

Japanophilia

Japanophilia is the philia of Japanese culture, people and history.^[1] In Japanese, the term for Japanophile is "shinnichi" (親日), with "親" equivalent to the English prefix 'pro-' and "日", meaning "Japan" (as in the word for Japan "Nihon" (日本)). The term was first used as early as the 18th century, switching in scope over time.

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Lafcadio Hearn a.k.a. Koizumi Yakumo, a notable Irish-Greek international scholar and author well known for his strong interest in Japanese culture.

Early usage

The term *Japanophile* traces back to the late 18th and early 19th centuries before Japan became more open to foreign trade. Carl Peter Thunberg and Philipp Franz von Siebold helped introduce Japanese flora, artworks, and other objects to Europe which spiked interest.^{[2][3]} Lafcadio Hearn, an Irish-Greek author who made his home in Japan in the 19th century, was described as "a confirmed Japanophile" by Charles E. Tuttle Company in their forewords to several of his books.^[4] Others may include Jules Brunet, a French Army officer who played a famous role in the Japanese Boshin War.

20th century

In the first decade of the 20th century, several British writers lauded Japan. In 1904, for example, Beatrice Webb wrote that Japan was a "rising star of human self-control and enlightenment", praising the "innovating collectivism" of the Japanese, and the "uncanny" purposefulness and open-mindedness of its "enlightened professional elite." H. G. Wells similarly named the élite of his *A Modern Utopia* "samurai". In part this was a result of the decline of British industrial productivity, with Japan and Germany rising comparatively. Germany was seen as a threat and a rival power, but Japan was seen as a potential ally. The British sought efficiency as the solution to issues of productivity, and after the publication of Alfred Stead's 1906 book *Great Japan: A Study of National Efficiency*, pundits in Britain looked to Japan for lessons. This interest, however, ended after World War I.^[5]

General José Millán-Astray, the founder of the Spanish Legion, stated that the samurai warrior code Bushido exerted a great influence on him. Defining Bushido as "a perfect creed", Millán-Astray said that "the Spanish legionnaire is also a samurai and practices the Bushido essentials: Honor, Valor, Loyalty, Generosity, and

Sacrifice", and added that Spain would become a great power like Japan by adhering to the code's principles.^[6] He also made a Spanish translation of Inazo Nitobe's book *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* and a prologue to it.^[7]

21st century

In the early 2000s, derogatory slang terms were created to refer to people who appreciate Japanese popular culture. The term "wapanese" (from "white Japanese", or possibly also "wannabe Japanese") first emerged in 2002 as a derogatory term for a white person who is obsessed with Japanese culture, particularly anime and manga. The term "**weeaboo**" (later shortened to **weeb**) came from the webcomic *The Perry Bible Fellowship*, in which the word had no meaning other than it was something unpleasant.^[8] According to an unpublished MA thesis, an administrator on 4chan added a filter on the site to change "wapanese" to "weeaboo," but users on the site quickly picked up the word and applied it in an abusive way in place of the already existing wapanese term.^[9]

Kim Morrissy of Crunchyroll wrote that the use of the word *otaku* in anime fandom can be hindered by the belief of some westerners that its use constitutes cultural appropriation and that it can only refer to a Japanese person.^[10]

In a blog post on Anime News Network, Justin Sevakis gives a difference between the two, saying that there is nothing wrong with loving Japanese culture. He points out that a person only becomes a weeaboo when they start to be obnoxious, immature, and ignorant about the culture they love.^[11] Matt Jardin from the *Alaska Dispatch* gave an opinion on the definition saying that weeaboos blindly prefer things from Japan while looking down on anything else despite obvious merit.^[12]

See also

- Japanization
- Japanification: cultural assimilation into Japanese society
- Japonism
- Orientalism
- List of Westerners who visited Japan before 1868
- Japanese studies
- Cool Japan
- Japan Expo
- Anime club
- Pacific Movement of the Eastern World
- Sinophile
- Kent Gilbert
- Jingri

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