

# Honorific Language and its Origin/Effects on Korean/Japanese Languages

존댓말과 그 기원과 한국/일본어에 미치는 영향

敬語とその起源/韓国語/日本語への影響

A study by: Harrison Sagraves, Victoria Barnes, Zachary Eicher

해리슨 새그레이브스, 빅토리아 바恩斯, 자카리 아이커  
ハリソン・サグレーヴス、ビクトリア・バーンズ、ザカリー・アイカー



## History of Language Development in Japan & Korea

- ❖ Japanese is mostly spoken amongst residents of Japan, but there are other minority groups in differing countries that also employ it as a second language.
- ❖ Traveling businessmen tend to spring up around the world, as well as do immigrant peoples (typically in North/South America) who foster their new home's native language as a secondary language or make the shift towards the new language being their family's mainstay language. (Loveday, pg. 2)
- ❖ Japanese colonization in Taiwan and Korea also created a group of Japanese speakers in these countries that last to this day.

# History of Japanese Imperialism

In 1910 the Empire of Japan annexed Korea without permission of the Korean emperor of the time. During this time, Korean language was suppressed by the Emperor of Japan and Japanese was considered the language of many public places. The government even went to the lengths of making laws to require Koreans to change their name to Japanese ones. Even though Korean was becoming highly forbidden it was still spoken in private at the home. Because of the marginalization of Korean and the strong effect of Japanese, many Korean terms were replaced with Japanese counterparts.



# Religious Beliefs

## Buddhism:

- Buddhism does not follow a chief god, and is often a religion that is followed as a philosophy.
- Developed in India by Siddhartha Gautama (referred to as the Buddha) around the 5th century BCE.
- Taught enlightenment to its disciples through the escape of samsara (the cycle of suffering, rebirth, and death).

## Shintoism:

- Shintoism teaches the importance of purity (both physical and spiritual), maintaining harmony in all things, the importance of procreation, familial and ancestral solidarity.
- It is important to be invested in the collective of society. Subordination of the individual to the group is a core concept. In fact, The soul of the dead is said to influence the living before it joins with the ancestors' collective.
- Shintoism also teaches to one to have a spiritual reverence for nature and realize that the all things in this world have the potential for good and evil.

## Confucianism:

- The especially relevant teachings of Confucianism would be those regarding proper behaviour towards one's superiors and the importance of human relationships as a role in government.
- The Korean government thrived off of hierarchy, rights, responsibilities, loyalties, and a sense of duty among its people.
- In order to preserve harmony and balance in society a sense of knowing one's role and beliefs such as trustworthiness, diligence, and respect were also important.



# Religion's Effects



## Buddhism:

- Buddhism has a relation with death and funerals in Japanese, and it has helped to develop ancient Japanese society. It is often revered as a religion that prevents bad luck and omens. Shrine visits are less common nowadays, but some traditionalists still follow the superstitions intrinsic with Buddhism in modern day Japan.

## Shintoism:

- Shintoism places importance on concepts such as harmony, solidarity, collectiveness, and purity. It makes sense that the Japanese would develop a form of "humble language" to refer to those in higher ranking positions in order to ensure societal harmony. When referring to a family member in an elder position, there is also a sense of "humbleness" to maintain solidarity.

## Confucianism:

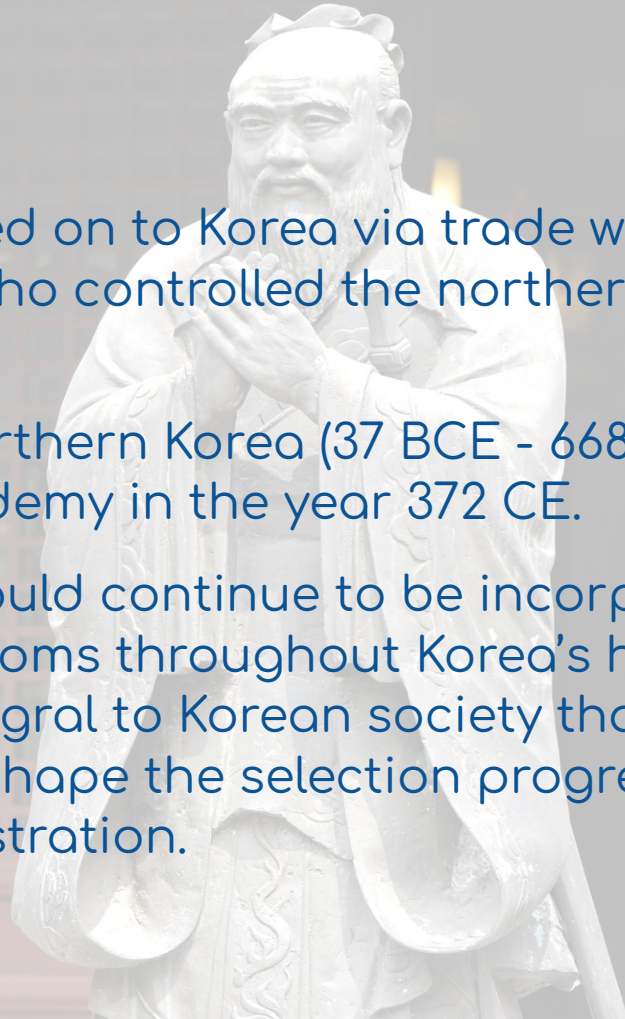
- Confucianism teaches that people thrive when they understand the society's hierarchy, responsibility, loyalty, and a sense of duty to others. Humble pronouns and morphemes would be used in order to ensure that there is a sense of trustworthiness and respect. Moreover, this more humble language could be used to foster the human relationships needed for a productive society.

# Confucianism

Confucianism would be passed on to Korea via trade with Chinese religious military personnel who controlled the northern borders during the 4th century CE.

The Goguryeo Kingdom of northern Korea (37 BCE - 668 CE) established a Confucian Academy in the year 372 CE.

Principles of Confucianism would continue to be incorporated into different dynasties and kingdoms throughout Korea's history. Confucianism became so integral to Korean society that the study of Confucian texts was used to shape the selection process for members of the state administration.



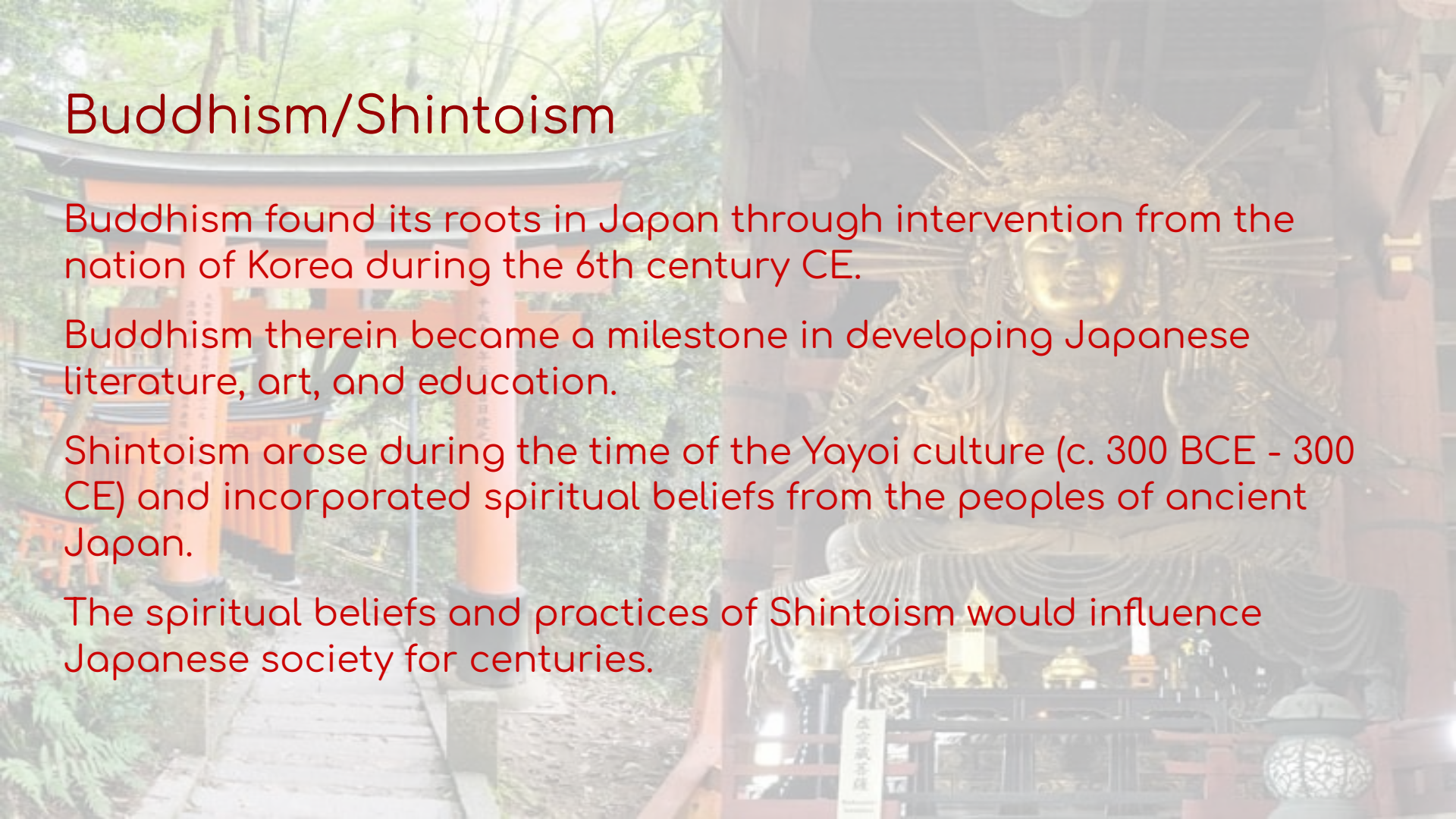
# Buddhism/Shintoism

Buddhism found its roots in Japan through intervention from the nation of Korea during the 6th century CE.

Buddhism therein became a milestone in developing Japanese literature, art, and education.

Shintoism arose during the time of the Yayoi culture (c. 300 BCE - 300 CE) and incorporated spiritual beliefs from the peoples of ancient Japan.

The spiritual beliefs and practices of Shintoism would influence Japanese society for centuries.





# Sociolinguistics

Japanese has different levels of formality, as well as a myriad of slang and plays on semantics that make certain words. Formality and slang also play an affect on the morphology of words that form a sentence.

Formal language, although of course used for formal occasions, is also used widely by women, as it is seen as well as feminine language.

When speaking informally, one may take on slang words to decorate their speech.

When speaking to superiors, humble language (assumes a lower position to the listener) is used.

Children tend to speak of their actions in a 3rd person mode of talk, and they also tend to break down formalities when speaking to most others.



# Linguistic/Extralinguistic Qualities of Japanese

## Linguistic

- Dialect, similarities in pronunciation from Chinese and Korean, writing, morphology.

## Examples

- Kantou, Kansai, Touhoku dialects. "Onyomi" (the pronunciation of pictophonetic words as heard from Koreans/Chinese) vs. "kunyomi" (the Japanese take on how characters should represent ideas/sounds in the Japanese language). The Japanese language has its own two distinct syllabaries of writing and speech but shares similarities with Chinese pictophonetic characters that are also utilized in the Japanese writing system. The morphology of the Japanese language system is comprised of around 50 syllabic sounds that are pulled from 5 vowels (a, i, u, e, o) all but for the exception of the one lone nasal consonant "n" which can exist without an aiding vowel. For example, the word 中型犬 (chūgataken) [medium-sized dog] is comprised of the three kanji for "middle/China", "size/form/pattern", and "dog" respectively. Those 3 kanji can be dispersed as so- the onyomi ちゅう "chū", the kunyomi がた "gata", and the onyomi けん "ken". The separate syllables in each part can further be broken down to the core makeup of the language's syllabary- ちゅ う "chu-u", が た "ga-ta", and け ん "ke-n".

## Extralinguistic

- Age, social hierarchy, gender, place, period.

## Examples

- Younger Japanese speakers tend to speak in a far less formal mode of language, and most young adults would refer to older/those of higher social hierarchy (a boss, teacher) with formal or sometimes even honorific language. Women tend to use formal language even in normally informal circumstances, as formal language is seen in those cases to be a more feminine mode of speaking. In a school setting, one would be more likely inclined to use formal language, and needless to say, in medieval/ancient Japan the verbiage used by the people of the time was quite different. This also applied to the written form of the language, as some kanji that had once been used in this time have now become outdated. Certain forms of verbs and pronouns as well

## Consonants

# Linguistic/Extralinguistic Qualities of Korean

## Linguistic

SOV (subject object verb) order

Ex. I an apple eat.

나는 사과를 먹다.

Honorific system/ speech protocol

way to address someone depends on the speaker's relationship to the person being addressed and the level of formality

Alphabet (한글/ 조선말)

14 consonants and 10 vowels

Syllable structure: CVC + CVC

## Extralinguistic

- Age, working position, gender, area, time period,

# Uses of Honorific Language in Japan

Language usage in Japanese can be broken down into hierarchies, much like the society the language roots from. In the language, there are different levels of formality or special vernacular used by those of subordinate positions. To someone a person is less familiar with, less familial, slightly formal and respectful language is appreciated. In cases of speaking to those in higher social hierarchies (a boss, or leader) one would use the Japanese form of “humble language”, which expands further than formality, and assumes the position of someone who is “allowed the honor” of doing something for someone higher in status than them.

Examples: “san” “さん” Older people and those of similar hierarchy standing.

“sama” “さま” To customers, deities, and highly respected individuals.

“chan/kun” “ちゃん/くん” To younger individuals or pets. A cute term used for those that you are very familiar with.

Addressing yourself formally: “watashi” “私” male formal “boku” “僕” - Informally: “ore” “俺”

Addressing another formally: “anata” “あなた” - Informally: “kimi/omae” “君/お前”



# Uses of Honorific Language in Korea

The Korean language makes use of a similar respect to formality and humility.

Humble pronouns and morphemes of words are interchanged to simulate different modes of formality and respect for the listener.

Korean language takes a stronger influence from a history in Confucianism, therefore Korean society has more of an emphasis on males and elders being higher in the spectrum of the respectful hierarchy.

When talking to people of higher status you must always make suggestions or ask as a question as opposed to making commands.

Age and gender is considered when addressing others, name is only used when talking to someone younger/same age or when very close in relationship. See Example 2

Examples:

Older people in general

Addressing others:

Addressing yourself:

1) 형, 누나, 오빠, 언니 --- (남/여)동생

Casual: 아

Formal: 씨

Casual: 나 Formal: 저

*hyung, noona, oppa, unnie nam/yeo dongsaeng*

Working / school relationships

1) 선배, 후배

Middle-aged

Over 70s

아주머니 아저씨

할아버지 할머니

# History of Cultural Development in Korean/Japanese

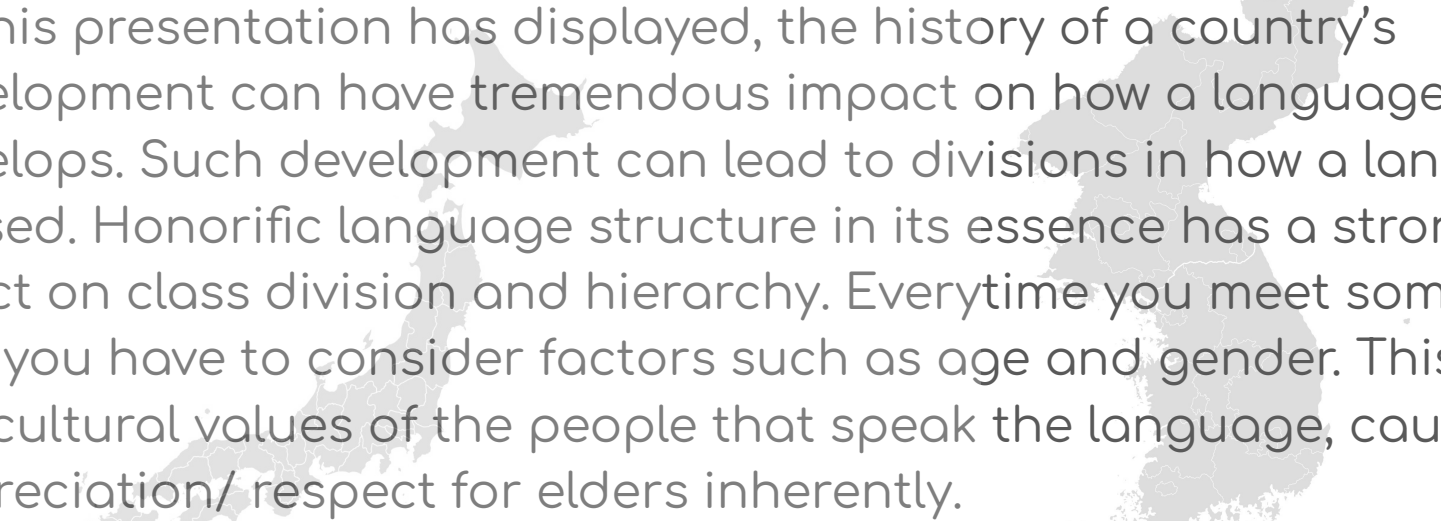
The creation and early development of Japanese is thought to have been a contact language, sharing similarities and roots with Korean, Altaic, Malayo-Polynesian, Tibeto-Burmese and Dravidian. (Loveday, pg. 3)

The difficult script of ideograms known as “kanji” in Japanese was originally created by the Chinese, but ported over to the Japanese peoples by Korea.

This system was adopted and suited to alleviate the Japanese languages issue with having very many homophones.


# Conclusions

As this presentation has displayed, the history of a country's development can have tremendous impact on how a language develops. Such development can lead to divisions in how a language is used. Honorific language structure in its essence has a strong effect on class division and hierarchy. Everytime you meet someone new you have to consider factors such as age and gender. This affects the cultural values of the people that speak the language, causing an appreciation/ respect for elders inherently.





# Works Cited



Cartwright, Mark. "Buddhism in Ancient Japan." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, Ancient History Encyclopedia, 19 June 2017, [www.ancient.eu/article/1080/buddhism-in-ancient-japan/#:~:text=Buddhist%20monasteries%20were%20established%20across,the%20arts%20in%20ancient%20Japan.](http://www.ancient.eu/article/1080/buddhism-in-ancient-japan/#:~:text=Buddhist%20monasteries%20were%20established%20across,the%20arts%20in%20ancient%20Japan.)

Cartwright, Mark. "Confucianism in Ancient Korea." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, Ancient History Encyclopedia, 9 November 2016, [www.ancient.eu/article/969/confucianism-in-ancient-korea/](http://www.ancient.eu/article/969/confucianism-in-ancient-korea/).

Cartwright, Mark. "Shinto." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, Ancient History Encyclopedia, 3 April 2017, [www.ancient.eu/Shinto/](http://www.ancient.eu/Shinto/).

Lee, L., & Ramsey, S. R. (2000). *The Korean language*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Loveday, Leo. *Explorations in Japanese Sociolinguistics*. J. Benjamins, 1986, Accessed 31 Mar. 2021.

Mark, Joshua J. "Buddhism." *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, Ancient History Encyclopedia, 25 Sept. 2020, [www.ancient.eu/buddhism/](http://www.ancient.eu/buddhism/).