



Dos and Donts when working in Asia.

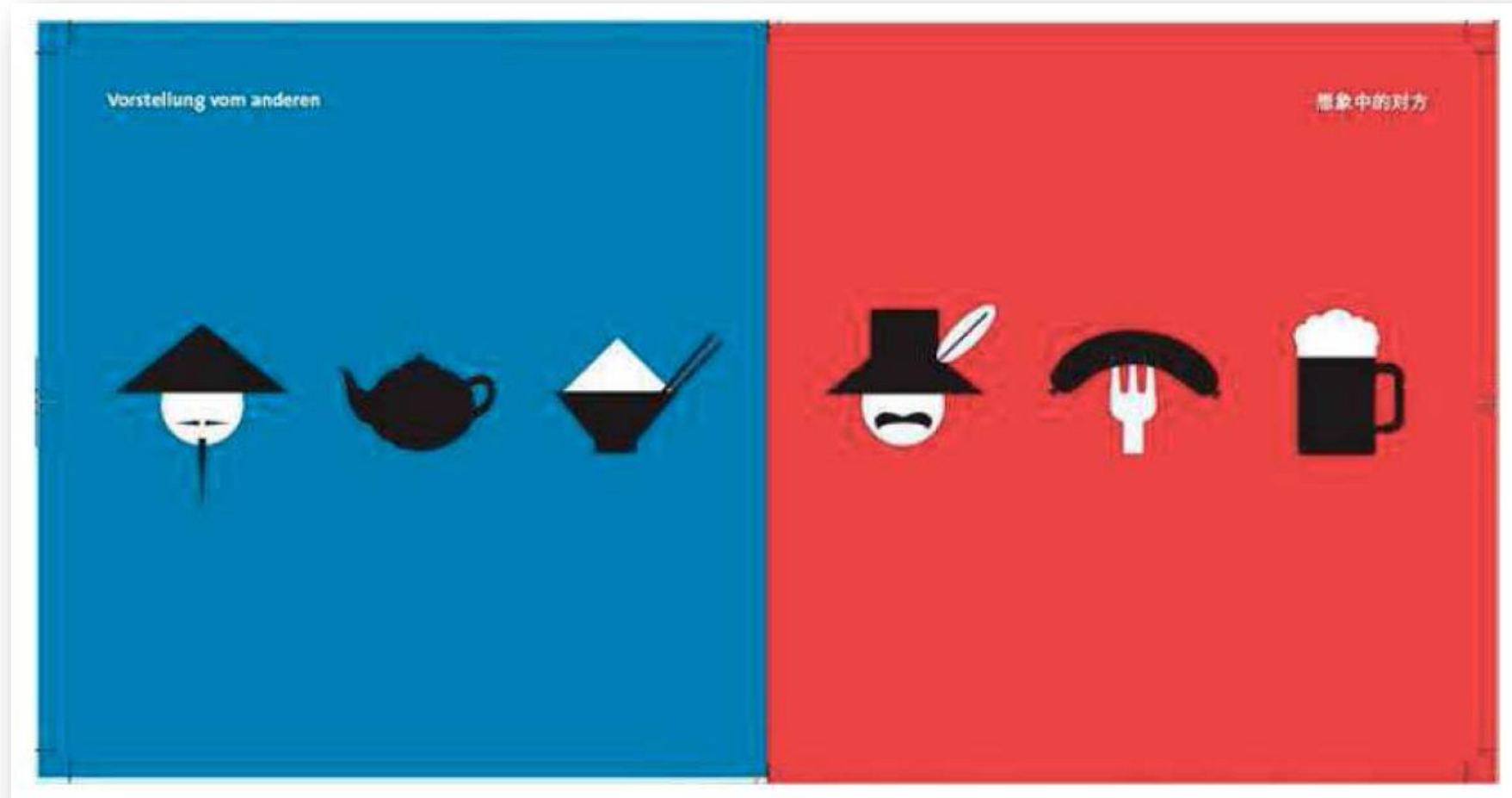
*A comparison based on the example
Germany/Austria and Singapore.*

Lions Club Wien Johann Strauss

September 23, 2014

Walter Sedlacek

Perception of each other



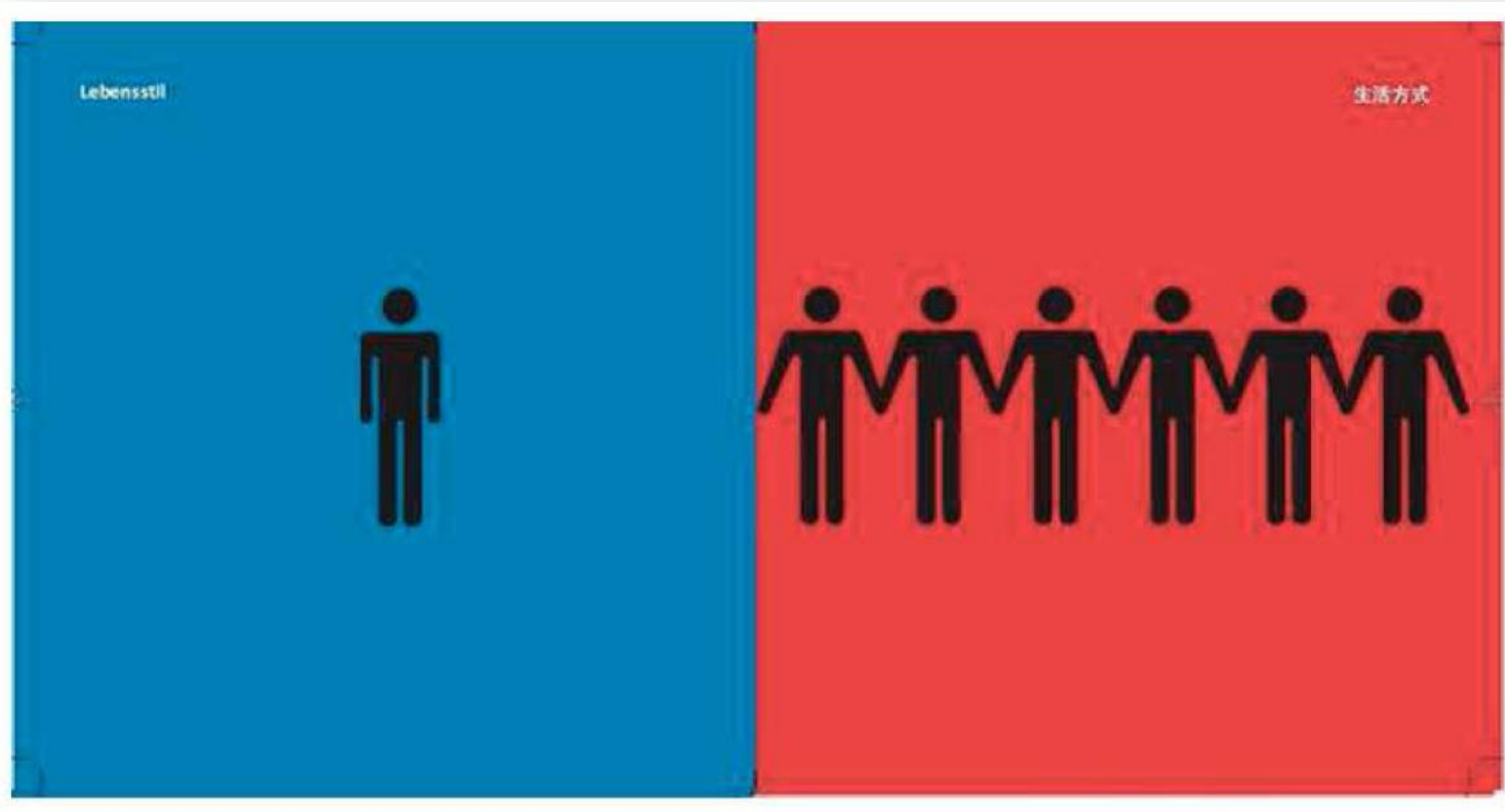


Perception of each other

- We look different
- We were brought up different
- We have different values
- We like different things
- We believe in different things
- We eat different things
- We speak different (language but also usage of words and phrases)

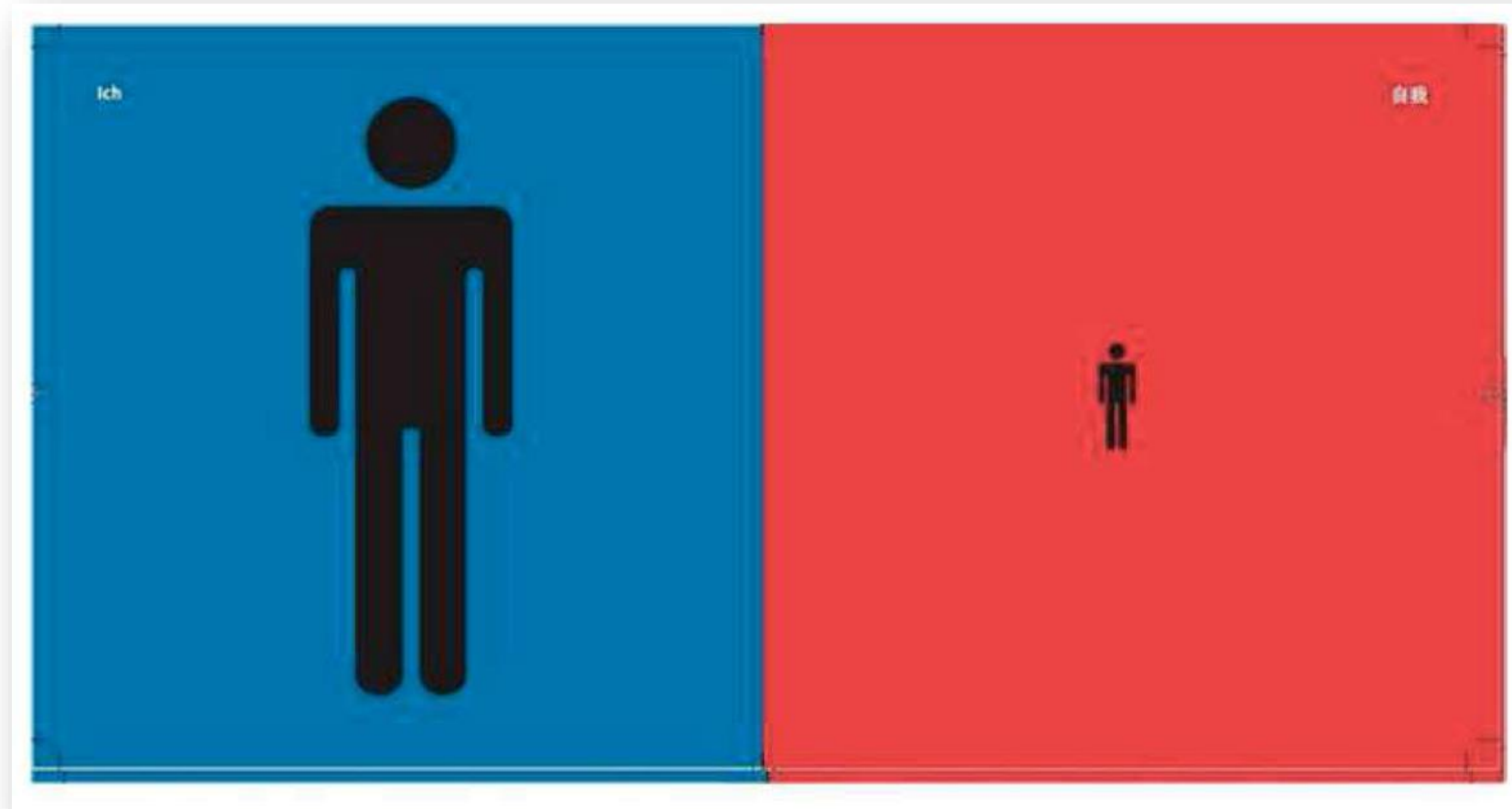


Individualism vs. Collectivism





Individualism vs. Collectivism





Individualism vs. Collectivism

Austria / Europe

- Focus is on the individual
- Sorting things out alone
- Kids leave house very early to live on their own.
- Strong personality, self-confidence and self-assurance are important personality traits – being self sufficient and able to look after yourself.

Singapore / Asia

- Focus is on the group
- Sorting things out together
- Kids stay with parents until marriage, family bond is strong.
- Being humble, loyal and caring are important personality traits – being able to look after the one you love.



HIGH VS. LOW CONTEXT

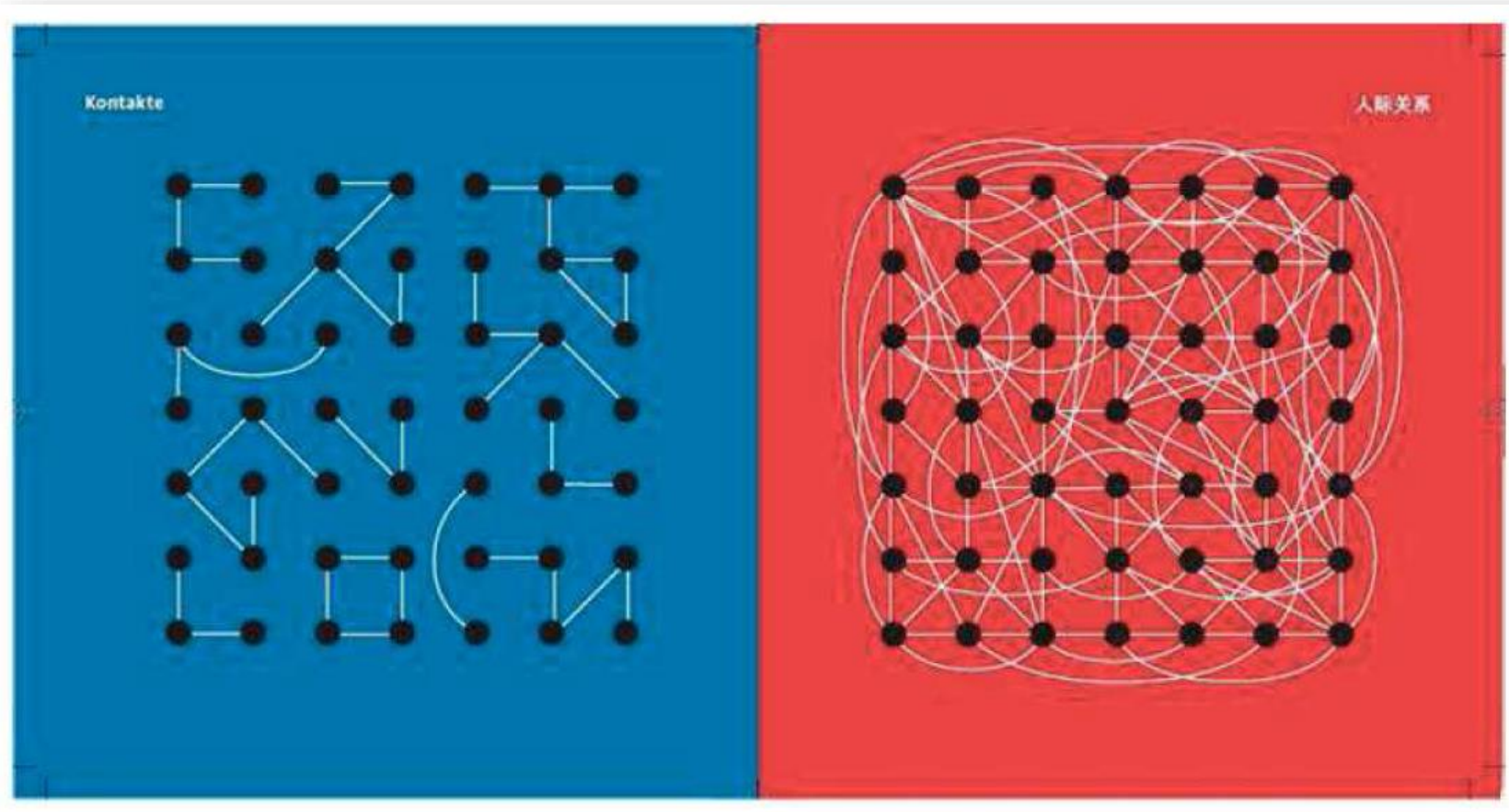
Austria / Europe

- Low context culture – all information must be given in the communication in a structured manner and the context doesn't provide any additional information.
- Austrians might get easily short tempered if not all information is given. They will ask questions until they understand as they don't like uncertainty.

Singapore / Asia

- High context culture – a lot of information might be implicitly clear to all individuals from the situation - except to the foreigners ;)
- Singaporeans might wonder why Austrians don't get all the implicit hints the context provides, ask for so much information and seem to get impatient easily.

Contacts





Business Communication

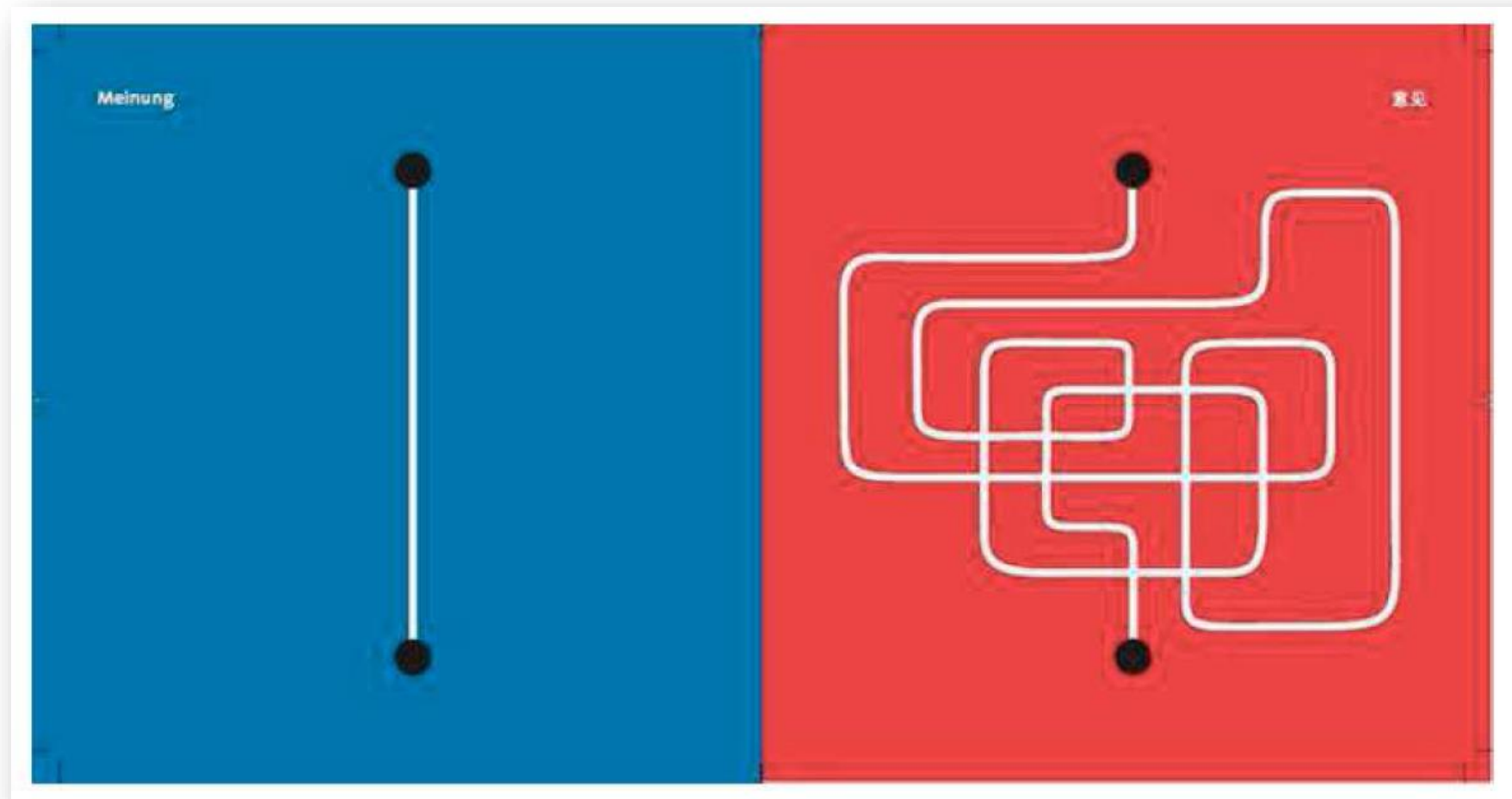
Austria / Europe

- Mobile phones are silent in meetings.
- Business life and private life are strictly separated what you can also see in the way they dress for each part of their life.
- Austrians do not fancy small talk, they want to “come to the point”.
- Austrians treasure efficiency & structure.
- A formal contract has more value than the personal word or relationship.

Singapore / Asia

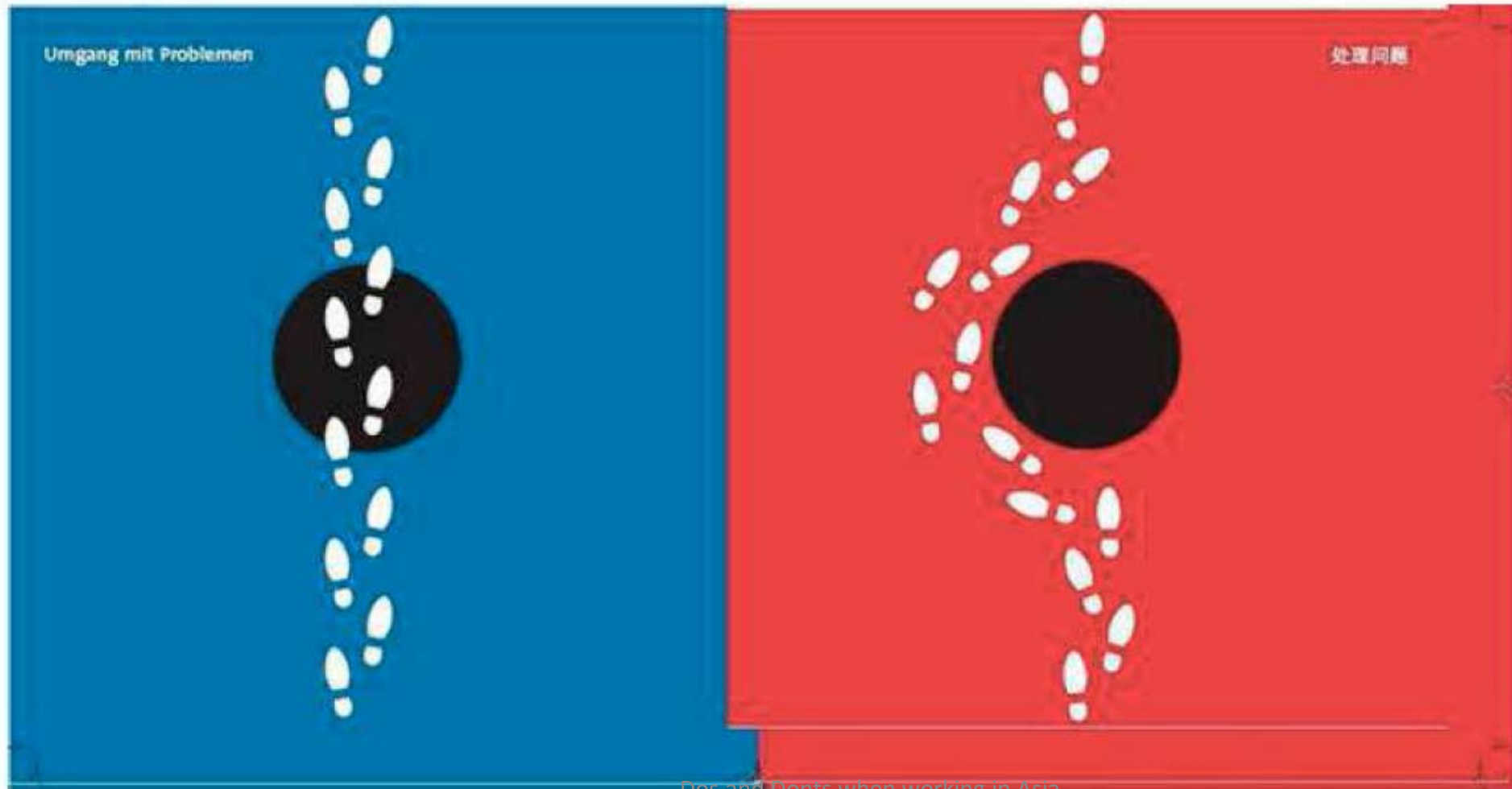
- Calls of important people are taken even in meetings with others – depending on the relation ship so phones are on.
- Business life and private life merge and family is very important. Dress Code is less formal in Singapore.
- Small talk is important to create an enjoyable atmosphere.
- A personal commitment is more important than a written statement.

Direct vs. Indirect Communication



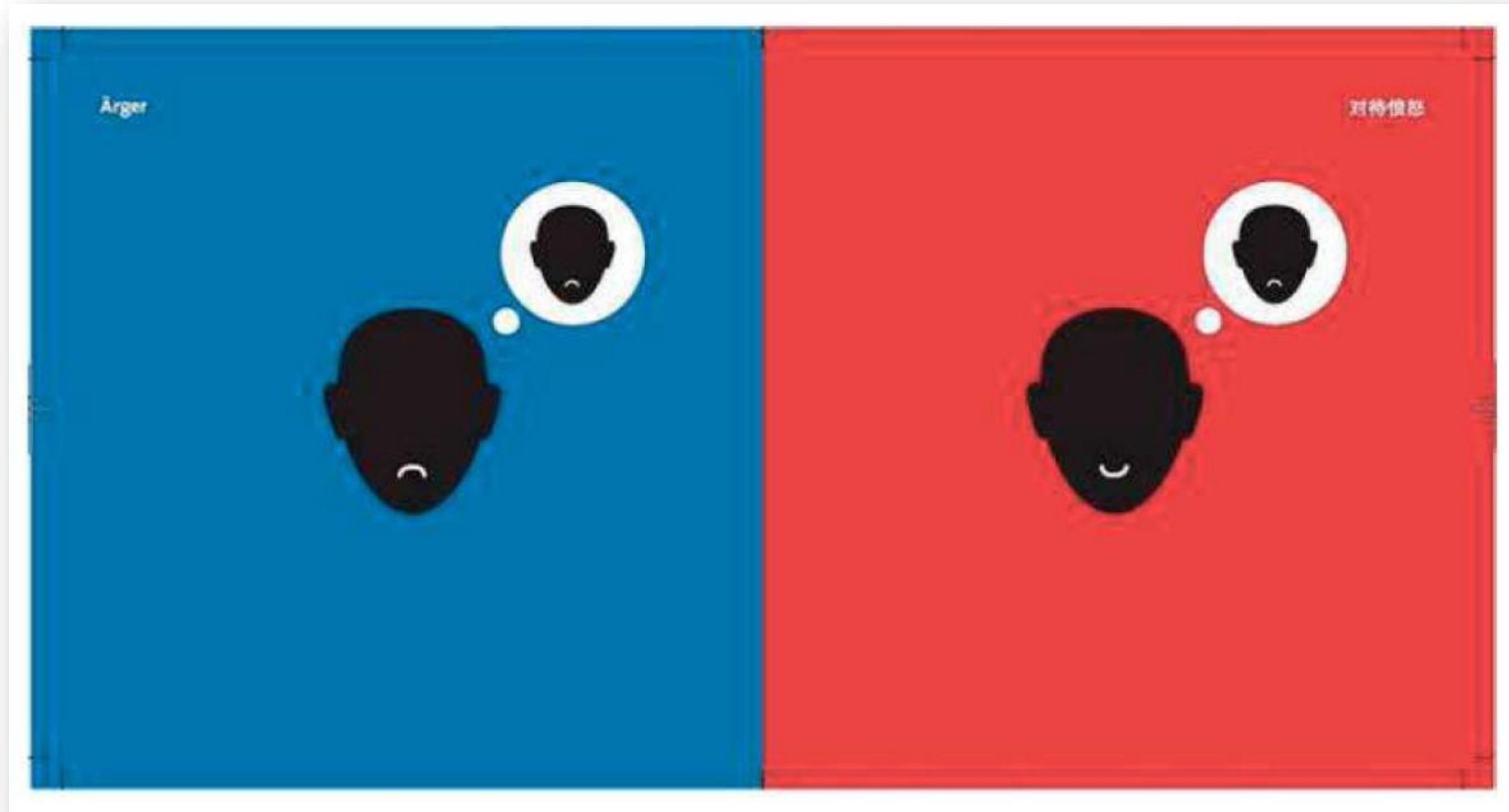


Handling of Problems





Anger



Direct vs. Indirect Communication



Austria / Europe

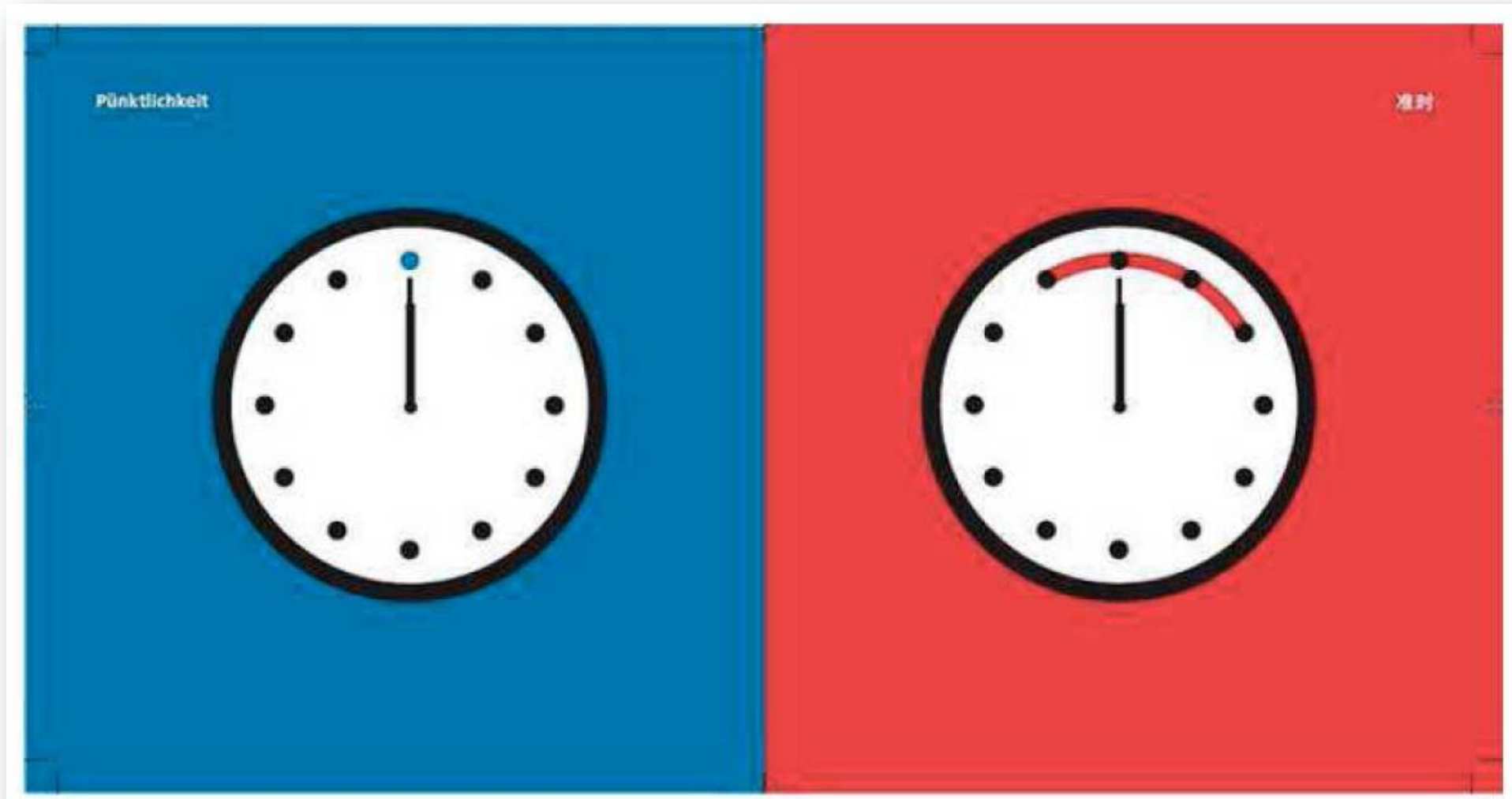
- Clarity and understanding is prime goal.
- Information needs to be structured!
- Direct and honest communication is seen as sign for honesty and sincerity.
- Eye contact is important.
- Compliments are very rare.
- Feedback about a topic is very direct and highly appreciated – no matter if positive or negative.
- Losing face doesn't exist because "no" to a topic is "no" to a topic – not to the person!
- Yes and nodding means: yes, we do it!
- If an Austrian is angry – you will see it in his face!

Singapore / Asia

- Making or keeping a good relationship is key
- Relationships are very important and people would not like to jeopardize a relationship so critical feedback would usually be avoided or more indirect.
- Eye contact is not as important and staring at someone can be seen as very impolite.
- Compliments and nice small talk are important for a good atmosphere.
- "No" to a topic could be seen as "no" to the person so it would be usually avoided in order not to make someone lose face.
- Yes and nodding means: I listen to you.
- You don't necessarily see if someone is angry as the facial expression might still be nice and friendly.



Time Concept





Time concept

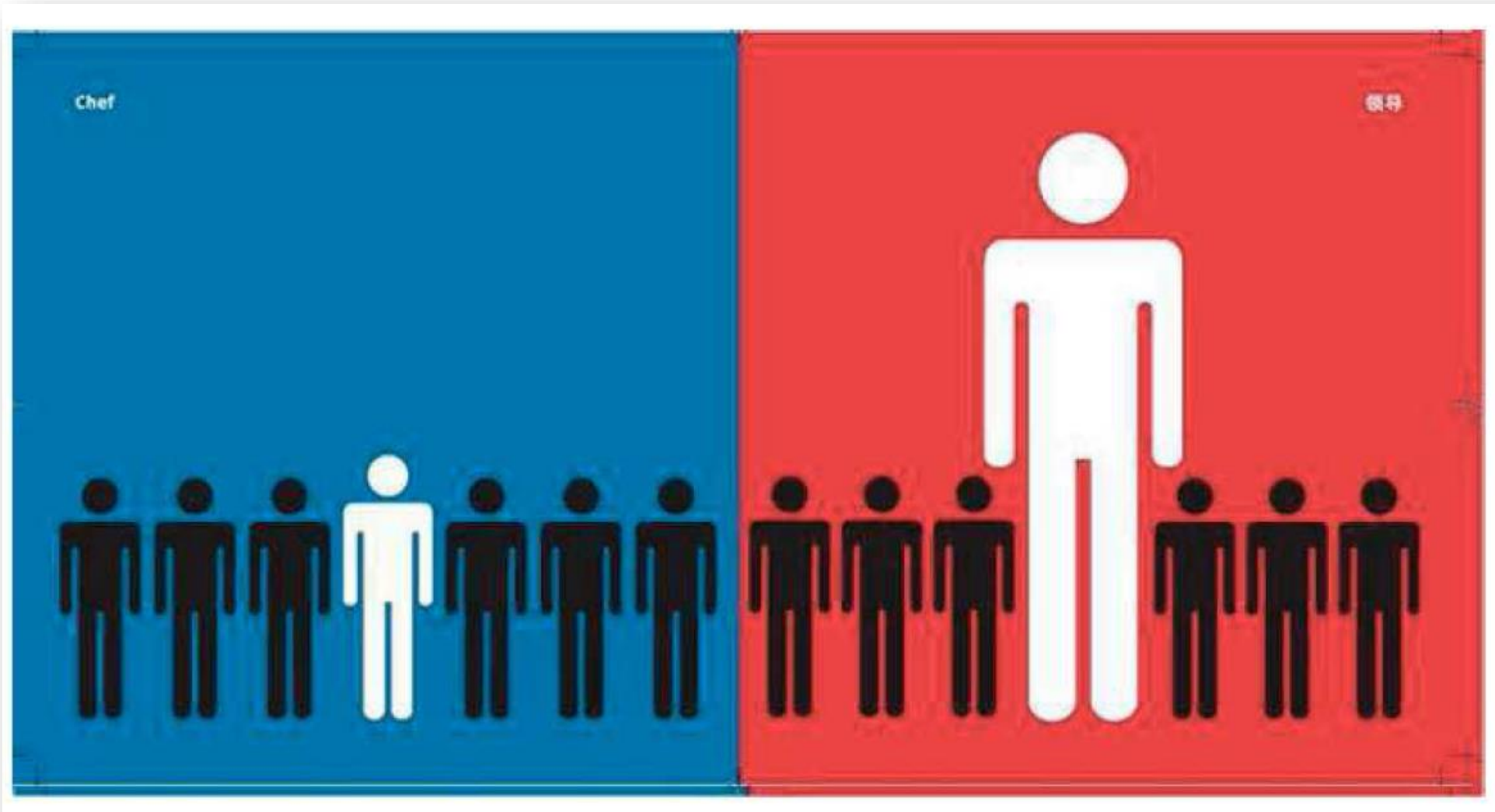
Austria / Europe

- Austrians follow a very strict linear time concept what means that they prefer to do things one by one
- Austrians would want to have a very clear schedule and agenda and prefer to have the topics as planned
- Distractions and interruptions are not appreciated
- Deliverables should arrive within the deadline
- People should be on time
- Austrians love efficiency so they expect people to come to meetings prepared (with material, information, slides, documents etc.) and will do so as well

Singapore / Asia

- Time is dealt with in a non-linear fashion – things are done according to priority or relationship to the requestor. Time concept is not as strict as for western people.
- A strict schedule is not necessary and can be experienced as too rigid and not allowing enough flexibility to deal with the situation or the topics arising from the discussions.
- Distractions and interruptions are ok and are dealt with according to priority of the person
- Singaporeans also love efficiency but that doesn't mean they come with slides and presentation material to the meeting. They prefer to allow flexibility and discussion time.

Power and Hierarchy – The boss





Power and Hierarchy

Austria / Europe

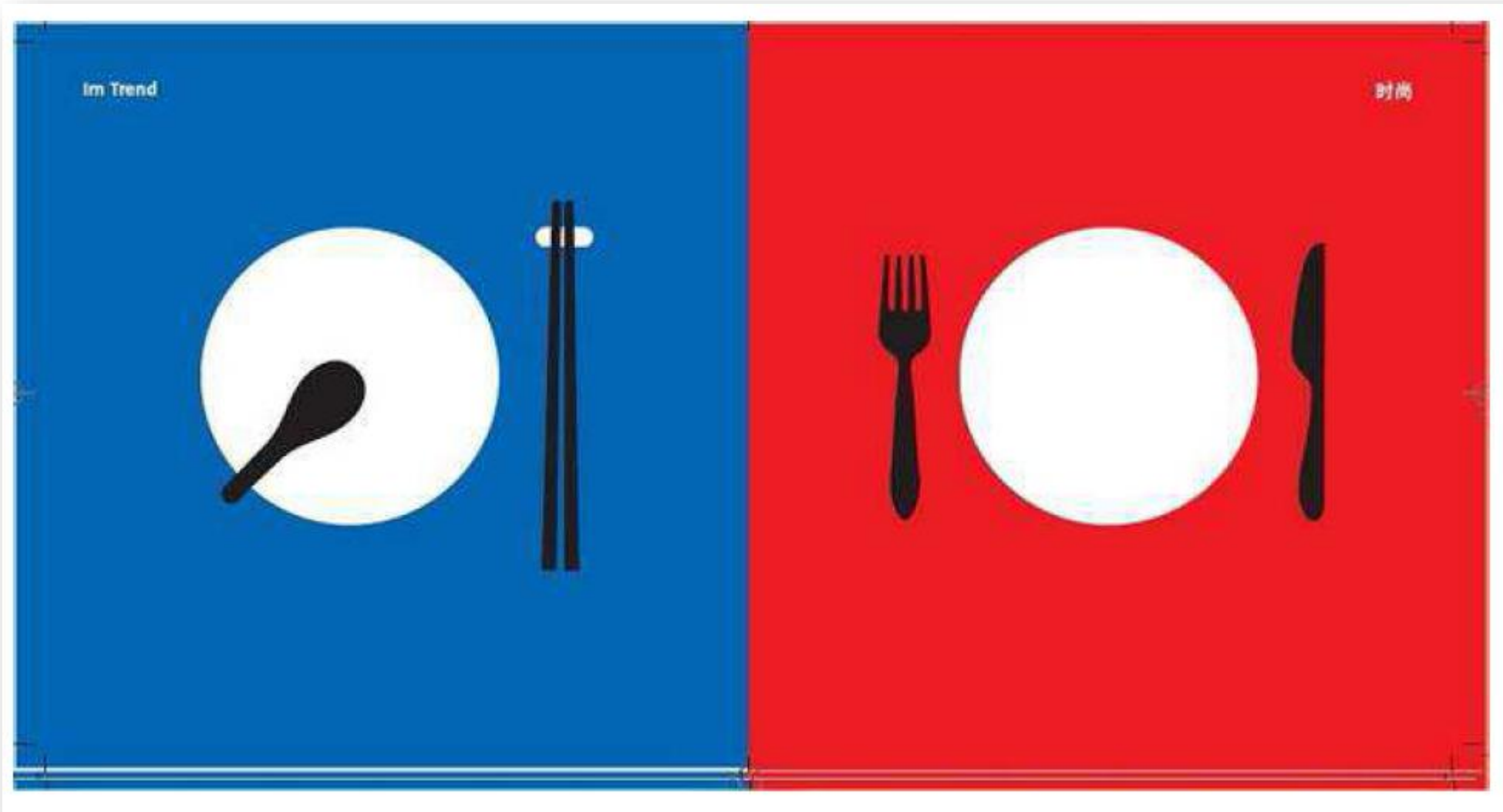
- What counts for people in order to respect others is their competency and personality more than status, title and hierarchy.
- A manager is not necessarily the highest expert of his team but still has the authority to manage.
- Managers proactively ask for the opinion and expertise of their employees and value it – without consideration of hierarchy.
- Meeting tables are usually round with no specific seating for hierarchy.
- A certain understatement is appreciated in Germany with regards to status, brands, titles etc.

Singapore / Asia

- Status and rank are very important and are valued.
- A manager is expected to have the final saying in decisions and have answers for the team and would be an expert in these matters.
- It might be more difficult to voice out a critical opinion against someone of a higher hierarchical status.
- The seating at a table might indicate the status of the person.
- Success is publicly shown (designer brands, cars, houses)
- Titles can make a difference in the business life and are considered very important.

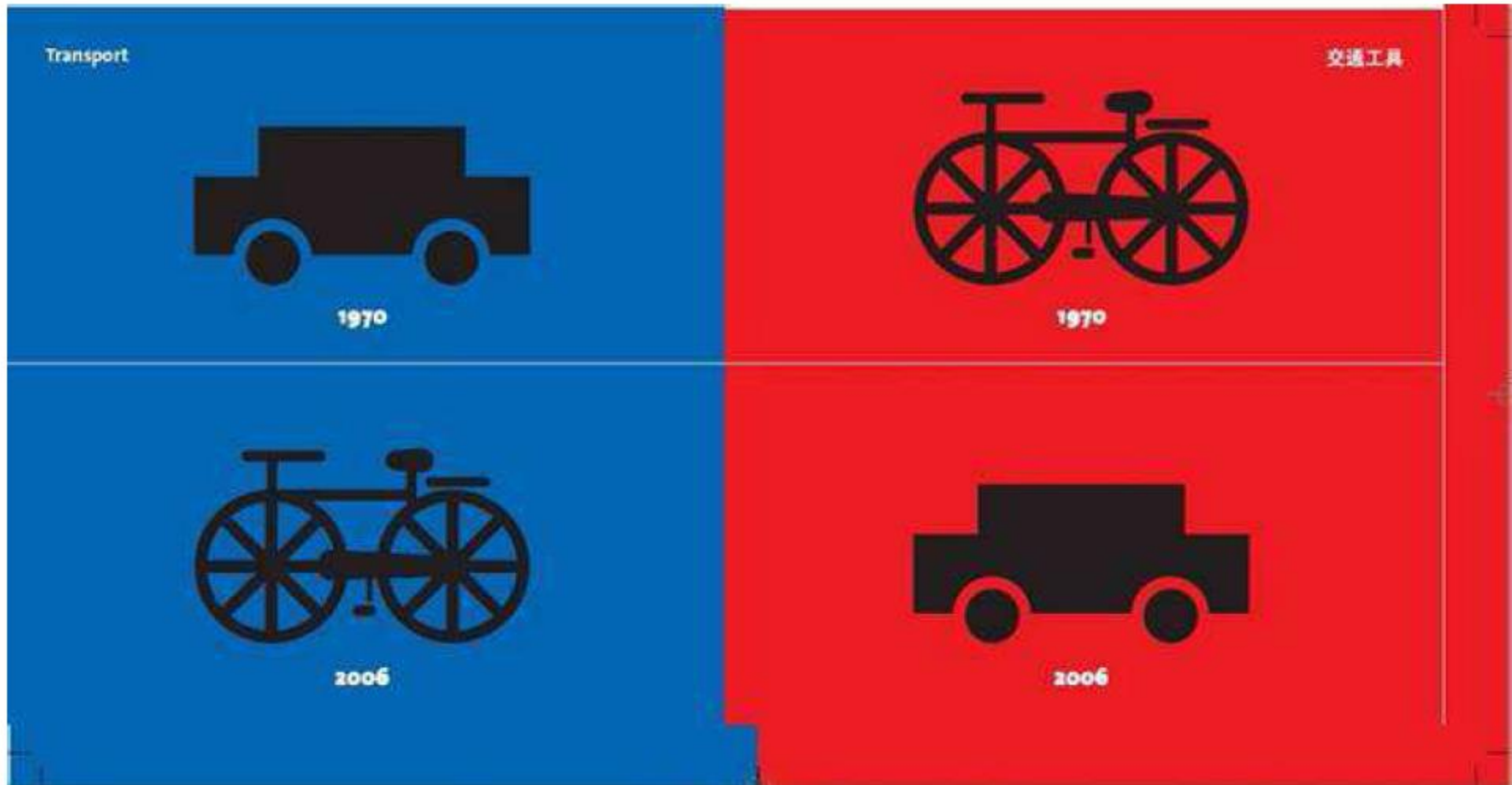


What's Trendy



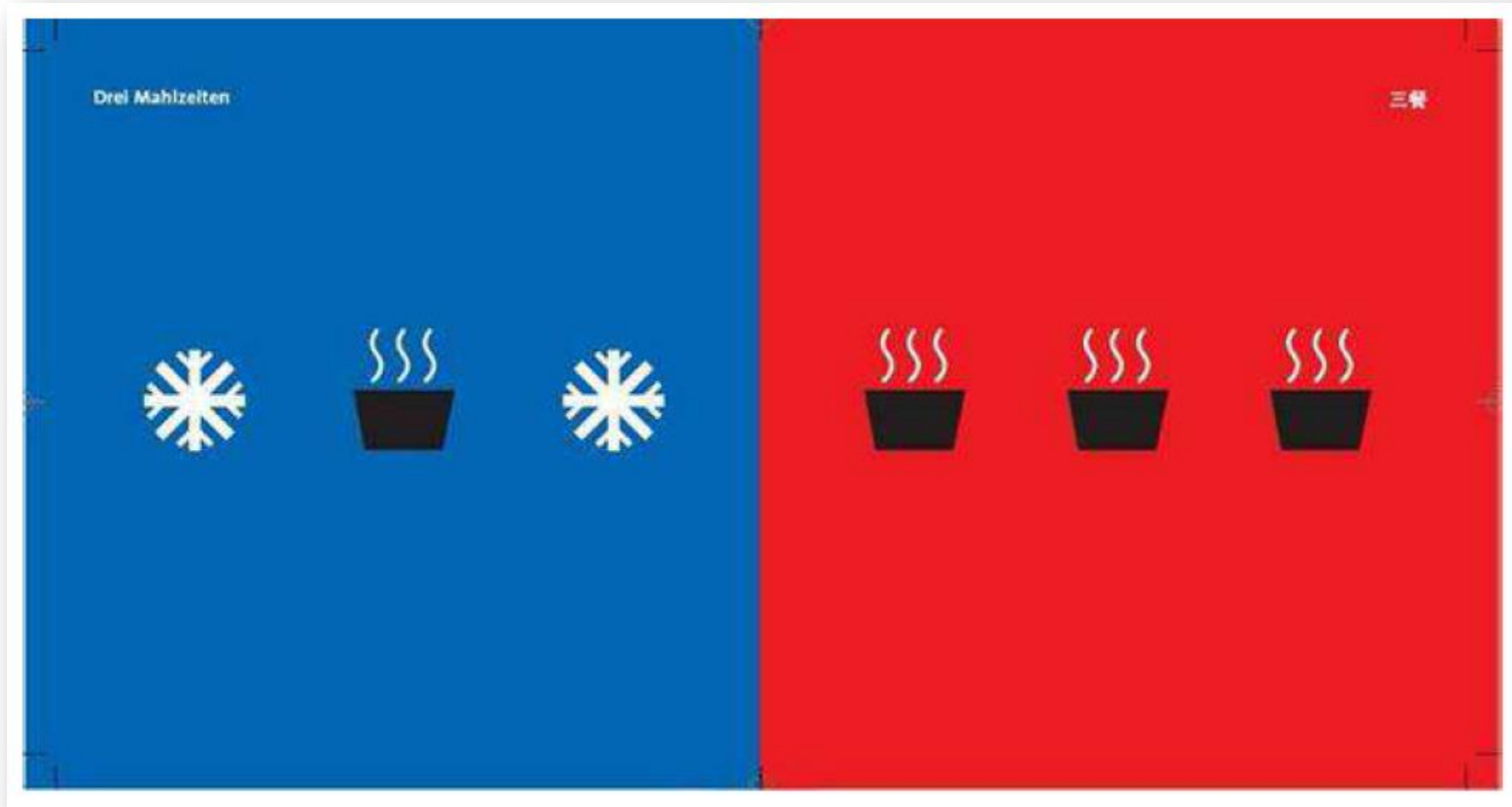


Transportation



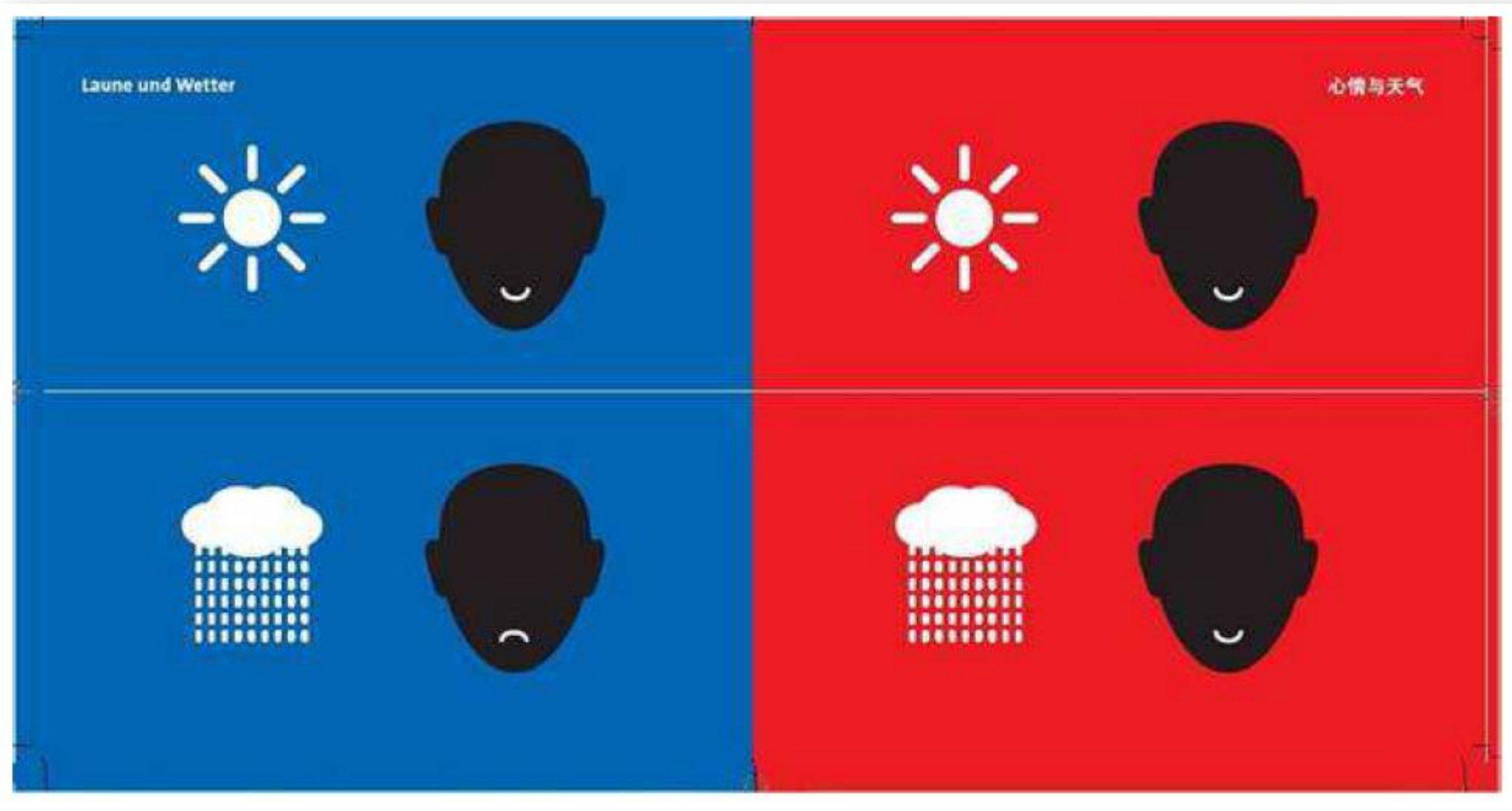


Three meals a day





Moods and Weather





Last but not least: Beauty

