

Who? What? Why?

Japanese Responses

Borrowed from Elaine Magnusson - <http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/japan/mdnjapan/LS29.html>

1. Most Japanese parents teach their children to respect older people and as they get older to behave themselves so that they will not shame the family. Two ways to show respect are to bow low to a person you meet and to add –san to the end of the family name. For example Ishida-san.
2. Japanese mothers and children “pull together” in completing homework and meeting other challenges. Mothers may be criticized or praised by teachers about their children’s school work.
3. Children who fail often cause pain to their mothers who cares for and loves him/her. The Japanese mother may use her pain to push the child to try harder in order to achieve. The father suffers too but is less open about it.
4. The Japanese mother is in charge of all childrearing. Care is taken to arrange the home for the child’s care and comfort. Independence is discouraged and obedience is rewarded. If discipline is needed, it generally is mild isolation or threats of shame or outside evils.
5. In Japan, control is developed by the mother through encouraging the children to do their duty. When the children go to school, the teacher provides an extension of that control for the family.
6. The family is generally considered the most important group by the Japanese. School groups may continue to get together and those friendships may continue throughout life. The company for which a person works is considered an extremely important group. The woman shifts her group membership to her new family when she marries. Her closest friends will be her children and other women.
7. Doing well is not just for the individual but is also for family position and honor. In achievement the family is the focus of the individual’s efforts to succeed.
8. The Japanese family teaches discipline. There is concern now because most grandparents do not live with the family, and thus cannot provide instruction in strict codes of behavior. Yet the close mother/child relationship continues.
9. Most Japanese families stress education and its importance. Every student must attend school through age 14, and very few students drop out of school before completing high school.
10. Success in Japan means a good education and a good job. Those jobs that require a college education are considered really successful and give greater position or status. Most Japanese marry and Japan’s divorce rate is about ¼ the American rate.
11. In the past, marriages were arranged by parents using go-betweens. Today, the young people of Japan are exercising more free choice of a mate. However, an employer, family friend, or other respected individual often arranges the first meeting with someone considered suitable as a future spouse.