Chinese Culture Essay, Research Paper

Throughout China’s

encased history it has developed much differently than

western parts of the world. Chinese culture varies greatly

compared to ours. These great differences between eastern

culture and western culture make China a very interesting

place. Some of the vast differences include literature, social

structure, and government. The greatest difference is

Chinese philosophy and way of thinking. China has

developed a strict system of tradition that has given China

great advantages and disadvantages. This is shown in

Chinese literature. Tradition in China is a set of unwritten

laws. This is why China turned its eyes from the outside

world and looked in. China found everything it needed in

Tradition (4). The strong traditions and customs play

probably the greatest factor in the life of a Chinese person.

This strict philosophy influences marriage, children, family,

and duty in life. Marriage is much different and has different

levels of companionship. One man may have many wives

and or concubines. The status of these wives and concubines

are very important. The lower you are on the husband’s list

the lower you were treated (1). When in a marriage if you

were having children a son would be most desirable for you

to have. You would be thought better of if you produced a

son. This shows the male dominance in Chinese culture.

Once a son was born the expectations for him were great.

He was supposed to learn all great literature and be very

scholarly (2). A girl, also was supposed to be raise to

appreciate art and literature. Most of all though children

were supposed to respect tradition. The traditions gave one

a feeling of not the individual but the whole as a group.

People grew up knowing their part in the world and strive to

do that well. They learn to acknowledge their emperor as the

"Son of Heaven" (4). Everything someone does, is done for

their county, and their duty in life. Chinese literature shows

that when everything is done for tradition and the individual is

not priority, many people get forced into a hard and unfair

lifestyle. This is shown in the movie "Raise the Red Lantern"

when the tradition made the lives of four wives strict and

dependent on the master and whom he chose each night.

Their lives were so strict on tradition that one of the wives

lost her life because that is what tradition said should happen

if she broke a rule (1). In other cases nothing could be

learned or changed because of the restriction of tradition.

Such was in the movie "The Forbidden City." In this movie it

also showed how the customs of the concubines and unics

were very constricting to their lives (3). In the book "Six

Records of a Floating Life" tradition creates the

impracticality of a test for magistrates that is purely literary

but decides the head of a certain area of land (2). In China

tradition and customs has done a lot but has hindered the life

of many of its people. Finally after thousands of years, the

withdrawn China was being seen by the western world.

Soon after, European explorers slowly started seeping in.

China tried to keep foreigners out finally with force but the

old traditional weapons of the Chinese were no match for

the technologically advanced Europeans. So after Europe

defeated Chinese forces and got their foot in the door to

China they slow started to enter. After the Chinese saw the

new foreigners they started "questioning their own

government, philosophy, and social systems" (5). When the

foreigners started to build factories and to start gaining

power the Chinese "recognized that if their country was to

protect itself against foreign domination, it would have to

become a modern nation" (5). This new reason to reform

eventually brought about the Communist Revolution. The

communists did away with many of the old traditions and

started to modernize the country. A new generation brought

new ideas, and technology slowly started to replace tradition

(6). China slowly started opening its eyes to the rest of the

world. China has come a long way in the past 50 years, from

a withdrawn country run by tradition, to a major modern

society. This has given its people a chance to choose their

own destiny and to be open to the rest of the world. China’s

strong heritage and knowledge of the past show that China is

now and will be in the future a great world power. Works

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