

# Chinese Traditions & Culture

The connection between  
yesterday and today in China

# Where do the Chinese live?



Taken from India (called the Stupa), the Pagoda design arrived with Buddhism.



This is a traditional layout of an ancient Chinese household (containing a courtyard, gate and rooms surrounding it).

Now the Chinese live in many settings, though evidence of the past remains...



Beijing – Hutong District: The courtyard of a large house now made into apartments.



Zhouzhuang – The Zhenbrenjia Hotel: Taken from the middle of the inner courtyard. Notice the raised threshold to keep out spirits and dirt. This used to be a wealthy estate.



Beijing – The Forbidden City: This is an elaborate marble screen (wall) to provide privacy to the room behind it.



Kangding: These were houses of farmers outside of the city near the border of Tibet.



Many Chinese live in these model/uniform houses. The bottom “garage doors” are meant to use as their shop areas.



Yangtze River Housing & Businesses



Zhouzhuang: Barber shop – Most shop owners live in small rooms in the back of their store.





Beijing – Hutong District: PS2! (For the record, PS3 wasn't out yet. Chinese kids play video games like too in their livingrooms!

Every culture has to go the bathroom somewhere too...



Squatting is more popular as a means of going to the bathroom than sitting.



Sometimes only a trench is provided to do your business.

# Centuries of Chinese Cooking Thrives Today





Rice is a staple of many Chinese people's diet. In the past, the Chinese greeted each other by asking, "Have you had your rice today?"



Chengdu – In an apartment in the city, a host family made me a traditional meal of homemade boiled dumplings. Manners dictate that you serve yourself with one side of your chopsticks, and eat with the other side. All share the dishes on the table.



Yangtze River Cruise Meal: The Yin/Yang symbol from an egg soup.



Kangding (Crossroad to Tibet): Yak meat eaten with your hands – Chopsticks were provided after we asked for them.



Shanghai: Food is precious. Nothing is wasted. The Chinese have suffered many years of famine in the past.





Three Gorges Dam: A mung bean popsicle. Sweet desserts are not as popular as they are in the USA.

# Living with the relatives...





Multi-generational families: Here a grandfather takes care of his grandchild while the mother and father work.



Shanghai – Jang'an Park: Grandmother taking care of her grandchild. Many grandparents were gathered there talking to one another while the toddlers and children played with each other.

The community gets involved in raising the youth too...



Shanghai: Young Pioneers – The first stage of joining the Communist Party in China.

**Filial piety** means to take care of one's parents; not be rebellious; show love, respect and support; display courtesy; ensure male heirs, uphold fraternity among brothers; wisely advise one's parents; conceal their mistakes; display sorrow for their sickness and death; and carry out sacrifices after their death.



Fengdu – The Ghost City: Here is a Confucian deity in a Taoist temple judging the recently deceased determining their fate in the next world. Confucius stressed filial piety, respecting one's parents and elders. Confucianism is an integral part of Chinese culture today.

# The Chinese view of death...

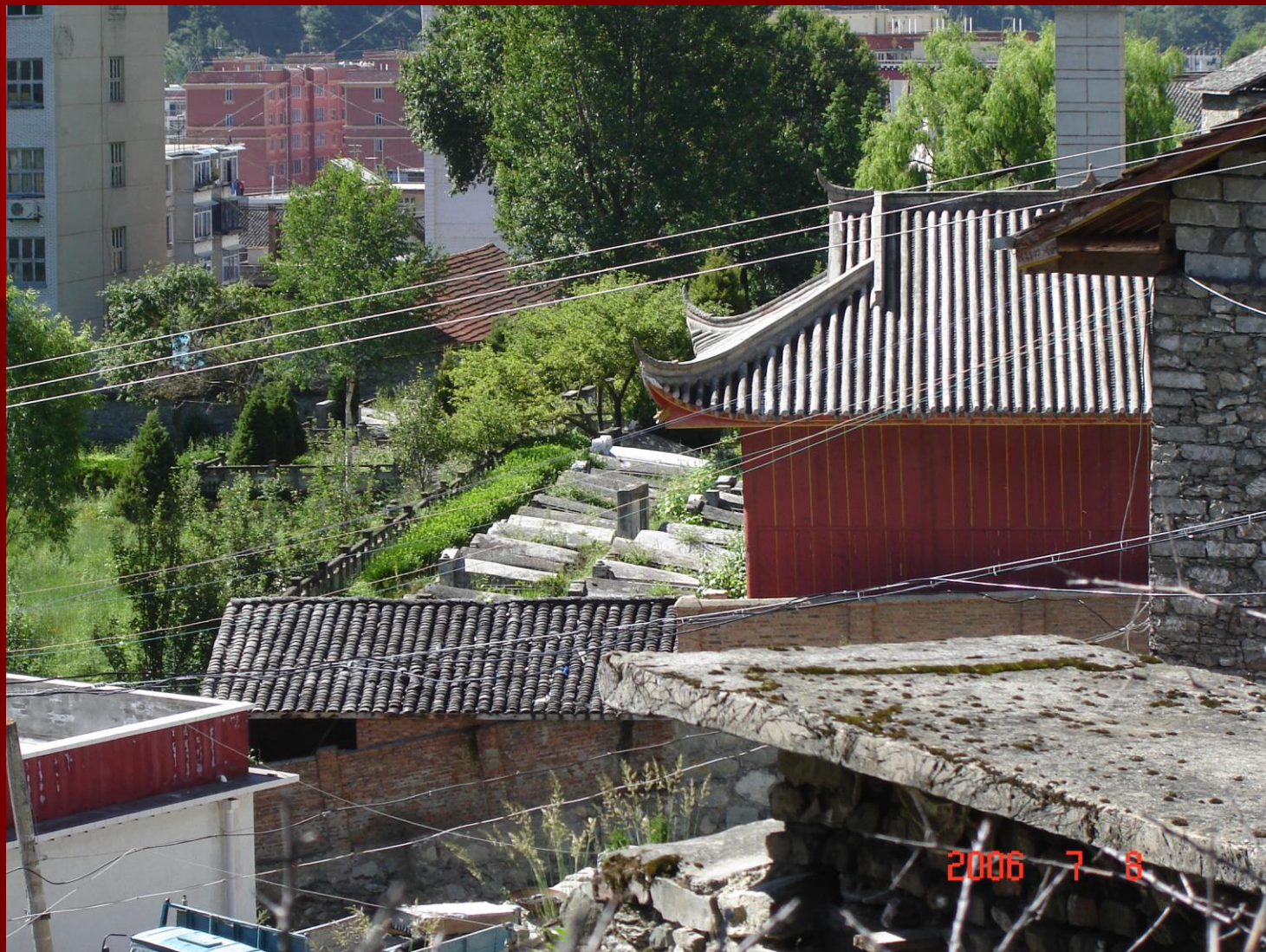


An Ancestor Shrine on the banks of the Yangtze River.



Many Chinese believe that one of the person's souls stays with their graves. Ancestors are believed to take an interest in the living world and have influence over it, as well.





Kangding: Notice the above ground graves in the picture. These would be attended to (cleaned up) on Qing Ming (Tomb Sweeping Day).

# Chinese Weddings and Funerals



Mt. Emei – Holy Buddhist Mountain: Traditionally the bride would be dressed in red, but globalization contributes to the blending of Western and Eastern cultures.



While not a traditional dress, the red is still used by many in China.



The color red suggests vitality and energy in China.

Zhouzhuang – Canal Town: Notice the red lanterns. Almost always the popular hanging lanterns were red, never white. White is associated with death and funerals in China.



# The End

Pictures taken mostly from NCTA  
China Study Tour 2006