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FLARR Pages #16: Chinese Cultural Tidbits

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FLARR PAGES #16

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File under:

- Chinese
- Culture (Chinese)
- Gift-Giving (Ch.)
- Celebrations (Ch.)
- Symbols (Chinese)
- Numbers (Ch.)

“Chinese Cultural Tidbits”

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1. The Chinese people consider it disrespectful to use the names of their ancestors, grandparents, relatives, or parents to name their new-born babies.

2. In Chinese and Japanese names, family names precede given names. Most of the Chinese family names consist of only one character whereas Japanese family names are mostly two or three Chinese characters.

3. In Chinese culture, addressing older people or authority or teachers by their first names is considered very impolite.

4. According to Chinese customs, the expenses of weddings are paid by the groom's family because the Chinese consider it a gain to the groom's family to have one extra family member, but a loss to the bride's family.

5. Traditionally it was not customary for Chinese to celebrate children's birthdays (except the first birthday). Chinese adults don't celebrate their birthdays or wedding anniversaries annually either because marriage is considered “for life.” However, the adult and/or married children would often jointly plan a celebration for their parents' birthdays and wedding anniversaries.

6. During the Chinese New Year, Chinese children usually receive many red envelopes (with money inside) from grandparents, parents, relatives, and friends.

7. Giving gifts is more common in China than in the U.S. Chinese people often take a gift with them when they visit a friend, a colleague, a relative, or a teacher.

8. When you offer a gift to the Chinese people, they usually refuse to accept it at first, saying that you are too polite. After you insist they they accept it, they will then put it aside, and don't open it until after you leave.

9. Generally, Chinese people's response to a compliment is, “No (you overpraise me).”

10. In Chinese culture, the most common gift for weddings and other happy occasions is money (put in a red envelope), not things that you bought. On the other hand, a gift of money for condolences should be put in a white envelope.

11. According to Chinese culture, it's impolite to use only one hand to receive things from your elders, teachers, or someone whose position is higher than yours. For example, you would always receive the diploma or an award from a university president with both hands and bow at the same time.

12. When Chinese people invite you to go out for a movie or a meal, it is usually their treat. The bill is never split.

13. The winter vacation for Chinese students lasts for about three weeks. It is in January and/or February around the Chinese New Year, which the Chinese celebrate for 15 days.

14. The national college entrance exams in China and Taiwan take place once a year in July. Students can not go to college unless they pass this annual entrance exam.

15. Taiwan was under Japanese occupation for 50 years until the end of World War II, so most Taiwanese people aged 65 or older can speak Japanese very well.

16. Chinese usually decline being paid when they help their relatives, neighbors, or teachers do something.

17. To the Chinese people, the dragon & phoenix are marriage symbols representing the bride and the groom. They are also symbols for prosperity, happiness, success, and high social status.

18. In Chinese culture, melon seeds and pomegranates symbolize many sons. Peaches are symbols for longevity, bats are also symbols for happiness, and the color red is a symbol for joy, good luck, and prosperity.

19. In Chinese culture, the number 4 is an unlucky number because its pronunciation is similar to that of death. License plates of cars in Taiwan don't use the number 4. However, 9 is considered a lucky number because its pronunciation is the same as that of the word long lasting. 8 is another lucky number because its pronunciation is

similar to that of to become prosperous. Many Chinese businessmen paid huge amounts of money to telephone companies in order to acquire a lucky telephone number with the numbers 8 and 9, and the more of them the better.

20. In traditional China, drinking and smoking were not considered acceptable or appropriate for women. Even now very few Chinese women smoke or drink.

21. "Face" is very important in Chinese culture. If you did poorly in school, or if you did something immoral or committed a crime, people would say that you lost your parents' "face." A teacher would work very hard to make sure that his students do well so that they would not lose his "face."

22. Most Chinese are introverts and are rather shy and reserved, so they usually don't show their emotions (such as smiling to people whom they don't know, kissing and hugging friends and relatives, etc.) openly in public.

23. Teachers are respected highly in most Asian countries. Chinese parents would thank the teacher profusely when their child did well academically. They think that their child's success is due to the teacher's effective teaching, assistance, and deep concern. So they would praise the teacher rather than the child.