

【Directions】 Read the text below to prepare for the interview and the writing test.

- 1) You will be asked to answer questions and to write an essay based on this text.
- 2) You can take notes in this booklet and bring them with you so that you can refer to your notes during the interview and while you are writing your essay.

Traveling to different countries can bring you a wealth of experiences. The problem is learning how to interpret what you see. Appearances can be deceptive. Things aren't always what they seem. A good example was my first day of sightseeing in Iran.

I'd gone off to visit a famous mosque. It was far from my hotel, but I was young, adventurous and eager to explore. When I was ready to return to my hotel, I suddenly realized that I was lost.

Luckily, a friendly Iranian was standing nearby. I decided to ask him for directions. "Excuse me," I inquired. "Can you tell me how to get to this hotel?" He immediately pointed north and announced, "It's that way!" His quick reply and confident manner convinced me that he was right.

Off I went in the direction he indicated. But the farther I went, the more I began to doubt his advice. "This is wrong," I thought. "I'd better ask someone else." I approached a second friendly Iranian and asked for directions. He immediately pointed south and, in a voice full of confidence, said, "Go that way!" "Hmm," I thought. "That doesn't seem right, either. I need another opinion."

I asked a third person. Then a fourth. Then a fifth. In each case, the same thing happened. They all replied immediately and spoke confidently, but gave different answers and pointed in random directions. Strange!

Finally, I decided to ignore their advice and trust my own instincts. I began walking and got back to my hotel 20 minutes later.

I left Iran frustrated by the way I'd been misled. The people were so nice, but why had they lied to me? Were they teasing me because I was a foreigner? Did they hate Canadians? I had no idea.

Many years later, I became a university professor and began studying world countries and cultures. One day, I found a book about Iran. In Chapter 3, there was a section on asking for directions. I read on eagerly!

"Hospitality is very important in Iran," the book stated. "When a foreign visitor needs help and asks a question, it's rude to say that you don't know. Iranian culture requires that people give an answer immediately, even if it's wrong."

Thanks to that book, I finally understood what had happened all those years ago. My first impressions were wrong. The people I had met in Iran weren't trying to mislead me. They were trying to help me! I just didn't realize it.

There are two lessons we can learn from this story. The first is that you shouldn't jump to conclusions, especially in cross-cultural interactions. The second is that it's important to learn about other cultures. If I hadn't read that book, I would have continued to believe that Iranians are liars who enjoy teasing foreign visitors!

【出典】

"Where's my hotel?", Kip Cates, March 22, 2013, The Japan Times ST,
http://st.japantimes.co.jp/english_news/essay/2013/ey20130322/ey20130322main.htm?print=english