

## Cultural Analysis 文化解析

[Greetings]

Chinese seldom greet strangers whom they meet on the street.<sup>1</sup> Unlike most Chinese, my husband is a very friendly person who usually smiles and says hi to people (acquaintances and strangers alike) who pass us when we are taking a walk in the neighborhood.<sup>2</sup> Several times I noticed that when the person he greets is Chinese, oftentimes that person just pretends not to see him or looks away.<sup>3</sup> However, a European-looking foreigner always smiles and says hi to him in return.<sup>4</sup> In Chinese culture, we are not used to greeting strangers on the street, in the elevator, or when jogging.<sup>5</sup> Even with friends, we seldom hug each other or kiss each other on the cheek in greeting.<sup>6</sup>

My first experience of cultural shock happened in 1982 when I was studying in the United States for my master's degree.<sup>7</sup> I lived with three other American girls in a suite of a student dorm in New York.<sup>8</sup> One day Jerry, a guy who had befriended one of my roommates, Rita, came to visit her.<sup>9</sup> I had seen him several times but was not very familiar with him.<sup>10</sup> Every time I saw him, I was at a distance (for example, busy at the kitchen) and simply smiled or nodded my head in greeting.<sup>11</sup> That particular time I was the one who opened the door.<sup>12</sup> As soon as he saw me, he gave me a big hug while saying "how're you doing" at the same time.<sup>13</sup> I didn't know how to react and felt extremely embarrassed.<sup>14</sup> I guess I must have blushed all over.<sup>15</sup> It was also the first time I was hugged by a male acquaintance.<sup>16</sup>

