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A Future for the Chinese Diaspora and Australia
Great Story and the Golden Rule

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Chinese in Australia have grown into a variegated diaspora with a mainland-born majority. Diasporas are channels of cultural, economic and political influence; and seen as such by sending and receiving countries. They interact in international cultural relations between sending and receiving countries, as expressions of civic virtue oriented to either or both. Cooperative interactions between the respective countries can bring prosperity to all; but when security considerations cast clouds over relations between countries, the concerned countries and communities have careful paths to tread. This input visits the Chinese diaspora past and present. It emphasises the rules of friendship and hospitality as guiding principles for healthy international cultural relations.

Introduction

The Chinese diaspora in Australia is situated at the intersection of migration and domestic social policy (cultural, economic and political) that has shaped international cultural relations over a century. A definition of cultural relations clarifies how diaspora, migration and domestic social policies are akin to international cultural relations. Richard Arndt (2005: 43) views cultural relations (distinct from cultural diplomacy) as "literally the relations between national cultures, those aspects of intellect and education lodged in any society that tend to cross borders and connect with foreign institutions"; such relations can happen autonomously of state programmes. This definition includes international cultural relations, diasporas being channels for relations between national cultures. Members of diasporic communities carry economic values and national identities to their new lands.

An issue that has arisen after 9/11, that is pertinent to migration, has been the porosity of borders to values inconsistent with those of Australian society. Culture and influence sits on the centre of the debate among the public and government. Cross-border social and news media, institutions, and agents compound this porosity. One category of diaspora members, international students, are sojourners or would-be migrants. Chinese students accounted for 37.3% of total international students in Australia, and for over 17 percent of total revenue for nine leading universities (Babones 2019). They have also contributed additional revenue in sectors such as tourism and housing.

Diasporas are more than migrant clusters. The 270 Chinese in Australia in 1845-49 were not a diaspora in today's sense (Australia Bureau of Statistics 2012). The White Australia Policy was a response to labour competition by Chinese sojourners during the Gold Rush in the then Australian colony of Victoria (mid-19th century). The closing of Australia to non-European migrants stymied growth of a Chinese diaspora. It was Multiculturalism Policy that later facilitated Australia's opening-up to Asian migration, and the late-20th century burgeoning of a Chinese diaspora. Diasporas are "networks comprised of transnational identifications that encompass 'imagined

communities' often engaged in the politics and social dynamics of remembrance and commemoration" (Barker 2004: 51). Many members, students included, are keen to support their communities in the new land and old country. This resonates with diaspora policies of sending countries as recounted below. Diaspora members identify with either sending or receiving nations – or both. Additionally, both sides consider a diaspora to belong to them, and as a natural channel of influence with the other side. For these reasons, diaspora members are important actors in international cultural relations. Policy environments, including bilaterally contentious ones, shape diasporic cultural relations.

What motivates diaspora members to engage in international cultural relations between the two countries? Naren Chitty's (2019; 2017a; 2017b) civic virtue model, that posits multiple prompts for civic behaviour – virtue, rules, nationalness, expedience, or combinations – is discussed in the second section. Such activities by diaspora members draw varied responses from the larger diverse Australian community. These range from keen approbation for developing mutually beneficial economic and cultural relations, to sharp disapprobation of influence deemed to be of concern.

This article has two substantive sections. The first looks at the Chinese diaspora in Australia in the context of the development of a facilitative Multiculturalism Policy. The second looks at diaspora and international cultural relations drawing on theoretical frames. It addresses the situation in Australia (circa 2020) and considers whether a resilient diaspora modus operandi is available to generate a modus vivendi for the Chinese diaspora in international cultural relations.

Chinese Diaspora in Australia

From the 1850s to circa 1950 South Chinese migrating *en masse* to Southeast Asia were referred to as overseas Chinese. Many were *hua-gong* [华工]/Chinese labourers fleeing poverty and were significant in the plantation economy era. Some merchants and artisans worked abroad and brought their families and extended clans to the new country, becoming *hua-shang* [华商]/Chinese traders (Wang 1991: 4-10, 21). Up to 1945 they mostly saw themselves as *hua-ch'iao* [华侨]/Chinese sojourners, "who remained politically and culturally loyal to China". Later, from 1950 to 1980, Chinese migrating "from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia to North America, Australia, and western Europe…renounced Chinese citizenship and gradually became *hua-ren* [华人]/ethnic Chinese who pledged allegiance to their host countries." Their descendants, foreign-born Chinese, become *huayi* [华裔]/Chinese descendants. Post-1980, "*xin yimin* [新移民]/new migrants" dominated overall Chinese emigration. The "46 million ethnic Chinese who reside outside of mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macau in the early 21st century" were called "*haiwai huaren* [海外华人]/Chinese overseas" (Liu & Van Dongen 2017). From China's 'reform and opening-up' (1980s) and subsequent trade intensification with Australia, new migrants were no longer mostly labourers. The contemporary Chinese diaspora includes highly educated professionals and students, resonating with Arndt's (Op. cit.) definition of cultural relations. Notably, as Girard (n.d.)[1] reports, "18% of the 25,500 Chinese who acquired permanent resident status in Australia from 2011 to 2012 obtained it through the investment".

Mostly skilled, well-educated and globalist, 'new migrants' have come from professional backgrounds and have pursued self-

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[1] n.d. no date.

developmental and quality-of-life goals: better education, environment, health services, socio-economic status. They include students-turned migrants, professionals and family-uniting or chain migrants (Liu 2010: 185). Chinese have a "fear of losing" (*kiasu*[驚輸]) that motivates social, economic, and academic endeavour and success (Special Broadcasting Service). This drive has contributed to the development of a vibrant Chinese diaspora whose contributions are applauded by major political party leaders in Australia. In 2019, prior to the pandemic, Chinese student enrolments were 260,000 plus – 160,000

in higher education (Hinton 2020). "[T]he influx of foreign students is crucial for the Australian economy with the injection of AUD 22 billion more in 2016-2017, an increase of 18.5% since the previous year. In addition, according to various Australian political actors such as the Australian think tank China Matters, the financial power of Chinese students is an important lever of Chinese policy in Australia" (Girard n.d.). The following tables summarise the Chinese diaspora in Australia.

Table 1: Chinese migration figures for receiving Australian jurisdictions[2]

Migrant numbers & Percentages / Receiving Australian States & Territories	China-born migration (Hong Kong migration included)	Total foreign-born migration	China-born migration (Hong Kong migration included) proportion of total population born overseas
New South Wales	256,100 (303,400)	2,326,400	11% (13%)
Victoria	176,600 (201,000)	1,892,500	9.3% (10.6%)
Queensland	51,600 (63,800)	1,140,000	4.5% (5.6%)
South Australia	26,800 (30,800)	418,800	6.4% (7.4%)
Western Australia	30,000 (37,000)	895,400	3.4% (4.1%)
Tasmania	3,300 (3,800)	67,900	4.9% (5.6%)
Northern Territories	1,400 (1,800)	55,400	2.5% (3.2%)
Australian Capital Territory	11,900 (13,700)	113,500	10.5% (12.1%)
Total	557,700 (655,300)	6,909,900	8.1% (9.5%)

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018 (reporting on 2016 census data)

[2] Since 2017, China-born migrants are second in number after people born in Australia. In 2019, there were 677,000 China-born migrants (2.7% of the population). They are spread across Australia's six states and two territorial jurisdictions with large concentrations in two states: New South Wales 256,000; Victoria 176,000; Queensland 51,000; Western Australia 30,000; South Australia 26,800; Australian Capital Territory 11,900; Tasmania 3,300; Northern Territories 1,400. The median age of China-born migrants was 34, on parity with people born in Australia (Australian Bureau of 2018 Statistics n.d.).

Table 2: Religion and English language proficiency of Chinese in Australia[3]

	Born in China	All overseas born	Australian born	Total
Speaks English only	2.6%	41.9%	90.9%	72.7%
No religious affiliation	73.4 %	26.7%	33.3%	29.6%
Buddhism	10.9%	6.5%	1.0%	2.4%
Catholic, Christian (no fixed denomination), Baptist	6.2%	26.3%	28.9%	26.7%

Source: Adapted from tables in Australian Bureau of Statistics '2016 Census QuickStats Country of Birth'

Chinese cultural organisations in Australia include the Australian Chinese Community Association, Australia China Friendship and Exchange Association Inc., Chinese Heritage Association of Australia; and Chinese Youth League of Australia. There are national (12), and state level (New South Wales and Victoria 15 each; Queensland 8; South Australia 6; Western Australia 4, Tasmania 1) Chinese language media outlets. "Chinese-language media, including social media, have played an increasingly important role in domestic politics. As 'ethnic minority' media, they have been particularly sensitive to multicultural and multiracial policy debates, especially on topics that potentially threaten the Chinese community's political and economic interests, or challenge their cultural values and traditions" (Sun 2016). Additionally, Chinese residents have access to Chinese news (CGTN - China Global TV Network) on cable and satellite television and online – so they are well served. Many, particularly students, rely on Chinese rather than western social media but some use both.

The Chinese diaspora contributed to the development of the mutually beneficial relationship that existed between Australia and China until 2019. Their contributions have been cultural, economic, and social. Chinese cuisine, festivals and language have grown in visibility and popularity. International cultural relations contributions have seeded business. The Chinese diaspora has offered entrepreneurship, investment, international and domestic trading, demand for housing, and professionals. Members have also remitted funds to their families in China. The 21st century diplomatic spat between Australia and China, in which the diaspora has figured, has been of concern to members of the community who wish to see good relations between their countries of origin and adoption/residence.

Overall, the picture of the contemporary Chinese diaspora in Australia is one of a dynamic community that enriches the larger society. It was demand for labour that brought in temporary migrants from Asia in the late 1940s to early 1950s. Republican humanist values and economic

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[3] "The 2016 Census found Australia is home to more than 1.2 million people of Chinese ancestry. Of these, two in five (41 per cent) were born in China, with Australia the second most common country of birth (25 per cent) ahead of Malaysia (8.0 per cent) and Hong Kong (6.5 per cent). Four out of five people of Chinese ancestry (82 per cent) did not state another ancestry. Nearly half of people with Chinese ancestry (46 per cent) speak Mandarin at home, with the other most common languages being Cantonese (22 per cent) and English (18 per cent). Interestingly, more than half of people with Chinese ancestry (54 per cent) reported that they had no religion, significantly higher than the overall national figure (30 per cent). One quarter (25 per cent) were Christian, while Buddhism was practised by 15 per cent of people with Chinese ancestry. A third (33 per cent) of Buddhists had Chinese ancestry, more than any other ancestral group". (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018).

rationality smoothed the way for dismantling of the White Australia Policy. The US South's 'segregation', South African 'apartheid' and Aboriginal Australian peoples' disenfranchisement coexisted malodourously with White Australia. The Holocaust inspired a new UN human rights regime (late 1940s), Australia playing a leading role. Australian Aboriginal peoples were enfranchised in 1962 ahead of the US Civil Rights Act 1964. The Holt Liberal government (1966) removed legal discrimination of migrants based on colour or race (National Museum of Australia n.d. 'a'). The Whitlam Labour government replaced the Act instituting the White Australia Policy with one that banned racial discrimination (1975).

An "official model of multiculturalism" that included "acceptance of ethno-cultural difference and an emphasis upon unity and loyalty to Australia" began with a Labour government in 1973. It was consolidated under the succeeding Liberal government (Moran 2017a). Multiculturalism, a policy approach that would shape international intercultural relations, commenced. Despite being variously tweaked, the broad orientation has survived. Prime Minister John Howard's Liberal government emphasised 'civic duty', 'cultural respect', 'social equity' and 'productive diversity', among others, as the foundations for multicultural policies based on the "evolving values of Australian democracy and 'citizenship'" (Naraniecki 2013: 254). Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's Labour government sought "an increased focus on addressing issues of intolerance"; and aimed to "empower a local response to issues of racism and intolerance" (Koleth 2010). Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's Liberal government emphasised "inviolable individual liberal-democratic rights, the privilege of citizenship with expectations of loyalty and obedience of laws" (Australian Government n.d.: 9).

Diaspora and International Cultural Relations – Theory & Suggestions

Policies of sending countries have been summarised in Exploring Diaspora Strategies: An International Comparison (Ancien et al. 2009), a report on an Irish workshop. Ireland is a major migrant sender with influential diasporas in the United States and Australia. The identified policies include encouraging and supporting the following: Electoral participation; cultural activities and language learning; diaspora social networks; information flows and portals; visits to the sending country; advisory services by diaspora leaders. Also included were the seeking of the following: advice and training from diaspora professionals; remittances to families; philanthropy; business partnerships and investment; supporting business networks; business knowledge networks; business mentoring and internships. Additionally, rewards would be made to "diasporeans who make a significant contribution to the homeland". Receiving countries would look for business networks, cultural inputs, investment, professionals and skilled labour.

Cultural theorists emphasise the cultural consciousness of diasporas (Vertovec & Cohen 1999). New features arise when culture travels, interacts and mutates. These can be saliences and differences; compromises and negotiation; conflicts and contradictions (Clifford 1992). Diasporas are societal ateliers for cultural creativity. When communities carry pasts from an erstwhile to a new space, novel cultures arise in 'third spaces' through 'creolization'. "[P]articipants select particular elements from incoming or inherited cultures, endow these with meanings different from those they possessed in the original cultures, and then creatively merge these to create new varieties that supersede the prior forms" (Cohen 2007: 1). Political and security researchers show how cultural attachments manifest in politics (Ogden 2008: 1-10).

Chinese carry their powerful holistic core culture when they travel – including the traditional concept of civilisation (*wenming*[文明]) signified by *dao*[道] or 'the way'. The core Chinese culture binds together members of Chinese diasporas and communities in China. Chinese diaspora members are naturally keen to extend Chinese culture.

The core Confucian civic virtue *ren yi* [仁义]/benevolent rectitude is part of *dao.* The Howard Liberal government's emphasis on 'civic duty' (Naraniecki 2013: 254); and the Turnbull Liberal government's emphasis on "liberal-democratic rights, the privilege of citizenship with expectations of loyalty and obedience of laws" (Australian Government n.d.: 9). Civic virtue prompts for acting on behalf of a country have been identified as value-based, rule-based, nationalness-based, expedience-based and combinations thereof (Chitty 2020a; 2017b: 455).

Value-based civic engagement is prompted by traditional-moral and secular-rational values; Confucianist and globalist respectively. Chinese overseas students were at the vanguard of China's encounter with modernity and became influentials (Lin 1979). Having embraced economic modernity as sojourners in Australia they, like many other overseas Chinese, are often keen to engage interculturally through negotiating between Chinese and Australian culture and building bridges between Australia and China.

Rule-based civic engagement refers to rule-driven cases such as China's Social Credit System or Australia's compulsory voting. Both include negative sanctions for not engaging in prescribed civic behaviour. Unlike in rule-of-law societies, China sees rule-by-law as a necessity. Chinese diasporas are reactive to changes in China's strength, status and politics. Beijing has expectations regarding the rights and obligations of overseas Chinese that are in some ways not unlike those from Exploring Diaspora Strategies: An International Comparison listed above (Ancien et al. 2009).

Nationalness-based civic engagement is based on emotional attachment to national culture and history. After 1900 many intellectuals and professionals went abroad to evangelise China's cause. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria (1931) and Chinese struggles to restore sovereignty stirred up Chinese nationalism. Overseas Chinese who had assimilated committed to protecting Chinese descendants or re-migrants to facilitate retention of 'Chineseness'. Some of the above features linger in nationalist feelings in today's diaspora. Another factor is economic nationalism arising from China's new trade-based prosperity.

Expedience-based cultural awareness is transactional and often linked to trade in influence. Rewards are reputational and financial. Many Chinese scholars have researched the significance of overseas Chinese in promoting bilateral trade deals and national geopolitical-economic projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative – BRI (Li, Xu & Chen 2017). BRI includes Foreign Direct Investment and human resource transactions that the Australian State of Victoria has deemed to be beneficial. There are mixed opinions about this in Australia. Dual-citizenship and dual-national identities allow diaspora members to maximise their advantage.

Three broad (not mutually exclusive) policy responses have been proposed by Australian commentators that differently impact diasporic international cultural relations. All within a liberal ethos, they are the Great Bridge, Great Wall and Great Story prescriptions. (Chitty 2019: 193-205).

In a Great Bridge approach, Ang (2017: 35-39) notes "[t]he mediating role of the Chinese diaspora in advancing business and cultural links between Australia and China [t]hrough their 'bicultural' social and cultural capital, including

language skills, knowledge of how Chinese businesses operate and access to co-ethnic transnational networks, they facilitate the entry of Australian companies into the Chinese Market". Sun (2019: 22-35) argues that Chinese diasporic media in Australia "seems to exist profitably by actively giving voice to PRC migrants' sense of ambivalence towards both Australia and China". She finds that Chinese in Australia are flexible and could fall on different sides of Chinese issues. She argues therefore members could play a role in Australian public diplomacy. Sun's (2020) "research indicates that when first-generation, Mandarin-speaking migrants become naturalized citizens, they (1) transition to a political system with voting rights and duties; (2) adjust to a different civic culture; and (3) shift to a media and digital communication environment that features two different, even conflicting, political outlooks".

The Great Wall approach calls for legislation against influence that is perceived as clashing with Australian democratic values. Growing security concerns entered the relationship between the two countries in 2018, influencing policy environments relevant to diasporas and diplomatic culture. Medcalf (2018) asks "[h]ow do we protect democratic institutions from foreign interference and influence in ways consistent with both national interests and national values, such as civil liberties, non-discrimination and an inclusive society?"

The Great Story approach (Chitty 2019: 193-205) is about telling the best stories to captivate members of diasporas with stories of the host country's virtues with virtuosity. But it goes beyond in that it is about the way in which international cultural relations can be conducted sustainably, in order to gain a win-win outcome.

The Great Story approach is about telling one's national cultural stories in diasporic settings within a soft power framework that both countries value. There can be both pleasure and

apprehension when two dissimilar cultures meet. Both the pleasure and apprehension of one's interlocutor needs to be understood in framing a story. Over centuries of international dialogue, we have learnt how to avoid raising bristles on the other side through diplomatic practice – within families and communities as well as between communities, nations and states. Host communities and diasporas need to be conscious of this modus operandi in their international cultural relations. The notions of friendship and hospitality are important here. We propose the adoption of a special type of friendship – soft power relationship – at every level of international cultural relations. In a soft power relationship, members of a larger community that consists of various overlapping diasporas will listen to each other; engage in dialogue; exchange values for mutual benefit; develop mutually beneficial relationships; cooperate in humanist projects and eschew violence, coercion, and inducement (Chitty 2017a: 24).

As Onuf (n.d.) writes "displacement from one's homeland" demands "a universally warranted response and finding that response in the traditional value of hospitality". He notes that Kant briefly remarked "on hospitality as a universal duty". Communities need to empathetically – not just professionally – host sojourners (Chitty 2020b). Some members of diasporic communities all over the world experience a sense of alienation. Sun (2017: 31-32) has noted that "a sense of alienation in the Chinese-speaking community, including both PRC migrants and Chinese migrants of other origins, is palpable and widespread." This alienation needs to be mapped and addressed as an essential condition for successful international cultural relations.

Addressing the triangular relationship between diasporas and sending and receiving countries the Chair of the Australian Multicultural Council recognised a time of "growing global tensions and uncertainty" and "enormous

opportunities to advance Australia's economic prosperity through the strengthening of communication and partnerships between government and diaspora communities in Australia" (Ozdowski 2020). For the Chinese diaspora community, it is wise to take the bridge of cultural identities and economic opportunities between new and old countries as a locus of civic engagement where social values are projected and protected. According to Sun's (2020) research first-generation Chinese migrants are eager "to learn about democratic values, practices and processes"; the best way to sustain this "is to promote social inclusion and encourage fair representation" so that those in the Chinese communities who do not feel they belong, begin to feel they do.

Great Story and Golden Rule

How does one straddle alternative cultural derivations of civic virtue? Can there be a successful syncretism here? What might be a modus operandi for international cultural relations that leads to a modus vivendi for the Chinese diaspora in Australia? Which of the three ethics and one position identified by Onuf is best applied to hospitality in this setting: (1) deontological ethics (granting autonomy and requiring treatment "of others as ends and not means to an end"; (2) consequentialist ethics (seeking the "greatest good for the greatest number"; (3) virtue ethics (that "locates the normative thrust of conduct in character and education, and not in rules, whether universal or local") or the postmodern position (focusing on 'othering'). Deontological and consequentialist are incompatible and subject to switching. Therefore, professionalism becomes a way of instilling rectitude in behaviour. Virtue ethics is Onuf's preference (Chitty 2020b). The first of Chitty's four civic virtue prompts is virtue-based. Being hospitable to others is a kind of civic virtue. Being hospitable could signify imbibed virtue, adherence to rules, being inspired by nationalness or influenced by a calculus of

expedience. Virtue-based hospitality will draw on the best values of society (Chitty 2020b). Virtuosity in messaging about hospitality and friendship requires the infusion of genuine empathy that banishes any sense of alienation.

The hospitality that one would expect of a host and a guest is applicable, including in the tertiary sector. Students need to feel respected and welcomed in any host country, city and institution. Many host countries, cities and institutions seek ardently to make students feel respected and welcomed. Guests should not be subjected to any kind of harassment or disadvantage. There are rules against this in many jurisdictions. Yet some students continue to not feel respected and welcome. Is this an effect of professionalisation of hospitality – without there being empathy? The other side of the hospitality coin is that guests should respect the rules of the host society (Chitty 2020c).

We have only to look to Habermasian dialogic communication to be guided in our communication as hosts and guests in the tertiary classroom and between countries regarding tertiary sector issues. John Weir Burton (1965), Australian diplomat and scholar, had already addressed in the 1960s the need for countries to understand each other's expectations. Countries, institutions, and individuals need to find the right formula of virtuosity for their communications with each other.

Chitty (2017a, 23-24; 2015: 1-22) suggests that countries should adopt soft power relations as defined above. In entertaining civic virtue of different origins that overlap, the commonalities should be emphasised. A modus operandi in international cultural relations communication and conduct should start with making the Golden Rule a modus vivendi: Treat others as you would like others to treat you. A reciprocal benevolent rectitude that governs speech and behaviour, characterises sustainable international cultural relations.

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