

The Chinese people possess a lot of interesting features in their daily routine, in business. They have unique traits of character.

In general, the Chinese are a collective society with a need for group affiliation, whether to their family, school, work group, or country.

In order to maintain a sense of harmony, they will act with decorum at all times and will not do anything to cause someone else public embarrassment.

They are willing to subjugate their own feelings for the good of the group.

This is often observed by the use of silence in very structured meetings. If someone disagrees with what another person says, rather than disagree publicly, the person will remain quiet. This gives face to the other person, while speaking up would make both parties lose face.

Non-Verbal Communication is very characteristic of the Chinese people and portrays their emotions .

Since the Chinese strive for harmony and are group dependent, they rely on facial expression, tone of voice and posture to tell them what someone feels.

Frowning while someone is speaking is interpreted as a sign of disagreement.

Therefore, most Chinese maintain an impassive expression when speaking.

It is considered disrespectful to stare into another person's eyes. In crowded situations the Chinese avoid eye contact to give themselves privacy.

Speaking about etiquette and customs we must mention that greetings are formal and the oldest person is always greeted first.

Handshakes are the most common form of greeting with foreigners.

Many Chinese will look towards the ground when greeting someone.

You should address the person by an honorific title and their surname. If they want to move to a first-name basis, they will advise you which name to use.

The Chinese have a terrific sense of humour. They can laugh at themselves most readily if they have a comfortable relationship with the other person. Be ready to laugh at yourself and support the Chinese person.

The Chinese people like to celebrate holidays and of course to present gifts.

In general, gifts are given at Chinese New Year, weddings, births and more recently (because of marketing), birthdays.

The Chinese like food and a nice food basket will make a great gift.

If you are a foreigner you shouldn't give scissors, knives or other cutting utensils as they indicate the severing of the relationship.

If you present the Chinese person clocks, handkerchiefs or straw sandals, flowers, he will associate them with funerals and death.

It's a well known fact that four is an unlucky number so do not give four of anything. Eight is the luckiest number, so giving eight of something brings luck to the recipient.

There are some common rules how to present gifts correctly.

Always present gifts with two hands.

Gifts are not opened when received.

Gifts may be refused three times before they are accepted.

Dining Etiquette is one of the most important for the Chinese society I think.

The Chinese prefer to entertain in public places rather than in their homes, especially when entertaining foreigners.

If you are invited to their house, consider it a great honour. If you must turn down such an honour, it is considered polite to explain the conflict in your schedule so that your actions are not taken as a slight.

Arrive on time.

Remove your shoes before entering the house.

Bring a small gift to the hostess.

Eat well to demonstrate that you are enjoying the food!

To show your respectfulness to the hosts learn to use chopsticks.

Wait to be told where to sit. The guest of honour will be given a seat facing the door.

The host begins eating first.

You should try everything that is offered to you.

Never eat the last piece from the serving tray.

Be observant to other peoples' needs.

Chopsticks should be returned to the chopstick rest after every few bites and when you drink or stop to speak.

The host offers the first toast.

Do not put bones in your bowl. Place them on the table or in a special bowl for that purpose.

Hold the rice bowl close to your mouth while eating.

Do not be offended if a Chinese person makes slurping or belching sounds; it merely indicates that they are enjoying their food.

There are so many customs, ways of life, rules of behavior that are characteristic of the Chinese people. But the first thing you should remember: you should respect this country and its people and always be polite.