
How important is it for people in your society to retain a sense of tradition?

Introduction

In modern society, the fast paced lifestyle has reshaped, evolved and moulded our perceptions to aged old traditions and cultural practises. Modernists assert that it is not important for people to hold a sense of tradition as these archaic practises are often seen as stumbling blocks that impedes progression in a globalised landscape. However, conservatives would caution against such extreme beliefs as tradition serves as a crucial moral, psychological and cultural identity tool. In view of such contrasting beliefs, it is pertinent to explore the issue from a multidimensional perspective in order to arrive at a nuanced and poignant conclusion.

Main body

Point 1 - proposition 1

It is important for people in my society to retain a sense of tradition because it serves as a moral compass for individuals to properly conduct themselves in this era of value relativism and ambiguity. Historically, religion and cultural traditions are key cornerstones in a society, inculcating moral values, standards and laws that effectively govern the individual, community and society. These unspoken rules have a pervasive influence that guide individuals in their self-navigation of reality whilst fostering positive, good values that maintain a harmonious and sustainable way of living in society. Furthermore, in this era of value relativism where all standards are abolished, the individual is morally barren, uncertain and directionless. All the more, the presence of tradition holds them accountable to a code of conduct that grants them certainty and stability. For example, the celebration of Hari Raya and Christmas Day allows individuals to understand the important values of loyalty, togetherness and unity in an era of personal gratification and self empowerment.

Point 2 - Extent of agreement 1

However, it can be argued that it is not important for people in my society to retain traditions as certain aged-old practises uphold archaic value systems that create tension and impede the ethical development of the individual, community and society. The above view holds the skewed assumption that all traditions contain an inherent value system that promotes multifaceted positive guidance and development. But it is not always the case. Just like the saying that "tradition is blind", not all that is of the past is still of value today. There has to be a reevaluation of all values that we uphold as accorded by Frederich Nietzsche, discarding what is repugnant and forging a brave new world of governing and guiding standards. For example, traditional beliefs about the domestication of women hold no value in

today's reality of equality and human freedom. Holding onto such beliefs that limits women to the kitchen creates a value tension with the values and ideals of human rights and empowerment of all individuals.

Point 3 - Proposition 2

Another reason for people in my society to retain a sense of tradition as it grants individuals and communities a sense of comfort and belonging to a particular group that provides them with support, respect and friendship. In modern society, traditions offer a respite from the hustle and bustle of outside life. In actual fact, traditions are not only about the aged-old practises that we carry out. It is more than that. It encompasses the process of it, where we enjoy the company of others that support and guide us. Take for example traditions in our society like the Chinese New Year reunion dinner and Mooncake Festival. It emphasises the spirit of togetherness in the extended family where each individual enjoys and appreciates the mutual company of others. It is a time where people get along and catch up with one another.

Point 4 - Extent of agreement 2

But it can be argued that retaining a sense of tradition is not important in my society due to the evolving nature and demands of modern society that eliminates the once-cherished distinctness and value of traditions. In today's age, the emergence of new media has revolutionised how we communicate, support and accompany others. These mediums remove the need for physical intimacy and presence, where one need not be physically available to catch up with others and can do so virtually too. In addition, families nowadays meet up much more often due to intergenerational homes. As such, the distinctness and uniqueness of a once-in-a-year reunion loses its intrinsic value and purpose as one can connect with others anytime, anywhere. Take for example the Chinese New Year reunion dinner. In the past, it was a once a year occasion where families get to gather together. Now with weekly meetups and the availability of Skype video calls, one can do it as and when they wish to.

Point 5 - Proposition 3

Once again, it is important for people in our society to retain a sense of tradition as it instils individuals with a sense of being, where we find inner peace and self-acceptance by being grounded in our core identity. In our multicultural society, the influx of western and foreign cultures brings about a fresh set of values, beliefs and identity. These diversity and variety of cultures create an identity dilemma within us. With traditions and practises, there is a binding sense of identity that we can instantly relate to our ancestral history, environment and people around us. It gives us a grounded sense of who we are and what we want in the multicultural landscape.

For example, Chinese cultural activities such as the Qin Ming Festival and Mooncake Festival reminds us about our ancestral origins and gives us a unique sense of identity in a world where we are constantly bombarded by waves of Americanization and Kpop Culture.

Point 6 - Extent of Agreement 3

Yet, it can once again be argued that it is not important for people in my society to retain a sense of tradition as it demarcates distinct cultural identities, fostering cultural bubbles that divide our multicultural and multireligious society. In a way, traditions could very well create an isolated sphere of exclusive activities, beliefs and practises that create a unique identity to particular groups of individuals. Inevitably, this would create segregations and foster the “Us vs Them” mentality. Eventually, this goes against the creation of single binding and unifying Singaporean identity that encompasses the spirit of multiculturalism and diversity. For example, in the infamous Curry Dispute of 2011, there was a dispute between a migrant family from China and a Singaporean Indian Family over the smell of curry. This incident arose from a lack of mutual cultural interaction and appreciation, where families are engrossed in their sphere of cultural activities and identity without proper integration into the Singaporean multicultural identity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, cultural traditions and practises possess an intrinsic value to people in our society but only if they are allowed to evolve with the times. At times, it has been shown to be static, archaic and rigid. Therefore, it is crucial that traditions work in tandem with modernity and adapt constantly in order to meet the standards, demands and requirements of both time and social contexts.