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## Multicultural Diversity And Pain

With all the ethnic groups out there, the three I chose to discuss are Chinese, Muslim and Native American. All three of these ethnic groups have fascinating and similar beliefs when it comes to their religion, diets, and pain and health practices.

Although Asia has a great variety of religions, the most practiced and influential one by the Chinese culture is Buddhism. Buddhism teaches that suffering is inherent in life and that one is or can be liberated from it by cultivating wisdom, virtue, and concentration. In the Muslim ethnic group, Islam is the religion that is most influential and practiced. The Quran "Holy Book", is the word of God by the Islamic prophet and messenger named Muhammad. "Islam" means "surrender" or "submission". "Salam" (which means "peace") is the root word of "Islam". In a religious context the word "Islam" means "the surrendering of one's will to the true will of God to achieve peace". Native American religions are more often spiritual practices. The many religions are based on the distinct histories and beliefs of one's individual tribe or clans. Native American's believe in respecting, appreciating and protecting all life. They believe that there is only one God which they call the "Great Spirit". As you can see, when it comes to religion in all three of these ethnical groups there are a great many differences, but one thing remains the same and that is peace within and all around.

When it comes to discussing the diets of all three ethnical groups, in China, food is considered a way to long life. It is considered medicinal. For example, eggplant is beneficial in cooling the blood, so it would be eaten by individuals with high blood pressure. Ginger is considered to heat the blood, so it is beneficial for individuals with anemia. Foods, spices and seasonings go beyond being just food or condiments. It's a medicine used as a way of living a longer life in the Chinese culture. In the Muslim culture, all foods must be considered 'halal' meaning allowed, permitted or lawful. It generally refers to how animals are slaughtered and prepared. Animals must be killed humanely, and their blood must be drained completely. Food purity is of high importance in the Muslim culture, which means that foods with harmful additives are prohibited. In regard to the Native American diet, Native Americans were relying on foods that were indigenous to their region. Corn, beans, and squash provided a stable food supply that was done by hunting, fishing, and gathering of wild foods. It was more about what the land had to offer them that became a staple of what is so common in our world today. It was about social gatherings and living off the land primarily. It's interesting to see the different beliefs and customs when it comes to diets. Chinese consume food for medicinal purposes, Muslims follow more of the religion aspect and Native Americans have kept with their ancestors in keeping the importance of social gatherings and flourishing off the land for their food supply.

What about pain and health practices? One of the positive traits in Chinese culture is Stoicism. Stoicism is enduring pleasure or pain without showing emotion. Revealing and admitting to pain, is a sign of weakness. Under the Buddhist law, pain is a part of life and must be embraced. Muslim's believe that illness and injury are caused by (Allah) a higher power. They are thankful for what they consider good fortune of being allowed the special medical and/or surgical treatments. Muslim patients understand that illness, suffering and dying are part of life and a test from God. They perceive illness as a trail from God by which one's sins are removed. It is a religious duty to take care of one's health in the Muslim culture. Native American's health is a

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continual process of staying strong, spiritually, mentally, physically and socially. Illness is thought to be a result of an imbalance of body, mind and spirit. The traditional healing is identified by the national Institute of Health/National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) medical system that encompasses a range of holistic treatments used by indigenous healers for a multitude of acute/chronic conditions or to promote health and wellbeing.

In conclusion, many different cultures all started with our ancestors and some are based and practiced on science, religion, or just simply what was provided to us by means of our surroundings. Simply put culture refers to shared ways of being, knowing, and doing. Not all cultures are the same with its norms and beliefs but one thing I think we can all agree on is that whatever culture we may follow, the goal and reward is our own individual wellbeing.

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