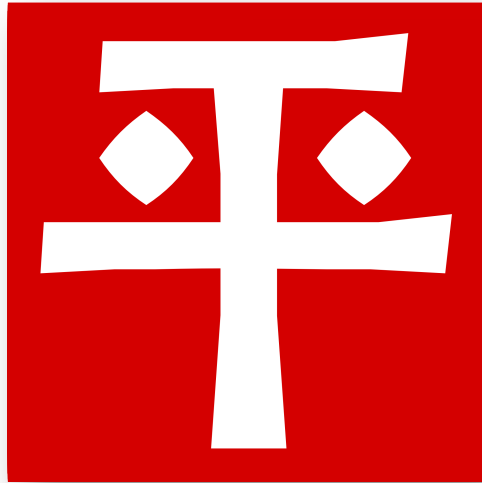


PROJECT PROPOSAL

for

PING



HOW TO FIND YOUR PLACE IN A
CONSTANTLY CHANGING WORLD

What the West can learn from the East

师中平
TIM F NASH

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TYPE OF PROJECT

Non-fiction book with accompanying video presentation material and tools for franchiseable workshops and consultancy.

SUMMARY

The world has changed. Change is the new normal. No-one knows what the future will look like – only that it will be different. So how do we find our place in a changing world?

The meteoric rise of China, along with the Internet Revolution and the economic crisis in the West, are the principle drivers of that global change.

The West is losing the influence, security and identity it has grown accustomed to. We are discovering again that we are not invincible, independent or eternal. And that is scary.

Meanwhile, China is going to the moon – literally. When they get there, will there still be a place for us?

Ping reveals the top secrets that the West can learn from the East in order to face an uncertain future with confidence and without fear. The key to finding our own place and to being at peace with others is to hold opposite forces in balance rather than seeking to resolve the tension.

AUTHOR

Tim F Nash is the founding director of Access China Ltd, a company that conciliates flourishing business relationships with China.

Tim is a trainer and consultant with over 20 years of experience working for clients that include Burberry, Coutts, Lloyds of London, HSBC and PwC. He has an excellent track record in solving performance issues caused by a lack of understanding between peoples, cultures, offices, departments and sectors.



Tim is a Mandarin speaker with an encyclopedic knowledge of China and an extensive background in business development, Internet technology and education. He is a creative and inspiring communicator with outstanding interpersonal skills and superb attention to detail.

Tim has degrees in Chinese from Oxford University, in Education from Cambridge University, and in Inter-Cultural Communication from the Open University.

COMPETING & RELATED TITLES

The following books address some similar themes. Their popularity, plus the plethora of other publications and blogs on China for Western readers, have proven the market.

- *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth and Faith in the New China*
Evan Osnos, 2014
- *Global Mindset Leadership: Navigating China and U.S. Business Cultures*
Dr. Gary Ranker, Donny Huang & Marilyn McLeod, 2014
- *When China rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order*
Martin Jacques, 2012
- *Decoding the Dragon's Mindset: Inside China's Destiny and its Hint to the World*
David W. Wang, 2009
- *What the West Can Learn from the East: Asian Perspectives on the Psychology of Learning and Motivation*
Oon Seng Tan, Dennis M. McInerney, & Arief D. Liem (Editors), 2008
- *China Road: One Man's Journey into the Heart of Modern China*
Rob Gifford, 2008

There are many publications which aim to provide Westerners with insights into the Chinese world – Ping uses the Chinese world to provide Westerners with insights into themselves, and in the process lowers the dividing wall of hostility and creates a new platform for East and West to engage more successfully with each other.

STATUS OF THE PROJECT

The ideas for this project have been developed and tested in a variety of contexts in both the West and China over 25 years. The key messages and themes for the project have been identified, but I do not yet have a full manuscript. I am looking first for an agent and/or publisher.

COMMENTS

The closest model I have for this project is *The Advantage: Why Organisational Health Trumps Everything Else In Business*, Patrick Lencioni, 2012

"I've reviewed your proposal and it looks good."
Amy Hiatt, Patrick Lencioni's 'The Table Group'

"Extremely useful and relevant ...
has already helped me avoid further problems." *RBS Coutts*

"Thank you for helping me go down a path that has changed my perception of humanity and awareness of others, and also has opened my eyes to a part of the world I knew little about. I can't thank you enough." *University Student*

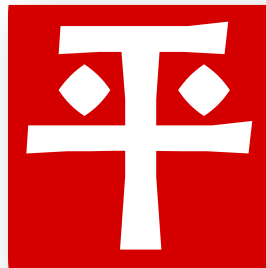
"This looks a great idea ... and the topic you're proposing is certainly a hot one. And I know from experience that you'll have some really valuable insights to share."
James Featherby, 'Of Markets and Men'

SAMPLE

All my life I've been trying to find my place in a world where I felt I didn't properly fit into any of the categories presented to me. With the world constantly changing at such a great pace, it has become harder than ever to find our place - and that is scary.

I can tell you several things about me that are true (I'm a linguist, a teacher, from the island of Jersey, British, and male) but they will almost certainly give you an overall impression of me that is false. The way to get the fullest picture of who I am is not through definitive labels like these but rather by holding contrasting elements in tension: I'm male, but I've grown up in predominantly female environments; I'm a teacher, but I've never wanted to work in schools; my roots are in an International Finance Centre, but I didn't want to be a lawyer, accountant or banker; I'm a linguist, but I didn't learn to read till I left university etc.

This is "Ping":



It sounds like a light-bulb moment, or a cash register, or the hitting of a target, doesn't it? Ping is a stylised icon for weighing scales. In commerce (trade), health (diet) and justice (society) we use scales to compare a new thing with a pre-existing standard in order to judge whether or not that new thing is identical, or at least equivalent, to the standard. But in "the new normal" there is no standard for one side of the scales.

Time to Ping - to shift our focus from the pans of the weighing scale to the beam between them: our goal is to get the beam to balance, and that is achieved by holding the contents of the two pans in tension. Maintaining balance is a continual process of adjustment and re-adjustment: adding to, taking from or shifting between the contents of each pan. This is liberating and exciting.

The default we have inherited is either for one to obliterate, dominate or subsume the other; or else for the two to homogenise in a lowest common denominator that impoverishes both. We are right to fear both of these options. By contrast, Ping is about maintaining a peaceful, enriching tension in the interaction of two or more individuals/disciplines/communities/nations etc. With tension, our muscles become stronger; without it we get flabby.

There will always be fixed points for both sides, but there is a much bigger, more dynamic and excitingly liberating space in between.

MORE SAMPLES

of Tim's reflections on what the West can learn from the East at:
<https://www.linkedin.com/today/author/388951>

APPROACH

Some people are interested in China and Chinese, some are not. Tim happens to love the language, the people and the civilization but his passion is not to inform about China; rather, he takes China as a case-study that sheds light on the West, because it is easier to look objectively at someone else than ourselves.

No-one would argue that China is not different to the West. But the reality is that the people in Accounts are different to those in Marketing; the North is different to the South; each of us is indeed different to every other person. Exploring how to build bridges between East and West teaches us how to find our own place in the world and how to get on with others – whether we ever go near China, or not.

WHO THE OTHER FIFTH ARE*

*Tim demystifies China and re-humanises the Chinese people
to break down the dividing wall of hostility*

The Chinese picture their civilisation as a river in which they are 5000 years downstream. While most consultants focus on data about China, Tim believes that if you want to engage with China at all you have to jump into that river – for however long or short a time. For us, the framework (the overall story) is more important than the detail (the statistics).

HOW THE OTHER FIFTH THINK *

*Tim provides insights into the Chinese language
to improve your ability to think and to connect with others*

Mandarin Chinese is humanity's biggest and most enduring medium for thought with more native speakers than English and Spanish combined. While most businesses focus on language as a barrier to be overcome by translation/interpretation and (for those that have years to spare) study, Tim believes that every minute of insight improves our ability to think and to connect with others. For us, language is primarily about thought and only secondarily about communication.

WHAT THE OTHER FIFTH SEE*

*Tim shows you the world through Chinese eyes
to give you a fuller perspective on yourself and to help you to thrive*

The Chinese have a poem which describes how a Mount Lu looks very different depending on which position you view it from. Which means that to get the fullest picture of something, we must learn to see it from multiple perspectives. While most advisors focus on how to push your message to the Chinese, we believe that to deliver value you need to see yourself through Chinese eyes. For us, there is more to learn about ourselves than about others in engaging with foreign cultures.

Ready for 20% more?

Let Tim show you why China is a catalyst for fulfilling your greater potential.

* Approximately 1 in 5 human beings is Chinese

OUTLINE

8 chapters each asking the question “What?”; an introduction to a changed and changing world; and a conclusion that presents the Ping principle.

Ping draws on Tim’s 25 years of experience in China, business and the Internet industry to present keys for personal, social and commercial success in today’s ever-changing world.

INTRODUCTION

Same, same – but different

A famous Chinese fable tells of a farmer who was ploughing one day when a rabbit ran through his field into a tree stump. Delighted to be able to feed his family that night, the farmer took the rabbit home for the cooking pot. Thereafter, he returned to his field each day, no longer to plough but just to wait for the next rabbit to present itself for dinner. The West is in danger of sitting by the tree stump, expecting that what has happened previously in history will go on repeating itself.

The East is bigger than China, of course, but Chinese civilization has been the most pervasive influence on Eastern cultures. This book is more concerned with paradigms than specific cultural details.

The goal is for each of us to find a place where we can flourish in an ever-changing world. That will necessitate living in peace with those who are different to us – whether they be other members of our family, personnel from other departments in our company, or people we encounter in a foreign land.

1. RIVER

What’s the story?

The Chinese picture their civilization as a 5000 year long river. This is a source both of pride and of fatalistic resignation. The significance for us is to recognize that, like it or not, we are part of a tradition, a heritage, a story and reconciliation - with others or ourselves – begins with identifying and articulating the story that we (or our counter-part) are a part of.

When the Channel Islands were considering an art project to celebrate the unity between their communities, they began planning a number of events on each island. By contrast, Cai Guoqiang – the artist responsible for the fireworks at the Beijing Olympics – saw the Channel they shared rather than the separate islands and encouraged them to build a boat that would float around and between them.

When a river meets a rock, instead of seeing it as a barrier to be broken down, it sees it as a fixed point to flow around. The river teaches us to focus on the immense freedom we have instead of fixating on the relatively small number of limiting parameters.

Labels are useful tools, for finding a taxi driver or choosing a doctor for example. But too often we restrict a person’s identity to the narrowness of a label, using that label for one facet to explain the whole: “well, she is Italian” or “of course you’d say that, you’re a man” or “I wouldn’t trust her, she’s a lawyer.”

We need to listen and observe what the reality is instead of leaping to a why and projecting an assumed reality based on our expectations.

2. REN

What is your role?

The person that has defined the flow of the Eastern rivers more than any other is Confucius (c.500BC). His philosophy is summed up in just four strokes of a brush: 仁. Over the centuries, countless volumes have been written about this Chinese character because each time Confucius himself was asked what it meant he gave a different answer. 仁 is not a word to be translated but a picture to reflect upon. It's a symbol for an idea.

仁 is comprised of two parts: a 'person' (on the left) and the number '2' (on the right). It has the same pronunciation as the word for 'person,' suggesting that it encapsulates something fundamental about what it means to be a human-being.

Amongst other potential interpretations, it surely means that 'no man is an island'; that our identity is found in relationship to others. The priority is to recognize and to fulfill our role in each particular relationship. This is the reason for business cards in Asia: to present an individual in terms of their role in a larger whole. Valuing a person's role leads to restraint, compliments and other natural behaviours typically classified as peculiar 'etiquette.'

The Ancient Greeks told a story about a commoner who told Damacles that he would love to be king, even if only for a day. Damacles granted his wish and allowed him to spend a day sat on his throne. But to ensure the commoner truly felt what it was like to be king, Damacles hung a sword by a single horse hair over his seat. Chinese has a similar story represented by the character 忍 (also pronounced 'ren' like 'human,' though with a different tone), which shows a blade resting on your heart.

The emphasis on individual relationships teaches us to "shorten the chain" – the financial crisis of 2008 and countless other dis-functions occur when the connection between people becomes too remote or is lost altogether. It is much harder to be dishonest when you are looking someone in the eye. By contrast, with constantly changing circumstances or legal frameworks, security is found not in disembodied contracts but rather in personal 'friendships.' The way to extend your reach is through developing a network of personal contacts.

In all of this, each relationship begins with your initiative rather than your reaction.

3. THE WAY

What are your counter-balances?

The second greatest influence on the flow of Asia's rivers is the concept of 'The Way' (道, pronounced 'Dao' though sometimes spelt 'Tao') in which everything in the universe results from the interplay between polar opposites as they continually ebb and flow. These opposites are classified as Yin and Yang, represented by equally-sized white and black tear drops that form two dynamic halves of a single circle. This is not about good and evil in a fight for supremacy but the equal value of both light and dark, hot and cold, male and female, and so on. Life, health and flourishing are found in the tension between the two.

The next step to identifying the roles you have to play is to identify the value of others in counter-balancing your contributions and completing the whole.

4. HEAVEN

What is the bigger picture?

The third greatest influence is a sense of ‘something greater’ – that who we are and what we do is just a part of a whole, most of which we remain completely ignorant of.

Over the centuries, a variety of ‘greater somethings’ have held sway at different times and in different places: the concept of 上帝 (Shang Di) – a God over all for whom, in the Temple of Heaven in Beijing, the central gateway was reserved where elsewhere this was the entrance for the emperor; a Golden Age in the past that Confucius looked both back to and forward to; ancestor worship; kitchen gods and other Immortals; the wheel of life and Nirvana described in Buddhism; a Marxist-Leninist utopia. The goal was alignment, most commonly represented by the centring of a square (representing the earth) within a circle (representing the heavens).

It’s a humble recognition of our own limits and a willingness to submit to something or someone greater. It preserves a vital sense of mystery, awe and astonishment. But even at more down-to-earth level, it encourages us to look for our ‘human common denominators’ and to use them to translate concepts from one context into another.

5. UNITY

What unites you?

Chinese civilization traces its origins back 5000 years, to a community that lived in the Ordos Loop of the Yellow River. Through a blur of legend and history, they are credited with creating the quintessential Chinese cultural identifiers such as tea, silk, character-writing, the calendar and traditional Chinese medicine. Over the next three millennia, this community grew and expanded until it was dispersed across a vast geographical area and organized into rival kingdoms.

In 221BC, the ruler of one of these kingdoms finally succeeded in conquering all the others and forming a unified political entity under his own banner of Qin (pronounced ‘Chin’ and romanised as ‘Chin-a’). He declared himself to be China’s first emperor and is memorialized in an exquisite underground tomb guarded by an army of Terracotta Warriors.

Though successive centuries saw the imperial system repeatedly crumble until it was swept away completely in 1911, the overriding sense that China *should be* united and disintegration is anathema has persisted. Thus the popularly supported government refusal to even contemplate a political separation of the Tibetan or Uyghur peoples.

However divided your views on particular issues might be, flourishing with others begins with first finding the small number of fundamentals that will unite you: a shared vision; common resources; agreed standards or protocols. These are the basis for trust and loyalty through the tumult of issues and changing circumstances.

6. CHALLENGES

What can you help with?

Western nations are facing crises on multiple levels, but so too is China and our flourishing involves recognizing and identifying with the challenges that others are facing.

When you are responsible for the security and well-being of nearly 1 in 5 human beings,

what infrastructure should you put in place to ensure representation for all people? Is there a limit to how big a human organization can get?

It is deeply engrained in the Chinese psyche that there are too many Chinese people. What do you do about that? What does it do to your sense of self to believe you are one of too many? Restricting families to one child may seem pragmatic, but how do you enforce such a policy without dehumanizing people and creating even greater problems for society than over population?

Economic growth has been phenomenal over the last 30 years, but the opportunities of the emerging cities have broken up family relationships and other long-established social structures.

Industrialisation has brought incredible improvements in people's standards of living, but – as in all industrialised countries – had a devastating impact on the environment. How do you continue to deliver the benefits to an expectant population whilst protecting the environment?

Those who are given power and wealth are continually tempted to abuse it. How do you deal with corruption?

These are some of the very real challenges that the people of China face today and what they actually care about (rather than whether Chairman Mao was 'a good egg' or not). Will we identify with these challenges? Will we sympathise? Will we wrestle with the issues and consider how we might be able to offer help? Or will we remain focused on what we can get out of the situation for ourselves, even if it is nothing more than a sense of superiority for being able to see others' failings so clearly?

7. PERSPECTIVE

What alternatives are there?

There is an old Chinese tale of a frog who lived in a well, happily splashing through the water and mud, feasting on bugs and insects that were in plentiful supply, and enjoying the neat disk of sky above him as it regularly changed hue. When a sea-turtle happened upon the well one day, the frog invited him to join him in paradise but the turtle quickly discovered he was much too large to fit down the well shaft. He invited the frog instead to come up and experience the boundless expanse of sea and sky above ground. The frog scoffed that nothing could possibly compare with the wonder of the world he lived in.

We all look at the world from our own perspective, as if we were at the centre of it. The Brits asserted that they were at 0 degrees longitude and everyone else was either to the east (right) or west (left); the iPhone featured an image of the earth taken from space that shows not just that North America is in the centre of the world but that it IS the world. No surprise then that the Chinese call their country the "Central Nation" or "Middle Kingdom." And yet, of course, the world is a sphere so no country is in the middle.

A Chinese poem reminds us that the same mountain is a different shape depending on where we are looking at it from and that the only people who cannot see any of the classic 'Toblerone' profiles are those who are actually on the mountain. It's a reminder that whatever our perspective, there are always other perspectives to discover and a fuller understanding to acquire. Ironically, it is in engaging with the perspective of others that we get the truest view of ourselves.

We think of the Internet as Google, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. In fact, none of

these are available on the Internet in China and yet the Chinese language Internet is as big as the part that is in the English language. If you search in a Chinese search engine, you will get results in Chinese and English; if you search in an English search engine, you will get results only from non-Chinese sites. As a result, China looks at the world with two eyes open; we look at the world with one eye shut but think we see the whole.

When my son was in primary school in China, his maths teacher asked all the students to get out 12 counting sticks from their pencil cases. She then proceeded to ask each student in the class how they knew they had 12 sticks on their desk: some had counted the sticks out one by one, some had got them out in pairs; others had laid them out in four groups of three or two rows of six or three rows of four; some may even have created a 'clock face.' The observation had a profound impact on me: the lesson was not that each child had successfully got out 12 sticks, but that there were almost countless ways available to check that each child had successfully got out 12 sticks.

This helped me to finally appreciate Chinese art, which I had previously dismissed as 'childish' because of its lack of perspective. What I discovered was that it used a different kind of perspective, appropriate to the context. The received wisdom in the West is that lines in a picture recede to a vanishing point on the horizon. But this only works if the view is static. With a Chinese scroll painting, the viewer is meant to be active – to move along the picture through different scenes.

Time provides another illustration. As a sweeping generalisation, the West tends to view time as a line along which we progress; the East tends to view time as a circle round which we cycle. Of course, there is both a linear and cyclical dimension to time and we do best to consider both.

What we typically lack is the ability to move between the macro and micro, the elevators which allow us to move between the different insights we get at different levels. We are so used to working in vertical silos (industries, professions, geographies) that we fail to see the bigger picture.

8. LANGUAGE

What are you thinking?

Languages are usually analysed using the framework of our mother-tongue. But when a language uses a fundamentally different paradigm, this process makes the language look extraordinarily difficult and obtuse. While languages are of course a means of communication, they are first and foremost a means for thought. Which means that if we can identify the human logic behind a language, it will become much more intuitive. But it also means we will discover an alternative process for cognition. Malcolm Gladwell explores the possible connection between the structure of Mandarin Chinese and the higher levels of mathematical skills in the general population compared to that of English-speaking countries.

The Chinese language – with no articles, genders, agreements, spelling changes, irregular forms or tenses – provides a particular instructive illustration of this truth. Could this be the language for those who, based on their experience of other Indo-European languages, have concluded they are 'hopeless at languages'? The character system (symbols representing concepts as opposed to alphabetic letters transcribing spoken sounds) open our imaginations to ideas and connections we may not have seen otherwise.

As I listened to the cacophony of conflicting descriptions of the Credit Crunch on

British and American media, I remembered the Chinese character for credit is: 信. This character shows a person standing by their word. Credit is simply (and indeed etymologically) a matter of 'trust' – whether or not someone trusts you to be able to pay back any money they lend you.

Having processed our thoughts, we communicate in a variety of ways – and only some of them verbal. Effective communication pays attention to what is actually being understood rather than what we intended to say, and we delude ourselves if we think we can contain genuine human relationships in written words in a contract.

PING

Connected, committed and dynamic

Instead of seeking to disrupt or dominate, we need to recognise the value we have in connecting with others in the eco-system around us and enabling them to thrive by connecting through us.

We find health and flourishing by maintaining tension rather than trying to resolve it. This is not a one-time achievement, like an educational qualification, but an on-going dynamic process because all living things are changing continually.