



INVESTIGATOR'S REFERENCE MANUAL

AN AID TO UNDERSTANDING
CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE CULTURES

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Preface

This paper on Chinese and Vietnamese Cultures is a compilation of previously published and unpublished papers to meet the needs of Queensland Law Enforcement agencies. It has been produced after consultation with the Queensland Bureau of Ethnic Affairs and leading members of the two ethnic communities involved. It has drawn heavily on the work of M. Cordell Hart, in discussing Chinese culture and similarly Miss Nguyen Van Hoa in its discussion of Vietnamese Culture. It is acknowledged that comments made in this paper are generic in nature and can only provide a partial understanding of the complexity of cultural identity.

CHINESE AND VIETNAMESE CULTURES

Background

Australian law enforcement bodies have been investigating organised crime involving criminals of Asian descent for some years and it is coming under increasing scrutiny within Queensland with the operation of the Joint Organised Crime Task Force and the establishment of an Asian Squad within the Queensland Police Service.

It should be noted that the great majority of Asian people now living in Australia are law-abiding citizens. Academic research shows that the arrest rate and gaol occupancy rate for those of Asian ethnic extraction are below the community average.¹ It is only a very small minority of the Asian community who are criminally motivated. However given the evidence of crime organised along traditional family or gang lines, the concentration of organised crime groups, if left unchecked, could present a serious threat to Queensland Society.

Law enforcement authorities need to be prepared to meet this threat. This can most effectively be tackled if authorities are aware of:

- . how culture underlies behaviour;
- . how it is likely to dictate the behaviour of those involved in crime; and most importantly,
- . how cultural understanding will assist in communicating with the law abiding members of the Asian communities when investigating crime within the community.

Chinese and Vietnamese cultures are manifestly different to European cultures. Values are different and in some cases, common practices are very different. Often Australians of European extraction tend to treat a different cultural practice as a wrong practice. Too often others' actions are judged by one's own cultural values, creating a situation where neither party understands the other or even sees how their behaviour should in any way cause friction or conflict.

Successful law enforcement of those with different cultural backgrounds, requires not only an understanding of the relevant community's cultural heritage and values, but also an acceptance, regardless of what the individual law enforcement officer may feel about a community's values, that these values are considered fundamental tenets of living by that community. Additionally it is important for investigators when dealing with those of a

¹ Berthier, Rolade, Race and Crime in Queensland Proceedings, The Australian Sociological Association Conference, the University of Queensland, 12 - 16 Dec 1990.

different culture to be sufficiently sensitive to these cultures, through competency skills in cross-cultural awareness, so that they find it easier to do their job. To act using traditional methods, no matter how appropriate to the situation, may maintain personal self esteem, but will often fail to achieve the best results.

This paper deals with facets of Chinese and Vietnamese cultures. The paper is not all encompassing and presents only some values which might be considered traditional. The contents of the paper are as accurate as they can be at the time of publication however it must be emphasised that the situation may change according to the individual you are dealing with. Culture is extremely complex and ethnicity is only one factor in shaping the values and assumptions of individuals. It is not possible to provide a definitive guide to anybody's cultural identity. Law enforcement officers should be aware however that cultural differences mean that different communication strategies may need to be employed as they undertake their tasks. The information provided in this paper should be considered no more than an introductory guide to understanding some of the cultural influences which may be a factor in Chinese and Vietnamese community life.

Law enforcement officers should be aware that this paper will not provide them with cross-cultural communication skills. Such skills depend on developing effective strategies that can overcome barriers to cross-cultural communication, such as language, non-verbals, judgement, stereotyping, and so on.

The paper outlines some cultural aspects of Chinese and Vietnamese community life and may provide some assistance in understanding cultural practices and behaviours in those communities. It is an "*aide memoire*" to assist in the investigation and prevention of crimes in those communities.

For ease of reference, the paper has been divided into three parts:

- . **Part 1** Overview of Chinese Culture and Community Life.
- . **Part 2** Overview of Vietnamese Culture and Community Life.
- . **Part 3** Aide Memoire on Chinese and Vietnamese culture and names.

PART 1

CHINESE COMMUNITY GROUPS

Chinese Immigration and Demography

Chinese immigration to Australia commenced with the gold rushes of the 1850s. By 1861 there were over 40,000 ethnic Chinese in Australia, almost entirely male.² Although some returned to China most remained after the initial rush. In the mid 19th century, Queensland attracted about a third of all Chinese in the country. However many of these migrated to other states as the gold fields in Queensland diminished. The second major arrival of Chinese occurred in 1947 after the establishment of communist rule in China. These arrivals tended to settle in areas where second and third generation Chinese from the gold rush days had settled. The next significant migration of Chinese did not occur until after the abolition of the White Australia policy in 1973.

Queensland has only 5,946 Chinese born persons living in the state. The 1986 census data shows that 9,000 persons in Queensland speak a Chinese dialect at home, and 13,200 claim to have Chinese ancestry. The Chinese population rate in Queensland accounts for only half the national average, representing about 0.4% of Queensland's population in comparison with a national average of about 0.9%. Three quarters of those of Chinese extraction live in Brisbane.³ This is spread throughout Brisbane, with concentrations in West End, St. Lucia, New Farm/Fortitude Valley, Mansfield, MacGregor, Sunnybank and Sunnybank Hills. Of those Chinese speaking persons, only approximately 2,300 live outside metropolitan Brisbane. Of these, a third live on the Gold and Sunshine coasts with the majority of the others living in the coastal provincial cities - Townsville (350), Cairns (300), Rockhampton (85) and Toowoomba (120).⁴

The central hub for members of the Chinese community in Brisbane is China Town in Fortitude Valley and its development has been relatively slow. The first significant development started in the early 1980s with the construction of the China Town mall, the place most visited by members of the Chinese community. They go there to enjoy authentic Chinese food, buy groceries, mix socially and to seek help from Chinese professionals. Since that time China Town has continued to expand and now covers most of western Fortitude Valley. China Town also attracts Chinese/Asian unskilled workers and students who fill the lower strata of employment positions. These workers tend to seek their entertainment within China Town, using legitimate and illegal pursuits, such as gambling, and drug taking. For the older immigrant China Town provides venues for cultural centres and professional associations.

² Francis, R.D., *Migrant Crime in Australia*, University of Queensland Press, 1981.

³ Hugo, Grahame, *Atlas of Australian People*, AGPS, Canberra (1989).

⁴ ibid.

The second area of Chinese community group concentration is the Sunnybank area. This is mainly composed of Taiwanese and Hong Kong immigrants. Market Square in Sunnybank has a reputation for being a second, although smaller, China Town. This area has restaurants, grocery stores and video shops. Sunnybank also houses the Taiwan Friendship Association.

Personal Relationships

Both traditional and modern Chinese are accustomed to acting as they perceive their role requires. Chinese will feel ill at ease if you behave so they cannot conduct themselves in their accustomed role. If you wish to achieve results with those of Chinese descent you will need to behave in a way consistent with their perception of appropriate behaviour. With those who you may think will consider themselves superior, you should appear to be respectful. With those who may consider themselves subordinate, you should be thoughtful, considerate, and kind. A great difference between Chinese and Western social psychologies, is the Chinese use of personal relationships (kuan-hsi). Compared to Australians, Chinese make a sharp distinction between their behaviour towards strangers and their behaviour towards acquaintances. Chinese tend to distrust strangers and trust associates to a much greater degree than do others. In some cases Chinese dislike conducting business with strangers. They much prefer to conduct their affairs within a network of persons with whom they have established "kuan-hsi", an understanding of mutual support and relative rank.

The purpose of "kuan-hsi" is not only friendship, but the exchange of goods and services. Some Anglo-Australians are shocked to find that their Chinese friend may have no real affection for them. The Anglo-Australian, because of his cultural training not to rely on others, will make few demands of his Chinese friend, thus leading to an impossible situation where the Chinese person is denied an opportunity to fulfil his perceived obligations to the Anglo-Australian. Another essential point about "kuan-hsi", or what Westerners commonly think of as Chinese concern for "face", is Chinese concern for their rank or position in the particular "kuan-hsi." To lose "face" is to lose position, and this does not mean simply to move down a notch in the hierarchy. It means to lose membership in the group.

Family Values

Generally one should refrain from inquiring about the details of Chinese family life. Traditionally it has been out of place to compliment a woman on her beauty or charm or to ask a Chinese husband about his wife's welfare. It has always been quite proper however to compliment a Chinese woman on her accomplishment, the good behaviour of her children, her tidiness, her gracefulness, or her learning. Chinese concern for the family is paramount.

Chinese Perceptions of Westerners

Most people hold preconceived stereotypes of other races and the traditional Chinese are no exception. Some commonly held Chinese views of Westerners are detailed below,

though probably no single Chinese holds all these views. Members of the Chinese community who have grown up in Australia and who are more familiar with Anglo-Australian culture may not hold such strong views, but by being aware of these stereotypes, you may watch for and guard against them.

- . Westerners are overbearing;
- . They are abrupt in speech and prone to violence;
- . They may explode unexpectedly, so be careful of them;
- . Westerners' hairy bodies are disgusting, and they smell strongly;
- . Western women are too big and too domineering;
- . It is difficult to tell from their features what Westerners are thinking;
- . Australians always reveal more about themselves than anyone cares to know;
- . Many Westerners look alike;
- . Westerners don't know about filial piety and don't care for their parents.

Even among themselves, some Chinese are bigoted. While most Chinese nationals are people of the Han race, there are many Manchus, Mongols and Tibetans, and their differences provide the basis for such bigotry. Even regionally, they have affiliations and targets of scorn. The southerners, northerners, and Shanghainese all look down on each other. Almost all agree to dislike the Shanghainese for being so cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and commercially energetic. The lesson to be drawn from this characteristic is that one should not generalise about or stereotype the Chinese community, because as with any other community there are differences within it.

Socialising

Always serve a beverage to a Chinese visitor immediately after you have seated him in your home or office. If you fail to do so, he may feel unwelcome or that you are purposely slighting him. Do not ask your guest whether he wants something to drink or what he wants to drink; simply serve him something. Among Chinese it is customary to serve tea, but coffee or soft drinks are equally acceptable. Do not serve alcoholic beverages as welcoming drinks unless it is specifically asked for by the visitor. When a Chinese host serves you a beverage during a call, you should not refuse it.

When dining, a Chinese host may use his own chopsticks to place some choice morsel on your plate. If this occurs, the host is honouring you both in using his own chopsticks and in selecting a choice morsel for you. You would be extremely rude not to eat the proffered morsel. A Chinese dinner is no place for exaggerated concerns about hygiene. Everyone uses his own chopsticks to pluck food from common bowls unless the restaurant has

provided common spoons. Members of the Chinese community follow the same practice in their homes.

If a Chinese person invites you to a restaurant or in his home for a meal saying he will be serving home-style cooking, don't you believe it. He will probably give a banquet unless you have become very close friends.

Chinese may ask questions that may strike you as rude or personally invasive, such as your age or how much something of yours costs. The range of these questions can be wide and can catch you off guard. Unless you think the Chinese is intentionally being rude, you should guard against what may be a natural reaction to respond in kind. Just try to answer the question or deflect it as best you can.

Business Dealings

In dealing with members of the Chinese community, don't get right down to business after the barest exchange of pleasantries. Don't lay all your cards on the table in an effort at plain speaking. Chinese dealing usually begins with a social invitation to a restaurant meal where the intended business may never be discussed. Perhaps a second invitation may be necessary. Matters usually unfold little by little with neither party feeling any need to bare all. Chinese are unlikely to accept such displays at their face value but may think they are naive attempts to disarm them. Proceed slowly and during any meal where you plan to broach a serious matter, do so only after commencing the meal.

While it is true that members of the Chinese community do not respond with a blunt "No" when not wishing to comply with a request, they do not, contrary to popular opinion, say "Yes" even if they mean "No." A Chinese "No" may take an elaborate form, such as an alternate suggestion and to other Chinese there is nothing devious about it. You will probably know when a Chinese person does not wish to pursue a particular line of discussion. If your comments produce only a smile and silence, he does not wish to continue the matter, and if he comes up with some totally "off the wall" comment, you should know that he is not merely uninterested, but may be offended by the topic.

Sharing costs is decidedly un-Chinese. If you don't intend to pay the whole bill for drinks or a meal, don't suggest dining with a Chinese person. In Chinese practice, people take turns inviting each other; in the end everyone usually gets back as much as he has given. This custom may enable you to parlay one meeting with a Chinese person into two, no matter who pays the bill the first time. If you pay it, your contact will owe you a shout; if he pays it, you will owe him one. Either of you may, however, substitute a gift later in payment of your social obligation. If you don't want a member of the Chinese community to consider you a shabby person, don't settle dinner accounts over the restaurant table when you are dining with other Australians. Pay the bill at the restaurant and settle with the others later.

Members of the Chinese community sometimes form associations, "Chit Funds", which are used by members to borrow funds against promised deposits. In the example given below are 10 people (A to J) who, over a period of 10 months, promise to contribute \$1,000 per

month to the fund, thus making \$10,000 available for lending. At a meeting each month the 10 members may make a tender for the available finances. The highest bid wins. In the table below, person A was the successful bidder in the first month with a tender of \$1,100. (This is shown in the shaded box.) The extra \$100 is divided among the remaining nine persons and deducted from their total. Note that person A must continue to make the payment of \$1,100 for the remainder of the time. In month Two, person B was the successful bidder with a bid of \$1,095. The extra \$95 is then split up among the remaining eight persons and deducted from their contributions. This system continues until the final month when person J may be required to contribute \$1 of his/her original \$1,000 in order to collect the money. The figures at the bottom of the table show the total contributions which were made by all persons involved. The system is called a "Chit Fund" because each member is issued with a Chit Book which they are required to take to the meetings and in which the details of the accounts are entered. With the increasing availability of financial institutions in Australia, this system is losing its popularity.

Month	Persons									
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	1100	988.8	988.8	988.8	988.8	988.8	988.8	988.8	988.8	988.8
2	1100	1095	975.6	975.6	975.6	975.6	975.6	975.6	975.6	975.6
3	1100	1095	1100	957.8	957.8	957.8	957.8	957.8	957.8	957.8
4	1100	1095	1100	1110	932.5	932.5	932.5	932.5	932.5	932.5
5	1100	1095	1100	1110	1010	917	917	917	917	917
6	1100	1095	1100	1110	1010	1015	892.5	892.5	892.5	892.5
7	1100	1095	1100	1110	1010	1015	1015	851.6	851.6	851.6
8	1100	1095	1100	1110	1010	1015	1015	1005	775	775
9	1100	1095	1100	1110	1010	1015	1015	1005	1000	550
10	1100	1095	1100	1110	1010	1015	1015	1005	1000	1
Total	11000	10843	10766	10692	9914	9846	9724	9530	9290	7841

Mannerisms to Avoid

- Don't touch any Chinese community members on the shoulders while they are gambling as it is believed to bring bad luck.
- Winking at women during formal occasions is considered impolite.

Don't touch or back slap a member of the Chinese community, and don't poke your finger at or into Chinese to make a point as you talk. These restrictions apply even in horseplay or jest.

Members of the Chinese community consider it offensive and demeaning to be summoned with an upraised wagging index finger. If you know a Chinese person well enough to summon him with a gesture, do it the Chinese way: hold your hand outward, palm down and move your fingers downward and back.

Giving and Receiving Gifts

Giving and receiving gifts is an integral part of Chinese society. It is potentially a difficult area for law enforcement authorities, as the giving or receiving of gifts is an area fraught with allegations of impropriety. The following information provided on gift giving is to be used to understand the common practices of Chinese society and is not to be construed as an indication that gift giving or taking is to be used in dealing with members of the Chinese community. The question of gift giving and receiving will need to be determined in the context of any operation and be guided by existing procedures.

One of the common misunderstandings of Westerners when giving gifts to Chinese people, is to try and play down the significance of the gift. Often the gift may be given with the words, "It's more than I can use" or "It would otherwise be just wasted". This represents a very refined form of Western social etiquette, that serves not only to convey a gift but to also make unnecessary any reciprocation or burdensome response by the recipient. However, the Chinese do not see it this way. To them, if the gift does not constitute a sacrifice, then it can't be a significant gift. So don't say how expensive or significant the item or service is, but don't talk it down either.

Never present a clock to a member of the Chinese community as a gift as the term "Presenting a clock as a gift" in both Mandarin and Cantonese sounds identical to "attending a funeral". If a Chinese person gives you a gift, do not open it in his presence unless he suggests that you should. Simply thank the donor appropriately and put the gift aside until you are alone. Do not be offended if a Chinese man has one of his children or an assistant takes the gift you have brought away. He will open it after you have gone.

Chinese have a long tradition of giving money, for such events as birthdays, weddings, funerals, or for the Chinese Lunar New Year. In some places in China it was customary to give a sum in round figures, eg 20 dollars rather than 27 dollars. Additionally, the first digit of the sum should be an even number, and the total sum should be fully divisible by two. Thus, one might give 20 dollars but not 30 dollars, or 40 dollars but not 45 dollars, etc. Furthermore, one always gives two pieces of currency rather than one, to tender "double good luck." If you should decide to give money, first try to find out the amount - that would be seemly; to give too little would make you look cheap; too much might make you look foolish or pretentious. When giving money, one should always present crisp, new bills, not old ones. Always place the money in an envelope; never simply hand it to the recipient.

Envelopes should be appropriately coloured for the occasion. Red, a happy colour, is used for wedding, birthday, and Lunar New Year envelopes. White, the Chinese colour of death and mourning, is the colour for funeral envelopes. Don't just pick up one of your ordinary white envelopes and use it to present money to a member of the Chinese community on a happy occasion. That would definitely be considered offensive. If you, as a non-Chinese person, know enough to give money on certain occasions, you will earn definite credit in the eyes of Chinese, but you will also be expected to know how to give it properly. When giving a gift it should be offered with two hands and received with two hands, with a slight bow of the head. This also applies to the giving and taking of business cards.

Language

More than in most cultures, Chinese language is a rich portion of that country's heritage. It is also an area of great difference between oriental and western cultures. The written form of Chinese is not directly related to the spoken form, so several dialects have evolved. Thus, while all Chinese write their language the same way, and read with the same understanding, they pronounce the same characters in totally different ways. There are approximately seven major dialects of spoken Chinese, all of which are mutually unintelligible. To alleviate the problem, both the Communist and Nationalist governments long ago endorsed a dialect of North China ("Mandarin") as the national language. Foreigners who cannot read Chinese, will have difficulty in working with Chinese names. The surname precedes the given name and the language allows many names written with unique characters to sound and appear in the translated form as identical. As a result a system known as Chinese Commercial Code was developed. (This will be explained further in Part 3.) While Mandarin is a common dialect among members of the Chinese community in Australia, the Cantonese dialect is common to many from Hong Kong, Macau and Canton and the Hokkien dialect is common to the Chinese from Taiwan and Malaysia.

Chinese Attitude Towards Authority

A relic of China's long enduring feudal society in which the emperor ruled by divine right is the overwhelming respect for authority generally shown by Chinese. Chinese grow up aware that rank has its privilege, but they also learn very early that one should respect authority, and avoid it. The attitude towards authority is thus likely to incline a Chinese person to be fearful and evasive when questioned by a government representative of any kind. To achieve results, investigators should gain the confidence of a person of Chinese ancestry, and that may take time and effort. The other typical Chinese response to investigators is to say what they think the investigator wants to know or what they think may help the person under scrutiny.

Shame (and how it relates to "face") is much more important to members of the Chinese community than to Anglo-Australians. Among Chinese, what others think is always more important than what one thinks of one's self. Among Chinese and other Orientals, a person enjoys a particular status to the extent that they fulfil the role that their status requires. Failure to meet others' expectations results in a loss of status ("face"). Members

of the Chinese community therefore may be more prone to lie. This aspect of the Chinese mind set is particularly important to law enforcement officials. Remember, in a Chinese culture, what one appears to be is always more important than what one actually knows one's self to be.

The important thing for law enforcement officials is that when you deal with members of the Chinese community, particularly informants, make it clear from the beginning, that you are not going to hold them to their promises, come hell or high water. If you do, and the informant can't give you what he thinks you want, he will simply lie to you to avoid shame. It is better to tell him up front that you know that "the best laid plans often go astray" or something similar. That gives him an honest out. It is also helpful in dealing with informants from the Chinese community to tell them that they need not name involved family members or their "dai lo," their mentor, (often in crime). That makes it easier for them to provide information on related criminal activity without specifically breaking the bonds of personal trust and obligation they feel to those persons.⁵

Police officers, whether dealing with witnesses or suspects, should take care to be polite and, above all, to display self-control. Chinese movies always depict inept and/or corrupt police officials as skitterish in their movements and profane in their language. Although it is important to have the force needed to control the situation, especially when dealing with dangerous persons, the quietly competent police officer is likely to receive far more cooperation and information, even from suspects, than the one who appears aggressive and agitated. "Carry a big stick, but speak softly."

⁵ Cordell Hart, M, "Chinese", Proceedings of the 14th International Asian Organised Crime Conference, Calgary, Alberta, Canada 12 - 17 July 1992

PART 2

VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY GROUPS

Immigration and Demography

Australia has a ethnic Vietnamese population of approximately 122,000. Of these, 8,582 live in Queensland with 92% of this population living in Brisbane. Within Brisbane the community is concentrated in the police districts of Oxley and West End. 14% of the Vietnamese community are second generation (Australian born) . The unemployment rate of the Vietnamese community is 35%, with a higher than average labour force participation rate of 70%. 53% of the community claim to speak english very well or well, 39% claim to speak english not well and only 6% not at all. Of interest is that about 25% of the Vietnamese community in Queensland claim Chinese ancestry and approximately 80% speak Vietnamese at home while 20% speak a Chinese language.⁶

Vietnamese Culture and Family Values

Vietnamese culture is based on agriculture and it is sometimes called "the rice culture". The land, the rice, fields, the seasons of planting and harvesting and the technology used for thousands of years are all important factors forming Vietnamese culture. Other spiritual factors have also greatly contributed in shaping Vietnamese culture. These are a combination of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, the worship of ancestors and other beliefs. There are thousands of proverbs, folklore, sayings and legends which are also important elements of Vietnamese culture.⁷

Religion

Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism are the main traditional religions in Vietnam. About 90% of population practise ancestral worship and a loose form of Buddhism. They are mutually receptive in their common practice. Besides these, Animism is also a traditional belief. In recent times Christianity and other two Vietnamese based religions, Caodaism and Hoahaoism, are strongly developing in Vietnam. In Australia, members of the Vietnamese community practise Buddhism, Confucianism, ancestral worship, Christianity, Caodaism and Hoahaoism.

According to Buddhism, life is a vast sea of suffering. Suffering is caused by human desires. In order to obtain happiness human beings should overcome their desires. Respecting other creature's life, doing good things, avoiding bad things and so on, are all

⁶ Bureau of Immigration Research, Statistics Section, Community Profiles.

⁷ Nguyen Van Hoa, Vietnamese Culture and Family Values, Seminar on Vietnamese Culture and Resettlement Issues, Thursday 25 February 1993

elements that are strived for. The long term aim is to obtain permanent happiness in the after life in Nirvana, where they are free from the vicious circle of life and death. Buddhists believe in the law of causality - that one's present life is predetermined by his good or bad deeds in his previous life. The circle of life and rebirth for an individual will only cease when he has finally been able to get rid of his earthly desires and achieve the state of spiritual liberation.

Confucianism teaches Vietnamese to follow great examples of the past. It instituted the worship of ancestors. People who practise ancestral worship believe that the spirit of the dead still remain and the relatives can have dialogue with them. Ancestral worship is a way to maintain the extended family. Confucianism is also a doctrine of social hierarchies. It teaches people to follow three sets of social interaction, called Tam Cuong. They are the interactions between ruler and subject, father and son, and between husband and wife. It also sets a moral code for the virtuous persons to follow five essential virtues, called Ngu Thuong: humanity, equity, urbanity, understanding and honesty. These become the rules to judge the value of a person or a family.

The three sets of social interaction teaches the employee to respect and follow the order of the employer, the child to obey the parent, especially the father and the wife to obey the husband. It also describes a model wife, who should possess four essential virtues; (Cong-Dung-Ngon-Hanh) skill with the hands, a pleasant appearance, prudence in speech and exemplary conduct. Confucianism expects a model man to follow four steps to moral perfection: the improvement of oneself, the management of the family, the government of the country and finally, the pacification of the world.

Although not generally practised in Australia, Taoism teaches Vietnamese that life is based on two opposite elements: negative (Yin) and positive (Yang). This represents the constant duality of nature. Man should keep the balance between Yin and Yang such as rest and motion, material and spiritual etc. Man should not disturb nature but live in harmony with it and with fellow human beings.

A Vietnamese, whether a Buddhist, Taoist, Confucianist or even a Christian, subscribes to a combination of some of all these beliefs and they generally dictate his or her behaviour.

Society

Social harmony and hierarchical relations play an essential role in Vietnamese culture. Concession is an important way to obtain harmony. Respect for the elderly and harmony with peers are common social expectations. Spiritualism is dominant in the society. To show their respect, members of the Vietnamese community will bow their heads in front of a superior or elderly person in their greeting. They also use both hands when shaking hands or passing something to a superior or an elderly person. Mutual respect between people is considered more essential than any service or gift that is provided. Vietnamese community members possess an inwardness and an ability to keep their true feelings hidden. One must never hurry to explain oneself. Straightforwardness in some occasions may be considered as impolite, lacking of courtesy or intelligence. Vietnamese are smiling people and well known for their frequent and all purpose smile. The smile can be used to

express or cover up feelings, emotion, truth, ignorance, response, confusion, disappointment, pride, fear or wrong doing; it may however mean nothing. Time is flexible in social contacts or social activities except for special arrangements.

Family Values

The family is the basis of the society, not the individual. In Vietnam, up to three to four generations can be living in the same accommodation: great grandparents, grandparents, parents/single uncles, single aunts, children and grandchildren. Legally husband and wife have the same rights, but traditionally within the family, the wife deals with all household matters. The husband deals with the outside world and is a bread winner as well as head of the family. This has changed with the move of people to the city or overseas and through contact with other cultures. Elderly parents are supported and live with married or unmarried children until they die. They do not go to live in a nursing home. Traditionally, parents are proud of having a large family. Filial devotion, brotherly love and conjugal fidelity are highly valued. Physical beauty and grace are important for both men and women but virtue is most highly valued and praised. Children are supposed to live with their parents until they marry. By tradition (not by law) a marriage should be approved by the parents of both sides. This is applied to persons of all ages. First cousins and their children cannot marry each other for up to 3 generations. Legally, women keep their own maiden name after marriage. Married women, however, use their husband's full name or first name in social contacts. For example, if a husband's name is: NGUYEN Van Minh, and the wife's name was: LE Thi Ngo. The wife's formal name could be: Mrs Nguyen Van Minh or Mrs Minh. Divorce is legal in Vietnam, but it is not common. Family conflict is often handled by both sides of the family.

Names are written with the family name first, middle name and then the first name. eg Nguyen (Family Name) Van (Middle Name) Minh (Male) (First Name). The family name is placed first as an emphasis on the roots of a person, however, the given name or first name is used in social greeting.

Business and Financial Practices

Some Vietnamese community members avoid using banks because in Vietnam, banks have occasionally gone bankrupt. The purchase of gold and diamonds is a more traditional way of keeping wealth. These items are sometimes exchanged for cash where cash is required, i.e. for a wedding. Members of the Vietnamese community use cash in preference to cheques because cheques are not commonly used in Vietnam.

Borrowing money from relatives and friends is common amongst members of the Vietnamese community. The amount borrowed can range from a few dollars to many thousands. Debts are often agreed upon without written agreements. Sometimes oral agreements are made in front of a friend who acts as a witness to the transaction. The non-repayment of loans results in a 'loss of face' to the borrower.

The Vietnamese 'Hui' (Hoi) loan club is a facility often used by members of the Vietnamese community to borrow money. It is similar in concept to the Chinese "Chit

Fund" or Money Loan Association. Loans are not necessarily used for business but may also be used for the purchase of a home or a car. The way the loan club operates is that a secretary or organiser arranges for a number of interested parties (around 20 persons or numbers that equate to three or six monthly multiples), usually friends and relatives, to agree to contribute monthly instalments into the club for the duration of the club's life. For example, if a '500 Club' was established amongst 20 people, each person would theoretically be required to contribute \$500 each month for 20 months being the life of the loan club. This means theoretically that each month \$10,000 is available to one person to borrow. What happens in reality is that at the beginning of the first month, members bid for the right to be the first person to receive the first loan. The amount of money bid is generally commensurate with how anxious a member is to have first use of the loan. Say the successful bid was \$50. This means that the remaining 19 members would be required to contribute \$450 ($\$500 - 50 = \450) each. Thus the first successful bidder would receive \$8,550 and is then considered dead (chet). This bidder will be required to contribute \$500 for the next 19 months. The remaining 19 persons are regarded as alive (song) are thus eligible to bid each month until such time as they make a successful bid. This action continues until there are no more "live" (song) bidders. Obviously the smaller the number of bidders left, the larger the sum of the loan will be. Consequently those who do not need to borrow money and can afford to wait to be the last bidder, have the advantage of receiving the full amount of the loan and making reduced monthly repayments due to earlier bidders paying a premium for being the first to receive the loan.

Common Practices

Listed below are some common practices of members of the Vietnamese community.

- . In Vietnam, counselling is only provided from within the extended family or from religious leaders, not from the welfare system. Vietnamese community members don't feel comfortable revealing family problems to outside people, particularly to strangers.
- . While talking, Vietnamese should not look steadily at respected people's eyes.
- . Women do not shake hands with each other or with men. Shaking hands has become more acceptable in Australia.
- . Kissing in public is not acceptable.
- . Persons of the same sex may hold hands or put the hand around the shoulders. They can sleep in the same bed, particularly with family members and this is not considered as a homosexual practice or incest.
- . Incest is strongly condemned by Vietnamese society.
- . Ladies should not smoke in the public, particularly young ladies.

Members of the Vietnamese community do not like their heads being touched by another person. Only elderly people can make light touch on the back of the head of young children to show their love or to comfort them.

Calling with a finger up is used only toward animals or an inferior. Between the two equal people it is understood as a provocation. Vietnamese community members use the whole hand with fingers facing down to call a person.

Members of the Vietnamese community see the future of their children as more important than their present. They give high value to the schooling of their children.

Vietnamese children are taught to think very carefully before speaking. If they are not sure they would say the right thing or speak correctly, they remain quiet and listen, particularly to elders.

Vietnamese parents expect their children to learn morals before gaining academic achievement.

Neighbours often inform parents of children who misbehave and also can verbally teach them not to do the wrong thing.

Coin rubbing is used commonly to treat common cold or fever. It will sometimes cause bruising to the skin and is not considered as physical abuse, but a physical treatment to the illness.

In Vietnam corporal punishment is a common discipline in educating children of primary level. Today however, most Vietnamese community members do not believe in corporal punishment, although some still subscribe to its use.

PART 3
AIDE MEMOIRE

Asian Names

Asian naming conventions and practices are different than most European practices. Failure to understand and to implement this different system will cause unnecessary confusion.

Chinese Names

The Chinese record their names the same way as the Vietnamese, ie. Family name followed by the generation name and finally the given name.

Family Name	Generation Name	Given Name
WONG	Kwok	Keung

Choa King Hun's brother would then be called:

WONG	Kwok	Hong
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When woman marry they may either retain their own family name, assume their husbands family name, or incorporate their husband's family name in a new hyphenated family name. ie.

CHOA	Yut	Hsin (female)
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marries:

WONG	Kwok	Keung
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She could be known as:

CHOA Yut Hsin, WONG Yut Hsin, or WONG-CHOA Yut Hsin.

Chinese Commercial Code

Chinese characters are romanised when written in the English language. Romanised Chinese name components with one spelling in English, can be written in numerous ways when using Chinese characters. This can lead to a complete name (Family, generation, and given name) when written one way in English having thousands of possible combinations if written in Chinese characters. To overcome this problem, a system known as Chinese Commercial Code was developed to give individual identification to each name. In this system the original Chinese characters for the name have been given a numeric code of four digits for each component of the name: ie.

WONG	Kwok	Keung		(Cantonese)
HUANG	Kuo	Ch'iang		(Mandarin)
7806	0948	1730	(7806 0948 1730)	(Chinese Commercial Code)

Recording Chinese Names

The whole question of recording Chinese names is fraught with confusion if not done accurately. It is therefore best when dealing with those of Chinese origin to carefully proceed through a deliberate process of recording the name. This could involve a number of steps such as :

- . Ask the person to write their name in the order, Family name, generation name and given name.
- . Ensure that the person has not transposed their family and given name to conform to Australian convention.
- . Ask them to write the name in Chinese symbols and Chinese commercial code, as well as in romanised English.
- . Question the person if the name is clearly in an Anglicised form, ie. Jonny Wong and get them to give their name in the Chinese form as well.

Vietnamese Names

The word surname has no meaning to Vietnamese. The terms to be used are: **family name** and **given names**. There are relatively few family names in Vietnam, hence people are referred to by their given names.

A Vietnamese Name is written in the following order:

Family Name	Middle Name	First name
Truong	Van	Cao

Woman are named in the same way, but after marrying Truong Van Cao, she could be called in some different forms. For example if her maiden name was:

Family Name	Middle Name	First Name
Dinh	Thi	Lien

After marrying she could be addressed as: Miss Lien or Mrs Lien depending on her age. If her husband is important, she could also be addressed using her husband's given name ie. Madam Cao. To complicate the matter further, as a result of Western influences, many members of the Vietnamese community are anglicising their name, by using their family name and adopting a Western first name. ie. Dinh Thi Lien may call herself Jenny Dinh, if she were unmarried. It is therefore essential that when asking for names, specifically ask for; Family, middle and first names.

Some common family, given and middle names are listed below:

Family Names (English pronunciation in brackets)

Bui (Bwee)	Duong (Doong)	Ha (Har)	Luong (Lwong)
Buu (Boo)	Dao (Dow)	Hoang (Hwang)	Luu (Loo)
Cao (Kow)	Dang (Dang)	Ho (Ho)	Mac (Mac)
Chu (Choo)	Dinh (Ding)	Huynh (Hwin)	Mai (May)
Cung (Koong)	Do (Do-oh)	Le (Lay)	Nghiem (Nyem)
Quach (Quoch)	Tang (Toong)	Than (Tan)	Trinh (Trin)
Ta (Tar)	Thai (Tie)	Tran (Tran)	Truong (Trong)
Nguyen (Nwyn)	Pham (Fam)	Phan (Fan)	Phung (Fun)
Ngo (No)	Phuc (Fook)	Vo (Vor)	Vu (Voo)

First Names

Anh	Hai	Lien	Ngoc	Thuy	Xuan
Bich	Hoang	Lieu	Phuong	To	Yen
Binh	Nam	Linh	Phuc	Trang	
Cao	Huu	Loc	Quang	Trieu	
Dap	Hung	Ly	Tam	Trong	
Diep	Khanh	Minh	Thanh	Tuan	
Dung	Kim	Ninh	Thien	Van	

Middle Names

Kim	Tan (Male)	Thanh	Thi (Female)	Van (Male)
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DOs and DONTs

DOs

Be polite and if necessary respectful
Be prepared to invest time to cultivate cooperation
Be prepared to make small talk to gain the confidence and cooperation of the community before making your enquiries. <i>Beat around the bush.</i>
Accept time may be flexible when making appointments
Speak in the first instance to the man of the house
Refer to persons by their given or complete name
Be known in the community
Respect Asian cultural practices
Learn a couple of courtesy terms
Check to see whether you should remove your shoes when going into a house.
Be thorough in recording the correct names

DON'Ts

Be impatient
Get angry
Don't believe a person is avoiding you if they do not look you in the eye, they are probably only being respectful
Shake hands with women
Refer to persons by their Family name or use the term surname
Touch persons of either sex particularly on the head
Owe favours
Criticise a cultural practice
Invade the personal space of another
Gesture for someone to come to you. If you do, do it in the Asian manner by using an up raised palm or finger

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