

China cultural heritage research paper examples

[Countries](#), [China](#)



China joins Babylon, India and Egypt as the four ancient civilizations. The nation has a vast geographical space and has a rich history with elaborate and magnificent culture that has been written for over 3, 600 years. The diverse and unique Chinese culture can therefore be traced hundreds of years back. For the Chinese, their culture presents itself as an asset that defines their position as a landmark in the world. China's cultural heritage can be examined by analyzing the different aspects of culture that include Chinese food, festivals, kung fu, language, medicine and the China World Heritage Sites. In this paper, we will examine the China cultural heritage by considering the arts, entertainment, food and drinks and health. In addition, the paper will examine some of the cultural heritage sites in china.

Chinese Art comprises one of the greatest cultural heritages. Historically, the Chinese cherish excellence and advancement in arts. Kung Fu, for instance is regarded as one on the best-known arts in the traditions of the Chinese people. Kung Fu, which is also referred to as Martial Arts is one of the longest lasting sports that have survived over time. Participants are required to use both strength and brain in order to excel in Kung fu. It is based on the classical Chinese philosophy, (Destination Asia, 2014, Para 2).

Traditional arts in form of food, carving, sculpture, writing, painting and singing, expresses the Chinese arts that are use unique styles. In Southern China for instance, there are many teahouses where people go to take tea. It is believed that, during warm seasons, taking tea would help one to dissipate heat and hence help in cooling the body and relaxing. Eating is also considered as an art in the Chinese culture. Eating involves a combination of the five senses including touch, sound, smell, and taste where Chinese

cuisines forms a dominant part of their culture whose core is taste and health preservation, (Destination Asia, Para 2).

Entertainment forms another major part of the Chinese culture. The most popular forms of Chinese opera include the Beijing Opera also known as Peking opera and the Cantonese Opera. These forms of entertainment can be traced back to centuries during the dynastic era. Cantonese Opera is believed to have originated from the cultures of people who lived in the northern China. On the other hand, Beijing opera is believed to have taken root in Beijing in the north and in Shanghai in the south. During performance of these Operas, music is accompanied by singing and artistic costumes and performances like acrobatics and Martial Arts. Culture and traditions of the Chinese people are well depicted in the performances in the opera. Operas most often reflect aspects like virtues, which include faithfulness, loyalty, morals including love and patriotism. Other than being a mere source of entertainment, Chinese Operas carried important messages that were essential especially before the widespread adoption of formal education. Most often, operas carried the message of encouraging people to be loyal to the emperor and to love their kingdom. Performance of the operas was usually accompanied melodic and percussive instruments, (Wertz, 2011). Traditional festivals are another aspect of Chinese traditions that have a rich cultural meaning. Having taken shape in the Qin Dynasty (221 - 206 BC), traditional festivals evolved from the primitive sacrifices and taboos to adopting aspects of entertainment by the period of Tang Dynasty (AD 618 - 907). Most popular Chinese festivals include the Spring festival, Qingming festival, Lantern festival, Dragon Boat festival, and Double Seven festivals.

Others include Winter Solstice festival, Double Ninth festival and the Mid-autumn festival. The spring festival for instance is one of the most important festivals celebrated in China. It is celebrated in the 15th day of the first month in the lunar calendar. It is equivalent to Christmas in the western cultures. People start to prepare for the spring festival months before its occurrence. Preparations include, making shopping and cleaning. Other aspects that accompany the Spring festival is family reunion where people share meals together and engage in moments of wishing each other lucky and prosperous times ahead, (China tour. com, 2014). Each festival is scheduled to happen in a particular date in the lunar calendar. The dragon boat festival for instance is held on May 5th in the lunar calendar. It is carried out for commemoration of Qu Yuan who was an ancient poet. Celebration of this festival involves eating rice dumpling (Zong zi), dragon boat racing, and making fragrant handicrafts for little children. Other festivals are carried out at specific dates with specific themes and purposes. Chinese cuisine is another aspect that strongly represents a rich heritage of the Chinese culture. To date, the unique diets of the Chinese cuisine have been introduced to other parts of the world. Mainly, a typical meal will consist of two components. Firstly, the meal will comprise a source of carbohydrates mainly rice or wheat- based products. The other portion is usually comprised of vegetables that are often mixed with fish and meat. In the Chinese culture, wooden chopsticks are the main eating utensils for taking solid foods. Liquids like soups are taken using a ceramic made flat-bottomed spoon. The use of knives and forks was traditionally prohibited in the Chinese culture as these types of utensils were regarded as weapons. It

is common for each person to be served with their own bowl of rice while other dishes are served in one communal plate for sharing by everyone. Raw foods like desserts are less typical in a Chinese meal. This is because; human manure is commonly used in growing vegetables due to the large population and scarcity of animals in China, hence, it is advised to cook the food well before eating for health purposes. However, desserts in form of fruits are usually served at the end of the meals or popularly a sweat soup. Another aspect of Chinese cuisine is that, cold drinks are not usually typical after a meal, as they are considered harmful to digestion. Therefore, cold water and other soft drinks that are common in western traditions are largely uncommon. Instead, a hot soup or any other beverage like a tea or hot water is usually served as is believed to aid digestion of greasy foods.

Chinese traditional medicine is another aspect that connotes a rich cultural heritage in China. The practice and use of traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) had been developed from ancient times. These traditional medicines are based on a unique theoretical structure, which comprise of the Theory of Yin-yang, Meridian system and the systems in the human body among other systems. TCM in some counties is usually considered as alternative medicine. In many Asia countries like, China and Taiwan, TCM is regarded as a primary component of the healthcare system. TCM is based on rich ancient beliefs of the Chinese including some religious concepts, (Wertz, 2011b).

Finally, in this paper we will examine two cultural heritage sites in China that depict a rich heritage of the traditions and culture of the Chinese people. By the year 2010, about 40 heritage sites in china were inscribed in the UNESCO World heritages list. Of the listed world heritage sites, twenty-nine of them

are recognized as World Cultural Sites while seven of them were named World Natural Heritage sites. The remaining four were named both Cultural as well as Natural Heritage Sites. In this paper, we will describe some of the cultural heritages in China.

The Great Wall of China is perhaps the most spectacular cultural heritage site in Beijing. Being the longest wall in the world, it illustrates a feature of ancient architecture and is one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Building of this wall was a project by the Chinese empire as a protection from northern invaders. Building works started in seventh century BC and continued until 1644. The great Wall of China was recognized by the UNESCO as a world cultural heritage in 1987. This heritage has been maintained as a major tourist attraction site. Building of this wall is said to have been the longest in history incurring “ the greatest cost in human lives, blood sweat and tears”. The Great Wall of china is a symbol of China’s unification as it represents the period when the many states in china were joined together during the period referred as Qin Dynasty (221- 206 BC). The great wall represents the ability of Chinese people to work together towards a specific course. The wall also represents the separation of China from the rest of the world showing the will to preserve their culture. In addition, the cultural site is one of the major tourist attractions in China, (China Highlights, 1998).

Temple of heaven is another cultural heritage site in Beijing. It is recognized as the most holy temples amongst Beijing’s imperial temples. Emperor Zhu Di who reigned during the Ming dynasty (1420 AD) constructed the Temple of Heaven in the royal garden. The emperor had the habit of coming t the temple during winter to worship Heaven and to pray for good produce during

harvesting season. Dismal harvest was interpreted as a fall of favors from Heaven and hence this could threaten the stability of the emperor's reign. Therefore, it was important for the emperor to pray for a good harvest. The Temple of heaven was build using a complex and a mystical design that represented the workings of the universe and the rotation of seasons. For instance, it was considered that number 9 is the most powerful and hence this concept was used to design the slabs in the Circular Alter in the temple that are erected in multiples of nine. In addition, the hall of Played for good Harvest was specially designed using four central pillars (representing seasons), 12 inner columns (representing the twelve months in a year) and twelve outer columns (representing 12 hours section that make a day). The Temple of Heaven was named as one of the UNESCO'S world cultural heritage site in 1998, (China Highlights, 1998).

In conclusion, China cultural heritage is represented by the arts, entertainment, food and drinks and health including the cultural heritage sites that have been designated as so. The unique and rich cultural heritage has been preserved for centuries and has helped to define the integral systems in medicine, administration, education and in the hospitality industry. The unique cultural aspects of the Chinese is today being practiced in many parts of the world and has contributed immensely, in one way or another, in social-cultural development not only in China but also in other parts of the world.

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