

Mount Fuji - Japan

Seen from the seashore, 40 km away, Mt Fuji rises in a lonely, awesome, splendour, dominating Japan as Everest crowns the Himalayas. Soaring more than 3 km's high, it has a kind of absolute, elemental force, a mystical grandeur, an utter purity. From afar, Mt. Fuji is incredibly beautiful. Usually serene and dormant, Fuji-san as the Japanese call it, is prone to sporadic eruptions, its last tantrum in 1707 covered Tokyo some 105 km, away with 15cm of ash. Despite such misdemeanours, Fuji san means a lot to the Japanese. More than just the nation's unofficial logo, it is the repository of the nation's soul, a place where tribe members recharge their emotional batteries their uniqueness. It is Japan's highest mountain, its most sublime symbol. Nothing tops Fuji. Thus climbing Fuji-san is more than just mountaineering. For most Japanese it's a patriotic ritual, a pilgrimage. Most crudely, it is a demonstration of collective nationalism. During the brief, two-month climbing season in midsummer, everyday is a celebration on the slopes of Fuji-san. Each year, some three million people start up its slopes; about 20,000 actually pass the sixth station.

Mount Fuji is much more than the tallest mountain of their land; it is the much revered Fujiyama or even Fuji San (word 'san is a Japanese word that shows utmost respect); a place very much intertwined with their culture and heritage. For them the mount is the representative of God. Mount Fuji is a dormant strato volcano, a strato volcano is one that stands isolated like Kilimanjaro of Africa or Paricutin of Mexico. Japan, the second largest economy in the world is a chain of mountainous islands about 200 km east of China; it comprises of 4 main islands; Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu, and Shikoku, and about 4000 small islets in the Pacific Ocean. It is located on a junction where three continental plates, which converge towards each other giving rise to natural calamities like volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and tsunamis, making Japan and nearby areas the most vulnerable places on earth. On the slopes of Mount Fuji various Buddhist shrines are located; thousands of pilgrims from all regions of Japan pay visit to this location for the purpose of worship. It is argued that the name Fuji itself is said to have originated from the word 'Ainu' language meaning 'everlasting'. Winter and early spring are the best seasons when most of the pilgrims climb up the mountain to pay a visit. Climbing to the top of Fujiyama is considered an achievement, both for old and young, pilgrims and tourists all participate in it with enthusiasm.

Q. Write and learn the spellings of the underlined words from the text.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

Q. Write the meanings of the following words in the spaces provided.

a. misdemeanours _____

b. nationalism _____

c. patriotic _____

d. sublime _____

e. grandeur _____

f. dormant _____

Q. Answer the following questions based on the text 'Mount Fuji-Japan'.

a. How does the writer describe Mount Fuji?

b. How many records are there in history of Mount Fuji erupting and when?

c. How sacred is Mount Fuji to the Japanese? Explain your answer.

d. Why does the writer believe it is a demonstration of 'collective nationalism'?

e. Where is Mount Fuji located?

f. Why is Mount Fuji prone to natural calamities?

g. Describe the different types of people who climb Mount Fuji.
