

2. PROFILES OF CHINESE STUDENTS

Today's Chinese students, strongly influenced by their culture, typically demonstrate these traits:

Society

- **Materialistic** – Students pursue wealth for significance and security. They take great pleasure in dining, shopping and traveling.
- **“Wired”** – Students are tech savvy and connected to the virtual world. They may stay online for hours chatting, watching TV shows and playing video games. They may find it difficult to verbally communicate and emotionally connect with others. Some are socially awkward.
- **Self-sufficient** – Chinese students have been taught to be extremely determined. Even though they think collectively, most ultimately rely on themselves.
- **Worldly** – Because of their exposure to movies and music, students are familiar with certain aspects of Western culture. Many have lost innocence through pornography and sexual activity.

Relationships

- **Harmonious** – Chinese students want to connect with others. They think collectively in matters of daily life--“we” not “me.” Chinese depend on their network of functional relationships within their community (expressed in Chinese as “guanxi”) for help and resources.
- **Respectful** – Students are obliged to respect and obey, especially within the family. They are dutiful to those in authority, such as parents and professors. They display politeness (“keqi”) to show their humility. Meanwhile, they tend to avoid conflict and in-depth communications because they are unsure of how to process such emotional content.
- **Conditional** – Students seek to give honor and not shame to others. They refrain from actions that would reflect badly on themselves or others and thus cause a loss of “face” (“mianzi”). They have a tendency to view interactions with others according to obligation. If they receive any favor, they think they must pay it back.

Family

- **Self-Focused** – Almost every Chinese student has been raised as the “4-2-1 family” (4 grandparents, 2 parents, 1 self). Because of this structure, many have been pampered as the center of family life. Some will demonstrate an undue focus on self and a struggle to connect with others.
- **Pressured** – Many students feel great pressure from their parents’ high expectations. In general, parents have sacrificed much for their children, and the children are expected to perform well in academics and artistry.
- **Disconnected** – Many Chinese students feel distanced from their parents because of the parents’ focus on career. Consequently, the students crave love and support, and they desire to be more deeply known by their parents.

Typical Profiles of Chinese Students

Li comes from an upper middle-class family in China, and her parents have chosen to pay the tuition for her to study in America. Much like her American undergraduate classmates, Li drives a nice car, spends countless hours on the Internet and takes luxurious trips during school breaks. Yet, she has problems understanding and relating to her American classmates. Li does not know how to join in conversations about American culture, especially sports and music. She has given up trying to understand American students and has resolved to stay within her Chinese social circle. **How might one enter Li’s world?**

“Ming” is a popular guy among Chinese students at his U.S. university. It seems like everything is working for him--many friends, good grades and a pretty girlfriend. He and his girlfriend live together, which is common for Chinese couples on campus. Yet, deep in Ming’s heart, he feels lonely and does not want to share his feelings of vulnerability with others. When he feels lonely and distressed he searches for pornography on the Internet. He doesn’t think this is wrong and, in fact, he sometimes looks at porn with his girlfrien. **How might one enter Ming’s world?**