Japanese Art Essay, Research Paper

Japan has been subject to sudden invasions of new ideas and cultures followed by long periods of minimal contact with the outside world. Over time the Japanese developed the ability to absorb, imitate, and finally learn those elements of foreign culture that balance their artistic preferences. The earliest complex art in Japan was produced in the 7th and 8th centuries AD in connection with Buddhism. In the 9th century, as the Japanese began to turn away from China and develop original forms of expression, the worldly arts became increasingly important. Both religious and world arts flourished.Painting is the preferred artistic expression in Japan, practiced by both amateurs and professionals. Until modern times, the Japanese wrote with a brush rather than a pen, and their familiarity with brush techniques has made them particularly creative. They found sculpture a much less important standard for artistic expression. Most Japanese sculpture is associated with religion, and use declined with the shrinking importance of traditional Buddhism. Japanese ceramics are among the finest in the world and include the earliest known artifacts of their culture. In architecture, Japanese preferences for natural materials and an interaction of interior and exterior space are clearly expressed.

Japanese art is characterized by unique difference. In the ceramics of the prehistoric periods exuberance was followed by disciplined and refined artistry. Another instance is provided by two 16th-century structures that are worlds apart: Katsura Palace is an exercise in simplicity, with an emphasis on natural materials, rough and untrimmed, and an affinity for beauty achieved by accident. Toshogu Mausoleum is a rigidly symmetrical structure replete with brightly colored relief carvings covering every visible surface. Japanese is art valued not only for its simplicity but also for its colorful energy, has considerably influenced 19th-century Western painting.