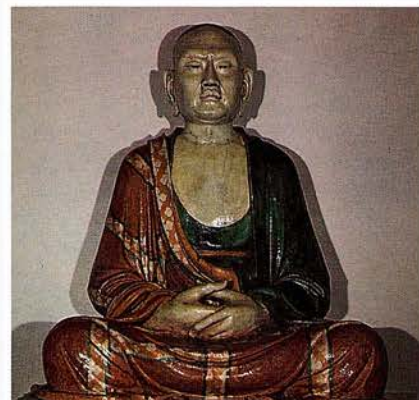
Forbidden City, Beijing



Superb example of chinese pottery



Twelfth century cliff carvings



Lohan – ceramic sculpture (tenth century)