

Acculturation of Ancestral Rituals: The Case of Taiwanese Residents in Osaka

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ABSTRACT

People who migrated from Taiwan to Japan face issues concerning aging and death at some stage. How do those Taiwanese people determined to make Japan their final home practice ancestral rituals? Most of the literature regarding ancestral rituals by foreign residents in Japan, discusses identity and the preservation of their native rituals. More important, however, is their orientation toward Japanese culture. Therefore, this paper looks at how values concerning ancestral rituals have changed by analyzing cases of Taiwanese residents in Osaka.

Whereas Taiwanese residents in Japan do not show their ethnic identities overtly in ancestral rituals such as funerals or, altars, Korean or Chinese residents in Japan exhibit their ethnic identities through their rituals. It is not necessarily the case that all of the Taiwanese residents in Japan do the same. Some of them, for instance, inscribe their native names in gravestones. "When it comes to Kako-cho," a Buddhist ritual item literally meaning "ancestral book" and usually containing ancestral names, however, Taiwanese residents do not write in their ancestral names. Instead, they simply put their names in. This clearly displays their identities as the first generation of Taiwanese residents in Japan. By not binding themselves to follow their native rituals, it seems that they try to adopt Japanese customs in accordance with Japanese society.

Keywords: Taiwanese residents in Osaka, acculturation, ancestral ritual

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