Culture And Death Paper

Every culture views and see's death differently. Growing up in the United State's and growing up in a small down in Michigan, I have know death as sadness, and losing someone you absolutely love is heart breaking. It is very interesting to learn about different cultures and how they view death. Tibetan Buddhism is well known, particularly because of the Dalai Lama. Dalai Lama is the symbol of peace, and is the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism.

In the Buddhism culture, a person who will die or will die soon is prepared for death. It is interesting because in this culture, they prepare people to die, even though the they are unsure when the person will die. They believe that since life is short and you never really know what can happen or when you will die, your time on earth is important. "Buddhists are encouraged to visit a graveyard as a way of facing their own death." (Redmond, 2019) I find this interesting that you are encouraged to visit a graveyard when your death is upon you. I say that, because in my culture visiting a graveyard could seem like you are ready to go or some people might think its morbid, but to the Tibetan Buddhist is more for peace.

It is important for Tibetan Buddhists culture to learn about death and not be afraid of death. Facing death without fear is good for rebirth in this culture. "They believe that the most advanced students of the faith should have neither fear nor regrets at the moment of their death" (Redmond, 2019). Facing death without fear can be difficult with some people who have never thought of death as a peaceful thing. For me personally, growing up with a heart condition, I always knew I could die at any point in my life. And some people might think, then why live life. But you have to live life and experience life to be able to be at peace with your life and not be fearful of death. (Gouin, 2012)

Tibetan Buddhists make death seem so peaceful by creating a peaceful environments for the dead, the presence of Monks, and transfer of good deeds. So what does this all mean? Well friends and families will place images of Buddha and flowers around the room of the dying to help that person remain calm at at peace. The flowers and pictures also help to focus on the resign its self for the person who is dying. A Monk will come visit the family and the person who is dying to help them focus on the good in their life and pray with them. As for the good deeds, they are transferred to the dying person from the family and friends, which is hope that the person who is dying will achieve more merit at death for a better rebirth. (Gouin, 2012)

Palliative care in the united states is brought up a lot in the hospital settings. Palliative care is medical care for people who are living with a very serious illness. Palliative care is more focused on the relief of symptoms and to live without pain. In Palliative care you also can help with the patients spiritual needs. "According to Buddhism, suffering is inherent to all human beings. Advice on how suffering can be reduced in the course of serious illness might be helpful to patients with incurable and progressive diseases" (Masel, Schur, & Watzke, 2012). According to Journal of Pain and Symptom Management "Palliative care could benefit from Buddhist insights in the form of compassionate care and relating death to life. Buddhist teachings may lead to a more profound understanding of incurable diseases and offer patients the means by which to focus

their minds while dealing with physical symptoms and ailments. This might not only be beneficial to followers of Buddhism but to all patients" (Masel, Schur, & Watzke, 2012). It is interesting to learn that the Buddhist insights could help all patients who are facing death to be calm, focus on the what they have done in life, and remember the good deeds, and to be surrounded by love can really help those who are dying.

There are many different forms of Buddhism, but they all have the same belief. Reincarnation. They believe that death is a transition from life, then to rebirth. I think that is an amazing way to think and believe because it is like you're being reborn, you are able to relive your life after death. (Klass, 1997) It's a beautiful way to look at it. In the United States many people have funerals, or celebrations of life to remember those who have died. Funeral rituals are extremely diverse around the world, and all cultures have differences with their beliefs and views on death and dying, but, that is why the death and dying in every culture so interesting. The beliefs have been handed down from generation to generation.

In the Buddhist culture, funerals are very different between the countries, but are all very traditional. Some customs for a funeral can have an open casket before a cremation, with photos of their loved one with friends and family. There is usually some candles or incense burning, and there is an image of Buddha, which is tradition. Sometimes there will be donations to the family or gifts to the family. (Klass, 1997) One thing that I thought was interesting was that Buddhism allows for the deceased to donate their organs. Some cultures believe that donating organs is not what you should do after death to have a good rebirth. So it was surprising to hear that they allow organ donation.

Learning about these traditions in the Buddhist culture is not very different in the United States. In the united states we have funerals where all friends and families gather and you remember the one who has passed, you hav a meal together, and just love on the family and friends. It's a time to remember that person and help the family. Death is a very uncomfortable topic for most people who have grown up in the United States, it is not really something we all just talk about. Most of the time, death is not really talked about and people get uncomfortable asking about a loved one who has passed. We need to change this in the United States.

Learning about the Buddhist culture makes you really appreciate what you have in your life, remembering the good times, the good memories, what you have done in your life, and we should do the same for those who have passed. When my older sister died a few years ago we had a celebration of life instead of a funeral. It was a way to show off her life, show off what she has done, and let everyone appreciate her. It was beautiful and I feel like it was a little influenced from the Buddhist culture. When I a go back and think about it more, my older sister absolutely loved traveling and actually traveled and saw Monks, and had a lot of Buddhas in her home. What a great memory to look back on.

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