**Japanese Expressions**

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| **Aikido** | "The way of harmonious spirit". A form of self-defense performed without weapons, now recognized as a sport. |
| **Amida Nyorai** | Amida Buddha will lead worthy souls to the Western Paradise (the Pure Land). |
| **Banzai** | The traditional Japanese cheer, meaning "10,000 years". |
| **Basho** | Sumo tournament |
| **Benten** or  **Benzai-ten** | One of the most popular folk-goddesses, usually associated with water. |
| **Bodhisattva** or B**osatsu** | A Buddhist intermediary who has forsaken *nirvana* to work for the salvation of all humanity. |
| **Bunraku** | Traditional puppet theatre. |
| **Buto** or Butoh | Highly expressive contemporary performance art. |
| **Cha-no-yu, Chado** or S**ado** | The tea ceremony. Ritual tea drinking raised to an art form. |
| **Cho** or M**achi** | Subdivision of the city, smaller than a - *Ku*. |
| **Chome** | Area of the city consisting of a few blocks. |
| **Daimyo** | Feudal lords. |
| **Dake** | Mountain peak, usually volcanic. |
| **Dainichi Nyorai** or **Rushana Butsu** | The Cosmic Buddha in whom all buddhas are unified. |
| **Donjon** | Castle keep. |
| **Dori** | Main road. |
| **Edo** | Pre-1868 name for Tokyo. |
| **Ema** | Small wooden boards found at shrines, on which people write their wishes or thanks. |
| **Fusuma** | Paper-covered sliding doors, more substantial than *shoji* , used to separate rooms or for cupboards. |
| **Futon** | Padded quilt used for bedding. |
| **Gagaku** | Traditional Japanese music used for court ceremonies and religious rites. |
| **Gaijin** | Foreigner. |
| **Geisha** | Traditional female entertainer accomplished in the arts. |
| **Genkan** | Foyer or entrance hall of a house, ryokan and so forth, for changing from outdoor shoes into slippers. |
| **Geta** | Traditional wooden sandals. |
| **Genki** | A useful (and often used) Japanese word meaning friendly, lively and healthy. |
| **Haiku** | Seventeen-syllable verse form, arranged in three lines of five, seven and five syllables. |
| **Hanami** | "Flower-viewing", most commonly associated with spring outings to admire the cherry blossom. |
| **Hashi** or **-bashi** | Bridge. |
| **Hiragana** | Phonetic script used for writing Japanese in combination with *kanji* . |
| **Ijinkan** | Western-style brick and clapboard houses |
| **Ikebana** | Traditional art of flower arranging. |
| **Inari** | Shinto god of harvests, often represented by his fox-messenger. |
| **-ji** | Buddhist temple. |
| **Jigoku** | The word for Buddhist "hell", also applied to volcanic mud pools and steam vents. |
| **-jinja** or **-jingp** | Shinto shrine. |
| **Jizo** | Buddhist protector of children, travelers and the dead. |
| **-jo** | Castle. |
| **Kabuki** | Popular theatre of the Edo period |
| **Kami** | Shinto deities residing in trees, rocks and other natural phenomena. |
| **Kamikaze** | The "Divine Wind" which saved Japan from the Mongol invaders . During World War II the name was applied to Japan's suicide bombers. |
| **Kanji** | Japanese script derived from Chinese characters. |
| **Kannon** | Buddhist goddess of mercy. A bodhisattva who appears in many different forms |
| **Katakana** | Phonetic script used mainly for writing foreign words in Japanese. |
| **Kawa** or - G**awa** | River. |
| **Ken** | Prefecture. The principal administrative region, similar to a state or county. |
| **Kendo** | The "way of the sword". Japan's oldest martial art, using wooden staves, with its roots in *samurai* training exercises. |
| **Kimono** | Literally "clothes", though usually referring to women's traditional dress. |
| **-ko** | Lake. |
| **Koban** | Neighborhood police box. |
| **Koen** or G**yoen** | Public park. |
| **Kogen** | Plateau. |
| **Ku** | Principal administrative division of the city, usually translated as "ward". |
| **Kura** | Traditional storehouse built with thick mud-walls as protection against fire, for keeping produce and family treasures. |
| **Kyogen** | Short, satirical plays, providing comic interludes in No drama. |
| **Machi** | Town or area of a city. |
| **Maiko** | Apprentice geisha. |
| **Manga** | Japanese comics. |
| **Matcha** | Powdered green tea used in the tea ceremony. |
| **Matsuri** | Festival. |
| **Meiji** | Period named after Emperor Meiji (1868-1912), meaning "enlightened rule". |
| **Meiji Restoration** | The Restoration (1868) marked the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate, when power was fully restored to the emperor. |
| **Mikoshi** | Portable shrine used in festivals. |
| **Minshuku** | Family-run lodgings, similar to bed-and-breakfast, which are cheaper than ryokan. |
| **Mon** | Gate, usually to a castle, temple or palace. |
| **Mura** | Village. |
| **Netsuke** | Small, intricately carved toggles for fastening the cords of cloth bags. |
| **Ningy** | Japanese doll. |
| **Nio** or **Kongo Rikishi** | Two muscular, fearsome Buddhist kings ( *ten* ) who stand guard at temple gates, usually one open-mouthed and one closed. |
| **No** | Highly stylized dance-drama, using masks and elaborate costumes. |
| **Noren** | Split curtain hanging in shop and restaurant doorways to indicate they're open. |
| **Notemburo** | Outdoor hot-spring pool, usually in natural surroundings |
| **Obi** | Wide sash worn with kimono. |
| Obon | The most famous is Tokushima's Awa Odori. |
| **Odori** | Traditional dances performed in the streets during the summer festival. |
| **Onsen** | Hot spring, generally developed for bathing. |
| **Pachinko** | Vertical pinball machines. |
| **Romaji** | System of transliterating Japanese words using the roman alphabet. |
| **Ronin** | Masterless *samurai* . |
| **Rotemburo** | Outdoor hot-spring pool, often in the grounds of a ryokan. |
| **Ryokan** | Traditional Japanese inn. |
| **Salarymen** | The thousands of suited office-workers who keep Japan's companies and ministries ticking over. |
| **Samurai** | Warrior class who were retainers of the *daimyo*. |
| **San** or **-zan** | Mountain. |
| **Sento** | Neighbourhood public bath. |
| **Seppuku** | Ritual suicide by disembowelment, often wrongly referred to as *hara-kiri* in English. |
| **Shaka Nyorai** | The historical Buddha, Sakyamuni. |
| **Shamisen** | Traditional, three-stringed instrument played with a plectrum. |
| **Shima** or **-jima** | Island. |
| **Shinkansen** | Bullet train. |
| **Shinto** | Japan's indigenous religion, based on the premise that gods inhabit all natural things, both animate and inanimate. |
| **Shitamachi** | Low-lying, working-class districts of east Tokyo, nowadays usually referring to Asakusa and Ueno. |
| **Shoji** | Paper-covered sliding screens used to divide rooms or cover windows. |
| **Shogun** | The military rulers of Japan before 1868, nominally subordinate to the emperor. |
| **Shukubo** | Temple lodgings. |
| **Sumo** | Japan's national sport, a form of heavyweight wrestling which evolved from ancient Shinto divination rites. |
| **Sumi-e** | Ink paintings, traditionally using black ink. |
| **Taiko** | Drums. |
| **Tatami** | Rice-straw matting, the traditional covering for floors. |
| **-tera** , **o-tera** or  **-dera** | Buddhist temple. |
| **Tokonoma** | Alcove in a room where flowers or a scroll are displayed. |
| **Torii** | Gate to a Shinto shrine. |
| **Ukiyo-e** | Colorful woodblock prints or paintings which became particularly popular in the late eighteenth century. |
| **Waka** | Thirty-one syllable poem, arranged in five lines of five, seven, five, seven and seven syllables. |
| **Washi** | Traditional, handmade paper. |
| **Yakushi Nyorai** | The Buddha in charge of physical and spiritual healing. |
| **Yakuza** | Professional criminal gangs, somewhat akin to the Mafia. |
| **Yama** | Mountain. |
| **Yamabushi** | Ascetic mountain priests. |
| **Yukata** | Loose cotton robe worn as a dressing gown in ryokan |

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