

## **Preserving Tradition with a Purpose: Interpreting *Zuo Yuezi* in Malaysia**

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### **Abstract**

Many traditional practices are no longer practiced. To a large extent, modernity is seen as the factor that changes our perception on the meaning of practicality. Due to modernization, individuals became more rational. As a result, many traditional practices were perceived as irrelevant and no longer practical. However, such understanding of rationalization can be problematic. There are some traditional practices which are continued till today, such as *zuo yuezi*. It has been practised by Chinese women for more than one thousand years. Hence, this paper argues that it is not modernity that causes individuals to be rational. Rationalization happens all the time and as a result some cultural practices were abandoned while some others continued. In order to discuss this notion, an inductive study was done to describe and explore forty seven Chinese women views on *zuo yuezi*. Data from this study revealed that the women continued the practice because they found purposes to practise it. Therefore, rationalization should not be seen as an outcome that is confined to modernity. It is an on-going process that transcends modernity and shaped by individuals' interpretation of what benefits them.

**Keywords:** *Zuo Yuezi*, Chinese Postnatal Care, Traditional Chinese Practices, Rationalization, Modernity

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## Introduction

Many cultural practices from the past are no longer practiced. One of such practices is *footbinding*. Although it was practiced by the Chinese women for over a thousand years, it became unpopular in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and was banned by the Chinese government in 1912 (Mackie, 1996). The movement to ban it was initiated by a group of anti-*footbinding* reformers. These reformers were against the practice and viewed it negatively. Since mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the reformers campaigned and established associations to coordinate activities to stop Chinese women from binding their feet. Their campaigns focused on the disadvantages of *footbinding* and the advantages of having natural feet. Consequently, these efforts managed to convince the Chinese government to ban it. Before the ban took place, the Chinese women believed that *footbinding* could help them to enhance their beauty. It was also used to mark the differences of men and women (Gamble, 1943). However after the Chinese started to abandon the practice, they began to view *footbinding* as lewd, wasteful and nationally humiliating (Broadwin, 1997). The setting up of associations such as Natural Foot Society and Anti-*Footbinding* Society in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century period strongly indicated the presence of structured movements within the Chinese social system to stop the footbinding practice. These associations were well accepted by the Chinese and within a short period of time Anti-*Footbinding* Society managed to recruit 300,000 members (Mackie, 1996, p. 1001). The anti-*footbinding* campaigns triggered a revolution in the Chinese cultural system. It had caused the Chinese women to relate the practice to its disadvantages.

Positive interpretation plays an important role in determining the continuity of a cultural practice. Based on the earlier discussion, *footbinding* was interpreted negatively and as a result from such interpretation, the practice was abandoned by the Chinese. Therefore, there is a relationship between the continuity of a cultural practice and how it is perceived by the community. Such relationship has long been discussed by interpretive scholars. These scholars opined that culture is formed through meanings which people share when interpreting symbols in their social surrounding. Geertz is one of such scholars. He described culture as a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their attitudes toward life (Geertz, 1973, p. 89). Such definition of culture relates the importance of interpretation

in determining the continuity of a cultural practice. A cultural practice is not inherited. Its continuity will depend on how it is communicated or in other sense interpreted by the practitioner. This thought which has its root in the Weberian school of thought highlights the importance of making social action sensible. In the making sense process, rationalization plays an important role in determining the type of reaction to an action. As such, within the context of such notion, modernity is conceptualized as a process of rationalization. Modernity is conceptualized as the time when individuals rethink and reinterpret some of their actions. Consequently, modernity has been perceived as the cause for traditional cultural practices such as *footbinding* to be abandoned. However, some scholars felt otherwise. They view rationalization as an ongoing process. Modernity does not determine the preservation of traditional practices. In other words, some cultural practices may be abandoned while some other practices continued to be practised.

Handler and Linnekin (1984) associated the role of interpretation to the definition of tradition. In their views, tradition is dynamic cultural practices and its continuity or discontinuity depends on the interpretation it received. Eliasoph and Lichterman (2003) made similar observation when studying the roles of group style in communication. Their study proved the importance of interpretation in forming group style. According to them, some scholars viewed group style as a product of institutionalized collective representation of how a group should behave. However, group style is not merely an institutionalized collective representation or in other words a code of how members of a group should behave. In their study, Eliasoph and Lichterman proved that the role of group members' interpretation on each other relation is important in determining group style. As a result, group style or in the larger context; culture; is an outcome of group's interpretation. Members of a group will rationally select items that they think is best for them.

The above scholars' propositions are proven by the fact that Chinese women had in the past practised other cultural practices and some of them are still continued till today. One of such practices is the Chinese women traditional confinement practice which is known as *zuo yuezi* in Chinese. Just like *footbinding*, *zuo yuezi* has a long history. It has been practiced by the Chinese women for at least one thousand years. However, unlike *footbinding* which has been abandoned in the age which has been described by some as the age of modernity; Chinese women still practise and believe that *zuo yuezi* is an

efficacious postnatal care for women (Shu, 2004). Most Chinese women who were in their postnatal stage practised *zuo yuezi* to a certain extent (Poh, Wong, & Norimah, 2005). Hence, *zuo yuezi* was and is still interpreted positively. The fact that *zuo yuezi* is still interpreted as efficacious by the Chinese women is showing that the practice is still positively accepted by the Chinese. The preservation of *zuo yuezi* indicates that modernity does not determine the preservation of traditional cultural practices. Otherwise, *zuo yuezi* would not be continued. The preservation of traditional cultural practices is largely determined by the practitioners' interpretation. If a traditional cultural practice received positive interpretation(s), it is likely that it will be continued. On the contrary, if it is not positively interpreted, it will not be continued. Therefore, practitioners' rationalization plays an important role in determining the preservation of a traditional cultural practice.

Through this paper, we attempt to describe the positive interpretations that Chinese women have on *zuo yuezi*. Besides finding out the reasons that have supported the relevancy of the practice, we would like to also examine the social support it receives from the Chinese social system. The support will reveal the fact that *zuo yuezi* is still positively accepted by the Chinese. Findings from this research will be able to support the notion that the continuity of a cultural practice is determined by practitioners' rationalization. As such, interpretation by members of a particular cultural group determines the continuance and discontinuance of their cultural practice as proven by the abandonment of *footbinding* practice by the Chinese.

### ***Zuo Yuezi: The Practice***

*Zuo yuezi* as defined by Pillsbury (1978) is a set of rigid practices to take care of the mother and the baby. It is the Chinese traditional postnatal care for the mother and the baby but most of the practices are more focused towards the mother. This tradition serves as a physical convalescence period that allows the mother to recuperate and regain strength after delivering her baby. It is also a social sanction for the mother to rest and at the same time the mother will receive sufficient care so that she can concentrate on breast feeding her baby (Cheung, 1997). This traditional practice has a very long history and can be traced back to the Song Dynasty which existed approximately 1000 years ago (Chien, Liu, Huang, Shu, & Chao, 2005). Traditionally, *zuo yuezi* will last for 30 days and the mother is expected to follow all the practices. *Pei yue* or confinement

nanny is often hired to assist the mother. If *pei yue* is not available, the mother's close relatives, mother or mother-in-law will assist. There are many "dos" and "don'ts" during this period. The sanctions imposed by this tradition cover many aspects. According to Dixon (1993) and Pillsbury (1978), during *zuo yuezi*, the mother is expected to adhere to the following norms:

- Do not wash the body or hair for at least 12 days.
- Do not go outside for the entire month.
- Do not eat "cold" or "windy" food.
- Eat chicken cooked in sesame oil.
- Avoid all wind, fan and air conditioning.
- Ideally, mothers should rest as much as possible.
- Do not go to another person's home.
- Do not get sick.
- Do not read or cry.
- Do not have sex.
- Do not burn incense or visit temple.
- Do not eat with family members.

Raven, Chen, Tolhurst and Garner (2007) discussed more or less the same set of norms when researching the Fujian Chinese women *zuo yuezi* pattern. However, as pointed out by Poh et al. (2005), some of these practices are modified or are not strictly followed to suit modern mother's lifestyles, beliefs and financial status. In rural China, most of the women who practised *zuo yuezi* did not strictly follow the norms. They were given freedom to choose how long and how intense they want to follow the tradition by their mothers-in-law (Strand, Perry, Guo, Chao, & Janes, 2008).

According to Pillsbury (1978), *zuo yuezi* practices are considered efficacious for curing the body's imbalance. The Chinese believe that after delivery, the balance between *yin* and *yang* of the woman's body need to be restored. In order to restore *yang*, various measures such as reducing contact with wind and water will be taken. They should also try to rest as much as possible to restore their energy. Food is another important element that will be looked into. They will be served a special diet. Most of the food is to bring back energy and heat. Chinese herbs which are recognized as food that can restore heat or energy will be served. In Malaysia, red and black dates, dried *long yan*, *kei zhi* (*gou ci*), *dong kwei* (*dang gui*), and *dang shen* are some of the herbs

used (Poh et al., 2005). The women are also served with chicken boiled in rice wine. Ginger and sesame oil which are considered as hot will be added into the dish. Pig liver and kidney will also be cooked in the same way. Wine plays an important role in their diet. In fact, they are encouraged to drink herbal wine. Alcohol is considered as “hot” and by consuming alcohol the women can reduce the cold element in their bodies and ultimately restore the equilibrium of *yin* and *yang*.

While practising *zuo yuezi*, the Chinese women are not allowed to eat fruits and vegetables that are considered cold or ‘windy’. Cucumber, brinjal, cabbage and lettuce are some of the vegetables that are being categorized as cold or windy. Fruits such as watermelon, pineapple, star fruit and jack fruit are also classified as ‘windy’. Besides food, Chinese women are required to abide by a few taboos when practising *zuo yuezi*. They are not allowed to burn incense or visit temples during confinement. Their husbands are also not allowed to go into their room during this period (Pillsbury, 1978). The Chinese believe that women are dirty after delivery and as such will cause misfortune if they pray or accept visits by their husbands.

### Research Methodology

In order to study the relationship between the interpretation of Chinese women on *zuo yuezi* and its relationship with its continuity, we conducted an inductive study on how a group of modern Chinese women interpreted *zuo yuezi*. Such decision is made after considering the fact that these women are exposed to modern lifestyles and ideas. Therefore their views and in-sights about *zuo yuezi* will be important to understand how their interpretations maintains *zuo yuezi* relevancy from the contemporary perspective.

The Chinese women studied in this research are educated, economically independent and stay in urban areas. These characteristics are important characteristics of modern women. Walby (1997) noted that modern women have access to education and are employed. Such background is important for this research since this research aims to illustrate contemporary Chinese women perspective on *zuo yuezi*. Besides achieving this aim, their background is also important to show that the women have financial and intellectual capability to decide what is best for them. Snow ball sampling method was used to identify respondents to ensure respondents fulfilled these conditions. All the women involved are married and had delivered at least a child. Their age group ranges from late twenties to late fifties. The diverse age groups are important to enable

us to get feedback from women who are in different stage of life.

Data for this case study was collected through survey, interviews and also observation. A survey was carried out to collect data related to the practices practised by the respondents, reasons for practicing *zuo yuezi* and their interpretation of *zuo yuezi*. The result of the survey will provide a general understanding of how the *zuo yuezi* was experienced by Chinese Malaysian women. To complement the survey, interviews and observation were conducted to discover the true nature of *zuo yuezi* practices among the women. In-depth interviews were held to probe into their perception on the relevance of *zuo yuezi*. Observations were held to observe how much the Chinese women believe in *zuo yuezi* also the support of Chinese community is providing. It is important to note that the inductive approach used in this research aims to understand Chinese women interpretation of *zuo yuezi* and not to generalize the data to the Chinese women population.

### **Practising Zuo Yuezi: Chinese Malaysian Women Experiences**

According to Poh et al. (2005), most of the Chinese women did not practise all of the *zuo yuezi* practices. Due to the influences from modernity, the types of postnatal care may differ from one individual to another. Some may even prefer not to practise *zuo yuezi* while some may prefer to combine *zuo yuezi* practices with modern postnatal care practices and the others may prefer to follow *zuo yuezi* practices rigidly. Besides the types of postnatal care, the women's opinion on the necessity of the *zuo yuezi* practices will also provide some indication on the nature of *zuo yuezi* practised by them. They may view some of the practices as important to be practiced. They may also feel that some of the practices as not so important to be practised which means they have an option to practise or not to practise the practices. It is also possible that the women may think that some of the practices should not be practised at all.

Table 1

#### *Types of Postnatal Care Practised*

Types of Postnatal care	No. of Women
Modern Postnatal Care	5
Combine Modern and <i>Zuo yuezi</i> Practices	37
Rigid <i>Zuo yuezi</i> Practices	5

From the responses obtained through the survey carried out in this research, it can be concluded that most of the women studied in this research prefer to combine *zuo yuezi* practices with modern confinement practices. As shown in Table 1, 37 of them chose to combine modern postnatal care and *zuo yuezi* practices. Their choices show that the women prefer a mixture of practices which combined elements of modern postnatal care such as visiting modern trained doctors and taking western medicine and complement them with *zuo yuezi* practices. Only 5 respondents indicated that they preferred rigid *zuo yuezi* practices as their type of postnatal care. The other 5 respondents preferred modern postnatal care only. In other words, they did not practice *zuo yuezi*.

The women were also queried on how they perceive *zuo yuezi* practices. They were asked to indicate their views on whether certain practices of the tradition must be practiced, optional or should not be practised at all. Results showed that most of the women were selective. Out of the 12 *zuo yuezi* practices, 6 practices were still being practised by most of the women. Most of the women believed that practices such as eat “hot” food, avoid “cold” food, stay at home, breast feeding, not to squat, abstain from sex and drink only herbal water during confinement as practices that must be practised. According to the women, these practices will enable them to regain their body heat which had lost during delivery. The practices will bring back the balance of cold, wind and heat in the body. Another woman claimed that she knew about the importance of these practices through her friends and relatives. They told her that these practices such as eating “hot” food and avoiding “cold” food would help women to regain their health.

A woman who we had the opportunity to observe, practised all of the six practices. With the help of a *pei yue* who was hired to take care of her, she ate “hot” food three times a day. In all the meals, she was served chicken boiled with rice wine. For supper, the *pei yue* would normally prepare chicken essence. The essence was obtained from chicken meat steamed with Chinese wine. Other practices listed by Barbara Pillsbury on traditional confinement practices were also observed by her. Her husband was advised by the *pei yue* to not to pray at home. He was told by the *pei yue* that he would be in a “*sou*” condition (a form of *dirt chi*) after her wife delivered and therefore he should avoid praying to deities. The woman was also warned by the *pei yue* not to squat because squatting would cause her womb to ‘drop’. During the whole month, she drank only water boiled with red dates, black dates, *dang shen* and *long yan* and she was



informed that the herbs would benefit her overall health.

Practices such as not to take bath and wash hair, not to brush teeth, to limit guest visits and not to cry were considered by the women as practices that should not be practised at all. When probed during interview sessions, the women explained that it would be impossible for them not to bathe and brush their teeth for the entire confinement month due to hygiene reasons and Malaysia's hot climate. However, although the women were strongly against the practices, interviews with them revealed that they would still try to abide by these rules by altering the practice. They would abide by the tradition of not bathing for at least two days. When they started to bathe, they did not bathe in cold water. They bathed in lukewarm water mixed with herbs. They were also asked to explain why they did not agree with the limiting guests practice. While some of them acknowledged the importance of limiting guest visits, others claimed it was difficult to limit visits from guests since most of the guests were close friends and relatives. They perceived limiting visit by guests as not practical.

Judging from the above, it is clear that the respondents did not adhere to all *zuo yuezi* practices. Even so, it must be noted here that although not all *zuo yuezi* practices were adhered to, most of the women still consider many of the practices as relevant. Out of 47 women, only 5 women preferred modern postnatal care. The others preferred either to combine *zuo yuezi* and modern postnatal care practices or to abide by *zuo yuezi* practices rigidly. Interviews and observations had also shown how some of these practices were rigorously followed.

All the women approached in this research are educated women and financially independent. Therefore, forcing them to practice *zuo yuezi* will not work. Their acceptance or semi-acceptance over *zuo yuezi* is an indication that they had interpreted this cultural practice positively. Although they did not fully abide by all *zuo yuezi* practices, most of these women had practised *zuo yuezi* because they decided to do so. In other words, *zuo yuezi* is still perceived as their postnatal care method.

### **Interpreting the Relevance of Zuo Yuezi**

#### **Zuo Yuezi is an Effective Post Natal Care Method**

The above discussions indicated that most women studied in this research accepted *zuo yuezi* as their postnatal care method. We were interested to know the factors which

caused the women to view *zuo yuezi* positively. We would like to know whether *zuo yuezi* was accepted by them because they felt *zuo yuezi* had performed certain roles which they perceived as important at the postnatal stage. We listed the potential roles of *zuo yuezi* in the questionnaire. The women were supposed to confirm whether *zuo yuezi* practices had provided them time to rest and regain their health, cope with new addition of family members and strengthen their family ties.

As shown in Table 2, most of the women (40 out of 47) studied in this research agreed that by doing *zuo yuezi*, they had time to rest and regain health. Their responses reflected the ability of *zuo yuezi* to perform the postnatal care function. Throughout the month, a *pei yue* or family members took care of the women. Their food and other needs were prepared for them. Foods which are rich in energy were served. The food would be able to satisfy their needs since they believed that they would be weak and in need of such nourishments after delivery. At the same time, the special diet would also be able to satisfy the psychological needs of the Chinese women who see themselves as weak and need special attention. These women were discouraged from performing household chores. All these enabled the women under confinement to rest and to take a break from routines that they normally do.

Many of them also agreed that *zuo yuezi* assisted them in coping with new members of society. This could be due to the fact that according to the tradition, the newborn will normally be taken care by a *pei yue* or whoever assigned to assist the women under confinement. Therefore *zuo yuezi* enabled the women to have sufficient time to rest and recover biologically as well as mentally. Without *zuo yuezi*, the hustle and bustle of taking care of the newborn will definitely cause stress and fatigue to the women under confinement.

Table 2

*Zuo Yuezi Roles*

	Options	Count
Time to rest and regain health	YES	40
	NO	7
Help to cope with new addition of family member	YES	33
	NO	14
Strengthen family ties	YES	34
	NO	13

Pillsbury (1978) suggested that social integration as another factor which has helped the traditional confinement tradition to be practiced. According to her research, by following the tradition, most Chinese women hope that they will be able to maintain positive relationship with the elders such as their mothers-in-law. 34 women agreed that *zuo yuezi* had helped them to strengthen family ties. One of the respondents also felt that she is closer to her sister-in-law after the confinement period. Her sister-in-law assisted her throughout her *zuo yuezi* period.

The above findings are showing that most of the women studied in this research accepted *zuo yuezi* probably because they perceived *zuo yuezi* had assisted them in many ways during their postnatal stage. There are other positive interpretations of *zuo yuezi*. According to Shu (2004, p. 14), *zuo yuezi* is seen as a form of recognition or honorable reward given to women who have endured pain and hard time during labor. In another study, *zuo yuezi* is seen as a form of emotional and social support (Chee et al., 2005). These were some of the interpretations Chinese women have on the roles of *zuo yuezi*. Hitherto, the Chinese women did not continue to interpret *zuo yuezi* as their postnatal care method just because it is a tradition. After all, they have a choice to discontinue the practice just like how *footbinding* was forgotten by them. However, based on the discussion about, they have chosen not to abandon *zuo yuezi*. *Zuo yuezi* is still continued until today because it is seen as a cultural practice with positive roles to play which is to be an effective postnatal care method.

### **Beliefs and practices and community support**

Pillsbury (1978) suggested that factors such as deep rooted beliefs as one of the factors which allow *zuo yuezi* to continue. According to her, the Chinese women believe *zuo yuezi* will be able to save them from illnesses and misfortune. The confinement practices of the Chinese are grounded in a belief system where they believe imbalances of the body's basic elements can lead to health problem (Samovar & Porter, 2004, p. 260). Taoist philosophy of maintaining the balance of *yin* and *yang* are found in many traditional Chinese practices and this include *zuo yuezi* (Quah, 2003). From the Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) perspective, health can be achieved through maintaining the equilibrium of *yin* and *yang*. A pregnant woman is in a state of *yang* but when she delivers she will be in a state of *yin*. The delivery process will make the woman to lose heat. To bring back the balance, her diet, activity and behavior must

be controlled to restore the equilibrium (Raven et al., 2007). In other words, *zuo yuezi* is part and parcel of the Chinese health belief system. By practising *zuo yuezi*, the Chinese women are practicing their beliefs and while doing that they are also ensuring the continuity of *zuo yuezi*. The symbiotic relation which exists between *zuo yuezi* and Chinese belief system has helped ensure their continuity in the modern world. They reinforce each other.

According to the survey conducted, 26 women adhered to *zuo yuezi* practices because they personally believe in the tradition. This shows that *zuo yuezi* is accepted by the women because they believe the tradition will be able to help them to recover and regain their health after delivery. It also shows that these women have faith in TCM practices since *zuo yuezi* is very much based on the *yin* and *yang* way of maintaining health. A respondent who holds a master degree in physics and a first class honors degree in the same area was asked to explain why she believes in *zuo yuezi*. She gave reasons such as she believes the system will work since the food will restore heat in her body. Another respondent explained that Chinese women need *zuo yuezi* to recover. According to her, Chinese women must consume *zuo yuezi* food to regain their health. She also believed that unlike western women, Chinese women need to eat “hot” food since they do not normally consume alcohol and eat high protein and fatty food.

A few of the women who were interviewed, elaborated how their mother or mothers-in-law reminded them of the consequences of not practicing *zuo yuezi*. In fact, lessons on the importance of *zuo yuezi* started since young. When young Chinese girls are exposed to TCM, they are already exposed to the idea of balancing the elements found in their body. The consumption of herbal medicine since young convinced them to believe in the principle of balancing the *yin* and *yang* elements. The informal education on *zuo yuezi* is reinforced by information obtained via mass media. Friends also serve an important role in promoting the tradition. The informal education will convince the modern Chinese women that *zuo yuezi* works and thus it is important to be practiced. For many modern Chinese women, the informal education neutralizes the effect of modern and scientific education. In other words, just like TCM, *zuo yuezi* is still recognized by the Chinese as efficacious. Due to such recognition, they support *zuo yuezi* and this has to a certain extent contributed to its preservation.

### Conclusion

For over at least one thousand years, Chinese women kept and maintained *zuo yuezi*. Many other past cultural practices have been either forgotten or abandoned. But, this is not the case for *zuo yuezi*. It was and is still very much a part of the Chinese women culture. Chinese women all over the world still practice *zuo yuezi*. Chinese women acknowledge it as a traditional practice but this does not mean that the women categorize *zuo yuezi* as merely a tradition. In the case of women studied in this research, *zuo yuezi* still plays an important role in their life. Although the women have been exposed to western medicine, most of them still believe in the relevancy of *zuo yuezi* in providing them the remedy to regain their health. They believe *zuo yuezi* will be able to bring back the balance of *yin* and *yang* which is the fundamental way of achieving good health from the TCM perspective. The women felt *zuo yuezi* would be able to assist them in adjusting to a new set of life. *Zuo yuezi* has been interpreted as the mechanism that ensures the women get sufficient postnatal care.

Their perceptions show how they make sense of their *zuo yuezi* experience. Judging from their responses, most of the women trusted *zuo yuezi* and the believe can be translated as positive interpretations. The responses also indicate that they were not coerced to accept *zuo yuezi*. Moreover, these women are educated and financially independent women. Hence, it will not be easy to coerce them to accept something that they do not believe in. In fact, coercion may cause them to develop negative perception which at the end will cause them to abandon *zuo yuezi*. Within such context, the women positive interpretations seem to be genuine and reflect the willingness to practise *zuo yuezi* willingly.

With the support from the Chinese healthcare belief system and also the Chinese formal and informal socialization, most of the Chinese women studied in this research have made *zuo yuezi* as their postnatal care method. They took *zuo yuezi* as a helpful cultural practice. Unlike *footbinding* which had seen as lewd and disgraceful, *zuo yuezi* is perceived as a good cultural practice that should be continued. It performs certain roles which are beneficial to the doer. Therefore, as pointed out by Handler and Linnekin (1984), the continuity of a cultural practice is determined by how the doer interprets it. It is an outcome of rationalization which is not confined by time and space. Rationalization transcends modernity and this has caused some traditional cultural practices to be abandoned while some still religiously practised. The process is fluid

and is very much shaped by individuals' interpretation of the choices that they have made. Therefore, modernity does not determine the preservation of a traditional cultural practice. As mentioned earlier, individuals' interpretation will decide the preservation of such practice.

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