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Adi Purwanto - July 07, 2019

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Name _____

Family Life

In ancient China, the family was the most important unit in society. The members of a family were expected to take care of each other and to be loyal to each other. The family members were also expected to honor their ancestors.

The grandparents, parents, and children lived together. The younger members of the family always had to show respect and obedience to their elders. Children thought of themselves first as members of their family, and secondly, as individuals. Chinese names were even written with the family name first and the individual name second.

Everyone in the family was responsible for the behavior of each family member. Any member of the family could bring honor or dishonor upon the entire family.

A son had to obey his father and even marry the bride his father picked for him. It was a son's duty to carry on the family name and manage the worship of the family's ancestors. A daughter could not do these duties because she became part of her husband's family when she married. A woman was expected to be obedient first to her father, then to her husband, and even to her adult sons if she was a widow.

In wealthy families, the men were responsible for the income of the family. The women spent most of their time at home managing household affairs. The women also raised silkworms to make silk. They wove cloth and made clothing. In poor families of farmers, shopkeepers, craftsmen, and other trades, the men, women, and children all worked together.

In wealthy families, boys learned reading and arithmetic, and the girls learned homemaking skills. In very wealthy families, boys also learned writing, history, and other subjects that would prepare them for official careers. In poor families, the boys and girls learned to do the kind of work their parents did. They had little or no schooling.

1. How is your family similar to families in ancient China?

2. How is your family different from families in ancient China?

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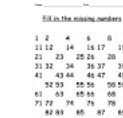
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