

A Gallup Survey:

"THE CHANGING FACE OF JAPAN"

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HOW THE SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED

The survey was conducted among three groups: 1262 Adults aged 20 – 79, 1179 Teens aged 13 – 19, and 300 Pre-teens aged 10 – 12. The adults were interviewed in 30 minute phone interviews, though average time per call ended up being over 1 hour. The teens and pre-teens were given self-administered questionnaires, having been recruited to do the surveys after school through their public school teachers with the approval of school authorities. All of the survey work was conducted between Feb. 14, 2001 and Mar. 11, 2001. The adult sample was indexed to the most recent Japan census and included all prefectures including Okinawa. The teens and preteens were selected from the statistically average-response-representing Tokai area of Japan.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS – HIGHLIGHTS

The survey was conducted in regards to the following 6 categories of questions.

Roles and Goals:

The three most important aspects in adults' lives are: family, friends and education.

Personal accomplishments was also an important aspect for single female respondents.

85% of teens and 64% of adults often wonder why they exist.

73% of adults and 62% of teens responded they are not always free to make their own decisions.

If teens were free to make changes, 87% would be themselves but change many things, 48% would leave their life as it is now, 36% would like to be someone else, and 11% prefer to have never been born.

Social Relationships:

83% of adults indicated feeling somewhat to very uncomfortable around people with different ideas beliefs and values from their own.

The most common leisure activities for teens were watching TV, reading newspapers, reading comic books and reading magazines.

Morals and Ethics:

The Japanese have a thoroughly postmodern view on morals and ethics, with 75% of adults and 86% of teens feeling that right and wrong are determined by the circumstances of the situation.

75% of adults and 85% of teens agreed they sometimes tell lies if they have to do so.

Most adults and teens would feel guilty about stealing and not repaying a debt (over 90% for both), even if no one knew, and less would feel guilty about premarital sex (37% and 32%).

Asked to rate various behaviors as morally good or bad or neither, adults and teens rated murder, bribery and extra-marital affairs as the worst actions, while 31% of adults rated pre-marital sex good, and 60% rated drunkenness good.

The people seen to have most influence in adults and teens major decisions were: self, spouse (if married) and mother.

Among pre-teens those seen by them as most trustworthy besides close family and friends were teachers (86%).

Spiritual Beliefs and Practices:

Among spiritual beliefs the strongest agreement (42% of adults, 39% of teens) was that there is a soul separate from the body and that there is some kind of heaven.

An interesting disparity was that while 35% of adults and 32% of pre-teens thought there is no afterlife (death is the end of all things), only 20% of the teens thought that.

The most disagreed with statement was that one can have a personal relationship with God and communicate with him (52%).

Fully 2/3 of adults think that no one hears their prayers but it makes them feel better anyway. 59% of teens agreed. But over 1/3 of adults and teens agreed they had experienced an answer to prayer.

92% of adults and 61% of teens have prayed to their ancestors. 38% of adults and 51% of teens have prayed to a creator God. 48% of adults and 29% of teens have also prayed to nature or natural objects.

The most common spiritual practices were memorial rites, drawing Mikuji or fortune cards from shrines and temples, and buying lucky charms from shrines and temples.

25% of adults and 29% of teens expressed they were interested in learning more about spiritual matters. Roughly 2/3 of Japanese were disinterested in learning more. Among those interested, the most likely method to learn more was through reading books and magazines, then consulting close family and friends, and the reverse order for teens.

Paranormal Experience:

Among adults, 46% reported dreaming something that was going to happen and then it happened, 25% felt that a dead person was trying to contact them, 17% said they thought they had seen a ghost, 13% said they had seen a fireball ("hi-no-tama"), 9% felt they were in the presence of an evil power.

Among teens, 51% reported dreaming something that was going to happen and then it happened, 20% said they thought they had seen a ghost, 11% felt they were in the presence of an evil power, 10% felt that a dead person was trying to contact them, 3% said they had seen a fireball ("hi-no-tama").

Religious Involvement:

When asked, "Do you have a religion?" 30% of adults and 20% of teens answered "Yes."

Among adults who answered yes, when allowed multiple choices, 74% said they were Buddhist, 19% Shinto, 12% Christian, 6% "New Religions", and 7% another religion. This means about 4% of Japanese adults claim to be Christian (3.6%). Significantly more females than males chose this.

Among teens who answered yes, when allowed multiple choices, 60% said they were Buddhist, 35% Christian, 15% Shinto, 1% "New Religions", and 10% another religion. This means 7% of Japanese teens claim to be Christian, a vastly larger number than expected.

39% of adults and 33% of teens agreed it was okay to change one's religion. 5% of adults and 3% of teens thought that Shinto was the only real religion for Japanese. 56% of adults and 53% of teens disagreed that Christianity is a religion only for Westerners.

The factors of a religion considered important by adults were the truth of its teachings, reassurance in life's crises and hope for the future. The same 3 were true of teens with future hope ranking highest.

23% of adults and 22% of teens felt they had a positive image of Christianity. 2/3 of adults and half of teens felt they didn't know enough about Christianity to have an impression. 63% of adults felt one could be Japanese and follow Jesus.