

Japan and Brazil through a Traveller's Eye

Comprehension I.

Question 1.

'Exquisitely well-mannered people' refers to

- (a) Indians
- (b) Japanese
- (c) Americans

Answer:

(b) Japanese people.

Question 2.

What behaviour substitutes privacy in Japan?

Answer:

Courtesy substitutes privacy in Japan.

Question 3.

The reference to public telephone suggests :

- (a) How overcrowded Japan is
- (b) How the Japanese respect privacy
- (c) How busy the Japanese are

Answer:

(a) How overcrowded Japan is

Question 4.

Why is bowing called 'quaint'?

Answer:

Bowing is called 'quaint' because it is old-fashioned.

Question 5.

Hierarchy in bowing demands?

- (a) Youngsters bow to their elders.
- (b) wife bows to her husband.
- (c) sisters bow to their brothers.

Answer:

All are correct.

Question 6.

What is the sign of appreciation in eating soup?

Answer:

To show appreciation while sipping soup, a loud slurping noise should be made. If guests fail to do so, they may be perceived as ill-mannered by the hostess.

Question 7.

How are the pavements in Brazil decorated? What does it tell us about the people there?

Answer:

In Brazil, the pavements are adorned with beautiful black mosaics, resembling Rangoli designs. This decoration suggests that Brazilians are easy-going individuals who take their time, as only those with leisure can engage in such artistic endeavors.

Question 8.

What happens when leisurely people in Brazil get a steering wheel in their hands?

Answer:

When leisurely Brazilians take the steering wheel, they become reckless, driving aggressively and disregarding the safety of pedestrians.

Question 9.

Who do the drivers look out for when they are driving on the Brazilian roads? Why?

Answer:

Drivers in Brazil primarily look out for pedestrians who step off the pavement, viewing them as fair game. They often aim for these pedestrians, forcing them to leap and run for safety.

Question 10

What distinguishes war between drivers?

Answer:

Despite their dangerous driving and overtaking on either side, drivers smile at each other, acknowledging their skills if they manage to avoid accidents.

Comprehension II.

Question 1.

Why is bowing in Japan a complicated process?

Answer:

Bowing in Japan is a complicated process because it requires a precise balance; one must bow neither too high nor too low. Failing to clasp the hands while bowing can be seen as disrespectful, but clasping them incorrectly can also be inappropriate. The Japanese have specific guidelines regarding who to bow to, how long to bow, and the proper timing for each bow.

For instance, inside the house, the wife bows to her husband, children bow to their father, younger individuals bow to elders, and sisters bow to all brothers, regardless of age.

Question 2.

Why does bowing, a natural practice in Japanese culture, look so 'quaint' and puzzling to the author?

Answer:

The author views bowing as an art form that seems ingrained in Japanese culture. Compared to the Western practice of handshaking, bowing appears 'quaint' and old-fashioned. The author feels puzzled by the complexities involved in the practice, ultimately comforting himself with

the understanding that bowing in a disciplined manner is a culturally significant art for the Japanese.

Question 3.

Do you think the author is finding fault with or making fun of the culture of bowing in Japan and speeding cars in Brazil?

Answer:

No, the author is not criticizing or mocking these cultures. Instead, he narrates his observations in a humorous manner, highlighting the quirks and intricacies of each practice.

Comprehension III.

Question 1.

‘Bowing in Japan is quainter; more formal, more oriental.’
Do you agree?

Answer:

Yes, I agree that bowing in Japan, along with its associated rules and traditions, is a complex and refined skill to master.

Question 2.

Describe how traffic in Brazil leads to humorous observations.

Answer:

The interactions between drivers and pedestrians in Brazil often lead to humorous moments. For instance, when a driver approaches a pedestrian, the pedestrian jumps aside and smiles, while the driver laughs in return, creating a quirky understanding between them. Additionally, drivers habitually overtake each other on both sides while smiling, reflecting a light-hearted approach to driving.

Despite the chaotic traffic, they don't exhibit anger, which adds to the humor. However, this continuous flow of traffic makes it quite challenging for pedestrians to cross the roads safely in Brazil.

Question 3.

What aspects of our social life, do you think, would appear quaint and odd to a foreign tourist?

Answer:

Many aspects of our social customs might seem quaint or unusual to foreign tourists. For instance, our tradition of greeting people by folding our hands may strike them as odd. Additionally, the practice of bowing and touching the feet of elders, as well as revered figures like priests and saints, could appear strange to those unfamiliar with our culture.

Additional Questions and Answers

Question 1.

How do Japanese mothers carry their babies?

Answer:

Japanese mothers carry their babies on special seats or saddles attached to their backs.

Question 2.

What is the reason for the high population rate in Japan?

Answer:

Japan has a high population rate due to its small land area, consisting of small islands, combined with a significant increase in population after the world wars.

Question 3.

Who do Japanese stores employ to greet customers?

- (a) Gents
- (b) Models
- (c) Bowling girls

Answer:

- (c) Bowling girls.

Question 4.

Where are the grey pavements decorated?

Answer:

The grey pavements are decorated in the streets of Copacabana, Brazil.

Question 5.

What items are expensive in Brazil?

Answer:

Motorcars are expensive in Brazil.

Question 6.

When does a pedestrian's life become more hazardous?

Answer:

A pedestrian's life becomes more hazardous when drivers, who are leisurely, get behind the wheel of their vehicles.

Question 7.

What is "Avenida Presidente Vargas"?

Answer:

Avenida Presidente Vargas is a location in Brazil.

Question 8.

Which is considered the worst place in Brazil?

Answer:

Avenida Presidente Vargas is regarded as the worst place in Brazil.

Question 9.

What is a travelogue?

Answer:

A travelogue is a written account of one's experiences while traveling and visiting different places.

Question 10.

'A quarter of an hour' is:

- (a) Forty minutes**
- (b) Twenty-five minutes**
- (c) Fifteen minutes**

Answer:

- (c) Fifteen minutes**

Japan and Brazil Through a Traveller's Eye Summary



– George Mikes

The extract "Japan and Brazil Through a Traveller's Eye" is taken from George Mikes's travelogue *The Rising of The Yen and How to Tango*. In this travelogue, Mike humorously explores the cultures and manners of the Japanese and Brazilians, expressing high regard for the refined manners of the Japanese.

Despite being a densely populated country, Japan is characterized by a deep respect for personal privacy. The

Japanese refrain from interfering in others' affairs, even in situations where someone might speak loudly on the phone or quarrel. They believe these matters are private, and it's considered rude to intrude.

Mikes emphasizes that bowing is a significant and respectful gesture in Japan. Everyone bows to one another as a sign of respect and acknowledgment. Visitors quickly adapt to this custom, and bowing becomes almost compulsive. For instance, he describes how a train conductor bows ceremoniously in both directions before checking tickets.



In a lighthearted moment, he recounts an encounter with a deer that bowed to him, hoping for food. At bus stops, people bow to each other while waiting, but once the bus arrives, the polite bowers become quite aggressive in their rush to board.

Dining etiquette also holds unique customs; for example, guests must slurp their soup loudly to show appreciation,

or risk being considered rude, while a quiet sip might lead the hostess to view them as ill-mannered Europeans.

In contrast, Mikes describes the chaotic traffic in Brazil, where drivers, despite the relatively low number of cars, drive recklessly and speedily, making life difficult for pedestrians. The roads are a challenge to cross, as drivers ignore the presence of people walking. They overtake from all directions and honk incessantly, creating a dense, frenetic traffic situation. If you spot an acquaintance across the street, chances are they managed to cross only because they are a local, accustomed to the long waits needed to navigate the roads.