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### Stereotypes and The Reality

In society, there are stereotypes; qualities that portray someone according to their race, looks, status, and etc. Many people judge a person based off of these qualities. In all cultures, there are stereotypes. For example: *All Chinese people eat rice*. This is an example of a stereotype that many people make on a certain race or group of people. The reason why people stereotype is because it is more efficient to categorize people into groups instead of having to get information about each and every individual. Stereotypes help society understand and predict about others in the social world, but not every stereotype is true.

Before my trip to Osaka, I have found many distinctive stereotypes of Osaka people on the internet. My purpose for researching the stereotypes online is so that I know what to expect from Osaka people when I get to Osaka. Henceforth, I would be able to see how these stereotypes I have found online differentiate from my real-life experience in Osaka. Many stereotypes of Osaka people that I found online were very fascinating; these stereotypes really defined Osaka culture and made them distinctive from other regions in Japan.

Osaka has a nickname which is known to be “Kuidaore no Machi”, the city where the food is so delicious and irresistible that you can go broke from eating too much. Many say that food is taken very seriously and that many people only spend lavishly when it comes to food. Since Osaka is more of a merchant city, many buyers haggle over the price to get a good and cheap deal. Everyone bargains like it is a big shopping mall. In business, they tend to greet each other by saying, “Moukarimakka”. (Are you earning well?). In order to do well in business, the merchants go out of their way to be friendly. Everyone is considered a potential customer to

them and they do not want to risk losing a customer. Besides the aggressive, cheap businesses, Osaka is also a city of natural innovators. Businesses are distinguished by their creativity and ability to present new products to the market everyday, making the city a merchant nature.

Osaka people are known to have certain personalities or traits that are common amongst the population. Osaka people are known to be loving, funny, and friendly. They also tend to be loud and go out of their way to be kind to others. They are free, independent spirits and have the strong will to contribute to society in any way possible. Sometimes they can also be very rude in public, especially when hot weather strikes. They tend to be tempered by discipline and concern for other people, which makes them passionate and caring. They sometimes ignore red traffic lights and social rules when they want to. They would always stand on the right side of an elevator, so that it distinguishes their culture. Osaka people go along with their *honne* (instincts), rather than follow rules.

After stepping foot in Osaka with the stereotypes in mind, I have gone through three weeks of an astonishing experience that has proven some of the stereotypes different from reality. Although, some stereotypes were proven true as well. Osaka people are indeed very friendly and are very proud of being “Osakan.” They would sometimes go out of their way to be kind to other people. For instance, the person who sat next to me in the movie theater would just offer me popcorn out of nowhere. When shopping, the store clerks would be happy to help you and strike a conversation with you. One time, I even got lost while trying to find a hair salon and I ended up asking someone to help me. Instead of just telling me how to get to the hair salon, she accompanied me all the way to the front of the hair salon. Osaka people are also very nice when it comes to dealing with foreigners. Although their English may not be up to perfection, they would try their best to help out someone who is not familiar with the city.

Osaka people are known to have the strong will to contribute to society. To prove this, Osaka people really care about their environment, due to the fact that they follow their recycling system. They would separate their plastic bottles, regular garbage, and paper bags. The streets were very clean and did not have a single piece of trash on the ground at all. In order to keep the subway stations and walkways organized, there were arrows on the ground that gave directions on where to go, so there would be no traffic, especially during rush hour. Most importantly, the people follow these rules, so that this keeps the subway system organized and everyone would not be wasting other peoples' time. Also, I noticed that in stores, some workers were able to speak more than one language. Since there are many tourists in Osaka all year round, many people in Osaka find it valuable to learn another language so that they can help foreigners get about in Osaka.

They are also very proud of their own culture. They have their own Kansai dialect and of course they stand out in many other ways as well. They would only stand on the right side of the elevator instead of the left side, so that they could be different from people from Tokyo. Osaka people do not always haggle over the price, but they do bargain. They like to buy goods that are delicious, but also super cheap. They want to always have the best deal in the market and do not like to buy expensive items. From my observations, the northern side of Osaka were not as spirited in their culture as the southern side of Osaka. The southern side had most of the markets, while the northern side was more of just buildings. The southern side would speak in Kansai dialect and were more proud of their unique culture. Osaka is a proud merchant city and the people are proud to be a part of it.

In conclusion, the stereotypes and realities of Osaka people were different. Some of it was true, but it could not apply to the whole population of Osaka people. Everyone is different

and has their own personality. As people from Osaka are stereotyped to not follow social rules or cross red traffic lights, I do not believe that this is true. Any person can choose whether or not to cross a red light, according to their decision making, which has nothing to do with a certain group of people. Therefore, I can not say that I now know the realities of Osaka people, but I can say that based off of the people I met and the experiences I had, reality was different from many of the stereotypes.