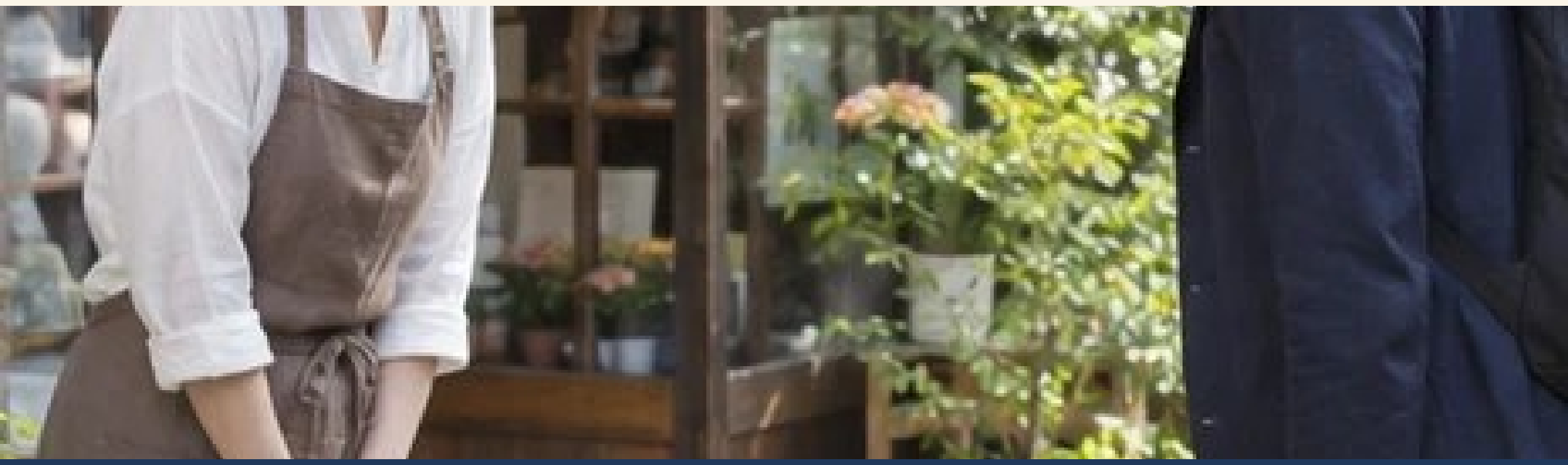
Why Do People Bow in Japan, and Should Visitors Bow Too?

日本人為什麼鞠躬？外國人也要跟著做嗎？



What a bow can say

同一個動作，不同意思



Illustrative scene · 情境示意

Hello

問候

When you meet someone, a brief nod can accompany your greeting. The setting and words tell the other person why you are bowing.

碰面時點頭，再說一句問候。場合和說的話會讓對方明白你的意思。

Thank you

道謝

If a passerby helps with directions, face them and offer a small bow with your thanks before you turn away.

路人指路後，先面向對方、道謝並微微鞠躬，再轉身離開。

Excuse me

致意

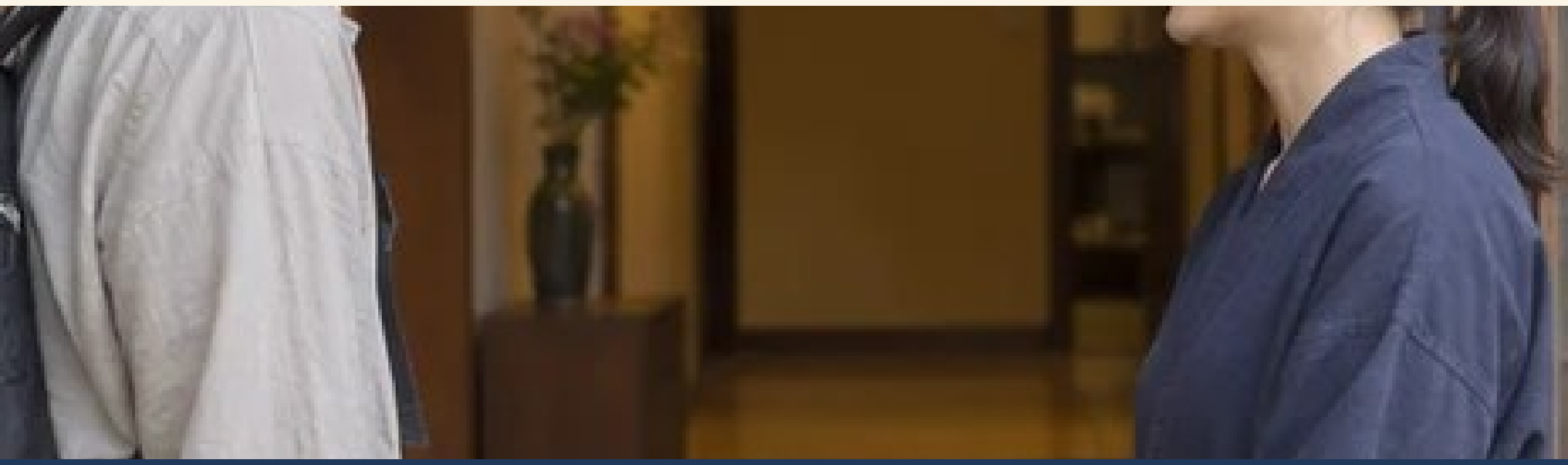
A slight bow can acknowledge a small inconvenience, such as brushing another passenger’s bag. Add a short apology if appropriate.

不小心擦到別人的包包時，可以微微鞠躬，並輕聲說句不好意思。

[1] [2] [3]

Greeting a host

和主人初次見面



Illustrative scene · 情境示意

Approach

走近

Stop where both of you have space. If the host greets you with a bow, a relaxed nod is a natural response.

在彼此都有空間的位置停下。主人先鞠躬時，放鬆地點個頭就是自然的回應。

Introduce yourself

自我介紹

Hajimemashite means “Nice to meet you” on a first introduction. Say your name after it if you are joining an arranged visit.

初次見面可說「はじめまして」。若是約好的參訪，接著報上自己的名字。

Follow their lead

看對方動作

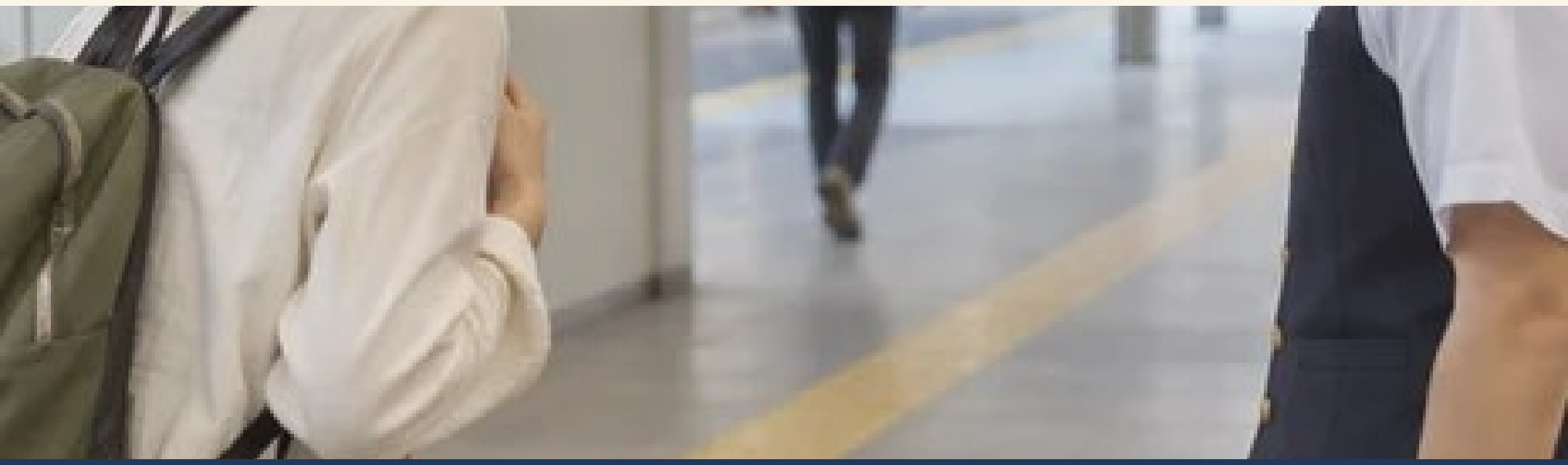
Give the other person time to finish their greeting. If they offer a handshake, you can respond naturally to that gesture.

等對方把招呼說完。如果對方伸手，就自然回應，不必同時做兩種動作。

[1] [2] [3]

When someone helps

收到幫忙怎麼道謝



Illustrative scene · 情境示意

Say thanks

說謝謝

Arigatō gozaimasu is a polite everyday “thank you.” It works when a station employee points you toward the correct platform.

「ありがとうございます」是日常有禮的謝謝。站務人員指引月臺後，就可以這樣說。

Finish the exchange

等對方說完

Listen to the full answer before bowing and stepping away. If directions are unclear, ask the follow-up question while you are still facing them.

先聽完再鞠躬離開。若路線沒聽懂，趁還面向對方時追問。

Hands full

手上有東西

If you are holding a tray or hot drink, keep it steady. A brief nod and spoken thanks are easy to manage.

端著托盤或熱飲時先端穩，點個頭、口頭說謝謝就很合適。

[1] [2] [3]

Getting someone's attention

開口詢問或致歉



Illustrative scene · 情境示意

Start softly

問事開頭

Sumimasen can mean "excuse me." Say it before asking a staff member a question, then pause so they can attend to you.
想詢問店員時，先說「すみません」引起注意，再停一下，等對方回應。

Small mishap

小碰撞

If you bump a bag in a narrow aisle, say sumimasen and move it out of the way. The action resolves the inconvenience.
在狹窄走道碰到包包，可以說「すみません」，並讓出空間，把造成的不便處理好。

Offer room

讓出空間

On a crowded platform, a slight nod can acknowledge someone while you step aside. Look where you are moving and stay clear of the edge.
月臺擁擠時，可點頭示意並側身讓路，留意腳步及月臺邊緣。

[1] [2] [3]

Match words to moments

把日語放進情境

Daytime greeting

こんにちは

Konnichiwa is a common daytime greeting. Pair it with a nod when you meet a host; use a first-meeting introduction if appropriate.

「こんにちは」是白天常用問候。見主人時可點頭問好，初次見面也可自我介紹。

Thanks

ありがとうございます

Say arigatō gozaimasu after the other person has helped. If you still need clarification, ask it before closing the conversation.

人家幫完忙時說「ありがとうございます」。如果還有問題，先問清楚再結束對話。

Excuse me

すみません

Use sumimasen to open a question. A short pause after the word gives a busy employee a moment to turn toward you.

問事前說「すみません」，稍等一下，讓正在忙的店員有時間轉向你。

How much should I bow?

旅客需要做到什麼程度

Casual encounter

微微點頭，配合問候

For ordinary greetings, a slight nod or modest bow is enough. You can spend your attention on the person and what they are saying.

一般旅遊問候點頭或微微鞠躬即可，把注意力放在對方和談話內容。

Formal visit

先看主人或主辦人提示

For an organized ceremony or formal visit, watch the host’s cue. Ask the organizer beforehand if a particular greeting is expected.

典禮或正式拜訪可觀察主人的提示；若有特定禮節，事先向主辦人詢問。

Limited mobility

以舒服的姿勢口頭致意

If bowing is uncomfortable or difficult, offer a spoken greeting or thanks from a comfortable position. A warm acknowledgment communicates your intent.

若身體不方便鞠躬，在舒適姿勢下口頭問候或道謝，也能清楚傳達心意。

[1] [2] [3]

Three greetings you can practise

三個可以先練的日文招呼

おはようございます

早安

Use this polite morning greeting when you meet a host or staff member in the morning.

早上遇到民宿主人或工作人員時，可以用這句有禮貌的早安。

こんにちは

您好

This is a useful daytime greeting. A small nod can accompany it when that suits the interaction.

白天可用這句打招呼，依互動場合搭配輕點頭即可。

ありがとうございます

謝謝您

Use a spoken thank-you after help or a service. Listen to the course audio if you want to practise the rhythm.

接受協助或服務後可口頭道謝。想先練語調，可以聽教材音檔。

[4]

REFERENCES

Sources & links

資料來源與原文連結

Tap a source to open the original. Edition: 24 Nov 2026.
點選條目可開啟原文。版本日期為 2026 年 11 月 24 日。

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02 **japan.travel**
日本政府觀光局 · 日常問候 →

03 **japan.travel**
JNTO | 問候、道謝與致歉 →

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Illustrative scene · 情境示意

Diagrams redrawn for this edition. Scene images are illustrative.
圖解依資料重新編排。內頁影像用於說明情境。