

JAPANESE AND UKRAINIAN CULTURE

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JAPANESE NATIONAL CHARACTER

It could be argued that Confucianism is unknowingly rooted in many Japanese people. If so, how do the Japanese themselves feel about their ethnicity today? In this paper I would like to introduce two surveys mainly targeting modern youth about this question.

In a survey by the Cabinet Office in 2018, when Japanese people were asked if they could communicate their thoughts clearly to others, those who answered in the affirmative did not account for the entirety of the respondents, with more negative opinions.

In a 2019 Nippon Foundation survey of 18-year-old attitudes, young people who answered “yes” to each of the questions “What do you think about yourself?” had the following results. Of the nine countries of Japan, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Vietnam, China, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany, Japan ranked last in all questions, ahead of other countries. This introversion and passivity is one of the characteristics of Japanese people. Modern Japanese are aware of their own introverted nature when compared to other countries.

The historical background of this ethnicity is related to Confucianism, but the history of national isolation, having only one language, and being an isolated island nation are also examples of factors. (What about the Ainu culture?) Furthermore, because of these three characteristics, the Japanese people have developed the perception that Japan is a single ethnic group, which is discussed domestically, but this is not the case. There was trade with the Netherlands and China even during a period of isolation. Over the years, due to these connections, certain words have been assimilated into the Japanese language.

Throughout history, ethnic groups have been assimilated in the same way, and a few have been eliminated. This has led to the perception that Japan is a single ethnic country, but Japan has always been a multi-ethnic country.

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