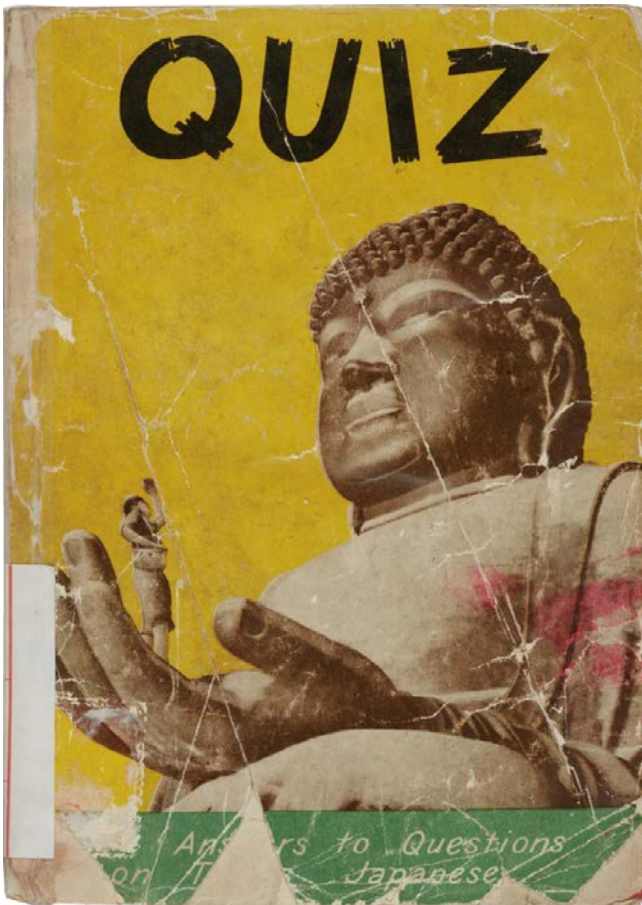


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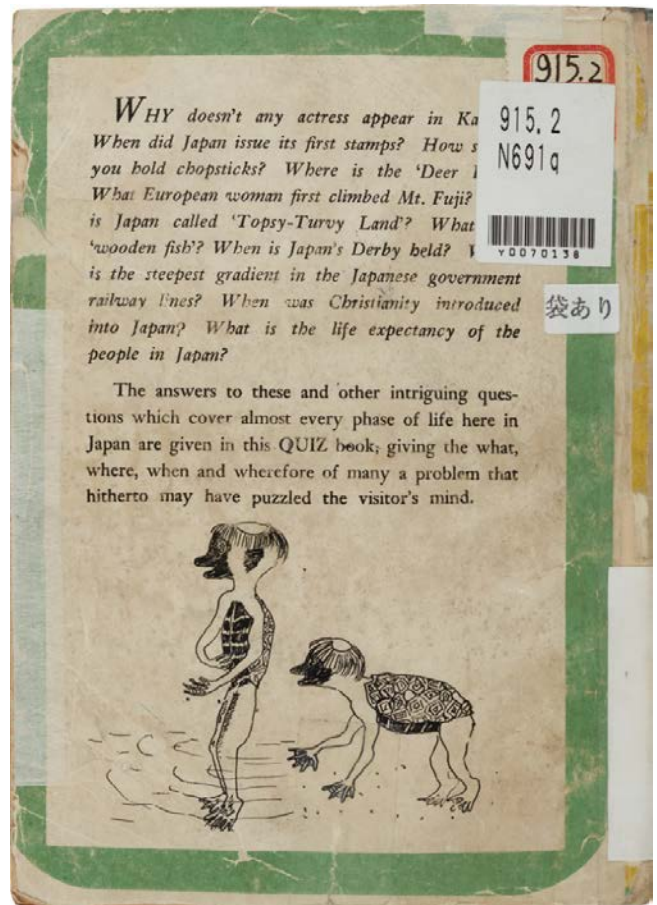
Quiz—700 Questions About Things Japanese

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front cover



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Quiz—700 answers to questions on things Japanese

Published by Japan Travel Bureau in December 1948, 152p; 18cm,
NDL Call no. 915.2-N691q

In 2018, the number of international inbound visitors to Japan reached 30 million for the first time in history¹, and there are those who predict that this number will exceed 35 million during 2019.² With Japan hosting the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020, the number of international visitors to Japan is expected to reach unprecedented levels in the near future. But there was a time when Japan was an exotic destination known only to a few. In this article, we will take a look at a book from an earlier age that purports to introduce Japanese culture to non-Japanese.

Quiz—700 answers to questions on things Japanese was first published in 1948, shortly after inbound visitors first began to visit postwar Japan. In addition to the first inbound visitors, who arrived in Yokohama in December 1947, there were also some one hundred thousand non-Japanese living in Japan, who were not tourists but the officers and men of the occupation forces.

It was during this period that the Japan Travel Bureau (JTB) played a significant role by serving the needs of the occupation forces and their families for tourist information

¹ Number of visitor arrivals to Japan reached 30 million for the first time! On the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) website. <https://www.japan.travel/en/news/visitor-arrivals-reached-30-million/> (Last accessed 11 November 2019)

² 35 million inbound travelers to Japan, 19 million outbound travelers from Japan in 2019, JTB forecasts. <https://www.travelvoice.jp/english/35-million-inbound-travelers-to-japan-19-million-outbound-travelers-from-japan-in-2019-jtb-forecasts/> (Last accessed 11 November 2019)

and tour guides. And in support of these services, JTB also published a number of guidebooks in English for customers who did not read Japanese.

This book also introduces Japanese culture to English-speaking people with characteristic style. It deals with 700 questions to introduce Japanese culture. Readers find out a lot about Japan by reading these questions, their answers and the commentary.



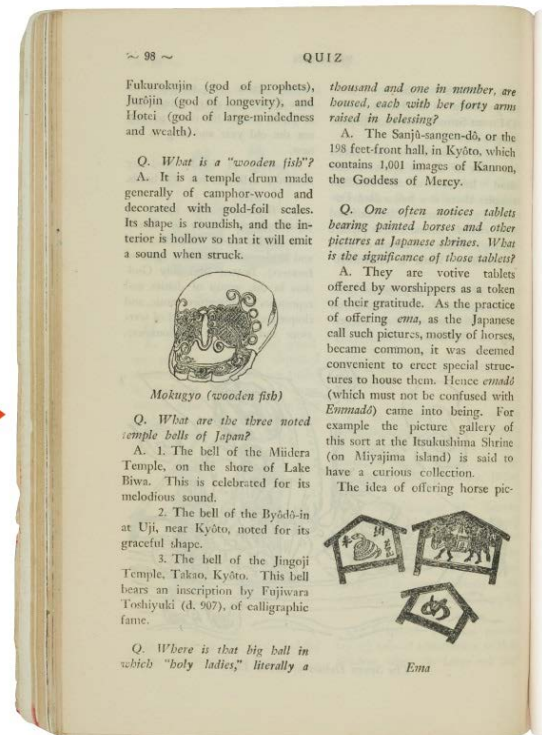
This is *Koiseya ochie* illustrated by Kitagawa Utamaro which is introduced in the chapter on art. Since the cover is yellow, she seems to be reading this book. Of course, she is not. She is reading a *kibyoshi*, an illustrated comic book which was popular during the Edo period.

Why was this book written in this quiz style? The social situation at the time may provide a clue. In 1943, the radio program *Information Please* was all the rage in the U.S.. Following this, broadcasting of the radio program *Hanashi no izumi*, a "wellspring of stories" which was based on *Information Please*, began in Japan in 1946 under the GHQ's directive. This book was written with backing from the popularity of quiz programs in Japan and the U.S..

Since the questions included in this book are well made, they are interesting even today, 70 years after the release

of the book. The questions are quite difficult and there are many questions which are too difficult for even Japanese people today to give the correct answers. For example, do you know the answer to the following question?

Q. What are the three noted temple bells of Japan?



You can try to solve the quizzes or just enjoy reading the text. The question about the three noted temple bells of Japan starts just under the illustration of *mokugyo* (wooden fish) as indicated by the red triangle (▶).

The answer is the bells at Miidera (also known as Onjoji) in Shiga prefecture, Byodoin in Uji, Kyoto, and Jingoji in Kyoto. The Miidera bell is famous for its sound, the Byodoin bell, for its appearance, and the Jingoji bell, for an inscription by Fujiwara no Toshiyuki, who was a skilled calligrapher. I am embarrassed to say that even I did not know the answer to this question. So, this book provides quite a challenge even for those of us who grew up in Japan.

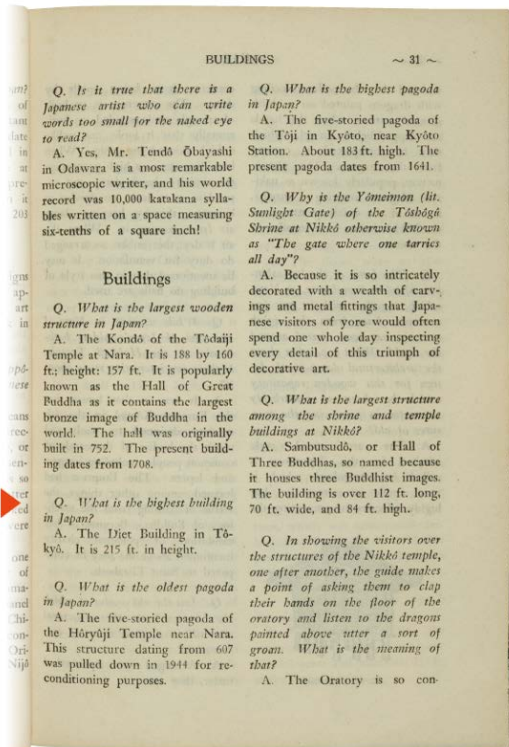
So, here is another question.

Q. What is the highest building in Japan?

Today, the correct answer is Abeno Harukas in Osaka, but this building did not exist in 1948. Which building was the highest in Japan at that time? The answer is the National Diet Building in Tokyo. The National Diet Building³ was

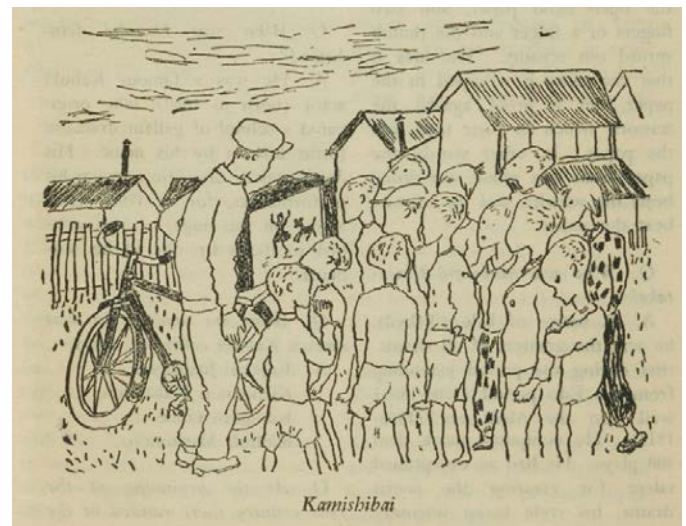
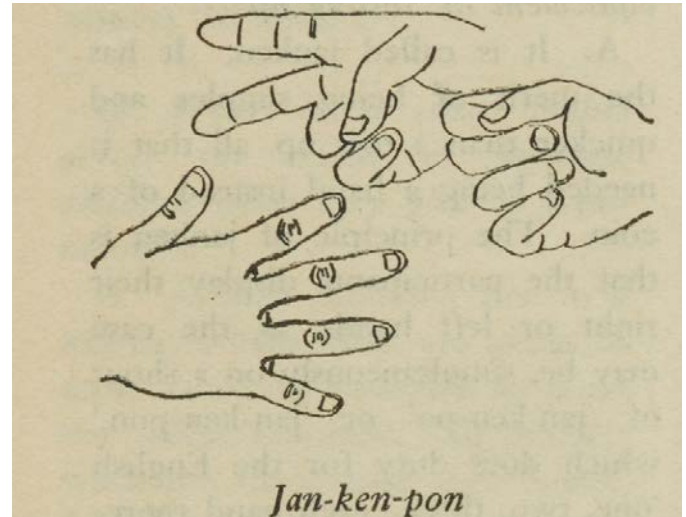
³ Kokkaigijido Annai: gijido kenchiku no gaiyo. House of Councillors, The National Diet Japan home page. <https://www.sangiin.go.jp/japanese/70/70-4.html> (Last accessed 11 November 2019)

the highest building in Japan from 1936 until 1964, when the main building of The New Otani Hotel was completed.⁴ There are many Japanese people who might be surprised to learn this.



In addition to this question, there are also questions about the largest wooden structure and the biggest pagoda in Japan on the same page.

Other questions in this book address all kinds of subjects, including kabuki, the rock-paper-scissors game, the Nippon Derby (now the Japanese Derby), giant salamanders, kappa, hinomaru bento, Ino Tadataka, the number of books and magazines published, *Taketori Monogatari*, and population trends.



From Top Kabuki, the rock-paper-scissors game, and a picture-story. The book contains many photos and illustrations.

As you can see, the questions in this book cover a wide range of subjects and content. In addition to the questions, there is also a lot of useful information at the end of the book, including how to convert weights and measures between the old shaku-kan units, imperial units, and metric units as well as a chronology of important events in Japan and around the world from the introduction of Buddhism to Japan in the 6th century to the first visit to Japan by a former US president, which took place in 1879 when President and First Lady Grant arrived from America.

There is also a list of reference books in English about Japan for those who want to learn more. And the index is detailed enough that you can use the book as a kind of encyclopedia about Japanese culture just by searching for your subject of interest. It is a small book, but it is useful in any number of different ways.

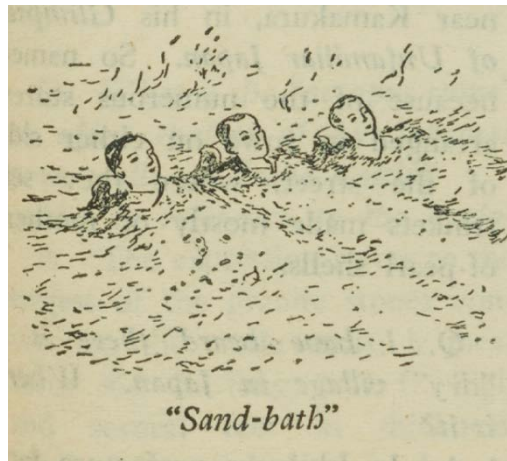
⁴ Chapter 6. Chokoso no Jidai — Yori takaku — watashitachi no shigoto. FaB-Tec Japan Cooperation home page. http://www.j-fab.co.jp/products/job/10episode_06.html (Last accessed 11 November 2019)



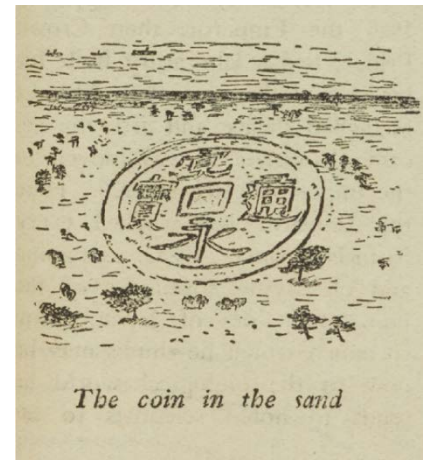
Nara

Q. Where is the park that is popularly called "Deer Park" by foreigners on account of its numerous deer?

A. In Nara. The park covers an area of 1,250 acres. It is finely wooded and tame deer roam about by twos and threes.



"Sand-bath"



The coin in the sand

You can also use this book as a travel guide on Japan

As might be expected of a book published by a travel agency, famous tourist attractions all over Japan appear in Chapter 6 "Places of Interest." There are illustrations of Nara Park, zenigata sunae in Kan'onji, Kagawa, and the sand baths in Beppu, Oita, and Ibusuki, Kagoshima. The writer made every effort to convey as much information as possible about Japan's enduring charm in a limited amount of space.

Many of you know that the U.S. Library of Congress in Washington, DC, is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. If I had the chance to revise and publish this book again, I would like to add the following question to alert readers about Japan's national library.

Q. What is the most august library in Japan?

(Translated by WATANABE Rie and OSHIMA Mika)

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