

- **FRONTPAGE**
- **NEWS**
- **BUSINESS**
- **LIFESTYLE**
- **SPORTS**
- **WORLD**
- **OPINION**
- **PROPERTY**
- **EDUCATION**
- **CARS BIKES TRUCKS**
- **ACTIONLINE**
- **MULTIMEDIA**

We could learn a thing or two from the West about morals

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By **Dr Vishalache Balakrishnan** - November 15, 2017 @ 8:18am

I AM writing a book for the transformation of the Moral Education for Form Three and am eager to be part of the community to bring about the change, which is part of the moral development and human involvement.

One of the topics suggested for Form Three is *budaya kuning*, or yellow culture.

Budaya kuning is about the negative influence brought from the West, such as punk culture and skinhead.

However, is everything that comes from the West immoral? Definitely not.

I would like to put forward my case in two issues, one involving eating and the other driving.

If we observe the West, every restaurant or eatery that you enter is as clean as a slate.

And, how is that? It's been a long-standing practice that people who enter restaurants will make their orders, eat the food and ensure that tables are as clean as how they were earlier.

Do we have such a culture in Malaysia?

In schools, students are encouraged to put their plates and cups in the designated place.

But, the same students, at times do so, and at other times do not, in public places.

One good example is fast food restaurants. At peak times, the tables look messy and uninviting.

This culture of leaving the table clean after eating needs to be learned from the West.

Next, driving. In my experience, when the traffic light turns red and the pedestrian-crossing light flickers, as pedestrians, we need to be alert as some drivers have a tendency to run the red light.

At zebra crossings, do not even think of crossing until you are sure cars have stopped.

On the other hand, especially in the United States, drivers will wait for you to cross the road before they proceed.

Sometimes, we might be three to four metres away from the zebra crossing, but they will slow down, allow us to cross the road and then drive on.

This is another culture that we, in the East, need to learn from the West.

Not everything that comes from the West is immoral and the term *budaya kuning* needs to be re-looked at by linguists, educators and policymakers.

We tend to judge others based on how our youth behave and react to other cultures.

However, do we have a foundation to ensure that Malaysia produces youth who are resilient to negative influences and have their own identity?

Dr Vishalache Balakrishnan, Senior (research) lecturer, Universiti Malaya