

## Is the media in Japan influenced by Western values?

I believe that the media in Japan is influenced by Western values. I hold this belief for the following reasons.

Japan has a very rich culture that covers all spheres of life ranging from modes of daily dress, eating habits, and greetings, to the relationship between adults and children. However, a cursory look at the programs in electronic media and the pages of print media demonstrates a change trend from more traditional ways of Japanese culture to more Westernized ways. I will give two examples.

Nowadays, in electronic media, newscasters are televised dressed in Western clothing. Although they still retain the Japanese traditional way of greeting (bowing the head), other than that, their appearance reflects a strong adherence to Western culture. In the area of music programs, the musicians that are shown on the television do not always portray the Japanese values of righteousness and humility. Rather, they appear in baggy clothes for the men and tight, transparent clothes for the women; a clear attempt to copy Western culture. Hardly does one find traditional Japanese music on the air (or on the radio); and when it is played, it is just for a few minutes.

My second example is regarding reportage. The choice of news-items, programs and analysis in newspapers, television and radio is greatly influenced by Western values. This may not be unconnected with the fact that the media wants to satisfy its audience. The majority of the audience nowadays, especially the youth, tends to prefer programs that contain elements of Western values. Any media outlet that sticks to traditional Japanese values in its programming faces the risk of losing this group of audience.

In conclusion, although some aspects of traditional Japanese values are still retained in the media, media today is clearly influenced by Western values.

## **Are there good moral standards in religion for society to follow?**

Religion is primarily the belief in the existence of a deity worthy of worship and the activities related or connected with the worship of such deity. There are various religions in the world today. Although these religions are different in their scriptures and modes of worship, they do possess some common basic elements. It is these elements in common that I believe are good for every society to follow because they consist of important moral standards that would make the societies better. I will explain this idea in the following paragraphs.

It is a basic element of all religions that the adherents must be honest. For example, in Buddhism, honesty is defined as truth-telling, promise-keeping, etc; it requires that “one should utter the truth” at all times. Apart from being truthful, honesty entails abstaining from unfair behaviors, such as stealing and cheating. In a society where honesty prevails, there would be little or no crime and the people would live in a happy, courteous way. It is said that an honest man is respected by all. This will ensure the development of the society at all levels.

It is also a basic element of all religions that children should be brought up in a righteous way. For example, Islam considers children to be vulnerable and dependent beings and requires that they should be guided to be righteous directly from childhood because habits learned from childhood “will remain with them for the rest of their lives”. In Christianity, all aspects of a person's life are believed to be shaped during his childhood, hence the requirement for proper guidance during this period. For example, if children are raised in a righteous way, the society would grow to become a society of righteous men and women.

People all over the world believe in their chosen religions but irrespective of what the chosen religion is I believe that there are good moral standards in every religion for society to follow; and if we follow those standards, society will benefit.