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*Petrovskaya S.P.*

*National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University*

## **A WORLD OF JAPAN: CULTURE AND LANGUAGE**

Japan is a unique country, everything in it is matchless: culture, language, cities. Those who had the chance to visit Japan are sure that there is nothing of the kind in any other country of the world. Here we are to put the question what makes Japan so remarkable. The main reason is probably in the fact that the Japanese have always been able to find harmony in everything. The goal of the article is to speculate on the fact, plunge into the world of Japanese culture, understand mentality of the inhabitants of this country and explore its connection with the language.

The exact date of the origin of the Japanese nation is unknown until now. The matter is that they had had no written language before the introduction of the Chinese hieroglyphs and no evidence of historical development had been saved. Japan is an island nation which is located on a set of small and large islands such as Honshu, Kyushu, Shikoku and Hokkaido. The traces of Japanese nationality can be detected from the 3-d century BC. It was the time when Manchzhuro-Korean and Malayn tribes arrived on the islands of Honshu, Kyushu and Hokkaido thus creating the Japanese Yamato tribe. They had been waging a protracted war with the indigenous population of the Japanese islands – with the tribe

Aino who were then partially pushed into the north of Honshu and who were partly mixed with the newcomers in the long run.

The peculiarity of Japan – its island location that closes people in a small space; engagement in agriculture – leads to a certain degree of conservatism, to zealously keeping their traditions.

In the 6-th century AD there was the introduction of the Chinese culture as a result of diplomatic relations between the rulers of Yamato Japan, China and Old Korean Baekje state which had been an important export center of continental (Chinese) culture in Japan.

The Japanese were susceptible to external influences; therefore not only a Buddhism but also Confucianism formed the basis of the principles of relationship between a governor and his subordinates. But if China's Confucius proposed to build a state on the basis of a family in which the ruler was the father of his subjects, and the subjects themselves were his children, the image of the family in Japan's relations between the ruler and his subjects had not been adopted. There had been saved only the strict law of subordination of a junior to a senior (not only by age, but also on the status).

In the 5-th century the Chinese culture came through Japan, from India through China the Buddhism and through Korea the Daoism came into the country. Together with the arrival of the political system the written language appeared in Japan. During the period a great number of Chinese words appeared in the Japanese language, and to this day 40 % of the vocabulary are the Chinese borrowing.

The introduction of the Chinese writing into the Japanese language created some problems which were connected with the difference in an accent, use of tones, morphology and syntax of both languages. The Chinese hieroglyphs had been used since the 7-th century. This took into account the Japanese format, morphology and syntax. At first there was manegana that presented the selected Chinese hieroglyphs which were to carry out the function of the syllabic alphabet. When trying to create the Japanese alphabet there were created katakana and hiragana. They presented the Japanese syllabic alphabets. Katakana had been developed by the Buddhist monk on the basis of the Chinese hieroglyphs, which became the prototype of modern katakana. In the 8-th century the lady from the Kyoto noble family of Heyan created the second syllabic alphabet - hiragana for recording poems and short stories. Both syllabic alphabets in a modified form can be found in modern Japanese language. The very moment of creating the «Heyke Monogatari» epos in the 12-th century is considered to be the beginning of the Japanese writing. It was based on the syllabic alphabets and hieroglyphs mentioned.

Since the ancient times there had been a great number of dialects in Japan. But by the 12-th century with the establishment of the state military authorities Kamakura that was near the modern area of Tokyo had become the basic dialect. Today it is called the Tokyo dialect. Up to the 20-th century a leading literary form of the Japanese language was bungo except for kambuna known as «the Chinese letter» that represented the Japanese version of classical Chinese wenyan with the Chinese word order and special marks to help it read in Japanese. Bungo known as written language was guided by grammatical norms of the classical Japanese language of the Heyan era but it had absorbed many phonetic and lexical changes since that time.

In the 16-th century during the Sengok era the Portuguese and other Europeans came to Japan bringing new technologies and religion. That was the period of Portuguese loanwords in the Japanese language. From 1603 to 1868 in the period of the feudal military government called Tokugava the publishing had been developing there and the literacy of the population had been growing. The distinctions between the dialects had been gradually leveled.

In the course of time in Japan special mentality embracing the system of blind obedience from the bottom up had formed. The emperor standing above all had always been considered to be almighty who was to receive all honours.

The personality of the emperor, the idea of the imperial power itself had always acted as an important factor to cement the national consciousness of the Japanese. There is nothing strange that on the basis of such ideas about the world and society there gradually appeared a conception of self-isolation. It allowed the level of the regulation of public life and standards of behavior to be brought to the very depths of social psychology.

Since the beginning of the 17-th century merchants and missionaries from Europe had not been allowed to visit Japan. Besides there had been the decrees that prohibited the departure of the Japanese from the country. Those who had left the country earlier were forbidden to come back under the pain of death. Such isolation promoted the strengthening of the prevailing economic and political order. Thus the features of strictly ritualized class society had been formed. They are diligence, organization, readiness for unconditional submission, persistence, endurance, undemanding with respect to living conditions.

After Restoration (1868–1889) in Japan literature began to develop; contacts with Europe and the USA became possible; there was an introduction of the European technologies all over the country. Mean-

while in the language itself there appeared English, German loanwords and borrowing from other European languages. The pronunciation of those loanwords had been adapted to the Japanese phonology.

After the defeat in World War II the AntiHitler coalition suggested to simplify Japanese writing by the transference of Japanese into Latin. It didn't happen. However in 1946 the revision of hieroglyphs was carried out and the list of 1850 standard hieroglyphs was made. Since then strict control over the language is being exercised.

The Japanese culture is both conservative and responsive to the influence of other cultures. However it should be noted that practically all external influences assimilate in local traditions and acquire an entirely different character and a different expression.

Now largely due to the influence of English and western culture there appeared a gap between senior and younger generations. Young people use neutral informal speech; as for the senior generation, they prefer polite speech of the traditional Japanese language. Mass media serve gradually to reduce the difference between dialects. Though the dialects are kept preserving even in the 21st century due to regional self-consciousness of the Japanese.

Consequently those are the reasons why the Japanese culture is so remarkable and the mentality of the Japanese is so unique and closely connected with the language.

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*Scientific supervisor S.N. Stepura, senior lecturer of TPU*