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## **JAPANESE CALLIGRAPHY AND HIEROGLYPHS: THE BEAUTY AND SYMBOLISM OF JAPANESE WRITING AND ART THROUGH THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE**

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Japanese calligraphy and hieroglyphs are an integral part of Japanese culture, deeply rooted in its centuries-old history. They not only serve as a means of communication but also reflect spiritual and cultural values. Alongside the rich heritage of traditions, Japan preserves its cultural identity, passing it down from generation to generation. Calligraphy holds a special place in this heritage, representing a tangible link to the past. Through the study of the Japanese language and the practice of calligraphy, we not only immerse ourselves in traditional art but also establish a connection with the essence of Japanese culture. This article explores various aspects of Japanese calligraphy and ideograms, their history, evolution, and significance in contemporary society. We will examine different calligraphy styles, their use in various cultural spheres, as well as the system of ideograms such as kanji and the alphabets katakana and hiragana. The aim of this article is not only to provide an vast overview of Japanese calligraphy and writing but also to accent their significance as key elements of Japanese culture and identity through language study.

It is possible that Japanese people do not always fully understand the essence of ideograms on paper scrolls. However, the meaning of the content on paper is much deeper than it may seem at first glance. Japanese calligraphy has its nuances that must be taken into account. When studying calligraphy, learners not only learn technical skills but also delve into symbolism through exploring the meanings of each ideogram.

Calligraphy, known as shodo (書道, "the way of writing"), is a honored form of art that contains the essence of Japanese culture and aesthetics. It seamlessly combines linguistic expression with visual mastery, captivating viewers with its elegance and depth of meaning. Ideograms reflect entire concepts, affecting significant influence on people's thought processes and contributing to the formation of structural-figurative perception. Understanding calligraphy requires a certain level of intellectual and spiritual culture, as it is necessary not only to see the written words but also to feel the emotional and aesthetic depth of their execution. The direct meaning of ideograms is secondary. It is important to understand that ideograms do not always need to be read literally. Their true significance is revealed through colors, lines, and the energy conveyed by the artist. Even the white paper itself forms a space that embraces everything the individual means to portray and convey. What is painted on the scroll is already a picture.

A question about the origin of ideograms can spark interest. The answer to it is linked to one of the most historically and culturally rich countries in Asia - China. In the 5th century, ideographic writing reached Japan from China by sea, along with the first Buddhist scriptures. Initially, these ideograms were thoroughly copied, preserving their written form and meaning, but the need to read texts in Chinese complicated the spread of Buddhism. In response, calligraphers began to use Chinese ideograms,

ignoring their meanings and retaining only their pronunciation. These character-syllables then became the basis for common words in the Japanese language. However, the philosophical depth of calligraphy did not decrease, but rather expanded with the development of Zen Buddhism and remained linked to the practice of spiritual development. [1]

Touching upon the topic of writing materials, in Ancient China, it was traditional to esteem four main "tools" of calligraphy masters. Masters paid special attention to the selection and careful use of these items, including: brush, inkstone, ink, and calligraphy paper. In modern Japan, where this ancient art has found new life, calligraphy masters use the following main items: "sitadziki" (下敷き) - felt mat; "bunchin" (文鎮) - paperweight, which allows pressing the paper while writing; "hanshi" (函紙) or "washi" (和紙) - special thin paper made from rice straw; "fude" (筆) - brush; "sudzuri" (硯) - inkstone; "sumi" (墨) - ink. [2, 19]

The process of writing a hieroglyph in Japanese calligraphy involves several meticulous steps, each necessary to achieve a beautiful result. First, lay out the felt mat "sitadziki" as a base for the paper to ensure a flat and elastic surface. Next, secure the "washi" paper with the paperweight "bunchin" to assure stability during writing. Then, select an appropriate brush "fude" based on the size and complexity of the ideogram. On the inkstone "sudzuri," grind the dry ink "sumi" and mix it with water to obtain liquid ink. At the culmination of the process, make each brushstroke confidently and precisely. Holding the brush vertically allows for free movement and simplifies the use of calligraphy styles, which we'll learn about later. Upon completion, carefully put away the materials used, storing the ink and brushes for future use. [3]

Practicing the technique of writing, the learner begins to understand not only the spelling of the ideogram but also its meaning, sentence structure, and the philosophy of writing more deeply. Thus, relieving the understanding of learning the Japanese language. The essence lies in the fact that each ideogram should express the intentions and feelings that a person invests in it. Beautiful writing is just the first step towards understanding the profound art of shodo.

There are several styles of Japanese calligraphy, each with its own distinct characteristics and applications:

**Kaisho (楷書)** - This is the standard vertical style of calligraphy characterized by clear and balanced strokes and straight lines. It is often used in official documents, printed texts, and for educational purposes. Strokes are performed surely and directly, with minimal changes in thickness or direction. Symbols are medium in size and easily readable.

**Gyosho (行書)** - This style is more free-flowing and energetic. It features smoother strokes and a more expressive character. Gyosho is often used for letters, poems, and other creative texts. Strokes are more dynamic and less strictly aligned. Symbols may have some variations in thickness and direction, giving the text a livelier and more emotionally expressive character.

**Sosho (草書)** - Sosho is a cursive style of calligraphy with swift and elegant strokes and shortened character forms. It is used for writing poetic texts and signatures. Strokes are more abstract and fleeting. They can be more curved and graceful, with elongated character forms.

**Reisho (隷書)** - This is a decorative style of calligraphy originally developed for use on ancient documents and coins. It is more complicated, with detailed strokes and character forms. Strokes include patterns and decorative elements, making the text more elaborate and aesthetically appealing.

**Kana (仮名)** used for writing the phonetic characters katakana and hiragana. This style is characterized by simplified forms and quick fulfillment. The strokes are simple and straight, making them suitable for fast and efficient writing of phonetic characters. They can be used for both practical and decorative purposes. [4]

Despite the uniqueness and complexity of each writing style, many Japanese artists do not strictly follow to just one manner of writing. Most calligraphy masters have their own style, and each has their

preferences for expressing their thoughts on paper, thus showing freedom in reflecting their energy and feelings through the brush.

Calligraphy styles aim to create a harmonious and balanced composition of strokes and characters on the surface. This expresses Japanese aesthetics and balances the space on the paper. Each stroke reflects the individuality and inner world of the artist, creating a unique impression. Students can apply their language knowledge by practicing writing ideograms in a style that matches their level of skill and interests. They can also gain a deeper and more confident understanding of the context of works consisting of kanji (ideograms).

The history and evolution of writing in Japan have deep roots that span many centuries. In this context, various writing systems play a key role, each reflecting unique aspects of the country's culture, language, and history. One of the most significant writing systems in the Japanese alphabet is kanji (漢字), representing a unique writing system. Each kanji displays a symbolic image or ideographic representation of a specific object, concept, or sound, making them special and multi-layered in meaning. Initially used to record Japanese words and expressions, over time they were also adapted to convey Japanese grammar and phonetics. Each kanji can be pronounced according to one or more reading principles: onyomi (音読み) - reading the Chinese pronunciation of ideograms with a more formal tendency, such as in administrative documents, scientific literature, and textbooks; kunyomi (訓読み) - based on the pronunciation of Japanese readings with an informal character, often used in simple speech, proper names, and common words. The pronunciation of a kanji character depends on the context, including its combination with other characters or its position in the sentence. In modern Japanese, ideograms remain one of the three main writing systems. [5]

In the 6th and 7th centuries, the Japanese began developing their own writing system based on Chinese hieroglyphs, adapted for recording the Japanese language, known as Kana (仮名). This system included two main categories of characters: Katakana and Hiragana.

Katakana (カタカナ) and Hiragana (ひらがな) are used to write sounds in the Japanese language. Both alphabets, instead of the familiar letters to many nations, consist of syllables. For example, the first sounds of the alphabets start with "a, i, u, e, o," and then "ka, ki, ku, ke, ko." These two systems have their differences: Hiragana is used to write Japanese words, including grammatical endings, and to transcribe foreign words. Katakana, on the other hand, is most often used to write foreign words and names. Anyone who wants to start learning Japanese will always begin with the stage of studying these two alphabets. They will help develop reading and writing skills, understanding of grammar, and mastery of basic vocabulary. Knowledge of Katakana and Hiragana also allows for a better understanding of Japanese culture through the prism of their everyday written communication, including in advertisements, signs on the streets, in shops, etc. Therefore, knowing these systems enables better perception and understanding of the surrounding environment in Japan. [6]

Japanese calligraphy and hieroglyphs are a mix of traditions, values, and customs that are everywhere in Japanese society. Today in Japan, the value of calligraphy and hieroglyphs is deeply intertwined with the preservation of its cultural heritage. Moreover, Japanese calligraphy has transcended national borders, becoming a symbol of Japanese cultural influence around the world. Through exhibitions, workshops, and cultural exchanges, Japanese calligraphy introduces people from diverse backgrounds to the beauty and depth of Japanese writing and artistry. It serves as a bridge between cultures, fostering understanding and appreciation for Japan's rich cultural heritage beyond its shores. Furthermore, the popularity of Japanese calligraphy in contemporary society reflects a broader global fascination with mindfulness practices and traditional arts. In an increasingly fast-paced world, the meditative nature of calligraphy offers a retreat into tranquility and self-expression. Thus, Japanese calligraphy not only enriches Japanese society but also contributes to a global appreciation for the beauty and significance of traditional art forms.

The wisdom and philosophy included in the Japanese language are boundless. Despite the complexity of calligraphy, the use of a triple writing system, unique stylistic spelling of ideograms, and deep respect for cultural values and traditions, the Japanese language remains majestic, rich, and distinctive. This is why millions of people around the world aspire to learn it, hoping to apply it in the homeland of this language. The love for learning any language breaks all boundaries, and Japanese is no exception, gaining more and more admirers from the magnificent Land of the Rising Sun.

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### **ENGLISH AND FRENCH IDIOMS IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

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The interaction between French and English cultures stems from their rich historical connection. For centuries, France and England have been significant political, cultural, and economic partners, exchanging ideas, technologies, and art. This interaction has had a considerable influence on both cultures, forming their literary traditions, styles, and socio-cultural norms. One of the most noticeable aspects of this dialogue is linguistic interaction. Studying the English language is common in modern times. Throughout the extensive history of the existence and development of the English language, an immense number of expressions have accumulated, which people have found convenient and beautiful to use. In this way a new layer of the language emerged – phraseology, a complex of stable expressions that have independent meanings. Studying phraseology greatly facilitates reading various styles of literature: from fiction to journalistic; and conscious use of idiomatic expressions makes speech more expressive and pleasant to the ear.

What is phraseology in language? Phraseology can be described as a branch of linguistics that studies figures of speech and expressions. This field of study includes collocations, idioms, proverbs, as well as speech clichés and phrase schemes. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the world of phraseology, it is important to conduct research in various fields such as grammar, stylistics, lexicology,