Japan's Dating and Marriage Practice

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**Introduction**

 In every society around the world, ‘Love’ is prevalent. People falling in love may have the same feelings; however, their approach towards love varies. Every country has its customs and rituals regarding dating and marriage. Among these countries, Japan possesses some unique and valuable procedures regarding dating and marriage. It is noteworthy to mention that Asian and Western countries have different dating and marriage procedures than each other. Therefore, Japanese perceive their relationship differently than western nations as Japan is a located in Southeastern Asia. Their ideas concerning dating and marriage share some uniqueness. Japan holds strong to their unique culture. Japanese have their unique ideas that how love is constructed and held together. In Japanese culture, people should act in a specific way. They must not break any rules of society otherwise people will think of that person in an erroneous way. The purpose of the paper is to highlight the supremacy of women in Japanese dating practices.

**Discussion**

 Japan is well known for fun and cultural things. Therefore, the dating culture in Japan is also kind of fun. Like other countries, dating is casual and easy in Japan, but there are few tricks and trips that will tell couples on what to do and what not to do.

**Confess your love if you want a date**

 The first step in Japan's dating practice is a confession about love. In many cultures, when people go to a date, they have no idea about the feeling of other people for them. Many people go home with a dizzy head as they don't about the feelings of other people. They don't know whether that person likes them or not. But that is not a problem in Japanese culture. In Japan, if two people went out for dating, then it means that they like each other. There should be a kokuhaku before going on a date. It is all about confessing your love to another person. It is notable to mention that Kokuhaku is usually done by a woman (Kaori, 2017). When a person is confessing, it means that he/she is asking someone out on a date. Confessing is all about to date exclusively. Most Japanese are very frank regarding this matter as their view of marriage in kokuhaku is different.

**Gender roles are different**

 It is well-known all over the world that women are shy, so men are supposed to ask or confess any woman. Men are more vocal and active to show their interest in a woman. However, that is totally in Japan, where women get the upper hand in dating's confession. Men are supposed to wait for a woman to confess her love or her desire to date. Men are considered to be poised and calm while women are expected to be active and open about their internal feelings. In Japanese culture, it is not suitable for men to express their feeling much. Women have supremacy in dating and marriage; therefore men need to wait for the confession from a woman (Kaori, 2017). Due to such reasons, women are the one to confess their love. It is interesting to know that woman tend to pay for dates instead of a man. Women have supremacy in dating practices, whereas men have their pride in professional life. In Japan, women are motherly kind and tolerant while men have their pride in the business.

**Friend’s approval**

 Friends are an essential part of our life as they stand by us in every situation. They have a major role in shaping our lives and approving different things such as dating. Japan has a unique dating culture in which friends play a vital role. In Japan, partners mingle together with their friends before any actual date. The main purpose behind that mingling is to understand more about a partner. Japanese partners usually mingle with each other’s friends for five to six times. After that, friends give permission whether to continue that relation or not. After confirmation, these two can go on to a more private date. Hence, it is safe to say that Japan has a unique dating culture in Japan.

**Physical intimacy**

 In many cultures, physical intimacy is common among couples, and it is not really serious, especially in western cultures. Physical intimacy is considered a way to show one's affection to his/her partner. However, Japanese have different views regarding physical intimacy. Japanese couples wait for a longer period before starting any physical touch. If the Japanese achieve boyfriend and girlfriend status, then it is possible for them to start having physical relation with each other. The physical intimacy in Japan includes touching, hugging, and kissing.

**Judgmental in choosing dates**

 Depression is a factor that forces someone to date, anyone, regardless of any connection. Therefore, people tend to give their date another opportunity in order to understand their dates more. While in Japan, many people are kind of judgmental when it comes to dating practices. Many Japanese want their partner to be close to perfect. They evaluate every matter of their partner, their personality, their intellectual level, their beauty, and their financial stability. If they find any defect in their partner, then they are not willing to continue their relationship with that guy or girl. That's the reason behind low marriage rate among Japanese. However, Japanese women are willing to marry western guys due to their supremacy and high living standards.

**Gender role (Girls supremacy)**

 Gender roles are reversed in Japan. As discussed earlier that women have the upper hand in date and relationship, so men are supposed to wait for any woman to confess her love. Men don't bother to chase after a girl as it's the responsibility of women to do all the chasing and confessing part (Kaori, 2017). When a woman wants to be close to a guy, she usually goes hard and persistent. However, it is notable to mention that women are more sensitive and emotional than a man. If a guy rejects their proposal, women usually get hurt. For women, a small rejection is not a big deal. In Japan, a woman gives a present that reminds a person about her. A woman tends to be kind to him and is willing to do anything for him.

**Japanese Marriage Practices**

 Marriage practice in Japan is different than any other country. There is a great Japanese ritual regarding marriage which is known as "san-san-kudo." That tradition is rich with meaning and is being practiced for over a long time. "san-san-kudo" is performed by both groom and bride along with their parents. Each person takes three sips of sake from each of 3 cups. It is noteworthy to mention that the first 3 represents three couples; the groom, the bride, and their parents whereas other three refers to three human flaws, ignorance, passion, and hatred (Hendry, 2010). In the Japanese culture, number ‘9' is considered to be lucky; therefore the name of that tradition contains "Ku" which means number ‘9’. The word ‘do’ in “san-san-kudo” means the freedom from the three defects. In Japan, the wedding ceremony also contains a rosary with twenty one beads. Twenty one beads symbolize the union of the families as it represents the couple, their families and the Buddha. In many cultures, ‘Bridesmaids' or ‘best man' present a toast for the bride and groom. In Japan, parents are honored with a toast, flowers or a letter which express their gratitude and love.

 In Japanese culture, crane represents longevity and prosperity of a relation. Therefore, Japanese fold 1,001 ‘gold origami’ in order to bring peace, longevity, good fortune, luck, and peace to the marriage. There are traditionally two outfits for a bride to wear; one for the marriage ceremony and other for reception. The Shiro is for the marriage ceremony which is a white kimono, while the uchikake kimono is for reception and it is patterned brocade (Monger, 2004). Colorful kanzashi accessories are used to worn hair in a bun. The tsuno kakushi is a white wedding hook which is used to hide the two front golden tsuno horns in order to represent respect. Kaiken (a small encased sword), hakoseko (a tiny purse), and a fan are carried by a bride which represents happiness and a happy future.

**Conclusion**

 Every culture has its traditional roles for men and women. However, in Japan, there are many ways in which people are still socialized towards particular actions. In Japanese culture, Women are active and superior in dating as their confession decide whether a certain relation runs any further or not. Men are supposed to wait for the confession of women. Japanese have certain expectations of the roles in the relationship. Japanese partners usually mingle with each other’s friends for five to six times to understand more about their partner. If the Japanese achieve boyfriend and girlfriend status, then it is possible for them to start having physical relation with each other. "San-san-kudo" is a great Japanese marriage ritual. Parents are honored with a toast, flowers or a letter in Japan which express their gratitude and love.

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