

## **Differences between Chinese and Western Family Values**

Family values must be an important part when talking about Chinese and western culture. Chinese family value is influenced by western culture, but it's obviously not the same as what in the western countries.

### **1.Importance of Family**

For Chinese people, family is always put in the first place, as Chinese culture focuses on collectivism, family has been a key component in Chinese society since ancient times. According to the Confucian thoughts, family is the core among the five important relationships, including husband and wife, elder and younger, siblings and brothers.

With a diverse culture among western countries, each country has their own point of view on family values. But we have to say, family value of most western people is individual-orientated. Even though family is important to them, they emphasis more on personal development.

### **2.Respect for Elders**

Based on the traditional Chinese culture of respecting the aged and caring for the young, it's a traditional virtue in China to respect the elders. Thus, Chinese people think it offensive to question the authority from the elders in their families. In China, when parents get old, their children have the responsibilities to support their parents. Except for supporting money, some young generations will invite their parents to live together with them, in order to take good care of their parents. Also, the elders play an important role in taking care of their grandchildren.

For western people, family is also important to them, but the family structure is so different from Chinese family structure. Unlike traditional Chinese families, the culture of four generations under one roof won't happen in western countries.

### **3.Marriage**

Chinese people believe that marriage is not just between the couple, it is a matter between two families, parents' willingness may affect marriage. Without their parents' blessings, young couples will marry under lots of social and financial pressures, since they need the support for buying new home. Influenced by traditional Chinese culture, Chinese people seek for a properly matched marriage, arranged marriage is still common in some rural areas in China.

In contrast, most westerners believe that marriage is a matter between two persons, their own willingness will be more predominant, rather than families' willingness.

### **4.Parenting Style**

In most western countries, children are treated as individuals. Children are supposed to move out after being 18 years old, because parents in the western families expect their children to be more independent. For western families, each family may have its own values. Individualism is highly

respected, kids are expected to express themselves openly, they could argue with their parents for different opinions, so that they have more freedom to speak for themselves and make decisions on their own.

However, Chinese parents keep a stronger tie with their children, many children will live with the family, even when they get married, traditionally live with the family of the groom. Nowadays, more young couples prefer to live separately from their parents, but the purchase of the home is normally funded by the parents of the couples.

Obviously, the parenting style in Chinese families is totally different from western families. For most Chinese parents, they project their good hopes onto their children, parents will make sacrifice in order to let the children educated well. As a result, they tend to make decisions for their children, and they believe that it is all for the good of their children.

## **5.Roles of Men and Women**

For traditional Chinese families, the man has the main responsibility to take care of and pay for the entire family, no matter for his children or parents, meanwhile, the woman is expected to stay at home and look after children and the elders. Normally the man will make the final call when it comes to decision-making.

For modern Chinese families, influenced by western culture, roles of men and women have changed vastly. Most women have their own jobs and seek for their careers as men do, child-rearing role is no longer a tag for modern women. Additionally, the man is not the one that holds the final say anymore, the family will discuss together, for children's education or marriage. Even though there are housewives in some western families, most men and women in the western countries tend to support the family together, they respect each other and believe in gender equality.