

Learn Chinese 1

Additional Cultural Notes

1A 中文姓名 Chinese Names

In traditional Chinese family culture, both the family name and one character of the given name are pre-decided. The Spreading Character is a common character given for each generation within each family system. Thus, the Spreading Character is an indication of a person's generation.

2A 我爱我家 I Love My Family

Traditional Chinese marriage is a ceremonial ritual within Chinese societies that involve a union between spouses. There are essentially six rituals, generally known as the three letters and six etiquettes (三书六礼). The three letters include the betrothal letter, gift letter and the wedding letter. The six etiquettes consist of the proposal, the birth dates, the betrothal gifts, the wedding gifts, arranging the wedding and the wedding ceremony.

2B 家庭关系 Family Relationships

Family Interdependence

Unlike the expectation in most Western families for children to live independently when they reach adulthood, Chinese parents typically raise their children to be part of a large, extended family. There is an expectation that sons will support and care for their parents in old age. Furthermore, the Chinese adopt the practice of ancestor worship as ancestors are believed to aid and protect their descendants.

Marriage Traditions

For most modern Chinese, arranged marriages are replaced by love-based marriages. Nowadays, it is increasingly common for modern Chinese people to have divorces or to live together before marriage. However, virilocal practices are still the norm.

Gender Roles

Traditionally, Chinese parents have valued boys much more highly than girls. Today, women in China receive almost as much education as men do, but many of them have lower working wages and are expected to be responsible for housework and caregiving due to deeply entrenched gender norms.

3B 哥们姐们 Best Friends

Nowadays, more and more Chinese people are using phrases such as “哥们”, “姐们” and “老铁” to call their close friends. By calling their friends “哥们” or “姐们”, it increases the

intimacy as friends are regarded like siblings. The phrase “老铁” originates from northern China.

5A 体育之国 A Sporting Nation

Beijing hosted the 2008 Summer Olympics, a milestone in the sporting history of China. Since 1949, China has won 385 medals at the Summer Olympics and 44 medals at the Winter Olympics up to 2018.

6D 天府成都 Chengdu

Hotpot

Hotpot has a history of over 1000 years in China. It is popular among the Chinese because it is a good way to socialise and it is also considered a healthy meal. There are different types of hotpot in China. Two of the most popular hotpots are Sichuan hotpot and Beijing mutton hotpot.

7D 南腔北调 Tones and Accents

The seven major groups of Chinese dialects consist of the Mandarin dialects, the Wu dialects, the Gan dialects, the Xiang dialects, the Hakka dialects, the Yue dialects (Cantonese dialects) and the Min dialects.

8A 喜迎春节 Chinese New Year

For the Chinese, the Lunar New Year is the Spring Festival. It is also celebrated across Southeast Asia in countries with large Chinese populations, such as Singapore and Malaysia. Lunar New Year is called *Seollal* in Korea, *Tet* in Vietnam, and *Losar* in Tibet. In Mandarin, “gong xi fa cai” means to wish you a prosperous New Year. In Cantonese, it’s “gong hey fat choi”.

8B 中秋佳节 Mid-Autumn Festival

The Chinese have celebrated the harvest during the autumn full moon since the Shang dynasty.

8D 教师节庆 Teacher’s Day

The Chinese government established the modern Teachers’ Day in 1985. It is celebrated across China and at Chinese schools abroad.