# TRADITIONAL ASIA

## Introduction

A tradition exists in many forms and is dependent on the people and their ideology and beliefs. Basically, tradition is a people’s way of life, it incorporates the beliefs, customs, language, and values of a society. Every nation and every race has its own creative and its own critical mindset.[[1]](#footnote-0) Asia can be considered to be a continent rich in tradition with respect to the continent’s composition of countries. Japan, China, Korea, and India are some of the countries in Asia which have preserved their traditions up to date. Every culture has its origin and development as well as its features. Tradition in Asia is quite significant due to the ancient practices that are still carried out today that other countries eroded. An in-depth analysis of the Asian tradition particularly in Japan will provide more insight on the traditional practices that the Japanese have.

Japan can be regarded as one of the leading world economies in the world. The country is one of the most technologically advanced and industrialized. The modern civilization of the country has however not completely eroded the culture of the Japanese. Various aspects of the Japanese culture are presented in different forms of the modern Japanese activities. Tradition in the country is presented through;

## Art

The biggest income generating sector in the country is the homemade artifacts. Many of the country’s citizens make money from home-made items. For the Japanese, art is not just about making things and selling them, art-making aims at presenting what is considered to be the most significant characteristics of the object[[2]](#footnote-1). The beauty of the art is inspired by Zen Buddhism which was a spiritual tradition that was employed by the ancient Japanese artists. The art of the Japanese is derived from a moral and spiritual perspective implying that the artifacts always have an ethical teaching to the society.

## Religion

Religion in Japan is unlike the religion in the western world. In Japan, religion is not preached or perceived as a doctrine. It is incorporated into the cultural values of the society. Religion is the way of life of the Japanese people and it is a private and family affair. There are no religious symbols and religion is not an everyday topic in the country. The Japanese do not claim to be religious and rarely engage in worship. The reason for the lack of religion in the country traces back to the World War II. The Japanese believed in the Emperor as a living God and the religion was all about worshiping him. During the World War II, the emperor was killed and his dying, distressed voice was broadcasted to the nation as the emperor renouncing his capacity as God.[[3]](#footnote-2) The beliefs of the people clashed and only the religious rituals that come with marriage, birth, and death survived.

Japan, however, has a form of a spirituality aspect and a religious aspect that the people believe in. the Shintoism is the spiritual figure and advocates for the belief that every living thing contains gods. Shintoism is depicted widely in the Japanese culture where the changing of the seasons and nature are highly valued. Japanese arts also reflect Shintoism in the flower arrangement and the garden designs. Buddhism is the religious aspect in the country, the people believe that it is responsible for the souls of the people and their fate in the afterlife.

## Clothing’s

The Japanese are well known for their unique dress code. The traditional clothes of the Japanese are still fashionable in the country to date. The famous garment of the Japanese ‘the kimono’ has developed over the years. The kimono was invented in the middle ages after interaction with other countries. The garment has been categorized in designs which are worn by the society’s elite and designs worn by the middle class. The modern day ceremonial kimono was created for the Nobel families. It was a 12 layered clothing and went by the name juni-hitoe. The middle class was accustomed by the short-sleeved kimono.[[4]](#footnote-3)The traditional clothes of the Japanese are still in use in the modern day and they are still worn by the traditional standards.

There some cultural beliefs in Japan that are shared by several other countries in Asia. The belief of death is common in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. A study carried out showed that the three countries have the same perspective on death. The belief is that misfortune follows after speaking out loud about death and that it is better having a bad life than a good death. The oldest family is also given the mandate of breaking the bad news to the rest of the family and all members of the family should be present.[[5]](#footnote-4)

One of the most distinguishable feature of the Japanese is their tendency of bowing. Bowing is used in different situations to communicate different meanings. The act is traced back to the introduction of the Chinese Buddhism. Bowing was regarded as the reflection of an individual’s status. The people of lower standards would bow to the higher class people as a sign of respect. In the modern Japan, bowing is done either to say hello or bid goodbye, offering thanks, giving an apology, worshiping someone or an object and while asking someone for a favor. The bow is regarded as a sign of respect and it is highly appreciated in the Japanese society

China is an Asian country that is also rich in tradition. Initially, the Chinese were atheists due to the governance of the Chinese communist party which based its governance on Marxism. Currently, there is a significant number of people that practice Taoism and Confucianism and other traditional religions. The Chinese also have Buddhism and also Catholicism as a form of religion. The traditional clothing of the Chinese do not vary greatly with the Japanese garments, there is only a slight difference in the material and colors of the clothes.

The Chinese also have the practice of bowing to show respect. The bow differs from the Japanese bow in that the Chinese give a slight head nod as opposed to the traditional full bow. China has seven major dialects in its language with the majorly used one being Putonghua which is the national language.

The Chinese also engage in art. The art is inspired by the spiritual and mystical history of the country. Buddhism is depicted in most of the Chinese arts. The musical instruments used in the country are also integrated into the culture such as the xun which resembles a flute.

The Chinese cuisine is influenced by the geographic and ethnic composition of the country. The close proximity to the ocean enables many seafood dishes. Rice is the staple food of the nation and it’s credited with helping the Chinese people grow[[6]](#footnote-5). The Chinese do not consume a lot of meat and so their main source of protein is pork and chicken.

## Conclusion

Overall, Asia is rich in tradition which resists erosion from an adaptation of the western practices. Japan has conserved its cultures overtime and the properties of the tradition give the citizens their identity. Tradition in Asia plays a great role in influencing the religious and moral lives of the people. Culture has been used to guide the way of the young and install proper morals. The beliefs, values, language, and standards of the society are passed down from generation to generation thus resisting the erosion of culture in the continent.

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