

The Six Core Aspects of Chinese Culture

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Clothing 衣

- Up until the early 80s, many Chinese had their clothes custom made: the pleasure of being unique, creative, and well draped with the clothes tailored just for you
- **Colors:** “To be charming, dress head to toe in white.” and “To look good, clothes in black or blue.” Red is chosen for happy events
- **Cuts:** The sexy Qi Pao was inspired by the costume of Qing Dynasty nobles (Qi Ren 旗人) and peaked in the 20s. Its many variations are considered the traditional costumes
- **Material:** silk and exotic fur
- **Patterns:** dragon, phoenix, peony, ducks, birds, symbols of longevity, fortune ...
- **Accessories:** Jade, 24 K gold, and pearls are the quintessential Jewelry of being Chinese.

Eating 食

- In the south, the main diet is the rice. In the north, the flour
- Chinese drink tea or boiled water all day long. Half of the pleasure of tea is its poetic process of preparation. Black and green tea are most common. Only a well trained taste bud can truly understand the delicate, pure, and exotic white tea
- There are four types of cuisine: little- eats cuisine, home cuisine, formal cuisine, and medicinal cuisine
- Formal cuisine includes the traditional big dishes from the 22 provinces and the palace cuisine. The most famous four of the 22 cuisines are Jing, Sichuan, Uer, Guang Dong. The best place for the palace cuisine is Beijing
- When you don't feel well, the medicinal cuisine will nurture the body and restore the Yin and Yang balance. Beauty and longevity recipes are also its main focus

Living 住

- Many Chinese believe in Feng Shui. Mountains, waters, rocks, and trees are important Feng Shui indicators. The outside carries more weight than the size or design of the houses. The houses are only a small part of the overall estate design
- Hence, Chinese garden used to be extremely expansive, elaborate, and intricate. Different houses were just individual decorative jewels in it
- And that is why the designs of traditional windows were focused on the best way to frame the outside views of the many gardens
- Interior décor: calligraphy, scrolls of painting, Song ceramics, screens,...
- In the traditional courtyard living, the south facing room is usually the most important room

Traveling 行

- Almost all Chinese given a touch of education knows this poem, "Travel a thousand miles and read through a million books." There is also a famous proverb, "A tree may die when moved. A person thrives when moving." That sums a national hobby – the Chinese love to travel
- Famous mountains and waters are the locations they love because the teachings of many famous poems are that the mountains and the waters cultivate one's spirit and personality
- Hence, many famous temples are located at the breathtaking high mountains. This is no coincidence, one stone kills two birds: cultivating personality and at the same time asking favors from the gods in the ninth clouds

Nurturing the Body 修身

- Longevity and eternal youth has been relentlessly pursued by the Chinese for thousands of years
- There are 4 levels of pursuit: medicine (exotic and rare herbs), medicinal cuisine, Kong, Bao Yang
- Kong: every Chinese practices some form of Kong. They practice at the parks very morning and evening
- Bao Yang rituals: stroll after dinner, soak feet before bed, drink boiled water or tea with special herbs are the common rituals
- Feet spa: feet holds many pressure points. Soaking feet in warm water opens up those points, improves blood circulations, relaxes the body. Feet bath is becoming a popular business outing when men and women talk about business while being “feet-pampered”

Cultivating Personality 养性

Chinese people cultivate their children’s personality and thinking by exposing them early (around age three) to **poetry**, **proverbs**, teachings of ancestors in nursery rhyme form, and famous ancient literatures/essays. Three schools of thought form the basis of the way Chinese people think are: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism.

Confucianism is the most important of the three. Confucius’ work includes: editing Poetry Book, establishing the Confucian Ethical Codes and Music, writing Spring Autumn, and teaching Yi Ching. He remarked, “Poetry, ethical codes, music are the three things one must have. Poetry can uplift the spirit and make one love the good and avoid the evil. Ethical codes can make one behave properly. Music can cultivate the personality and make one successful.”

Taoism’s main teaching is that our understanding of the world is frequently partial and within our own imaginations. It’s better not to act on partial knowledge and imagination. When one sets out to save the world, one frequently makes a bigger mess.

Buddhism was imported to China from India and peaked during the Tang Dynasty. The teachings adopted by many Chinese are to do good in this life in exchange for a better next life.

The Way Chinese Think

Ancestor worshipping & Relationship

- Ancestor worshipping is an important family activity. The reason having a son is so important is to carry on the family line so ancestor worshipping can continue
- Relationship is the key to getting anything done in China. One must always save face for others. Losing face is unbearable and destroys a relationship
- Being old means you've moved to the top of many relationships. The Chinese respect and obey the old

The Middle Way

- Nothing is black and white. And there is Yin inside Yang and Yang inside Yin. The Chinese strive to keep the balance and walk the Middle Way.
- "Good enough" is frequently used by Chinese and this drives data-minded Westerners up the wall. For Chinese, we can never know all and good enough is, well, good enough
- "Half and half" was the golden rule of human experience by the bourgeois before the fall of the last dynasty. "Half work, half play, and the whole life is yours"

Yin & Yang –Yi Ching

- Yi means change or simple. Yi Ching offers the foresights to heaven, earth, and human on what must change, what they will change into, & what will not change. It shows the strategies to foresee the changes, deal with the changes, and adapt to the changes
- The endless change between Yin (- -) and Yang (—) is the rule of heaven, earth, and humanity
- Yi Ching is strategy & philosophy to guide one's thinking. Only if the situation is so uncertain, one turns to its future telling function

Fun Facts About Chinese Culture

Many Chinese are somewhat superstitious. Different gods are worshiped for different reasons: the money god for fortune, the door god for family safety, the kitchen god for good food, and on and on. Regular offerings are made to one of the many gods in exchange for favors or asking for forgiveness. A lot of Chinese rely on the "Yellow Calendar" to pick the date for a wedding, moving, signing important business deals, traveling, and on and on. Many Chinese believe in Feng Shui (风水-meaning wind and water). Unknown to many Westerners who practice Feng Shui, the location of a building determines 80% of its Feng Shui and merely 20% is determined by the arrangement of furniture or interior structure of the house. That goes the 80-20 rule! Frequently, many Chinese are secretly superstitious and sensitive about the following number, colors, and characters:

Good**NUMBERS**

9 九(ju) sounds like Long Lasting 久
 8 八(ba) sounds like Prosperity 发
 6 六(liu) sounds like Smooth 溜

COLORS

Red 红 (hong) is for Happy Things 喜

CHARACTERS

Fish 鱼(yi) sounds like Abundant 余

Not Good (Avoid)**NUMBERS**

4 四(si) sounds like Death 死

COLORS

White 白(bai) is for Death 丧

Important Festivals	When	Traditions
Qing-Ming Festival 清明节	Lunar calendar (early April. e.g. on April 5 th for 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Worship ancestor & remembrance (祭祖) •Sweep graveyard & picnic (扫墓)
June 1st Children's Festival 六一儿童节	June 1 st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Performance at school (少先队) •Money & presents for kids •The beginning of summer
The Moon Festival 中秋节	Lunar calendar August 15 th (late September. e.g. on September 25 th for 2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Family gather (团圆) •Eat moon cakes (月饼) •Drink rice wine •Appreciate the moon
Spring Festival (The Chinese New Year) 春节	Lunar calendar January 1 st (mid to late February. e.g. on February 18 th)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •On New Year's day: red envelopes 红包 with money for kids; kids wear new red clothes; going door to door to wish happy New Year •The celebrations last 15 days and

住 Living