



Green Tea

OR

Coca Cola

An introduction to China & the Chinese
by Geoffrey Weymouth

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When living for a prolonged period in China, held hostage, so to speak, to its alien culture it is very easy to find oneself *converted*, and thus view the local environs as though one is *Alice in Wonderland*.

Conversely, failure walks hand in glove with success in China and if personal failure is the dominant feature of your China venture, it is equally as easy to slip into perpetual critique, with bitter and twisted anecdotes and forebodings of impending doom.

To be candid, to write a balanced view of the Chinese is extremely difficult as there is so much to admire, but also much to dislike and even a little to detest. How to convey what I consider a realistic and balanced picture I have pondered for over twelve months; completed many drafts, and am still not entirely happy with the end product.

The unique nature of Chinese Culture, with its inherent traditions and language, is the very fabric that created this fascinating country. With a written history sweeping back over 5,000 years, you very quickly come to realize that what we Westerners consider *our* culture, is but a 'Cold War' relic, an outer-dressing of rather transparent material worn as much as a mantle to hide the warts, as it is to rejoice perceived benefits.

Unlike Western "Flag" waving/saluting values, the Chinese value and venerate family above all else, perpetuated as it is through *filial obedience*; it cannot be destroyed by war, disaster or politics; it is tenaciously rooted in age-old convictions that are worth dying for. It is the "Willow in the wind", break off a branch and it will quickly take root wherever it may finish its journey, develop into a facsimile family branch of the parent, and remain forever mindful of its Chinese values and heritage.

The oft stated reticence of Chinese living abroad is forever perplexing to we unthinking and sometimes ignorant foreigners. Why don't they want to join us and become part of our community are catch words one hears. The answer is very simple; Chinese (generally) are very conceited, with just cause, and most often find our antics and behaviour banal, inane, profane and sometimes grossly offensive.

We lack respect for others, especially within the family, live what can best be described as decadent lifestyles, eat revolting, machine manufactured and packaged foods, create

national heroes and icons out of brain dead gladiators, and think that older people are redundant parasites.

It is pointless to undertake the Herring Bone game, with its pros and cons, because we are unable to separate ourselves from the mystique in which we have shrouded and over-exposed ourselves. We believe it is our god-given superior right to speak out against others and berate their faults, warts and perceived abuses with less than candor and a clear absence of hindsight to the misdeeds of our own forefathers

Chinese peoples the world over never lose sight of their life's blood; they remain in perpetuity, Chinese, be they Chinese American or Chinese Australian. They are Chinese first and foremost and wherever that may be second

Not so ethnic Europeans, who upon invading, occupying or taking up residency in a foreign land invariably attempt to dominate and superimpose their own 'God-given' values and lifestyles over the incumbent owners, occupiers and stakeholders in their new found adoptive land, and that has included whole continents.

So who are the Chinese?

To understand the Chinese, you must firstly separate yourself from the dyed in the wool clinical view that we have of the world, where almost everything is prejudged against our own indolent and 'Cold War' indoctrinated 'Bamboo Curtain vs. Paper Tiger' mindset.

China is a country where *logic* is considered *illogical*, where a child who exhibits surreptitious and deceptive behaviour is considered a family asset, where if you are *NOT* an *old rogue* by the time you are 40-years of age, you are considered a failure and redundant, at best.

So let's look at clever vs. smart, and ignore the standard literal definitions, but rather look at clever as inferring inventive and smart as intuitive common sense.

In a country where there is competition (virtually, if not in reality) for the very air one breaths, which personal attributes for survival and prosperity would you consider of paramount importance?

Clever is what we western cousins are. We can invent the most complicated and complex devices for killing and saving people, research and discover previously unknown facts and

hidden resources. Exceedingly clever no one, anywhere, can gainsay – but are we very street smart?

It can be safely said that the Chinese are not very clever in the aforementioned context. It is true they may have stumbled upon papermaking and printing, gunpowder and the compass, but did they get beyond the very fundamental stages of development?

It was the Europeans, who in each of the aforementioned instances, that took very elementary but revolutionary inventions and turned helpful aides into means for destruction, conquest and suppression.

For the Chinese, papermaking was used to create beautiful paintings, calligraphy, maps and poetry for enjoyment; gunpowder was made into fireworks for fun and excitement and to communicate with one's ancestors (and occasionally to bring down the wall of a fortress), wood-cut printing allowed many to share and enjoy the same traditions and customs, and the compass allowed early Chinese navigators to evade the Persian Customs collectors, bandits and robbers by sailing directly to the Horn of Africa and shores of the Mediterranean Sea for trade and commerce with Europe.

For the Europeans, the compass allowed the resource poor nations to navigate the world marauding, conquering, pillaging and destroying all in their path using the destructive power of gunpowder in cannon and muskets and paper and printing to convert the subjugated *heathens* using the printed word of their God.

Which brings us to the dilemma of *Chinese logic*, based as it is on the Chinese conception of truth, and truth according to the Chinese can never be proved; it can only be suggested.

Congruous with this theory, if truth cannot be proved, but can only be grasped by the mind in a “dialectic without words”, or to be more succinct; “one knows it is so without knowing why it is so”, it can, therefore, only be felt as a sort of intuitive perception.

The hypocrisy of the West.

For a Western raised foreigner it is usually sufficient that a proposition be logically sound,

whereas for the Chinese this is not sufficient to constitute a (the) truth, for it must at the same time be in accord with human nature, for a theory may be so logical as to be devoid of common sense.

If it is possible to have ten internationally recognized experts, each speaking the absolute truth on the same topic, but each with his or her own viewpoint, which at times will be diametrically opposite to that of other experts, wherein lay the absolute truth?

We thus have, in the West, the situation where logic and common sense are at odds with each other, whereas in China common sense takes the place of inductive and deductive reasoning.

Analytic reason (logic) looks at truth by dissecting it into ever smaller fragments until it is impossible to recognize its origins and the whole of reasoning becomes subjective; whereas common sense views the subject as a whole, in much the same way as Tradition Chinese Medicine (TCM) practitioners do not focus so much on the symptoms but rather attempt to root out the cause for the complaint by examining the *whole* patient.

There is no doubt that Chinese medicine is highly effective - actually works, the only argument is with the accuracy of diagnostic techniques. Unfortunately, in Chinese medicine too much diagnostic work is premised on the TCM practitioners visceral perception and the remedies prescribed (often) on age-old superstitions and fantastic associations of thought or word plays.

Behind all this, however, is a genuine and real alternative to the one shop stop of Western medicine. Although, decried by most Western pharmaceutical companies, these same mega-corporations are spending \$100's of millions on research into all know Chinese medicines.

But what of religious beliefs?

There is absolutely nothing logical nor 'provable' in the religions of Christianity, Judaism or Islam. At best, they all fit the Chinese ideal of truth; that is, “dialectics without words”.

However, unlike Westerners who are strictly beholden to the essence and dictates of logic to validate, legitimize and substantiate their

lifestyles and greed, the Chinese rely more on the healthier machination of common sense.

It is for this very reason that orthodox religions have never really gained a foothold in Asia. Religion is not a geographical accident, rather the evolution of ethnic and environmental characteristics.

As Christianity harmonizes beautifully with verdant forests, does Islam with harsh desert landscapes and Buddhism with overpopulation.

It is both absurd and preposterous to think that a single religion could be superimposed on all peoples, any more than American style democracy or Chinese communism is the ideal ideology for everyone.

The Chinese have no use for impracticable idealism, as they have no patience for doctrinaire theology. They do not teach their young to become sons and daughters of God, but teach them to behave like sane, normal human beings.

The Chinese are essentially humanists, and for Christianity to succeed in China it must be altered beyond recognition before it will be accepted, generally.

Of Christian teaching, two virtues; dove-like gentleness and serpent-like wisdom, which are attributes of the old rogue, are the only two that will be universally accepted by the Chinese.

Therefore, what is truth? Is it the dogma of proselytizing radio evangelists, or those educated and immersed in the waters of alleged pure thought, or the remaining free thinkers of the world?

For over 200 years foreign governments, religious hierarchies and the media have branded the Chinese people as “yellow devils and *heathens*”. Conversely, the Chinese, who view themselves as cultured free thinkers, consider the brash superiority of Europeans as that of uncouth “barbarians”.

The British with their brutal ways and blatant arrogance, when they were the world’s only super-power, chose, as the Americans are now doing, to rewrite the English language to fit their own narrow and often bigoted hegemonical view of world.

The Europeans prejudiced view of the world is epitomized in the word bigot, with its religious roots. It remains the power tool of zealots, even to this day, in an era of human rights, gender and racial equality, and ignominy on those who trespass.

The Europeans are masters at the use of the words as a weapon. Simple abuse of ‘word power’ is found in the German *Juden*, British *Yellow* to describe Chinese (perceived) cowardice, American *Niger* and, more recently, *Axis of Evil*.

Conversely, the Chinese prefer a more cultured and mature use for language and the use of words; be it calligraphy, verse or riddles.

Aristotle said, “Man is a reasoning, but not reasonable being”. Therefore, it is interesting to note that Chinese do not judge the correctness of a proposition by appeal to reason (logic) alone, rather to both *reason* and *common sense* or reasonableness (balance).

The Chinese spirit of reasonableness and almost religion like adherence to common sense over logic have a most important bearing on the lifestyle and business functions of Chinese and their perceived ideal of life.

Reasonableness can be used to settle an interpersonal dispute or develop rapport and business friendships, but it cannot be used to project or demonstrate theoretical outcomes.

In these situations Chinese lean towards intuition, or gut feeling, balanced by reasonableness. From the combination of these two factors comes the standard of judgment most favoured by the Chinese and methodology for action.

Logic without common sense can also be extremely dangerous, especially when in the hands of dictators and power brokers. If a man in power holds an opinion, be it premised on religion, bigotry, arrogance or sheer ignorance, it is easy for him, with his academic brain, to evolve arguments to satisfy his version of the truth; thus we have the sum of a+b can always be proved to equal ‘c’.

The Mongol, Genghis Khan may have been the master of feigned defeat and withdrawal, who gave no quarter to defeated troops and

slaughtered them without mercy whilst encouraging his troops to lay with the deceased troops widows and daughters.

He may have invaded China with intent to plunder, and ruthlessly cut-down all who stood in his path, but by default he unified a squabbling, factionalized nation. Not only were the *Menggu* great warriors, they were excellent managers and left many administrative policy legacies that have been perpetuated until this very day.

Although, the Mongols were the most hated of all the barbarian rulers they added huge measures of administrative and management expertise, and significant pool of Mongol blood to the Chinese Nation.

After the death of Genghis Khan his grandson and the fifth Great Khan continued expanding the realm and the suppression of the Chinese people, but the Yuan Dynasty he created in 1279 lasted less than 90 years.

The Chinese learned from their Mongol masters how to beat them at their own game. It is something that should not be forgotten when interfacing with the Chinese; they are very perceptive, quick learners and masters at 'conversion' of ideas to suit their needs and circumstances.

But who is the average Chinese person?

What percentage of a population drink green tea or Coca Cola is entirely a matter of social accident, and makes little important difference to outcomes, because they are the 'averaged' people. Yet, in dealing with a country the *averaged* people cannot be ignored, they are consumers.

Our perception of the *averaged* Chinese man or woman exists only as a general abstraction in our minds. Apart from the cultural unity, which binds Chinese people as a nation, the southern Chinese differ probably as much from the Northerners, in temperament, physique, spoken language and habits, as the Greeks and Sicilians differ from the Nordic peoples of Europe.

The common thread of historical tradition in China is the written language, which has in a singular way solved the problem of Esperanto in China, and the cultural homogeneity

achieved through centuries of slow, peaceful penetration of the Han ethnic group over comparatively docile minorities, have achieved for China the basis of the common brotherhood so much desired now by the European Community.

A Chinese man or woman can make himself understood anywhere in China, a linguistic feat made possible by a slow colonization process and helped greatly by the system of writing, the visible symbol of China's unity.

The cultural homogeneity sometimes makes us forget that there are major racial differences and considerable differences in blood within the country we know as China, and not just in the high profile areas of Tibet and Taiwan.

It is only when we put a southern manager over northern staff that we are abruptly reminded, for the significant fact remains that the northerner is essentially the administrator and the southern the manufacturer and trader, and that of all the pretenders who founded Chinese Empirical Dynasties, none came from south of the Yangtze River.

Whose Standards?

Since the invention of the flush toilet and vacuum cleaner, modern man appears to judge another man's moral standards by his cleanliness, and often thinks a dog more highly civilized for having a weekly bath.

One, not infrequently, hears foreigners speaking of Chinese farmers "living like pigs", whose first step to salvation would seem to lie in a general disinfection or burning of their houses and belongings. Yet, it is not the standard of hygiene but the fear of disease that is a sign of modern man's degeneration.

It is a very dangerous practice we indulge in to judge another man's physical well-being and morality by how close he lives to nature. Rather, as has been proven with Western society, it how far from not how close that appears to affect a man's morality and ethics.

If one takes the physical appearance of Chinese as a point for discussion, one can see clear traces of the effects of thousands of years of civilized life. Mankind in China has adapted (evolved) very well to a social and cultural environment that demands stamina, power of resistance but negative strength.

The Chinese are contemptuous of physical prowess, care little for participating in sports and have a general dislike of the strenuous life, all of which are viewed as synonymous with the working class, farmers and peasantry. Perhaps this viewpoint can be directly linked with Chinese decreased body mass, especially in the city living bourgeois class.

The constitutional difference and body mass between European and Chinese children of school age is unmistakable. On the athletic field, it is invariably found that young people of European origin distinguish themselves by their athletic prowess, agility and general exuberance of energy, but seldom excel in endurance tests and rarely compete directly with Chinese students in scholastic attainments.

A study of the hair and skin of the Chinese also appears to indicate millenniums of indoor living. The almost total lack or extreme paucity of visible body hair, albeit what there is, is somewhat more coarse than European hirsuteness; be it beard, chest hair on men or moustache on a woman's face, which is not so rare among Europeans, is out of the question in China. Perfectly bare mons veneris is also not uncommon in Chinese.

The pores of the skin are also much finer than those of Europeans, with the result that Chinese, on the whole, have complexions that appear more delicate. Glandular secretions from the skin of Chinese have also and correspondingly decreased, negating the (imagined) necessity for the daily bathing of the Europeans to remove their strong body odour.

Furthermore, sensitivity to cold and heat, uncomfortable conditions and general noise seems to be much more blunt in the Chinese than in ethnic Europeans.

Perhaps the traits that draw the most comment and admiration from Westerners is Chinese *nerve* and the Chinese capacity for endurance and suffering, which are enormous.

Nonetheless, the Chinese Han people, as a race, did not survive merely on the strength of coarse nerves or a capacity for suffering. The racial stamina and vitality that has enabled the Chinese people to survive and regenerate after horrendous political disasters and introduction of foreign blood is partly constitutional, partly

cultural. The accepted infusion of new blood must explain, to some extent, the racial vigour that they possess today.

History

The 5,000-years of documented Chinese history can be conveniently divided into cycles beginning with a short-lived militarily strong dynasty, followed by four or five hundred years of peace, succeeded by successive waves of wars, subsequently to be subjugated under a foreign rule, which ends the cycle.

How was it possible for the nation to survive these periodic political disasters and not be submerged by them, as the British were by the Nordic & Germanic races, and old Rome and the Romans by the Lombard's, and the original American Indians and Australian Aborigines by European settlers.

Among the cultural forces making for racial stability must be countered, first and foremost, the Chinese family system, which is so well defined and organized as to make it impossible for a person to forget where his lineage belongs.

This form of social immortality, which the Chinese prize above all earthly passions, has something the character of a religion, enhanced as it is by the ritual of ancestor worship, and the consciousness of it has permeated deep into the Chinese soul.

Another cultural force making for social stability was the complete absence of established classes in China, and the opportunity open for all to rise in the social scale through the imperial examination system started in the Tang Dynasty (618 - 906AD) and based on the ultimate belief that no man is born noble. The Chinese for this is, "There is no blood in premiers and generals". This system was maintained until 1905 as an open door for all to rise from poverty to power and fame.

What appears more important is the fact that the ruling classes not only came from the countryside, but also returned and retired to the countryside, as the rural mode of life was always regarded as *the ideal*.

Chinese Character:

'*Character*', as we perceive it, is essentially a

British-English descriptive word. Strange bed-fellows they may be, but apart from the British, few nations have laid such stress on *character* in their ideal of education and manhood as the Chinese.

The Chinese seem to be preoccupied with attaining *character*, in that their whole philosophy and perception of maturity is premised upon the idea of *character*.

Whilst the British view 'character' as suggestive of strength, courage, 'guts' and merely looking glum in moments of anger or disappointment, the Chinese word for character, 'zhihui', brings us the vision of a mature man of mellow temperament, retaining an equanimity of mind under all circumstances, with a complete understanding not only of himself but of his fellowman.

The Great Learning, the Confucian primer with which Chinese school boys used to begin their first lesson at school, defines 'great learning' as the attainment of a 'clear character', an almost impossible expression to translate into English, but by which is meant the illumination of understanding; developed and cultivated through knowledge.

A mellow understanding of life and human nature is, and always has been, the Chinese ideal of character, and from that understanding other qualities are derived, such as pacifism, contentment, calm and strength of endurance; all of which distinguish the Chinese character.

According to Confucianists, when a man has cultivated these virtues through mental discipline, we say he has developed his *character*.

The disposition of the Chinese

If we study Chinese closely and try to picture their national characteristics, we shall probably find the following innate traits:

1. Sanity
2. Simplicity
3. Filial piety
4. Patience
5. Indifference
6. Old Roguery
7. Industry
8. Frugality
9. Love of Family Life

10. Pacifism
11. Humour
12. Conservatism

All these qualities may be summed up in the word *mellowness and reasonableness*. They are passive qualities, suggestive of calm and benign strength rather than youthful vigour and the romantic ideals of today's Western leaders.

They are suggestive of the qualities of a civilization built for inner strength and endurance rather than rash progress and conquest. For it is the quintessential civilization that enables man to find peace under any circumstances, and when a man is at peace with himself, he cannot understand the youthful enthusiasm and exuberant lust for progress and reform.

It is an old culture of an old people who know life for what it is worth and do not strive for the unattainable. Tolerance has been the most outstanding quality of Chinese culture, and tolerance will also become the greatest quality of Western culture, when that culture matures.

The mellowness of the Chinese is the result of their environment. American born Chinese, brought up in a less mature (wise) environment, are most often devoid of the characteristics of the common Chinese. The mere sight of their impudence and direct forceful speech can break up a meeting of their peers in China.

Overseas born Chinese lack that supreme, unique mellowness peculiar to the sons and daughters of Cathay. Conversely, Chinese college students, whether born in China or overseas, are considerably more mature than European students of the same age. Chinese do not have the same interest in outside activities like football, baseball and cars; they have other more important things to do.

Since the 1970's Mainland Chinese have been born into a *one-child* society, they have their parents and grandparents to remember, and perhaps some less fortunate cousins to help through school. Responsibility makes them sober, and a national cultural tradition that helps them think sanely about life a little earlier than they could arrive at individually.

Filial piety; dutiful respect or regard for parents, homeland, etc is to the Chinese an inherent part of their culture, manifesting as it does from

the very finite bonds of the family unit.

The mellowness does not come from a book; it comes directly from society, which is apt to openly laugh at immature enthusiasm. The Chinese have an overt contempt for young 'studs' and for new brooms that sweep clean.

By laughing at 'inappropriate' enthusiasm and at the impossible belief that anything is possible, Chinese society very early teaches the young to hold their tongues while elders are speaking; as a result, youthful impetuosity is soon tempered with wisdom.

If they escape the personality tempering experiences and remain round-eyed, naïve, hotheaded at thirty, still enthusiastic for progress and reform, he or she is considered either an inspired idiot or a confounded genius.

Honesty has not been included as a national characteristic, because it is not a recognized virtue. Nonetheless, all over the world farmers tend to lean towards honesty, and the reputation of the Chinese merchant for honesty is only concomitant of his provincial method of doing business.

The worst characteristics of Chinese.

The Chinese have their very own distinctive characteristics because for thousands of years they have lived under certain peculiar cultural and social influences.

Let us take the three most striking, frustrating and, to the foreigner, worst characteristics of the Chinese; patience, indifference and old roguery, and see how they arose.

Patience and tolerance is the result of the family system and adjustment to overpopulation and economic pressures that leave little elbowroom for people to move about freely.

That patience is a noble quality of the Chinese no one who knows them will gainsay. There is so much of this virtue that it has almost become a vice with them. The Chinese people have put up with more tyranny, anarchy and misrule than any Western people would ever put with, and seem to regard them as part of the laws of nature.

Christian forgiveness appears like petulance

when compared with Chinese tolerance, and foreign tourists would do well to take home with them some Chinese patience and tolerance. The Chinese submit to tyranny and extortion as small fish swim into the mouth of a big fish.

It is this capacity for putting up with insults that has been ennobled by the name of patience and deliberately inculcated as a cardinal virtue of Confucian ethics. As the saying goes, "A great man who cannot tolerate small ills can never accomplish great things."

If the Chinese are unique in their patience and tolerance, they are still more justly famous for their indifference. Indifference is largely due to lack of legal protection or constitutional guarantee of personal liberty. In a society where legal protection does not extend to personal rights, indifference is always safe and has an attractive side to it difficult for foreigners to appreciate.

Young Chinese are as public spirited as foreign youths, and Chinese hot heads show as much desire to meddle with public affairs as those of any other country. But somehow and for some reason, between their twenty-fifth and thirtieth birthdays they all 'wise-up' and acquire indifference.

The survival value of indifference exists, therefore, in the absence of personal freedom and rights. It is highly unsafe for a man to take too much interest in public affairs unless a member of the CPC. All Chinese journalists, as with diplomats from mature overseas administrations, are proud of committing themselves to no opinion of life in general.

The Chinese instinct for self-preservation tells us that indifference may be the best constitutional guarantee of personal liberty. It is a form of self-protection, developed in the same manner as the tortoise has developed its shell.

Old roguery is derived from the Taoist (Daoist) view of life, it is also the most difficult characteristic to explain to a foreigner, and yet it can also have the most profound impact on bilateral relations.

This nonchalant, albeit materialistic attitude is rooted in the very shrewd view of life which only older people and old nations can understand. It would be futile for young people under thirty to attempt to understand old roguery, as it is futile for young nations in the New World and

Australasia to try to understand the ramifications of China's soft diplomacy. If life is worth anything, it is that it teaches us a lesson in kindness.

An old rogue is a person who has seen a lot of (real) life; who is realistic, materialistic, nonchalant and (usually) skeptical of progress. One does not learn to become a realist; in China, one is born a realist and if one is not a *crook* by the time he or she is forty, they are either feeble-minded or a genius with a capacity for eternal youth.

When a person grows old they develop a genius for flying low and idealism is tempered with cool, levelheaded common sense, as well as heightened savviness and understanding of business dollars and cents.

All this, however, is pure Taoism, in theory and practice. It is a philosophy, which counteracts the positivism of the Confucius outlook, on which life is positive, whilst the Taoist outlook is negative, and out of the alchemy of these two strange elements emerges the immortal thing we call Chinese character. However, by nature the Chinese favour Taoism than they do by culture, Confucism.

Justice, as we know it in the West, has been denied Chinese, they distrust lawyers and law courts. Ninety-five percent of legal related issues are settled out of court directly between the parties involved or using a mediator.

Chinese are shrewd enough to denounce vice, but they are also astute enough not to be surprised or disturbed by it. They are visionary enough to elaborate a perfect system for official impeachment, civil service and traffic regulations, but they are also smart enough to break all systems, ignore them, play with them and become superior to them.

The Rule of Law, as perceived by foreigners as the benchmark for a democratic society, is often viewed by Chinese businesspeople as an obstacle to doing business that must be circumvented, dismantled or surmounted.

Pacifism:

Despite all the talk of mellowness, the Chinese are a hard-boiled lot. There is a *no nonsense* about them; they do not live to die (in the religious context), nor do they speak of utopia

on earth, as many seers in the West do.

In a life they know can be full of pain and sorrow, all that Chinese want from this life is order on earth so that they may work and live in peace and happiness, and endure with pride.

Of the presumed noble virtues of the West: Zeal for Reform, Public Spirit, Sense for Adventure and Heroic Courage, the Chinese are devoid.

However, they are terribly interested in the commonplace world and they have indomitable patience, an indefatigable industry, and a sense of duty we in the West would envy; together with level headed common sense, cheerfulness, humour, tolerance, pacifism and an unequalled genius for finding happiness under the most trying, harsh and unforgiving conditions.

The chief of these qualities is pacifism, which is the hallmark of a mellow culture, and which is not an overtly visible attribute of Western leaders. From this point of view, the self-assertion and the restlessness of the spirit in the West are but signs of youthful naïveté.

It seems at times barely possible that the West will one day outgrow its hot-headed, youthful exuberance, antagonism and intellectual brilliance, and that they will perhaps learn to be a little less *brilliant*, and a little more mature and accommodating of those they consider inferior.

From a Chinese perspective, pacifism is not "noble"; it is simply "good" because it is common sense. If this earthly life is all the life we have, we must try and live in peace if we want to live happily; it is merely a matter of higher human understanding.

The Chinese are the world's worse fighters because they are intelligent enough to see the futility of warfare. They do not fight because they are the most calculating and self-interested of peoples. The Chinese appear to hate war but will fight to the death to protect family and homeland.

Good people never fight in China, for "good iron is not made into nails and good men are not made soldiers".

Chinese parties to a dispute are the easiest to bring to their senses. Their calculating philosophy teaches them to be slow to quarrel

and quick to patch up, it also warns them against false pride and self-edification, it teaches them patience and passive resistance in times of trouble. "When fortune comes, do not enjoy all of it; when advantage comes, do not take it all."

Chinese children fight and squabble much less than Western children. As a people, Chinese fight much less than they ought to, in spite of their interminable civil wars over thousands of years. If American people were subject to the same misrule of the Chinese this past 100-years they would have staged thirty revolutions, not three, as have the Chinese.

For Chinese, be it private quarrels or civil warfare, it is the sound that makes up the essence of the battle. One doesn't see fighting in China, *one hears it!*

In applying a warped Western 'envy' standard, many believe the Chinese live in a perpetual state of misery. They cannot conceive of any person being happy unless they are living in an air-conditioned condo and own two cars. If this standard had any credibility, no person born before 1850 would have been happy.

Any standard, real or imagined, that measures a man's level of a man's happiness by the number of buttons he presses in a day, must, therefore, be a false standard. Foreigners would do well to better understand the so-called mystery of Chinese contentment.

The cleverness of the Chinese in inventing gunpowder and then the comicality of finding the best use for it in making fireworks to celebrate their grandfather's birthdays is merely symptomatic of their humourous and pacifistic inclinations.

Chinese Humour:

Humour and fun are states of mind, more than that; they are points of view, a way of looking at life or a circumstance. The abysmal ignorance of the foreigner in his knowledge of China and the Chinese cannot be better illustrated than when he asks the question, "Do the Chinese have a sense of humour?"

The Chinese have a unique perspective of life and sense of humour to match, they are always telling stories and love a good joke, but it is humour of a very different sort to that of Europeans, it is their very own brand and is

based on the farcical view of life.

To Chinese, life and living is a façade that hides the true meaning of life. With this in mind, the Chinese fail to take anything seriously, from the most serious political reform to a dog's funeral.

Whereas Westerners are forever preoccupied with serious, *important* issues, such as 'freedom, global warming and saving whales, and the more secondary democratic rights to vote and to be tried before a jury of peers, the Chinese have never even thought of the right to be tried by jury after being charged, but they have always been supremely jealous of their right to personal happiness, which neither poverty nor disgrace is allowed to take away from them.

The common Chinese man and woman wants quite a few things from life, but they want only the things that make for happiness, albeit that includes wealth, but at the same time do not insist on having them if they are out of their reach.

A strong determination to get the best out of life, a keen desire to enjoy what one has, and no regrets if one fails; this is the secret of the Chinese genius for contentment and "One who is contented is always happy".

Geoffrey Weymouth
Beijing, China
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About the author:



Geoffrey Weymouth, 6-years as CEO of Global Access China Ltd (GAC), Beijing. Geoffrey was responsible for recruiting over 2,500 foreign experts for China government projects and schools and is universally recognized as an expert on the employment of

foreigners in China.

Australian by birth, Geoffrey first came to China in 1995, but it was not until five years later in 2000 that an opportunity arose that saw him take the helm of the newly created international consultancy, Global Access China Ltd, as the foundation CEO.

Geoffrey Weymouth's

CHINA SURVIVAL CREDOS

No.1

For new comers to China

- take your time,
- don't talk too much,
- spend the first five weeks listening and looking

“You really will learn more in one month of looking and listening, than you will in one year of talking”

No.2

10-point Cardinal Survival Credo

1. Do not judge
2. Do not compare
3. Do not become frustrated
4. Do not get angry
5. Do be patient
6. Do be tolerant
7. Do be quiet
8. Do be polite
9. Do listen (even if you don't understand)
10. Do look beyond yourself

No.3

5-point “How not to be misunderstood” Credo

1. Say Yes if you mean Yes
2. Say Yes if you know what it means
3. Say No if you mean No
4. Say No if you are not sure
5. Do not say Yes if you mean No

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