

＜全国通訳案内士試験＞

英語第2次試験対策

特訓セミナー(1)

テキスト

ハロー通訳アカデミー

本書の目的

- (1) 英語第2次試験に出題が予想される質問に対する基本的認識を深めること。
- (2) それらの質問に対する自分なりの意見をまとめること。
- (3) 「英語第2次試験対策特訓セミナー①」の実践的質疑応答演習を通して、英語第2次試験に対する万全の準備をすること。

本書の構成

- (1) 本書には11回分のレッスンがある。
- (2) 各レッスンは12の質問により構成されている。
- (3) 本書の前半に質問、後半にその回答がそれぞれ記載されている。

効果的な学習法

《予習》

- (1) 各LessonのQuestionsに対して、Model Answersを参照しながら自分なりの言い易い回答を用意する。
- (2) 自分の回答から派生しそうな講師の質問(follow-up questions)についても、回答を用意しておく。

《授業》

- (1) 授業中は講師の目をしっかり見て、大きな声ではっきり応答する。
- (2) 自分及び他の参加者の回答に対する講師のコメントを注意深く聞き、自分の回答を改良してゆく。

《復習》

- (1) 授業終了後、再度Model Answersを参照して、さらに自分の回答を改良し、「決定版」と言えるものにする。
- (2) 「決定版」を徹底的に口頭練習して、「長期記憶回路」に定着させる。

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第2次口述試験の評価項目

第2次口述試験は、下記の6つの評価項目にて採点されるので、受験者はこれらの評価項目を常に意識しながら回答しなければならない。

Examination Criteria

1. Listening Comprehension
2. Speaking Ability
3. Pronunciation & Grammar
4. Ability to respond flexibly to the questions asked
5. Motivation & Enthusiasm
6. Aptitude for a tour guide in terms of impression and hospitality

Lesson 1

Land and Nature

- A number in the parentheses indicates the year when the question was asked in the examination.

1. *How big is Japan? (2009)*
2. *Tell me about the topographical / geographical features of Japan. (2006, 2009)*
3. *When was Japan's present territory determined?*
4. *What is the longest river in Japan?*
5. *How many volcanoes are there in Japan?*
6. *How many islands are there in Japan and which one is the largest?*
7. *How many lakes are there in Japan? Which one is the largest?*
8. *Why are there so many hot springs in Japan? (2006, 2007)*
9. *I heard there are many hot springs in Japan. Please recommend one of them. (2008)*
10. *When and where can we see cherry blossoms in Japan? (2006, 2009)*
11. *I know Japanese people love flowers. But why do they particularly love cherry blossoms? (2008)*
12. *After cherry blossoms are gone, what flower can you enjoy viewing?*

Lesson 2

Climate (1)

1. *What is Japan's climate like? (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)*
2. *How would you explain Japan's four seasons to foreign tourists? (2009)*
3. *What is the most comfortable season to travel in Japan? (2009)*
4. *What part of Japan has the heaviest snowfall? (2009)*
5. *Tell me about the climate of the Kanto area.*
6. *Please tell me about the climate of Tokyo.*
7. *Why is it dry in Tokyo in winter? (2007)*
8. *Please tell me about the climate of Kyoto.*
9. *What is the charm of Japanese spring?*
10. *What is the charm of Japanese autumn?*
11. *I hear that in Japan it is very hot and humid in summer. How do you cope with it? (2008)*
12. *What is Tsuyu? (2007)*

Lesson 3

Climate (2), Natural Disaster

1. *Why are there such great differences in climate in Japan?*
2. *Please tell me about the climate in winter in Hokkaido and Okinawa. (2007)*
3. *I am wondering about whether I should go to Hokkaido or Okinawa. Can you tell me about their climates at this time of the year? ("this time of the year" = from late November through early December)*
4. *These days, global warming is getting more serious. How does it affect Japan? What can Japan do to stop global warming? (2008)*
5. *What is typhoon?*
6. *When do typhoons strike Japan? (2007)*
7. *How often does Japan have typhoons?*
8. *What is the difference between typhoons and hurricanes?*
9. *When is Mt. Fuji likely to erupt?*
10. *Why does Japan have a lot of earthquakes?*
11. *What should I do if a great earthquake happens while I stay in Japan?*
12. *Are there any areas likely to have major earthquakes in the near future?*

Lesson 4

History (1)

1. *When did Japan emerge as a nation?*
2. *Where did the Japanese people come from?*
3. *How long have the Ainu people inhabited Japan?*
4. *What period of Japanese history are you interested in most? (2008)*
5. *Who is the most important person in Japanese history? (2006)*
6. *What is the most important event in Japanese history? (2006)*
7. *Who do you think is the most important foreigner in Japanese history? (2008)*
8. *What was the Nara Period like? (2008)*
9. *What was the Heian Period like? (2008)*
10. *What was the Kamakura Period like?*
11. *What was the Muromachi Period like?*
12. *What was the Azuchi-Momoyama Period like?*

Lesson 5

History (2)

1. *When did the Japanese start wearing Western-style clothes? (2006)*
2. *Do you think Toyotomi Hideyoshi is an important person in Japanese history? Why?*
3. *What is “tenno” and what acts does he perform according to the Japanese Constitution?*
4. *Why was the “chonmage” hairstyle worn by the samurai?*
5. *What is a shogun? (2006)*
6. *Can you tell me about the last shogun? (2007)*
7. *At the end of the Edo Period, why did the shogun return his power to the emperor? (2008)*
8. *How was Japan modernized after the Meiji Restoration? (2007)*
9. *I heard the Meiji Restoration was very important in Japanese history. Why was it so important? Tell me how it happened and what changes it brought to Japan? (2008)*
10. *What was the Showa Period like after the end of World War II?*
11. *What is Japan like in the Heisei Period?*
12. *I want to know Japanese history. Which museum should I visit? (2006)*

Lesson 6

History (3)

1. *Apart from Samurai, what kind of people lived in the Edo period? (2007)*
2. *I heard that there was “the procession of feudal lords” in the Edo Period. Please explain what it was like and what it was for? (2008)*
3. *In the Edo Period, there was a system called “Sankin-Kotai.” What was the purpose of it? (2008)*
4. *What is “Tokaido-gojusan-tsugi”?* (2008)
5. *Why did samurai always have two swords?* (2008)
6. *Why did samurai commit seppuku?*
7. *Why did the shogun have more power than the emperor?*
8. *Why did Japan cut off its relations with the outside world for over 200 years?*
9. *Why did Ninja dress in black?*
10. *What was the Edo Period like?*
11. *Have there been any female rulers in Japanese history?* (2007)
12. *Why is Edo Castle called the Imperial Palace now?* (2008)

Related Questions:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>What is Kimigayo?</i> | <i>What is Bakufu?</i> | <i>What is Chotei?</i> |
| <i>What is Kofun?</i> | <i>What is Daimyo?</i> | <i>What is Samurai?</i> |
| <i>What is Haniwa?</i> | <i>What is Sakoku?</i> | <i>What is Bushido?</i> |

Lesson 7

Government, Industry (1)

1. *Why is tourism so important to Japan? (2009)*
2. *What are the main industrial products of Japan? (2006)*
3. *When and how was Tokyo designated as the capital of Japan?*
4. *What kind of pollution is Japan facing now?*
5. *How is Japan's prime minister elected? (2008)*
6. *How is the local government of Japan conducted?*
7. *When and how was the Japanese Constitution made?*
8. *What are some special characteristics of the Constitution of Japan?*
9. *What is the parliamentary system of Japan like?*
10. *How many members of the Diet are there and how are they elected?*
11. *What is the government system of Japan like?*
12. *What is the major industry in Japan and where is it located? (2006)*

Lesson 8

Industry (2), Business

1. *Tell me about Japan's overseas trading. What Japanese products are most dominant abroad? (2009)*
2. *Are prices in Japan higher than in other countries in the world?*
3. *Why do Japanese people like playing golf with their business associates?*
4. *What are the differences between Japanese and American companies?*
5. *What is Shataku?*
6. *Where is the biggest car factory in Japan? (2006)*
7. *What is the reason for Japan's economic strength after World War II?*
8. *What is Ringi?*
9. *Which part of Japan is famous for rice farming? (2006)*
10. *Explain Japanese agriculture.*
11. *What kind of fish can you catch in the seas around Japan? (2007)*
12. *These days the Japanese economy is very bad. What do you think Japan should do to cope with it? (2008)*

Lesson 9

The Japanese at Work (1)

1. *What is the retirement age of company employees in Japan? (2009)*
2. *The Japanese are known for working long hours. Exactly how many hours do they spend at work?*
3. *Today many Japanese work very hard. Why do they work so hard? (2006)*
4. *How many holidays do the Japanese have in a year?*
5. *How do employees in Japanese companies obtain promotions and pay increases?*
6. *Why do Japanese employees often leave their families behind when they transfer to other towns?*
7. *Can't the Japanese do business without business cards?*
8. *When and on what occasion are seals necessary?*
9. *Do many people switch companies?*
10. *What is Nemawashi?*
11. *What is Shushin-koyo?*
12. *What is Nenko-joretsu?*

Lesson 10

The Japanese at Work (2), Pensions, Health Care

1. *What is Tanshin-funin?*
2. *What is Bonus?*
3. *What is the population of Japan? Is it increasing or decreasing?*
4. *What is the average number of people per household?*
5. *What proportion of the work force is female?*
6. *Do many women work after they marry?*
7. *What kind of pensions are provided for the Japanese?*
8. *How much can one receive as pension money?*
9. *Are Japanese medical institutions fully equipped?*
10. *What is the most common cause of death in Japan?*
11. *Can anyone participate in the health insurance programs?*
12. *What is the Long-Term Care Insurance (“Kaigo-Hoken”) system?*

Lesson 11

Japanese Way of Life and Society

1. *What is the average life expectancy of the Japanese? Why do they live so long? (2009)*
2. *What do you think of the numerous bicycles illegally parked around stations and on streets? (2009)*
3. *Why do the Japanese pay so much attention to people's ages?*
4. *Why do Japanese like taking baths so much?*
5. *How has the family changed over the years in Japan?*
6. *What do Japanese children want to be when they grow up? What are popular occupations? (2006)*
7. *What is the reason for Japanese group behavior?*
8. *What is Giri? (2009)*
9. *What is Ninjo?*
10. *Is it true that the Japanese differentiate between honne (true intention) and tatemae (enunciated principle) depending on the situation?*
11. *Why do you want to be a tour guide? (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)*
12. *What is the most important thing to be a tour guide? (2007)*

Lesson 1 Model Answers

Land and Nature

1. *How big is Japan?*

Japan's land area is about 378,000 km², which is slightly smaller than the state of California in the United States. Japan's archipelago stretches some 3,500 km (2,170 miles) between the northernmost and southernmost points.

2. *Tell me about the topographical / geographical features of Japan. (2006, 2009)*

[Ex. 1] First, the islands of Japan are surrounded by the sea. Second, Japan has a wide variety of topographical features due to several volcanic ranges which run through the country. Third, its rivers are short and fast-flowing, and as a result, they form deep gorges in the mountainous areas. Finally, Japan boasts many places of scenic beauty and hot-spring resorts.

[Ex. 2] Japan is a very mountainous island nation. Although its total land area is a little smaller than California, 67% is covered by mountains. Plains account for only 13%. Japan also has 80 of the world's 800 active volcanoes.

3. *When was Japan's present territory determined?*

In 1945, after Japan was defeated in World War II, its land was reduced to its present size, which is the same as it was prior to 1894.

4. *What is the longest river in Japan?*

Japan's longest river is the Shinano River ("Shinanogawa"), which runs 367 km from the eastern part of Nagano Prefecture, through central Niigata, to the Sea of Japan in Niigata City.

5. *How many volcanoes are there in Japan?*

Japan has 80 active volcanoes, which are situated along seven volcanic belts that stretch across the country. This represents 10% of the world's 800 active volcanoes.

6. *How many islands are there in Japan and which one is the largest?*

Japan has four main islands and about 6,800 smaller islands, some of which are not inhabited. Among the main islands, Honshu is the largest followed by Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku. The largest among the smaller islands is Etorofu, located east of Hokkaido.

7. *How many lakes are there in Japan? Which one is the largest?*

Japan has about 100 lakes that are larger than one square kilometer. Lake Biwa, located in Shiga Prefecture, is the largest with a total area of 670 km². It is also one of the oldest freshwater lakes in the world.

8. *Why are there so many hot springs in Japan? (2006, 2007)*

Hot springs are the result of volcanic activity under the Earth's surface. Since Japan has many volcanoes, it also has many hot springs.

9. *I heard there are many hot springs in Japan. Please recommend one of them. (2008)*

[Ex. 1]

I would recommend Noboribetsu hot-spring resort. Noboribetsu is part of Shikotsu-Toya National Park, and is the most famous hot-spring resort in Hokkaido. It is beautifully surrounded by forested hills. Noboribetsu's major attraction, besides its baths, is Jigoku-dani, or "Hell Valley," where you can smell natural fumes of sulfurous steam, and see stunning streams and ponds.

[Ex. 2]

I would recommend Dogo Onsen in Ehime Prefecture. It is one of Japan's oldest and most famous hot springs, located on the outskirts of Matsuyama City. Its main attraction is the Dogo Onsen Honkan. It is a wooden public bathhouse constructed in the Meiji Period, dating back to 1894. Besides bathing, the elegant complex offers tea, Japanese sweets, and private rooms for relaxation after the bath. Dogo Onsen is most easily accessed by tram. The tram ride from JR Matsuyama Station takes about 15-20 minutes.

10. *When and where can we see cherry blossoms in Japan? (2006, 2009)*

Cherry blossoms (or "Sakura") can be viewed at many locations throughout Japan from late January (in Okinawa) through mid-May (in Hokkaido.) The blossoms reach their peak earlier in the south than the north, but usually last for only ten days or so. Nearly all Japanese cities have local parks with beautiful cherry blossoms. Popular viewing places in Tokyo include Chidorigafuchi, Ueno Park, Shinjuku-gyoen Park and Koganei Park.

11. *I know Japanese people love flowers. But why do they particularly love cherry blossoms? (2008)*

Cherry trees bloom brilliantly and lose their flowers in the short span of about two weeks. This evokes a sentimental feeling among Japanese, drawn from an ancient cultural belief, and reminding us of the short, transitory nature of human life. Also, cherry blossoms are regarded as the official signal that spring has come after a long, cold winter, so people are naturally in a cheery mood. Besides, Japanese people like to enjoy "hanami," or a cherry-blossom-viewing parties, with family and friends. These are some of the reasons why Japanese love cherry blossoms in particular.

12. *After cherry blossoms are gone, what flower can you enjoy viewing?*

After cherry blossoms are gone, people can enjoy viewing hydrangeas. Hydrangeas blossom with the coming of the rainy season. A hydrangea is of Japanese origin, and is the most popular flower in the rainy season from June through mid-July. A hydrangea changes its color due to pH and other materials contained in the soil. Many Japanese people love to enjoy hydrangeas in the rain. All over Japan, in shrines and temples, Ajisai-matsuri, or hydrangea festivals, are held in the season.

Lesson 2 Model Answers

Climate (1)

1. *What is Japan's climate like? (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)*

The climate of Japan is mostly temperate, but varies greatly from north to south. There are four distinct seasons. With the exception of Hokkaido, most areas have a rainy season from early June to mid-July, followed by a hot, humid summer. Typhoons are common during late summer and early autumn; and except for semitropical Okinawa, many parts of Japan have snow in winter.

2. *How would you explain Japan's four seasons to foreign tourists? (2009)*

The climate of most parts of Japan is characterized by four distinct seasons. The spring months generally are from March to May, summer months are from June to August, autumn from September to November, and winter from December to February. Japan's summer is generally very hot and humid, and winter is generally cold. The difference between winter temperatures and summer temperatures is more than 20 degrees Celsius. In spring and autumn, almost all parts of Japan enjoy comfortable temperatures.

3. *What is the most comfortable season to travel in Japan? (2009)*

Although each season has its own charm, most Japanese would agree that the most comfortable seasons are spring and autumn. As the climate is stable, these are generally the best times of year for travel and sightseeing.

4. *What part of Japan has the heaviest snowfall? (2009)*

On the border between Niigata Prefecture and Fukushima Prefecture, and in the mountains of the Hokuriku region, snowfall of over two meters is not unusual. The heaviest snowfall on record is eight meters in the mountains of Niigata Prefecture, one of the snowiest regions on earth.

5. *Tell me about the climate of the Kanto area.*

Situated in the temperate zone, the Kanto area generally has a mild climate. Like most other parts of Japan, it has four clear-cut seasons with a rainy season between spring and summer. The average temperatures of Tokyo, for example, are about 27 degrees Celsius in August, and about 6 degrees Celsius in January.

6. *Please tell me about the climate of Tokyo.*

Since the Japanese archipelago widely extends from north to south, the climate varies greatly from region to region. The climate in Tokyo, located in the temperate zone, consists of four seasons. The winter is relatively mild, sometimes with a few snowfalls, and the summer is hot and humid. The rainy season comes in early summer, and some typhoons come during late summer. September has the most rainfall, and Tokyo's annual amount of rainfall is about 1,450 mm on average. The mean temperature of Tokyo is around 16°C.

7. *Why is it dry in Tokyo in winter? (2007)*

In Japan, the climate is greatly affected by monsoons. Every winter, as regular as clockwork, winds from Siberia howl across the Sea of Japan drawing up moisture and dumping it along the Honshu coast. After clearing the mountains, which cover most of the island, the monsoon has lost most of its moisture and pushes dry air through the Kanto region. This is why Tokyo is dry in winter, and also this is why Tokyo suffered from devastating fires many times during the Edo Period.

8. *Please tell me about the climate of Kyoto.*

Since the Japanese archipelago widely extends from north to south, the climate varies greatly from region to region. The climate in Kyoto, located in the temperate zone, consists of four seasons. The winter is relatively chilly, though there are few snowfalls, and the summer is hot and humid. The rainy season comes in early summer, and some typhoons come during late summer. June has the most rainfall, and Kyoto's annual amount of rainfall is about 1,550 mm on average. The mean temperature of Kyoto is around 16°C.

9. *What is the charm of Japanese spring?*

In early May, trees are covered in fresh green. Above all, spring is the season when cherry blossoms bloom so beautifully, and people enjoy “hanami,” or Cherry-Blossom-Viewing picnics, under the trees. Also, since it is neither too hot nor too cold, spring is one of the best seasons to travel.

10. *What is the charm of Japanese autumn?*

In autumn, you can enjoy a lot of delicious food that come into season. Also, since the leaves change color on the mountains, it is a nice time to go for a drive and enjoy viewing them. Since it is neither too hot nor too cold, autumn is one of the best seasons to travel.

11. *I hear that in Japan it is very hot and humid in summer. How do you cope with it? (2008)*

During very hot, humid summers, I sometimes spend evenings or holidays with a yukata on. Yukata is an informal thin cotton kimono, and it is very relaxing to be in, especially on hot days. Also, our family often waters our yard to cool the air that comes into our house, and hangs a “furin” under the eaves. Furin is a wind chime made of metal, porcelain, or glass, and when it catches the summer breezes, it makes a nice soothing sound, which makes me feel better.

12. *What is Tsuyu? (2007)*

Tsuyu is the early summer rainy season which begins about the middle of June and lasts about a month. This rain is needed by the farmers at rice-planting time.

Lesson 3 Model Answers

Climate (2), Natural Disaster

1. *Why are there such great differences in climate in Japan?*

Japan is not a large country. In area it is only one twenty-fifth the size of the United States. In latitude, however, the northernmost and southernmost points of Japan approximately match those of the United States. And just as the northern and southern parts of the United States have quite different climates, so do Hokkaido and Okinawa in Japan.

2. *Please tell me about the climate in winter in Hokkaido and Okinawa. (2007)*

The winters in Hokkaido are generally severe. For example, Sapporo and the rest of western Hokkaido are influenced by the seasonal winds from the northwest, causing heavy snowfall and regularly cloudy skies. As for the climate of winters in Okinawa, it is generally warm, because Okinawa is a typical subtropical region.

3. *I am wondering about whether I should go to Hokkaido or Okinawa. Can you tell me about their climates at this time of the year? ("this time of the year" = from late November through early December)*

Choosing whether to visit Hokkaido or Okinawa during this time of year depends entirely upon which type of weather you prefer. Hokkaido is now becoming cold as winter approaches, so you should take warm clothes if you go there. Also, since some places in Hokkaido may already have snow, you may even have the chance to go skiing. Okinawa, on the other hand, is said to have the most beautiful beaches in Japan and normally enjoys temperatures above 20 degree Celsius for most of the year. You should go there if you would prefer to do summertime activities.

4. *These days, global warming is getting more serious. How does it affect Japan? What can Japan do to stop global warming? (2008)*

As with everywhere else on Earth, global warming has been affecting Japan more seriously than before. For example, it has gradually increased torrential rainfalls, decreased agricultural water, changed the flora, and eroded some beaches. More and more people are realizing that global warming is a real threat to our lives. I think we all should start conserving much more energy, and the Japanese government should redouble its efforts to tackle global warming domestically, as well as internationally.

5. *What is typhoon?*

Taifu, or typhoons, are violent tropical storms which often strike Japan from early summer through autumn.

6. *When do typhoons strike Japan? (2007)*

They strike Japan from early summer through autumn. Every year several typhoons hit the Japanese archipelago. They are responsible for the major share of the wind and flood damage suffered by Japan, and they are particularly worrisome for rice-farmers, as it is in the typhoon season that the rice plant blooms and ripens.

7. *How often does Japan have typhoons?*

Although there are, on average, 27 typhoons born annually in the western part of the North Pacific Ocean, only about four typhoons reach Japan each year, usually during late summer and early autumn.

8. *What is the difference between typhoons and hurricanes?*

A typhoon is a tropical cyclone that develops in the western part of the North Pacific Ocean, and refers to a rainstorm with a maximum wind speed of over 17.2 meters per second. On the other hand, a hurricane is a tropical cyclone that develops in the Western Atlantic Ocean, and is defined as a rainstorm with a maximum wind speed of over 32.7 meters per second.

9. *When is Mt. Fuji likely to erupt?*

The first recorded eruption of Mt. Fuji was in 781, and it is said to have erupted 13 times, roughly once every 30 years, till 1083. An interval of 428 years elapsed before the 14th eruption, and only three eruptions were recorded between 1511 and 1707. Since then, no volcanic activity has been observed. All of this indicates that it is extremely difficult to predict volcanic eruptions. Hopefully, Japan's excellent observation system can provide early warning about future volcanic activity.

10. *Why does Japan have a lot of earthquakes?*

The Japanese archipelago is situated along the North American Plate and the Eurasian Plate. Squeezed in under these plates are the Pacific Plate and the Philippines Sea Plate, which makes the landforms unstable, causing a lot of earthquakes in and around Japan.

11. *What should I do if a great earthquake happens while I stay in Japan?*

In case of an earthquake, several things can be done to reduce the risk of injury or death. If indoors, one should: 1) extinguish open flames and turn off gas valves, 2) open doors which lead to a possible escape path, 3) avoid falling objects by taking cover under a desk or table. If outdoors, take shelter to avoid falling objects; and if near the sea, go to high ground to avoid the dangers of a tsunami that may be generated from the quake.

12. *Are there any areas likely to have major earthquakes in the near future?*

Some specialists say that a major earthquake could occur at any moment in Suruga Bay, Shizuoka Prefecture, located in the Tokai region. Off the coast of Sanriku in the Tohoku region is another area of concern. But, as you may realize, precise prediction of earthquakes is not yet possible with today's scientific technology.

Lesson 4 Model Answers

History (1)

1. *When did Japan emerge as a nation?*

It is believed that Japan emerged as a unified country by the 7th century. Japan officially celebrates its “National Foundation Day” on February 11th. However, since this date is based on legends, there is doubt over its historical accuracy.

2. *Where did the Japanese people come from?*

We can say that the Japanese stock was created over a long period of time by the gradual mixture of the Jomon strain, an ethnic group from Southeast Asia that crossed the Sea of Japan, the Yayoi strain, Tungusic people arriving through the Korean peninsula, and the Ainu ethnic group.

3. *How long have the Ainu people inhabited Japan?*

The Ainu are descendants of Japan’s original hunter-gatherer inhabitants, the Jōmon strain, whose existence in Japan dates back over 12,000 years. The Ainu are the aboriginal people of Japan.

4. *What period of Japanese history are you interested in most? (2008)*

I am interested in the Edo Period most. The Edo Period spanned from 1603 to 1867, and politically Japan enjoyed relative peace and stability for more than two centuries, due in part to the national seclusion policy. Also, it was during this period that traditional Japanese arts, which we are still proud of, such as kabuki, bunraku puppet theater, ukiyoe, and haiku, flourished. The townspeople, centering around the merchant class, played a major role in fostering this type of culture.

5. *Who is the most important person in Japanese history? (2006)*

The most important person in Japanese history is probably Tokugawa Ieyasu. He was the founder and first shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate, which ruled from 1603 to 1867.

6. *What is the most important event in Japanese history? (2006)*

I think that the most important event in Japanese history was the Meiji Restoration, which occurred in 1868. At this time power shifted from the shogun to the imperial government under the Emperor. The event brought enormous political and social changes, and led to the rapid Westernization of Japan.

7. *Who do you think is the most important foreigner in Japanese history? (2008)*

I think it is Commodore Matthew C. Perry, who employed “gunboat diplomacy” to make Japan accept and sign “the Treaty of Peace and Amity” (or “Treaty of Kanagawa”) in 1854. This led to the opening of two ports (Shimoda and Hakodate) to American whaling ships. This also meant the end of Japan’s 200-year “sakoku” (seclusion) policy and later Japan’s signing of “the Treaty of Amity and Commerce” under conditions favorable to the U.S. in 1858. These historical events marked the burgeoning Western influence on Japan.

8. *What was the Nara Period like? (2008)*

The Nara Period spanned from 710 to 794. Nara was the capital of Japan from 710 to 784. Buddhism flourished in this period under the state patronage and protection of the religion. It was also during this period that the world’s largest existing bronze statue of Buddha was constructed at Todaiji Temple in Nara.

9. *What was the Heian Period like? (2008)*

The Heian Period spanned the time from the transfer of the capital from Nagaoka to Kyoto in 794 until Minamoto-no-Yoritomo's establishment of his shogunate government in 1192. Emperors, aristocrats like the Fujiwara family, and retired emperors ruled for a large part of this period. This period saw the development of arts and literature of courtly elegance and refinement, as exemplified in the novel "The Tale of Genji."

10. *What was the Kamakura Period like?*

After defeating the Taira family, Minamoto-no-Yoritomo established a shogunate government in Kamakura in 1192. During the early part of this period, the shogun, or the head of the warriors, controlled political affairs, with the emperor being simply a figurehead. After Masako Hojo was left a widow at Yoritomo's death, her family, the Hojo clan, took over and remained in power until Emperor Go-Daigo defeated the Kamakura shogunate government in 1333 and effected a restoration of imperial rule.

11. *What was the Muromachi Period like?*

[Ex. 1]

The Muromachi Period can be divided into two periods: the Northern and Southern Courts period and the Warring States period. The Northern and Southern Courts period was a time of conflict between Emperor Go-Daigo, who had overthrown the Kamakura shogunate government and restored political power to the palace in Kyoto, and Ashikaga Takauji, who set up a shogunate government in Kyoto. The Warring States period is the 100-year period beginning with the Onin War in 1467 and continuing until Oda Nobunaga's defeat of the shogunate government in 1573.

[Ex. 2]

Culturally, the Muromachi Period saw the birth of ink painting, no and kyogen theater, the tea ceremony, and Japanese flower arrangement. And with the arrival of Francisco Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary to Japan, in 1549, Christianity was brought to Japan.

12. *What was the Azuchi-Momoyama Period like?*

In terms of culture, the Azuchi-Momoyama Period gave rise to what is known as the Momoyama culture, which saw the weakening of Buddhist influence and the emergence of a free and sumptuous style. Typifying this culture were the building of castles with soaring towers and the creation of wall and screen paintings glittering with gold leaf.

Lesson 5 Model Answers

History (2)

1. *When did the Japanese start wearing Western-style clothes? (2006)*

The Japanese started wearing Western-style clothes in the Meiji Period (1868-1912). The Meiji government first adopted a European-style military uniform, and decided that officials, mailmen, and railroad workers should all wear Western-style clothes. This was because they felt it necessary to quickly transform Japan into a modern state. This expedited the spread of Western-style clothes among ordinary people as well.

2. *Do you think Toyotomi Hideyoshi is an important person in Japanese history? Why?*

Yes. Although he was of peasant origin, Toyotomi Hideyoshi became a powerful warlord who completed in 1590 the grand work of national reunification started by Oda Nobunaga. Realizing many socioeconomic problems of the time, he conducted extensive social reforms throughout the nation.

3. *What is “tenno” and what acts does he perform according to the Japanese Constitution?*

Tenno, the Emperor of Japan, was regarded as a living god until the end of World War II. But now he is considered to be a constitutional monarch, and he performs the following acts with the advice and approval of the cabinet. The first one is political. He convenes and dissolves the Diet. He also officially announces new laws. The second one is diplomatic. When important people come from abroad, he greets them on behalf of Japan. The third one is ceremonial. He makes speeches in important ceremonies or events.

4. *Why was the “chonmage” hairstyle worn by the samurai?*

Men in the Edo Period (1603-1867) wore their hair in a style called “chonmage.” This style called for the top of the head to be shaved, the rest of the hair to be grown long and made into a ponytail, and then the ponytail folded back onto the top of the head in a topknot. Apparently this style was based on a samurai custom of the Kamakura Period. When engaged in battle, warriors wore helmets, but with a full head of hair, the helmets got hot and sweaty. So a samurai shaved the top of his head to let the air circulate, and then folded his ponytail onto the top of his head so that his scalp would not come into direct contact with his helmet. This is said to be the prototype of the “chonmage.”

5. *What is a shogun? (2006)*

Shogun is usually translated as generalissimo. It was originally a temporary title given by the emperor to the commander-in-chief of an expeditionary army. Later, it developed into the official title given by the emperor to the administrative head of the country. This shogunate system lasted until the mid-19th century.

6. *Can you tell me about the last shogun? (2007)*

Yes. Tokugawa Yoshinobu became the 15th and last shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1866. He tried to reform and strengthen the aging shogunate, but ultimately failed. After resigning as shogun and returning all governing power to the Emperor in late 1867, Yoshinobu retired to a quiet life in Shizuoka.

7. *At the end of the Edo Period, why did the shogun return his power to the emperor? (2008)*

It was because, towards the end of the Tokugawa Period, pro-imperial sentiment was rising in Japan. The anti-Tokugawa leaders of the Satsuma and Choshu domains formed an alliance in 1866, in order to challenge the ruling Tokugawa Shogunate and restore the emperor to power. They proclaimed an “imperial restoration,” and ordered Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the 15th shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate, to surrender the domains ruled by the Tokugawa family. When Emperor Meiji ascended the throne in 1867, the Tokugawa Shogunate was overthrown.

8. *How was Japan modernized after the Meiji Restoration? (2007)*

After the Meiji Restoration, Japan was modernized through the transition from a system of government based upon feudal domains to one based upon a unified state. The new government introduced land reforms, abolished the samurai class, and established the Imperial Japanese Army, which it trained in Western tactics and weapons. It also promoted industrialization and a move to a more capitalist economy based on Western ideas.

9. *I heard the Meiji Restoration was very important in Japanese history. Why was it so important? Tell me how it happened and what changes it brought to Japan? (2008)*

Japan realized the need to establish a modern state to cope with world capitalism, once it opened its doors to the world in 1854 after 220 years of national isolation. As a result of strong demands from imperial loyalists of the lower samurai class, the last shogun Tokugawa Yoshinobu stepped down in 1867, and Emperor Meiji came to the throne. Thus, the Meiji Restoration took place in 1868, which included a series of drastic political, economic and cultural changes. Seeking to “enrich the nation and strengthen the military,” the new government promoted industrialization and modernization, through abolishing the feudal system and introducing Western culture and political systems.

10. *What was the Showa Period like after the end of World War II?*

After its defeat in World War II, Japan was placed under the allied forces for the following six years, and underwent various reforms for democratization. Japan's postwar economy became stronger with America's support, a stable exchange rate of 360 yen to the dollar, and the prosperity resulting from the war boom during the Korean War in the 1950s. Having gone through the period of rapid economic growth during 1955-1973, Japan became an economic power. Culturally, this was a period when all sorts of fads from America and Europe were introduced, and Japan became westernized quite rapidly.

11. *What is Japan like in the Heisei Period?*

The "bubble economy" that formed at the end of the Showa Period suddenly collapsed in 1991. Land prices fell, stock prices collapsed and, most notably, banks found themselves with huge amounts of non-collectable loans. A few banks went bankrupt and Japan's economy went into a long recession. Since 2002, Japan's economy had gradually been recovering. Politically, Japan faces various lingering challenges, such as reducing the national debt and rebuilding the pension system.

12. *I want to know Japanese history. Which museum should I visit? (2006)*

If you want to learn about Japanese history, I recommend that you visit the Tokyo National Museum, which is the oldest and largest museum in Japan. The museum is located in Ueno Park (Tokyo) and holds a large collection of Japanese art and archaeological objects, including many national treasures. All information is provided in Japanese as well as several foreign languages including English.

Lesson 6 Model Answers

History (3)

1. *Apart from Samurai, what kind of people lived in the Edo period? (2007)*

During the Edo period, there were four classes of people in society – the samurai were at top (5% of the population), followed by peasants (80% of the population), then craftsmen, and finally merchants. Outside these classes were doctors, priests and kabuki actors.

2. *I heard that there was “the procession of feudal lords” in the Edo Period. Please explain what it was like and what it was for? (2008)*

During the Edo Period, there was a rule of the Tokugawa shogunate called “Sankin-kotai,” or the alternate attendance system. By this rule, daimyo, or feudal lords, were required to reside in alternate years at Edo (now Tokyo) to be in attendance of the shogun. The typical daimyo traveled to the capital, with 150 to 300 or more vassals and members of his household, using the main highways. This was called “daimyo-gyoretsu,” or “the procession of feudal lords.” The size of the entourage was an indication of the daimyo’s status. The journeys and the overall upkeep of a daimyo’s Edo estates consumed about 70 to 80 percent of his income, so they financially weakened the daimyo and thus the Tokugawa shogunate was better able to control them.

3. *In the Edo Period, there was a system called “Sankin-Kotai.” What was the purpose of it? (2008)*

The “sankin-kotai” system is known as the system of “alternate attendance.” It was instituted by the third shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate, Iemitsu, as a means of political control. During the Edo Period, Japan was divided into many autonomous feudal domains. Each lord, however, had to stay in Edo (modern-day Tokyo) every other year. Members of his family were held in Edo as hostages. One of the chief objectives of this system was to weaken the lords financially.

4. *What is “Tokaido-gojusan-tsugi”?* (2008)

The Tokaido was one of the Five Routes constructed under Tokugawa Ieyasu. They formed a series of roads linking Edo, which was the seat of power for the military government, with the rest of Japan. Of the Five Routes, the Tokaido connected Edo with the then-capital of Kyoto. The most important and most-traveled of the five, the Tokaido ran along the eastern coast of Honshu, thus giving rise to its name meaning “Eastern Sea Road.” Along this road, there were 53 post stations, which provided stables, food, and lodging for travelers. These stations tended to be located in scenic spots or places of historic interest, so much so that a famous ukiyoe painter Utagawa Hiroshige produced a series of 55 woodblock prints to commemorate them.

5. *Why did samurai always have two swords?* (2008)

When two swords were carried together by a samurai, they were called “daishō,” or literally “big and small.” More accurately, they are referred to as the katana, or longer bladed sword, and the wakizashi, shorter bladed sword. The daishō were limited exclusively to the samurai, and therefore a symbol of their rank. The wakizashi was carried to commit “seppuku” (or “hara-kiri”), or in case the longer sword was broken in combat. Usually the swords were used individually, although a few samurai were trained to use them in combination.

6. *Why did samurai commit seppuku?*

There are several different theories about why samurai committed seppuku, but the idea behind them all is that one should personally take responsibility for one’s own mistakes; this was a samurai ideal. It was considered an honorable way of dying (often a way of saving one’s honor) and was not permitted for those of low status or those who had committed particularly horrible crimes.

7. *Why did the shogun have more power than the emperor?*

From the Medieval period (1185-1568) on, the Emperor occupied a special position in Japanese society. When a powerful military figure appeared on the scene, the Emperor gave (or, bestowed on) him the title of shogun, and the shogun then conducted politics as the Emperor's representative. Even today, according to the constitution, the Emperor is a symbol of Japan and is not allowed to engage in politics. In the past, the Emperor's position was somewhat similar to this. Rather than opposing the Emperor, who had been deeply respected since ancient times, the powerful political figures of each age came to the conclusion that it was better to keep the Emperor as a symbol of authority, but take practical control of the government themselves.

8. *Why did Japan cut off its relations with the outside world for over 200 years?*

There were various reasons why this national isolation policy was put into effect. One important reason was that a report had reached the shogunate that Spain and Portugal were planning to invade Japan after Christianity had spread there. Another reason was that the absolute faith in Jesus Christ was contrary to the shogunate's strict class system. The shogunate feared that if Christians banded together, they could become a powerful force within Japan. Finally, the shogunate wanted to prevent local warlords from accumulating wealth by trading with foreign powers.

9. *Why did Ninja dress in black?*

Ninjas were a kind of special forces team that specialized in spying and plotting (that is, conspiracy). However, even compared to today's special forces, their very existence was kept a strict secret, so very little is actually known about them. Ninjas are usually pictured as dressed in black and with their faces covered, but in actual fact they dressed that way only when sneaking into enemy castles. Since the ninja's principal duty was to secretly enter another warlord's territory and gather information, he obviously did not wear clothes that would make him stand out.

10. *What was the Edo Period like?*

The Edo Period is the 260-year span following Tokugawa Ieyasu's defeat of his principal rivals in the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600 and the establishment of a shogunate government in Edo (now Tokyo) in 1603. This period saw the reinforcement of a status system known as "shi-no-ko-sho" (warrior-peasant-artisan-merchant), which placed the warrior in the top social class, and externally, the establishment of a policy of national isolation and the prohibition of Christianity.

11. *Have there been any female rulers in Japanese history? (2007)*

Although Japan's imperial line is determined by a hereditary system whereby paternal male heirs succeed to the throne, there have been cases where women have succeeded to the throne when no male heirs existed. Imperial records note eight empresses during Japanese history. However, since the office of Prime Minister was established as the head of government in 1885, Japan has not yet had a female prime minister.

12. *Why is Edo Castle called the Imperial Palace now? (2008)*

Built early in the Edo Period, Edo Castle was the headquarters of the Tokugawa shogunate for over two centuries. In 1867, however, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the 15th and last shogun of the Tokugawa shogunate, surrendered to the emperor the political authority to rule the country. After the Meiji Restoration started the following year, the area enclosed by the castle's inner moat became the Imperial Palace.

Lesson 7 Model Answers

Government, Industry (1)

1. *Why is tourism so important to Japan? (2009)*

Japan's labor force is shrinking because of its falling birthrate and the aging population. The Japanese economy is now also in recession. It is clear that we won't be able to expect steady growth of our domestic economy in the future if we do not take any action. Therefore, it is important for the Japanese government to attract more foreign tourists to Japan, as we will depend more than ever on international tourism as a source of income.

2. *What are the main industrial products of Japan? (2006)*

Japan's main products include automobiles, consumer electronics, computers, semiconductors, and iron and steel. Additional key industries in Japan's economy are petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, bio-industry, shipbuilding, aerospace, textiles, and processed foods.

3. *When and how was Tokyo designated as the capital of Japan?*

Through the Meiji Restoration, the Tokugawa shogunate (feudal government) turned its power over to the emperor in 1867, and in 1868 a new government was formed around the Emperor Meiji. Edo, the castle town of the feudal government, was designated as the headquarters of the new government and its name was changed to Tokyo, which literally means "eastern capital."

4. *What kind of pollution is Japan facing now?*

Japan currently experiences various kinds of pollution including: acid rain and other airborne pollutants from industrial plant emissions, "red tides" caused by excessive nitrogen and phosphorus in the waste water of homes and factories, and air and noise pollution caused by motor vehicles, and other modes of transportation.

5. *How is Japan's prime minister elected? (2008)*

The Prime Minister is not chosen by a general election. The position is appointed by the Emperor after being designated by the Diet from among its members. The leader of the majority party or leader of the majority coalition in the House of Representatives usually becomes Prime Minister.

6. *How is the local government of Japan conducted?*

The Constitution of Japan guarantees local autonomy. Governors, ward chiefs, city mayors, village mayors and members of their assemblies are directly elected by residents. However, the municipalities are heavily dependent on the state, because their major job is business entrusted by the state, and public works in those municipalities cannot be implemented without financial assistance from the state. It is said that, on average, 70% of the financial resources of local governments come from subsidies from the central government.

7. *When and how was the Japanese Constitution made?*

The current Japanese constitution was created in March 1946 and went into effect on May 3, 1947. It is based upon a draft that General MacArthur presented to representatives of the Japanese government in February 1946 after he had rejected their first draft in January 1946.

8. *What are some special characteristics of the Constitution of Japan?*

The three basic concepts of Japan's constitution are: 1) sovereignty of the people, 2) respect for fundamental human rights, and 3) renunciation of war. The position of the Emperor, who had previously held absolute power, was reduced to a symbol of the people's unity. Also, the constitution clearly states that Japan will not use war as a way to solve international disputes, and therefore will not maintain war-making capabilities.

9. *What is the parliamentary system of Japan like?*

The parliament of Japan is called the Diet (“Kokkai”), and consists of the House of Representatives, whose 480 members are elected by popular vote for four-year terms, and the House of Councilors, whose 242 members are elected by popular vote for six-year terms.

10. *How many members of the Diet are there and how are they elected?*

The House of Representatives has 480 members, 300 of which are elected from within the country’s 300 small electoral districts. The other 180 are elected by a “proportional representation system,” in which votes are cast within 11 large electoral districts for political parties instead of candidates. The House of Councilors has 242 members – 96 of which are elected according to the “proportional representation system” and the remaining 146 are elected from electoral districts based on prefectural units.

11. *What is the government system of Japan like?*

The government consists of a legislative branch, an administrative branch, and a judiciary branch. However, since the prime minister and most of the state ministers in the cabinet are chosen from among members of the Diet, the line between the legislature and the administration is obscure.

12. *What is the major industry in Japan and where is it located? (2006)*

Japan is home to many of the world’s largest and most technologically advanced producers of motor vehicles, electronic equipment, machine tools, steel, ships, chemicals, textiles, and processed foods. Many factories of these industries are located along the coastal regions of the Pacific. (One major industry that is distinctively Japanese, however, is the anime and comics industry.)

Lesson 8 Model Answers

Industry (2), Business

1. *Tell me about Japan's overseas trading. What Japanese products are most dominant abroad?*

According to the latest edition of the White Paper on International Trade, the following Japanese products are most dominant abroad: cameras, integral circuits, image scanners, video game consoles, digital cameras, copy machines, and motorcycles. These items have been widely accepted in the world market because of their high quality and competitive prices.

2. *Are prices in Japan higher than in other countries in the world?*

Prices in Japan are among the highest in the world. A 2002 survey on price differentials showed that the average price in Tokyo is 1.06 times higher than the average price in London, 1.13 times the average price in Paris and Frankfurt, and 1.24 times the average price in New York.

3. *Why do Japanese people like playing golf with their business associates?*

One reason why “business golf” has become popular in Japan is that it provides a good setting for Japanese-style business. Through playing golf, a person can entertain the other person that is his business associate. Sometimes, a little bit of flattery can be used in order to win over the other person. The person paying for the game tries hard to make his guest have a good time while playing. This way, it would become easier for both parties involved to deepen their business partnerships.

4. *What are the differences between Japanese and American companies?*

The basic differences are the following: (1) Traditional Japanese companies have a system of lifetime employment, while American companies employ workers on an annual contract basis; (2) Whereas in Japan employees are promoted according to length of service, in the United States promotion is mostly based on merit; and (3) Japanese workers belong to company unions, while American workers belong to industrial unions.

5. *What is Shataku?*

Shataku is company housing for employees and their families. It is usually conveniently located, and rents tend to be lower than average.

6. *Where is the biggest car factory in Japan? (2006)*

Toyota Motor Corporation is the biggest car company in Japan. In 2008, Toyota surpassed General Motors to become the world's largest car company in terms of total annual sales revenue.

7. *What is the reason for Japan's economic strength after World War II?*

Close government-industry cooperation, a strong work ethic, mastery of high-technology, and a comparatively small national defense budget have all contributed to Japan's economic strength after World War II.

8. *What is Ringi?*

The ringi system is a very common way of arriving at decisions from "the bottom up" in Japanese companies. A lower-level employee writes up a proposal and this proposal makes its way up the organizational ladder, involving everyone who may be involved with the proposed idea.

9. *Which part of Japan is famous for rice farming? (2006)*

The Tohoku and Hokuriku regions of Honshu are famous for rice farming in Japan. Among the most famous rice-producing areas in Japan is Niigata Prefecture. The most famous rice variety is Koshihikari, which is produced in many areas in Japan, but the tastiest Koshihikari is said to be the one produced in the Uonuma region in Niigata Prefecture.

10. *Explain Japanese agriculture.*

Japanese agriculture is characterized by small-scale intensive cultivation and a great preponderance of food crops. Dairy farming is located primarily in Hokkaido. While almost self-sufficient in rice, Japan depends heavily on foreign countries for other cereal crops such as wheat and corn.

11. *What kind of fish can you catch in the seas around Japan? (2007)*

The most popular kinds of fish which can be caught in the seas around Japan include: “aji” (horse mackerel), “iwashi” (sardine), “saba” (mackerel), “suzuki” (sea bass), and “tai” (sea bream).

12. *These days the Japanese economy is very bad. What do you think Japan should do to cope with it? (2008)*

Considering that both consumer spending and plant and equipment investment have weakened, the Japanese government has no alternative but to increase government spending, in order to improve the economy. To put it concretely, the government should plan and implement public works projects, such as building roads or dams.

Lesson 9 Model Answers

The Japanese at Work (1)

1. *What is the retirement age of company employees in Japan? (2009)*

The retirement age in most Japanese companies is currently 60. However, since the qualifying age for receiving an old-age pension is being increased to 65, the retirement age in companies may also increase in the future.

2. *The Japanese are known for working long hours. Exactly how many hours do they spend at work?*

Under the revised Labor Standards Law of 1993, the maximum number of hours employees may work was limited to 8 hours per day, and 40 per week. This law is still often ignored, however, especially by small businesses.

3. *Today many Japanese work very hard. Why do they work so hard? (2006)*

Many Japanese work hard because they have a strong work ethic and a sense of loyalty to their employers, who often promise lifetime employment.

4. *How many holidays do the Japanese have in a year?*

According to law, Japanese workers have more than 120 days off per year, including holidays and paid holidays.

5. *How do employees in Japanese companies obtain promotions and pay increases?*

Traditionally, lifetime employment and promotion by length of service have been the main features of the Japanese employment structure. Once someone has been employed, it is normal for their wages to rise in accordance with qualifications and length of service in the company. Yet the current trend is that a small but increasing number of companies are introducing an annual salary system based on performance to replace the uniformity of wage structures based on length of employment.

6. *Why do Japanese employees often leave their families behind when they transfer to other towns?*

Because a family would rather stay behind to care for elderly parents, or for reasons relating to home ownership, a spouse's job, or the children's education. Also, since Japan has an extensive air and rail network, it's possible to spend weekends with family while living and working in another town during the week.

7. *Can't the Japanese do business without business cards?*

It is customary for Japanese to exchange business cards when they meet for the first time to conduct business. Since Japanese names are often pronounced the same but written differently, business cards precisely convey a person's name, in addition to his/her job title, company name, and contact information.

8. *When and on what occasion are seals necessary?*

Seals are required on important business documents, to express consent on contracts, to open bank accounts, and to give notices to government offices.

9. *Do many people switch companies?*

Japanese people rarely switched companies because the employment system in Japan made it difficult to do so. Now that many companies use merit (instead of seniority) as the primary criterion for determining employees' salary and promotion, more people switch companies than before.

10 *What is Nemawashi?*

Nemawashi refers to the common Japanese practice of arriving at a decision through informal, background discussions before an official meeting on the issue is held. Carried out in order to achieve consensus and avoid embarrassing public dissent, nemawashi is a common business and political practice.

11. *What is Shushin-koyo?*

Shushin-koyo is the lifetime employment system which has been prevalent in Japanese companies. Under this system, employees are expected to be totally loyal to the company in exchange for guaranteed employment until retirement, usually between the ages of 60 and 65.

12 *What is Nenko-joretsu?*

Nenko-joretsu is the seniority system which has been prevalent in Japanese companies. Under this system, wages and promotions depend almost exclusively on length of service.

Lesson 10 Model Answers

The Japanese at Work (2), Pensions, Health Care

1. *What is Tanshin-funin?*

Tanshin-funin, a common practice in Japan, refers to the situation where a company employee is transferred to another city or country while leaving his or her family behind. The main reasons for a family staying behind include concern for children's education, home ownership, care for elderly parents, and a spouse's job.

2. *What is Bonus?*

Bonuses are an indispensable part of the Japanese pay system. Instead of raising monthly salaries, the company keeps back a percentage of the employees' wages and pays the bonus out in lump sums — usually twice a year in June and December.

3. *What is the population of Japan? Is it increasing or decreasing?*

As of March 2009, Japan had a total population of 127.70 million. Japan's population peaked in 2004 at 127.94 million, and it has been decreasing ever since.

4. *What is the average number of people per household?*

The average number of people per household in Japan is 2.46 as of 2007.

5. *What proportion of the work force is female?*

For example, in 2007, the total number of people employed by businesses was 64,120,000. Of the number, 25,530,000 or 40% were women. Women work mostly in the service industries, wholesale and retail sales, at financial institutions and insurance companies. In the service industries, they comprise two thirds of the employees.

6. *Do many women work after they marry?*

It used to be said in Japan that women were expected to quit their jobs upon marriage. However, these days the number of women continuing to work after having children has increased. In fact, of the 25,530,000 working women in 2007, 63% were married.

7. *What kind of pensions are provided for the Japanese?*

The current Japanese pension system consists of the following plans: (1) National Pension, (2) Welfare Annuity, and (3) Mutual Benefit Annuity. National Pension is mandatory for everybody aged 20 or over who is self-employed, housewives, students, or employees of non-member companies of the Welfare Annuity system. It also applies to unemployed people as well as foreigners. The Welfare Annuity is a pension for people working for private enterprises. In a narrow sense, the Mutual Benefit Annuity is designed for national public servants and local public servants. The working population and people aged 20 or older in Japan must join one of the above pension plans.

8. *How much can one receive as pension money?*

If you have participated in the National Pension Plan for more than 25 years, you will receive 67,017 yen per month as “basic old-age pension” (the 1999 revision). With the Welfare Annuity Plan, an average male with more than 40 years of membership will get 238,150 yen per month, as “old-age pension.” The Mutual Benefit Annuity encompasses different plans depending on what mutual benefit association one belongs to, such as for national or local public servants, but recipients are likely to get 10 to 20% more than the monthly amount provided by the Welfare Annuity Plan.

9. Are Japanese medical institutions fully equipped?

Japan's healthcare system is said to be one of the best in the world in terms of skill and facilities. Japan reached its goal of 1.5 doctors per 1,000 people in 1983, and so now it appears that there are enough doctors. But, in fact, doctors' offices and hospitals in Japan are almost always crowded and the long waits make most people feel that there are certainly not enough doctors. As for facilities, Japan has the second most hospital beds in the world after Switzerland.

10 What is the most common cause of death in Japan?

The most common cause of death in Japan is cancer, followed by heart diseases, cerebrovascular diseases, and pneumonia.

11. Can anyone participate in the health insurance programs?

Upon joining an organization, the employees and the families of those employed by government offices, the private sector and public organizations automatically join the program. The employee and employer pay about 50% each of the insurance premium. Anyone can join the National Health Insurance program operated by municipalities throughout the nation. Those insured include employees of small companies, self-employed people, unemployed people, students, and foreigners.

12. What is the Long-Term Care Insurance ("Kaigo-Hoken") system?

"Kaigo-Hoken," or Long-Term Care Insurance, tries to provide healthcare services for elderly people, in the same way that the national insurance system provides medical care for citizens. The system became effective in April 2000. Those being insured, the citizens, pay premiums to the insurer, the local government, making it possible for care facilities to provide services to those in need. The program is directed to those 65 and older, but anybody between 40 and 64 who is in need of care may also be eligible.

Lesson 11 Model Answers

Japanese Way of Life and Society

1. *What is the average life expectancy of the Japanese? Why do they live so long? (2009)*

The world's longest life expectancy is in Japan, where the average male lives 79.29 years, and the average female lives 86.05 years (according to data collected in 2008 by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare). There are several reasons for this longevity. One is the low rate of infant mortality. From 2000 to 2005, the Japanese infant mortality rate was 3.2 per 1,000, which was by far the lowest rate among advanced nations. Other reasons include the establishment of a modern medical system and dietary improvements. The traditional Japanese diet is low in fat and low in calories, but it is also low in animal protein and high in salt. From a nutritional point of view, the modern Japanese diet is quite balanced.

2. *What do you think of the numerous bicycles illegally parked around stations and on streets? (2009)*

It is unfortunate that the streets around train stations or in shopping districts are always cluttered with illegally parked bicycles. Those bicycles often block the way for pedestrians, and they can be potentially dangerous for people such as the elderly, the physically disabled, and small children. They also may interfere with ambulances and fire services in times of emergency. Each individual should be more responsible, either by parking his/her bicycle in a designated parking lot or by not riding a bicycle and walking instead.

3. *Why do the Japanese pay so much attention to people's ages?*

In Japan, many people feel uncomfortable not knowing the age of someone they're talking to. They don't know how to deal with the other person, because age-based ranking is fundamental to Japanese society. Even the forms of spoken address change. A man speaking to someone older will add the suffix "san" to the person's surname; to a younger person, he will use the more informal "kun" or omit the suffix entirely. That's why some people get

upset if they don't know the other person's age since they won't know how to talk to him.

4. *Why do Japanese like taking baths so much?*

One reason why Japanese like baths may be the climate of Japan. Summers are hot and humid, and winters are cold. A hot bath provides escape from both extremes. An even more important reason why Japanese like hot baths is that it allows them to relax. In Japan, where one's public persona is all-important, many people feel stressed out when they are away from home. Outside the home, both body and soul become tense. So, returning home, taking off one's clothes, and bathing provide both physical and mental release from their stress.

5. *How has the family changed over the years in Japan?*

Prior to World War II, civil law dictated that the eldest son was to inherit the fortune and patriarchal rights of the family. When this system ended after the war, many people migrated to cities, arranged marriages declined, and the husband and wife gradually became the center of the household.

6. *What do Japanese children want to be when they grow up? What are popular occupations? (2006)*

I think that many Japanese boys would dream about becoming baseball players in the US major-league teams. It is because several famous Japanese players, such as Matsui and Ichiro, have served as their role models. As for girls, many dream about becoming florists or confectioners.

7. *What is the reason for Japanese group behavior?*

The Japanese tendency to group behavior might come from Japan's agricultural past. Wet-rice cultivation practiced in Japan made group efforts necessary and placed a high value on cooperation. In modern Japan, group behavior is still highly valued since it is believed to contribute to the success and harmony of the group, upon which Japanese society is based.

8. *What is Giri? (2009)*

Giri refers to the sense of social obligation which every individual is supposed to develop in life.

9. *What is Ninjo?*

Ninjo refers to the natural human feelings of love, sympathy, and sorrow, which everyone is assumed to have from birth.

10. *Is it true that the Japanese differentiate between honne (true intention) and tatemae (enunciated principle) depending on the situation?*

Yes, depending upon the situation, Japanese differentiate between “honne” – one’s true feelings – and “tatemae” – the behavior and opinions expected by society and required according to one’s position and circumstances. The tactics of “tatemae” (or “façade”) are used in an attempt to avoid conflict and maintain social harmony.

11. *Why do you want to be a tour guide? (2006, 2007, 2008, 2009)*

[Ex. 1]

I’m very interested in cultural exchange. I would like to tell others about Japan as well as learn more about other cultures and countries around the world. I also wish to clear up any misconceptions or stereotypes that foreign people may have about Japan. If many people were to get involved in cultural exchange at the grass-roots level, I’m sure it would further improve understanding and relationships between countries.

[Ex. 2]

First, I’ve always been very interested in the history of Japanese temples and shrines. In fact, one of my favorite pastimes is visiting them all over the country. For example, I’ve trekked to all 33 temples on the Bando pilgrimage trail in the Kanto area. Second, I like meeting people from different backgrounds and telling them about the attractions of Japan. For these reasons, I think a tour guide would be a very suitable job for me.

12. *What is the most important thing to be a tour guide? (2007)*

[Ex. 1]

I think being knowledgeable, friendly, and patient are all important qualities for a tour guide. Of course, having a good command of English or other languages is also very important.

[Ex. 2]

There are many important qualities, but I think being outgoing and knowledgeable about a wide range of topics are among the most essential. In addition, having an open mind and being tolerant of others' beliefs are also important qualities.