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*There are few juvenile delinquents among Chinese children*

by Chen Mei

**I**N RECENT YEARS juvenile delinquency has been one of the most serious problems in America; yet, even in large cities like New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chicago, few Chinese-American teen-agers have been brought into court on juvenile delinquency charges. People have asked me, "Just what is the secret of the Chinese in training their youngsters?"

Some attributed it to family loyalty and our traditional love and

respect for parents. It is true that a Chinese child is brought up to recognize that he cannot shame his family. But as one who was born and grew up in China, I know that it takes more than that to train a child, for filial piety is but a small part of our home training. In China when a child misbehaves, we do not say: "The child is bad," but "The child lacks a home education."

As a child, I used to visit the Buddhist temple often with my

grandmother. One morning as we came out from prayer, a street urchin, who was no more than my own age, rushed forward and hit me with a stick. Grandmother, instead of shaking an angry finger at the boy, said quietly to him: "My child, who is your father that has so poorly trained you?" The boy stared shamefacedly at her, then hung his head and slowly backed away.

Chinese parents hold that teachers are responsible for the mental and intellectual development of the children, but that responsibility for the shaping of their moral character rests solely upon the parents. As soon as a child starts to walk and talk, he is taught the rudiments of etiquette. As he gets older, he is taught decorum, obedience, deference to elders, and these rules of family and social conduct will be enforced well into adolescence.

When we were children, one of the first things we learned was to call on our parents and grandparents each morning before breakfast to pay our respects. At the dinner table we learned never to pick up our chopsticks until the grown-ups had started; we learned to address each and every member of the family before eating, and never to leave the table until all had finished with the meal.

As we grew older, we were taught to rise from our seats whenever an elder entered the room, never to interrupt a conversation,

never to argue, and always to obey our elders, not only because age should command respect, but because they had lived longer and therefore had more experience and wisdom than we. The unfailing politeness my grandparents showed to one another, to their children and grandchildren was only the reflection of good manners that ruled the home.

WHENEVER my grandmother spoke to us about others in the family, she would always refer to them as "Your honored grandfather," "Venerable aunt," or "Esteemed cousin." We seldom addressed our brothers and sisters by their first names but used "*Gor gor*—Elder Brother," "*Dee dee*—Young Brother," "*Jei jei*—Big Sister," and "*Mei mei*—Little Sister." These amenities not only kept us aware of the precious family relationship, but by knowing where we stood among the rank and file in the family, we learned to conduct ourselves accordingly.

This insistence on "propriety" or *li*—the ideal standard of conduct—is perhaps one of the most important aspects of Chinese home education. Propriety is nothing more than a code or a rule, or sometimes a sense of what is proper and fitting. By setting up the rules of conduct, a child is taught what is right to do; by discipline, he learns to respect these rules.

In our family, discipline was

strict. I will never forget the time (I was then five) I was made to pick up the pods of watermelon seeds out in the dark because I had been "careless" and "willful" and had scattered the tiny pods all over the lawn.

During our first years at school, it was a family rule that we learned calligraphy or the brush stroke technique by copying the printed ideographs for an hour each day, after school. My brother and I had tried every trick to escape it. I discovered that by feigning sleep I could be excused from this tedium and my brother would play with the brush and inkstick until the time was up.

For this we were punished often, but the punishment had little effect. One day father came up with a new rule. For every sheet of calligraphy that was overdue (our quota, four sheets daily), we were fined two extra sheets, retroactive with the New Year. For weeks thereafter, my brother and I had to write like mad in order to catch up with our "penmanship" fines. Although I am still what my father considered a poor calligraphist, this early experience taught me a lesson. By subjecting myself to discipline, I learned self-discipline.

CHINESE children, on the whole, learn responsibility early. We were never allowed to think of ourselves as irresponsible merely because of our age. At nine, I was given charge of my father's study.

In those days my father used to practice calligraphy every morning before breakfast. (Calligraphy, like painting, is regarded as an art in China.) Thus before leaving for school, I had to see that his ink was properly made, his writing papers and brushes were properly set. When he had finished with his writing, I had to see that the brushes were rinsed and put away.

Not long ago, a Chinese boy in New York's Chinatown accidentally broke a barbershop window with a baseball. What the father did was unorthodox, but it helped train his son: to the barbershop the next day came a long line of Chinese to have their hair cut. Though not related by blood to the young offender, they all bore the same family name, and according to the Chinese, those with the same family name were *hing dai*—"cousins." Since the boy had to pay all those haircuts out of his small savings, this was the father's way of teaching him responsibility. And the haircuts more than paid for the shop's damage.

This incident in Chinatown reminded me of a similar incident at home. Once, when my brother smashed a window in our living room with his slingshot, grandfather neither scolded nor punished him. But the window remained unrepaired. Days passed . . . a week . . . two weeks. When my brother could at last bear it no longer, he went to grandfather and said: "Do

what you like with me, grandfather. But please get the window mended." To him the silence was worse than a beating.

Chinese youngsters are always taught by their parents to get along with others. A child is told not to fight, not for want of courage but because his parents would persuade him to solve his problems with reasoning. Thus, before a Chinese child takes any step, he is trained to consider what effect it will have on his parents! Will they be proud if he does this . . . or will they be ashamed?

When my grandfather was alive, he was known for his "high" temper. One day an old friend of grandmother asked her how she had managed to live half a century with him without quarreling. Grandmother replied, "Whenever thunder struck, I just played deaf."

This ability to ignore and to overlook another's shortcomings and weaknesses is perhaps the most precious thing learned from grandmother. Call it tolerance, compassion or whatever you like, it is this ability to live and let live—or in grandmother's own words, "to relent"—that makes it possible for us to maintain harmony in the family and goodwill toward our fellow-men.

From my parents and grandparents we also learned charity and humility. Grandmother never refused rice to anyone who came to our door, and there was always a

bed for those who needed it. In the summer father used to set up a tea shed on the main road, providing tea for the jinricksha pullers.

SOMETIMES we had to learn the hard way. While I was in junior high, I had done well in my school work and for three consecutive years I had come out top in my class. But the last year the title was captured by another girl, a new student. When the prize was announced at the commencement, I slipped quietly out of the auditorium, hid in the family car and wept.

On our way home that afternoon, grandfather, who had attended my graduation with my aunts and young cousins, announced that he would celebrate the occasion by taking us all to the best restaurant in town.

"But why?" I asked, with tears still in my eyes. "Have I not lost face?"

"You must remember," said grandfather, "one cannot hope to win all the time. Is it not time you gave the others a chance?" I was silent. "I feel no shame because you have lost," grandfather went on, "because I know you have done your best." Then, touching me on the shoulder, he said, "Humility is a great thing, my child. When you get older you will understand."

From my parents and grandparents we also learned of the small wonders of life: a well-cooked meal, a cup of fresh-brewed tea, an au-

turn sunset, a boat ride on the lake, a good poem, the visit of a long lost friend, of things well done, a good laugh—even at our own expense.

During my high school years, my family used to have open house on Sundays and my schoolmates were always invited to join. Once grandmother asked me why Fong, the Eurasian girl in my class, had never appeared. I said that few of the girls would come had I invited her, for after all, socially, an Eurasian was a few rungs below us.

"I shall tell you a story," said grandmother. "You know Fourth Grand Uncle, who has never done a day's work in his life, came to grandfather for money one day and grandfather said that it was time he turn to his son. Then he came to me. 'My Third Sister-in-law,' he said. 'You know if anything should happen to Brother, my son will be his only heir?'"

"'How so,' said I. 'Have I not borne him three sons?'"

"'Ah, do not forget,' said Fourth Grand Uncle. 'You are not my brother's lawful wedded wife!'"

"'Does not the law recognize children of concubines?' I asked.

"'Not since the Revolution,' he said and he laughed at me.

"Of course your Fourth Grand Uncle said this to anger me," said grandmother, "for I found out that a son is still a son no matter if he is from the concubine or the Number One wife. But if what he said was true, then perhaps you are not as good as an Eurasian?"

We looked at each other and laughed.

IF Chinese youngsters seem better behaved than others, it is because the Chinese parents have only one set of moral standards for both the parents and children. A Chinese child is appreciated in his own home. He is treated with dignity which makes him feel he belongs, and punishment is always accompanied by justice. He has little urge to run away from home because the home offers him everything he wants—love, understanding and self-respect. Chinese children have no need to join the "asphalt gang" because they are happy adolescents; to them the home is their haven and their parents are their best friends.

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### Perfect Behavior

A demure young miss of seven years was in the doctor's office for her regular examination. Through all the conventional tests she watched him without comment. Then he pressed firmly on her chest.

"Feel anything?" he asked.

"No," she informed him, "and it's no use. I *never* squeak!"

—T. & J. GOOTEE

# BEYOND THE BRAIN STORM **IE**

*A new technique for culling ideas  
solves the problems of management . . .*

by Mary Bosticco

ONE BRILLIANTLY sunny morning last June, a large conference room at the new building of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce began to fill with business executives from all over the city. They had one thing in common. All headed a small but growing company.

The conference room was set with tables seating six people. Before each was a small pad of four by three-inch pink paper, a pencil, and an instruction sheet.

When the last of the stragglers sat down at the tables, they began looking expectantly toward the podium, then toward the door. At ten o'clock, a man of medium height and build, his straw-colored hair neatly brushed into submission and his blue eyes hidden behind thick glasses, approached the podium. Disregarding the comforting protection of lectern and microphone, Ernest Loen stepped forward, faced his audience and began.

This was the last of five work-

shops the purpose of which was to gather data on the problems facing small businesses all over the nation, preparatory to President Eisenhower's Conference on Technical and Distribution Research for the Benefit of Small Business.

The five workshops yielded the phenomenal total of 14,000 ideas from 452 business executives in less than 20 hours total time! Within six weeks all of this invaluable material was assembled and analyzed by Loen's crew of specialists. It was then written up, edited and bound into a 160 page report ready to be rushed to the President and his advisors.

The technique Loen used is known as idea engineering—or IE—an amazing new research and problem-solving tool which threatens to revolutionize management methods. It is not a fad, but a scientific technique solidly based on the behavioral sciences. The analytical procedure used in assembling the bits of data are the products of