

WHY, FOREIGN PEOPLE?

When I was watching TV the other day, I was shocked to see an angry western man shouting loudly **“Why, Japanese people?!”** But the audience were laughing hard so I was impressed. He’s known as Atsugiri Jason, a 28-year-old comedian from America. Have you ever seen his videos? He can speak Japanese and he’s good at Japanese characters too - kanji, you know? He uses kanji to make a new style of comedy called - **“Why, Japanese people?!”**

Many foreigners and young Japanese alike are interested in his points of view. For example, he explained that the numbers 1, 2 and 3, when written in kanji, are drawn only with lines like these: 一(*ichi*), 二(*ni*) and 三(*san*). Then he asked why 4 or 四(*yon*) isn’t written in the same style. So he screamed **“Why, Japanese people?!”** It’s also fun for him to talk about kanji that are similar in shape. He wanted to know why the kanji for big and fat-大(*dai*) and 太(*futoi*) look like the kanji for dog-犬(*inu*). He said, **“The most popular pet in Japan isn’t big! Why, Japanese people?!”** He’s right. The Chihuahua is a dog famous for its small size and 犬 is very similar to 大 and 太.

Foreigners like Jason have a lot of questions about our ways of writing and even our lifestyles. I’ve got questions for them too. I’m sure, it’ll be difficult for them to answer mine. First, we all know Japanese anime and manga are popular around the world. But why do foreigners think that all of us are anime or manga fans? Not all Japanese watch anime or read comic books. **Why, foreign people?!**

Last winter, I saw foreigners wearing only T-shirt outside. It’s too cold! And their shirts have strange Japanese writings. Why do they like these kinds of clothes? Didn’t they ask for the meaning of the kanji first before buying them? Such designs are not fun to look at. By wearing only T-shirts, tattoos of meaningless kanji could easily be seen. These shouldn’t be drawn on their skin. Without jackets in winter, foreigners can catch cold easily. Soon they’ll start sneezing. And they won’t even put any masks on. **Why, foreign people?!** They can spread disease in the air. When people sneeze, some foreigners say “Bless you” at once. I don’t understand why they say it. But when my pollen allergy attacks next spring, I hope I won’t hear any “Bless you!” every time I sneeze.

We always react to different cultures, traditions and customs. But our opinions shouldn’t create any problems. We don’t have to say anything bad about other peoples’ lifestyles. Instead, we must try to understand one another and learn new things from each other. I really don’t want to say **“Why, foreign people?!”** What I want to say is **“Wow, foreign people!”** I’m sure, once Atsugiri Jason hears it, he will say: **“Wow, Japanese people!”**