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右? (migi) 左? (hidari)

Yesterday, I was in **Osaka Station**, and let me tell you what happened. I was standing on the left side of an escalator when I noticed that many people were staring at me as they passed by. Then, one of them asked me, "Are you from **Tokyo**?" and pointed behind me. As I looked back, I realized that I was blocking a long line of people who were in a hurry. How did he know I came from **Tokyo**?

◆ The following classification shows the typical convention in each area.◆

Right-side open: Stand on the left side to leave room on the right for people who walk

People generally follow this rule in the **Kantō** area, such as **Tokyo, Kana-gawa, Chiba** and also in some parts of **Kyoto**.

The presumption is that people make room on the right for people who want to walk because they follow Japan's traffic rule (keep to the right side).

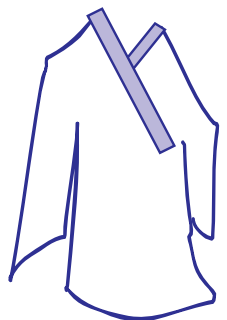
Left-side open: Stand on the right side to leave room on the left for people who walk

People generally follow this rule in the **Kansai** area, such as **Osaka, Nara, Wakayama**. (Exception: some parts of **Kyoto**)

It is said that this rule started after London escalator etiquette was introduced at the **Osaka Expo** in 1970.

◆ There are also rules about right and left for Japanese **kimono**.◆

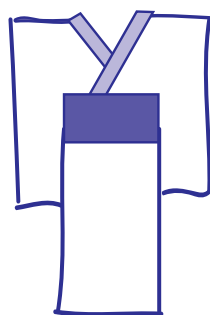
4th-6th centuries



During about 200 years of the Kofun period (ca. 300-710) people wore **kimono** with "**hidari-mae**." However, Empress **Gensho** decreed a change to "**migi-mae**."

"**hidari-mae**":
left side under the right

At present



Both men and women wear kimono with "**migi-mae**" at present. Since "**hidari-mae**" is worn by the dead for their funeral, it is taboo. However, some religious sects and in some parts of **Okinawa** Prefecture it is the custom to wear kimono "**hidari-mae**."

"**migi-mae**":
right side under the left

◆ Let me tell you some useful phrases using the words "right" and "left."◆

right
右

- To spend money as soon as you get it.
右から左
migi kara hidari
- No one is better than he is.
右に出る者がいない
migi ni deru mono ga inai
- Following suit
右へならえ
migi e narae
- Having no idea
右も左もわからない
migi mo hidari mo wakaranai
- The right arm
右腕
migiude
- Right-handed
右利き
migikiki
- Right side
右手
migite
- Right-handed (clockwise)
右回り (時計回り)
migimawari (tokē mawari)

left
左

- Living in comfort
左団扇 (で暮らす)
hidariuchiwa (de kurasu)
- Left side
左手
hidarite
- Becoming poor
左前になる
hidarimae ni naru
- Left-handed
左利き
hidarikiki
- A drinker
左利き (左党)
hidarikiki (satō)

left-right
左右

- Symmetry
左右対称
sayū-taishō
- Controlling one's fate
運命を左右する
unmē o sayū-suru
- Going hither and thither
右往左往
uōsaō

右

左

左右

Choose appropriate expression from 1) to 16) in the box of following sentences.

- (A) An alarm bell sounded, and guests in the hotel were going hither and thither.
非常ベルが鳴り宿泊客は した。
hijō-bell ga nari shukuhakukyaku wa shita
- (B) I just came to Japan, and I have no idea what to do.
日本に来たばかりで です。
Nihon ni kitabakari de desu
- (C) Mr. Ida is the president's right arm, and he is in charge of everything.
井田さんは社長の で全てを任されています。
Ida-san wa shachō no de subete o makasareteimasu
- (D) My husband spends all his money as soon as he receives his salary.
主人は給料を貰っても です。
shujin wa kyūryō o morattemo desu
- (E) He always copies others, and has no initiative of his own.
あの人は誰の意見にも で
自主性がないです。
jishusē ga nai desu
- (F) No one has more knowledge of sumo than Mark does.
マークさんの相撲の知識に です。
Mark-san no Sumō no chishiki ni desu
- (G) As for me, the event was to determine my fate.
私にとって 出来事でした。
watashi ni totte dekigoto deshita
- (H) My hope is that I will win the lottery and live in comfort.
宝くじを当てて のが私の夢です。
takarakuji o atete noga watashi no yume desu

Answers (A)-(16) (B)-(4) (C)-(5) (D)-(1) (E)-(3) (F)-(2) (G)-(15) (H)-(9)