

Maasai Culture- Power, authority and influence

Introduction

A culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people, it is the widening of the mind and spirit, culture is the pattern of human knowledge, belief and behaviour along with attitudes, values, goals and practices within one's family or social group. The Maasai tribe are East African nomadic people inhabiting southern Kenya and Tanzania, identified through their distinctive customs, vehement and vibrant garments, and inimitable rhythmic harmonies in the traditional jumping dance, this culture is recognized for interpreting life to be illumined within destiny's web, to cast one's will to the winds, a journey of the heart, a spirit of the soul that truly sets the universe of the path to peace. Australia evokes the culture of a sunburnt nation, a land of sweeping plains, floods, droughts, ragged mountain ranges and immersed horizons, Australia's diverse culture and lifestyle reflect its liberal democratic traditions, values, humour, slang and identity, to formulate the contemporary nation to this present day. These cultures, although contrasting through beliefs, ethnics and values, demonstrates aspects of power, authority and influence to create a binding society.

Influence may be the highest level of human skills, encompassed with how we as individuals communicate and act, to signify the length and shadow of our own souls, divulged within Australia's culture, influence is distinguished as a form of social power based on prestige, it takes origin when a majority is being influenced to accept the beliefs or behaviour of a minority. This nation demonstrates a diverse culture and lifestyle that reflects its liberal democratic traditions and values, geographic closeness to the Asia-Pacific region and the social and cultural influences of the millions of migrants who have settled in Australia, shaping and manipulating the embodiment of this contemporary society today.

Age Sets- power and authority

Power and authority can be guns and knives, it may be the ability to read and write, a fist, money, the endowment of words, the emotion to kill, encompassed within the Maasai culture power and authority is identified through the age sets, this is highlighted through the stages of young boyhood, junior warriors, senior warriors, junior elders following by senior elders, advancing usually every 15 years. Through this modification a new warrior group is formulated, forcing all prior formations to progress to their next role in life. The Maasai culture distinguishes the transformation of boy to man to be immensely significant and an impetuous milestone; a marvel that transpired over the trajectory of a decade, absorbing into a spiritual ritual that occurs over a four day period, perceived as Eunoto. It can be illustrated as a rigorous, challenging, and inhumane ceremony, Eunoto entails the slaying and possession of a lion, the skinning of a buffalo, sexual intercourse with uncircumcised young females, the composition of a building for each youthful man, and even engulf the individual into a hysterical trance, pursuing an attempt to slay himself with a spear. The man being initiated encloses the ritual by permitting his hair to be cut off by the mother, this symbolizes the termination of the maternal bond between two, evoking the induction of a new force of authority, awakening the inner power of the spiritual sole.

Hairstyles

For every stage they have specific rituals, most of them are centred around the way they groom their hair. The kids have short hair. The Warrior is the only one allowed to have long hair. He starts as a junior Warrior with a shaved head; then he lets it grow. The Maasai senior Warrior's hair looks like the helmet of Romans. Their people met the Romans in Egypt before they went to Kenya and Tanzania. The key ritual for the Maasai Warrior is to kill a lion with a metal-tip spear. He must do this alone. If he succeeds, he becomes a hero and can wear a hat made of lion's skin.

Jewellery - power

Divulged amongst this diverse international world, ethnic groups are characterized and identified by dress and ornamentation, the Maasai are engulfed with luminous vivid colours that bind into intricate patterns and designs, the enchanting jewellery possess the human eye through its unique composition that is poised and encompassed around the outer surface of the human body, the entanglement of twisted coils, distinctive and variegated embodies around the forearms, the beaded embellishment, collar necklaces that rhythmically manoeuvre to harmonies of the tradition jumping dance, along the head dresses that drape the formation and accent the facial features are widely interpreted throughout this culture. These intricate forms of jewellery withhold a depth of measurement into the history of this culture; each vibrant colour highlights a form of power or symbolizes the force of authority a superior individual dominates. Red exposes the power that a warrior should acquire, the danger, ferocity, bravery and strength, it signifies a cow's scarlet blood when slaughter for a culture celebration, green exemplifies the force of health, white emphasizes the energy of purity, while black represents the colour of its people, the hardships and obstacles that erupts throughout one's entity, the power of nature's sequence of life.

Marriage - influence

Established as an influential arrangement within the Maasai culture, marriage is perceived as an ideology that when two souls are brought together to enhance into husband and wife, the united couple are expected to live with each other till the end of eternity, divorce is not an option. The traditional family structure is based on polygamous marriage, it is conveyed that the male possess the privilege to as many wives as he can afford to support, however the wives are granted the freedom to have lovers, the influence is illustrated through the father selecting the daughters husband, it is interpreted that as the individual with power and authority within the tribe, this right should be enforced, however only Ilpayiana, which translates to elders only being able to marry a female, the Maasai must undergo the ceremony of Olingesherr, requiring the head to be shaved and there be a blessing ceremony for their cattle sticks and branding irons. This influence and custom is encompassed through the Maasai culture and is recognized as a part of their values, beliefs and ethics.

Characteristics

Music and Dance

Traditions of the Maasai: Dance and Music

Distinguished throughout the Maasai traditional jumping dance, it can be illustrated that the performance is mainly conducted by the male gender of the village; these tribe members would leap into the air to demonstrate their physical strength, vehemence and stamina as tribal warriors, advancing and plummeting further into the air, as each male increases the height distanced from the ground, the vocals enhance and intensify. It can be highlighted that there are dances for the celebration when a lion is sacrificed by the warriors, a dance for the blessing of cattle, and dances performed at wedding ceremonies and celebrations. Musical instruments are generally not recognized throughout these performances, the intricate beads engulfed around the outer circumference of the body creates a jingling melody while a manoeuvre of the head and neck are evoked, the pattern formulates a uniform bobbing effect, reinforcing the vibrant atmosphere that is absorbed into the barren environment.

Religion

Absorbed into the inner heart of this unique culture, the Maasai traditionally center their universe as God's chosen people, the god Enkai created the world, formulating three groups. The first were

the Torrobo, hunting and gathering people of small stature to whom God gave honey and wild animals as a food source, the second were the neighboring Kikuyu, farmers to whom God gave seeds and grains and the third were the Maasai, to whom God gave cattle, which came to earth sliding down a long rope linking heaven and Earth. While the Torrobo were destined to endure bee stings, and the Kikuyu famines and floods, the Maasai received the noble gift of raising cattle. ▲ Torrobo, jealous of the Maasai's gift of cattle, cut the umbilical cord between heaven and Earth, for many Maasai, the center of their world remains their cattle, which furnish food, clothing, and shelter.