

*Young gangsters distort Golden Rule:
Do unto others for what they did to you.*



U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

121384-
123189

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by

Pepperdine University
National School Safety Center

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner.



Pepperdine University's National School Safety Center is a partnership of the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education. NSSC's goal is to promote safe schools free of drug traffic and abuse, gangs, weapons, vandalism and bullying; to encourage good discipline, attendance and community support; and to help ensure a quality education for all children.

Ronald D. Stephens, Executive Director
Stuart Greenbaum, Communications Director
Ronald W. Garrison, Field Services Director
James E. Campbell, Business Manager
Bernard James, Special Counsel

Pepperdine University NSSC Steering Council:
David Davenport, President, *Chair*; William B. Adrian, Provost, *Vice Chair*; Andrew K. Benton, Vice President, University Affairs; Nancy Magnusson-Fagan, Dean, Graduate School of Education and Psychology; Ronald F. Phillips, Dean, School of Law; Charles B. Runnels, Chancellor; Ronald D. Stephens, Executive Director, NSSC; John G. Watson, Vice President, Student Affairs; and James R. Wilburn, Vice President and Dean, School of Business and Management.

School Safety

School Safety is published by the National School Safety Center to communicate current trends and effective programs in school safety to educators, law enforcers, lawyers, judges, government officials, business leaders, journalists and the public. Publication dates are September (Fall issue), January (Winter issue) and May (Spring issue). Annual subscription: \$9.00.

Ronald D. Stephens, Executive Editor
Stuart Greenbaum, Editor/Art Director
Brenda Turner, Suzanne Harper, Associate Editors
Cynthia Randolph, Photocompositor

Articles in this publication may be reprinted — excluding individually copyrighted material — with credit to *School Safety*, NSSC and a copy of reprints to NSSC. *School Safety* encourages the submission of original articles, artwork, book reviews and letters to the editor and will review and consider each item for publication.

Correspondence for *School Safety* and the National School Safety Center should be addressed to: National School Safety Center, 16830 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 200, Encino, CA 91436, telephone 818/377-6200, FAX 818/377-6209.

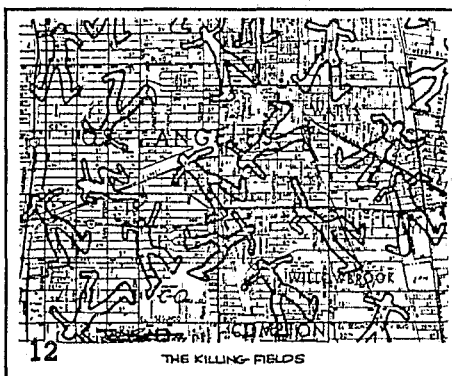
Prepared under Grant No. 85-MU-CX-0003 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Education or Pepperdine University.

Copyright © 1989 National School Safety Center.

About the cover:

Gang "brothers" pose for this portrait, proudly flashing their gang hand sign. Photograph by Merrick Morton.

CONTENTS



4 When you're a Crip (or a Blood)

123184

12 LA's gang busters — lessons learned

By Suzanne Harper

123185

16 Gangs, guns and drugs

By Ronald D. Stephens

123186

20 Gangsters: Back to the future

By Ronald W. Garrison

123187

23 Fighting crime for kids' sake

By Karl Zinsmeister

123188

27 Troubled Asian youth: The deafening silence

By Jeffrey J. Munks

123189

Updates

2 NSSC Update

31 National Update

32 Legislative Update

33 Legal Update

34 Resource Update

Resources

18 NSSC Resources

19 NSSC Resource Papers

35 "Principals of Leadership"

NCJRS
SEP 28 1989
ACQUISITIONS

BY JEFFREY J. MUNKS

Difficulty assimilating in their new American communities and schools has fostered a generation of disenfranchised, vulnerable Asian youth.

Troubled Asian youth: The deafening silence

For most Asian children, being patted on the head by an adult would be an insult. Vietnamese youngsters would be shocked to have boys and girls work together on a class project since children in that country are segregated by sex from the time they enter school.

As increasing numbers of Asian children enter our country's classrooms, these and other even more significant cultural differences are presenting some of the most complex issues ever to confront American educators. Today's American teachers are educating the children of the world. Since 1975, unprecedented numbers of immigrants and refugees from all corners of the globe have left their homes in search of a better life in the United States.

In terms of numbers, the largest population of these newcomers is from Asia. This has presented an alarming paradox. The immigrant group that is growing faster than any other in this country also is the immigrant group Americans know the least about.

Academically, most Asian children are

doing exceptionally well in our schools, no matter what the grade level or locale. The Asian immigrant children of today, many of whom are class valedictorians or have earned other academic honors, may grow up to become the generation that recaptures the lead in research and technological development for the United States as we enter the next century.

However, numerous obstacles have to be overcome along the way. The introduction of languages never before heard in American schools has produced endless struggles for both teachers and immigrant students. The threat of Asian youth gang activity has brought a new kind of criminal element into our schools and communities. Unfortunately, the answers and resources for resolving these concerns are scarce.

Before we as a nation can embrace the good and deal with the bad in this new population, we must first know and understand who they as a people really are. Non-Asian-Americans tend to lump all Asians into one group, often characterizing them as "Orientals" or "Chinese." While a non-Asian-American probably would not be able to differentiate whether an individual is from Thailand or Cambodia, greater caution must be exercised when using general categories to identify or deal with Asians or any other group of people.

Communication is a key. We will not be able to effectively deal with the

problems and concerns unique to a given people unless we know how to communicate with them. With Asians, as with all other people, effective communication means dealing with language and culture.

A self-test

Knowing your student population is requisite to planning and providing a meaningful educational environment. Take the following self-test and check your level of awareness on issues related to Asians in your schools and communities.

Name the Asian nations represented by children in your school.

If typical, your school may have children from the Philippines, China, Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, India, Tibet, Pakistan and a host of other Asian nations.

In America, we are sensitized to racial prejudice that typically involves conflict between black and white or Hispanic and white groups. Does prejudice along ethnic and/or national origin lines exist among Asians?

Several years ago, I interviewed a successful, well-educated and articulate Vietnamese businessman. We were discussing Southeast Asian refugee population trends in California. At one point, I asked him why so few Cambodians

Jeffrey J. Munks is vice president for marketing and co-founder of Communication and Language Line, Inc. (CALL), in Monterey, California. A former San Francisco Bay area police officer for 13 years, he currently travels throughout the United States making presentations about the services provided by CALL.

live in a particular California city that seemed almost dominated by Vietnamese.

His response was unsettling: "Cambodians are dogs." He could see the shock on my face and followed quickly by saying, "It's the same with you. In America, you hate your blacks." That pronouncement did nothing to ease the tension of the moment. Still trying, he said, "Well, in America there always has been trouble between black and white." I told him I could accept that statement.

He continued, "It is the same in my country. The Vietnamese hate the Cambodian. The Cambodian hate the Laotian. The Laotian hate the Hmong. And the Hmong hate everyone." These were strong words when they were said several years ago. It still makes me shake when I recall what he said and give it the weight of one man's opinion on an issue that involves us all.

Are Asian children and their families comfortable with the commingling of sexes in school?

You and I grew up in an endless succession of classrooms in which our seating was dictated by our last names. Sally Johnson sat next to Wally Jones because they shared the first two letters of their last names. For many Asians, however, sitting next to a member of the opposite sex in school is a tremendous culture shock.

In Vietnam, for example, children are segregated by sex from kindergarten through high school. Boys and girls do not sit in the same row in class. A boy and girl never will be assigned to work together on a class project. How many American educators consider these points when easing the Vietnamese student into his new educational environment?

In America, adults often pat children on the head when complimenting or congratulating them. Does this action have any significance in Asian cultures?

For many Asians, the head is the seat of consciousness. It is a sacred place

and is not to be touched.

If you need to speak to the parents of a child whose family recently arrived from China, what language will you need an interpreter for?

It could be Cantonese, Toyshanese, Fukienese, Shanghai, Taiwanese, Chao-Chou, Chungshanese, Hakka or Mandarin.

An opportunity at risk

The questions posed in the preceding exercise dealt with just a few of the issues raised by the presence of Asian youth in American schools. Having the correct answers to these and other cross-cultural questions is of vital importance to all of us. The questions and issues raised here carry the potential of sparking the kind of violence we have not seen on our campuses in nearly two decades.

What do you feel when you hear someone mention Howard Beach and the senseless act of stupidity that cost the life of a young black man? Like most Americans, you probably experience a mix of anger, sadness and a sense of foreboding. You hope that a random, unplanned incident will not serve as a catalyst for increased racial violence of the type this country endured during the 1960s and '70s. If you experience these or similar feelings at the mention of an incident such as Howard Beach, it is a testament to how well you have become sensitized to issues involving cross-cultural conflict.

But what do you feel when you hear someone mention Bloody July? You probably stare at the words and wonder if you missed something in the news about the Middle East. Bloody July is my euphemism for a series of well-planned, unprovoked and racially motivated attacks on young Vietnamese newspaper carriers that occurred during July 1986 in San Jose, California.

These boys, ranging in age from 12 to 14, were delivering newspapers during the early morning hours in various San Jose neighborhoods when they were

jumped by three or four Hispanic male adults who beat them with baseball bats and golf clubs. One boy required 40 stitches and lost several teeth after being beaten.

Robbery was not the motive in these attacks. None of the victims were gang members. These kids were doing what you and I would like to see our own kids do. They were acting like responsible community members, working before going to school. Why were they attacked? It was because they were different.

You probably never heard about Bloody July before now. The attacks did not receive the national media attention that was focused on Howard Beach in the weeks following that incident. Bloody July did get some press. On August 5, 1986, the *San Jose Mercury News* devoted approximately four square inches on page 5 of the local section to a story that provided a brief account of the series of attacks.

What is the message here? Certainly, Howard Beach proves that Americans have been sensitized to react when evidence of cross-cultural or ethnic conflict is presented. Bloody July, however, proves that to many Americans, cross-cultural conflict occurs only along certain ethnic or cultural lines. Such a presumption is widespread and dangerous.

A look back

Asians always have been in American schools. For generations, they have been a quiet and "unseen" minority. With a strong sense of commitment to family and a cultural dedication to educational achievement and hard work, Asian-Americans did not figure prominently in the social unrest of the 1960s and '70s. The Asian-American student of that era was a second- or third-generation American who embraced English as his first language and differed from his non-Asian classmates only in appearance.

The Asian-American student of the '60s and early '70s moved quickly and quietly through an educational system

that hardly noticed his presence. Such is not the case today. With the fall of Saigon in 1975, a new chapter began in the history of Asians in American schools.

Who is the Asian student today?

Our schools today have children from every country in Asia. Since 1975, the largest and most visible group of Asians entering American schools has been the Vietnamese. They come from the most populous country in Indochina. As of early 1989, Vietnam had approximately 66 million people, with a million more being added to the population each year.

More than one million Vietnamese live in the United States today. Thousands more are arriving every month. In addition, more than 600,000 Vietnamese still in Vietnam have applied in writing for permission to come here — and more are applying each day. Earlier this summer, more than 2,000 Vietnamese refugees were arriving in Hong Kong every week.

The ghostly image of a dilapidated fishing boat overcrowded with forlorn people is not simply a memory from the first great Boat Lift. The scene is being played out day after day in 1989 as groups ranging in size from 15 to 200 are plucked from the South China Sea. Until the situation in Indochina normalizes to some significant point, no end to the exodus out of that dying corner of the world and into the United States is in sight.

Into the classroom

With no fanfare and little preparation, the children of war-torn Southeast Asia started entering American classrooms in 1975. Their numbers were noticeable then, but they were not overwhelming.

Unaware of the tremendous influx that was to follow later in the decade, school administrators steered a steady course that focused on a traditional population and its predictable proportional ethnic mix. Schools continued to formally acknowledge and celebrate the presence of black, white and Hispanic

students with ethnic fairs, festivals, national holidays and other activities unique to the affected groups.

Asian children were, and still are, expected to participate without necessarily being acknowledged. The trouble with this status-quo methodology for recognizing and dealing with ethnic diversity in the classroom is that it fails to acknowledge the dramatic changes occurring in the communities of our student populations.

Teachers in classrooms across the United States have been happy to see that the Vietnamese, for the most part, are dedicated to excellence in education. Newspapers in nearly every major city have run stories about Vietnamese children who, after two or three years in our country, are walking off with honors in science, spelling, math and American history competitions.

Stories of success make adjustment to fundamental language and cultural barriers a little easier to handle. Things are different, however, when the story is one of failure. In the past four years, I have traveled to nearly every major American city to check on the progress of Vietnamese refugee assimilation into local communities, schools and criminal justice systems.

The picture does not change from New Orleans to Boston, or from Austin to Seattle. Teachers, administrators and law enforcement officials are pleased to have a core group of hard working and studious Vietnamese youth within the community. A veteran white teacher from Long Beach, California, summed up a common sentiment, saying, "I don't know what makes them tick, and I don't have to. I can't talk to their parents, but I don't need to. I just give them the lessons, point to the books, and they do the rest — and they do it better than any population I've ever worked with."

While something may be said for the point-and-run method, I wonder if this teacher is really teaching? I wonder too if the Vietnamese children she was referring to are gaining much from

what should be a mutually beneficial student, teacher, parent and school relationship that addresses the whole of what education in America should be all about.

When problems occur

When the discussion of Vietnamese children in our schools turns to the subject of crime, educators, administrators and law enforcement officials nationwide get a little bit anxious and the conversations get short. The following questions are typical of those posed in every city I have visited:

This Vietnamese child is a problem in the classroom. How can I talk to his parents? They don't speak English and getting an interpreter is almost impossible. Should I be using the child to interpret for his parents?

The answer to this question should be obvious. Qualified interpreters *must* be available when needed. It is never appropriate to use the affected child as an interpreter when school officials are dealing with the parents of that child. This all-too-common approach puts the problem child into a position of advantage and control. Being forced to use their child as an interpreter in such a dealing with persons in authority is a demeaning experience for the parents and it simply should not be done.

This Vietnamese child is a good student, but can I trust him? His school records and class placement show him to be 8 years old. Some of the kids say he is really 14. What should I do?

Be happy you have a good student and get on with teaching. Many, if not most, Vietnamese children brought to the United States since the first great Boat Lift have come with two ages. The child referred to probably is 14. Born in a country that was nearly obliterated by three times the tonnage of all the bombs that were dropped in World War II, he has not had the benefit of "normal" schooling.

Coming out of a refugee camp, his

parents know that if they send him to school as a 14-year-old, he will be placed with his chronological peers and he will fail. The child, like all Vietnamese children who recently have arrived here, is malnourished and underdeveloped and can easily pass for much younger than his true age. The parents back his age down to 8 and he goes into the third grade with a chance of making it in an American school.

I'm hearing more about "Hasty Gangs" and their violent crimes. Are they a threat to our schools?

Yes and no. The Hasty Gang phenomenon is new and unique to the Vietnamese. The term describes a loose-knit group of from three to 10 or more Vietnamese youth who band together to commit a single, well-planned robbery. These young people, both boys and girls, who get involved in Hasty Gang

activity are part of a new group of disenfranchised Vietnamese youth who find themselves on the street and on the run after discovering that life in America is more alluring than life in a traditional household dominated by their Vietnamese father.

The Vietnamese family is a close-knit, tightly controlled unit that for 2,500 years has been ruled by the father. In a paternal society, the father always has had the authority to use force whenever necessary. This is not to say that the Vietnamese father is a violent man by nature. Quite the contrary, he normally is a loving, compassionate and doting parent. Resettlement in America, however, has introduced challenges and problems that threaten to tear his once-close family apart.

The youngster who was expected to obey without question in Vietnam has become part of an American communi-

ty that is used to questioning authority no matter what the name or stripe. When the children get their first taste of after-school activities, the video arcade, sports and all-night parties, it becomes increasingly hard to stay in line with the Vietnamese father's perception of an ordered family life.

What follows all too often is a situation in which the youngster is punished, perhaps too severely, by a father who feels emasculated by a society that guarantees individual rights and freedoms he has never heard of. Father and child push away from each other, and the child — at age 10 to 17 — winds up on the street. Looking around, the youth realizes he has nothing. This is not his country. He has seen the look of suspicion and mistrust on the faces of school officials and the police and he believes there is nowhere "within" the system for him to go.

A natural, compressed evolutionary process leads to an attitude which dictates that one must make it alone. This child becomes part of the new disenfranchised class of Vietnamese youth, living on the street or in safe houses and ready for the camaraderie and feeling of belonging that Hasty Gang involvement offers.

Balanced on the edge

As educators, administrators and law enforcement officials, we too are balanced on the edge. We can turn a blind eye toward this tremendous population we know so little about and hope that it remains "the quiet minority." In so doing, we can claim success every time a child named Nguyen wins a spelling bee. We can pretend not to notice when another child is lost to the street because of a cross-cultural conflict.

The alternative certainly is not so easy. The rewards, however, could be phenomenal. With a little bit of work, we can get to know this new Asian population. In the learning, and through the effort, we will be sending the right message to these children, their families and ourselves: We care. □

CALL, to get some culture...

Any effort made to learn about the wide variety of people and cultures now present in the United States is time well spent. Breaking through the cultural barrier is one way to ensure that cross-cultural contacts will not be confused and complicated by unintended mistakes or misinterpreted gestures.

Overcoming the other great obstacle, the language barrier, requires no great effort. Communication and Language Line, Inc. (CALL) is the world's largest provider of telecommunications-based bilingual access. From its Monterey, California, headquarters, the company provides immediate access to interpreters of more than 140 languages through toll-free 800 numbers that cover the nation. The average connect time when you call and ask for an interpreter in any of the covered languages is *14.5 seconds*. The service can be purchased by an entire school district for less than the cost of a single car phone. CALL can be reached at 408/646-0979.