

Death and dying process and rituals in the asian culture



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Death and Dying Process and Rituals in the Asian Culture As far as cultural differences go, every culture has its own way of dealing with death and dying. Asia itself contains a variety of cultures where death may be greeted with quite grief to an open and encouraged display of wailing to show how loved was the person who died. In essence, the death of an individual is also connected with the religion and creed followed by the family which dictates how the person should be mourned and how the best possible path to death can be obtained by a person (NASP, 2003).

For example, in China, the rituals concerning death and end of life come from a mixture of Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist faiths. After the death of an elderly member of the family, celebrations or events such as weddings may be postponed. The closest members of the individual are supposed to grieve the longest and the amount of grief expressed is supposed to be equal to how close the person was to that individual. In terms of bereavement, men are allowed to openly cry during a family gathering after the death but only the women are supposed to cry and express their grief during the funeral ceremonies while the men are supposed to remain stoic (Leach, 2006).

The right to die changes from culture to culture and while some cultures such as Japan may accept a person's decision to end his/her life, others such as China may frown upon it (Leach, 2006). Some Buddhist patients may actually refuse to seek medical attention due to an acceptance of pain, suffering and even death as a part of their karma. This can lead to a situation where a medical practitioner may have to stop treatment at the request of a patient. Numrich et. al. (2006) report that such patients may have to be reminded that Karma can be both good and bad therefore they should

accept treatment as a part of their good karma just as they accept pain as a
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part of bad karma.

When individuals are supposed to maintain stoic attitudes, the lack of expression of grief may cause them to become depressed. This depression could be a problem both for the person who knows s/he is going to die as well as the individuals who are around him/her (NASP, 2003). However, belief in spirits as well as an afterlife for most of the Asian culture does provide some comfort since death itself may be seen as nothing more than change and a transfer from this world to the next (Lobar et. al., 2006). In such situations, families come together to form support groups and ease the mourning process for the individuals who are left behind. However, for the widows, the process can create problems as well since a male dominated society may not allow them to get remarried and ever create issues with regard to the disposal of the property left behind by the husband or the custody of the children. These social issues still remain to be solved by the governments of many Asian countries.

Works Cited

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