

## INDO - JAPAN CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH A REFERENCE TO URDU IN JAPAN AND JAPANESE URDU SCHOLARS

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### Abstract

*The cultural ties between India and Japan existed since the time immemorial. The history recorded that Buddhism was carried to Japan from India in 7th C A.D; via China and Korea. Cultural exchanges between India and Japan began in 6th century with the introduction of Buddhism to Japan. Buddhism had great impact on Japanese culture which resulted in healthy relations between the two nations. The political relations started in the 16th C and continues till date. India appreciated Japan's post war economic progress and growth. In 1892 Swami Vivekananda while travelling to the World Congress of Religions, at Chicago (1893) appreciated Japan's progress and had remarked that India must learn a lot from Japan. This article not only presents the details of cultural relation between India and Japan but also highlights the development, progress the research and translation works done on one of the most beautiful and world over popular Indian languages Urdu [literature and poetry]. Three major Japanese universities Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), Osaka University and Daito Bunka University teach Urdu. In 2008 TUFS celebrated hundred years of teaching of Urdu. The scholars of these institutions have carried out commendable and original research work on Urdu language and literature. The article acknowledges the contributions of Japanese Urdu scholars.*

**Keywords:-** Indo-Japanese cultural relations, Buddhism, Artists, Urdu, TUFS, Osaka, Daito Bunka universities.



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The Indian monk Bodhisena visited Japan in 736 A.D for the purpose of spreading Buddhism and lived in Japan till his death in 760. Buddhism had great impact on Japanese culture which resulted in healthy relations between the two nations. The visits of monks, scholars and the students from India to Japan had been continuing Japan since 8th century. The Nalanda University library recorded the arrival of the scholars and students from Japan to attend the school. Tenjiku Tokubei was the most famous Japanese travellers who visited India (1612-1642). He was named after 'Tenjiku' the Japanese name for India which means "Heavenly Abode".

The political relations began when Japan established political connections with the Portuguese colonies in India in 16th century, but the direct political relations developed during the reign of Meiji (1868-1912). Further cultural exchange took place in the late 20th century when the Indian and Japanese cinema had their greatest influence on each other. Films made by Satyajit Ray, Guru Dutt and Rajnikanth from India were immensely liked and appreciated in Japan and back in India Japanese films by Akira Kurosawa and others had a great impact and influence during 1950's and 1960's.

India admired Japan's post war economic progress and the pace of growth which reconstructed Japan at the fastest speed. India welcomed and accepted Japan as an emerging power in the early 20th century. Japan's victory in the Russian- Japanese war in 1905 inspired Indians during their freedom struggle. Japan welcomed the strengthening of friendship by forming a base for Indian revolutionaries to take refuge. Many Indian leaders were provided with the assistance by the influential Japanese nationalists who promoted a close relationship between the Indians and Japanese.

Japan became an example for its zeal to maintain its independence with a continuous and rapid success in modernizing itself. Hence in (1863-1902) 1892 Swami Vivekananda on his way to World Congress of Religions, at Chicago (1893) appreciated Japan's progress and had remarked that India had to learn a lot from Japan. History maintains that there was friendship between Japanese thinker Okakaru Tenshin and Indian writer, poet, painter, philosopher Rabindranath Tagore, O.Tenshin and Priyamvada Banerjee from India.

Okakaru, an artist who belonged to Meiji school of art was quite instrumental in making leading Japanese artists to visit India, who lived with Tagore family for 2 years in Bengal. These artists influenced the modern art movement in Bengal to a great extent under the leadership of Rabindranath Tagore. Jujitsu experts were also sent to Shantiniketan to train students in Japanese martial arts. Under the students exchange programme Indian students also visited Japan for training in industries like ceramics and textiles etc., Indian leader who greatly impressed the Japanese was Gandhi. In the 1930, Japanese scholars visited India along with Mr.Yori Nogudi, the poet who delivered lectures in the University of Calcutta. A famous Japanese painter executed a series of frescos on the life of Buddha.

Though Sanskrit being a classical language is no more spoken in India, which is the language used in Buddhism and Hinduism is still used by a few ancient priest in Japan and the Siddha  
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script is also still being written there .In 1899 Tokyo Imperial University setup a chair in Sanskrit and Pali languages, setting up a chair also in comparative religion in the year 1903. Japan India Association was founded in 1903.

In 1956 India Japan mixed cultural commission was found as per the agreement between govt. of India and Japan for the purpose of promoting cultural relations between the two nations. The Commission was founded with intention of enhancing cultural relations by conducting cultural events both in Japan and India, including dance, exhibition etc., visits of distinguished people, achievers, exchange of scholars and artists. Great interest was shown by the Japanese scholars in the studies of medieval, modern and contemporary India. Both the countries strengthened the relations by opening centres for teaching language courses. Japanese studies centres have been established in Indian Universities like JNTU, Delhi University and Vishwa Bharti University. India looks forward to a great cooperation and exchange in the Science and Technology also.

Times of India (English News Paper-India) reported that the popularity of Japanese as a language has grown considerably among the students in the last two years. (Report –Aug. 2nd, 2012). JLPT-Japanese Language Proficiency Test is recorded to have a very good number of students in Pune-(Maharashtra). A 40% rise has been observed in the number of students taking the test (JLPT) which is the largest as compared to the other cities of India. Pune had almost 1500 test takers till December 2011. According to the survey done in 2015 there were 24000 people studying Japanese in India.. A 2006 survey by the Japanese Foundation showed 369 teachers teaching 11,011 students at 106 institutions. Akitaka Saiki, The Ambassador of Japan had said, “The proposed Delhi - Mumbai Industrial Corridors came up with large investment by the Japanese government resulting in creation of opportunities for the people conversant in Japanese”. Projawal Channagire, Japanese language co-ordinator, Department of Foreign Languages, University of Pune said. “The popularity is evident also from the number of institutes that teach Japanese in the city. With the emerging ties between India and Japan, many young graduates, IT professionals are learning Japanese to explore their careers options”. The Indian government announced special schemes to promote Japanese language.

#### THE POPULARITY OF URDU LANGUAGE IN JAPAN

Three major Japanese universities Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), Osaka University and Daito Bunka University teach Urdu. In 2008 TUFS celebrated hundred years of teaching of Urdu. The scholars of these institutions have carried out commendable and

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original research work on Urdu language and literature. Some of them have reproduced many valuable literary assets of Urdu literature into Japanese making it accessible and available to Japanese readers. A considerable amount of modern Urdu literature has been translated into Japanese and Urdu language due to the immense love and efforts of the following Urdu scholars.

TUFS:- Tokyo University of Foreign Studies has carried out wide variety of research on the world of Indian and Islamic culture which flourished and emerged by the convergence of the worlds of Indian and West Asia.

Urdu and Hindi are ranked as the third most spoken languages in the world. While the tradition of Indian Studies based on Buddhist philosophy and Sanskrit was encouraged, modern Indian Studies including languages were also given importance in Japan. The teaching of Urdu in Japan began when the Tokyo School of Foreign Studies was established in 1908. In the beginning it was called “The Department of Hindustani Language” as the name was in vogue for Urdu in those days. In 1949, the school was upgraded to the status of a university and the two separate departments of Urdu and Hindi were established. According to Prof. Kataoka “Urdu was introduced in Japan in 1663 when a ship came to Nagasaki from Vietnam. The captain of ship was a ‘Moor’ a Muslim. Professor Nagashima discovered a polyglot of five languages compiled in Nagasaki in the year 1971 which gives the synonyms of a ‘Moorish’ language. That Moorish language is in fact Persian, and Persian words are included in Urdu. This polyglot becomes the first and oldest reference of Urdu in Japan.

The two learned men to whom Urdu owes most of its popularity in Japan are Prof. Gamon Reiiki and Prof. Suzuki Takishi who are rightly called ‘Baba-e-Urdu’ means ‘Father of Urdu’ in Japan. Urdu is taught in three major Universities of Japan besides other institutions which are Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (TUFS), Osaka University and DaitoBunka University. In the year 2008 TUFS celebrated 100 years of teaching of Urdu. The scholars associated with these Universities carried a commendable and research work in Urdu language and literature. Some of them came out with masterpiece of Urdu translated into Japanese. Their tireless efforts made modern Urdu literature available in Japanese making Urdu language and literature popular.

The Contributions of Japanese Urdu Scholars:-

Professor Reiiki: - He graduated from Tokyo School of Foreign Languages, a predecessor of TUFS in 1923, joined the same University in 1925 as a lecturer. He was the first Japanese to

teach Urdu in Japan, became a professor in 1934. In the beginning it was very difficult to teach Urdu in Japan without the teaching material, to overcome this problem Professor Reiki compiled some basic Urdu books for Japanese students. In 1938, he wrote “Urdu Ki Ibtedai Qavaid” or Basic Urdu grammar which helped generations of Japanese in learning Urdu. His other contribution for Urdu is the translation of *Bagh o Bahar* into Japanese. His other works include the books on the history and culture of Iran, Islam and Spoken Urdu. His personal collection of Urdu books is available in the library of TUFSS.

Professor Takeshi: - Prof. Suzuki Takeshi a student of Prof. Reiki who joined TUFSS in 1963 has translated modern Urdu fiction into Japanese. He wrote many articles on the history and the development of Urdu fiction, Urdu criticism and Tazkiras. He also wrote research papers on Urdu literature regarding 1947 riots, and on Urdu’s legendary publisher Munshi Naval Kishore. His works include Urdu Qavaid, Urdu Bolchal, Urdu- Japanese dictionary, Ibtedai Urdu or Basic Urdu Ki Aasan Kahaniyan. Professor Takeshi’s greatest contribution is the 20,000 word Urdu-Japanese dictionary which is the example of his immense love of Urdu with untiring efforts. Later Prof. Hiroshi Hagitha, an associate of Prof. Suzuki gave a final shape to the dictionary for the publication.

Professor Hiroji Kataoka:- Born in 1941 in Tokyo Prof. Kataoka was the student of Prof. Suzuki Takishi. Having done his master’s in Urdu from Tokyo, Prof. Kataoka joined Osaka University in 1974 and taught Urdu language and literature. He served also as the Dean Faculty of International Relations and Director, Institute of Contemporary Asian Studies in Diatobunka University. He is well known for his works on Ghalib, translated *Dewan-e-Ghalib*, Iqbal’s *Baang e Dara* and Faiz’s almost entire poetry in Japanese, in addition to over 60 papers in the Urdu language and literature and Pakistani culture. Besides translating the works of Faiz and Minto, he wrote papers on Faiz, Meera ji, N. M. Rashid. Akbar Allahbadi and other poets of Urdu, Prof. Kataoka also initiated the idea of conducting Mushairas in Japan and the Mushairas are being organized every year in Japan since many years, which are attended by large number of people from Tokyo and Osaka etc.

Professor Asada Yutuka:- Chairman, Department of Urdu who joined TUFSS in 1981, has published many works including ‘Muntakhab e Urdu Adab’ “Fasadaat Ka Adab” “Khawateen Ka Adab” and some Urdu Readers for learners.

Professor Heroshi:- Professor Heroshi is also associated with the dictionary of Prof. Takieshi. He has written on fiction writers of Urdu such as Ahmed Ali, Hayatullah Ansari and the Sikh  
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writers of Urdu. His greatest contribution is the translation of Shoukat Siddiqui's 'Khuda Ki Basti' in Japanese.

T. Matsumara:- Head Department of Urdu at Osaka University is another Japanese Urdu Scholar ,famous for his love for Urdu. Besides working on modern Urdu literature, he has written many papers on Sir Syed, Haali and Dr. Iqbal. The translation of the selected ghazals of Wali Dakhani, Mir Taqi Mir, Mir Dard and Nasikh are in addition. Other works include a very comprehensive book on Urdu grammar and papers on Aab e Hayat and Delhi and Lucknow schools of Urdu. The other respected veterans of Osaka University who promoted Urdu are Professor Sava and Professor Hiroshi Kankagaya.

The two important names from the later generation worth mentioning are of Prof. Kansaki Mameyan and Prof. So Yamane who teach Urdu at Osaka University. Professor Yamane compiled a book in 2003 that include 60 research papers on Pakistan's history, culture, language, Urdu literature Islam and is engaged in further research. He speaks flawless Urdu and Punjabi, translated the work of Gulam Abbas in Japanese. His latest published paper is on Urdu Orthography and its history. His recent work is on teaching of Urdu through internet.

From Osaka University's Research Institute for World Languages, Urdu Department's Prof Soya Manay visited Delhi in 2010 along with his colleague Mamia who said that he has translated the works of Indian authors Mujtaba Husain, Yusuf Nazim and others into Japanese language and that he was particularly interested in writings of humour and satire. During their stay in Delhi the delegation met many Urdu journalists.

Japan and India had signed a peace treaty and established the diplomatic relations on 28th April, 1952. This treaty was one of the first peace treaties Japan signed after World War II. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, both the countries have enjoyed cordial relations. Today, India and Japan share a global vision of peace, stability based on sustainable development. Shared democratic values and commitment to human rights, pluralism, open society, and the rule of law, the global partnership between the two countries continues.

The year 2012 marked the 60th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and India. Various cultural events took place both in Japan and in India to promote mutual understanding between the two countries, under the theme of "Resurgent Japan, Vibrant India: New Perspectives, New Exchanges."

During the visit of Prime Minister Modi to Japan in November 2016, the two Prime Ministers declared the year 2017 the Year of Japan-India Friendly Exchanges to enhance people-to-  
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people exchanges between the two countries. The year 2017 also marked the 60th anniversary since the Cultural Agreement came into force in 1957. Various commemorating events took place in both the countries.

In 2022, Japan celebrated anniversaries with the seven countries of Southwest Asia, including India. Japan has designated 2022 as “Japan-Southwest Asia Exchange Year” with the aim of taking Japan’s relations with the countries of Southwest Asia to new heights.

They announced “Japan and India Vision 2025 Special Strategic and Global Partnership Working Together for Peace and Prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Region and the World”, a joint statement that would serve as a guide post for the “new era in Japan-India relations.”

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