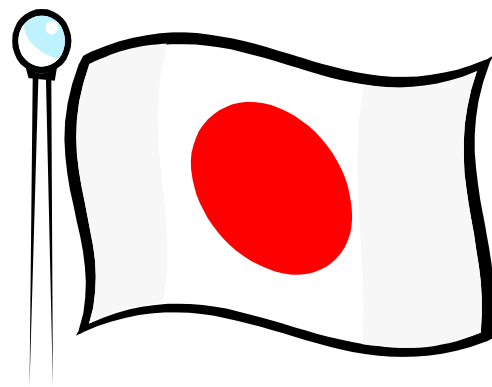




Nihon

日本
にほん



Japanese call their country Nihon (にほん) or Nippon (にっぽん).

Thousands of years ago, the Chinese called the islands to their east Riben .

The meaning of the characters they used are the *sun* and *origin* or *source*.

They chose these characters because the source of the rising sun seemed to be the islands of Japan.

The second character is also used for *book*. This is because book can be thought of as the source of knowledge.

Early travelers to China, heard the name Riben as Japan.