

# The Instant Sleepers

## Nope, not Narcoleptics!

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Some of you may be wondering what in the world I may be talking about and others will pretty much keep guessing. Well, one whopping eye opener I experienced when I moved to Japan was the peculiar train etiquette. At first, I found it offensive then rude then plain ol' annoying. I am getting accustomed to it a day at a time, but it can stir up some feelings once in a blue. When you visit Japan, you realize that the chivalry that was imbued in your mind back home can deviate substantially from views here. You could either "roll with the punches," which means to downright ignore the chivalry from your home country or you could always complain about it like I did and be miserable.

I remember one of my first instances, I was passively strolling to a seat soon after boarding the train when a man practically

ran past me possibly as fast as *Flash* nearly knocking me down to sit on the seat I was headed for. In seconds, he fell "asleep." Yes, that fast. I almost felt like *Marvel's Human Torch* and firing up like hell. It looks like rushing to get seats will always happen. Sometimes, I am just at a loss for words. I have always been taught that a man gives up a seat when he sees a woman standing up. Yet, that's rarely the case. It's easy to say okay forget it, but my instilled beliefs surface even when I try ignore them. At the same time, trains in this country tend to get crowded and some people avoid standing up so they race toward vacancies a mile a minute.

Later on, I witnessed another aberration. As I mentioned before, the man that almost knocked me down pretty much played dead. More or less each time I get on the train a number of passengers have a seat and a few do zoom past. As soon as they close their eyes, they seem to be on their third dream. However, when their train stop approaches, they gracefully get up and walk out. Initially, I

was in shock, then denial. After that, all I could do was laugh. As a matter of fact, I continue to find it hilarious. I came to the conclusion that these men and women are usually quite exhausted and rush to find a place to rest their tushes after 12 or more hours of labor or due to little sleep. Yes, in Japan people tend to work a great deal. It doesn't take away from folks around the world. I can only compare the citizens here to those in North America and the Caribbean. Those are the only places I have lived in.

I must admit I wanted to blame some of these citizens for being less like me and more like themselves. Ensuing that mind frame, I took note and asked myself, "Who do you think you are Jennifer?! You should do like the Romans do and stop being so closed minded." Allowing myself to see this situation in a different light has taken a load off my mind and shoulders. The more I open my mind, the more I grow and that's why I am here. What do you think?