

What Foreigners Have Noticed since Coming to Japan

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1. Introduction

There are many troubles which can occur between Japanese people and foreigners due to cultural differences. Our team researched 16 foreigners who came to the intensive English conversation lessons in Kozu high school last summer about the troubles they had experienced in their daily lives. There were unexpected answers from some Americans, about the custom of tipping and the relationships between seniors and juniors. Therefore, we decided to research those cultural differences between Japan and America.

2. Tips

America has a custom of paying tips, but Japan doesn't have such a custom. A tip is a service charge and it is included in the price of meals at restaurants or hotel rooms in Japan. However, it is not included in America. This is because Americans feel service charges should not be fixed in advance. Americans pay chefs or managers of the restaurants for the meals and pay waiters a service charge in the form of a tip.

There are some theories about how the custom of tipping began in the U.S. First, a long time ago, the customers were supposed to pay a fee into a box so that they can receive services quickly in British pubs. There was a sign written "To Insure Promptness" on the surface of the box. The word TIPS comes from this old tradition.

Second, some people say the custom of tipping was related to slavery in America. As a compassion for colored workers that were excluded from the minimum wage, customers tried to fill the wage difference with tips.

We also considered the reason why the custom of tipping continues in America now. For example, if there are two people working at the same place, and one works hard while the other doesn't, if there was no custom of tipping, they would get the same pay. As it is not fair, it is thought that people in America continue using a tip system to recognize good customer service.

3. Relationships between seniors and juniors

American people talk back to their bosses with no hesitation if they think their bosses are wrong. On the other hand, Japanese people don't talk back to their bosses in any situation. This is because the priority when they communicate with their bosses is different in Japan and America.

In America, it is more important for workers to tell their own ideas clearly. Also, many people think relationships should be flat. For them, it is not a "talking back". It is a "discussion". On the other hand, in Japan, it is considered that instructions or orders from bosses are important, even if they are not right. Seniority is well-established in Japan, and people follow their bosses to express their respect.

4. Conclusion

We researched some cultural differences between Japan and America (such as tipping), and the relationships between seniors and juniors. There are many more things which we can still research because there are a lot of differences between cultures. We should attempt to understand those differences and not to push our own customs and common sense on people who come from different cultures, so that we can live together in harmony.

5. References

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