

## ASIAN AMERICAN FUND DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Saving Face/Indirect Asking

Asian culture has the value of "Saving Face." This concept doesn't exist in Western culture. It is not a problem to say no to someone's face. Western cultures can be very direct. A direct "ask" and receiving a direct "no" are OK. There is no loss of face. In Asian culture, it is not desirable to say "no" to someone because it causes disharmony in the relationship and causes both parties to lose face if there is a "no." Eastern culture values smooth relationships and getting along harmoniously with everyone. Getting to a "no" causes a loss of face because the party that said "no" is put in the position of saying he or she cannot meet a need, request, or expectation. The person who asked feels shame for asking because they put the responder in the uncomfortable position of having to say no.

Being direct vs. indirect is a subtle cross-cultural skill. It is like being a missionary in a foreign culture, the effective Asian-American fundraiser will develop the tools of both being able to ask directly and indirectly and develop the sensitivity to know when to use the appropriate "ask." Methods of Indirect Asking: a) Prayer letters and other Letters b) E-mail c) Having someone else ask for you (advocate) d) Web Page e) Phone Calls f) Offering EFT g) Large Group Presentations

**NOTE:** Asking style takes into consideration the culture of the donor NOT the culture of the staff member. We ask in ways appropriate to the donor. Asian American staff DO need to "ask"... but their ask may look different than a white staff. Asian American staff DO need to make face to face appointments to get to know the donor and share the ministry. Asian American staff asking white prospects will need to learn to do a direct ask (even though this will feel very cross-cultural).

### 2. Group-oriented and Hierarchical culture/Advocacy

Asian-American culture is relational and group-oriented. In Asia, the way most things get done are through relationships/networks/guanxi/ connections. Asian-Americans like to support people they know. If someone they know and trust introduces you, then you are not a stranger; they are more inclined to support you. Asians are loyal to their community, so if in advocate vouches for you, that you are one of the community (someone in their church that you should support), then that helps the potential donor see you as one of them. Asian-American culture is hierarchical. There is a respect for elders. What elders say is viewed as important. If an older Asian-American leader/influencer in the church advocates for you that is powerful in the community.

- Utilizing **advocates** who will speak on the staff's behalf and connect them to important networks is a key element for FD in the Asian American community. Get endorsements from key leaders in the community.
- Consider inviting groups such as Sunday School classes, Bible Study groups etc. to support the ministry. Ask for support for teams doing work on the campus.
- Make sure to honor age and position by approaching groups and individuals in the proper way.
- Sometimes a younger female staff may need an older (or male) advocate or champion.

### 3. Reciprocity/Thanking

Gift giving is an important part of Asian culture. As a reciprocal culture, when we go to someone's home, we usually bring a gift. Asians value appropriate gift giving and expressing appreciation for gifts. It is important to thank our donors well and express our appreciation of them. Steve Chung, a Young Life fundraiser says, "you can raise as much with a 'thank you' as you can with an 'ask.'" He meets with his donors twice a year, once to say thank you and the second time to ask.

We need to have personal contact with our donors in order for them to feel appreciated. This includes sending regular prayers letters, an occasional phone call to say thank you, a personal thank-you note, email, etc.

What are Asian-American Appropriate ways to care for our donors?

- Remember important events in their lives, i.e. weddings, birthdays, babies, funerals, etc. Your parents may be sources of information about people in your home churches. Ask your parents to tell you about the people they know on your support team. Send birthday cards or gifts for the significant events.
- Write thank you notes
- Take them out to eat or make them a meal
- Give them gifts (small items, maybe IV items like books, videos, etc)
- Spend time with them
- Send postcards from mission trips
- Use email to correspond with them.
- Call them to keep in touch and say thank you.
- Ask them for prayer requests and pray for them.
- Serve their families, children of friends, and friends of friends. Offer support to families with kids who are approaching college. Invite them to do a campus visit at your school and/or connect them with the InterVarsity staff at the schools they are going to.

## **4. Differences and similarities in Asian American ethnic groups**

### **FILIPINO**

#### **1. Family**

"*Tulong* means help or aid given to those in need. The custom of *tulong* is practiced most often within the family and the nuclear community...Filipino social values emphasize interdependence."<sup>1</sup>

"Filipinos have strong family ties; they do not look to charitable organizations and services when facing hard times."<sup>2</sup>

#### **2. Compadrazgo**—a system of ritual godparenthood is used to help pay for specific celebrations and to expand the support network of one's family.

"In order to expand this interdependent support structure, Filipinos enlarge their families by assimilating outsiders through *compadrazgo* (ritual kinship). Important sponsors are sought out for baptism, weddings and confirmations. Traditionally *ninongs* (godfathers) and *ninangs* (godmothers) serve to forge bonds of loyalty that now link a child to his or her godparents. In the past, these ties would serve as a form of life insurance and also occasionally as a means of upward social mobility."

**Sustento** (allowance or support)—Filipinos send and take a large amount of money, material goods and food to relatives living in the Philippines.

#### **3. Reciprocity**—Much of Filipino giving is characterized by reciprocal obligation.

"The notion of *utang na loob*, a debt of gratitude or a reciprocal obligation due another is central to Filipinos. Filipinos are aware that they must practice *puhunan*, returning of favors done for them by other. This assures that the person who helped you will have aid when it is needed and so will you in the future."<sup>1</sup>

"When someone dies, Filipinos give *abuloy* to help defray the funeral costs and food for those who attended the survivors. Traditionally *abuloy* was a quasi-contractual obligation. The bereaved kept a record...then when someone in the donor's family died, the *abuloy* would be given in return."<sup>1</sup>

#### **4. Celebrations**—The sharing of food and gifts at ceremonial occasions, is very important to Filipinos.

"While the proportion varies from family to family, godparents are often responsible for a significant portion of the expenses associated with the various ceremonies and parties that occur at baptisms, confirmations, and weddings. The *pakimkim* monies are nominally for the godchild, but really for the parents."<sup>1</sup>

Filipino-American donors tend to enjoy events and social gatherings, particularly dinner dances and entertainment.

#### **5. The Church**—Filipinos are very religious (Catholic) but give little to the church.

"The Catholic church in the Philippines is a missionary church and as such relies on outside support to fund many of its activities. As a result Filipinos do not contribute as much to the general collection as Catholics do in other countries. When Filipinos migrate to America, they continue to donate a relatively small amount..."<sup>1</sup>

### **CHINESE**

#### **1. Kinship and Community**

"Kinship is a principle of social organization for traditional Chinese. Kinship often plays an important role in determining informal models of giving....Hierarchy and respect for parents were so strong that care of parents traditionally came before all other obligations."<sup>1</sup>

"In addition to family obligation there is an obligation to the clan. *Yéuhng ga* is an old custom based on a shared responsibility for the maintenance of the family. Even with their meager financial pay as immigrants they sent what they could to their families and communities back home in China. *Bóng* is primarily the practice of giving financial and material support to new immigrants settling in the US." "The Chinese have the longest history in America of any Asian group."<sup>1</sup>

"Clans and mutual benefit associations are important centers of Chinese philanthropy"<sup>1</sup>

#### **2. Celebrations**

"Chinese often make donations to charitable organizations as part of ceremonial events such as births, weddings and funerals".<sup>1</sup>

"*Múun yuht laih sih* is money given to the newborn by all married individuals in attendance at the Red Egg and Ginger Party (birthday party). *Baai nahn* (paying homage to the year) is a term used for gifts of food when visiting family and friends at the Chinese New Year. Food serves as the center of many Chinese rituals of social interaction. Chinese have a strong belief in starting the year off right by being generous."<sup>1</sup>

"The *jam chàh làih sih* (tea ceremony) is given to newlyweds when they pay their respects to individuals of higher status. Gifts given at this time are generally the most generous...people donate 'to look respectable in the community...to save face. For some it is for the community, and for others the respectability'."<sup>1</sup>

"Upon the death of an individual, a funeral is the last time the immediate family may pay homage to the remains of the physical body. As such, great expense is incurred, especially if the deceased is a parent or grandparent. To do otherwise would result in a loss of face to the family. It is customary for extended family members to give *fui gám* (ash gold) or *baahk gám* (white gold) monies to the bereaved to help defray the funeral costs."<sup>1</sup>

#### **3. Reciprocity**

"There is a strong sense of reciprocity in Chinese sharing and helping."<sup>1</sup>

"A first generation respondent explained: 'Chinese tradition has you as obligated to give things, and that is just part of the Chinese way, whereas the dominant culture isn't obligated to do anything in the way of giving in their cultures. The dominant culture can just give and get nothing back, there are not tied. In Chinese tradition, when you give or get something, you know there is an expectation of return at some point.'"<sup>1</sup>

#### **4. Volunteering**

"Money is given more easily than time, but time given has a higher value."<sup>1</sup>

"*Bóng sáu* or *boh hau* refers to volunteering services. It means "lending a helping hand or donating time to an organization." "<sup>1</sup>

## **5. Giving to Organizations**

"Chinese give to mainstream charitable organizations as well as to Chinese organizations. *Chih sihn gam* is the Cantonese phrase that is closest to the dominate culture's meaning of philanthropy. It is usually a donation given directly to an organization."<sup>1</sup>

"In addition to community survival, the primary purpose of *sihn tòhng* (family associations) in the early Chinese immigrant community was management of burials...in the old days it was mutual benefit; now it is social and charitable *sihn tòhng*."<sup>1</sup>

"Chinese make few bequests because it is taboo to speak of death."<sup>2</sup>

## **JAPANESE**

### **1. Culture**

"Maintaining harmony in interpersonal relationships and face are mentioned often by respondents as reason for continuing charitable practices."<sup>1</sup>

"Confucianism and Buddhism are significant influences on Japanese giving behavior. Both provide the framework for deeper more complex meaning than simply giving something. *Kodomo no tame ni* (for the sake of the children) respect for elders, *giri* (debt of obligation), *oyibun-kobun* (master/disciple) harmony and mutual dependence are traditional values within the framework for appropriate reciprocal behavior."<sup>1</sup>

"The Japanese term for charity is *hodokoshi*. With Buddhist roots there is an emphasis on compassion and giving alms. *Kifu* means donation, empowerment and by extension philanthropy."<sup>1</sup>

### **2. Kin and Community**

"The cultural attitude which emphasizes giving to kin and community, may help explain the ethnocentric giving prevalent in the Japanese American community....The major form of Japanese giving revolves around care of the elders. Care of the elderly is not considered charitable activity to the Japanese, but is more of a duty reflecting Confucian, Buddhist and other traditional values."<sup>1</sup>

"The giving behavior, reciprocity, and mutual dependence learned primarily in early childhood are not restricted within the family, but spread out to the community. When individuals share responsibility for each other there is less need for dominant-culture social services."<sup>1</sup>

### **3. Reciprocity**

"For Japanese time and money are given with equal readiness due to a strong sense of payback, or of doing one's share toward community survival."<sup>1</sup>

"[One respondent said] 'Japanese expect something coming back, something where you get benefit immediately'."<sup>1</sup>

"This sense of returning the favor is consistent with the Japanese value of balance and fairness. An 83-year old woman called it, 'some form of helping the community out, like *koden*—redistribution."<sup>1</sup>

"*Senbetsu* refers to a gift given when people are relocating or going on a trip. Though a token gift may be returned, it is not of the same value as the money given."<sup>1</sup>

### **4. Celebrations**

"Two prominent New Year gift-giving customs are *nenshimawari* (practiced by males visiting friends homes) and *otashidama* (a present for good luck given to children)....It is believed that generosity breeds plenty."<sup>1</sup>

*Koden* consisting of monies given to defray funeral costs, is probably the most common Japanese giving practice. Some of these monies are then donated back to the community...to establish a memorial in the name of the deceased, to give to organizations in the name of the donor, and to give money to the church. *Koden* is an important part of respect for the family."<sup>1</sup>

## **5. Giving to organizations**

"Japanese donate both to Japanese and dominant culture organizations."<sup>1</sup>

Japanese mutual aid organizations, originally established for economic survival and political advocacy, have become more social focusing less on giving assistance and more on preserving the culture."<sup>1</sup>

## **KOREAN**

"Second only to the Philippines, Korea is the Asian nation with the largest populations of Christians: 25% of Koreans profess Christianity. About 70 percent of Korean Americans are Protestant. Korean interest in Christianity did not originate from missionary work; they sought it out and adopted it."<sup>1</sup>

### **1. Kinship and Community**

Much Korean sharing and helping takes place within the extended family."<sup>1</sup>

"The 1.5 generation Koreans have to be independent and efficient and at the same time fulfill obligations toward their parents. Some feel the pressure of their parent's expectations. First generation Koreans want their children to assimilate and to be accepted by the dominant society. At the same time they expect their children to conform to traditional Korean values. *Sang-hwal-bi* is money sent or given to parents for daily living expenses. *Yong-don* is pocket money sent by children to their parents."<sup>1</sup>

"Koreans prefer to take care of families and neighbors before making donations to churches, schools, and other nonprofits."<sup>2</sup>

"Giving practices in the Korean community are strongly influenced by social relationships. Traditionally, Korean society is strictly governed by Confucian philosophy and norms of conduct. Duties to each other in relationships are clearly defined. Interpersonal relationships and harmony within the community play a major role in the giving practices of Koreans."<sup>1</sup>

"Koreans sometimes give indirectly by buying something not really needed from a relative or friend. This is done to save the pride or face of the person who is being helped."<sup>1</sup>

### **2. Celebrations**

"Money given on happy occasions is called *chuk-ui-kum*, and money given on sad occasions is called *cho-ui-kum*."<sup>1</sup>

"*Paek-il* is the celebration of the baby's first 100 days. Money and presents are given. *Hwan-gap* is a person's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. In the past everyone was expected to come, even homeless beggars."<sup>1</sup>

"When one gets the first paycheck, it is customary, in turn, to buy little gifts for one's parents and grandparents...In many cases money from the first payday is also given as an offering to the church."<sup>1</sup>

"The money given at the funeral is called *cho-ui-kum* (sad or condolence money). Each person contributes a little, and then it becomes the pool of money capital to help out the family."<sup>1</sup>

### **3. Churches**

"First generation Koreans give primarily to Korean ethnic organizations and Korean Protestant churches."<sup>1</sup>

"Protestant and, to a lesser extent, Buddhist churches are a focal point in Korean giving practices. Many Koreans regularly contribute a significant amount of money (*hum-kum*) to their churches as well as for special religious occasions. Church members are more likely to participate in social giving practices within the Korean community. Most Korean churches in the US are run by first-generation immigrants with strong traditional cultural beliefs."<sup>1</sup>

### **4. Giving to Organizations**

More traditional Koreans feel a strong sense of duty to their community. Korean groups and associations also provide networking opportunities...Donations are often given to educational institutions through school alumni associations.<sup>1</sup>

## **SOUTH ASIAN**

"The South Asian countries do not restrict emigration...The brain drain is of real concern—it is estimated that one-fourth of the graduates of Indian medical colleges come to the US annually."<sup>5</sup>

"Those born in India have the highest media household income, family income, and per capita income of any foreign-born group in the 1990 census. Immigrants born in India also constitute the highest percentage in managerial and professional fields. 11% of the men and 8 % of the women were physicians and another 7 % of the women were nurses. Indian engineers are the second largest foreign born group of engineers after Chinese, and Indian business students outnumber any other international group."<sup>5</sup>

"South Asian traditions of giving and sharing mirror the great diversity and remarkable contrasts of Asian Indians. In addition to English, 18 official languages are recognized. Traditions of giving can be traced back through the various religions practiced by South Asians.

**Hindu:** personal or family worship (*pūja*), seasons or times for important activity (astrology), celebration of important festivals or holidays.

**Muslim:** Almsgiving, or *zakat*, refers to individual and community responsibility for others. Financially capable Muslims are expected to pay an annual 2.5 % wealth tax to address the needs of the less fortunate. Muslim belief includes a broader community.

**Sikh:** A cornerstone of Sikh faith is the concept of *seva*, the selfless service to the community—not just the Sikh community, but expended to all others."<sup>5</sup>

## **SOUTHEAST ASIAN**

"Remittances, or money transfers, have long been an established method for emigrants desiring to send financial support back to family and neighbors in their native country. The primary impetus has historically been the desire to provide financial support for family members, but there is increasing documentation of remittances being used to support needs beyond the immediate family, such as schools, books, paved roads, and community support....immigrants, who generally earn low wages collectively manage to send substantial sums of money to their countries of origin.

"Affinity for family support extends beyond the Filipino community and can be found in other Asian culture as well as non-Asian groups. Of the recent immigrants to the United States, the Hmong from Southeast Asia have been viewed as among the least prepared for living in the United States. Fleeing for their lives in 1975 from the victorious communists in Laos, the majority of Hmong arrived with knowledge of subsistence farming on mountainsides, but little familiarity with formal education, technology, or understanding of American civic and social customs. The gap between the deeply group-oriented way of life among the Hmong...and the fact that formal education in the United States stresses independence demonstrates the clash of traditionally held cultural values and those found in one's new homeland.

"The economics of subsistence farming in Laos requires harmony in Hmong culture, whereas survival in the United States is tied to the economic system, which often requires people to leave families to take a job, forgo old ideas in place of new, and limit the extent to which they deplete their capital by sharing it too broadly with others. Many of the 300,000 Hmong living in the United States continue to struggle to adapt.

There are three recommendations for incorporating culturally diverse practices of giving and sharing into the study and practice of philanthropy, particularly among youth:

'Can immigrant youth influence charitable giving at home? An undocumented source reported that in the 1990's an estimated 14 percent of all school-age children came from home where English is not the primary language. Non-English-speaking youth or youth with parents for whom English is not a primary language are in the position to interpret and influence decisions within the family unit. The strength of familial interdependence will also affect immigrant youth in their decision-making process. Customs of giving and sharing valued by the family across generations will certainly have an impact on the younger generations of immigrant families."<sup>5</sup>

## **SOURCES**

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