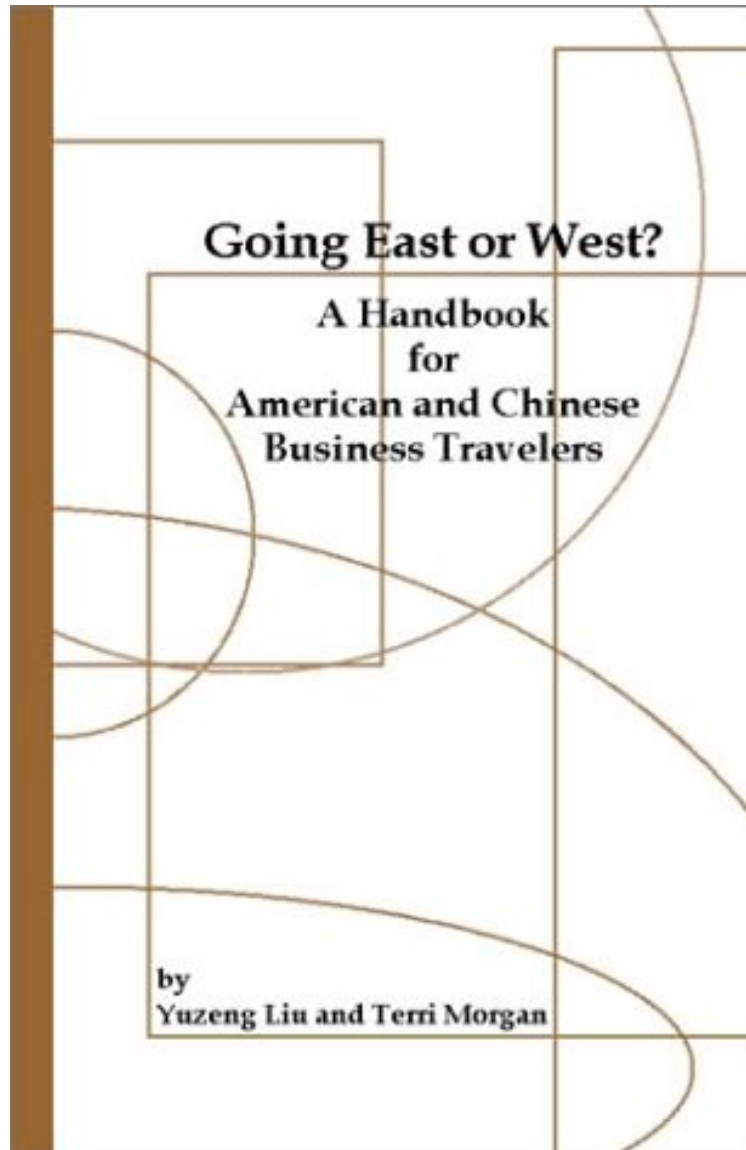


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Going East or West? A Handbook for American and Chinese Business Travelers

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Yuzeng Liu, Terri Morgan : Going East or West? A Handbook for American and Chinese Business Travelers before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Going East or West? A Handbook for American and Chinese Business Travelers:

Clear, concise, and written for busy business people, our book is indispensable for anyone who wants to do business in China or has clients from China. Are you from China? Need help understanding American business culture? This book is for you, too! Brief stories in each section illustrate cultural issues and business situations on both sides of the planet. Our book is the ideal prep tool and makes great in-flight reading. Checklists, phone numbers, and visa procedures (with contacts) are included as are specialized resources and strategic information for business professionals.

From the Publisher This book provides cultural insights and essential resources to specifically address the needs of business travelers going across the Pacific. We have also included a comprehensive internet resource directory. We have selected the best, most stable sources we could find, you can be assured of valid information. Rather than giving advice or providing just another etiquette book, we include brief stories from actual experiences that illustrate significant cultural points for business professionals.

From the Author Everyone who is part of the culture may not share the points of view or opinions we have included, but we believe they represent some of those typically present in the respective cultures. The answers to the questions Who am I?, How do I identify myself?, How do I relate to others? can be found in each individual's background and experience. Why are we who we are? is a question that comes clearly into focus when we are required to engage someone who is completely outside our "normal" sphere of interaction. In addition to providing a resource for travelers, another goal for this book is to provide a resource for those who will receive travelers. Many times, we receive guests without knowing how to treat them or how to make them comfortable. Usually, we would offer to treat a guest in the same way as we would like to be treated ourselves. The problem with this is that what I consider polite may not be the same as what you would consider polite. This book addresses such issues in the context of what business travelers may encounter. We include everything from getting on and off the plane to general tips on handling contract negotiations. Our goal is to provide some insights to how and what the other person thinks so that both can find greater harmony and develop the understanding needed for truly cooperative efforts.

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SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES This section touches on some of the social and cultural issues that business travelers should understand or at least recognize. It is not intended to be a comprehensive social history or critique of either culture; rather, we hope it will provide some insights to the values and personalities that are part of both cultures. In so doing, our goal is to help individuals understand each other and thereby, understand each other's cultures. Will every individual exhibit the traits attributed to his or her culture? No. Will each person have some of these characteristics? Yes, and then some. This is a point worth keeping in mind. For while people do represent their cultures, each individual will have his or her own perceptions based on personal history and the roles he or she plays. While anyone who travels should try to understand and respect the culture of the host country, it is important to remember that you will never meet the culture. Culture is cumulative and abstract. You will meet individuals who may or may not fit whatever profile has been defined for the culture. When it comes down to it, good manners come from a fundamental respect for oneself and for other people, not from knowing which fork to use for the pate. It is our belief that by cultivating relationships with individuals, understanding of the culture will emerge. And, by trying to understand the culture, respect for the individuals who represent that culture will grow, thus making it possible to develop long-lasting and profitable relationships.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE The values held by a culture affect the way people from that culture behave, the way they relate to others, and the way they think of themselves. Americans value independence, self-reliance, and competition. American culture is competitive. There is always a contest to be won or a prize to be had. Americans always want to be first, to be the best, to be the champions. Americans are called cowboys not just because of romantic images from the period of westward expansion, but for impetuous and unrestrained actions, open competition and direct speech. Americans are committed to the notion that each person is unique and has something to contribute. Chinese value compromise, the group, and social harmony. Chinese culture is cooperative. Where an American will challenge; a Chinese will try to mediate. Where an American will assert individuality, a Chinese will relinquish personal status to preserve the harmony of the whole. On the whole, Chinese people are more aware of other cultures and more cognizant of world events than most Americans. American media outlets in the US provide limited views of events in other countries. Even the major US news services which promote World News programs focus almost exclusively on events or stories being followed in the US. How much importance did O.J. really have in world affairs? And the other stories followed by US media? In the US, the view normally presented is a view of the world from within US borders; not a view of the world as it exists from our perspective. While the BBC has maintained a standard for excellence in journalism that is as distinctly British as it is honorable for the profession, the Voice of America has limited itself to a narrow range of views and presents only a tiny window for other people to access American culture. Consider regular news programming. In the US, the national evening news usually starts with coverage of events in the US. Local news programs cover regional and area stories. During the national news, there is only limited mention of US interactions with other countries, unless there is some crisis. The activities of the President will be covered, but may only include domestic items. International news segments that focus on events in other countries are limited and often only provided as part of some special programming. By contrast, the national evening news in China generally keeps a

standard format which regularly includes segments from other countries. International news is presented first, focusing on the Prime Minister and his activities and interactions with world leaders. Next, reports focus on significant events in the rest of the world, and then on significant national events. Weather is given in the last portion along with a human interest or economic success story at the end. Local and regional stories may be presented by local broadcasters following the national news. To be sure, the perspectives presented by US media and Chinese media are different. But the regular inclusion of stories from other countries gives the average Chinese person a wider view of international events than most Americans may have. The average person in China may be aware of events in France or Germany that the average American knows nothing about, simply because stories from other countries regularly appear in the evening news.

Changes Since 1990 Both the US and China have seen any number of social and economic changes during the ten years between 1990 and 2000. But the changes taking place in China are far more radical and far more fundamental than the progression that has formed the basis for change in the US. In the US, technological advances, social progress, and a strong economy have developed as an extension of efforts started during the preceding 30-40 years. In China, the decisions to undertake fundamental economic, social, and technological changes were a departure from previous efforts and have proven a boon for the Chinese people.