

# What's in the Heart and Mind of a Dragon?

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# OBJECTIVES



RAISE  
AWARENESS



FACILITATE  
DISCUSSION

INCREASE  
KNOWLEDGE  
BASE



# RATIONALE

- Fast-changing ethnic demographics in NZ
- Heavier reliance on Qualitative Information

*“Gathering of information and data through the qualitative means demands much cultural sensitivity as well as creativity” (Lau, 2014).*

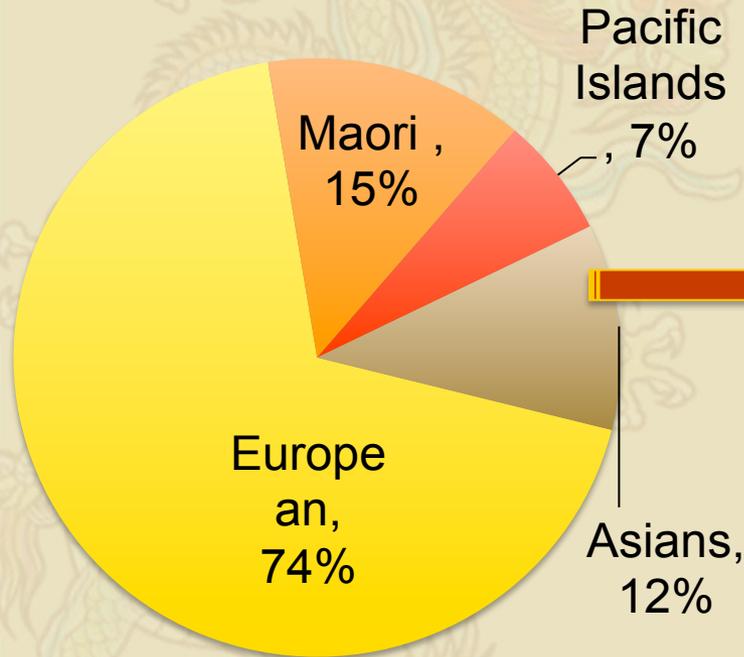
# Asian People in NZ



*NZ Herald (August 10, 2013) The changing faces of NZ: Putting faces to names*

# NZ 2013 Census

NZ Statistics grouped 31 ethnic groups as “Asians”.



# Asian Chinese in NZ

- Chinese is one of five largest ethnic groups in NZ
- 38% of total Asians in NZ consider themselves to be:
  - Chinese
  - Hong Kong Chinese
  - Taiwanese
  - Malaysian Chinese
  - Singapore Chinese
  - Cambodian Chinese

# Heterogeneity of Asian Chinese

Language

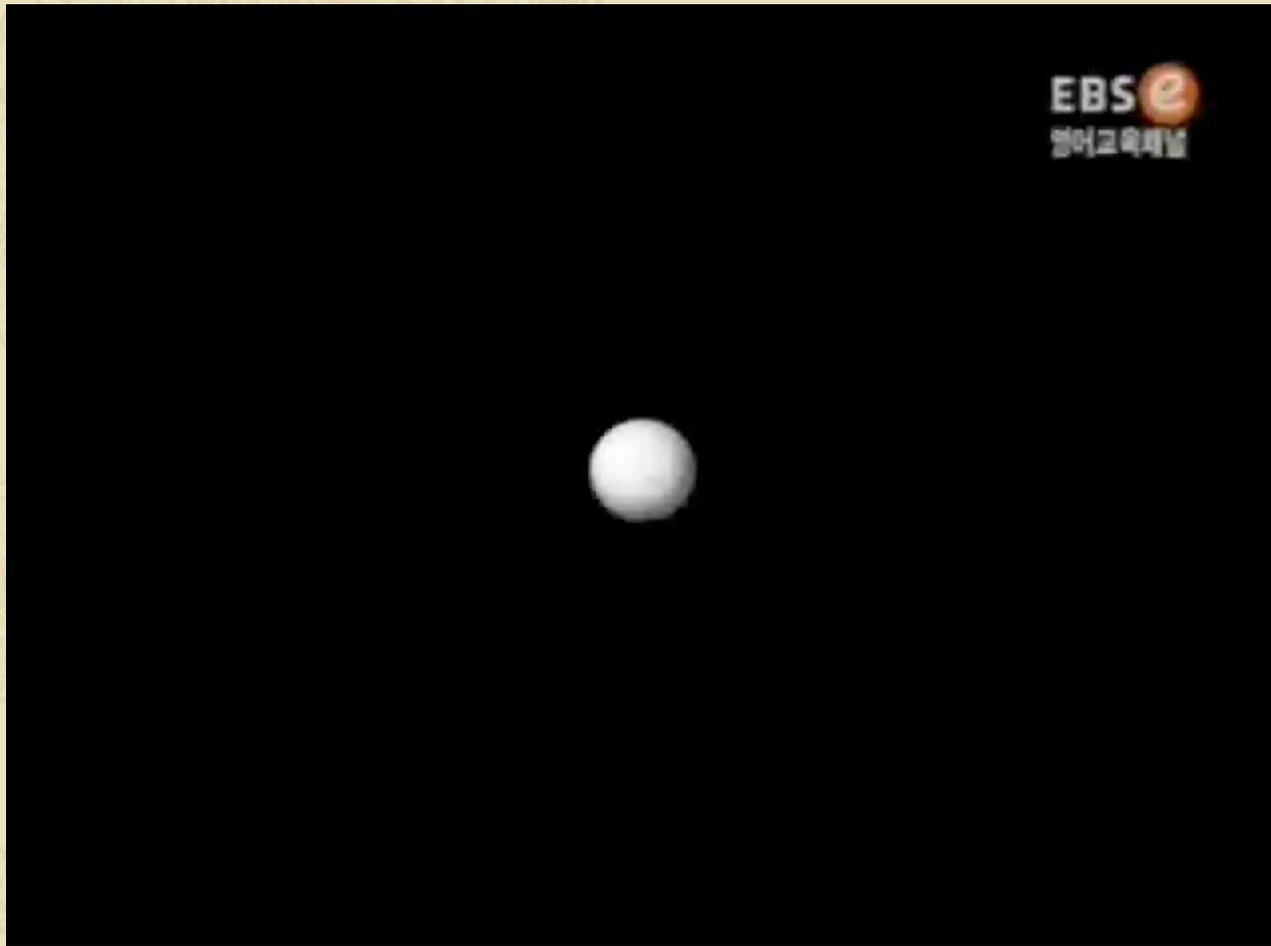
Foods

Education

Socio-  
Political  
History

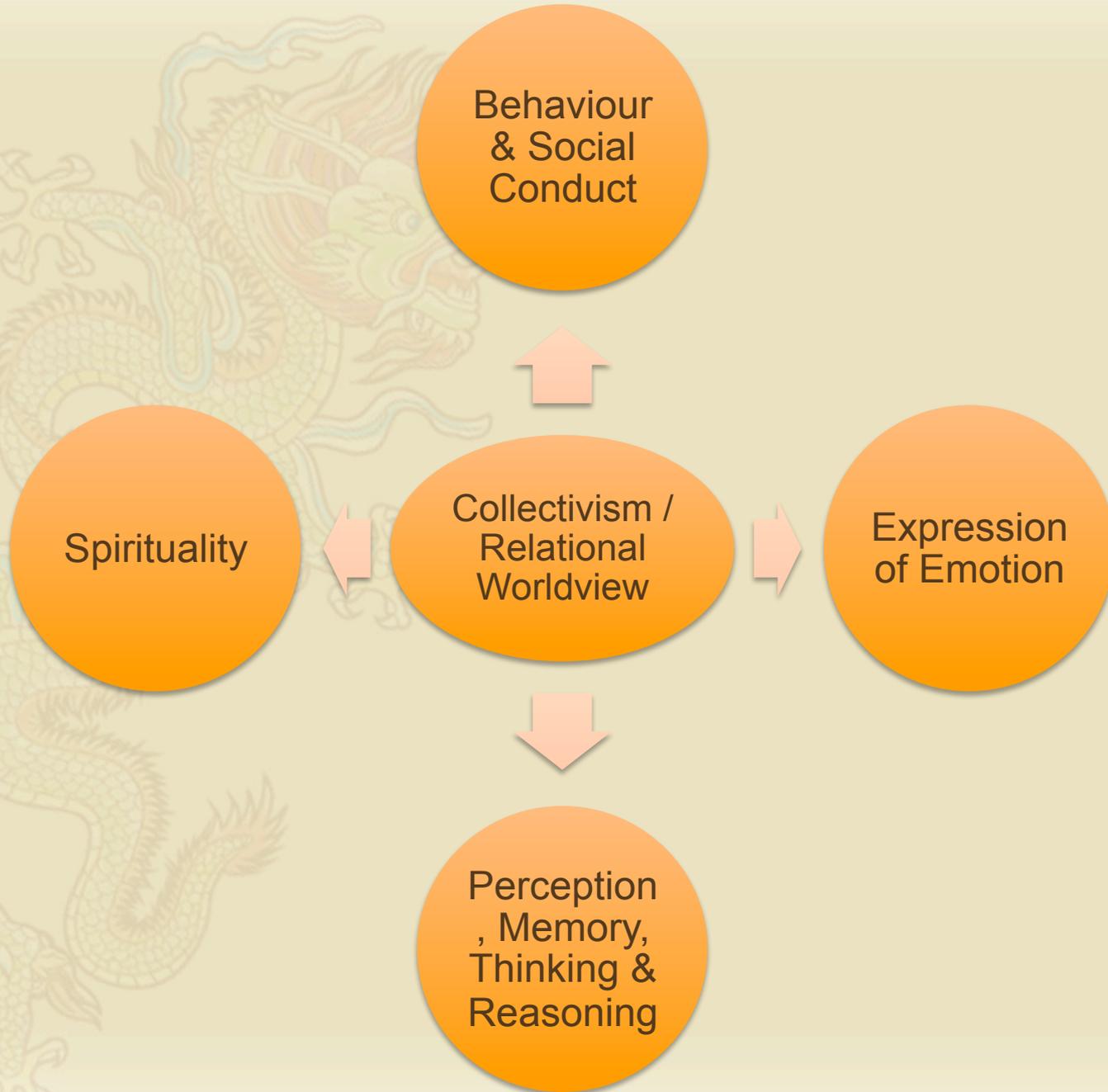
Religion

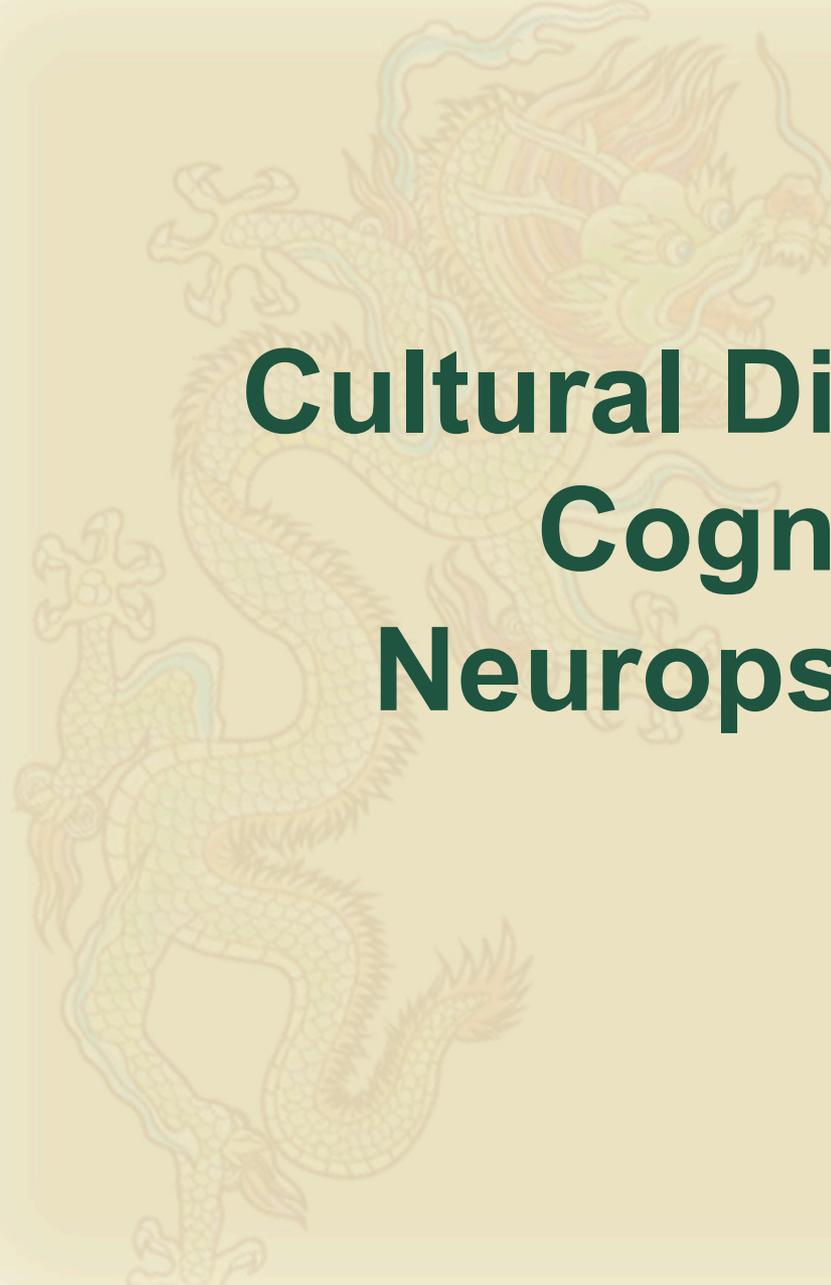
# Collectivism Worldview



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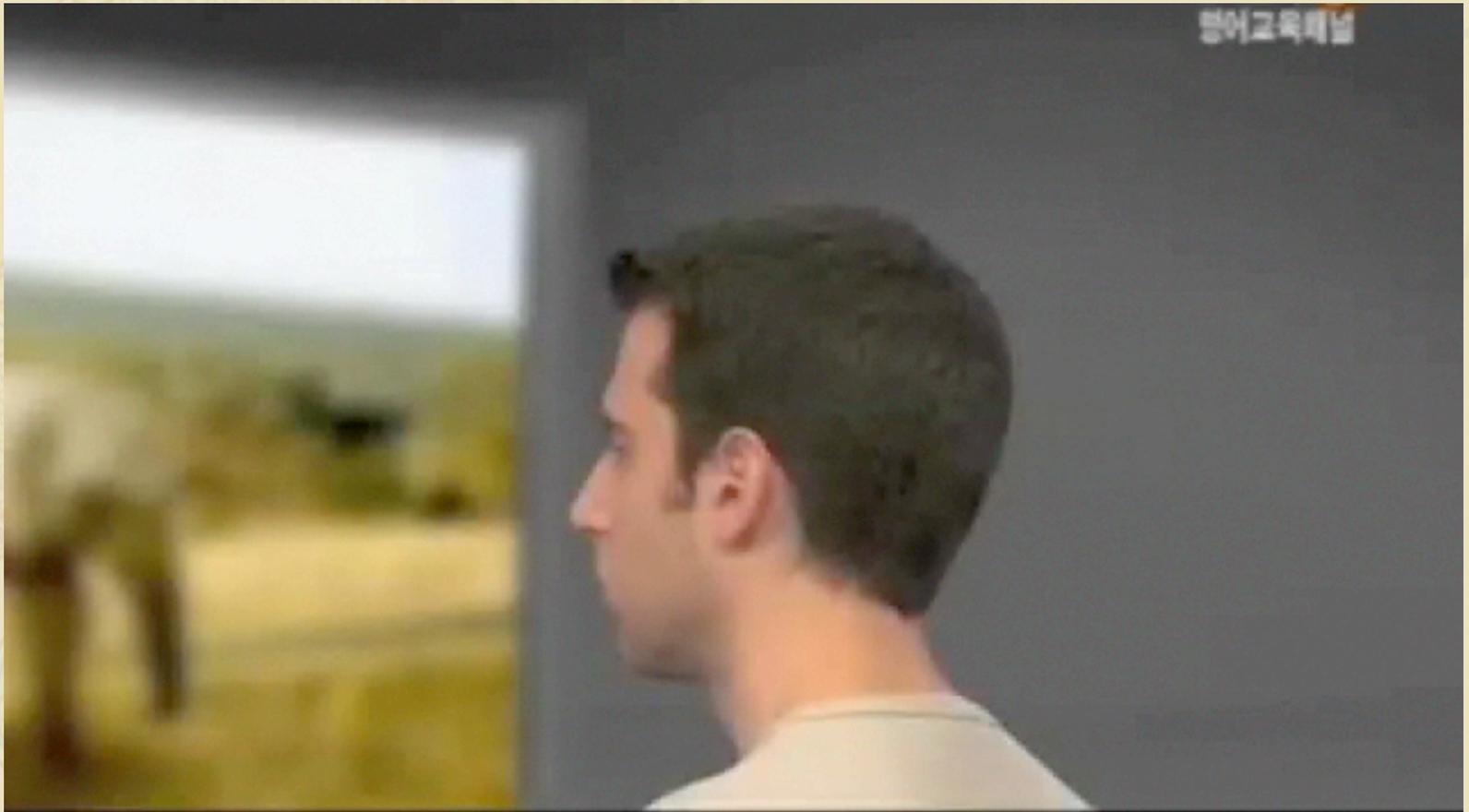




# Cultural Differences in Cognition & Neuropsychology

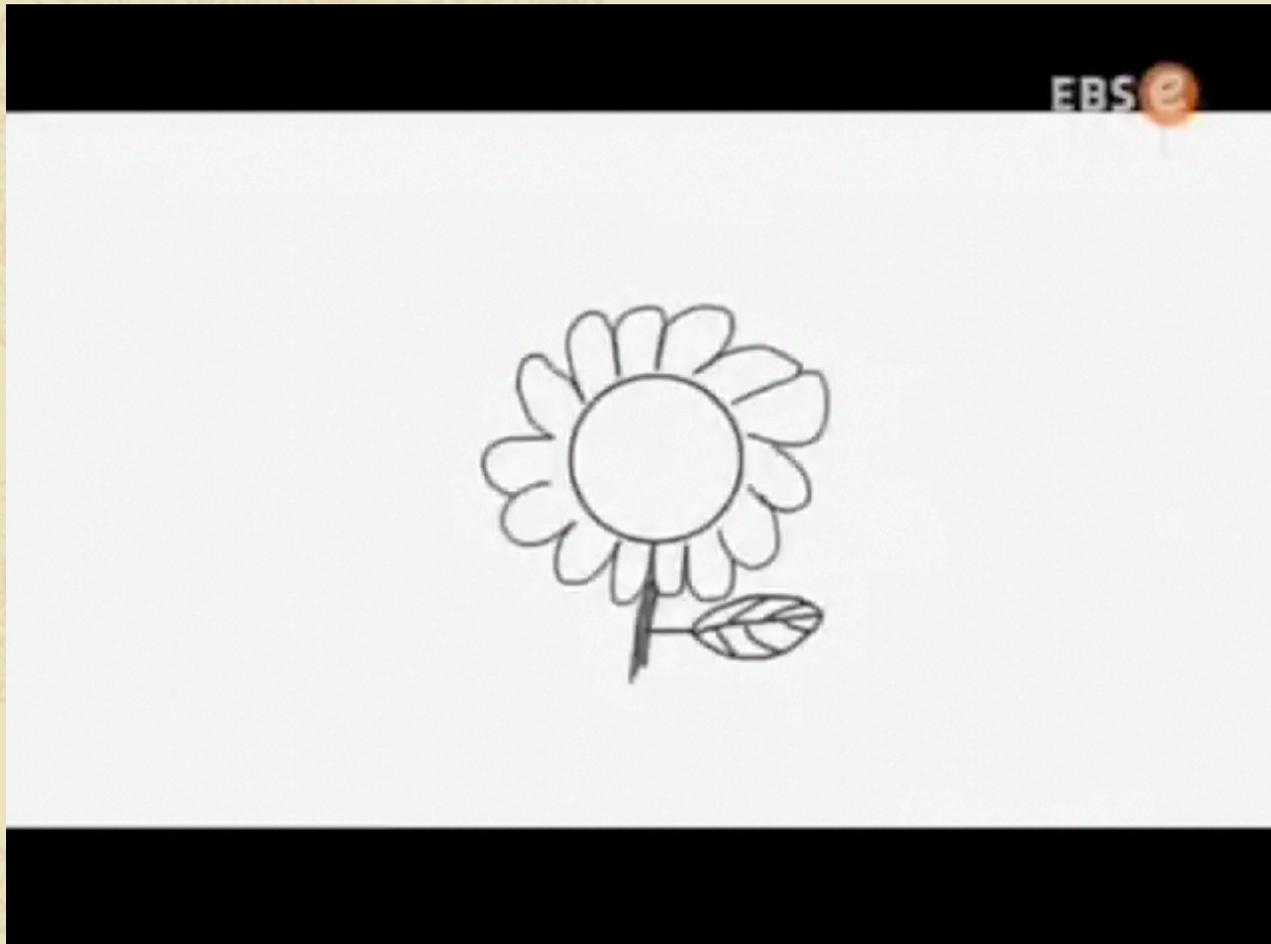
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# Visual Perception



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# Analytical Reasoning



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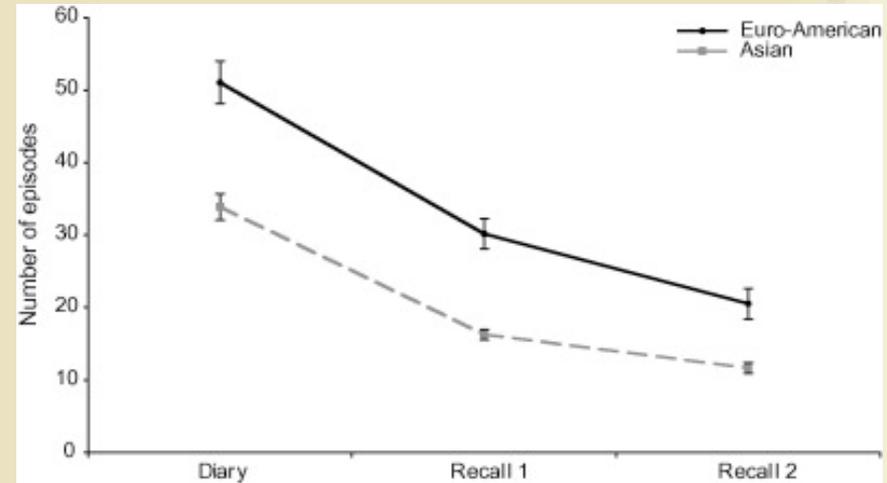
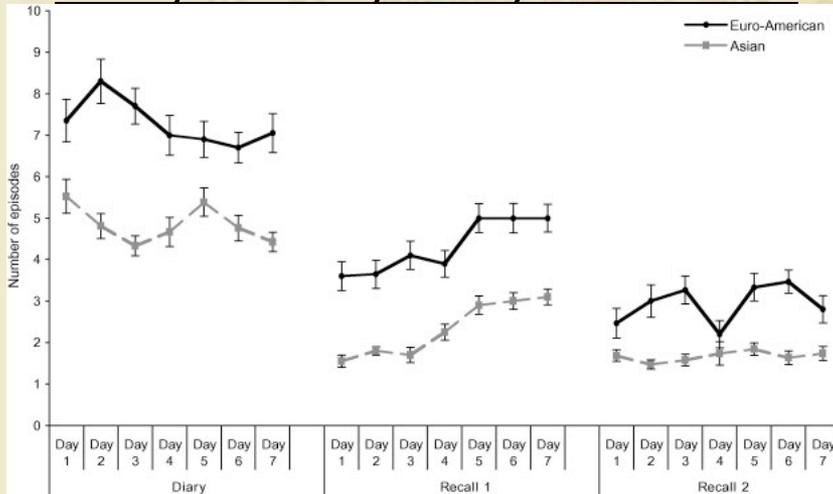
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## Memory

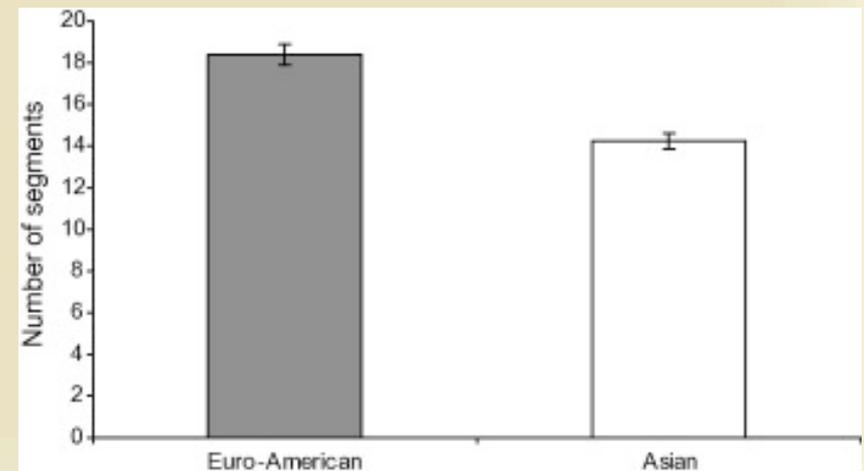
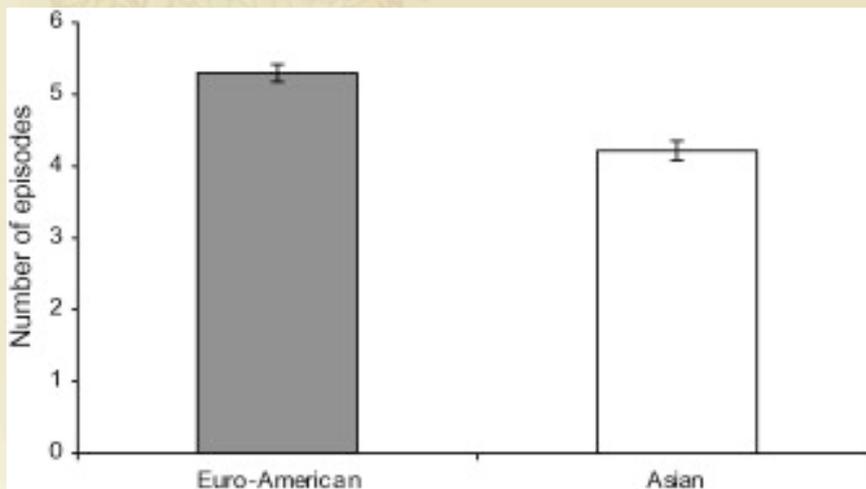
- Extensive research to show cross-cultural difference in episodic memory
- Compared to Europeans, Asians generally report significantly fewer significant personal events and with less detail, as well as recall fewer information over time (Wang 2009)
- This is not about rate of forgetting, but the cultural differences in Asians encode information – they perceive and encode fewer discrete episodes

Wang, Q. (2009). Are Asians Forgetful? Perception, retention & recall in episodic remembering. *Cognition*, 111, 123-131.

### Study 1: Diary Entry and Recall



### Study 2: Reading Short Narrative & Recall



- Bilingualism and autobiographical memory recall
- Trauma related memories?

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# Academic Achievement

- Asian adults generally perform better on Arithmetic tasks than non-Asians.
  - Language of numbers
  - Teaching methods
  - Cultural differences in value of education and academic performance (family and school)

## Working Memory (Digit Span/Arithmetic)

- Asians generally perform better on digit span tasks than people with alphabetical language (Hoosain, 1979; Chan & Elliot, 2011; Ting et al., 2014; Elliot, 1992).
  - Baddeley's Phonological Loop theory of working memory
- Wang et al. (2008) – WMI in WAIS-III (Taiwan version) poorer sensitivity in detection of individuals with working memory impairment

## Attention

- Chinese translated version of Test of Everyday Attention for Children (TEA-CH) applicable for children in China (Chan et al., 2008)
- Lee (2010) - Chinese and Hong Kong Norms for:
  - Digit Span Test
  - Balloon Test
  - Digit Vigilance Test
  - Symbol Digit Modalities Test
  - Colour Trails test
  - Stroop Test (Chinese Translated)

# Perception & Expression of Emotions

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- Generally, Asian people tend not to openly express their emotions (especially negative ones) as this may draw attention to the individual (lose face by being negatively perceived by others) and cause disruption in group harmony (offend others and cause them to lose face)
  - Tsai & Levenson's (2006) study
  - Soto et al. (2005)

- Cross-cultural difference in the recognition of emotional expressions:
  - Europeans are more accurate in recognising emotional expressions
  - Asians appear to be less accurate in recognition of negative expressions, especially fear and disgust.
- Asians more likely to take into account of contextual background info when perceiving facial emotions

Masuda et al. (2008) Placing the Face in Context.



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# Behaviour & Social Conduct

- Relationships are important
- Maintaining harmony within the relationship is the key
- Confucianism: emphasis on the dual aspect of responsibility and obligation of relationships:
  - Authority – Subordinate
  - Husband – Wife
  - Father – Son
- Disruption of harmony in relationship may cause shame or the lost of 'face'

# The 'Face'

- 'Mian Zi' or 'Lian'
- social reputation, credibility, honour, prestige within the social environment
- Not about your personal ego or pride
- the lost of face can also cause others related to you to lose face (or shamed)



Social Conduct/Control achieved by:

Western

Guilt-based

Individual  
Conscience

Absolute

Personal  
Integrity

Eastern

Shame-  
based

Social  
Conscience

Context  
dependent

Collective  
Integrity

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		Other People Believe That		
		I didn't do it	I did it	
I Believe that	I didn't do it	No Problem	Protest my innocence & Fight for the truth.	I am ashamed and dishonoured by other's belief
	I did it	I am expected to feel guilty	No one knows, so I'm not ashamed.	I am guilty and I am punished.

# The 'face' is not a static notion:

## – Gain or be given face

- Name-dropping, associated with others with high status, lavish gifts giving, use of correct titles, 'behave properly'

## – Lose face (literal translation is throwing your face away)

- Not acknowledging your status (e.g., not using correct titles), doing something wrong and got caught, not achieving expectations, showing your inability to do something

## – Fight for face

- Arguing about who should pay after a meal

# The Notion of 'Face' in Clinical Assessment:

- Submissive behaviour towards the clinician
- Minimise their difficulties or provide a partial account of the story
- Tell you what they believe you want to hear
- Defer to the person who can speak English the best to answer questions
- Sometimes "Yes" may mean "No"

# The Role of Family

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- Confucian-based: dual responsibility and obligations within relationships
- Male-oriented, hierarchical
- Each member of the family has a specific role and responsibility (i.e., expectations)
- Elders are highly respected, and children are cherished and valued
- Special responsibility for the first born son (expectations to one day take over family affairs and decision making)
- Difficulty in meeting role expectations may lead to a loss of face for the family member and the family

# Family Expectations

- Confucian-based: Individuals are encouraged to constantly cultivate and improve themselves, and changes in the self are explicitly valued and expected (Choo, 2000).
- Intricately related to the notion of maintaining the 'face' of the family



# Belief Systems

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# Spirituality & Superstitions

- An element of magical thinking
- Symbolisms and meanings



# Health Beliefs

- Holistic: Body and the heart/mind are interconnected.
- The human body is made of balancing forces (Ying/Yang) and 5 natural elements (water, wood, fire, earth, metal).
- Sickness = imbalance (restored through )food or Chinese medicine

# Mental Health Beliefs

- mental illness is the result of flawed familial lineage, or the punishment from something did, or superstitious beliefs (client's date of birth) → shame
- Heart = the seat or container of emotions
  - Happy (kai xin) = open heart
  - Sadness/feeling unsettled (xin qing bu hao) = heart system not good
  - Upset/troubled (xin fan) = troubled heart
  - Painful/unbearable (xin ku) = heart that is hard work

# Phenomenology of Depression in China

- Lee et al (2007)'s study:
- DSM-IV symptoms AND a constellation of indigenous experiences and expressions were identified.
- Sadness and depressed mood was conveyed implicitly.
- Sleep difficulty was believed to have caused sad mood

*“Then I was sick again. I didn’t want to do anything. I felt vexed and bored [fan men]. I lost interest in everything.. I feel very painful [ xinku] at my heart.”*

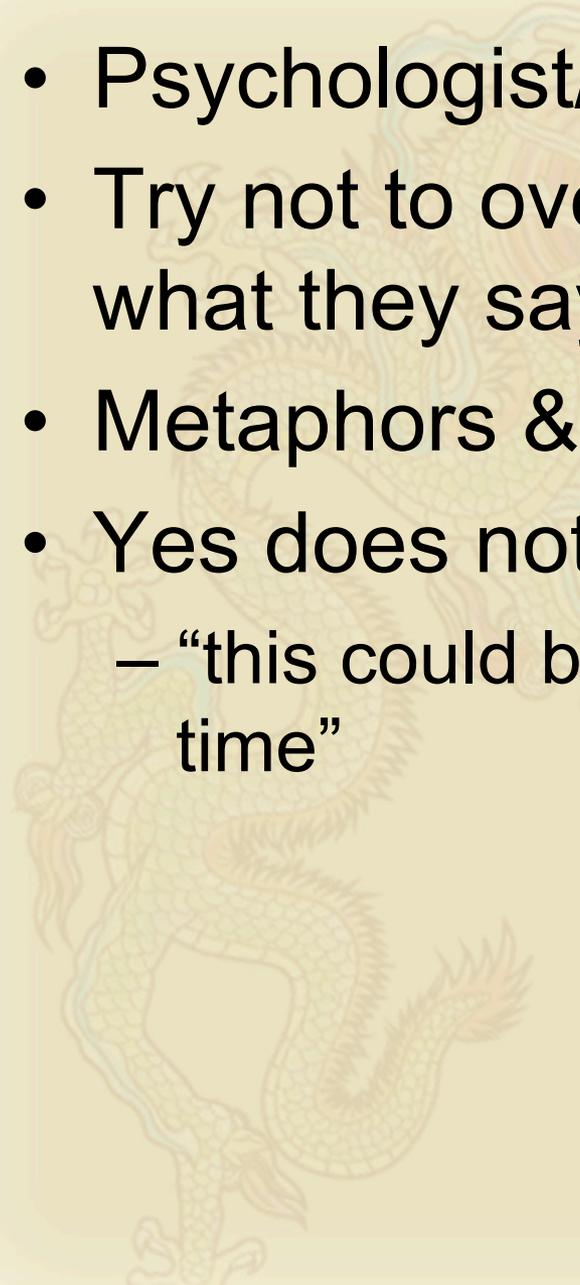
*“I felt my head swelling, very distressed and painful in the heart [xin hen xin ku], my heart felt pressed. My heart was troubled [xin hen fan’.... My brain swollen, so swollen inside”*

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# Practical Tips



- Clarify the referral question
- Know your client's first and given names
- Call them by their last name Mr or Mrs (especially if they are a mature adult or elderly person)
- Assess for English language proficiency (and other languages)
- Assess for level of acculturation (not simply years living in Western culture)
- Spend time in clinical interview (implicit messages)
- Understand the family structure

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- Psychologist/Client relationship
  - Try not to overtly challenge or question what they say – take your time!
  - Metaphors & Proverbs
  - Yes does not always mean “yes”
    - “this could be tricky/difficult”, “perhaps next time”