

While self-  
consciousness is  
taught to them from a

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While in Japan I learnt lots of new things about their culture and the way their society functioned. This experience has helped me to find some aspects of Japanese society that I think Australia could learn and hopefully benefit from.

The first, and probably most important, thing I noticed was the great amount of shared respect all Japanese people have for each other and their public areas. This shared respect and self-consciousness is taught to them from a very young age and extends to all parts of Japanese life. Starting when they turn 6 and begin primary school the Japanese are taught how to be responsible and tidy with their own belongings as well as being conscious of their impact on the people around them. In most Japanese primary school students wear a formal uniform to school before changing into playwear once they arrive. This is so that they can move about more freely, but also to teach them to take care and be tidy with their belongings as they are required to neatly fold and pack away their unworn clothes themselves. A similar system could possibly be implemented in Australian schools to help teach younger children to be responsible for their belongings and help them be more self-reliant. Another inspiring aspect of Japanese life and culture is the almost complete lack of public bins. The philosophy behind this is: ' Why should other people have to take care of your garbage and mess for you?' and the result is amazingly clean and litterless streets.

Instead of dumping their trash everywhere the Japanese carry whatever rubbish they accumulate throughout the day and take it home with them where they then separate and sort it into its separate components themselves. Unfortunately, lots of Japan's rubbish end up being incinerated

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anyway but I believe that if children were taught to take care of their own waste and not rely on public bins then Australia could maybe begin to phase them out and move towards having cleaner streets as well as using less single-use disposable plastic containers and wrappers. This philosophy of cleaning up after yourself doesn't solely relate to rubbish but can be seen everywhere in Japan. Perhaps the best way to contrast Japan's tidiness and respect for shared places with Australia's is to compare public toilets from each. Going to a public toilet in Japan is as pleasant an experience as going to the toilet can be, and often feels much like going to the toilet in your own home. It's clean, it doesn't smell and you can go to one without feeling scared to enter.

In Australia, however, I am sad to say it really isn't the same experience. Australian public toilets, at least all the ones I have been to, are filthy. They stink, they're dirty and there's almost always strange substances in places they shouldn't be. This difference isn't because of some magical cleaning fairy that tidies up all Japanese restrooms, it's because of how the Japanese people respect others and shared places. They clean up after themselves and use the facilities they are given properly so that others can as well.

This part of Japanese society, the respect for others and special awareness is something I really hope to see one day soon in Australia. Finally, the last aspect of Japanese society that I think Australia could learn from is Japan's public transport system. As it is highly representative of Japan's core values. Japan, unlike most of Australia, has an amazing public transport system.

It's punctual, it's clean, it's affordable, it's reliable and it's super widespread. Japan's railway network is vast and has a line passing through almost every town. This allows everyone from students to office workers to travel easily to wherever they need to go. Japan's trains are so punctual that just recently a Japanese train company issued a formal apology for one of their trains leaving 20 seconds early, wherein they apologized for the "the severe inconvenience imposed upon our customers". In contrast to Sydney trains which define "on time" as the train leaving or arriving within five minutes of its scheduled time. In Japan, if your train or bus is delayed by any more than 5 minutes you receive a Train Delay Certificate which you can use to prove why you are late to your employer.