The Changing Dating Scene in China

Love is in the air and romance is no longer a hush-hush in dating China. All over China there are couples out there even in public spots romancing and expressing their love for each other. A Chinese date is becoming more daring than a Western one with its outburst of public displays. Westerners are watching with gaping mouths at this trend of China date.

This is mainly because this open dating China is such a contrast to the traditional China. Romantic relationships were rare and marriage was a mere social contract between the families of the marrying couple. Dating was unknown. From the time of Confucius, the husband and wife unit was supposed to be the basic unit of society and carrier of the family surname. Chinese marriage became a custom during the Warring States period (402-221 B.C.).

From these ancient times, it was very important to follow custom of the "Three Letters and Six Etiquettes" for a marriage. The "Three Letters" included the Betrothal Letter, Gift Letter and Wedding Letter. The Betrothal Letter was the formal document of the engagement, asking for the girl's hand in marriage. Next, the Gift Letter would be given to the girl's family, which would have a list of gifts for the wedding. The Wedding Letter was the final document prepared and presented to the bride's family on the day of the wedding and was to confirm the formal acceptance of the bride into the bridegroom's family.

The Chinese Date practices of those times also consisted of the six etiquettes. The first was the Proposal in which a matchmaker would present the proposal of the boy before the girl's family. The second task was to do astrological matching of the birth dates of the couple. Once this match was made, the Betrothal gifts would be given to the girl's family as the third step. This was followed by wedding gifts including exotic items like lotus seeds and bridal cakes. A wedding date would now be picked by consulting the stars and on the wedding day, the groom would reach the brides' house with much fanfare for the wedding ceremony. All these traditions are very beautiful, indeed.

But all over the Mainland China the old customs are giving way to the new. Dramatic changes have happened in China's economy, politics and society. Chinese date resembles western dates with men serenading women with roses and chocolates. The Dating China scene is seeing romance bloom as early as in high school. Public displays of affection are common on a China date. A Chinese date is becoming more daring than a Western one with its outburst of public displays. Westerners are watching with gaping mouths at this trend of China date. Big cities like Shanghai have even started Speed Dating encounters for young Chinese people. Online dating sites like China Dating Corner and Sunshine International are popular.

The Dating China scene reflects an easing of the traditional pressure of parents on their adolescent children to settle down. Chinese men and women are able to enter into relationships before they finally settle down in their late twenties. Chinese date may have opened out and become liberal but has still to cross some boundaries. Dating China still frowns on interracial dating - a Chinese - black or a Chinese - Caucasian relationship. It is also not yet open to the idea of same sex relationships -Gay and Lesbian.

Discussion Questions for open conversation

1. Describe the appearance of the person you would like to date?

2. Describe the character of the person you would like to date?

3. Do older girls/boys have a problem dating younger girls/boys?

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4. Do you believe in love at first sight?

5. Have you ever had a crush on someone?

6. Have you ever hated loving someone?

7. Have your parents ever disapproved of any of your relationships?

8. Is there a such thing as a perfect relationship for you?

9. If you are a man, and a woman asks you for a date, do you feel you should pay for dinner, or that the woman should pay?

10. What characteristics do you look for in a girlfriend or boyfriend?

11. What do you consider cheating in a dating relationship?

12. What do you like to talk about when on a date?

13. What do you look for in a girlfriend or a boyfriend?

14. What qualities are important to you in a boyfriend or girlfriend?

15. Would you mind if your boyfriend/girlfriend went out to party without you?

16. Would you prefer to go out with a quiet or a talkative person?

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17. At what age do you think that dating should begin?

18. Do you think there is any age when a person is too old to date?

19. What is your definition of love?

20. Can you control your partner by playing games?

21. Do you like to have boy friend or girl friend in your school or in your classes?

22. How long does it take for dating to become a relationship?

23. Do you think that age difference is important when dating?

24. Would you date someone much older or younger than you? Why or why not?

LIVEWORKSHEETS