

Recitation B

Why did Japanese Fans Clean the World Cup Stadium?

At most major sporting events, Japanese fans are a colorful sight; decked out in face paint and banging tribal drums, they're not afraid to make their presence felt. But during a recent World Cup game, they distinguished themselves via another means entirely – tidying up the stadium.

While their compatriots back home caused jubilant scenes of celebrating in the streets, fans engaged in more sedate behavior in the stadium, carrying small plastic bags and patiently going from one set of seats to another, collecting any rubbish they found. This earned them not only praise from a number of outlets but has also been an inspiration to fans from other nations.

So what are the reasons for such an exemplary display? The answers lie in the very fabric of Japanese society, one which values cleanliness at a premium. On the whole, Japanese cities have no problems with graffiti, and littering isn't considered a problem as much as it is in other big cities in Asia. Residents are reminded at all times about the importance of keeping one's environment clean and tidy – hygiene is espoused as a virtue. Overseas visitors to Japan will notice the lack of street bins in towns and cities. For the Japanese, this is nothing new, the idea being that you take your garbage home with you to dispose of there.

This idea of having respect for one's environment is something that is instilled in the Japanese from an early age. Children are encouraged to clean their own schools, not as a means of making use of available child labor but to teach them life skills, environmental awareness and respect for others. If you attend a Japanese music festival, you can expect to see some of the longest queues not for the bar or the merchandise stall but for rubbish collection and recycling points.

(305 words)