

Lesson 1 Anime Pilgrimages

Lesson 1 Part 1 Summary

Lucky Star is based on a four-panel comic strip series. The story describes the everyday lives of four high-school girls. It was broadcast in 2007 and was a great hit.

Lucky Star was a great hit like *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*. It was one of the most popular television anime series of 2006.

Many fans of novels, movies, and TV dramas make “pilgrimages.” “Pilgrims” visit places where stories were set. They consider these places to be “holy” places. Anime fans have also been visiting such places. These are called “Anime Pilgrimages.”

These places have attracted fans from Japan and around the world.

Lesson 1 Part 2 Summary

Washinomiya Shrine is a famous “Anime Pilgrimage” site. A shrine in *Lucky Star* was modeled on this shrine.

Some fans noticed this and started to visit this shrine. After that, the connection came to be widely known. Washinomiya Shrine became famous.

According to statistics, the number of New Year’s visitors to the shrine was about 130,000 in 2007.

The next year, the number increased to about 300,000. It reached 470,000 in 2011. It is estimated that the “pilgrimages” added about 3.1 billion yen to the local economy.

Lesson 1 Part 3 Summary

A variety of souvenirs, including character goods, are sold at Washinomiya Shrine and other sites. Many fans visit the sites to buy souvenirs and to take photos.

The growing number of “Anime Pilgrims” can cause problems. Some of them go into restricted areas to take pictures.

Others walk around local neighborhoods to find better photo spots. They are often very noisy and such behavior annoys the residents.

There are “Anime Pilgrims” who do not respect local customs and lifestyles. However, more and more visitors are now trying to communicate with local people. They want to do something for the local areas.

Lesson 1 Part 4 Summary

Lucky Star finished airing in 2007, but fans have continued to interact with local people in the Washinomiya Shrine area.

Meanwhile, local people have tried to understand anime better, and they have willingly accepted anime fans. Mutual understanding has had a very positive economic effect.

“Anime Pilgrimages” play an important role in attracting tourists from abroad. Those people often have a strong interest in Japanese culture and in the locations of their favorite anime stories.

Information about “Anime Pilgrimages” is being provided in many different languages on websites and social media. In Japan, “Anime Pilgrimages” have great potential for promoting regional development.