

Introduction:

This activity teaches about how the power of culture predisposes us towards how we choose to view events, and how each of us belongs to a “cultural tribe” that partially determines our ideas about appropriate solutions and paths to action. You will be asked to consider how people from other “cultural tribes” might propose ideas or actions that are counterintuitive to your own culture’s way of thinking.

Activity Instructions:

1. Read the following article: [Glimpses of Culture Through a Lava Flow: Bomb the Crater or Clean Your House?](https://japaninsight.wordpress.com/2014/10/12/glimpses-of-culture-through-a-lava-flow-bomb-the-crater-or-clean-your-house/)

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2. Get into pairs and discuss the following questions:
 - “Does your culture predispose you to repel lava flows with bombs and D9s or welcome the lava ‘as an important guest?’”
 - Why are there “such starkly different responses to the same phenomena?”
3. Change partners, and discuss the following questions:
 - Does your culture traditionally put people above nature?
 - Does your culture believe that people can “own” land?
 - To what extent should “gaps” in opinion be filled (e.g., is it possible to reconcile the Hawaiian belief that people cannot own land with the Western idea of land ownership?)
4. In whole group discussion, discuss the following questions:
 - Why is it important “to *not* focus on issues beyond your control (like trying to change the beliefs of others)?”
 - Is it “possible to respect others’ rights to believe what they want without accepting those beliefs yourself?”
 - What is the value of “focusing on common ground and cooperation for achieving mutual benefit?”

(Sullivan, 2018)