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Significance of Japanese Childbirth Rites: With Special Reference to the Practice of Satogaeri-shussan

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Abstract: This paper aims to discuss why Japanese women still practice their traditional age-old ritual like Satogaeri-shussan even in contemporary times, particularly when rapid modernization and urbanization have already taken place all over Japan. From the perspective of Japanese women from Nagoya city, this paper will examine why Japanese women during their pregnancy and the young mothers after giving childbirth feel the necessity to conduct the ritual of Satogaeri-shussan. In addition, this paper will describe their impressions or thoughts about this ritualistic practice. Unlike the previous studies related to Satogaeri-shussan, this paper will seek contemporary Japanese women's point of view on Satogaeri-shussan. This paper will mainly rely on the primary and secondary data for the analysis. Around 61 informants have participated in the face-to-face interview survey, and 747 informants have participated in the questionnaire survey conducted by the author between 2018 and 2020. Finally, this paper will conclude that even if so many changes have taken place in the way of performing traditional rituals or day-to-day life of Japanese people due to modernization and rapid economic growth, still many Japanese women love to preserve and continue their conventional childbirth practices and customs because their previous generation has handed down this traditional childbirth custom to them.

Keywords: Japanese childbirth rituals, Contemporary times, Japanese women, Nagoya city, Satogaeri-shussan.

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