

East and West: Exploration of the Father–Son Conflict in Chinese Culture from the Perspective of Family Triangulation in the West and the Classical Opera Stories of the East

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The Father–Son Dyad in Traditional Chinese Culture

The father–son dyad is one of the five cardinal relationships (五倫) in Chinese culture. Both the father and the son should have clear positions within the family context, such that the son should conform to the concept of filial piety, and the father should advise in whatever context is required, by, for example, acting as the principal to the son (父為子綱).

Hsu (1967) asserts that father–son identification is at the core of the Chinese kinship system. In *Clan, Caste, and Club*, Hsu (1963) states that the Chinese family system is characterized by the dominance of the father–son relationship, in contrast to the dominance of the mother–son relationship in the Hindu system and the dominance of the husband–wife relationship in the Western system. The most important features of the father–son relationship are continuity, inclusiveness, and mutual dependence (Hsu 1963), which are typical features of patrilineal social systems. The responsibilities and expectations of father and son are clearly stated: father and son should be united to face outside enemies or family relationships. The following are corresponding Chinese proverbs: 養不教,父之過 (It is the fault of the father if the son is not properly disciplined); 虎父無犬子 (A competent father does not have a weak son); 上陣不離父子兵 (Father and son fight on the same front); 父慈子孝 (Kind father and filial son); and 父子有親 (Close father–son relationship).

Both the filial piety and the cardinal relationships (五倫) mentioned in part two imply that the son should be obedient to the father in Chinese culture. In clinical sessions, it is observed that the son fights the father, even when the latter tries to accommodate the needs of the son. Hence, a question sometimes pondered is whether there is any concept or value in Western culture that justifies the son's rejection of the father. Before answering this question, it is recognized that filial piety is the other important Chinese concept that governs the father–son relationship.

Expectations of the Father–Son Role as Defined in the Concept of Filial Piety

Filial piety has been cited as one of the guiding principles in the parent–child relationship...
(to be continued)

The above 400 words are taken from the chapter “East and West: Exploration of the Father-Son Conflict in Chinese Culture from the Perspective of Family Triangulation in the West and the Classical Opera Stories of the East”, from the book *International Handbook of Chinese Families*. For the rest of the chapter and other chapters of the book, please go to https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4614-0266-4_24