

# GENERATIONAL SIMILARITIES/DIFFERENCES ACROSS CULTURES: EAST ASIAN CULTURES

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## INTRODUCTION

There is a plethora of writings and PPT (Power Point presentations), many oversimplified, on the different mainstream USA generations describing the historical markers used to define each generation (Silent, Boomer, GenX, and GenY/Millennials), their values and social/workplace behaviors, as well as suggestions as to how to better relate across these different generations in the workplace. However, one cannot make the generalization that all cultures of the world behave like the mainstream USA generations, i.e., homogeneity of (inter)generational values/behaviors within & between cultures!

Assuming the definition of generation is a cohort of people born and living with values/behaviors shaped around a certain time period (arbitrarily defined), to what extent are the assumptions and statements regarding the historical markers defining the Silent, Boomer, Gen X, and Gen Y/Millennials found in mainstream USA literature valid and applicable for other global industrial/technological cultures?

If other global cultures consider/use different historical markers defining their native generations, to what extent might there be generational similarities/differences across the global industrial/technological cultures? What is the meaning of these similarities/differences?

How do these similarities/differences manifest themselves socially and in the workplace, i.e., conversations, recruitment, peer-to-peer, meetings, decision-making, negotiations, etc., and what are their business implications as it relates to the bottom line of productivity & service effectiveness?

Recently, a few internet articles have appeared alerting readers that the Western generational model cannot account for the global workforce difference. Hole, Zhong & Schwartz 's article, "Talking About Whose Generation?" appeared in the Deloitte Review (2014) analyzes some generational differences across Asian, European, and South America countries. Jacque Vilet's "The Gen Y Workforce: What

Causes Differences Around the Globe?" (Apr 4, 2013) article talks about the different historical markers influencing different generational values and work expectations in China, Japan, UK, Russia, Brazil, Kenya and Saudi Arabia. Mark Frederick's Northwest HR Mgmt Assoc. slide presentation (2009) "Successfully Juggling the Generations in China & India," discusses the similarities/differences between the two countries (histories, policies, etc.) and implications for talent management.

For East Asian cultures, according to Rosalie Tung (Personal Communications, 2014; <http://vimeo.com/55487962>, 2012), there are even variations across the different regions and different countries depending upon what are considered historical markers defining each particular generation. Oversimplification of the different cultures and their generations can lead to overgeneralization, homogenization of cultures/generations, and can affect the way businesses recruit and manage. Tung says that we need to make finer distinctions in our global war for talent, for human talent/capital. If new hires from different countries/different generations exhibit similar behaviors, does that mean that the world is converging on accepting the same values/behaviors or is it just face/faux validity? We need to dig deeper!

Internet and literature searches reveal that much has been written about China from pre-Mao to Mao to the present generations. Japan, with less generational literature written, point to the WWII, post-WWII, 60s student activism, 70s oil crises, and the 80s bubble economy as markers that do not align themselves with USA or Western contemporaries: Shinjinrui gen (60s-90s bubble generation), Yutori gen (80s-2000 post-bubble gen). South Korea, also with less generational literature written, uses historic markers as pre-WWII, WWII, 50s Korean War, 475 gen of the 90s (age 40s, college in the 70s, born in the 50s), 386 gen (age 30s, college in the 80s, born in the 60s), GenX of the 70s-80s and GenY of the 80s-90s.

This paper will focus mainly on China since there is extensive literature describing the historical/economic markers, the different generations and their values/behaviors.

## CHINA & ITS GENERATIONS

Chinese historical/generational markers align themselves very little with mainstream USA/Western markers: WWII (30s-40s), Civil War (40s)/Mao Zedong era (1949-1976 including the Great Leap Forward to the Cultural Revolution), postMao (Deng Xiaoping/DXP era (late 70s-early 90s), Jiang Zemin era (1993-2003 and restructuring of State Owned Enterprises), Hu Jintao era (2003-2013), Xi Jinping era (2013 - present). The unique historical confluence of Deng Xiaoping's and others leadership and policies encouraging rural to urban migration, rise of an affluent class, and the one-child policy have been identified by mainstream writers (Hole, Zhong & Schwartz, Vilet & Frederick). Note: the influence/impact of USA 911 events or hi tech/social media as a generational marker is given less credit in China media/literature. Thinkingchina.com's "70hou, 80hou, 90hou - The Enhanced Generation Gap" article uses the decade concept to discuss the values of the offsprings (后 后) of China's different generations.

Digging deeper, Chinese & other Asian insiders/bloggers (Personal Communications, 2014) on the web have identified and discussed three very specific generational clusters that are generally not discussed in detail by D&I (Diversity & Inclusion) trainers, nor within Western media, especially the rise of the Fu Er Dai (富二代), the rich 2nd generation as a result of the one-child policy coupled with the rise of urban affluence.

## I. Born in China generations:

Some significant groups are noted: Hong yi dai (红一代, Red 1st generation or those revolutionaries who marched with Mao); Xiao Huangdi generation (小皇帝, Little Emperor generation, the one-child policy generation, many of them over-indulged off-springs of parents who have become affluent); along with generations emerged as a result of urbanization: Sheng Nv (剩女, leftover women) and the Nongmingong (农民工, rural to urban migrants) or Waidi Ren (外地人, outsider).

Specifically, many in the Xiao Huangdi (one child) generation matured into the Fu Er Dai, 富二代 the rich 2nd generation which can be further differentiated into:

Hong er dai - 红二代, Red 2nd generation children who inherited the honorary status, power and legacy as offsprings of Mao's revolutionary generation

Guan er dai - 官二代, Government official 2nd generation children who inherited their status/power as off-springs of government officials

Xing er dai - 星二代, Star 2nd generation children who inherited their status as off-springs of celebrities or the rich & famous

Chai er dai - 拆二代, Tear down/Demolition 2nd generation children of real estate/property developers)

In addition to, but not exclusive of, the above FuErDai subgroups, two additional social/ generational clusters emerged from China's rural to urban modernization initiatives:

E. Sheng nv - 剩女, leftover women, a new generation of educated, urban working independent-minded women who defy the parental pressures of marriage. Leta Hong Fincher's ethnographic study of 283 Chinese single women in first & second tier cities is presented in *Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China* (2014). Story: a Guangxi woman engineer said her parents constantly pressures her to get married by age 27, otherwise she will be too old and unattractive for any suitor. Story: one Shanghai sheng nv executive asked me, "How much your home cost? (answer).. I could pay for that in cash!" Story: young daughter with business degree says she does not want to follow legacy of her 24/7 mother/boss of machine shop as she wants more balanced work hours and social/fun lifestyle. See youtubes of some issues faced by Sheng nv -

a) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glOKxekEYfl>;

b) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vDwoLLwsYE>;

c) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLzWgWelxE8>

d) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU10aeDsze4>

Nongmingong -农民工, Rural to Urban Migrants or 外地人, Waidi Ren or Outsider). Nobel laureate and economics professor Joseph Stiglitz recently said that the two most important trends or forces that will shape the world's development in the 21st century are: 1) the technological developments in the USA, and 2) the urbanization in China.

Under Mao Zedong in 1949, China's population was 90% rural and 10% urban; under the 1980 leadership of Deng Xiaoping, it was 80% rural and 20% urban. But during the next thirty plus years China's modernization program was such that by 2013 the urban population, for the first time in China's history, surpassed its rural population, 51% to 49%. Approximately 700 million Chinese now live in urban cities, while 650+ million still reside in the countryside (total population around 1.3+ billion people) This is the largest migration in the history of humankind in such a short period of time (and is still going on). Given the same timeframe, India's population went from 90% rural 10% urban to its current 70% rural, 30% urban (total population around 1 billion+ people).

But such massive migrations within a short time span are always complex and not without consequences. Central to population movement is China's hukou (household registration) system where people born in cities are considered residents of these urban areas and enjoy the privileges/benefits of the housing, health, education & welfare systems. Not so for the rural people (residents of their rural origins) who come to the urban areas to help build and modernize China, as they are considered non-residents and therefore not privy to the same benefits as city residents. These rural migrants (nongmingong/waidi ren) who work in urban areas can only afford to live in low-income housing, work at lower wages (the urban worker makes 2-3 times the amount in wages than the rural worker), are denied educational access for their children (or cannot afford a higher "non-resident" cost education for their children), nor have their health and welfare needs met. Even though there are no studies conducted, it is surmised that fewer rural migrants make into the FuErDai class compared to urban workers. See youtubes of

inside the outsider - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbX13IA4T6o>

how migrant workers live - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKHGxYFJUDY>

migrant workers travel home during Chinese New Year - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZyoV9q068qo>

Values/Behaviors Displayed.-- In summary, overall analysis, discussion and integration of interviews/stories and literature search reveal ambiguities in defining affluence and distinguishing middle class families, rich and the super rich families. However, three types of FuErDai (rich 2nd gen) Families from which their values/behaviors are manifested:

Quiet Wealth Chinese Family – hardwork ethic; making lots of money but does not brag or show wealth; living in city/suburb with excellent schools/educational opportunities; parents & children use social media (games, social connexions, consumer needs, business, status); tend to not spoil themselves/children (don't buy car for children). Story: a moderately high ranking Chinese official defends an incoming student to a USA university: "S/he's not a xiao huangdi, s/he studies hard!" (implying she's not spoiled).

Modest Show of Wealth Chinese Family – hardworking; making lots of money but modestly shows wealth by spending on some luxury items; living in city/suburb with excellent schools/educational opportunities, parents & children use social media (games, social connexions, consumer needs, business, status); tend to somewhat spoil themselves/ children (buy fairly new/used car for graduation pres). Story: affluent father says to his son, "I'll pay for all your private high school (Webb Schools in Claremont, CA) and your college, but your obligation is to get good grades."

Flaunt Wealth & Status Chinese Family – hardworking; making lots of money and shows off their wealth & luxury lifestyle; living in city/suburb with excellent schools/educational opportunities; parents & children use social media (games, social connexions, consumer needs, business, status/power); tend to spoil themselves/children; restaurant meetings; massage palors; private gambling; Concubine Hill to support more than one wife or another woman as he travels between China & USA. Story: an affluent Chinese professional brags to me that he bought a new Mercedes for his son to go to USA college in style; he also brags about paying cash for new houses for son and daughter in Southern California. Story: another affluent Chinese professional treats me to lunch but gets offended and complains to the Chinese restaurant owner that he was not given the best table & view (the owner should have recognized the Chinese professional and given him face/status).

The above three family types exist within Chinese culture, but currently there are no studies showing the percentages in each category. Via personal communications with fellow Chinese (2014), there is indeed the emergence of a Chinese middle class, those who are affluent but not super rich. There is probably a greater percentage in the Quiet Wealth families and with Modest Show of Wealth families than those families who Flaunt Wealth & Status. Media sensationalism or media headline grabbers may incorrectly overestimate or overinflated the percent of those who flaunt their wealth & status. Story: one young educated Shanghai woman professional tells me that she never knew whether her

classmates were rich until much later in life, as they did not display or flaunt their wealth as high school students. Story: a 21 year old stepson of a wealthy exec treats me to an expensive sushi restaurant (Southern CA) and afterwards flashes a big roll of \$100 bills to pay the lunch, then drives me home in his new BMW sports car.

See youtubes of:

Luxury lifestyle -- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYBX\\_wLSVog](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYBX_wLSVog)

Piers Morgan on Shanghai's rich & famous -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YNG3I3-3Tdl>

Rich Chinese youth in Vancouver -- <http://www.chinasmack.com/2011/stories/richSchinese-youth-fined-in-canada-claim-westerners-jealous.html>

The Chinese have a saying: one generation to accumulate the wealth, the next generation to maintain the wealth, and the third generation to squander the wealth. Zhang Yimou's film, *Huozhe (To Live)* stars Ge You & Gong Li, traces the life and experiences of (originally) a wealthy property owner from pre-WWII, WWII, to the Mao eras.

Application of how KMA's 3Hs (Harmony, Hierarchy, Hardwork/Perfectionism) are valued and manifested within each of the three types of Fu Er Dai families and other Chinese generations reveal the following two metaphors and their findings according to a) Tung, Worm & Fang's *Sino-Western Business Negotiations: Thirty Years After China's Open Door Policy* (2008); b) Xiang Yi. *Generational difference in China* (2010); c) Ming & Tam. *Generational Differences in Work Values* (2013); d) Zhang, Li, Foley. *Prioritization of Work and Family* (2014); and e) Ralston, Egri, Steward, Terpstra, Kaicheng. *Doing Business in 21st Century with New Generation of Chinese Managers* (1998):

The Onion Metaphor describes the Mao/post Mao DXP over 50 year old traditionalist (50hou, 60hou, 70hou ) generation:

Heavy emphasis on the layered, stable 3Hs - Harmony (emphasizes relationship building -guanxi, mianzi; face + cellphone contact; may not speak English well; deploy traditional Art of War/Three Kingdoms "deception" strategies; less adept to change), Hierarchy, HardWork/Perfectionism ( more conservative, less risktaking, somewhat inflexible, purity-oriented towards selection of a new leader).

Onion executives need to show their status & power as voice still commands in the social media – priority is voice and face, if not possible, “lv voice msg not txt msg.” They tend to use the centralized power model and are still in positions of leadership and power.

See youtube of Chinese billionaire with social responsibility & loyal to Communist Party -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XhvYO8kf5I>.

The Ocean Metaphor describes the Xiao Huangdi under 30 year old (70hou, 80hou, 90hou) generation, which includes the FuEr Dai (Hong er dai, Guan er dai, Xing er dai, Chai er dai), and Sheng nv:

Lesser emphasis on 3Hs (Harmony <Hierarchy <HardWork/Perfectionism), more emphasis on changing dynamics of being straight forward/more direct, English speaking, more risk taking; adept at change with more flexibility, rebellious, less purity oriented. Ocean executives are more hi tech/social media-oriented in business & relationship building (“txt trumps voice”) compared to their parents or the onion/traditionalist generation. Knowledgeable in using both the centralized power model and the delegatory empowerment model, they are of age to move into positions of leadership and power to succeed aging parents/bosses/leaders. American teenager, Michael Stanat, stayed with Chinese families in 2004 and describes in China’s Generation Y (2006) his observations & experiences and notes even then:

“...the youth will not relinquish their cultural heritage, which they view as better and natural. Like the Japanese who modernized in their own fashion, they will create a sinocised (Chinese-influenced) version of Westernization.”

See youtubes of :

Chinese millionaires -- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ZgUyJzPSh8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZgUyJzPSh8)

Chinese police cars clearing traffic for young fu er dai in Ferrari to get through -- [www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzKWs0jA4CE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rzKWs0jA4CE) );

Social Media Considerations – Recently, there have been several reports describing the rise of hi tech/ social media usage in China, especially among the young. Age, affluence and purpose (games, social connections, consumer shopping, business transactions, etc.) appear to be factors related to how the



different generations use social media in China. Thomas Crampton's "Social Media in China: The Same, but Different" in Marketing +Entertainment (Jan 1, 2011) and Richard Simcott's "Social media fast facts: China" (Feb 26, 2014 in [www.emoderation.com](http://www.emoderation.com))

reveal the 591 million Chinese internet users, 70% under 35 yrs old, 91% having social media accounts (compared to 67% of people in the USA) averaging 48 minutes/day usage. Crampton reveals that only in China did the youth have more friends online than offline (while other Asian nations have similar numbers of online and offline friends). It also revealed via the OgilvyOne in China study that 55% of China's netizens engage in corporate business discussions.

While Youtube, Twitter & Facebook sites dominate in the USA, China has multiple equivalents even though these USA sites are blocked. Youku and Tudou are the equivalent Youtube sites, Sina Weibo and Tencent Weibo are the Twitter equivalents, while Douban (art, books, cinema, culture, music), Kaixin001(young professionals), QZone (teens-25, migrant workers), RenRen (university students), Pengyou, and WeChat exist, depending upon one's interest and specialization. Alibaba and Taobao are the USA equivalent to amazon.com and eBay.com. Linda Jackson's "Social Network Use Reflects East/West Disparity" in MSUToday (Feb 7, 2013) discusses research she and Jin-Liang Wang did comparing China's Southwest University college students with USA students on social network usage. Their study revealed that USAers spend 58 minutes/day compared to the Chinese students spending 28 minutes/day on social networking. She surmises that America's "me-first" culture and China's "collective-good" culture are at play here. Apple's 2015 ad (see - <http://www.businessinsider.com/apple-chinese-new-year-advert-expansion-2015-2>) in China reveals how coupling the millennials with their traditional love and respect for the elderly can be an excellent selling point:

see-[www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpoDNjiMYRI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpoDNjiMYRI)

II. Born in China, but immigrated/studied/stayed in USA with some returning (Hai gui - 海龟 sea turtle) and Chinese in Different Asian/SEAsian Countries (Huaqiao (华侨 overseas Chinese):

It should be noted that while China has the world's largest population, it also sends the largest number of its students to study in USA (650,000+ total foreign students with 200,000+ Chinese

and 100,000+ Asian Indian), as well as to the EU. All of them are social media sophisticated. Almost 2/3 of the Chinese/Indians stay after their USA degree(s). Shanghai high schoolers scored #1 in math/reading/science on the 2012 PISA (OECD) followed by Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, & So Korea, while USA ranked 27th (math), 17th (reading) & 20th (science) among 65 nations. Recently, due to the increased competition for global talent, China is trying to attract professional Hai gui's back to China with incentives, turning it from a brain drain/gain to brain circulation. See youtube on Shanghai students top score on PISA -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Olr8fVsHxww>.

Also there has been an increasing number of Chinese students (Generation Z?) being sent to USA private high schools. Affluent Chinese parents are willing to pay full tuition + supplemental help/costs. Many of these off-springs are spoiled, overindulged, become discipline problems and have been caught plagiarizing in schools. It should be noted that Tufts University Greatone Education Group Company in Boston is trying to use a traditional Chinese model to work with these Fu Er Dai offsprings and their problems so they can be successful at USA high schools and colleges. Milwaukee's Wisconsin International Academy is another example of using traditional Chinese model to educate China's GenZ.

See youtube of the Chinese 2nd gen rich in USA schools:

- a) applying to USA schools and universities [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn4\\_BmhmZt8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nn4_BmhmZt8).
- b) entering private USA high school [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejToaxis\\_Bw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejToaxis_Bw)

In addition to the above groups, many Chinese have migrated to the Southeast Asian countries, esp. Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, etc. (for later expansion).

## I. Born in USA/Elsewhere generations - Huaren 华人, Huayi Meiguoren 华裔美国人 or ABC)

(Included in this section will be other Asian generation groups in addition to the Chinese)

US Census from 1970 to 2010 consistently show that the great majority of Asian Americans were born in their native country of origin. Presently, approximately 75% of the Chinese in USA were born in China, while 25% were born in the USA. Other Asian groups show even greater disproportions: 80% of Vietnamese & Filipinos born there, 20% born here; 85% of Koreans born there, 15% born here; and 90% of Asian Indians born there, 10% born here. Census 2010 show 14.5 million Asians in the USA, with another 2.5 million claiming mixed Asian/HAPA status.

Ron Takaki's *Strangers From A Different Shore* (1998) expertly describes the immigration of the different Asian groups to USA, beginning with the Guangdong Chinese to Hawaii, then to the California coast by the 1840s. These historical markers along with the discriminatory incidents and ordinances culminating in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Japanese internment during WWII, and the Asian American Movement of the 60s-70s, highlight and helped shape the values & behaviors of the different Asian generations in America. The hostile host environment coupled with the Chinese tendency to isolate themselves into enclaves, shaped the 19th & early to mid-20th century generational values/behaviors as more quiet, deferential, non-assertive, but harmony/hierarchical/hardworking and education-oriented, compared to their more recent generations. So it is not surprising that within the mainstream work world, Asians tend not to be in leadership/management positions.

Japanese Americans use the terms, Issei (1st), Nisei (2nd), Sansei (3rd), Yonsei (4th) to describe their generational experiences here in the USA. Their harmony, hierarchy & hardwork/perfectionism values/behaviors were shaped by the socio-economic conditions of the times in which they lived, as immigration started in Hawaii in the 1840s, then to the mainland USA by the 1860s. The constant throughout all these generations seems to be education. From the early 20th century, literature (see Reginald Bell's *Public Education of the Second-Generation Japanese in California*, 1935) revealed the early Japanese immigrant arriving in California (to replace the excluded Chinese) had an average 8th grade education, compared to the typical Californian who had a 6th grade education. During times of anti-Asian sentiments, Bell presents the 1920 Congressional Reports stating that the Japanese were feared because they were too smart ("superior in certain characteristics") and would outcompete the whites on the coast ("dispossess the white race"). Today, that high expectation of hardwork/perfectionism is still valued with the current generation as shown by their continued high educational

achievement levels. Also, with the high percentage of out-marriages, the issue of “what is a Japanese?” is prevalent among the different generations.

Koreans arriving in the USA during the turn of the 20th century as part of the new source of Asian labor to replace the excluded Chinese, also possessed a strong emphasis on harmony, hierarchy & hardwork/perfectionism. Takaki revealed that their traditional generation demonstrated fate (palja), face (kibun/chaemyun), family (tongjuk), collective loyalty (chaebol), protocols/rituals (poongsoo) as well as insularity, internalization of problems, and emotional regulation (deep seated frustration/hahn). Their 1.5 generation offsprings blended their parents traditional values/behaviors with the host USA values/behaviors. Current generation Korean Americans(KoAm) tend to view themselves as both Korean and American, maintaining the 3Hs while being more competitive, outgoing and expressive than their parents (deferential to authority/officials while being spontaneous/blunt (eum & yang) towards equals/peers). The term, Sa I Gu (4 2 9 or April 29, 1992) is still a rally cry and a reminder of the post-Rodney King/LA Civil Unrest where many Korean stores were targeted, looted and burned.

Ethnic preservation/spiritual support is maintained via the church, as membership in Christian churches are 50% for Koreans and 70-80% for Korean Americans. Roy Choi’s (with Tien Nguyen & Natasha Phan) book, L.A. Son (2013) describes his upbringing as a 1.5 generational latchkey kid from South Korea to LA’s Koreatown during the Fonz 1970s.

Korean youtube series Happy Together,(Jackie Chan appears in this episode) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGCVWJSx17M> shows the directness and bluntness (almost raunchy in topics we would consider taboo or over-the-hill) by which Koreans converse. Also, the <https://www.facebook.com/video.php?v=869638099821014>

video clip shows the difficulty with which Americans pronounce K-pop stars’s names. Moreover, within the K-pop millennial music (popular in South Korea, Asia and USA), there is a noticeable fusion of traditional Korean culture and America hip-hop as in the Taekwondo example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uc-1Y4Mnro&feature=youtu.be>. Hierarchy or attitudes towards authority is evident, as in some video clips one can see the performers bowing to their elders in respect before performing their blunt, in-your-face dance moves.

For the Hmongs who arrived in the USA (1970s-present) due to their involvement with the USA in the Vietnam Conflict, their millennial music are shaped by their past as Hmong resistance fighters (against the Communist Viet Cong), their experiences in the camps of Laos, diaspora as boat people, and their traditional Hmong culture. Rapper Tou Saiko Lee's youtube Hmong Hip Hop Heritage shows him rapping while his grandmother (dressed in traditional Hmong clothes) sings an ancient Hmong poem - a sign of respecting elders and one's cultural hierarchy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIrN9hV62D8>.

Two modern day convergences are seen with the Asian Americans in the USA - the 60s/70s Asian American Movement helped coalesce the different Asian American groups who immigrated and were born here into a united socio-political force (non-existent among East Asian nations internationally), just as Asian American assimilation and acculturation into mainstream society since WWII helped blend Asian and USA values.

Today, many American Born Chinese (ABC or ChiAm) are also affected by their native culture of origin as well as the host culture/USA. As such they tend to align themselves with both USA historic markers and with Chinese markers, and display both generational similarities and difference with/ between China and the USA. Social media sophisticated ABCs tend to be highly educated, more individualistic, less collectivistic, and less Confucian oriented, and more risk-taking than the China-born gens, but more educated, less individualistic, more collectivistic and more Confucian and less risk-taking than American Born Whites. Eddie Huang's book, *Fresh Off the Boat* (2013), describes his Taiwan Chinese American upbringing loving Tupac, football, parties in Orlando and New York that ultimately leads him to opening the Baohaus (no relationship to the architectural concept) restaurant featuring Taiwan street food and the 2015 TV comedy series with the same book name. Eric Liu's *A Chinaman's Chance* (2014) and the youtube of his book - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz0Fo2lZrZw> reveals the ChiAm integration of the American values of individual liberty and equity with the Chinese value of community (service).

Fifty years ago, Asians chose careers/professions consistent with or following their parents' wishes; interest and passion for the field of study was secondary. Story: a retiring university professor said he always wanted to become a race car driver, but could not tell his dad who wanted him to become a medical doctor. Today's Asian generation are moving beyond the STEM (science, technology,

engineering, math) fields into non-traditional/unconventional arenas. Like Amy Chua's Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mom (2011), more Asian Americans are choosing to follow their own passion and paths: tennis, golf, sports medicine/coaching, co-owner of roller derby team, film, music/theatre, etc., even though their parents worry that they need to have some marketable skills/profession to fall back on when hard times hit. See youtube of

a) ABC pressured by China-born parents -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xz05GUU9IO>

b) ABC in high school -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8qGhiMy2LI>

## BUSINESS/WORKPLACE IMPLICATIONS: TOWARDS GREATER PRODUCTIVITY & SERVICE EFFECTIVENESS

As China's (and other Asian's) different generations migrate globally, especially to the USA and enter into our workforce, one might see them in the following social/business scenarios:

- 1.Young Asian-born woman gets promoted over older, more senior workers. She first goes and talks with the eldest Asian-born man in her workgroup. Why is she doing this and what kind of convo do you think s/he had?
- 2.In the KMA EAsian module, M-gen Song describes Hardwork/Perfectionism in the 3Hs as having to practice something a few times before mastering it. How does what he says differ from the notion that in tai chi chuan/taiqi quan one practices the movements 1000 times to learn the form, 10,000 times to realize the qi, and 100,000 times to learn to move the qi?
- 3.Some off-springs will inherit their parents' business, and whether achieved or inherited, they may squander father's business (like ZhangYiMo's film To Live (Huozhe). USAers might meet/negotiate with them as they become new generation of bosses in some supply chain.

4. Some offsprings will become our peers at work – they may display signs of FuErDai affluence (Chinese families are now eating more meat, less vegetables, much less rice at home and especially at restaurants; obesity and drinking has become a national problem). They flaunt conspicuous consumption as they pay cash for car, property, luxury items as status/power symbols, etc., as the young are brand conscious, so one can capitalize on organization's name/appeal/structure. They are generally optimistic, ambitious & bullish on business climate; more individualistic, less collectivistic & less Confucian than their parents 3Gs; but less individualistic compared to mainstream USAers; still not encouraged to question/challenge teacher/authority; struggle between immediate rewards/materialism vs. relationship building & long term commitment; and tend to be in a hurry/impatient to advance given China's GDP, pace of economic growth.

5. China's M-gens are now in leadership/management positions and whether as worker or supervisor/manager, they still tend to show lack of initiative and/or ability to question/challenge and pushback/counter with an alternative idea/solution. USA managers may assume too much self-directed proactive behaviors, leading to undermanagement, lack of guidance/development- implications for coaching/mentoring.

6. Negotiators – How many M-gens on your USA negotiating team? Why not add millennials to your negotiating team? Your USA M-gens should connect with their Chinese M-gens online & offline – implications for social media, coaching/mentoring.

7. Chinese professionals from China and university Chinese students from China serve on a large committee along with other Chinese Americans to plan the annual festivals (Chun Jie/Lunar New Year or Duan Wu/Dragon Boat Race). Conflicts occur especially when the Chinese professionals gave "orders," the Chinese students would be offended and verbally fight back, claiming that they were not respected (being disrespected). A few of these Chinese students were undergrad students and drive Mercedes and BMW. The situation escalated to a very nasty email sent by a Chinese student that blasted certain members and their behavior, totally shocking the entire committee. Reflecting on this case study, what dynamics were going on? Where were the potential points of intervention? As a committee member or chair, what would you say, do, when, to whom, etc., to resolve the conflict and move on to the planning and implementation of the events? In what ways do you face similar intergenerational situations at your workplace and how do you handle them?

## SUMMARY

Let me connect the dots or the pixels. If certain historic/economic events (e.g., The Depression, WWII, 911) define generations and shape their outlook, then China's largest migration in human history of rural workers to urban cities within the past thirty plus years in order to modernize, coupled with its one-child policy is a megatrend that will greatly impact the world, including defining China's generations. China's human capital/talent will exhibit different generational values/behaviors as we interact and do business with them internationally. Domestically, the fact that 75% of the Chinese in the USA were born in their native country, while 25% of the Chinese were born in USA, suggests that we also need to examine their similar/different generational values/behaviors and how they align with mainstream USA workplace expectations, values and behaviors. Moreover, there are other Asian American groups (Vietnamese, Filipino, Korean, Asian Indian, less Japanese) with even higher percentage of people born in their native countries who live and work in the USA.

It behooves us to explore both domestic and international business/workplace scenarios where possible misunderstandings and conflict may occur and solution-oriented strategies are created towards better recruitment, retention/engagement, promotion, as well as greater productivity and service effectiveness. Like the Yin & Yang model, we need to examine conditions where innovation & ideas trump hierarchy & habit, and vice versa. The current D&I (Diversity & Inclusion) model of examining race, ethnicity, gender, disability & sexual orientation within a USA-centric/silo framework must be expanded to include multicultures/multi-nationals, multi-generations, class, geography/region, level of economic development, and historical relationships in an overarching interdependent/web of relationship perspective.