

# Out-of-the-Box Consultancy: a Premium Enterprise for Cross-Asia Cultural Exchange

By Man-Jung Mignonne Chan



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## Japan SPOTLIGHT Introduction

Dr. Man-Jung Mignonne Chan is a distinguished long-time member of JEF's Asia-Pacific Forum (established in 2003). She has been an invaluable associate and contributor of a wide range of articles to *Japan SPOTLIGHT*. An eminent political economist and policy advisor in Taiwan, she recently added another qualification to her resume as an entrepreneur. Her story related below as the owner of a start-up company presents us with a different facet of Asian regional cooperation from the those on which discussions usually focus.

### Background of the Founder

I have a cross-country post-graduate education in Taiwan and the United States. My professional career over the past four decades includes:

- advanced academic research & teaching in international political economy & global business environment;
- senior advisor in the government at the top level and member of parliament; and
- top executive positions in regional organizations [including APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), ABAC (APEC Business Advisory Council), PECC (Pacific Economic Cooperation Council), and PBEC (Pacific Basin Economic Council)].

I set up the Out-of-the-Box Consultancy (OTBC) in Taipei in 2014, and then in Hong Kong in 2017.

### Corporate Goals & Value

OTBC aims to help shape inter-Asia cultural exchange in the context of geo-political and geo-economic changing dynamics. OTBC's core value is confidence-building and win-win-for-all prosperity. OTBC aspires:

- to put the core value into practice so as to transcend our limited confines;
- to initiate innovative ideas;
- to embrace optimal solutions; and
- to reach higher ground in human endeavors.

This is particularly of relevance when populism and protectionism are on the rise in the West. Asian values, embedded in civilizations at least 5,000 years old, encompass a rich cultural heritage which defines the relationship among Heaven, Earth, and the people (*Photo 1*).

### Essence for International Endeavors

The body-mind-soul component of humans determines our value systems, methods of problem-solving, and interpersonal as well international relations. The priority of looking into our inner core precedes the very self-assuming "best practice", which often derives from either a self-imposed altruistic mission or an arrogant self-defined one-and-only supremacy. Many plural and multilateral schemes are repeating the enthusiasm-then-disillusion on-and-off cycles of invention-then-dismantlement. Cross-cultural exchange could nurture cross-fertilization of value systems, and thereby consolidate our common grounds for problem-solving.

Photo 1: Author



Dr. Chan as a keynote speaker at the inauguration of the Deb-Hong Innovation Forum in China on Aug. 16, 2016

Photo 2: Author



Dr. Chan, former director-general of the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, and Pascal Lamy, former director-general of the World Trade Organization, at a Smart Cities Forum in Taipei on March 28, 2018

## Approaches to Problem-Solving

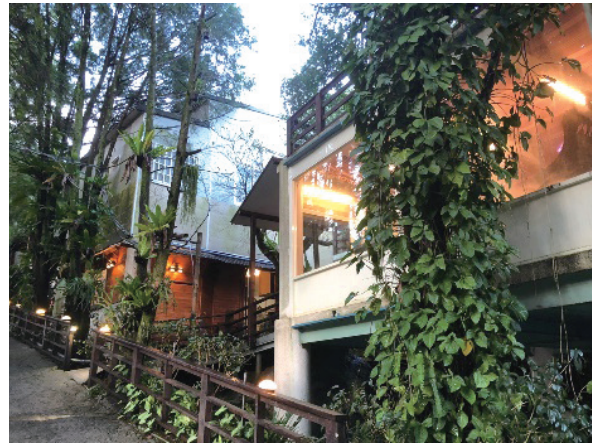
I believe that human civilization needs greater harmonization among its various systematic structures, that we need more integration between the human and the natural environments, and that we need to develop greater empathy between human hearts. The multilateral establishments of social, economic, political, and human security are embedded in consensus-building and conflict resolution.

Only if we transcend our endowed or man-made confines can we forge any long-lasting consensus on problem resolution. Based on this desire for mutual enlightenment, OTBC aspires to work on not merely technical skill-training but also on potential synergies for cross-cultural learning and self-discovery to generate the wisdom for problem-solving (Photo 2).

## Corporate Projects & Activities

Cultures encompass our daily life of food, clothing, shelter, transportation, education, and entertainment. In an age of scientific breakthroughs and digital economy, where science elevates living standards on the one hand but risks detrimental destruction to natural and human environments on the other, OTBC aspires to help find technical solutions in supply chain connectivity — such as food security for bodily nourishment, natural and environmentally friendly fabrics for clothing, smart cities for better living, for sound and

Photo 3: Author



Dalawan in Miao-Li, Taiwan: an "Edu-Retreat" haven for the body-mind-soul rejuvenation

efficient traffic management, for innovative e-learning and big-data cloud-computing, and healthy and rewarding self-discovery and mind-elevation. Mutual learning of the best in each civilization within Asia would contribute to ways to resolve bottlenecks and conflicts in the path of human and national development (Photo 3).

## In Search of Like-Minded Partnerships

OTBC has helped in various businesses, including organic agro-business, the health industry, smart city projects, the electronic and semi-conductor industries, airline business, negotiation training, and cultural innovation. OTBC is currently designing some body-mind-soul "Edu-Retreat" projects for top business and government decision makers, and for family reunions, etc., particularly in the harmonious ambience of Heaven-Earth-being and integrated approach to body-mind-soul. Only if we human beings are in the right state of body-mind-soul can our endeavors to make structural changes — personal, familial, national, international, and global — be sustained in our lifetime and decades ahead. OTBC welcomes like-minded partners to collaborate for the good cause of cultural exchange and human endeavors.

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Dr. Man-Jung Mignonne Chan is Chair & CEO of Out-of-the-Box Consultancy Pte. Ltd.