Non-Verbal Communication

- The Chinese’ non-verbal communication speaks volumes.
- Since the Chinese strive for harmony and are group dependent, they rely on facial expression, tone of voice and posture to tell them what someone feels.
- Frowning while someone is speaking is interpreted as a sign of disagreement. Therefore, most Chinese maintain an impassive expression when speaking.
- It is considered disrespectful to stare into another person’s eyes. In crowded situations the Chinese avoid eye contact to give themselves privacy.

Enjoy your time in China!

What to expect when you go to China
Things to Keep in Mind

The Importance of Face
The concept of face roughly translates as honor, good reputation or respect.

There are four types of face:
- **Diu-mian-zi**: this is when one’s actions or deeds have been exposed to people.
- **Gei-mian-zi**: involves the giving of face to others through showing respect.
- **Liu-mian-zi**: this is developed by avoiding mistakes and showing wisdom in action.
- **Jiang-mian-zi**: this is when face is increased through others, i.e. someone complementing you to an associate.

**It is critical you avoid losing face or causing the loss of face at all times.**

Collectivism vs. Individualism
- The Chinese are a collective society with a need for group affiliation, whether to their family, school, work group, or country.
- To maintain a sense of harmony, they will act with decorum at all times and will not do anything to cause someone else public embarrassment.
- They are willing to subjugate their own feelings for the good of the group.
- This is often observed by the use of silence in very structured meetings. If someone disagrees with what another person says, rather than disagree publicly, the person will remain quiet. This gives face to the other person, while speaking up would make both parties lose face.

Meeting Etiquette
- Greetings are formal and the oldest person is always greeted first.
- Handshakes are the most common form of greeting with foreigners.
- Many Chinese will look towards the ground when greeting someone.
- Address the person by an honorific title and their surname. If they want to move to a first-name basis, they will advise you which name to use.

Dining Etiquette
- The Chinese prefer to entertain in public places rather than in their homes, especially when entertaining foreigners.
- If you are invited to their house, consider it a great honor. If you must turn down such an honor, it is considered polite to explain the conflict in your schedule so that your actions are not taken as a slight.
- Arrive on time.
- Remove your shoes before entering the house.
- Bring a small gift to the hostess.
- Eat well to demonstrate that you are enjoying the food!
- Learn to use chopsticks.
- Wait to be told where to sit. The guest of honour will be given a seat facing the door.
- The host begins eating first.
- You should try everything that is offered to you.
- Never eat the last piece from the serving tray.
- Be observant to other peoples’ needs.
- Chopsticks should be returned to the chopstick rest after every few bites and when you drink or stop to speak.
- The host offers the first toast.
- Do not put bones in your bowl. Place them on the table or in a special bowl for that purpose.
- Hold the rice bowl close to your mouth while eating.
- Do not be offended if a Chinese person makes slurping or belching sounds; it merely indicates that they are enjoying their food.
- There are no strict rules about finishing all the food in your bowl.

Gift Giving Etiquette
- In general, gifts are given at Chinese New Year, weddings, births and birthdays.
- The Chinese like food and a nice food basket will make a great gift.
- Always present gifts with two hands.
- Gifts are not opened when received.
- Gifts may be refused three times before they are accepted.