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The Samurais Influence On Japanese Culture

Modern Japan is a unique country that in a bizarre way combines centuries-old traditions and modern technologies. Ancient temples stand proudly next to the striking skyscrapers. Therefore, samurais in Japan are still of great interest. Stories about these amazing and proud people firmly entered not only the Eastern, but also the Western culture.

The name of the warrior "samurai" appeared as a derivative of the verb 侍 奉 "saburau", meaning action - "to serve" (translation - a service person). The first mention of them appears in medieval Japan during the reign of Shogun Minamoto in the 12th century. Since that period was described as a relatively calm era, the number of samurais was small, and the warriors themselves were more engaged in peaceful affairs. They raised children and taught martial arts.

When the Japanese clan of Tokugawa shoguns came to power, the position of the samurai changed dramatically. Their number increased. They had their own code of honor, in which the main place was occupied by the law "Bushido". Following it, the samurai should worry about the life and honor of his master, obey unquestioningly and also not spare his life for the sake of the master.

So the first samurais were bodyguards and loyal servants. Sometimes in peacetime they replaced the police force. For the honest performance of their duties, they received good wages and land plots, becoming wealthy people.

By the seventeenth century, the samurai class took shape and divided into:

Hatamoto - vassals of the shogun, privileged layer, Daimyo - vassals of princes,

Ronin - warriors who lost their master, but did not fall in battle and became townspeople and artisans, Shinobi - the Japanese analogue of ninja, assassins.

But at the end of the 18th century the samurai class began to disintegrate as a result of the progress of the Japanese bourgeoisie. Most of them turned into farmers, traders, some of them went to religious cults. A small part of the dissenters died as rebels.

Samurais in Japan were great and legendary characters. Before going to bed, parents told tales and legends about them. A lot of people from an early age wanted to be like them, to be as brave and courageous. The children of the samurai were proud of their fathers and tried to grow up worthy successors of the family and tradition.

In order to educate this kind of warrior, a multi-level process which started from the earliest years was specially developed. Honoring the samurai code, children were brought up in unquestioning obedience to their elders and in full confidence that a man is the only head of the family. In addition, the Iemoto technique was studied. It included strict rules of discipline and behavior that could not be violated.

History has preserved a description of how little samurais were prepared for future ordeals. In addition to the compulsory mastery of various martial arts, it was necessary to control one's own body and spirit. Warriors must endure pain without giving away their feelings with groans or other signs. It was also required calmly and with dignity to obey the order of the elder.

In the Middle Ages boys were given a test of endurance. For example, for several days they sat in a cold room in darkness and hunger, but did not allow themselves a single complaint. Some fathers may have forced their sons to spend nights in the cemetery, stay awake for a long time, walk barefoot in cold weather, or do difficult jobs.

The most important age when the child was already considered a future warrior was 5 years after the samurai sword Bokken was presented. From this

moment active training in fencing and self-defense, mastering the skills to swim and stay in the saddle began. As the samurai was next to his master, he had to be literate, write beautifully and correctly, know the history of his country and literature in order to support any dialogue. It was also advisable to understand music, philosophy and learn any craft in order to feed himself and his family.

Having passed this long way, at the age of 15 the boy became a warrior, a samurai.

The key feature of the samurai costume, his identity is daisho. These are two curved iron swords. Since swords were sacred objects, they were treated with great respect, looked after them daily and cherished as part of themselves. Going to bed, the sword was placed at the head of the bed, and during the day it was kept on a special wooden stand, near which a servant stood.

Additionally, each warrior had a katana resembling a saber about 75 cm long.

The samurai must be able to shoot from the yumi bow, which was revered in the same way as swords and was considered an animate object endowed with great power. It could reach a length of 2 meters.

Samurai armor was a suit made of metal plates, pasted over with leather and connected by lacing. It weighed about 15 kg.

Today it seems that samurai are characters from distant fairy tales, but in Japan they remember and honor famous warriors.

Today samurai in Japan remains an example of a unique personality, combining the features of a brave warrior, a refined poet and an inspired artist who was not afraid to die in battle and was able to leave a magnificent suicide poem by committing ritual suicide. The active penetration of eastern culture into the western world made it possible to place this image on the pages of books, in films and, of course, reflected in the culture of anime, giving rise to various manga, cartoons and being embodied in stylized costumes.

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