

A Study of Chinese Gift Giving Culture

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Abstract

Culture is an important aspect in Chinese society and Chinese people respect their culture. Gifts are the most important social exchange method of human society. China has a gift giving culture and it has a long history. It is a main part of Chinese culture. By giving a gift, Chinese people express their feelings and to enhance their friendship. When Chinese people are attending a ceremony, they bring gifts. China has numerous ceremonies such as Dragon Boat Festival, Lantern Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, New Year Festival. In these occasions they exchange gifts. Their gift culture is really unique. Chinese gift giving culture has some of amazing facts. Their gift giving culture has customs, gift giving etiquette and taboo gifts. The research is based on my personal experience. Many Sri Lankan students go to China for studies and most of the foreign students lack knowledge about Chinese taboo gifts and gift culture. Students in Sri Lanka learning Chinese, are also unaware about Chinese gift giving culture. As Sri Lanka has many business connections with China, when communicating with them, we should have knowledge about their gift giving culture, otherwise it can badly affect the relationship. If we know about their gift giving culture it is really convenient to communicate with them. The main focus of the study is on the Chinese taboo gifts. Chinese gift giving culture has etiquettes. Chinese taboo gift is an important part of Chinese gift giving culture. When Chinese people exchange gifts, they pay attention to the taboo gifts, so when foreign people give gifts to Chinese people, they also must pay attention to these taboo gifts. Umbrellas, watches, pictures of gods, wallets, shoes, and hats are some examples for taboo gifts in Chinese culture, they have some amazing reasons to avoid these gifts. My research aims to discover what gifts are considered as taboos in Chinese gift giving culture, gift giving etiquettes and the taboo gift and etiquette in ancient china. Questionnaire and documentary analysis were the two methods used to collect data in this research. Questionnaires were distributed among Chinese major students in University of Kelaniya. It was noticed that they do not have the knowledge about Chinese gift giving etiquette and taboo gifts. The purpose of the study is to give more knowledge about Chinese gift giving culture to Chinese learners in Sri Lanka.

Keywords - Chinese gifts, Chinese gifts taboos, Chinese gift etiquettes, Chinese gift custom, Chinese gift Culture

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