

Japanese Culture

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During the Edo era, Japan implemented an isolationist policy, where they stopped their relations with all countries. This policy refined and developed the Japanese culture, which before was influenced by China (Tsutsumi, 2017).

When the era ended in 1868, Japan overturned this practice and acquired cultural traditions from all the different countries, blending them with the developed and refined culture during the Edo era. Over time, Western culture influenced the various facets of Japanese culture, including skills, customs, and cuisine (Tsutsumi, 2017).

Shinto and Buddhism are the two primary religions in Japan. Shinto is a native Japanese religion, whereas Buddhism originated in China in the sixth century (Tsutsumi, 2017).

The aspects of Japanese culture in health and healthcare arise from religious and philosophical beliefs. Shintoism views illness and disease as foul and unwholesome. Simultaneously, Buddhism accepts aging and sickness as a natural process, and the majority of the Japanese people accept and support Buddhism later in life (Blanch, 2018).

Conventional Japanese practices concerning health and healthcare are distinct from Western methods. The notion of "hazukashii" or shame, is connected to the Japanese view of life. Japanese culture focuses on attaining success, preserving health, and close family relations. Having poor health is a shameful prospect for the Japanese (Blanch, 2018).

The family is known as "Kazoku," which consists of a mother, father, and children. The Kazoku usually reside with their elderly parents. In more recent years, third-generation members of the family have preferred new provisions (Tsutsumi,2017).

Rooted in Confucianism are the codes of ethics that mandate household and public order in Japan. One of the morals of Confucianism is "filial piety," meaning that children are obligated

to take care of their parents in their old age. It is deemed disgraceful to the household if an elderly is in a care facility (Blanch, 2018).

In the Japanese culture, prayer, walking over a placenta, child adoption, sharing a bed with a postpartum woman, or eating leftovers from a postpartum woman will help a woman get pregnant (Team et al., 2009).

Pregnant women avoid dark-colored foods because they symbolize "cold" energy. Women do not have any restrictions on the type of food they eat. They are allowed to eat sushi and a wide variety of food to guarantee sufficient nutrition to the baby (Team et al., 2009).

During labor, Japanese women vigorously eat because they believe that food will supply the strength and energy for pushing. Women are also told not to cry during labor, and fathers are generally not present during labor (Team et al., 2009).

The majority of the OBGYNs in Japan are male. They tend not to explain anything or ask for clarification from their clients. Japanese mothers trust and follow all instructions and leave all decisions to the doctor without question (Team et al., 2009).

The Japanese believe that childbirth is a natural and beautiful experience that does not end once the baby arrives. Japanese women tend to give birth without painkillers, which relates to the Buddhist approach to suffering. The Japanese believe that labor pains are a test for women to undergo to prepare them for motherhood challenges (Team et al., 2009).

Japanese women give birth in hospitals, but usually, the babies' fathers are not allowed to be in the delivery room. Fathers who have taken prenatal classes with the mother are allowed to be present during births. Fathers are sent to the waiting room if their partner gets a cesarean

section. Mothers are to stay in the hospital five days after natural birth, or ten days with cesarean delivery (Team et al., 2009).

It is a tradition for a new mother to recover in her parents' home in bed after childbirth for at least eight weeks. During the recovery period, family members help out with chores while the mom bonds with her new baby. It is also forbidden for women to shower or wash their hair until seven days after birth. Breast massages are customary to help increase lactation. Breastfeeding in public or anywhere outside the home is said to be embarrassing and shameful. Japanese women are conscious of weight gain and restrict their diet after birth, which affects their milk production. When the baby is at two-three months, Japanese women use formula instead of breastfeeding (Team et al., 2009).

The shift from isolation to globalism molded the Japanese culture. The culture is an amalgamation of old and new cultural practices, both Japanese and foreign.

References

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