Behavioural Norms and Etiquette in Chinese Social Environment

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Behavior and Mode of Thinking - Party

West meet East
......Liu Yang
Behavior and Mode of Thinking - Anger

West meet East
......Liu Yang
Behavior and Mode of Thinking - Contacts

West meet East
......Liu Yang
Behavior and Mode of Thinking - Way of Life

West meet East
......Liu Yang
Behavior and Mode of Thinking - Elderly in Day-to-Day Life

West meet East
......Liu Yang
Behavior and Mode of Thinking - Handling of Problems

West meet East
......Liu Yang
Behavior and Mode of Thinking - Boss

West meet East
......Liu Yang
Behavior and Mode of Thinking - Opinion

West meet East
......Liu Yang
Behavior and Mode of Thinking - The child

West meet East
......Liu Yang
Behavior and Mode of Thinking - Three Meals a Day

West meet East

......Liu Yang
Behavior and Mode of Thinking - Travelling

West meet East
......Liu Yang
Cultural foundations- The Confucian concept of harmony

Five Basic Confucian Relationships

Respect and loyalty are shown in the relationships between

- Ruler - subject
- Husband - wife
- Father - son
- elder sibling and younger sibling
- elder friends and junior friends
Chinese Core Value - Respect for authority

- Filial Piety (xiao) - respecting the family, elders and parents
- Respecting hierarchy
- Obedience to parents and managers
- Self-control of strong feelings
Chinese Core Value - Humility

• Praise for others

• Blame of self for failure

• Reciprocity – the Golden Rule:

“Don’t do to others what you wouldn’t want others done to yourself.”
Societal Influences and Families

• Parents are held responsible for raising a child who will be a good student and a contributing member of society

• Societal standards regarding the ‘ideal child’ (academic focus, obedient, focuses on harmony in relationships). Parents put pressure on their children to succeed both academically and in the workplace
Chinese Perception and Thinking

• Western thinking aims at being objective, at separating facts and judgment.

• Chinese thinking sometimes expresses a need to evaluate, judge and take sides in any situation. Everyone is good or bad; behavior is correct or wrong. **There is no neutral position**

• Chinese communication styles
  – Less visible? Indirect?
  – Explicit? Contradiction?
The Chinese Self

• Individualism is strongly suppressed by one’s family or society
• The Chinese seldom consider themselves as individuals, but the father of his son, the son of his father, the brother of his siblings, the husband of his wife…
• Extended family: the whole village can be considered as related - an extended family
• Boss in a company: father of the employees
Guanxi / Inter-personal Relationship

- *Guanxi* - means ‘relationships’ or ‘connections’, is a network of elaborate relationships promoting trust and co-operation

- *Guanxi* is essential in a Chinese community, people are connected by *guanxi*. It might be far more important than Western friendship

- Distinguish people into two types: with *guanxi* (we, us), without *guanxi* (they, them). Using *guanxi*, people can relate themselves with unknown people / strangers

- Secure & trustworthy in dealing with people with relationship. In business, possessing the right *guanxi* is crucial for ensuring the minimization of difficulties and frustrations that are often encountered

- Relationship between two parties needs further development
Importance of *Renqing*

- *Renqing* - resources you can give others in social transaction, e.g. in wedding/urgent situation, A give cash/gift to B, then B owes A *Renqing* (Western concept of gratitude or personal favors)

- *Renqing* is a social relationship, exchange between two persons, which explains how the society is possible. Once being with *Renqing*, you become the in-group

- Receiving then returning is common sense in China. Traditionally, the Law and *Renqing* are of equal importance
Basic Rules for *Renqing*

- Universal social exchange: three words - to give, to receive, to repay
  - for the *Renqing* payer: not expecting repayment
  - for the *Renqing* receiver: should repay the favor

- Exchange: economical, social
  - Economic exchange: money, can easily be calculated
  - Social exchange: ‘*Renqing* balance sheet’
  - “Do not have *Renqing* debt” - In order to avoid *Renqing* debt, one should repay the other by even more *Renqing* in the future
  - Even after repaying a favor, a Chinese person remembers the event and keeps the relationship. Thus, *Renqing* is not expected to be repaid in the short-run, but is a long-term investment
Understanding the Important Concept of ‘Face’ (Miànzi)/ 1

- Face is a mark of personal pride and forms the basis of an individual’s reputation and social status, dignity, prestige, social standing, can be based on wealth, intelligence, skills, attractiveness, position, guanxi, etc.

- An important issue that should be considered throughout interactions with Chinese people is the concept of ‘face’
Understanding the Important Concept of ‘Face’ (Miànzi)/ 2

• “Saving face”: individual dignity is attained through appropriate behavior and appreciation from the community/group

• “Losing face”: cannot act according to the expected behavior and others look down on you. When one is embarrassed or humiliated in the eyes of others

• Face is given/judged by others/standing in the eyes of others, not by oneself. In Chinese culture ‘saving face’, ‘losing face’, ‘fighting for face’, and ‘giving face’ are vital for successful business.
Dos and Don’ts

• **Gift giving etiquette** (do not give clocks, umbrellas or green hats. Present gifts with both hands and ensure gifts for senior staff are perceived to have a higher value than gifts for junior staff)

• **Food culture** (Seating? The bill? Exotic food? Drunk? Left food on the plate? Vegetarian? Sensitive to food?)

• **Social Conversations** (small talk or big issues)

• **Language** (basic phrases- ice breaker)

• **Do not become upset if things are different** (tea during negotiations, time consuming dinners, talking while eating, answering mobiles during meetings, not opening gifts, addressing you by surname)
But I’m not Chinese

- when do I give the gifts?
- I can’t speak Chinese
- where should I sit?
- how do I use chopsticks?
- I don’t like eating rice
- Do I have to drink tea?

*Chinese do not expect you to be Chinese*
Survival Tips

• Bring a large supply of business cards

• Compliment people in front of their boss or colleagues – it’s an easy way to win points

• Do not try too hard to ‘go Chinese’ – the Chinese do not expect you to know all of their etiquette and they make allowances for foreigners. Be yourself

• Do learn a few words of Chinese – shows an interest in your host's language and culture and is a great icebreaker
  Hello - ni hao    Thank you - xie xie
  Cheers (toast) - ganbei
QUESTIONS?