

Japan is a safe country, a myth and reality: Different faces of crimes in Japan



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Japan is often considered slightly odd compared to other countries. Its economic success, distinct culture and disciplined population has made Japan rather unique, and produced one of the lowest crime rates in the world. The country has 127 million people yet street crime is almost unheard of; the murder rate is only lower than Monaco and Palau, and the use of drugs is minimal compared to other industrialized countries. The Japanese intolerance to illicit drugs seen as evidence of bad personal character, also this intolerance were demonstrated with the national outrage when two well-known sumo wrestlers tested positive for marijuana in 2008.

Furthermore, the belief that almost all Japanese are law-abiding also creates a system that routinely treats suspects as guilty until proven otherwise. In such a hierarchical and deferential society, suspects face enormous pressure to cooperate with the investigators and admitting guilt, leading to a conviction rate in the courts of more than 99%. The criminal justice system is founded on a strong belief that the criminal must repent for his crime, not simply being punished by the law also the Japanese prisons are well-known (or notorious) for their strict discipline and order.

It is an undisputed fact that Japan has achieved a remarkable safe society compared to other industrialized countries, and they incarcerate far fewer than for instance the UK (with a prisoner rate 3 times higher) or the US (13 times higher). Yet it is also a carefully maintained image that ignores many darker aspect of the Japanese society. Unlike the rare violent crimes, sexual assaults are said to be widespread and severely underreported.

Over the year past, the recognition of Japan as one of the "safest countries in the world" has suffered a series of unsettling and worrying metamorphosis and relegation. The overlooked and unnoticed crime rate has now soared an enormous 150%. Different studies and researches have shown that the level of crime rate in Japan in the last three years have increased to 48.53% from 17.82%. Normal citizens Express that there is increased worries on stealing, physical attack and other crime types.

New Japanese government data publicized for the first time that crime was higher among the country's elderly people than teenage youth. According to the Kyodo News Agency, police authorities reported in July-August 2015, that "the number of people aged 65 or older subject to police action reached 23,656 compared to 19,670 for those aged 14-19. It's the first

time the elderly have exceeded the young in crime data since 1989, when Japan started keeping tabs of crimes by age group.

Over the time, there's been a significant centre of attention on Japan's aging, shrinking population and the prospective effects of its steady demographic slide. Some projections recommend that Tokyo's population will halve by the end of the century; the Japanese capital is one of the few major urban centres in the world that is shrinking rather than expanding. Corresponding to this movement has been the questioning rise in Japan's elderly crime rate, which doubled between 2003 and 2013, according to Bloomberg. In 2011, the number of crimes committed by the elderly was six times what it was 20 years prior. Even as murder rates declined in Japan, homicides carried out by the elderly were rising.

Some 70 percent of the elderly crimes, according to a government white paper written in 2012, were acts of shoplifting by impoverished pensioners. A 2012 editorial in the Japan Times said the surge in elderly crime "primarily [stems] from bad economic conditions," exacerbated by welfare cuts as more and more of Japan's population enter their twilight years. Even minor offenses can garner jail time where some pensioners (as well as other elderly guilty of graver, more violent crimes), enter a strange reality. 1 in 5 inmates in Japanese prisons is over the age of 60, a ratio far greater than that found in the U.S. The inmates' health problems and social alienation often compound while incarcerated.

In past one decade the issue of phone scam popularly known as ore-ore fraud in other words, "ore-ore sagi" (It's me! It's me! Swindles), has been increasing. These are the scams in which callers pose as relatives, friends and or police officers or even some times as colleagues to their targets and make them to pay for all reasons they could provide. The scam has been around for many years, with the criminals quickly learning that elderly people are most susceptible to pleas for money to be sent to a bank account in order to help pay off a traffic fine or cover the cost of a minor car accident. Some victims are milked for cash over a lengthy period of time. According to National Police Agency sources, the amount of cash swindled soared 41 percent in 2014 from a year earlier to a record high of swindled amount yen 48.7 billion.

On the Other hand, Public confidence in the police has plummeted to below 50%, an all-time low. A series of high-profile police scandals has rocked public confidence and exposed serious flaws in the way the country's law-enforcement system works. It is also of the opinion that many Japanese feel, their police are simply not working enough to deal with the existing increase in crime. It's a cunning and acquisitive world out there, and just as criminality stimulates protective ingenuity, so does protective ingenuity stimulate criminality.

There is a saying in Japan that "All crimes begin with a lie". Low violent crime levels, low prison population, commending safety and security in society, good policy of weapons importation and exportation, low extent of domestic and international conflict, free economic impact of violence and political stability are among the reasons Japan was seen as one of the most peaceful country of the world.

In conclusion, considering the juxtaposition of the past and the present; as natural disasters, terrorism, robberies and massacres made our planet a hell, everyone is in the urge to settle down in one of the safest places be it on earth, moon, mars or anywhere in the Galaxy. Nevertheless, the once-valued sense of personal and societal safety seems obsolete or dropping even in so called safest country like JAPAN, Security has been displaced by profound nervousness about crimes of all types.

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