

Japanese Wisdom

Japan assumes a unique position in the world. A country of homogenous society, people with tremendous ambition and perseverance, always eager to achieve perfection.

Very few Indians and westerners have an opportunity to learn them from close quarters. I am glad to share below my personal observations.

Some Characteristics of the Japanese people.

- 1) Pride for their nation.
- 2) Hard working with competitive spirit.
- 3) Aware of scarcity of natural resources in Japan and hence extremely careful to conserve resources like material, energy, time, etc.
- 4) Homogenous society leads to mutual respect, trust and care.
- 5) Advanced aesthetic sense.

At Railway Station:

Railway Network, the most popular and developed means of public transport in Japan has several facts worth studying.

They are extremely user-friendly. You will find the following facts very interesting.

In thickly populated Japan with its large economy and people enthusiastic to go places, the traffic is very heavy.

Again being a small country, multi level stations are common.

To serve the passenger better and better, Japanese Railways, both national or private, use the width of the staircase intelligently

They divide the staircase in 2 unequal widths (a) the broader one to come out from the platform and (b) the narrower one for going into the platform. The reason is as follows.

The 'incoming' passengers have time equal to the intervals between 2 trains, say 3 minutes, but as soon as the train arrives, every alighting passenger wishes to rush out. Thus assuming that the same number of persons get into or alight from the train, the density of outgoing passengers is higher; hence provide a broader staircase for them --- simple, isn't it?

Marking on the platform floor: There are different types of coaches in use. The distances and locations of the entrances / exit doors of train coaches are at different locations (A) "O" and (B) "△"

To let the passengers align at the door positions, Japanese Railways show the marks (“O” or “△”) at the door locations for the coaches. On the Announcement board on platforms, for the train arriving next, they display appropriate marks (‘O’ or ‘△’).

The disciplined passengers align themselves accordingly.

Elevators on platforms for the elderly and handicapped persons:

The Japanese care much for the handicapped. Elevators are provided on practically all platforms of – which are 2 level type stations and they make it user-friendly again.



An elevator in a train station enables wheel-chair users to reach the platform on their own.

Elevators have doors on opposite side e.g. on East side on Level ‘1’ and on West side on level 2. The handicapped person in a wheelchair enters the elevator from one side climbs up or down using the elevator and goes out from the door (on the opposite side)

He does not need to turn his wheel chair. (without having to turn his wheel chair!) Push button switches for

“door open / close” and destination floors” are also provided on heights to suit the wheel chair levels. They also have legends written in Braille script (for the blind)..

Effective use of colors: Several Railway Companies operate in Japan and the network of criss cross tracks in metro cities is mind boggling. Japan puts great efforts to design the infrastructure to make it user friendly. They use colors, a universally understood medium. A color is “allotted to each Railway line. The rolling stock as well as the tracks shown on maps use the some colors. In complex stations such as hub-stations in Tokyo or Osaka with even more than 20 platforms, the arrows indicating the directions for platforms for platforms of different railway tracks, also use the some colors, much to help the foreigner, who does not understand Japanese.

Punctuality: Japanese trains are known for their punctuality. They maintain the scheduled time within ± 15 seconds and one can set his watch by the announced time of arrival of the train.

In the coaches in most new coached announcements are made in running LED displays to show doors on which side will open at the next stations. Audio announcements is of course a normal service.

Information on computers: Very useful web sites are available:

You input the starting station and destination. The site will give you option – faster / cheaper / with minimum charges of trains; corresponding timings, periods and fares as well. You can plan your travel comfortably from home also.

Changing railway tracks, especially in a city

Many times, as in case of Dadar Station in Mumbai (India), one may like to travel from Station CCG to Station KYN Japanese Railway transfer lines as shown about.

This facilitates changing of line by just changing the side of a platform, avoiding use of staircases – so much energy saving for the commuters



There several Railway lines operating in Japan. They share ‘stations’ at many places. Each line has a characteristics color for the rolling stock. All the information br about the line bear the ‘color’ of the line.

For example, platform no 3, b are for keihin Tohobu line, etc. This is very convenient for the passengers.



This map shows the routes of various railway lines. You will please observe that different route lines use different colors same as the rolling stock.



The location of the train is displayed in the display above the sliding exit doors of railway coaches. The display also shows relevant extracts of the route.



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