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Family traditions are — the basis of Japanese spirituality

This article provides the importance of family traditions in the life of the Japanese. It includes an analysis of the historical foundations and particularities of family traditions. It is revealed and explained the importance of the concept of «family» on the basis of the Japanese proverbs. Much attention is given to the role of the father and mother in the upbringing of the child, and to the importance of worship of the spirits of ancestors. The author draws reader's attention to the role of the traditions and rituals, also holidays in the upbringing of children. The article gives examples of traditions related to the birth of a child and the Japanese model of upbringing. It is spoken about characteristics of the Japanese as a member of community and the basic principles of child education.

Keywords: japanese culture, family traditions, traditional family, cult of ancestors, children's holidays, japanese upbringing, kamidana, butsudana, worship.

The family is the fundamental unit of any civilized society and has a decisive influence on the socialization of human being. It is in the family that a person absorbs the values of respective culture. The family, as a mirror, reflects the social psychology of the nation. Each nation has its own atmosphere of family relations inherent only to it. The family in Japan, as in many other countries, is the main unit of a modern society.

Japanese principles of family traditions trace their origin to the Edo era and are associated with the care of expanding the family and housekeeping. Therefore, families assumed a large number and tradition of co-existence of different generations under one roof or in the neighborhood.

A variation of the traditional family is patriarchal, which includes parents, children and grandparents. The hierarchy in which women obey men and younger people obey older people is preserved till nowadays. The only exception to the hierarchy is children under five.

Provider of the family income is the husband, the role of the wife is reduced to housekeeping and the allocation of funds. The tradition of raising children has been unchanged for centuries. The imperial position of the child is provided by parents up to 5-6 years, including the special favour of relatives and others. Nobody punishes, raises his voice and prohibits to do anything to the child, education is based on demonstrating examples of behavior. Therefore, the tradition in which the mother devotes her time entirely to the child has been preserved.

The modern Japanese family represents a strong institution with the maximum preservation of cultural traditions and patriarchy. Continuity of generations is not only the transfer of traditions from generation to generation, but also the preservation of the hierarchy of men and women, older and younger family members irrespective of the varieties and diversity of relations forms.

A lot of information about family and family traditions we can find in Japanese folklore, such as proverbs, legends and fairytales.

Nothing defines a culture as distinctly as its language, and the element of language that best encapsulates a society's values and beliefs is its proverbs. W. Mieder has proposed the following definition of proverb, «A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation» [1, 2].

Some of the Japanese proverbs about family say:

1. 親に目なし (Oyani me nashi). English equivalent is – Parent does not have the eyes. The meaning of this proverb is that parents can not see the bad sides of their child, they always stand for child.
2. 親の意見と冷や酒は後で効く (Oya no iken to hiyazake wa atode kiku). It means that when our parents give us advice or share with their opinion we do not listen to them, but later we will admit that they were right.
3. 悪妻は百年の不作 (akusai wa hyaku nen no fusaku). English equivalent is «An ill marriage is a spring of ill fortune». It means if you get married to bad woman, she will be bad wife and you will be unhappy. Bad wife have an influence on children and future descendant.

4. 氏より育ち(uji yori sodachi). English equivalent is «Nurture is above nature». «Nature» means the influence of an individual's genetic make-up on their development and upbringing. «Nurture» means the impact of the individual's family, education and upbringing.
5. 木の実は元へ落つる (ki no mi wa moto e otsuru). Meaning is that children observe daily and in their behavior often follow the example of their parents.
6. 血は水よりも濃い (chi wa mizu yori mo koi). English equivalent is «Blood is thicker than water», which is said to emphasize that you believe that family connections are always more important than other types of relationship.
7. 嫁見るより母見よ (yome miru yori haha miyo). English meaning is «Like mother, like daughter». This is a proverb which means that daughters resemble their mothers [3].

Above-mentioned proverbs appeared on the basis of ways of living, customs and traditions.

A child born in a Japanese family begins his life in a special way. The first boy, for example, enjoys the special favour of others from his birthday. He begins to feel his importance very soon, and this feeling contributes to the formation of egocentrism and the desire for leadership in his character. The younger brothers are encouraged to develop obedience and docility in their personality. Regarding the girls, they become aware of their subordination and submit to the need to serve and endure.

In modern Japan, patriarchy as an integral element of culture literally breaks into today's life from the depths of centuries, including through the linguistic features of the Japanese language. In the Japanese language there is not even the word «brother» or «sister». Instead, we find «elder brother» and «younger brother», «elder sister» and «younger sister». The idea of superior and subordinate never leave the mind of a Japanese, regardless of whether he means only his brothers and sisters [2].

A strong sense of solidarity in the family that is common in Japan is another important consequence of the family system. In life, this feeling is expressed in the strict respect for all principles about the filial piety. Japanese vision of the family includes all the ancestors of the distant past and all descendants of the distant future. Therefore, the concept of a man's duty includes certain obligations, both for his descendants and for his ancestors.

The feeling of special respect for the deceased in Japan has survived hundreds of generations and still preserved, despite a number of social upheavals. Japanese culture not only successfully resisted «oppositional» views on the cult of ancestors, but even in some way strengthened it in the minds of the nation.

In Japan, the cult of ancestors originates from the distant past. In Japanese reality there are three varieties of this cult: worship of the Imperial Palace; worship of the patron of the family; worship of family ancestors. In Japanese houses, there were set the Kamidana (神棚、in the Shinto «miniature household altars») and Butsudan (仏壇、Buddhist «home altar» or «altar of Buddha») [4].

Kamidana is a wooden board-stand, in the middle of which a taima (victim) was placed, represented by rice, sake and a branch of sakaki (榊), a Shinto sacred tree. The households perform a ritual of worship in front of this altar every morning, clapping their hands and bowing low. In the evening candles in front of the kamidana are light up.

The altar of butsudan is also a polished board, on which models of monuments with the names of the dead are set. Flowers, branches of shikimi (柶), anise-tree, tea, rice and other plant food in the form of an offering are placed on the altar. In houses where Shinto is predominantly practiced, there is also a board designed for honoring the ancestors of the family. The symbols with the names of the ancestors and the dates of their birth and death are written on it. Sacrifices consist of rice, tea, fish and sakaki.

The family, in the understanding of the Japanese, rests firmly on the patrimonial foundations. Family members support the flow of the family in its endless movement. Usually the Japanese family in the recent past had a scroll with the list of their family, clan and this relic passed down from generation to generation. The concept of the family in Japan emphasizes the continuity of the family line, whose decay is perceived as a terrible disaster. Ancestors for the Japanese are an integral part of the present.

In Japan, it is believed that the well-being of the family depends on how faithfully each generation performs the ritual of the worship of ancestors. Filial piety acts here as a cementing agent. According to the Confucius' ideas there are three thousand misconducts, the severity of which falls into five categories, but there is no more serious offence or even a crime than the disrespect of parents or filial impiety.

In a patriarchal family, marriage is independent of emotional attraction. In Japan, there are still three kinds of obedience: the daughter obeys the parents, the wife to the husband, the widow to the eldest son.

Japan is a country where the cult of children reigns. The children are the most privileged class here. Cute, smartly dressed kids can be found everywhere, parents take them to temples, to huge department stores and baseball matches, teaching them to all casual and ethereal pleasures and difficulties.

In general, very close contact between mother and child in the first years of his life is the basic rule regarding the baby. When a Japanese woman decides to have a baby, she is psychologically ready to devote herself to this new toddler, giving her body, her care and attention to his full disposal. She will not be able to do in different way, because she was prepared to be a mother since she was a child.

The image of the mother in Japan, above all, is connected in the minds of the Japanese with the meaning that is contained in the word «amae» (甘え). It is difficult to find an analogue in other languages for the word «amae». It means a feeling of dependence on the mother, experienced by children as something desirable. The verb «amaeru» used here means «to use something», «to be spoiled», «to seek protection». These words express the attitude of the Japanese towards the mother. They positively consider the aspiration of children to parental care, the same response in their minds is received and the reciprocal action of parents in relation to children [4].

However, the excessive degree of amae is considered disapprovingly. This is because guardianship bordering on blind devotion has a negative impact on the nature of children. As a person endowed with the authority to provide the necessary balance in education, the mother for the Japanese is not only a symbol of tenderness and affection, but also a bearer of the social control function: the mother has influence, she is worshipped, she is feared.

In Japan, there are three main principles in the education of children. Firstly, adults must devote much time to children. Secondly, parents must do everything to prevent the babies from crying: a crying child is the biggest trouble for the Japanese. Thirdly, under no circumstances to scold children in the presence of strangers.

The educational doctrine in the Land of the Rising Sun is applied to children with such softness and love. No grumbling, no rigor, almost complete absence of corporal punishment; pressure on children is in such a mild form that it seems that the children educate themselves. Such an attitude toward children in Japan has not changed: parents behave today with children the same way as before.

Parents do not prohibit the kids to do something, do not raise their voice, do not punish up to five or six years. Parents bring up their child showing their own model of behavior, that is, a model of the mother's behavior. The mother is always near, and the father communicates with the child only on the weekends. From the very birth of the baby, the mother, even doing housework, take the child everywhere with herself - on her chest or behind her back. She talks to him and sings the baby songs and constantly repeats those words, which he will have to say first. As a result, children in Japan are beginning to speak faster than walking.

The child sleeps in the parents' bed, next to the mother, who breastfeeds him. Japanese women, giving birth to children, leave their work and are fully committed to raising children. If it is necessary, a Japanese woman can work, but this will mean part-time work, and the priority will still be the management of the household and caring for the child.

Generally, up to three years, women sit with their children at home, and if they give it to a kindergarten, then only for a few hours. In such gardens nurses engage in comprehensive development of toddlers, they teach etiquette and elementary rules of behavior. Mother can also attend classes, participating in all sorts of games, then transferring the experience to family upbringing.

Young children in Japan almost do not cry because parents just do not give it to do, foreseeing and fulfilling all the desires of the kids. This happens until five or six years, because at this age the child enters the school under the strict system of norms and rules. Japanese people are born and bred as collectivists and the common interests are for them in the first place, therefore, they have advanced so far in technological development than Europe. If a woman in Japan primarily cares about the family, then every Japanese male lives in the interests of the company in which he works.

Japanese woman tends to regulate the child's behavior by effect on the feelings and the possible consequences of the act; she avoids confrontation with the will and desire of the child and more often expresses her displeasure indirectly. She is trying to expand emotional contact with the child, considering it as the main means of control.

The Japanese mother avoids the assertion of her authority, as this leads to the exclusion of the child from the mother. The most important thing for her is to demonstrate the correct model of behavior in society and not a verbal communication with a child. The Japanese woman focuses on problems of emotional maturity, pliability, harmonious relationship with other people. For this purpose, parents send the children to preschool institutions.

The kindergarten and nursery are places where children spend most of their time and these places have an effect on the formation of their character. For the nursery and kindergarten (working from 8 am to 6 pm), it is necessary to prove that both parents work more than four hours a day.

In Japan, a number of holidays are held for children, which allow them to form a sense of belonging to the traditions of their country. Traditional Shinto and Buddhist rites accompany the little Japanese from the moment of birth and all his life. Of all the ceremonies associated with the birth of a child, the most common is a ritual performed on the seventh day after his birth. This is a holiday on the occasion of the naming. This rite is called shichiya – «the seventh night» or nadzuke no iwai – «a celebration on the occasion of choice of name» [2; 74].

In the naming, attention is drawn to the meaning and harmony of the hieroglyphics to which it is recorded. The name for the newborn baby can be chosen by parents, grandparents, or other close relatives. The chosen name is written on paper which would be placed either on the headboard of the crib, or given to relatives along with two mochi («餅», rice cakes of red and white colors). In some parts of the country this day the newborn leaves the house for the first time.

One hundred days after the birth parents carry their child to the temple for the first time. When a child turns a year, various objects (for example, scores, a sickle, a writing brush, etc.) are laid out for him and by what he takes first, they talk about his future. On the same day, parents prepare rice with red beans or rice cakes and give to relatives and neighbors.

For the first two years, the baby is considered as a part of the body of the mother, because she carries the baby tied behind her back for days, puts him to sleep next to her at night and breastfeeds baby at any time. The baby always hears only warnings as «it is dangerous», «it is dirty», «it is bad» from mother, grandmother and sisters. In the end, these three words enter into his consciousness as something unambiguous.

Traditionally many children's holidays are celebrated in Japan. For example, hinamatsuri (ひな祭り) – the festival of girls, and kodomo-no hi – (子供の日) «the festival of boys» and the ceremony of children at the age of three, five and seven years (shichi-go-san). On this day girls (aged 3 and 7) are put on a kimono (often for the first time), parents decorate their hair and color their cheeks.

3-5 years old boys dress amontsuki (紋付), it is a short top kimono with a family crest, and hakama (袴) is a part of the Japanese official suit in the form of wide trousers. Children together with their parents go to the temple, where a festive divine service is performed, in order to propitiate the gods, to grant them the right to the continued existence of the child.

The numbers three, five and seven have a deep meaning for Japanese. According to the Chinese belief, odd numbers bring happiness. The Japanese attach special importance to the age of seven, it is at this age that they first emphasize the difference between girls and boys.

Raising a Japanese child begins with a method that could be called a risk of exclusion. «If you behave improperly, everyone will laugh at you, everyone will turn their back on you». This is a typical example of parental teachings. The fear of being ridiculed, humiliated, excommunicated from family or community from the early years falls into the soul of the Japanese. Since the image of his life almost leaves no room for some personal business hidden from others, the threat of alienation is acting seriously.

There are no special recipes for physical education of Japanese children. They pay a lot of attention to it. Priority is given to a large amount of physical activity, such as a variety of outdoor games, sports games like skipping ropes, catch-ups, relay races are popular. Apparently, the most surprising thing is that both educators and teachers participate in these games on a par with children.

In every educational institution in Japan, there is a whole team of medical workers, consisting of a doctor, a nurse, a dentist, a pharmacist, a health curator. The Japanese method of hardening, which consists in the fact that the child should be as close to the natural conditions of survival as possible, on the whole justifies itself. Along with increasing the natural resistance of the child's body, one of the main and very attractive elements of upbringing is the inurement of the child to bodily cleanliness. The cult of purity is manifested not only in clean hands, but also in a clean body, clean clothes, clean hair and teeth.

Therefore, the upbringing of young children in Japan skillfully forms the concept of a human coexistence in the child, it educates a physically and mentally healthy person who can work in a team, clearly fulfilling the requirements.

From these data, it can be concluded that one can not consider the Japanese practice of educational training as something unchanged. The Japanese study the traditions, norms, educational methods of other countries with great interest and undoubted benefit for themselves. Adopting them, they learn from other people's mistakes, trying to minimize their own.

Japanese family carries with it all the best traditions, such as respect and honoring of elders, genuine love for children, filling with joy of living together and more.

Despite all the complicated patriarchal norms and way of life, the Japanese are a cheerful and life-loving people for whom all established rules and traditions are a norm that easily and naturally fits into everyday life. The Japanese family is a strong and happy social unit and each of its members joyfully fulfills their duties that were clearly defined by their ancestors and cares for each other.

Everyone in Japan is a part of a community. In the first place there is the family, where the child learns devotion, fidelity, a clear assimilation of differences between the elders and the younger. As he grows up, family skills extend to other communities like school, club, business. Conformism is cultivated in the group. An adolescent who violated these norms is ostracized by society. Group conformism is present even in the game of young children.

In Japanese children's organizations it is a special way of influencing known as a *tatakinaoshi* (correction by punishment), when violators are excluded from the group or sometimes group members boycott them. The person moving from group to group, from one company to another, evokes distrust in Japan.

In school, everyone belongs to a group where all are of the same age with the same position, with common interests. Mothers of these children communicate with each other. Upon graduation from school though keeping fidelity to former schoolmates and friends the Japanese drew attention to fellow workers. He shares his sorrows and joys with them. The opinion of the community members is decisive for the Japanese. Even in actions that are formed individually, such as karate, the influence of the community is always enormous. In fact, any act in Japan is a manifestation of group behavior.

The intensity of mastering the psychology of group behavior increases when the child enters into peer groups at the place of residence. Such groups of comrades are formed in each village. A boy can enter this group if he reaches the right age.

The groups of boys previously were called *kodomogumi* (子供組), they had a strict hierarchy: for example, the older one was called the head «*kogashira*» (小頭). The distribution of rights and duties in groups was based on the principle if the younger the group member is, the less his significance is. Now such formal organization of children's groups has practically disappeared, however the team game activity of children has remained.

More «serious» events are organized by youth groups, which were previously created in each populated area and called *wakamonogumi* (若者組). In the Meiji era, they were transformed into associations of young people with a variety of names. Today these associations are known for the functions that they carry out.

Joining a group meant that the young man had reached adulthood, and from that moment the neighborhood residents began to think of him as an adult. Sometimes groups had houses for meetings called *yado* (宿), where only members of the group were allowed. Nowadays *yado* can be found in the Izu Peninsula and in some fishing villages in the southern part of the island of Kyushu. Two types of houses are known, firstly, those that were visited during the year, and those that were used for some occasions. Sometimes such houses were built specially, sometimes they were rented from wealthy residents.

In the daytime, the young men took part in the labour activity of the family, and in the evening they went to their *yado*, where they were engaged in weaving straw mats or repairing the nets. Sometimes they spent time playing games or talking. *Yado* contributed to the development of youth self-sufficiency and gave them a sense of personal freedom. Currently, youth groups are helping the public in the fight against fires and other natural disasters. However, most of the time they are engaged in the arranging and carrying holiday events.

Thus, the *Mikoshi* rituals associated with the transfer of the palanquin of the Shinto deity are carried out by members of such groups. In many parts of Japan, they take on the arrangement of various sport events and games. By the way, there are such games where the players cause significant physical pain to fellow. There was previously a belief that only through the experience of pain a person can achieve perfection, if a person dies during the pain test, his soul can not find rest.

In the old days, youth organizations like *wakamonogumi* benefited financial support from the public and authorities. After the war, this system was eliminated, and nowadays you can find groups that exist only at their own expense.

There are also girls' groups. They were previously called *musumegumi* (娘組), *musumenakama* (娘仲間) or *onnagowakashu* (女子若衆), they could be found on the west coast of Japan. Girls entered them when they reached the age of 15-16, in some regions at the age of 12 years. Like the young men they had houses for

meetings, where they could display an active attitude and personal autonomy. After marriage, the visit to these houses was stopped.

The various associations of young women existing in Japan resemble the musumegumi in some way, although they differ in the nature of their activities. Whereas previously these groups helped girls to forget everyday worries, today's associations function to gain a worthy place in the life of the nation. Japanese girls are involved in the trade union movement, take part in the work of various educational committees, participate in the activities of sports organizations. All these group movements began to be widely publicized on radio and television.

In general, the group behavior of Japanese youth is specific. It promotes the cultivation of the main features of the Japanese national character in girls and boys, develops national identity and patriotic feelings among them.

Happy families of the world are very similar to each other. Education throughout the world is the same. It differs only in methods that leave an imprint on the character, there is the national character of every people which also depends on the forms of upbringing.

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Отбасылық дәстүрлер — жапон руханиятының негізі

Мақалада отбасылық дәстүрлердің жапон халық өмірінде алатын маңызы қарастырылды. Отбасылық дәстүрлердің тарихи негіздері және ерекшеліктері талданды. «Отбасы» концептісінің маңыздылығы жапон мақалдары арқылы көрініс тапты. Отбасылық дәстүрлерде әкенің ролі мен бала тәрбиесіндегі ананың алатын орны, ата-баба рухына деген құрмет ерекше көзге түседі. Қалыптасқан дәстүрлердің бала тәрбиесіндегі маңызды ролі айқындалды. Баланың дүниеге келуімен байланысты өтетін салт-дәстүрлер, мерекелерге талдау жасалып, бала тәрбиелеудің жапондық үлгісі мен негізгі ұстанымдары айтылды. Жапондықтың әлеуметтік топ мүшесі ретінде атқаратын қызметі мен қасиеттері сипатталды.

Кілт сөздер: жапон мәдениеті, отбасылық дәстүрлер, дәстүрлі отбасы, бабалар рухына табыну, бабалар мерекелері, жапондық тәрбие, камидана, буцудан, кадір тұту.

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Семейные традиции — основа японской духовности

В статье на материале японского фольклора, пословиц и поговорок рассмотрена важность семейных традиций в жизни японцев. Представлен анализ исторических основ и особенностей семейных традиций. Выявлена и обусловлена важность концепции семьи на основе пословиц японского народа. Особо отмечена роль отца и матери в воспитании ребенка. Показана роль традиций и обрядов, а также праздников в воспитании детей. В статье приведены примеры традиций, связанных с рождением ребенка, японской модели воспитания и основных принципов воспитания. Дана характеристика японца как члена социальной группы.

Ключевые слова: японская культура, семейные традиции, традиционная семья, культ предков, детские праздники, японское воспитание, камидана, буцудан, почитание.

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