Chinese Culture Vs American Culture Essay, Research Paper

Chinese Culture vs. American Culture

Chinese and Americans are very different, right? The Chinese believe that the family is more important than the Individual. Americans don’t conform to the family, but do we not all try to fit into a social group or other group? Are we really that different from the Chinese?

In traditional Chinese culture, women are subservient to men, ancestors are worshipped, and baby males are precious while baby girls are a burden. These ideals were true of people living in their native country, China. Some of these values or views came with immigrants who immigrated to the United States. In traditional Chinese culture most marriages are arranged; the groom’s family usually buys the bride. Women are taught to stay in the kitchen and to obey and take commands from the husband. In the movie The Joy Luck Club, Aunt Lindo is sold to a family when she is only four years old: when she goes to the family, she is fifteen. Upon arrival she finds her husband is still a child around eleven years old, and he makes her sleep on the floor. This example illustrates the view that family is more important than the individual. Also women are discouraged from pursuing an education or career, by being taught to obey their husbands and raise a family. They are taught to do housework and raise children not to have a career. Another aspect of Chinese culture is when a child is successful at something that reflects highly on the family. This is illustrated in The Joy Luck Club when Waverly, Lindo’s Daughter, is an extremely talented chess player and her mother brags to all her friends that her daughter is brilliant. However, this does put a lot of stress and strain on a child and eventually caused Waverly to quit playing chess. Success in the children makes the family looked upon highly in the community, and that is very important to the Chinese. One defining thing about the Chinese is that they conform to the values of the family, often sacrificing their individuality, which in Waverly’s case is playing chess against her will.

I strongly feel that the Chinese are sacrificing a big part of their personal happiness, to obey age-old traditions. It is hard for marriages to have passion, mutual respect, and love if the bride is bought, I am sorry you can not buy love. Do the Chinese not allow them selves to have these intense feelings that come with a happy marriage? Maybe they do grow to love the person they marry after time. Do the Chinese know what true love is? I wonder why women go threw this torture, and then turn around and put their daughters through it, it must be for the good of the family because it is not for the good of the daughter. The Chinese put tradition before individuality; they care about their families and do what is best for their family.

On the other end at the spectrum, the Americans have a much different value system. America is an industrial and technology era, with high crime and divorce rates, and a place where everyone is equal, in theory. In America we have the right to choose, and express our individuality, but do we? I think most of the American citizen do not use this right but conform to certain groups. We are a nation obsess with the latest technology, and the new styles of clothing from Polo or Tommy. We have a desire to be like the celebrities we see on television. Trying to be like someone cool is easier than being individual, because of this America has a sky high divorce rate, half of all marriages end in divorce. Because we do not fall in love for the right reasons we fall in love with the person that makes us popular and look good. We get married for what is on the outside not on the inside. This is a bad thing because divorce is not a good thing on anyone, especially the kids. The American crime rate is phenomenally high as well, along with the many Americans who are currently abusing drugs or alcohol or even both. Americans look down upon the Chinese for the way they treat women, but isn’t the rate of domestic abuse in the States soaring to record highs. I think another idea that American is very materialistic, we base our opinion of people by the car they drive; and where their house is located. I’ve done this myself, whenever I see people with the Confederate flag, I think they must be uneducated rednecks. We as Americans as a hole judge people by what others are doing. For example, if I saw a crazy redneck hanging a confederate flag I would assume all people with a confederate flag are rednecks. I know this assumption is not always true. One defining thing about Americans is that we conform to social values, sometimes sacrificing our individuality.

One thing that I see in American society is the fact almost everyone conforms to some social group. Therefore, we hide from really truly being ourselves by belonging to a certain group. For example stoners, they wear baggie jeans and old thrift shop shirts. Jocks have their letter jackets and tight jeans, and the freaks that wear just about anything that is strange. One unifying theme in all of these groups and all other groups is that the whole group follows these trends. How many times do you see people dressed like a freak hanging out with someone wearing a letter jacket, you don’t it just doesn’t happen. Do Americans know what true happiness is if they are always conforming to a group and/or being afraid to be an individual. I do not think that you can be truly happy if you are always sacrificing your individuality to fit in with a group. I feel that most people find that it is easier to go along with the group, then stand of their own, because they don’t want to be alone, no one does.

The issue that is trying to be tied together is conformity of the Chinese and American cultures. Now matter how you look at it people in both cultures conform to either social of family pressures. Americans look at Chinese and say their wrong for the way they treat women, while Chinese look at Americans and say we have let crime and drugs get the best of our country. Both countries have faults of their own. There is no way you can tell either country that they are wrong because it is their culture.