



The Blue-Eyed Dolls: Friendship That Crossed an Ocean

Read the passage and answer the questions. (CEFR B1–B2)

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1 In 1927, about 12,000 dolls crossed the Pacific Ocean from the United States to Japan. Japanese children called them the blue-eyed dolls, and each one carried a passport, a ticket, and a letter from an American child. The project was led by Sidney Gulick, a former missionary who had lived in Japan for about 25 years. He was alarmed by the anti-Japanese feeling growing in America, and he believed that children could build the friendship that politicians were failing to create.



2 The dolls arrived in time for Hinamatsuri, and many schools displayed them next to their hina dolls. Japan responded the same year by sending 58 large dolls in silk kimono, timed to arrive before Christmas. The businessman Eiichi Shibusawa helped organize both sides of the exchange in Japan.

3 The story, however, did not end simply. When war broke out between the two countries, many of the blue-eyed dolls were destroyed as symbols of the enemy. Some survived only because individuals quietly hid them, and a few hundred are known in Japan today. The episode raises a question that still matters: can culture protect friendship when politics turns against it?

Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- ☐ (A) A doll exchange in 1927 tried to build friendship between two countries, but war later put it to the test.
- ☐ (B) American children learned how to make hina dolls from Japanese teachers.
- ☐ (C) Sidney Gulick wanted to sell American dolls in Japanese shops.
- ☐ (D) Japan stopped celebrating Hinamatsuri because of the war.

2. What did each blue-eyed doll carry when it came to Japan?

- ☐ (A) A silk kimono and a small box
- ☐ (B) A passport, a ticket, and a letter from an American child
- ☐ (C) A photo of Sidney Gulick
- ☐ (D) A Christmas card for Japanese children

3. How did Japan respond to the gift?

- ☐ (A) It sent 12,000 dolls back the next year.
- ☐ (B) It invited American children to visit Japan for Hinamatsuri.
- ☐ (C) It sent 58 large dolls in silk kimono to arrive before Christmas.
- ☐ (D) It asked Sidney Gulick to stop the project.

4. What can we infer about the people who hid the blue-eyed dolls?

- ☐ (A) They were ordered by the government to keep the dolls safe.
- ☐ (B) They wanted to sell the dolls after the war.
- ☐ (C) They did not know where the dolls came from.
- ☐ (D) They took a personal risk because they valued the dolls and the friendship behind them.

5. In paragraph 1, the word "alarmed" is closest in meaning to

- ☐ (A) worried
- ☐ (B) pleased
- ☐ (C) surprised in a good way
- ☐ (D) bored

6. Why does the writer end the passage with a question?

- ☐ (A) To test whether readers remember the number of dolls.
- ☐ (B) To ask readers to think about whether cultural exchange still has value when countries are in conflict.
- ☐ (C) To show that the writer does not know what happened to the dolls.
- ☐ (D) To suggest that Japan should send more dolls to the United States.



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

Match the words with the definitions. Then rewrite and summarize.

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|---------------|---|
| 1. missionary | a. to plan and arrange an event or activity |
| 2. alarmed | b. to damage something so badly that it cannot be used or repaired |
| 3. exchange | c. one person, not a group or an organization |
| 4. fail to | d. a person who goes to another country to teach people about a religion |
| 5. respond | e. feeling worried because something bad or dangerous may happen |
| 6. organize | f. an activity in which two groups or countries give things to each other or visit each other |
| 7. destroy | g. to not do something that you try to do or that people expect you to do |
| 8. individual | h. to do or say something as an answer to something else |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “He was alarmed by the anti-Japanese feeling growing in America, and he believed that children could build the friendship that politicians were failing to create.”

Hint: Split it into two sentences. Use "worried" for "alarmed" and "could not" for "were failing to".

2. “The dolls arrived in time for Hinamatsuri, and many schools displayed them next to their hina dolls.”

Hint: Use "just before" instead of "in time for" and "put ... beside" instead of "displayed ... next to".

3. “Some survived only because individuals quietly hid them, and a few hundred are known in Japan today.”

Hint: Use "If people had not ..." and replace "survived" with "are still here".

Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.



Debate & Opinion Essay

Prepare for a debate. Then write your opinion (100–150 words).

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Motion: Cultural exchange between children can prevent conflicts between countries.

FOR 賛成

- Children who exchange letters and gifts learn that people in another country are friends, not enemies, and they keep this feeling as adults.
- The 1927 doll project made thousands of children and schools on both sides take part, which is something politicians alone cannot do.
- Even during the war, some people hid the dolls. This shows that the friendship the dolls carried was real and lasted under pressure.

Add your own reason:

AGAINST 反対

- The doll exchange happened in 1927, but war still broke out between the two countries, so it did not prevent conflict.
- Wars are decided by governments and leaders, not by children, so children's friendship has little power over them.
- When politics turned against the friendship, many dolls were destroyed as symbols of the enemy, so culture could not protect itself.

Add your own reason:

Opinion	<i>I believe / I think that ...</i>
Reason 1	<i>First, ... For example, ...</i>
Reason 2	<i>Second, ... In fact, ...</i>
Counter	<i>Some people say ... However, ...</i>
Conclusion	<i>In conclusion, ...</i>