

D18 Kazuko / Japan / Course of Studies Unknown

Interaction partner(s): German students
Moment of enquiry: SS 08
Experience of difference: Behaviour expectations for invitations

After finishing high school, Kazuko, a Japanese student, comes to Germany to study there. She is successful in establishing contacts with German students, and to deepen these contacts, she invites her fellow students over to her home. Kazuko is looking forward to the evening, cleans her apartment and provides food and drinks. At eight o'clock on the dot, the guests show up on her doorstep. She opens the door, and they all greet each other warmly. And then the – for Kazuko – unbelievable happens: The guests enter her room the way they are – straight from the street – and plop themselves right on the sofa! Kazuko is shocked. She is even more traumatised when one of her friends goes straight to the bathroom. After a few minutes, the guests notice Kazuko's confused expression, and they ask if everything is okay. Kazuko has no idea how to explain to her German fellow students that they should have taken off their shoes at the door and that they have soiled her apartment. Her response is evasive, but the evening and the mood is ruined.

1. Why does the Japanese student expect her German fellow students to take off their shoes?
2. What might explain the German students' behaviour?