

# CHINESE CINDERELLA: DIFFERENT CUSTOMS

**Learning Intention:** We are learning to better understand and accept different cultures while rejecting values that are not in harmony with scriptural values or basic human rights.

## Instructions:

- Put a **W** next to any Chinese customs you think are a bit weird.
- Put an **X** next to any you think are wrong.
- Put a 😊 next to the ones you think are great and/or make a lot of sense.

## Traditions

- Chinese New Year a holiday for whole country
- New clothes worn for New Year
- Orphanages take unwanted children as well as those with no parents
- Traditional style gardens: walled with ponds, rocks, pavilions, and winding paths
- Wear white at funerals, pg.22
- Crickets in cages as pets, pg.73
- Rude to leave any scraps on your plate pg.92
- Beggars bang tin cups and chant for handouts pg.43
- Bowing to show respect pg. 187
- Travelling by rickshaw (cart pulled by a person), either personal or hired
- Unwanted children can be sold as servants or adopted children.
- When someone dies, everyone sleeps in the same room as the coffin to keep them company, pg.22

## Family

- Called each other by place in family, not name e.g. Third Brother Little Sister
- Father head of house
- Very strong hierarchy in family
- Women don't talk to men and only talk if spoken to
- All the family live together
- Lots of children
- Children should be 'seen & not heard' e.g. often don't get an opinion or much respect in family
- Called a different name in your family than the one used by people at school or work.
- "Family ugliness (e.g. unpleasantness or disputes) should never be revealed in public" pg. 242
- Parents may treat children how they like, no law against child abuse/neglect at that time.
- At meals, all dishes served at once, adults served first and then children
- Oldest woman respected
- Respect for old people/elders
- Arranged marriages at young age pg. 100
- Sons better than daughters, pg.206

### Food

- Spring rolls
- Duck meat and salted duck eggs
- Frog legs stir-fried with ginger and soy sauce
- Sweet & sour spareribs
- String beans with beef in black bean sauce and sautéed spinach
- Dumplings
- Dragon's eye fruit (similar to lychee)
- Fermented bean curd
- Tea eggs (egg boiled in tea)
- Steamed buns with meat or bean filling
- Melon seeds, salted plums & sliced ginger as snacks
- Noodles, barbequed pork and scallions

### Clothing & Beauty

- Foot binding
- Painted nails
- Child's outfit: silk trousers with matching jacket, cloth shoes.
- Long loose-fitting gown made of dark blue wool with cloth buttons and high 'mandarin' collar
- European clothes and hairstyles, especially French, seen as high status
- For a wedding – pink qipao/cheongsam and silver shoes

### Values

- School achievement highly valued (pg.40) studying hard brings honour
- Looking neat important
- Status – follow Chinese traditions about who to respect in society/hierarchy
- Discretion & privacy very important
- Face/honour/pride above honesty
- Community more important than the individual
- Individual's actions affect their family and community, not just themselves

### Language

- Use the word dynasty to refer to time periods
- Family name comes before first name
- Speaking French and English sign of education and class
- Chinese language is pictorial rather than alphabetical
- Many different dialects e.g. Mandarin, Shanghai dialect, Tianjin dialect.
- No connection between written and spoken language
- Most people bilingual or trilingual, street signs often written in multiple languages
- Art of calligraphy highly respected, handwritten poems prized & passed down for generations
- Chinese words resemble their meaning

### School

- Medals for topping the class, even in foundation/kindergarten
- Missionary schools are expensive or high status schools for rich kids

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Learned English and French
- Teachers called 'Teacher Last Name' e.g. Teacher Wong, Teacher Lin.
- Only boys go to university normally
- Called year levels 'forms', i.e. First Form
- Homework important

### Social ranking

- People with disabilities or deformities often beggars, feared by children
- Wealthy families keep servants e.g. cooks, chauffeur
- Children had to show respect to Japanese soldiers – could be punished by kicking or slapping
- Aunt Baba had 'servant' status because she was meek, shy, unmarried and had no money.
- In Hong Kong (British Colony) white people took precedence over locals, automatically go to the head of every line

### Religion

- Communists are atheist and do not support religious freedom, have been known to persecute religious groups
- Buddhists practiced a traditional hundred-day religious mourning period after a funeral
- Superstitious – believe 'lucky' objects or images will bring prosperity and happiness
- Objects or people can be 'bad luck' and are believed to cause/bring unhappiness and calamity
- Buddhists shaved their heads and wore skull caps to show their devotion
- Some common Chinese Buddhist beliefs and practices: ancestor's spirits help them, making offerings of food/incense to ancestors, karma (cause and effect)

### Three Key Questions:

1. Explain how you decided whether a custom was one you agreed with, or whether it was weird or wrong.
2. Are the weird ones necessarily the wrong ones? What does this tell you?
3. How should people determine whether a custom is acceptable or not?