

View Point from a Social Scientist

By Professor Yu-long Ling

As a social scientist, I have been trained to find an explanation for each time I see a new phenomena. In a sense, I try to explain why things happen the way they do. I do not try to justify why things happened; only philosophers provide justification. I have remained in this country for close to 50 years. There are several phenomena that have caught my eye and have urged me to find explanations for their causes.

The first case is that every year the finalists of the national spelling bee contest are American decedents of India. They are always in the finals and more often than not, they are crowned the champion.

The second case draws us to the Siemens Competition for remarkable talent early on fostering individual growth for high school students who are willing to challenge themselves through science research. Interestingly, Asian-Americans students received half of these awards, even though Asia Americans are only less than 5% of our total population. The third case takes us to the annual McDonald's High School Basketball showcase. Ninety percent of the qualified participants are African-American. The fourth case goes to Olympic swimming. Typically, a large majority of those who qualify to compete at the Olympic level are Caucasian. The last case takes us back to education, but also to the business sector. In general, Jewish people do very well academically and they also find success as business-owners.

Now, why do certain groups of people excel in particular areas? As a seasoned columnist, I know what to avoid. No one dares to explain the aforementioned phenomena based on race. If you do so, you will be labeled a racist. No one wants to be called a racist (I have experienced several cases of prejudiced treatment in the past, but none of those who committed the wrongdoing admitted they were racist). No

one will admit they are a racist. So, let's say that race has nothing to do with these phenomena. Let me repeat, race has nothing to do with it.

The only explanation that we can offer is that different races have unique cultures. Culture is a way of life. Culture also decides priorities in life. Within the broad American culture, we have different sub-cultures. It is the sub-culture which dominates the value of the people who believe and practice their values. In other words, the individual learns to accept or reject certain aspects of life based on their surroundings. It is safe to say that the following socialization agents have a lot to do with our values. A few of these agents are the family, schooling, news media, and peer groups. Through those socialization agents we accept certain core value.

To explain all of this, we must not stereotype; that is something which must be avoided. The idea is that once you live in, and are brought up in a unique culture, you do not see anything wrong with it. If that is the case, we will never make changes. Where is the social mobility that we were promised in our democracy? In our democracy, we believe in equal opportunity. We should not be confined to certain and limited doors. The sky is the limit, but that is not always the case.

One of the great thinkers, Plato, advocated that man was not created equal in talent, but through universal education, each individual would develop within a respective discipline and then overtime, excel in that discipline. Under his utopia, different levels of education would determine your role in society. Of course, Plato was not a democrat. He did not pay too much attention on individual's interests. His view was that each individual should perform their best for the state. Plato's ultimate goal was to create a perfect



Professor Yu-long Ling, a Franklin resident, is a respected expert in foreign policy. He writes this weekly opinion column for the Daily Journal.

society. We Americans do not appreciate such an arrangement. We believe that each individual has a right to search for his/her own happiness. Based on different cultural aspects, however, it is hard for individuals to break through those cultural barriers.

The way I see it is that we have not reached a real democratic society. Families, peer groups, the news media, and schools all have pre-determined and biased values. Our young generation will not be given complete free reign to search for their own happiness. As a result, I am sure many natural talents are wasted. If cultures do not change, we will continue to see this trend where certain groups excel in certain areas. Maybe nothing wrong with that phenomenon. May be I should follow the three wise monkey wisdom: see nothing, hear nothing, and say nothing, and then life will be much easier.

ON ASIA

by Dan Russell

JAPAN

After being elected President of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) on Monday, Japan's Finance Minister, Yoshihiko Noda became Japan's new prime minister on Tuesday because of his party's majority in the lower house of Parliament and some complicated political jockeying. All of this was made possible with the departure on Friday of Naoto Kan who was prime minister and also president of the DPJ.

Noda was immediately urged by Greenpeace to put off opening schools near the nuclear plant crippled by a massive earthquake and tsunami six months ago. They contend that the schools are still unsafe and that the government's decontamination plan is inadequate.

Fukushima city schools are scheduled to reopen Thursday. No parent should have to choose between radiation exposure and education for their child," said Kazue Suzuki, Greenpeace Japan nuclear campaigner. A government spokesperson said it was premature to ask Noda to delay the opening.

CHINA

A Chinese tycoon Huang Nubo is reported to have offered almost 9 million dollars to buy 155 sq miles of land in Iceland's Grimsstadir a Fjollum region. Opponents of the deal fear that the deal would give China a strategic foothold in the North Atlantic. The deal has been approved by private landowners in Iceland, but still must pass approval by the Icelandic governmental which owns part of the land involved. Iceland's Interior Minister, Ógmundur Jónasson, will make the final decision and he said "China has been very active in buying up land around the world so we need to be aware of the international ramifications."

On Tuesday workers pulled 19 miners to the surface from a flooded mine in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. The Hengtai coal mine flooded on August 23 when miners mistakenly drilled into a neighboring mine that was flooded. Forty-five miners were trapped, but 19 managed to escape. Three were rescued on Saturday and a dead miner was recovered on Sunday. Rescuers continue to search for the other three miners.

A 30 year old female day care worker in Shanghai attacked eight children with a knife on Monday, Five boys and 3 girls were taken to the hospital with various cuts and wounds. The children were 2-4 years old and children of migrant workers. The assailant is under arrest.

SRI LANKA

The port project of Hambantota is the showpiece of Sri Lanka's growing cooperation with China. It now has an embarrassing obstacle in the form of a massive rock that is only about 21 feet below the surface at the entrance to the port. It blocks access to deep draft ships which would cripple the port's operations. The government had denied the existence of the rock for several months, but has finally that it does pose a problem for the operations in the new port. Measures will be taken to have it removed.

INDIA

India's recent monetary tightening has resulted in the country's slowest pace of economic growth in 6 financial quarters. Its' GDP came in at 7.7% growth compared with 7.8% in the 1st quarter of last year. The Reserve Bank of India has raised interest rates 11 times in the last 18 months to try to offset double digit inflation. India's central bank, the Reserve Bank of India, has raised interest rates 11 times in the last 18 months in an attempt to curb double-digit inflation, but the measures have led to a drop domestic consumption. In July, auto sales in India fell for the 1st time in 3 years. All of this poor financial news comes in the midst of the country's anti-corruption campaign. Investors are anxious to see what effects the campaign has on the Indian economy.

PHILIPPINES

Typhoon Nanmadol left 16 people dead in the Philippines on Sunday and 8 people missing. It spent only a few hours over Taiwan on Monday and dropped over 20 inches of rain, but was weaker than on the Philippines. About 30,000 were left without power and 8,000 had to be evacuated from their homes. In the Philippines 5 died in landslides, 2 were drowned and a person was crushed by a collapsing wall. From Taiwan the typhoon headed towards the Chinese coast.

ICMA FREE MEDICAL CLINIC FOR ASIANS

Asian patients who can not afford insurance, regardless of status will be treated without charge. The clinic will accept appointment by phone for non-emergency medical problems and diagnostic ultrasound, EKG, routine laboratory work. Non English speaking patient will need to bring interpreter for their appointment.

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Phone:	317-694-3273 (MUST CALL BEFORE COMING)
Date/Time:	Saturday September 27 9 am - Noon Saturday October 29 9 am - Noon Saturday November 19 9 am - Noon Saturday December 17 9 am - Noon

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My Motivation for Volunteering

By Emily WuZhi Fletcher

I believe it is important to contribute to my community and global efforts in order to make the world a better place. There are many people working together on our planet, but our world still needs help. Across the globe, there is hunger, poverty, pollution, and many children do not have the opportunity to go to school. If I am not willing to help in small ways, then how could I encourage others to join in? As Gandhi said, "Be the change you wish to see in this world."

It is important to help people when their luck is down so they can recover and get back into the stream of health, school, work, and community. For example, giving people food when they have none helps nourish them so they can be healthy and make good decisions about how to improve their situation. When they are healthy, they can go to school or talk to a job coach to get a job. Then they can take care of themselves and their families and eventually others. It is a big circle.

Volunteering to help others has also given me the opportunity to learn more about a variety of people and life circumstances. Understanding more clearly what people are going through allows me to be more compassionate and of better service.

In my local community, I have helped those less fortunate by collecting food for the Hamilton County food pantry. I have also participated in projects at our church to help feed those in need. In addition, I have been very involved with collecting and organizing donations for

our church Holiday giving program which provides clothing and essentials to people registered at 6 nonprofit agencies in the Indianapolis area. All of these efforts help to make life better and easier for those going through challenging times. In the area of health, I participated in the Heart Walk. The purpose of the Walk was to educate people about heart health and raise money for research and advancements in cardiac care. In order to help kids who are dealing with illness or homelessness, I organized my own service projects in my neighborhood and collected 61 videos for the children at Riley Children's Hospital and 77 books for the kids at Third Phase. I enjoyed the opportunity to do this for the kids so they could have something new and fun to watch and read. Later, I found out about Camp Firefly in Georgia, which provides a camp experience for terminally ill children and their families, and made donations to them. I have also been helping others beyond our own borders in the global community. A couple years ago, I asked my parents if we could sponsor a child through World Vision in South Africa. Since then, I help to collect money to sponsor Luxolo so he can attend school and receive the medical care he requires. In addition, I help to sponsor babies and children living in orphanages in China waiting for their families. Both of the organizations Half the Sky and Love without Borders use the donations for special care programs to make their lives better for those living in an orphanage.

Overall I think volunteering is



Emily Fletcher is the first place winner of the 2011 Indianapolis Association of Chinese Americans (IACA) - Telamon Competition for Middle School. Emily just completed her 8th grade in Clay Middle School when writing this essay. The competition is based on an essay with the theme selected by IACA and the candidate's volunteerism. Emily has demonstrated her excellence in both categories.

Good luck Emily on your future endeavor.

very important. It gives people a chance to better understand others and reach out and get involved with them. This creates a stronger awareness of our connection with one another that expands far beyond our families, our communities, and our country... to all over the world!

Zoo Mystery:

HOW DID APES AND BIRDS KNOW QUAKE WAS COMING?

By Joel Achenbach

Her name is Iris, and with her straight, elegant, red-orange hair she is beyond dispute the prettiest orangutan at the National Zoo. She's calm, quiet, unflappable. "Iris lives the life of a queen," says great-ape keeper Amanda Bania.

On Tuesday afternoon, the queen lost her cool.

It happened a little before 2 p.m. Primate keeper K.C. Braesch was standing just a few feet away when Iris emitted a loud, guttural cry, known to scientists as belch-vocalizing. Iris then scrambled to the top of her enclosure.

Braesch stepped back and scanned the enclosure to see what might have agitated the ape. Was it Kiko, the male? Although generally a lump, Kiko can turn into a hothead and throw things. But no, Kiko was lounging.

Then — all this had happened within about five seconds — Braesch felt the earthquake.

"Animals seem to know," she said Wednesday. "You always hear it anecdotally, but this is the first time I've seen it."

Orangutans, gorillas, flamingos and red-ruffed lemurs acted strangely before

humans detected the historic magnitude-5.8 earthquake. Now the question hovering over the zoo is: What did the animals know, and when did they know it?

Therein lies a scientific mystery, one in which hard facts and solid observations are entangled with lore and legend. There has been talk over the years about mysterious electromagnetic fields generated by rupturing faults. There has been speculation about sounds inaudible to humans, and subtle tilting in rock formations, and the release of vapors that people can't smell.

But there also may be less to the mystery than meets the eye, with Tuesday's zoo weirdness merely serving as a reminder that many wild animals are paying close attention to nature while humans are doing whatever it is that humans do.

The zoo documented a broad range of animal behavior before, during and after the tremor that began in central Virginia and shook much of the eastern United States. For example, a gorilla, Mandara, shrieked and grabbed her baby, Kibibi, racing to the top of a climbing structure just seconds before the ground began to shake dramatically. Two other apes —

an orangutan, Kyle, and a gorilla, Kojo — already had dropped their food and skeddaddled to higher turf.

The 64 flamingos seemed to sense the tumult a number of seconds in advance as well, clustering together in a nervous huddle before the quake hit. One of the zoo's elephants made a low-pitched noise as if to communicate with two other elephants.

And red-ruffed lemurs emitted an alarm cry a full 15 minutes before the tremor, the zoo said.

During the quake, the zoo grounds were filled with howls and cries. The snakes, normally inert in the middle of the day, writhed and slithered. Beavers stood on their hind legs and then jumped into a pond. Murphy the Komodo dragon ran for cover. Lions resting outside suddenly stood up and stared at their building as the walls shook.

Damai, a Sumatran tiger, leaped as if startled but quickly settled down. Some animals remained agitated for the rest of the day, wouldn't eat and didn't go to sleep on their usual schedule.