



Are "Surplus" Jobs necessary?

「余計な」仕事は必要ですか？

Text: Steve (England)

文：スティーブ（イギリス）



Many foreigners who come to Japan are bemused to see the many 'surplus' jobs being performed almost every day in cities like Tokyo. These include such seemingly redundant jobs as elevator ladies, car park attendants in suits, the typical 10 construction workers standing around while one man digs a hole, bank staff who push buttons and hand out queuing tickets to bank visitors, etc.

来日する多くの外国人が、東京のような大都市で毎日のようにいたるところで見られる「余計な」仕事に困惑している。それらは、エレベーターガール、スーツを身につけた駐車場整備員、一人しか掘り出し作業をしていないのに、工事現場に決まったように立っている10人ほどの労働者、ボタンを押したり、列に並ぶ人に整理券を手渡したりしている銀行スタッフなど、余計と思える仕事だ。

While on the surface these jobs appear mind-numbingly boring, almost completely pointless and negatively affect the employer's profits, there are major advantages when the bigger picture is considered.

表面上これらの仕事は、どうしようもないほど退屈で、全く無意味で、従業員の利益を損なうが、大きな目でみれば、かなりの利点がある。

Just imagine if all the people doing these 'redundant' jobs were

made redundant tomorrow. Unemployment would skyrocket, thousands more families would suddenly face serious financial problems and there would likely be an increase in homeless people living in parks. And if all that wasn't bad enough, the already heavily bankrupt Japanese government would be faced with an even larger bill for unemployment benefits.



「余計な」仕事をしているす

べての人が、明日いなくなることを考えてみてください。失業者は一気に増え、数千の家族が金欠病に陥り、公園で生活するホームレスが増加するに違いない。もっと悪く考えれば、倒産状態の日本政府は、さらなる失業者負担費用に直面するだろう。

Additionally, questions should perhaps be asked as to whether Japan's unemployment rate is actually as low as stated. With thousands, possibly millions of people working in what appear to be almost totally unnecessary jobs (in particular in the construction industry), shouldn't Japan's 'real' unemployment rate be far higher?

ついでだが、日本の失業率が言われているほど実際に低いのかと疑問がわいてくる。数千、数百万という人がほとんど必要ではない仕事についているのだ（特に建設業において）。日本の「本当の」失業率ももっと高いのではないだろうか？

Faced with this scary scenario, or the polite but arguably unnecessary greeting from an elevator lady, which would you choose?

あなたはこの恐ろしいシナリオを選びますか？ それとも、エレベーターガールの、丁寧だが不必要なあいさつを選択しますか？

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Small Towns Also Should Provide Information in Foreign Languages?

小さな町も外国語の情報を提供すべきか?

Text: Carl (New Zealand)
文: カール (ニュージーランド)

After traveling to a town in northwestern Japan recently with my Japanese wife something very interesting struck me — there were no other foreigners in sight. There was also very little signage or information in foreign languages.

最近日本人の妻と日本の北西にある町を旅行したが、興味深いことを感じた。そこでは、他に外国人が誰も見あたらないのだ。また、外国語の情報や標識もほとんどなかった。

My wife commented that this is probably because few foreigners come to this town. But how could they get around and enjoy a comfortable stay if everything is in unrecognizable Japanese?

おそらくこの町には外国人が来ないからだろうと妻は言った。しかし、すべてがわからない日本語の中で、外国人はどのように動けるのか。また、快適な滞在を楽しめるのだろうか。

Famous tourist cities and regions such as Kyoto, Hakone and Nara are touted at foreign tourists and information is provided in foreign languages to attract them. Subsequently, these places are at the top of many foreigners' travel itineraries.

京都や箱根や奈良などの有名な観光都市では、外国人観光客を魅了するために外国語の情報を用意している。その結果、外国人旅行者の旅程のトップにランクされている。

But what about the smaller towns — some of which are located in

extremely beautiful areas that many foreigners would love to see. Are foreigners not visiting these places in great numbers because there is little information in their language?

小さな町はどうか——多くの外国人が見たい素晴らしい景観の地もある。外国人がこれらの場所をあまり訪れないのは、彼らの言語の情報がほとんどないからではないのだろうか？

Or is there not much information in other languages because few foreigners are visiting? Which comes first — the chicken (tourists) or the egg (foreign language information)?

さもなければ、外国人があまり訪れないから、外国語の情報がないのだろうか？ 鶏（観光客）が先か、卵（外国語の情報）が先か、という問題だ。

The Japanese Tourist industry has cities and towns that are “friendly to foreigners,” but perhaps more consideration should be made to increase the number of such places. Otherwise the government’s plan to attract 10 million foreign tourists to Japan could fall flat on its face.

日本の観光業界はいくつかの市や町で「外国人にやさしい」街づくりをしてきたが、そのような場所を増やすにはもっと配慮がなされるべきだろう。さもなければ、政府の外国観光客1,000万人計画は失敗に終わるに違いない。



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