

A Chinese Kaleidoscope; An American Mosaic

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Nowadays the demand for professionals in China is not as great as in the United States. In China people like to give nice-sounding titles to people, for example a regular engineer will be given the title “senior engineer”, and it is the same with other occupations, for example “senior economist”, “senior professor”. On the other hand in the United States, even famous doctors and lawyers will not have such titles. The reason for this discrepancy is that in China people are sensitive to matters of reputation. People like to have titles like chairman or general manager to add to their business cards. In general people outside of China will usually only add academic degrees such as doctorates or master’s degrees.

In the past in China, you had to follow specific steps and procedures when setting up an industrial enterprise, for example increasing awareness about your product, as well as improving quality and service. Now once a business has been set up, the owners immediately start thinking of a way to start selling stock, by getting an accountant to get their accounting records in order and then seek government approval. If the business succeeds in going public and the stock goes on the market, then the original owners will make money, and the business will receive lots of capital to expand and diversify its operations. Thirty years ago, there were no publicly traded companies in China. Now stock in Chinese companies is traded not only on exchanges in China and Hong Kong, but also in the United States.

Sixteen: The North and South of China supply large quantities of goods. Foreign alcohol and coffee are commonplace.

In China the population is huge and spread over a vast area. Therefore people’s eating habits are different, and there are myriad types of foods and cuisines. South of the Yellow River, rice is the major dietary staple. This is because the Yangtze and Pearl Rivers provide an atmosphere and source of water suitable for large scale farming of rice. Therefore the south of China is known for its rice production. However in the north of China, noodles are the dietary staple. Generally speaking, someone who can eat rice or noodles is relatively well off when compared to the many poor people who can only afford to eat yams and soybeans.

Traditionally Guangdong has many small family-owned restaurants and food carts. The work in such a job is laborious and taxing. Workers need to buy ingredients and do washing and cooking. The work lasts until late at night. Since there is no refrigeration, the food is always fresh, and the prices are cheap. However, both hygiene and service tend to be poor. Nowadays

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such carts are not permitted on city roadsides, and are concentrated in specific locations.

Such carts usually start business at six o'clock in the morning and continue working until four o'clock in the afternoon. The areas that such businesses have been relegated to have grown to become small cities.

In terms of beverages, China is best known for its tea. Each region in China has its own tea, and there are many types. Making a cup of tea is a form of art. You must get the water, boil it, smell the fragrance, and distinguish the color and taste. There are some restaurants in Guangdong that are devoted specifically to serving tea. Tea leaves must be harvested at a specific time of the year. At the time of harvest the tea leaves are precious, but if the time for harvest has passed, this is not the case. However, only connoisseurs of tea will be able to tell the difference. The best teas are completely different from inferior teas. The worst type of tea is the type in tea bags because the tea is all ground up and you cannot tell its quality. Wealthy people like to drink expensive teas, such as *Dahong Pao*, which is the most expensive brand. China produced a great amount of tea, but each region has its own way of preparing it. For example, in Chaozhou tea is made in a special with a specific type of tea set. Recently the price of *Pu'ercha* has gone up due to promotion of its purported health benefits. Of course there are numerous other drinks in China such as sodas, and mineral water, but among these the most popular is mineral water.

In China, each region has its own types of foods, and the foods of China's minority groups are especially varied. Nevertheless, there are also foods that are popular amongst nearly everyone, being both cheap and tasty. For example, Shanghai's soup dumplings, Shandong's pot stickers, and Hong Kong's fish eggs are dishes enjoyed throughout China. Although Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Shenzhen used to be small villages, they are now major metropolises. Nevertheless, there are many dining options, and people from the countryside can always find the style of food from their hometowns.

Chinese people are very hospitable to their guests, and alcohol is always served to them. Chinese people do not drink much foreign alcohol, and instead prefer white and yellow rice wines. The alcohol content in white rice wine is quite high, while that of yellow rice wine is relatively low. In the past when China lacked resources, alcohol consumption was low. Now that the economy has grown, alcohol consumption has risen, which has given rise to increased

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problems such as alcoholism and drunk driving.

In the countryside, the population density is low, and there is a lot of land. People tend to live in single-family homes. The families live by means of subsistence farming, and surrounding the house will be their crops, unlike homes in foreign countries where flowers are planted in front of homes.

The crops farmers plant next to their homes are all organic because they have always used natural fertilizers rather than chemical ones. Large-scale commercial farms on the other hand all use chemical fertilizers, and their produce is anything but organic. In the past China's villages relied on manual strength and oxen to cultivate the land. Farming by traditional methods produces harvests of poor quality, and so farmers in the past lived very hard lives. This was the case for several thousand years. A rich person would spend more on one meal than a peasant would make in an entire year. Peasant families had to supplement their incomes by raising chickens, ducks, pigs, and cattle, which took a long time to raise before they were ready to be sold at the market. Since oxen were so useful in ploughing the fields, people were grateful and therefore did not eat beef. The amount of fish and shrimp that can be caught in the rivers is very low due to pollution from industry. Therefore fish can only be caught at sea. Currently there are very few farms that make agricultural produce the natural way, most taking advantage of scientific advance to produce things in bulk.

Traditionally, ninety percent of China's population farmed for a living. Life as a farmer was difficult, and this was especially true during the time period when farmers had to live in communes. After the reforms, private business and private production were permitted, and industry and agriculture grew at a rate faster than Europe and America during the Industrial Revolution. In addition to the agricultural and industrial sectors, a budding service sector also arose. Businesspeople and entrepreneurs went to the countryside in search of cheap labor. Women went to work in factory cafeterias, and men repaired roads and built houses. Although their wages were low, the income far surpassed anything they had made through farming.

Eventually, young people from the countryside came to the cities in search of work, and it was no longer necessary for businesses to move out to the countryside. For this reason, the immigrant population in cities in Guangdong, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu began to outnumber the local population. Such workers lived hard lives in order to send money back home.

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Chinese traditional foods are nutritious and healthy because the crops and preparation methods were made before the advent modern science, so there are no chemicals, preservatives, or chemical fertilizers in the production process. Many natural plants are of medicinal value. Chinese people have a lot of experience in using medicinal plants to cure illnesses, and much research on the cardiovascular issues has been passed down through the generations. For this reason Chinese traditional medicine is not like Western medicine, which requires things like injections and surgeries. Chinese traditional medicine's biggest issue is that practices and methods are not always preserved through the generations. There are many ailments Western medicine cannot treat that Chinese traditional medicine can. Nevertheless many Chinese medicines are not permitted to be imported in the United States and Europe. Some need to be approved by regulatory commissions such as the Food and Drug Administration. Others are not permitted on the grounds of preserving wildlife. For example one Chinese medicine, tiger balm, was originally banned for import because it was thought that some of the ingredients came from tigers. When this misunderstanding was corrected however, it became eligible for import.

Contact between China and each part of the rest of the world is frequent and intimate. For example, most types of Chinese foods can be found in supermarkets throughout the world, and products from all over the world are available in Chinese supermarkets. In major Chinese cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, there are many foreigners. Just like Chinese people, these foreigners want to have food from their hometowns, so Chinese businesses import such products to sell to them.

In major Chinese cities, one can find not only foods from all over China, but also from all over the world. The most popular types of foreign cuisine are French, Japanese, and Italian. Not only do foreigners enjoy them, so do Chinese people.

Before the economic reforms, China was an agricultural country. However, after the reforms and economic development, it no longer became necessary for the majority of Chinese people to be occupied with farming for themselves because such things are taken care of by the agricultural industry.

Seventeen: Emphasize Western medicine, and value Chinese traditional medicine. Each can complement the other.

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Currently China's healthcare system also emphasizes Western medicine. Of course, Western medicine's foundation is more scientific. Western medical practices undergo precise experimentation, first carrying out animal testing for evaluation before they are promoted for use in humans. Western medicine also takes advantage of medical equipment that can be both fast and effective. Chinese traditional medicine on the other hand relies on the experience of past generations, and although it has several thousand years of history, is relatively slow in effect because it relies mostly on plant-based medicines.

In China Western medicine is very popular, and Chinese traditional medicine is primarily supplemental. Nevertheless Chinese traditional medicine is respected because it is a national treasure passed down for several thousand years. Every province not only has Western medical schools, but also Chinese traditional medicine schools. Acupuncture and moxibustion in particular are very popular, and are even gaining popularity outside of China.

Chinese social welfare and public healthcare systems are rapidly transforming. Before the reforms, there were no private businesses, so everyone worked for either the government or in a government-owned industry. Seeing the doctor was free because of worker's insurance. After retirement, one would receive a pension from their work unit. Housing was also provided by the government. Although worker's wages were low, all necessities were provided for by the government.

After the reforms, the government knew that such a system made the nation poor, and the people poor. Now the economy is developed, and the vast majority of small and mid-sized national industries have been privatized. However, most business owners are not able to handle health insurance and pensions for their employees, so a social welfare system has become necessary. Similar to American and European systems, a small portion of each worker's wages are taken by the government to be used towards social security and health care.

Although China's economy has improved, hospitals do not have enough capacity, and the quality of facilities tends not to be good. There are different types of hospitals, for example government and military hospitals, which have good facilities and experienced doctors. Regular hospitals have relatively poorer facilities and less capable doctors. In these hospitals that are oriented towards the masses, patients must pay a fee and wait in line. Nevertheless, the fee is much smaller than in the West, regardless of the type of treatment. However some people buy

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imported medicines that result in fees much greater than what patients pay in the West. Foreigners typically pay a larger fee in Chinese hospitals. The facilities in higher quality hospitals in China are advanced and Western.

Commonly, Chinese people do not go to the doctor when they are sick, and if they feel just a little unwell they will simply wait for their health to improve. If they feel they cannot wait, they will go to the pharmacy for some medicine. Only when the illness is serious will they go to see a doctor. By the time the illness has been diagnosed, it may be too late to treat it. It is rare in China for people to have a yearly physical and have tests of their lung function and blood. Nowadays it is not the same with China's urban population. Similar to the West, people will see a doctor when they are feeling ill, and sometimes will go for an examination even if they are not sick. People pay attention to Western medicine in addition to Chinese traditional medicine, and in general take care of their health. With the quality of healthcare in China improving every day, the people are healthier and life expectancies are rising.

Requirements for pharmacies in China are not high. Generally speaking, a high school graduate can become a pharmacist with an additional two years of specialized training. Some pharmacies do not even have pharmacists on staff. Requirements for pharmacies in Hong Kong are higher. Pharmacists must be registered with the government, and pharmacies have a wide variety of medicines available. Furthermore, doctors with their own clinics will usually have a medications onsite and can fill patients' prescriptions themselves.

In the United States the situation is different; if a doctor writes a prescription for a patient, the patient must go to a pharmacy to have it filled by a pharmacist. Additionally, pharmacists in the United States must finish six years of university and receive a master's degree before becoming a pharmacist. Pharmacies in China tend not to make much money because people do not always get prescriptions, and pharmacies do not necessarily receive reimbursements from insurance companies or the government. In China pharmaceutical research is constant, and the quality of medical care is improving daily.

People in China retire comparatively early, usually by age sixty. Furthermore everyone is understands how to take care of themselves, neither eating too much nor too little. Recently the health benefits of greenery are being emphasized. People sleep and wake early, going to the park in the morning to take part in Tai Chi groups or just to stroll around, all things which can help maintain health.

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In the past, Western medicine was divided into internal medicine, and surgery. Chinese medicine currently is similarly divided, and uses all types of medical instruments to diagnose illness. For example, patients with heart disease will go to see a heart specialist.

Eyes are the most important part of the human body. Without eyes one would be unable to see. To suffer from blindness is truly a hardship. In modern times, reading books, using computers, and watching movies has resulted in increased incidence of myopia and astigmatism. Cataracts and glaucoma are also a problem, as well as other diseases of the eye.

It is currently very common for ophthalmologists to use laser eye surgery to cure myopia. Before the surgery, the ophthalmologist will conduct a special examination. The patient does not feel pain during the laser eye surgery, and the whole procedure is over in just two or three minutes. Only a few days of recovery is necessary for the patient. Laser eye surgery is very effective at restoring strength of sight. Nevertheless, after five or six years, the nearsightedness can return. Chinese traditional medicine methods such as Chinese medicine, acupuncture, moxibustion, qigong, and acupressure are all effective at treating illness. Although the basis for these treatments is not as scientific as in Western medicine, that they are able to treat certain illnesses is an incontrovertible reality.

Hong Kong has long been an established center for Chinese traditional medicine. Prestigious schools of Chinese medicine have been founded there to foster Chinese medical talent and develop effective new Chinese traditional medical treatments.

In European and American countries there are two prevailing systems of medical insurance. In England and Canada, all citizens are covered by government health insurance. Other countries follow the same system present in the United States. In the United States there are three methods of obtaining health insurance. One can get health insurance through an employer if it is offered, through the government if the person is of a sufficiently low income, or through purchasing it themselves from a private insurance company. This is a good method because employees are covered through their employers, poor people are covered by the government, and well-off people can purchase their own coverage.

There is very little health insurance coverage in China. If one goes to the northwest of China, the citizens there are unlikely to even understand what health insurance is. The

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government is currently trying to improve health care coverage however.

There are many places in China that have natural hot springs. The water in these places possesses special mineral properties that have health benefits. Ingredients for Chinese medicine, such as Chinese caterpillar fungus and Changbai mountain ginseng are of high value, but currently there are very few in the wild. Those one can find in markets are cultivated domestically and are not effective.

Eighteen: In China for each 100 emigrants there is less than one immigrant; Chinese people are hurrying to go abroad.

Due to the fact that China's population is so large, immigrants from other countries are naturally not welcomed; otherwise China's population would be much too large.

For the past five thousand years, China has always been a small farming-based economy with very little industry. Industry was never developed, and the common people led difficult lives. For people in areas near the coast, it was more convenient to immigrate to other countries to seek their livelihoods. Residents of Fujian and Guangdong in particular emigrated in large numbers. Usually such emigrants would work hard in their new surroundings, raise a small amount of capital, and then open a small business. Therefore Chinese people who emigrated tended to have a better economic foundation. In the latter half of the seventies when the government enacted reforms, there occurred an upsurge in emigration in China. Many common people wished to move abroad, especially to the United States, Europe, Australia, and Canada. A lesser number immigrated to Southeast Asia. Those who immigrated to Southeast Asia often first held jobs as laborers and field workers, or engaged in small business. Since counties in these areas were not developed and the thinking of the local people was simple, Chinese immigrants engaged in commerce did comparatively well. The earliest Chinese immigrants to the United States worked in gold mining and road construction.

Although there are several million Chinese immigrants throughout the world, they tend not to be involved in politics, with the exception of Singapore, where the leader is an overseas Chinese. In brief, Chinese immigrants not only need to work to ensure their livelihoods, but also need to make sure their children are educated in a foreign language in addition to Chinese. The second generation of Chinese immigrants tends to suffer from a crisis of identity, and the third generation will usually return to China to search for their roots.

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Chinese-American diplomatic relations were severed after the revolution in China for a full quarter of a century. The Cold War had a negative effect on both countries. Why was this case? Since one country had the world's largest economy, and the other had the world's largest population, the two countries standing in opposition to each other could only have negative effects on the development of both. On the other hand, if relations between the two countries are amicable, then both will benefit.

In the beginning of the seventies, the United States and China began to interact diplomatically. In 1972, Henry Kissinger visited China, and afterwards President Nixon also came. There they met Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai. Relations between the two countries began to improve and became more cooperative, laying the foundation for diplomatic relations to be restored in 1978. After the restoration of relations, opportunities for Chinese to immigrate to the United States increased. In the time between the years 1980 and 2000, more Chinese people immigrated to the United States than had done so in the past 200 years, and the number continued to increase. If obtaining permission from the United States government had not been an issue, Chinese immigrants would compose fifty percent of the American population.

In the years before the restoration of relations between the United States and China, there were relatively few Chinese immigrants. Most were refugees, students, or people with relatives already in the United States. Each year the number did not surpass ten thousand immigrants.

Why are there currently so many Chinese people in the United States? Although Chinese people in the United States seeking to help their relative immigrate were limited to helping their immediate family, eventually regulations allowed them to help other relatives enter the country, and those relatives in turn helped other relatives. Furthermore, the number of foreign students, special workers, and investors coming to the country also increased.

In the beginning, Chinese people's immigration to the United States was much like immigration had been for Europeans. Large numbers of people crowded into boats and had to endure a long sea journey of several weeks to a month. Europeans had to cross the Atlantic Ocean, while Chinese had to cross the Pacific. Most immigrants were destined for San Francisco and New York.

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With modern advancements, travel across the sea has become common in vacations. A trip by plane from China to the United States takes no more than one day. Whereas immigrants in the past had to endure many setbacks along the way, today's immigrants and travelers need only go to an international airport, fly to the United States, and then pass through the immigration department. Each day nearly one hundred thousand immigrants and travelers enter the country in this manner. Other than the usual method of immigrating to the United States, there are several other ways. For example, if someone receives permission to study in the United States, his or her spouse and even parents can apply to come to the United States to accompany the student. Primary and middle schools can also enroll students from abroad.

Due to the fact that large numbers of people immigrate to the United States consistently, even though the birth rate is not high, the population increases every year. Immigration to the United States from Europe is relatively favorable and more convenient. However, the number of immigrants from Europe currently is not very large because life in those countries is stable. The rate of approval from the immigration department is very high for Europeans. The largest number of European immigrant applicants comes from Russia, and many of them receive approval. Immigrants and travellers from Asia, South America, and Africa, however, have a very low rate of approval. Immigrants from these areas try every possible means to come to the United States, and usually upon arriving are able to find jobs. Although many Chinese people wish to immigrate to the United States, few Americans wish to go to China.

Nineteen: In China, Overseas Chinese are protected by foreign consulates, whereas members of the Chinese Diaspora are taken care of by the Chinese government.

In Mainland China, there are three types of people from abroad. The first type is foreigners who come to China for travel, business, or public service. The second type is ethnic Chinese who have been naturalized in the United States or were born there, and do not have Chinese citizenship. These first two groups do not have the right to stay in China long-term. The third type is Chinese people who have lived abroad long-term, and may be foreign residents, but still retain their Chinese passport. This last group is what the term "Chinese Diaspora" refers to. Ethnic Chinese without Chinese citizenship are limited to stays of six months in length when they are in China, whereas Chinese Diaspora can remain indefinitely. If they have a green card as well, then they can move between the United States and China without restriction.