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Compare and contrast the culture in China and Korea

As everyone knows, there are many cultural differences among different countries. Even two bordering countries also have different etiquette. Nowadays, globalization becomes more and more widely in the world. It will bring a big crash on the cultural transmission of every country. The global culture will gradually be integrated In the future. So how can we avoid the lost culture is really a difficulty to human beings. This paper is designed to analyze the differences and the similarities between two closed countries, China and Korea. Through comparing and contrasting these two Asian countries, it can reflect some phenomenon about the consequence of culture loss in some fields. As far as I can see, the comparison can be sorted into three major parts: the education, the food and the etiquette.

For this reason, I have interviewed three Korean students in my school. We talked about a lot about Korea and I really a great deal of information. I summed up their answers in order to further analyze the feature of Korea. Here are some questions I really care about.

Me: Can you talk about something about the education system of your country?

Interviewee: Umm. I have to say I know little about it. But in Korean, it is compulsory to accept primary education. Children in six are admitted to a school where is in their residential are. Then they will advance to the next grade each year. After 6 years' primary education, children will study in middle school for 3 years. By the way, middle school education is not free, but I think the enrollment rate is high.

Me: So how about the college level?

Interviewee: I don't know, because I have not been in Korean college yet. I just know we need to take a college entrance examination to enter.

Me: Alright. And how has your culture influenced your family values?

Interviewee: It is hard to say. We pay great attention to our etiquette. In Korea, everyone show respect for the elder, it is very important.

Me: Sounds good, thank you. And what festivals do you celebrate in Korea?

Interviewee: We have four important traditional festivals. Seollal, Dauboreum, Dano and Chuseok. Especially, Seollal is the most important of the traditional Korean holidays on the first day of lunar calendar. It celebrates Korean New Year. During the holiday, we visit our parents or other relatives. Dress up in colorful hanbok. It is really interesting and memorable.

Me: What do most women do after they get married in your country?

Interviewee: In the past, most of them maybe need to stay at home and do housework. But nowadays, more and more women get to find jobs. Men and women almost have the same rights. I guess so.

This one is heard from my friend.

Jiayin: Please tell me one thing that makes you proud of your country.

Elisa: I am proud of Korea when the name of the country is well known to foreigners compared to the past. If I ask anybody about my country, sometimes they know much more than me. Especially, as the celebrities are getting popular to the foreigners, Korea gets famous after all.

However, I have a lot of negative aspects about Korea. I am skeptical whether it is a good

trend that Korea is only famous for celebrities, dramas, cosmetics and things like visual oriented ones. More like Korean culture such as traditional costumes, houses, food, and more authentic cultural things are neglected by the things are not really a Korean things, westernized, which is recently booming. This is just my thought. You don't need to add if you need just academic statistics, but I thought it is really necessary to express my idea how I, a real Korean person, feel about Korea itself.

These questions involve many fields of Korean culture. They really do help me reflect the real life in Korea. So I think, through that, I can be more objective, precise and comprehensive to compare and contrast between China and Korea.

Education

In China, for course requirements, teachers always give lots of assignments because they tend to think “practice makes perfect”, which is an old saying in China. They want students be more skilled and well prepared when we have to take the exams. For the exams, Chinese students have to take a lot of exams which are quite hard. The exams cover a wide range of knowledge which is not from the lectures or the text books. The atmosphere of education in China, students study hard from very young age. Teachers even give students lots of homework and exams when they are in primary school. Take my personal experience for example, when I was in primary school, I had a lot of homework and it was not easy for me at that time. I felt very tired and under pressure. As time goes by, we are facing more and more homework and exams. We have every day exams and practices in our high school to achieve a good grade in the college entry examination in China. Since China has a large population, there are a large number of students in

the college competition. What's more, at most times, a student can only take the college entry examination one time in his/her lifetime. So this is our only chance to get into college, which is the main reason for the big pressure in high school. Above all, education system in china has still not improved, most of Chinese students just study for getting good grades in exams instead of their interest or dreams. This kind of action is called test-oriented rote and cram system. It is harm to students, ignoring the capabilities of students, depriving students of personality. Nowadays many people are against this system. However, considering sufficiently special condition of Chinese country and so many students, examination has so far remained to be the most effective means in selecting talents. Therefore, currently, I think turn the education mode from examination-oriented education to education for all-round development is becoming the task of ordinary education which has no time to delay. Besides test-oriented rote and cram system is also popular in East Asia like Korea. But to Korea, although it has such a problem, the situation is much better than China. In Korea, the education has similarities from a certain sense with China. It is also viewed as being crucial for success and competition is consequently very heated and fierce. "A centralized administration oversees the process for the education of children from kindergarten to the third and final year of high school. Mathematics, science, Korean, social studies, and English are generally considered to be the most important subjects. Normally physical education is not considered important as it is not regarded to be education and therefore many schools lack high-quality gymnasiums and varsity athletics."(1) South Korea was the first country in the world to provide high-speed internet access to every primary, junior, and high school. However, in order to let students be beneficial to know the online information, high-speed internet was provided by Korea which is the first country in the world. It covers

really widely, can access to every primary, junior, and high school.

In addition, the education's history of these two countries is both originate from Confucian Education. Confucius, who is the greatest educator in Chinese history and founder of the Confucianism, his thoughts is the core of Benevolence and Ceremony. It can be said that the impact of Confucianism upon Chinese culture even today.

The historical importance of education in Chinese culture is derived from the teachings of Confucius and philosophers of the middle and late Chou eras. Confucius taught that all people possessed the same potential, and that education was the corrective means to curb any tendencies to stray from ethical behavior. From the very first, Confucius made education available to students from all classes. (2) Confucian moral tradition through the course notice that this is a powerful mechanism for the realization of Chinese society's moral and social norms.

Different from western education, especially considering the medieval and Renaissance higher education mode, where the students were encouraged to pursue debate, Chinese traditional education mainly includes memorization and memory of the classic.

The very democratic nature of Chinese education--i.e., that it offered a path of upward mobility to anyone who could survive the rigors of study and examinations--was established from the first by Confucius himself. (2)

Food

As the saying goes, food is the first necessity of the people. It plays an irreplaceable role in the whole history about the development of human beings. Everyone needs to eat. However, there are many differences between China and Korea, especially in etiquette and the culture

which food contains. In some ways, if we can know the meaning of traditional food for other countries, we will learn more about their lifestyles and history even feel empathy with them. Therefore, the purpose of this essay is to compare and contrast food contents, food etiquette, nutrition and balance in food and the attitudes for food.

In china, there is an old saying,” The masses regard food as their heaven”. It means food is people’s primal want. Down the ages, to Chinese people, eating is not just meant to get nutrients from food. According to BEMYSELF (4), those who promote food culture often use the words of Chinese philosopher Confucius, “diet and love-making, all primal needs of every human beings, “finding an aspiring and positive thought basis for such an epicurean lifestyle. There's probably not another place in this world that has as great a variety of delicious fare as China. The Chinese, who see eating as a fortune and life as an art, not only created various kinds of regional food styles in its own vat lands, but have also spread Chinese food culture to far across the seas. Today, in this world where even the farthest corners can seem as close as one's back yard, Chinese food can be enjoyed in each and every metropolitan throughout the world. This is the overall concepts for the Chinese food world.

To Korea, it represents ways of thinking, a big and diversifying background. In other words, the style of eating food reflects the diversity of personal taste. Consequently, for the most part, people think eating should be quick, convenient and cheap. They do not want to cost much time on food. John Ikerd (2) points out, “Koreans also value “looking good” and choose foods that “look good.” Some are even willing to spend a lot of money for food that makes them “look good” – as when they eat in expensive restaurants. The characteristics of Korean dominant food culture is cost convene appearance.” Nowadays more and more Korean people pay more

attention to the nutritional information on the food label, so organic food is pretty popular in Korea. In addition, Korean food revolution is developing fast; an important reason is because of obesity. “The obesity can’t be good for Korea to become Lard-Ass Nation. It’s going to cost us a lot in medical care, for starters. But it’s the bad food that makes people fat. You just can’t consume the good stuff by the ton, since the purpose of great cookery is artistry and taste, not repletion, and too much of a good thing ruins the good thing.” (3)

Although, there are so many different food cultures between china and Korea, they also have some common place. First of all, food contents really have many similarities. People in China and Korea choose the materials extreme carefully. If some food is not enough fresh to make a dish, they will never use those food. Moreover, there are lots of different styles cooking the same materials. I think that is an important reason for why Chinese food and Korean food are both popular in the world. Not only for Korean and Chinese, but also there are many foreign people enjoying it.

Etiquette

Food etiquette is a primary component in the culture. The most famous feature in china is people use chopsticks to eat without using forks and knife. Chinese are proud of a kind of spirit of cooking and will be pleased to give you a taste of many different types of cuisine. They will just order enough for people there, if someone holds a party. When Chinese are taking somebody out for dinner and the relationship is polite to semi-polite, then they will usually order one more dish than the number of guests. If it is a business dinner or a very formal occasion, there is likely to be a huge amount of food that will be impossible to finish. A typical meal starts with some

cold dishes. These are followed by the main courses, hot meat and vegetable dishes. In china if you invite people for meal, the person who invites other people would pay for the meal. (4) In Korea, if you are invited to a South Korean's house, It is common for guests to meet at a common spot and travel together. You may arrive up to 30 minutes late without giving offence. Remove your shoes before entering the house. The hosts greet each guest individually. The host pours drinks for the guests in their presence. The hostess does not pour drinks. The hosts usually accompany guests to the gate or to their car because they believe that it is insulting to wish your guests farewell indoors. Send a thank you note the following day after being invited to dinner.(5) in addition, meeting Etiquette, table manners and business etiquette are also very important in both countries.

In conclusion, every country has a potential connection. Explore the difference and similarity between Asian countries and western countries. It not only can clearly reflect the phenomenon about the consequence of culture loss in some fields, but also promotes the development of human civilization.

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