Expand Your Horizons and Use the Blackboard!

Kunal Mehta
MBA
Melbourne

When I was in school, teachers used a black coloured board and different colour chalks to teach us everything. What was once a well known object now has different connotations in today’s world. Cut back to today’s times and we have a virtual “Blackboard” provided by ACU. Initially I was of the opinion that our lecturers would just put out lecture slides on the Blackboard and that it was just a way of letting us know what the next lecture would be about. But it is so much more than just lecture slides! I later on noticed that my lecturers also put out various articles and links to interesting websites related to our unit.

The ability to create announcements is another important feature. There may be times when our emails would bounce back, but announcements on blackboard are really helpful as they pop-up just when you open the unit making it almost impossible to miss!

I also had one of my mid-semester tests on the Blackboard. It was so convenient. I didn’t have to stress about reaching the university on time, or getting nervous seeing other students in the class doing last minute studies.

Another feature that I really like about the Blackboard is the Discussion section. This section allows us to have discussions with the lecturer, section instructor or even with other students in that section.

Recently the new section created for International students is a perfect example of that. It works just like a discussion forum on any other website. You can discuss matters with either the International Student Adviser of your campus, or just put out your thoughts to other students. Others may have been in similar situations and may be able to help you. It helps you to connect with other students and make new friends. Using email is a bit time consuming in cases of passing out general information. A mails B, then B replies to the A. Then A forwards that mail to C & D, consuming a lot of time and creating a lot of confusion. Having an open discussion on Blackboard also allows others to check out the issues. I would strongly recommend that you start getting involved with the international student blackboard site for your campus.

The mail tool is another useful facility that helps us communicate with others. The email addresses of the lecturer and other classmates are already fed into the system. The ‘Browse for Recipients’ option displays their email i.d.s it is really easy to mail them. There is also a link on the Blackboard to directly go into the university’s library section.

These are just a few of the wonderful features of the Blackboard. The Blackboard makes things really easy and convenient for us. The more you use the Blackboard, the more you get into contact with others and share your experiences. So I would encourage all of you to utilize it more from now on.

Editor’s Note:

With the introduction of the International Student Blackboard on each campus has come the ability, for the first time, to connect with both your International Student Adviser (ISA) and other international students about issues that really concern you. Not only is the blackboard used by your ISA to put up announcements, but it can also be used by students to advertise second hand books, rooms for rent or simply as a way of discussing items of interest with other students.

It is there for your use and your benefit. Open your eyes to the wonder of the blackboard! Get on board and get YOUR campus blackboard moving. Come on! Expand your horizons!
A Trip to the Northern Beaches that gave us so much more than scenery

Hope
International Student
North Sydney Campus

It’s hard to believe this trip was so great! God blessed us and gave us such sunny and warm weather. The Northern Beaches trip was far more than just beaches and we visited Westhead, Kur-ing-gai National Park, Bahal Temple and many other places. There were so many wonderful things to look out for on this trip and we experienced surprise after surprise all day!

How much do you know about Australia? Are you ready to be a real Aussie? The only way to understand the Australian culture is to get involved in it so that you can then understand the cultural differences. Open your mind and make friends with the world. Going on excursions with other students is a great way to get to know new friends and understand new cultures.

The most distinct characteristic for ACU National at the North Sydney campus is that about 50% of its students are from different countries around the world. There is really no excuse not to make friends with people from other cultures because we are surrounded by it every day.

The world is certainly not as big as it used to be and that there are more ways than one to “Skin a cat” as they say here. Understanding is the key to resolving cultural differences.

Many people tend to be followers because they are afraid of change. They are often just afraid to do something new or unfamiliar. Coming to Australia means opening ourselves to new ways of thinking and learning to adapt to the culture and environment little by little. Try not to just hang out with your own group! Spice things up a little and learn to live life without barriers!

Editor’s Note

The message in this article is simple, folks! Get out there and get involved! The author is right, how can we ever be expected to understand a culture unless we experience it? Of course, doing something outside our individual comfort zones is always a challenge and requires a certain degree of courage. But then, what is life? Is it not all about challenging ourselves and striving for the best we can be? Courage is something we all have inside us, but it requires challenge to bring it forth.

What greater reward can there be for anything than greater understanding and self respect?
Defence Mechanisms and Everyday Life

The human mind has an amazing capacity to invent mechanisms that shield us from mental pain and conflict and from becoming aware of unpleasant emotions and thoughts. This temporary clouding of reality through thought, feeling and behaviour is known by the descriptive metaphor, ‘defence mechanism’. Defence mechanisms often are disguised and often operate outside our awareness.

These defences, of which there are many, may appear disorderly and unreasonable to an observer and yet, so often, they reflect an adaptive response and an intact, working brain. The situations that call forth our defences are often psychologically perilous and we cope the best way we can. So when we are confronted by sudden inner conflict and pain, our defences keep us from being immobilised by depression and anxiety.

Let’s consider the example of the New Yorker, Joan Didion (2005), who was confronted with the sudden death of her husband, John Gregory Dunne. For a year afterwards, Didion was convinced that, if she hoped enough for it, Dunne would return – hence the title of her moving memoir, The Year of Magical Thinking. In it Didion describes many examples of her own magical thinking, particularly her poignant refusal to give away Dunne’s shoes, as he would need them when he returned. ‘I know why we try to keep the dead alive’, she writes, ‘we try to keep them alive in order to keep them with us’ (p.225).

One of the defence mechanisms at work here is psychological denial. Although she witnessed Dunne’s death, Didion cannot believe he has died. Initially, Freud thought that defence mechanisms were only pathological. Later thinkers, like George E Valliant (1993) in The Wisdom of the Ego, thought that defences are more often than not healthy rather than pathological responses. Didion was facing the serious illness of her daughter, Quintana, when Dunne had his cardiac arrest and his death was a completely unbearable loss to her, especially in that context. She accommodated it in the best way she could, by denying it, until such time as she was able to begin to emotionally tolerate it.

Defence mechanisms explain the inexplicable. Through understanding the defence, undoing, for instance, we can make sense of the conundrum of a student who has not studied for his exam, yet refuses to put any effort into it when he sits it. To have a chance of success, he must tolerate the anxiety of the high risk of failing it. Instead of giving the exam his best shot, though, he brings himself undone by the thought, ‘Well, I haven’t done any study for it, so what’s the point of trying’ and, of course, he fails.

Another defence mechanism, reaction formation, enables us to make sense of how a person, worn out and angry at listening to friends’ problems, comes to pay even more attention to them. Her anger is an unpleasant, painful feeling and it threatens to bring her into conflict with her mates. As a result, she represses it and tries to distance herself from it by doing the opposite to how she feels. So she asks her companions even more questions about their troubles; empathises with them even more deeply; invites them to dinner, and so on. But her original feeling of anger lives on in her unconsciously (and is intensified by her cranking up her giving) and we would expect that she would come to feel depressed – depression, in this instance, being anger turned against the self and a painful and disturbing state of mind.

Then there is the defence, splitting, which reveals how a person who has an uncontrolled shopping, gambling or drug problem can remain completely unaware of its perils. Splitting is a potent defence in which a person avoids inner conflict by keeping two kinds of incompatible feelings entirely separate. We can savour the euphoria of new purchases, the excitement of a win on the blackjack tables, and the anaesthesia of our pain through drug-taking. And that’s all we know. We have split off from our awareness the probability of financial ruin and of damage to our health.

Our mental lives are deep and rich, inviting us to wonder about them. So often, when we do, we discover that our feelings, thoughts and behaviours, while sometimes seeming odd to ourselves and particularly to others, are utterly intelligible in the light of our minds’ inner conflicts. In counselling practice, the best work is done when the counsellor and the client are curious together about the client’s mental life and, often enough, this will involve an exploration of the client’s characteristic defences, adaptive and maladaptive alike. As Milton (1667) put it in Paradise Lost: ‘The mind is its own place, and in itself Can make a heav’n of hell, a hell of heav’n’.

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Rosemary Williams
Counselling Psychologist
Counselling Service

The Wisdom of the Ego
George E Valliant
The Year of Magical Thinking
Joan Didion
Paradise Lost
John Milton

Knowing the Chinese Tea Culture

Ge Xiaotong
Nursing
Melbourne

The History of Tea Drinking

China has a long history of both drinking and producing tea. It is also considered to have the earliest records of tea drinking. It is believed that it was first discovered by an ancient Emperor, Shen Nung, when some tea leaves fell from a tree into his pot of boiling water. Drinking this water, he felt surprisingly invigorated.

In the Han dynasty, tea was used as a herbal medicine. The consumption of tea as a beverage for pleasure on social occasions dates from the Tang dynasty. As early as the Song Dynasty, formal tea-tasting parties were held in the imperial palace to treat the nobles and the noble families usually treated their honorable guests with expensive tea to show their high social status. Tea is still so important in both Chinese society and culture that you can find tea houses in most Chinese cities.

Different Kinds of Tea

Tea is produced and consumed in different ways, at different times and in different regions of China. The great varieties of tea include black, green, white, flower, oolong and blended and sometimes people also categorize tea as tea bricks and loose-leaf tea. The strength, quality, taste and nutritional benefits of tea depend on a number of factors which include the country of origin, soil condition, altitude, picking method, picking season, processing method and brewing method.

Tea Customs

In Chinese culture offering tea is also regarded as offering your respect, so often the younger generation in the family is supposed to serve tea to the older generation in traditional activities. In the past, it was the socially lower ranking person who needed to serve the higher ranking person on formal occasions. Offering tea can also mean an apology where the one who has made a mistake should pour tea for who has been offended to show their apology. Receiving the tea represents the fact that the one who was offended has forgiven the errors made. In Chinese traditional wedding ceremonies, the newly weds usually kneel down in front of their parents and serve them tea to show their gratitude to them for bringing up the bride and groom.

Benefits of Drinking Tea

Tea can help protect the cells of our body from the normal, but damaging, physiological process known as "oxidative stress." Although oxygen is vital to life, it’s also incorporated into reactive substances called free radicals. These can damage the cells in our body and have been implicated in the slow chain reaction of damage leading to heart disease and cancer. It also prevents blood clotting and lowers cholesterol levels. Furthermore, it neutralizes enzymes that aid in the growth of tumors and help stimulate the immune system.

The Top 10 Chinese Teas

Every drinker of Chinese tea will, of course, have their own favorites, so it is very difficult make a definitive list of the top 10 Chinese teas. However, the following 10 are certainly noteworthy and deserving of being in the top 10 list.

1: Longjing 龙井茶 tea from Zhejian province.
2: Bi Luo Chun 碧螺春茶 from Jiangsu.
3: Tie Guan Yin 铁观音茶 from Fujian.
4: Mao Feng 毛峰茶 from Anhui.
5: Yin Zhen 银针茶 from Hunan.
6: Qi Men Hong 祁门红茶 from Anhui.
7: Da Hong Pao 大红袍茶 from Fujian.
8: Gua Pian 瓜片茶 from Anhui.
9: Bai Hao Yin Zhen 白毫银针茶 from Fujian.
10: Pu er 普洱茶 from Yunnan.

Do yourself a favour and try them all! You will certainly find one to suit your individual palate and the benefits of being a long term tea drinker will become obvious to you.

Of course, one thing to remember: This is Chinese tea! Please don’t add milk and sugar to them! They are meant to be drunk as they are. That is unless you have bought yourself a cup of pearl milk tea. Now that is another matter altogether!
Being far away from home, most international students feel elated about this whole new overseas experience. However, as we enjoy our new life here, we need to pay special attention to our safety at the same time. Although Australia is a relatively safe country in comparison to others, safety should remain a primary concern of everyone. Here are some general safety tips for all international students:

**Money:**
Do not carry a lot of cash with you. 20 or so dollars should be sufficient since plastic money is universally accepted here in Australia.
Keep some coins with you in case you need to make telephone calls to your friends for help.
Do not keep all your money in one pocket.
Unless you have decided to buy something, do not give your credit card or credit card information away to others.
And after the payment is finished get back your card as soon as possible.
Keep important ID in your inner pockets or at home.
Do not leave your bag unattended.
Do not share your pin number with other people, and get different pin numbers for different cards.
Do not write important codes or numbers down or carry it with you in case you lose it.

Avoid withdrawing money from ATMs at night, if you feel anything strange, do not enter the ATM room and leave the scene quickly.

**Home:**
Do not open the door for strangers, even if there is an appointment made, eg: repair man. You need to see the ID of the visitor before you open the door. Do not assume that a uniform means that the person is genuine.
Do not leave any messages on the door to tell others that you are not home.
Even if you leave the room for just a few minutes, you had better lock the doors and the windows.
If you are going to be late, notify your friends or housemates and tell them your location.
The stairways in tall buildings are usually dark, use the elevators.

**In the street:**
Be alert while walking in the streets alone, and walk only in well lit areas.
Have plans of your route; get to know the place you are heading for before hand.
If followed, change your direction and walk to the nearest shops, restaurants, police stations or public phones.
While walking or jogging, do not use earphones, because you can not hear the cars or other people approaching you then.
Try to walk in groups in the middle of the pavement if you go out at night. Avoid approaching quiet and lonely places, like parks.
If you are going home late, take a cab if that is possible. Do not hitchhike.
Do not argue or fight with robbers if being robbed. Call 000 as soon as possible.
If lost, stay calm and ask for help from police officials. Do not show your anxiety.

**Fire:**
Keep exits clear, and check the windows regularly.
Before moving into a new building, get to know the nearest escape, stairway and exit; ensure they are not blocked.
Make sure you have smoke alarms at home.
Avoid using candles.
Know the number you should call (“000”) in case of fire and practice reporting your own address clearly and accurately.
Do not smoke in bed.
Never leave cooking unattended.
When finished cooking, check that the stove is properly tuned off.
Avoid using electric heaters to dry your clothes.
Keep heaters at least 1 meter away from any curtains, beddings or furniture.
If fire alarms begin, do not try to take any valuables and leave the fire scene as quickly as possible.
Install a portable fire extinguisher if possible.
Do not change the electric wiring in your house by yourself.

**Most important tip:** when you are facing danger, stay calm and do not panic!
Even Thunderstorms will Pass

Mary Hemant
Education, Melbourne

In a sense, when you sit down and think about it, life is such a see-saw really. You have your regular upbeat highs and then there are those all-time downs. When you’re on one of those upsided lofts, things can be so uplifting and life feels truly good. And you say with the contented gratitude of good old Robert Browning: God is in His heaven and all is well with the world.

This situation may not be long lived, however. Before long, things could slide slowly on the downhill road. One by one the good times seem to dwindle down to be replaced by the not-so-good events that can bring your spirits to an all-time low. Sometimes this can come as a bolt from the blue and life feels truly downhill. One of the not-so-good events that can bring your spirits to an all-time low.

Having said that, it is eventually in the way we handle these testing times that we become stronger and more capable of withstanding the next turn of events along life’s journey. Here again, there are two ways that we can handle life’s stressful situations. Either we could rise above the times and soar out to greater heights from the ashes of doom. Or we could go right down and get buried in despair while thinking of personal destruction and willful self-harm as the only solution to our problems.

Anyone who has been there will know what I am talking about now. It is all very fine to be told at this point that everything will be alright and life will go on. But when you are really at the lowest ebb of your life, that is no consolation actually. For at such times, one would think of any possible means that would seem like the easiest way out and end it all once and for all. Let me be quick to add, however, that these are also the times when a person needs the greatest moral and emotional support ever possible.

After all, at such moments even a pat on the back or a gentle hug will mean a world of comfort for one who has already been crushed from all sides. So the next time you see someone who is not really hundred percent and keeping track of what they should have been doing in terms of commitments, do take a moment to consider why they are not the way they should be. Before you pass judgement and condemn them for giving everyone else a hard time, ponder a while and perhaps question them to see if all is well. You may be surprised to know that they are down because life has just dealt its unkindest cut to them in recent times.

If you are wondering why I am ranting and raving about such philosophies in this day and age, let me be honest and tell you that I have been there only recently. And I must say that it was only the timely support and moral guidance of my family that lifted me out of the mire. Most notably, my greatest sustenance came from the International and Counselling offices of ACU. I cannot even begin to tell you how much I am indebted to the overwhelming help they rendered me in my time of dire need. John Crowder, in particular, spent hours with me in hospital (where I ended up for a few days) and went through all the options available for me under the circumstances.

Then there was the unanticipated lift-off that I got from an excellent book I picked up at an op-shop. Selected to Live came to me like a godsend of hope and cheer just when I most needed it. It is an amazing true story of young Jewish girl’s survival amidst tragedy and loss during her escape from Nazi occupation and sure death during the Second World War. As she was led by an Invisible Hand from one hideout to another in the Dutch countryside, she found her true God who had truly singled her out while she watched her family and friends arrested and tortured one by one, selecting only her to live to tell the tale.

I am grateful then, that God has also selected me to live through another ordeal by fire and purified me with yet another time of testing. I bless this beautiful land of Australia, all its peoples and especially the government and its medical system that follows the most beautiful motto: Let the sick never lack care. I thank the wonderful team of doctors and medical professionals who nursed me back to well-being into the land of the living. And most of all, I thank the Almighty for His tender loving care, for showing me that He continues to take me up on the see-saw of life again and again and again.

I knew that Thou dost always watch the humble and those who wait for Thee; therefore I had this certainty, I’d never be alone; My broken heart be healed by Thee in time.

But I didn’t know Thou wouldst come bowing deeply, entering this low door, witnessing a golden light streaming through the window transfiguring our shamble here with scented melody.

And I? for bread and water I do give Thee praise…
In here, Thy Name’s uplifted by angels and poor me…
while all creation Thy works can’t fail to see…
My eyes just see the greatness of Thy might.
When weak, Thy strength was always just in sight.

(translated by Johanna Ruth Dobschiner from the original)

Bibliography

Selected to Live
Shahrukh Khan - Bollywood Master of Movies

Last month, ISV- The Voice introduced some interesting aspects of the Hindi Film industry, popularly known to all as Bollywood. Now let me introduce you all to one of the most famous actors of Bollywood in recent times.

Shahrukh Khan has been one of the most prominent personalities of Bollywood for the last 2 decades. He began his career as a television actor in the 1980s and made his Bollywood debut in 1992. Since then he has a number of hit movies to his credit. To date he has won 13 Filmfare awards, 7 of them for best actor. One of his most popular movies to date has been Devdas. There have been so many people in Australia who have talked to me about this movie.

In the last few years there has also been international recognition of Shahrukh Khan. Times magazine named him in the top 20 list of best Asian actors. He also has a mannequin of himself in Madam Tussaud's Wax Museum in England. He has also been awarded the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Order of the Arts and Literature) award by the French government for his Exceptional Career.

For the last few years he has also owned three Production Houses in India; Dreamz Unlimited, Red Chillies Entertainment and Red Chillies VFX (related to visual effects). More recently he has been in the news for being the owner of a multimillion dollar team in the much hyped Indian Premier League (the cricket competition).

To get a hang of Bollywood films, I would recommend watching some of Shahrukh Khan's movies that were blockbuster hits not only in India but also countries like US and England such as Swades, Main Hoon Na, Paheli, Don, etc.

Editor's Note:

I strongly recommend the movie Devdas. It is fantastic! Not only does it have Aishwarya Rai, but also the incomparable Madhuri Dixit!
My Trip to Adelaide - The City of Churches

Liu Ying
Nursing
Melbourne

As a final year Accounting student, it is good to have some rest and relaxation through the Easter holidays. I managed a trip to Adelaide which I had intended to go on for a long time.

I am lucky enough to have a friend living in Adelaide so accommodation was free and I had someone to take me around. She picked me up at the airport and explained the public transport system to me. I soon learnt that the public transport system, especially the bus-routes, run much more efficiently and conveniently than they do in Melbourne! A lot of places have what is called the “15-Mins Go” signs which indicate that the maximum waiting time is 15 minutes.

I spent the first two days shopping at Rundle Mall and visiting the museums, universities, and Parliament House. Rundle Mall is the main street for shopping. Apart from the large department stores like Myer, there are also some small shops selling unknown brands of clothing and accessories. They are quite lovely and unique. I especially liked the Japanese and Korean shops with a lot of cute dresses that cannot be found in the department stores.

Walking through the Mall, you never feel overcrowded or uncomfortable. There are attractive street performers and friendly tourist guides to entertain your days and provide excellent help. The street next to Rundle Mall is a tourist paradise. The whole North Terrace is built in an ancient style.

The University of South Australia and Adelaide University are located beside each other in what makes up an academic precinct. Further down from the universities are the State Library and the SA Museum. People say that it is the largest Aboriginal culture museum in Australia. A truly large amount of decorative handicrafts and Aboriginal status symbols were located in the museum. I found it really interesting to listen to the explanation on how they are made and what are they used for. I believe you will be amazed by the intelligence of the tool making processes.

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The weekends in Adelaide are quiet and peaceful. I did not find a lot of people in the shopping mall, however, when I went down to the Glenelg Beach, families and friends were getting together and enjoying the bright (but not burning) sunshine. Although that beach is neither as big as St Kilda nor as famous as the Gold Coast, I felt the harmonious and serene atmosphere in the small city.

The German village is another recommended place to visit. Traditional German Pettites is one of the famous dishes from Hahndorf and I have found some quaint stores and local art galleries displaying their customs. There is a strawberry farm two bus-stops distance from Hahndorf. I have never gone into a fruit farm before so it was exciting for me to pick the strawberries by myself. They looked so different and so beautiful that I did not want to eat them!

Although I only stayed there for 4 days, I found the life style is so different between Adelaide Melbourne, and Brisbane. The biggest advantage of a small city is they can live casually and peacefully.

So, if you want to escape from your school work for a short period or desire to experience original Australian casual oriented culture; Adelaide is the best place to go at a relatively low cost.
Echuca - My Paddlesteamer Playground

Listening to the gentle splashing of the paddle wheels on board paddle steamer P.S. Pevensy, I perched myself on the bow of the boat, ready for an incredible hour long cruise on the largest river in Australia...the Murray River. The Murray River, which is 2756km long, spans three states: South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. Beginning as a little spring flowing from the highest mountain in Australia, Mt Kosciusko, it flows through much of the border between Victoria and New South Wales, eventually crossing over to South Australia, finally ending in the Southern Ocean.

My trip to Echuca took me first through the historical town of Bendigo, where everyone on the day trip enjoyed a journey through the last 150 years, on the majestic Vintage “Talking” Tram. The tram ride that lasted about half an hour, took us past historic architecture, all the while “talking” about the glorious past of Bendigo, founded on Australia’s richest goldfields. When our short tram journey came to an end, I hopped off the tram at Australia’s oldest working tram depot only to be greeted by the most colourful array of trams I’d ever seen! From rusty old trams with tiny blue doors and pink windows to larger trams painted orange and turquoise, all the tourists on board the rather dull looking talking tram moments ago burst into excited chatter, as they scurried around capturing the moment with their cameras.

After our historic tram ride at Bendigo and a short lunch break, the next leg of the journey took us on a short drive on the coach further north, to Echuca, the main segment of the trip. Finally, the moment I had been waiting for had arrived... the paddle boat P.S Pevensy is said to be one of the most famous boats in Echuca, as it had been the very boat used to film the romantic movie “All the Rivers Run”, in the late 19th century. I stood on the upper deck of the paddleboat, wind in my hair, as the gentle splashing of the paddle-wheels soon hastened as the boat took off. Heading downstream, we were passed by many other similar looking paddle steamers full of tourists crowded onto the decks and excitedly waving to those travelling on the other boats.

We soon left the busy port behind and were surrounded by calm waters and could hear nothing but the soft paddles of the boat. Bordered by only trees along the banks, I enjoyed the tranquil surroundings as it was a nice change from the usual busy environment of Melbourne city. Everyone on board P.S Pevensy relaxed on the decks of the boat, munching on snacks they had brought with them, while some huddled around near the centre of the boat, where the heat of the coal fire kept them warm. After about half an hour, the paddle steamer made a U-turn, and headed back to Port Echuca where our cruise ended.

After the quiet surroundings of the Murray River, everyone on board the paddle steamer were brought to the busy local wineries to taste some of the wine that was produced from the fields irrigated by the Murray River. Following that, we visited local shops in Echuca selling a variety of things from homemade candy bars to antique clocks. As the sun began to set, we had to bid Echuca farewell as we headed back to Melbourne. My trip to Echuca had been an enjoyable one and I’m sure anyone who plans to go there will have just as much fun as we did!
The story of the creation of the world and everything in it, including humankind, has been immortalized in the writings of the oldest book of the Bible, the Book of Genesis and the first book of the Jewish Torah, the Bereishith. Authorship of this record of creation is historically attributed to Moses, inspired of God to preserve the story of creation throughout human history. But are these ancient stories of the Bible only to be found in the Bible, or is it possible that they have been recorded elsewhere in the chronicles of our ancestors? Is it possible that other ancient civilizations believed in the God of Moses and, through their own records, corroborated these Biblical accounts of the dawn of humanity?

Certainly one of the most ancient of all civilizations, with an unbroken heredity down through history, is that of the Chinese, whose roots can be traced back to the ancient region of Biblical Babel. From their earliest beginnings, the ancient Chinese were meticulous in the recording of their activities and it is through these records, that we, thousands of years in the future, have a clear view of their life and beliefs at the very dawn of their great civilization. We do know that, in the very early stages of their society, the ancient Chinese were monotheists, meaning that they believed in only one God. Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism which would, centuries later, come to dominate the religious ideologies of the Chinese had not yet emerged and it appears that the ancient Chinese may have been followers of Elohim or El Shaddai, the God of creation.

So how, one may ask, can a connection be drawn between the one true God and the Chinese language? Let us look at the construction of some of the ancient pictographs that form the written Chinese language. These pictographs have remained virtually unchanged for millennia and allow an interesting insight into their early life.

From the Biblical account, it would appear that this word refers directly and specifically to the creation of Adam. God’s act of creation can clearly be seen as He forms a man’s body from the dust (士), and with his mouth (口) breathed the breath of life into the “dust man’s” nostrils (indicated by the “pie” 亻 at the top of the word – the pie indicates life). The first man was created an adult, able to speak (言) and to walk (辶).

Tu 士 (dust) + kou 口 (mouth) + pie 亻 (alive) = 亻 (to talk) + chuo radical 辶 (walking) = 造 to create.

Does it not indeed indicate that the wise sage charged with the creation of the written Chinese language must have had some knowledge of the Biblical story of creation? Of course, one could dismiss this as a fluke; some outrageous coincidence, and that would be quite acceptable were there not more of these “coincidences” that mirror the creation story.

To continue, the Bible goes on to say that after God created the first man, He said “It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make a helper for him.” So God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep and while He slept, He took out one of his ribs. The Lord God formed man from the rib which He had taken from him, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). The first man of God’s creation was named Adam. The Chinese word for “to create” has preserved throughout antiquity the crowning glory of God’s creation: man.

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Adam’s ribs and from it, created the first woman, Eve. Adam and Eve lived in a beautiful garden that God had created for them, the Garden of Eden. It is said that a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden and there it divided into 4 separate rivers. It is interesting to note that one of the Chinese words for garden or field is 田 (tian). This pictograph itself is representative of an enclosure (a garden perhaps?) with a river starting in the centre and branching out in 4 separate directions.

In the centre of the garden, God planted two trees. The tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And God commanded Adam saying “You may eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it, you will surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

It is said that as Eve was in the centre of the garden one day, Satan appeared to her in the form of a serpent. He tempted Eve by telling her that she would surely not die if she ate of this tree and that she would actually become like God if she did so. So when Eve saw that the fruit of this tree was good and that it would make her wise, she desired it and ate it. After she had eaten, she also gave some to Adam, who was with her. Both had therefore broken the commandment of God by eating of this tree.

Is it another coincidence then that the Chinese word for “to covet” or “desire” (婪) very clearly depicts this first act of human covetousness which, in turn, became the first sin? Let us examine the word in detail and you decide for yourself.

婪

This character clearly shows the Chinese words for tree or wood (“mu” 木) and the word for woman (“nu 女”). “So when the woman (女) saw that the tree (木) was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate” (Genesis 3:6). According to this Biblical account, it was the woman who first desired the fruit of the forbidden tree and gave in to the temptation to eat it. This character clearly shows the 2 trees (林) in the centre of the garden and the woman. Still not enough to convince you? How about this one then!

禁

The character is made up of the two trees (林) and the abbreviated word for God (示). This word, it would appear, is a pictographic record of God’s initial commandment regarding these two specific trees. God (示) initially forbade Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and later warned them and prevented them from eating of the tree of life by banishing them from the Garden and guarding it against their return.

Wow! I don’t know about you, but the evidence looks pretty convincing to me! What an amazing study of the language this is! It certainly looks more
and more possible that the ancient Chinese were aware of the story of creation as recorded in the Bible and the Torah and practised what was taught in this record.

Two more examples and we’ll be done! Another one using the two trees points even more clearly to this amazing fact. Let’s look at the word often used to denote Satan the Tempter (mo):

魔

Hidden within this character, we see a number of the elements already discussed. We can clearly see the two trees and the garden in the centre. To look at this word in more detail, we need to study the word for “devil” (gui). In this character, we see a clear account of Eve’s encounter with Satan in the Garden.

First of all, from the pie (両) at the top of the word, we get an indication that something is alive or moving. The word for garden (田) + man + 鬼 private = 魔 (devil) + the two trees + cover = 魔 (Tempter or Satan). Now how is that??

There are so many more examples of these Biblical references hidden within the ancient pictographs of the Chinese language – far too many to be spoken about in this article. I am already way over my word limit! Hopefully this article gives some food for thought. It has certainly convinced me! At the very least, it offers a very interesting insight into the way that Chinese characters are formed. More in the next edition.

McCaulley Campus Shuttle Bus

Andrea Dos Santos
Brisbane

At the McCaulley Campus, getting to and from the university has never been so easy!

As of the beginning of 2009, students have been provided with a free shuttle bus service from the campus to Toombul and Northgate train stations. On weekdays, the bus leaves Toombul on the hour and half-hour and arrives at the Brisbane Campus 15 and 45 minutes past the hour. The first service departs from Grace Street Toombul, (Toombul Railway Station end) at 7:30am with the last service departing at 9:00pm. The bus continues to Northgate Station, Ridge St (ramp side) and then to ACU National.

The Bus leaves the campus (Bus Drop Off Area behind the Library) and heads back to the train stations at 15 and 45 minutes past the hour. The last service leaves ACU National at 9:15pm. On weekends, the bus runs on Saturdays during Library opening hours.

“There has been a significant number of students using the shuttle bus service, particularly during peak hours”, said the bus driver. Students are greatly benefiting from this service. Kate Robinson, a student of the Bachelor of Arts/Master of Education and Teaching, mentioned that the ACU shuttle Bus is a great option for those who depend on public transport. According to Kate, the ACU shuttle bus helps her save 40 minutes on her journey to the university and back home again.

Another student, Lovis Schmidt from Germany, said that the ACU shuttle bus is a regular and reliable service. “It is a great option, particularly, for students who finish classes later at night”, continued Lovis.

Other students, like Caetano Medeiros from Brazil, are even considering using the ACU shuttle bus, instead of their own transport. According to Caetano, having regular services from Toombul and Northgate can help him to reduce on the cost of petrol.

Bus drivers are also enjoying the opportunity of being in touch with young and spirited students from all over the world. “It is a great job and being able to share ideas and discuss opinions with these students is a valuable experience”, said Brian.

The ACU shuttle bus at McCaulley Campus is making transport an easy and convenient option for students.
Hanano Sato  
Nursing  
Melbourne

Adjusting to Australia is not just making Aussie mates or eating at a barbie. It is important to both be a member of and support the Australian community. I myself have experienced home-stay, and sharing a house with Aussie girls. I learnt so much about Australian culture and people by living with them. However, there was an issue I struggled to adjust to. That was saving water! I do not know how many times I was scowled at by my host father because of having a shower for too long. I was so surprised the first time I saw that the girls did not rinse the dishes when they did them!

I am from Japan where we have enough water to last us through each year. I used to have a bath for an hour every day back home and that was the way for us to relax in a bath. However, there is a saying “When in Rome, do as the Romans do”. I believe we international students should show the respect to the Australian culture and adjust in these ways. Now, I usually have shower for 5 minutes maximum. I fill a sink with hot water before doing dishes so that I save some water by not rinsing dishes for too long. Moreover, saving water can be beneficial for all of us both financially and environmentally.

My housemates and I decided to grow some vegetables and herbs in pots in the kitchen so that we can reuse the water used for cooking to water them. Let’s not think that saving water is something you have to do, but that it could be both fun and help us to save money.

Here are some water saving tips that you can start doing from today!

* Have a short shower. You may use a shower timer to set the shower time.

* Stop using running water to defrost frozen food. Ideally place food in the refrigerator to defrost overnight

* Look for washing machines that have a four or more star rating (WELS label) when you buy one

* Fix leaking taps

* Avoid flushing the toilet water unnecessarily

* Do not let water run while shaving or washing your face. Brush your teeth first while waiting for water to get hot, then wash or shave after filling the basin

* Store drinking water in the refrigerator rather than letting the tap drip every time you want a cool glass of water.

All of these things listed are easy to apply to your life from today. Keeping these new water saving habits will make a big difference to the whole community in the long run. As long as we are here together, let’s do our part to ensure the future of Australia and share the natural resources responsibly together!

SWINE INFLUENZA: Tips for keeping it at bay.

With the Winter flu season coming on, the following tips can help you minimize the risk of any flu, even the swine flu!

Adopting good personal hygiene such as covering our mouths when sneezing, washing hands, safely disposing of tissues and good housekeeping with normal household cleaning agents; Avoiding close personal contact with people who may be ill;

If suffering flu-like symptoms (fever, cough and fatigue), stay home, avoid contact with other people and isolate and care for yourself by drinking plenty of fluids, keeping your temperature under control, resting and seek medical treatment;

Likewise, if students report for class or to the Library with flu-like symptoms (fever, cough and fatigue), send them home and advise them to seek medical treatment;

Call your doctor (GP) – if you have an influenza-like illness (fever, cough and fatigue) and have travelled to Mexico or California, Arizona, New Mexico or Texas in the past seven days;

Call your local hospital – if you have pneumonia and have travelled to Mexico or California, Arizona, New Mexico or Texas in the past seven days.

We hope all of our students will have a flu-free Winter.
Buying a Car and Driving Safely in Victoria

Mohit Virmani
MBA
Melbourne

For an international student, driving a vehicle in your own country is a relatively easy and uncomplicated experience. You have family for supervision and advice, you are accustomed to the road and traffic rules, you are familiar with the routes and in most cases you know how to avoid getting into trouble while driving. But driving in a foreign country is an altogether different endeavour. It's scary because you don't know the laws, or the roads; you don’t how the locals drive and basically you have a very limited knowledge of the driving norms. Even if you can read the rules in a handbook, or observe others drive, there is no alternative to driving on your own and getting used to the new conditions.

Let us start with the basics – firstly, you need to have a licence! International students who are on temporary visas are allowed to drive with their overseas licenses. But still, it is recommended to do a driving test in Victoria and get a Victorian licence. In that process you get to learn the rules, train and experience the diverse driving styles and gain confidence in yourself. Students with an overseas licence of less than five years old have to start from scratch and apply for a learner's licence, but those who have had a licence for more than five years can straight away apply for a full licence. Secondly, many students who have a licence are not necessarily good drivers. If you don’t have the experience and confidence to drive on your own, make sure you have an elder with you for training and support.

Next in line is the decision of buying a car. It is rare for international students to buy a car, but those who do should be aware of the responsibilities that are implied in doing so. First and foremost you need to decide if you really require a car. What is your purpose for buying a car? It is usually for travelling to university or your place of part-time work, for leisure or perhaps just to show off to your friends. Anyone can buy a car but only those who really need it should go ahead with the purchase. The next practical thing to do is to decide on a budget. The majority of students go in for a used car, and this requires a lot of research and hunting around to find the perfect car that suits both your needs and your pocket.

As a student's income is generally limited, it is advisable to look through the plethora of car yards and second hand car dealers scattered all over the State. You should have listed all the ‘must have’ features that you want in a car and the maximum amount you are willing to spend. This practice will make it relatively easy to find the car of your choice. There are other options such as browsing for deals on the internet, but it is best to see the car and test-drive it yourself and get full satisfaction. Every car dealer will, in the beginning, quote a bloated price, so do not forget that you can bargain to get the best deal.

What most students do not initially comprehend is that the price of the car is not the final amount they will be spending. There are additional expenses - both compulsory and optional, like car insurance, annual vehicle registration, regular servicing, and maintenance costs. But more significant than the price, is the condition of the car. Whichever car you decide upon, be sure to get a ‘road worthy’ check done to ensure that it is in drivable condition. This is not only a logical thing to do, but it is also a legal requirement for your vehicle to be road worthy. Therefore getting the road worthy certification is both essential and mandatory. You need to check that the brakes are good, the lights are all working, the engine is smooth and well maintained, the tyres are not skidding, and many other details which affect its ability to run properly and safely.

Next you must check and make sure that your selected car has all the required safety protocols - seat belts, air bags, anti-theft device, anti-lock braking and so on. The Australian Used Car Safety Ratings (USCR) is a star rating system that is given to used cars after determining their ability to protect the passengers in case of an accident. So it is wise to check the rating of the car or cars that you have selected and ensure they pass the test. Another important thing to check is the legal status of the vehicle. There are websites that provide a report where you can look up the legal status of the car you intend to purchase. If the car was involved in an accident, stolen, written-off or has an encumbrance, it will be shown to you; and this is important since the car dealers will not provide you with this information.

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All said and done, once your final decision has been made, buy the car you have selected and start getting used to the way it handles. Get a printed or digital copy of the official driving guidelines and get familiar with the road safety norms. All the information about road signs, traffic driving, rules and regulations are provided in the book. It is imperative to follow these guidelines and practice them, preferably with an experienced friend or relative so that you can gain the confidence to drive safely and properly in the state of Victoria. All the states have different driving rules, so if even you plan to take a trip outside Victoria, be sure to look up the varied rules on the internet. Since you will not be familiar with the routes, it is best to purchase a GPS unit and use it for navigation. Please remember that this advice is based on personal experience only. For more exact legal advice, please refer to the traffic authority in your State.

Last but not the least I would like to list some helpful tips that might aid you in driving safely:

Your car is a sophisticated piece of machinery. To ensure that it performs optimally, you must get it serviced at regular intervals, which varies from car to car but normally 3-4 times a year.

Tyre pressure, brake fluid, coolant, indicator lights, etc – these must be checked as often as possible to ensure smooth and safe driving.

When you sit, make sure it is a comfortable position and you are able to clearly see the road ahead, and the rear and side mirrors.

Driver and all passengers are legally required to wear seatbelts at all times.

Never drive without insurance.

Instead of anticipating what the other drivers will do, you should be aware of your own driving and make sure you are following the road safety norms.

Honking is considered rude behaviour, and should only be done if required to alert another vehicle.

There are heavy fines for exceeding the speed limit, jumping red lights and parking in non-parking zones.

Follow the ‘two second’ rule – keep two seconds distance between you and the car ahead. Double this time in wet weather.

The roads get slippery when they are wet. Drive slow during rain and maintain a larger distance between yourself and the vehicle in front.

Practise slowing down to determine how long your brakes take to stop at different speeds.

Avoid using mobile phones while driving, even hands free devices as they cause distraction.

Never drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. You not only risk your life, but also the lives of passengers and other motorists.

Always give way to the pedestrians.

Avoid driving late at night, especially when alone.

Never drive if you are feeling tired or fatigued.

Avoid unnecessary modifications of your car – some accessories are regulated but others only harm your car’s running cost and can hamper driving ability as well as void the insurance.

Do not play loud music in the car; it can be a major distraction.

Have important documents like registration, insurance, etc in the car at all times.

Do not overtake unless you have to, stay in your lane.

All the technology a car provides will never replace the human aspect of driving. Common sense is probably your greatest safety asset. Understanding your own ability and your car’s limitations is an important aspect in ensuring your safety and that of other motorists.

Some useful websites:

www.vicroads.com.au
www.racv.com.au
www.carsales.com.au
Enjoying Photography and Taking Better Pictures

Zha Qian
Nursing
Melbourne

As digital cameras are much easier to use than traditional film cameras, and the price is getting more and more affordable, having your own camera and taking photos is not a dream anymore. It seems that taking photos with a digital camera is so easy that even people who know nothing about photography can do it. Just simply switch to “auto” and it takes great photos. It is true that digital cameras are smart and that you don’t have to worry about exposure, focus, or white balance. However, there still is something you can do to make your photos better and more professional.

Select a camera
The first thing to do is to choose a camera that is suitable for your needs. As a general rule, the more expensive the camera, the better and more professional it is. However, which one to choose depends on what purpose you need the camera for as well as your budget. If you want to buy a camera for taking photos of families and friends, then a $200 one would be good enough for you. If you want to get into photography in a bigger way, then you would probably need to go for those professional cameras which cost over a thousand dollars. So, decide on a budget first and then focus on the ones which are within your budget range.

One of the important things is not to trust what the advertisements tell you too much because they always exaggerate the truth. What you can do is to log onto the Internet and do some research. Make sure you know the features of the cameras and what the terms “megapixel”, “optical zoom”, “digital zoom” etc. mean, then read reviews from people who have used that particular camera before you make your decision.

Read the manual
After you’ve chosen your camera, the next step is to sit down and learn what basic and advanced features your camera has got. Yes, you can leave everything on “auto”, but you will find that there are many settings which can help you take amazing photos. When you read these settings, make sure you practice with your camera as well, because this is the best way to learn about your camera.

Using light
Great light makes great photos. For photos of people, the strong light at mid-day is not a good option, because it leaves harsh shadows on the face. You will find that soft light makes photos of people much better. Examples of “soft” light are; light on a cloudy day or light through a curtain. Sunrise and sunset are what photographers call the “golden hours”. Photos taken during this time always have warm and inviting colors, which make the photos rich and dramatic.

Get closer
Sometimes, photos look better if you just take two steps closer to your subject. When taking photos of a friend or a group, most people like to place everyone’s full body in the frame. However, these photos are always dull because the clutter in the photos draws the eye away from the main subject in your photo. Next time, try to get two steps closer or use the zoom of your camera to get a close up shot and try to fill the frame with your subjects’ faces only especially when they are smiling. This will make an amazing difference to your photos.

Lock the focus
Since most cameras focus on whatever is in the center of the picture, you usually get the wrong focus when the subject of your photo is not in the center, especially when you are using micro mode. To get a clear and sharp view of your subject, you need to lock the focus. First, place your subject in the center of the frame and then press the shutter button halfway down. By doing this, you lock the focus on your subject. Then, re-frame your photo while you are still holding the shutter button halfway down. After that, finish by pressing the shutter button the rest of the way.

Use a simple background
A cluttered background draws the eye away from the subject while a simple background emphasizes the subject. Try not to use a busy or competing background, and also watch out for items in the background that might look odd when photographed. For example: a lamp above your subject’s head.
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The rule of thirds
Most people like to place the subject in the center of the photo. However, this is not the best position. Just imagine a tic-tac-toe grid in your viewfinder, and place your subject at one of the intersections of lines. Then you will find the photos are more dramatic with your subject off the center.

Use lines
Lines in the photo can lead the eye to the center of interest and add depth to the photo. Look for brick walls, sidewalks, the horizon line, fences and edges when you take photos. For example, you can place your subject at a corner where a fence intersects or use a long side walk to “point” to your subject.

Know your flash
It is important to know the range of your camera. It normally is 10 feet. If your subject is more than 10 feet away from the camera, then your flash is not able to cover it. You’ll have to find other ways to increase the light, such as turning the lights on or opening the windows, otherwise you’ll get a photo with your subject under-exposed. You also have to watch out not to place your subject too close to your flash, because the light would be too bright and will blow out the details of your subject. So place your subject in the right position and use the flash to get the right exposure. Another important thing to know is that good photos can be taken without a flash. Personally, I suggest not to use flash unless absolutely necessary and try to use natural light instead. When taking photos at night time, set the shutter speed at a slower speed to let in enough light and use a tripod or place the camera on a stationary surface to keep it steady, then turn off the flash, and you will see the difference.

Red-eye problem
If you use a flash in a dark environment, you often get a red eye effect. This is because in a dark environment the pupils dilate, so the light of the flash gets in and reflects from the retina, which is covered with tiny blood vessels. To avoid the red eye effect, try not to use a flash in a dark environment. Move outdoors, increase room light, position your subject near a light source, or maybe just turn the flash off. Another way is having the subject look away from the lens. Some cameras have got a “red-eye reduction” function and you can just simply turn it on. It works by having the flash shine a light into the eyes of the subject prior to taking the picture. This causes the pupil to contract. However, make sure your subject is looking at the camera when you are using the “red-eye reduction” feature. Otherwise it won’t work.

Use macro mode
Almost every digital camera has macro mode. It is for tiny subjects such as a bee, a flower, or a dewdrop on a blade of grass. Just look for the icon, which is usually a flower symbol. A lot of people may have never used it. However it is such an amazing feature that once you find its magic you’ll never stop using it! Even the simplest objects take on new fascination in macro mode. So just simply switch it on and get as close as possible to your tiny subjects and you’ll find a tiny amazing world which you would never pay attention to with your naked eyes.

Now you must have some basic skills for taking photos. What to do next is to take your camera with you and start to shoot photos. Trust your eyes and practice more, and you’ll enjoy the fun of taking photos.
Do You Recycle?

Liu Yilin
Brisbane

The “yellow lid bin” (in Brisbane) can be found in every household for recycling purposes. This State Government initiative can help Australia to be an environmentally friendly nation. However, not everyone knows exactly what materials can be recycled. Ensuring that we recycle garbage helps to keep Australia clean and green, and if we can get everyone to do this, it will be a significant change to the mentality of many international students who come from countries where this initiative is not so strongly encouraged. The general information provided gives some idea as to what sort of garbage can be put into the recycling bin, but this may differ depending on individual State and local Council regulations.

What can be put in the “yellow lid” recycling bin:
- Plastic containers (without lids)
- Aluminum, steel cans, aerosols and clean foil
- Paper and Cardboard
- Newspapers, magazines and phone books

What cannot be put in the bin:
- Batteries
- Containers contaminated with food products
- Sharps/Syringes
- Ceramics or crockery
- Nappies, plastic bags or wrap

There are some recycling tips that we can use to make this environmental protection easier. We can save space in the recycling bins by squashing plastic bottles and containers, closing the bin lid when collecting and placing items loosely in the bin. Other methods for reducing waste include choosing products that can be recycled and or are refillable, using your own bags or baskets when shopping or reusing plastic bags and reduce packaging by buying in bulk.

These daily efforts can save our land from being further polluted and making the living environment more enjoyable. We can be green if we start recycling our garbage more effectively.

Don’t be Alone in a Foreign Country

Li Cunjing
Brisbane

When I woke up this morning, I suddenly realized that I have already been in Australia for almost one year now! I just can’t believe how much I’ve changed over that period of time!

From one who didn’t even know how to use an oven and always felt shy speaking English to locals, I now seem to have a much easier time of things and everything appears to be going so smoothly for me now. I’ve got a satisfactory part-time job, and have I feel that I have no problems fitting into Aussie life.

However, having said that, I need to say that there are two important factors that play an important part in this progress. One is the support I got not only from friends, but also from the teachers in uni. I’ve never felt luckier than I do now having two of the closest friends anyone could ever want, who are always there when I need help. Apart from that, we help each other through difficult times such as the first time we went shopping with luggage, the jokes we told each other and the laughs we had when one of us was missing home. Moreover, I also feel lucky because I can always get help from the teachers in school. This help covers a wide range of areas from academic help such as how to write an essay, to those life tips about where to go shopping to get cheap stuff. The first year for most international students can be difficult as we have to struggle to adapt to a new life style and cope with the language barrier.

The other factor I found very important is the attitude I have always kept. I don’t know why, but I always think that people here in Australia are very friendly and willing to help, and that’s always proven to be true when I get lost somewhere. Some people may feel discouraged when they get turned down by an employer and stop trying to find a new job, while others never lose hope and always believe better things will happen to them. I say the latter one is the kind of attitude we should all keep. Discouraging things do happen, but when you look back after a period of time, it is just something you will laugh about.

I’m writing this article to all international students, no matter whether you’ve just started life here or whether you’ve been here for a long time. Don’t feel that you are alone! Support is always there when you look for it.
Dear Aunty Rosemary,

People always say that friendship is one of the most important things in life and I have tried to live my life valuing my friends and being a good friend to them. But I have started to wonder whether my friends value friendship as much as I do. I recently lent a sum of money to a close friend. It was not a lot of money (only $250), but she desperately needed it and I just happened to have a little extra at the time. I was happy to lend her this money. However, I find that since lending her this money, our relationship seems to have changed. Although I have not ever asked her to repay this money, (she originally told me that she would pay me back the following month. I told her just to pay it back when she was able to), I noticed that within about 2 weeks of lending her this money, she started avoiding me and seemed to be embarrassed to be around me. I don’t understand why. Is it that she feels ashamed to have had to borrow this money? Or does she feel that she has not yet been able to pay it back and is trying to avoid having to confront this? I really don’t know. I am happy for her to keep the money if it makes her feel better. I am not a rich girl, but I would rather her keep the $250 than for it to affect our friendship. Is friendship so cheap nowadays that a mere $250 can affect it? It’s more that all sorts of psychological dynamics make a mere $250 a complicated matter. Clearly, being generous in life is not enough. It has to be accompanied by a willingness to be thoughtful about the circumstances surrounding our generosity, as, indeed, you are. In this event, you may have lost your friend, as well as your money – an outcome which is blatantly unfair to you. The task of living our lives in ways that are fair to others and also to ourselves is a challenging one – sometimes we get it right; sometimes we get it wrong – and, yet, it is a lifelong project essential for managing our mental lives, which is the responsibility of each one of us.

With kind regards from Aunty Rosemary

Dear Aunty,

I had applied for a part time job at store which is near my place of residence. The job application demanded only availability of 15 hours per week and nothing else in particular. It also stated that it was a suitable job for a student. After I left my resume with them, I never got a call, so I assumed that they had hired someone else. But a few days later I saw the advertisement was still there and so I went to inquire. To my shock the owner told me that the job was only for ‘local’ students and I felt really offended by that. To my understanding, in Australia discrimination on the basis of ethnicity is illegal, is it not? Can I do something about this?

One way lending it can seem a simple emotional (and practical) transaction, the reality is almost always complex and convoluted. Your friend has adopted the defence of avoidance and we know that defences are an attempt to shield ourselves from mental conflict, which in her case, presumably, arises from not repaying you and yet feeling guilty about it. Psychologically speaking, all you can do is to wait on her to find her own way through the maze, but, practically speaking, I would very soon ask her to repay the money to you.

It’s not that friendship is ‘so cheap nowadays that a mere $250 can affect it’. It’s more that all sorts of psychological dynamics make a mere $250 a complicated matter. Clearly, being generous in life is not enough. It has to be accompanied by a willingness to be thoughtful about the circumstances surrounding our generosity, as, indeed, you are. In this event, you may have lost your friend, as well as your money – an outcome which is blatantly unfair to you. The task of living our lives in ways that are fair to others and also to ourselves is a challenging one – sometimes we get it right; sometimes we get it wrong – and, yet, it is a lifelong project essential for managing our mental lives, which is the responsibility of each one of us.

With kind regards from Aunty Rosemary

Dear International Student,

Thousands of years ago, throughout southern Mexico, lived the Toltec, women and men of knowledge, whose beliefs about life include the idea that we often make erroneous assumptions about people and situations because we are afraid to ask questions. Yet our questions are critical because many of our assumptions lead us to misinterpret our circumstances and set us up for suffering.

Your assumption is that the store owner’s preference for local students over international students is based on ethnicity. You could be right. You could be wrong. You do not have enough information to be certain either way. To find out more, you need to return to the store and ask the owner why he / she prefers local students. Is it because the owner wants to ensure that the student can work over the summer vacation and is aware that international students might want to return home instead? Is it because there are occasional extra shifts and the owner is conscious of the 20 hours a week working limit for international students during semester? Is it because the owner is discriminating against you in some way? Is there some other reason we can’t anticipate?

If the owner’s reply confirms your assumption that you are being discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, there are State and Commonwealth laws in Australia, which make such discrimination illegal and which provide avenues for complaint. And I’d recommend that you do complain. Note that a complaint of discrimination cannot be made under both Commonwealth and State legislation at the same time. Forward your complaint to:

Director, Complaint Handling
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC)
GPO Box 5218
Sydney NSW 2001

Complaints Line: 1300 656 419
complaints@hreoc.gov.au
Web: www.hreoc.gov.au

I certainly hope you are able to resolve this situation to your own satisfaction.

All the best from Aunty Rosemary
Crime: What is a Charge and Summons Sheet?

As you are aware, a crime is an offence against society and penalties may include things like fines and jail.

All criminal proceedings, whether for serious or less serious offences, may be commenced at any time by filing a charge with the appropriate court registrar. Such a charge must be on a charge sheet signed by the police.

The charge is an allegation of an offence and the Charge Sheet is the recording of it. Some students may have heard of a Charge Sheet on the news and a few students may have received one and might ask themselves whether they need to attend the hearing. The existence of a Charge Sheet is not sufficient to compel the attendance of an offender at court. The options for compelling attendance are a summons, a warrant to arrest, bail and remand in custody.

A charge is a formal accusation that an offender is guilty of conduct which is an offence in accordance to law. For an offender to be guilty of any specific offence, his/her conduct must be shown to have had the essential features which in law constitute an offence.

The form used in practice is a Charge and Summons Sheet. It often contains both the written record of the charge together with a written record of the means by which attendance is compelled at a specific place and time.

An offender is entitled to be informed of the precise charge or the substance of the charge. A charge must not be ambiguous or uncertain. A proceeding for a summary offence must be commenced within twelve months, except where otherwise provided, otherwise the offence will be statute barred. There is no limitation for the commencement of a serious offence.

Any charge has certain essential elements and the Police Prosecution must prove each element of the charge by admissible evidence that each one of the essential elements have been shown to have existed in the case against the offender beyond reasonable doubt. For example, in a theft situation, the Police Prosecution must prove beyond reasonable doubt, in accordance to the Crimes Act 1958, that an offender has dishonestly appropriated property belonging to another with the intention of permanently depriving the other of it.

It should also be remembered that, the law is very complex and that it is important not to make things more complicated than they need to be.

If you are having trouble with the Police or have received a Charge and Summons Sheet and unsure whether it is a valid Charge Sheet in its content or substance and in the form prescribed by the regulations, and if you do not know what to do and who to turn to for help, get legal advice early. Your International Student Advisor, in particular, may assist you in seeking legal advice from a private lawyer or Legal Aid or a Community Legal Centre. But don’t wait until the last minute!