



Chinese Culture in “The Kitchen God's Wife” by Amy Tan

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ABSTRACT

Culture is a floorboard for knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, and habits. According to the Baidu definition of culture, “culture” refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving. To be more exactly: Culture is the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people.

Keywords:

Bao-bao, patriotic, kind and faithful.

Chinese Americans have been contributing to U.S. literature for over a century, but their role did not gain recognition in mainstream culture or academia until the 1970s. Investigating main themes and characteristics of Chinese American literature has helped us to know better about authors' works, their style and new vocabulary. All in all these works helped us to imagine the whole picture of Chinese American literature.

Studying Amy Tan's literary career and her personal life we had known that she is patriotic, kind and faithful. She tried to show the relationship between immigrant Chinese mother and her American-born daughter in most of her famous novels. Moreover, we understood that many of her novels are based on Tan's own experiences from this point of view we can say that her works are autobiographical. Amy Tan wrote six novels, three children's books, one short story and one non-fiction. She was awarded nineteen times: Academy of Achievement, Golden Plate Award in 1996 and Asian\Pacific American Awards for Literature in 2005 and others.

Analyzing her novel “*The Kitchen God's Wife*” we learnt that this novel is based on

events from the life of her own mother, the main character describes the tragic consequences of the mother's earlier life in China, revealing all the secrets she has never before imparted to her daughter including details of her previous abusive marriage.

Chinese Culture Reflected and Scattered in the Novel is considered as the novel full of Chinese culture. It is not only refers to the ideas or things in the novel, even in the novel, from the beginning to the end, the author use the Chinese sound to mean the idea. The Chinese letters are the most noticeable Chinese culture. Chinese American literature has managed to embark on a successful voyage, and as the numbers of newly published fiction and non-fiction books show, it will continue its important work.

All these tasks were done with the help of methods such as investigation, comparison and holistic. While doing this research we have learnt how to collect the related information, how to analyze it, how to work on information and how to arrange it. Furthermore, we have learnt how to use research methods. We have improved reading, writing skills and critical thinking abilities. As a consequence, this research is very essential in discovering a body

of American literature as it plays an important role in the history of it.

We may conclude that the tasks at the beginning of the research are solved, the aim is reached and the investigation considered to be completed.

The Natural Rights of Man as a Central Cultural Value Thomas Jefferson (1826) in his last message before he died on the 50th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence said it best, "...assume the blessings and security of self government...the form which we have substituted restores the faith in unbounded reason and freedom of opinion...and all eyes are open or are opening to the rights of man...".

The Refection of Both Chinese Culture and American Culture in the Novel As the ideas mentioned above in the novel, some of the Chinese cultures will be found and some of the American cultures or signs will be shown.

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The Name Identity of Chinese at the beginning of the story, the name of the boy (then the adult) is called Bao-bao, which is the typical boy's name in China, whose real name is Roger. From the first paper, readers can notice the Chinese indication with the name. And the author continuously explained that Bao-bao means "precious boy".

"The Dragon Symbol" another noticeable Chinese culture at the beginning of the story is that they were going to have a big banquet dinner at Water Dragon Restaurant. The dragon is an obvious Chinese culture symbol. Only Chinese or overseas Chinese prefer to the restaurant with dragon.

"The Banners for the Congratulation" it is a typical Chinese custom. For the banners with the congratulating sentences, not the English ways of saying like "Good Luck" or "prosperity and Long Life", "all the sayings, written in gold Chinese characters, are of her own inspiration, her thoughts about life and death, luck and hope:

"First-Class Life for Your First Baby", "Double-Happiness Wedding Triple Family fortunes", "Money Smells Good in Your New Restaurant Business", "Health Returns Fast, Always Hoping" (p. 19)

The Mandarin Words in the Novel in the mother's words, she sometimes used the Chinese words to express the idea: as "He swallowed them until he made himself sick. 'Ai! *ying-gai* find him another job" (p. 27). In the sentence "*ying-gai*" is Chinese sound for "should have or would". Also, in the novel, the author purposely used many Chinese Mandarin words: *Suanle* – Forget this! (p. 235), *Daomei* – bad luck (p. 235), *Tang jie* – sugar sister (p. 90), *Qipao* – long wedding dress (p. 188), *Ganbei* – bottom up (p. 180), *Chi ping mei* – Chinese traditional book (p. 155), *Wah-wah ye* – a special kind of fish (p. 129), *Dabing* – kind of pan cake (p. 485), *Taonan* – to ran away/escape (p. 497), *Yin and Yang* – the Traditional conception of essence of women and man (p. 511).

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