Youth culture in japan.

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Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 Title Annotation: Japan Enters the 21st Century Author: Kawasaki, Ken'ichi Date: Jun 22, 1994 Words: 7827 Publication: Social Justice ISSN: 1043-1578 1. The History of Youth Culture in Japan In order to understand youth culture in Japan, it is necessary to examine its history in comparison with youth in the United States and the United Kingdom. This article analyzes the main generational groupings to have grown up under conditions of affluence and discusses their readiness to take part in an increasingly global culture. There is hope that they can reconcile the best qualities of traditional Japanese culture, with its emphasis on the group, with the individualism and voluntarism demanded by information-based societies. 1. 1: Modernization and Youth Culture in Western Europe Modernization, which consists of urbanization, industrialization, and the development of an information-based society, began in British society in the last half of the 18th century. It subsequently spread to the European continent and the United States. In the decades following World War II, the world was dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union. In the 1980s, however, the balance of power in the world drastically changed, giving way to multidimensional centers, e. g., the United States, the European Community, and Japan. Accordingly, late modernization swept away the Western-style model and today requires reconsideration as a multidimensional model. Despite differences in degree, almost all nations were caught up in the wave of modernization. Consequently, they share similar economic institutions, political systems, and cultural values. Direct comparisons among them were difficult before modern times. Comparisons were perhaps possible in the case of neighboring regions or those having close relationships. According to

J. R. Gillis (1981), the history of youth culture in Western Europe can be divided into five periods: 1. Young people before industrialization (before the 18th century); 2. The early period of industrialization (end of the 18th century to the 1860s); 3. The birth of adolescence (from the 1870s to 1899); 4. Adaptation and deviation (1900s to the 1940s); and 5. Mutual penetration, coexistence, and formalization (from the 1950s to the present). 1 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 Youth in the sociological sense of a life-cycle period came into the world in the modern period. The concept was supported primarily by the middle class, whose values emphasized that a man behaves in a manly way and a woman does so in a womanly fashion. Although middle-class values were adaptive and conservative, they ironically fostered deviance from the norm. The middle-class value of adaptation came to dominate all classes. At the same time, many forms of resistance occurred against them in the 1960s, especially experiments involving lifestyles. The lifestyle experiments that emerged in the culture of the younger generation during the 1960s continue into the present. Yet the younger generation has experienced the huge wave of consumer culture along with economic dependence on their parents. Thus, consumer culture engulfed the youth generations and deeply influenced them. The diaclonic consistency of youth culture in Western society may be an artifact of class culture. That is, when a Japanese researcher looks at Western youth, a strict class culture nonetheless remains. To be sure, the wall between classes has become thin - especially after the 1960s, but the culture of the working class remains distinct from that of the middle classes. Moreover, the difference seems to have a deep impact on the nature of the youth culture in the West. 1. 2:

Youth Culture in Japan Naturally, youth culture in Western Europe differs from that in Japan. It was established early in Western Europe and late in Japan. Support for youth culture from the Japanese middle class was weaker than that offered by their Western counterparts. Moreover, in Japan the influence of the military and farming cultures (which still have a considerable influence on youth culture today) was great. Accordingly, it is helpful to periodize Japan's youth culture. (1) Youth Before Industrialization: Before the 1870s Japanese society before industrialization was divided into the following four social classes: the bushi - warriors and artisans - class (5%); the merchant class (10% to 15%); the farmer class (70% to 80%); and the underclass (2% to 3%). In such a class society, class differences determined many other social differences. Thus, young men experienced different class cultures. Take the wakamonogumi in the farmer class, for example. This was a young age group, in which boys and girls in a community learned a multitude of behaviors appropriate for an adult farmer. (Many such age groups were to be found in the rural areas.) Those groups were custom-based and normative, but they were simultaneously independent of other social groups. The diffusion of educational activities throughout Japanese society of that period has been well documented. The education system was divided and catered to two different class systems, with the bushi class on the one side and the common people on the other. By 1870 in premodern Japan, among the common people 40% to 45% of the men and 15% of the women had mastered reading and writing, elementary arithmetic, and knew the history and geography of their country (Dore, 1976: 55; 1965). Of importance here is that investment in education was widespread during this period and was already at an unusually high level. At that time, the culture

as a whole was a military one and people's behavior was channeled by means of physical violence and military norms. Each class regarded education as an important activity. The bushi were expected to engage in lifelong education in their own schools, called hannko, that were built in each local district. In those schools Confucian education curriculums 2 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 were adopted and used as one basis of their power. Another form of education was carried out in the independent education curriculums that the merchant classes attended. The farmer class went to terakoya, which were often built by Buddhists. These educational systems were not formalistic like that of the bushi, but were more practical in orientation. (2) The Birth of Urban Youth Culture: The 1880s to the First Half of the 1950s The second period in Japanese youth culture flourished between World War I and World War II. Metropolitan culture in Tokyo and Osaka emerged in the 1880s, developed during the first decade of the 1900s, and began to function substantially in the 1930s. Youth culture initially took on a vague form as a rural culture within specific communities that subsequently expanded into urban cultures. It should be noted, however, that such a rural community culture exercised an influence over Japanese youth culture into the 1970s. Urban culture was suppressed by the military authorities during the 1930s and 1940s and Japanese culture, controlled by military power, had a depressed and integrative character. Japanese youth culture consequently exhibited similar characteristics. After World War II, and specifically between 1945 and 1955, institutional and value confusion became operative and youth culture became anarchic. The urban youth culture of the 1930s was basically consumerist and was not supported

by the middle class. It was therefore unable to create a new urban culture. It has often been observed that the culture was suppressed and destroyed by Japanese fascism. The reality, however, is more complex. Urban culture could not be easily destroyed. It developed rapidly during that period and deeply influenced urban residents. The values of urban culture strongly contradicted both military and rural cultures. As such, its suppression by the military and farmer classes became an imperative, a point that takes on great importance in the analysis of youth culture during this period. A central player in rural youth culture was seinenndan culture. Seinenndan was an age grouping set up by each local government. During World War II, the military government used this group to oppress individual liberties through a system in which individuals kept watch on each other. The seinenndan was not itself essentially a military institution, but it was easily harnessed by the military authorities. In addition, military youth culture was formed by the draft system and Confucian ideology, which stressed chu (loyalty to the dominator or superior), stood in contrast to the original Confucianism of ancient China, which regarded ko (filial piety, or giving back to one's parents) to be the most important concept. In the 1880s, the central government ordered the organization of the seinenndan and its nationwide scheme was already in place by 1922. The draft system was formally established around 1889, after the system had been refined several times. According to Hirayama (1978), Confucian ideology was fully and positively instructed in the schools from the early days of Showa (the 1920s).(1) (3) Rapid Economic Growth and the Youth Culture: Last Half of the 1950s to the First Half of the 1970s Despite promoting some degree of modernization, Japan's involvement and subsequent defeat in World War II seriously damaged Japanese society. The

economy did recover sharply, however, because of infusions of American aid, large reductions in military expenditures, and collective abstinence. Rapid development through industrialization and urbanization brought about a significant increase in the middle class - the largest in Japan's long history. This middle stratum suffered from several limitations. First, most of them had rural origins, which heightened the influence of rural culture over urban culture. Second, the tide of urbanization was so sudden 3 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 that consumer life could not keep pace, creating a lag and gap between economic success and affluent consumption. Whether positive or negative, the confusion directly following World War II brought about a new configuration of group consciousness and individualism in Japan. Consequently, individualism without community spirit coexisted with group consciousness based upon group sentiment. (In other words, rural democracy was still superior to urban democracy.) After 10 years of confusion, however, a new functional group consciousness - that would later be well known to the world - was reconstructed. Japanese youth culture in the 1960s had two characteristics. The first was a coupling of deviant culture and political protest movements, unlike Western Europe and the U. S. where they occurred distinctively. The second was the phenomenon of the onset of world-scale simultaneity. The former had two meanings. In the 1960s, the number of delinquent or deviant youth had increased. At the same time, many students were protesting against the political establishment. Student protests or conflicts toward the end of the 1960s had spread across almost all advanced societies. This simultaneous world phenomenon was truly epoch-making. Yet the results brought about by

protest movements differed in each society. In Britain, the younger generation participated in voting. In Germany, those movements elaborated environmental protection in the form of green movements. In the U. S., following defeat in the Vietnam War, they influenced civic values. In Japan, by contrast, those influences scarcely left a trace. The reasons for this are important to consider. The most powerful explanation seems to lie in the self-contradiction of the student movements themselves. They eagerly sought communal values originating in the rural community. At that time, however, it was necessary for urban Japanese to deny rural values and to create new urban values. An inconsistency apparently existed between the students' goals and the necessities of an urban lifestyle. Parenthetically, this inconsistency was specific to Japan, whereas factors common to advanced societies were uniformly important. Among them was a value shift - especially concerning the achievement of love, a value advocated by student protesters. It was difficult to realize this value in one or two generations, however, and that difficulty undermined their success. Among the legacies of the student movement in Japan was the impetus it gave to a reorganization of the Japanese educational system. Administrators in the system modified it only slightly, but the reorganized system became a basis for the Japanese educational institution that would later emerge. (4) Advanced Consumption Culture and Youth Culture: After the Second Half of the 1970s From the latter half of the 1970s to the first half of the 1980s, a genuinely affluent society emerged for the first time in Japanese history. At the same time, what I call a " high-brow mass" (in terms of mass consumption) also emerged. The " high-brow mass" had two contrasting aspects. The first was their high level of consumption, especially of high-priced foods and brand-name clothes

(indicating a touch of high fashion). Compared to the middle classes of Western Europe, however, there were clear differences. Western European consumer habits directly influenced the " high-brow mass," who were steeped in Japanese rural traditions, but newcomers - younger generations - mostly came from urban areas and began to change the culture of the older generations. The Japanese have been constrained by historical conditions that differ from those in Western Europe and the U. S. Absent in Japan have been modern-era European innovations such as individualism and social reforms enjoying middle-class support. The Japanese upper class has been isolated both from the other classes in Japan and from the upper classes in foreign 4 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 countries. Hence, the Japanese upper class has exercised no leadership in the cultural arena. Meanwhile, middle-class culture remains impoverished and immature. Almost all the life in consumption has been bottom-up and most Japanese have become rich. Yet housing conditions remain poor. As the saying goes, the " Japanese look rich outside the house, but they look poor inside the home." Japanese social life also remains poor, with people binding themselves to their ascribed groups. For men, this means their companies (kaisha), while for women and children, it means their houses and schools, respectively. A final characteristic of new-middle-class culture is that of the upstart or nouveau riche. 1. 3: Characteristic Consistency of Youth Culture in Japan The characteristics of youth culture in Japan are closely related to the fact that modernization got a relatively late start there. Consequently, a rapid process of modernization coexisted with the survival of premodern society. This led to serious conflicts between modern and premodern values,

coupled with the dominance of political radicalism. It also accounts for why the influence of the military and rural cultures persisted well into the 1970s. A complicating ingredient, however, is the fact that intrinsically modern factors existed in premodern Japan (i. e., the Edo period, 1606 to 1868). Examples would be the Japanese educational system during that period and the establishment of a central government. Group consciousness or attachment to the group as a cultural tradition is the last consistent one. Contemporary group consciousness originated in the early 20th century and was reorganized after World War II. Although it is very effective and functional, it is a historical cultural program. Urban or metropolitan culture was genuinely established only in the 1970s. Accompanying that development were changes in the nature of group consciousness. The Japanese shifted their stress from vertical authoritarianism to horizontal collective sentiments and the equality principle. Youth culture in Japan must be considered in these contexts. During the early stages of modernization, youth culture was voluntaristic but rural. Subsequently, a politically controlled youth culture and elite culture gained predominance until World War II. Rural youth culture persisted into the 1970s, when urban youth culture emerged. Recently, youth culture has taken on strongly consumerist and expressionist overtones. 2. Characteristics of Contemporary Youth Culture Let us now examine contemporary youth culture. This subject is often often analyzed with reference to generations. Since the degree of homogeneity and similarity among Japanese youth is high, generational analysis is a valid method, provided that one is aware of the danger of stereotyping. I wish to highlight two generations here. (See Table 1 at the end of the article.) 2. 1: Comparison of Shinjinrui and Yuppies - New Youth

Culture in the 1980s The definition of shinjinrui (" a new human species" - a new type of youth) was fundamentally generational and its social character is vague. Most notable about this new social category is that journalists paid great attention to it, comparing them with the baby-boomer generation. In addition, personnel departments in the corporate world tended to deplore them because expert training in Japanese companies traditionally had been carried out after a new applicant had entered the company. Finally, the consumer market targeted them. Accordingly, a definition of such young people includes: 5 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 1. Individualism, and particularly selfish behavior patterns, in which youth tend to place highest priority on individual benefit or values; 2. A strong predilection toward consumer behavior; and 3. Expressionism, the tendency to insist on presenting oneself and the individual's attachment to such presentations. To place the shinjinrui in a favorable light, they were the first generation to be fully brought up in an affluent consumer society. This has two sociological implications. They did not experience a (distinct) class society and did not grow up with a crude mass culture, but rather within an advanced and elaborated consumer culture. By comparison, yuppie (young urban professional) culture was a typical and comparable one from the 1980s. Characteristically, a yuppie had high educational achievement, a high income, enjoyed urban life, had a success orientation, and was a hard worker. They formed a new middle class and were part of the new rich who had attained it suddenly, but did not attach importance to distinctions such as race, gender, or region.(2) The yuppies shared most characteristics with the shinjinrui. Their historical backgrounds differed, however, insofar as the

yuppies' individualism was established fundamentally upon a white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant (WASP) tradition, while expressionism reached the business world in the span of three generations. In Japan, a weak, light form of individualism emerged in the mid-1980s. This soft individualism was based upon the profound influences of modernization, combined with a soft group consciousness. How are the shinjinrui perceived from the yuppie point of view? Both are hard-working urban dwellers with a sense of style. Yet differences do exist. First, not all Japanese shinjinrui have high educational attainment or a strong success orientation. Second, due to the particularity of the Japanese wage system, the shinjinrui did not earn the high wages found in the U. S. Third, the shinjinrui had no political power. Fourth, the yuppies were baby boomers, but the shinjinrui were not. Thus, they exercised only slight demographic pressure within the framework of Japanese society. In sum, while the yuppie was constructed as part of an elite class, the shinjinrui was not. 2. 2: Baby-Boomer Junior Generation - New Youth Culture in the 1990s (1) Shinjinrui to Baby-Boomer Junior Generation In the 1990s, youth culture in Japan is undergoing another change. Some argue that the cultural initiative is shifting from the shinjinrui to the junior generation of baby boomers. This hypothesis is easily accepted by the Japanese baby-boomer junior generation. They have a new social character, which is more adaptive than was true of the shinjinrui. This adaptability has three manifestations: 1. Flattering adaptability: if a gap exists between an environment and oneself, one tends to adapt to the environment; 2. Fluid adaptability: a tendency in which one does not persist in the face of an environment; if 6 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 the

match between a person and an environment is not a good one, another choice will soon be available; and 3. Anticipatory and clear adaptability: if one cannot choose from the above forms of adaptability, there will be a necessary alternative. The differences between the two generations, then, can be summarized as follows. The baby-boomer junior generation is the first generation whose parents were baby boomers. The new values and lifestyle of their parents had a decisive influence on them. This generation grew up within a stable and mature society and lives in an advanced information-based society where computers are diffused to some degree. (2) Comparative Analysis The preceding analysis is summed up in Table 2 (located at the end of the article). Five aspects are taken into account: demographic significance, employment and the labor market, class/stratification, lifestyle and the consumer market, and identity and culture. Similarities between American youth and Japanese youth have been increasing from the 1980s to the present. For example, consumer life is partly shared and mutual understanding (including tourism and direct exchange) has increased. The two tendencies thus appear to be clear. Yet there remain many differences deriving from different historical and geographical conditions. In the U. S., class and ethnic cultures have decisive functions. In Japan, a uniform culture - like it or not - has an equivalent function to the class culture in the U. S. Although this explanation remains mostly valid, important changes have occurred in the 1990s. After providing some background information, I will explain these changes. 2. 3: Sociological Analysis of the New Youth Culture (Shinjinrui and BBJG) (1) Demographic Factor Whether youth culture as a subculture can exercise a larger influence on national culture is decided basically by demographic factors. Generally,

the size of the youthful population correlates with the degree of its social influence (producing a positive relationship). According to this proposition, as of 1993 the two relatively large generations pertinent for Japan are the baby-boom generation (around 45 years of age) and the baby-boomer junior generation (around 20 years of age). In the context of the entire population, the baby-boomer junior generation may exercise more influence than the shinjinrui. (If the shinjinrui had an impact on Japanese society, other factors were at play.) Britain's demographic pattern is similar to that of Japan. There are two baby-boomer generations (although the second generation peaks five years higher than in Japan). However, the U. S. differs from both Britain and Japan. Baby boomers in the U. S. have a 20-year age span, ranging from 30 to nearly 50 years of age. Given the large size of that population, the cultural impact of the baby boomers is greater than in the other two countries. (2) Employment and Deviance To establish an independent youth culture, both disposable earnings and behavioral freedom are required. It is therefore necessary for youth to hold stable jobs or, where that is not possible, to have tolerant patrons. In this sense, the issue of the labor market assumes a basic importance for the youth culture. If the labor market fails to offer sufficient employment 7 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 opportunities, the amount of delinquency, deviance, and protest among the younger generation increases. With respect to youth employment, there are two kinds of labor markets in Japan. One is the market in which only the highly educated can get a job. (Students are recruited between June and November and enter corporations in April of the next year.) Another market is formed by the remaining people - a residual

category. Most Japanese youth are included in the first labor market. Over the last 20 years, a stable supply of jobs has been available. Japanese youth have thus not worried about securing a job. Very recently, the labor market has narrowed because of a series of economic recessions; however, most new entrants can still get a job. When analyzing Japanese youth culture, this factor must be kept in mind. This lack of worry about jobs explains a peculiarity of Japanese youth culture - for them, " Japanese university is like an amusement park." To compare Japanese youth with those in other countries, it is clear that they are the exception to the rule governing the severe reality in almost all countries - joblessness. In the Third World, there has been a persistently high jobless rate. In addition, a high rate continues in the OECD countries (see OECD, 1985). Although northern Europe experienced relatively good conditions in the 1980s, they deteriorated in the 1990s. In the U. S., the unemployment rate fell to around 15%, and in Britain it remained steady at over 20%. The level of educational attainment, ethnicity, and social class were closely connected to the incidence of joblessness. In regard to youthful delinquency and deviance, since the end of World War II, Japan has experienced two peaks in the guidance number for juvenile delinquency. The year of the first peak was around 1968 - a period of student protests - when the total reached 150, 000, and the second was around 1985, when the total reached 190, 000. Recently, the number has become increasingly smaller. These peaks resulted from demographic pressure, i. e., they correspond to the two large generations discussed above. During the latter peak, school violence and reported bullying became a serious social problem. For example, in 1982 there were 1, 400 cases of violence in lower secondary school, while bullying cases numbered 100, 000

in elementary school in 1985. The most serious educational problem has been " students refusing to attend school." The number of such students has increased and 40, 000 lower secondary school students refused to go to school in 1990. Relatively speaking, however, these forms of delinquency appear to be less serious than those found in other countries. The Japanese often treat delinquency and deviation as an exception. (Although most people do not believe it, Japanese youth tend to regard larceny as play or as an amusement.) Small percentages of unemployed and ethnic youth in Japan have exacerbated this situation. (3) The Generational Factor As social change proceeds in contemporary society, the various generations tend not to have shared experiences. Thus, generation can function as sociological factor. The generational factor takes on more importance under conditions where there is equal opportunity for education and little differentiation between social classes. Where this is not the case, the generations acquire different social meanings. In general, the generational factor functions more effectively in Japan than in the U. S. and Britain. In Japan, there is a tendency to reduce social differences to the generation factor alone. The 8 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 shinjinrui was just such a case. The baby-boom generation is particularly so inclined. Generation has become a central focus of marketing and advertising personnel, who tend to overemphasize the differences between generations and to divide them into smaller population segments. Although the discussion appears to be cast in a generational framework, it actually is not. The Japanese media's widely prevalent preference for the notion of generations usually reduces itself to a form of quasi-ageism or quasi-generationism. In the U. S., people certainly

like to talk about a younger generation, but age differences are scarcely reflected in social institutions. Other factors such as ethnicity, an independent adult culture, etc., are more influential there. In the United Kingdom, the percentage of students going on to higher education is considerably lower than is true for Japan or the U. S. and class distinctions still exist. British youth culture is subdivided into an upper-class and elite culture, a working-class culture, and an ethnic culture. Within these strata, Britain's yuppie culture reveals an overlap between the upper and elite cultures, and subsequently is not included in popular culture. In addition, since British adult culture is firmly established, the general social impact of the youth culture is slight. (If we compare a British yuppie with a Japanese yuppie, the latter appears to be almost childish.) (4) The Social Class Factor Many analysts have argued that the yuppies in the U. S. constitute a new elite. Thus, they form part of a dominant class and a new establishment. As a consequence, the yuppie phenomenon was often discussed with reference to social class. In the past, the orthodox establishment expected them to change the old social system in a positive, " responsible" direction, while intellectuals expected them to move it in a new, liberal direction. In reality, they lacked the power to change the social regime. In contrast to the yuppies in the U. S., neither the shinjinrui nor the baby-boomer junior generation have been placed in the context of social class.(3) People who talk in terms of generations avoid discussing social class. Instead, they discuss consumption and fashion. Most Japanese are intensely occupied in their own ascribed relations, groups, and organizations. They give priority to those ascriptions over individual interests or values. Thus, they tend to avoid conflicts - including social class - between collective commitments and

individual behavior. Furthermore, in Japan the elite class is closely correlated with age. The seniority wage system keeps the income of young people low. Consequently, there is not a clear income difference between elite youth and non-elite youth. It is difficult to distinguish a class boundary between the shinjinrui and baby-boomer junior generations. In the United Kingdom, youth culture or British yuppie culture correspond to distinctions among social classes. Yuppie culture has become a new establishment culture and they belong to an upper-middle culture. Yet this group lacks sufficient power to profoundly influence establishment culture. (In both Britain and Japan, it has been very difficult for youth to change their social system.)(4) (5) Technology and Education During the U. S. occupation of Japan after World War II, an achievement-based educational system was adopted, upon which a strict " diploma society" was formed. Over the course of 9 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 several decades, educational careers became linked with the lifetime employment system and effectively became a stamp on individuals that is treated as an ascribed status. Educational background therefore provides a basis for individual identity and even becomes a mental standard or frame of reference. Historically speaking, authoritarianism resting upon educational careers was based on the latecomers effect, which many developed societies have in common (Dore, 1976). Despite the short history of " diploma society" in Japan, most Japanese regard it as a longstanding cultural tradition. The tendency toward diploma-based stratification coexists with group mentality. This coexistence simultaneously represses intrinsic voluntarism and individualism, while contributing to the maintenance of an ascribed order and an effective fluidity

within organizations. The content of school education is consistent with these social values. Japanese youth manifest two opposing facets to their personalities: formalized rigidity and uncertain situational adaptability. Technological innovation and social adaptability are also important factors. Advanced information-based societies - predicated upon successive innovations in information processing and communications technology - have emerged since the 1980s. This process assists modernization and may bring about postmodernity. The more this process develops, the more central innovation becomes. The machines and media do not achieve a steady state in their form and function; rather, they are continually transformed and metamorphized. Given this situation, it is crucial not to fix our mental standards or maintain reflexive attitudes. In this sense, the Japanese younger generations have already attained these attitudes. (6) Consumer Culture, Lifestyle, and Values Finally, I wish examine the consumer culture, lifestyle, and values. In considering these issues, the following points are important: 1. Amalgamation into one huge consumer culture; 2. Expressionism as an adaptive style; and 3. Over-patterned or spaced expressions, and avoidance of conflict or peer conformism. In contemporary Japan, consumer life is of crucial importance to everyday life, even subjectively. Almost all consumer behaviors are regarded as productive behaviors, and much of what appeals to consumer tastes has become highly commercialized. (For example, the large do-it-yourself chain, " Tokyo Hands," with stores located in some of Japan's large cities, deals with a wide variety of commodities that appeal to such tastes. They dominate this aspect of culture in Japan's urban areas.) Reviewing the history of advanced mass consumer society, W. W. Rostow points out that advanced mass

consumption emerged in the 1910s in the U. S. and in the 1920s in France and Britain. In Japan's case, however, " take off" was delayed until 1955 - as was the case with Russia. Japan was one of the late-comers in advanced mass consumption. The shinjinrui and baby-boomer junior generations are new affluent generations in this sense. They are the first generations to grow up in truly urban areas and to enjoy an affluent material life. Such generations in contemporary Japan have adopted new lifestyles and social values. Concretely, this is what is denoted by expressionism as an adaptive style. In general, what one expresses has a significant meaning and is highly valued. (As advanced mass consumer societies progress, I believe that expressionism adopts more superficial standards and changes 10 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 in an artificial direction.) In Japan, two new generations prefer such expressionism. Unfortunately, the expressionism of the younger generations is not often connected with the inner or intrinsic self due to soft individualism and therefore their expressions take on a superficial quality and remain conformist. Japan also has a longstanding traditional culture - some say a " highly patterned culture" resulting in a tendency to prefer patterned relations and to avoid analyzing segments or fundamentals that comprise the totality (Berque, 1982). Most likely, military culture, which endured for nearly 700 years, played a role in forming that tradition. The new generations have transcended that cultural tradition. However, their preferences represent a shift from the formalized and large scale to the more individual and small scale. Finally, I will address conflict avoidance or peer conformism among the two younger generations. Conflict avoidance largely concerns social behavior

and social relations. An adult normally strikes a balance between hierarchical or stratified roles (e. g., organizational behavior) and equal partnerships (e. g., friends). In this sense, Japanese culture places a heavy emphasis on total harmony as a group sentiment and gives clear priority to vertical patterns or hierarchy over horizontal patterns or equal partnerships. The new generations share such cultural programs, but there are also some departures. First, because of the narrow range of social circles and the lack of age differences among classmates in the milieu in which they are brought up, these youth have few opportunities to learn hierarchical roles. As a result, the older generations are puzzled by the behavior of the younger generations. The second difference is in peer conformism. Traditional Japanese vertical patterns minimize and shape peer conformism, which is the narrowest aspect of group mentality. The lack of vertical socialization and peer conformism produce attitudes of conflict avoidance among group members and an ignorance of mutual differences. 3. Youth Culture - New Directions in the 1990s and Their Possibilities It is not sufficient simply to refer to the above-mentioned young generations. In the 1990s, important changes have been occurring in Japanese youth culture. I therefore wish to discuss changes such as the segmented character of the baby-boom junior generation, an orientation for a new class culture, and their positive possibilities. 3. 1: Youth Culture - A New Attitude of the 1990s (1) Mature Urban Segmented Youth Culture: the Baby-Boomer Junior Generation By the time they had reached high school, the baby-boomer junior generation had already become intensely targeted by the marketing sector. Numerous monikers were pinned on them, including " the parabola age," " children of the baby-boom generation," " the strawberry generation," and " the slime

generation." Each was valid to some extent, but they presupposed that every member of the baby-boomer junior generation shared the same characteristics. This assumption is open to question. Japanese youth are surely socialized through group consciousness - typically through their schooling - and internalize the behavioral patterns consistent with a group mentality. This group consciousness has begun to change, however, becoming narrower in scope. At the same time, their consumer life and lifestyle reflect an individualistic side, and they are the first generation in which at least some members demonstrate culturally discerning eyes. Their behavioral patterns and thoughts weaken their uniformity and orient them in multidimensional directions. 11 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 Nearly all previous studies on the younger generations belie the implicit standpoint of a " Western and U. S.-centered model." The Japanese formerly made no distinction between the Western European and American cultures. According to this model, Western European and particularly U. S. culture are considered to be the ideal culture for the Japanese, the ruler against which striving societies could measure the extent to which they had come to resemble those two mass-consumer cultures. The validity of this model has gradually eroded for various reasons. First, the profound influence of U. S. mass culture has been operative for nearly 50 years and the contemporary younger generations in Japan have internalized it sufficiently. Second, Japan's mass culture has itself matured and been elaborated. It has begun to influence TV games and cultural idols in East and Southeast Asian popular culture. Finally, we are beginning to witness a shared popular culture - like it or not, for good or bad - and it must be recognized as an international

or global popular culture. Japan's contemporary youth have inhaled the air of global culture. Consequently, I propose a world simultaneity model that explains the new Japanese youth culture more effectively than does the Western and U. S.-centered model. In sum, the time for conducting cultural analysis using the dominant method - whereby a generation is dealt with as an undifferentiated mass while analyzing the change from generation A to generation B - has passed. A generation must be segmented and each sub-generation must be discussed in its own right. A world simultaneity model, moreover, will prove its validity in explaining Japan's younger generation. (2) Directions of a New Stratified Culture During the latter half of the 1980s, differences between the social classes again widened. In the period between defeat in World War II and the first half of the 1980s, most Japanese tended to have a strong sense both of belonging to the middle class and of overall equality. Consequently, class cultures were little noticed. Japan's " bubble economy," however, jacked up the standard of living as a whole and created the new rich. This period marked the beginning of a new process of stratification. Although the " bubble economy" burst in 1991, the distinction between stratified cultures endured. Economic recession and a rising yen subsequently brought doldrums to enterprise activities. Consequently, Japanese youth have begun to encounter difficulty in landing a job. The formerly stable labor market for youth has begun to change. With corporations now reducing the number of new employees, youth are no longer able to select the enterprise they wish. The choice is now between getting good jobs or bad jobs. Nonetheless, Japanese youth remain happy. Even if they cannot insist on their preferences, nearly all of them will be employed. Yet the process of searching for a job will result in dividing them

into elite and non-elite classes. Another trend is indicative of a new class culture. The increase in kikokushijo (Goodman, 1990) is an example. The term refers to Japanese international youth - children who have returned from foreign countries, were influenced by foreign cultures, and therefore cannot behave like " true Japanese." From the 1970s onward, Japanese multinational enterprises branched out into many foreign countries. In the 1980s, the number of these children sharply increased. The readjustment of Japanese international youth therefore became a social problem. Government officials and school teachers were eager to reeducate them into being " pure Japanese." Their sheer numbers (50, 000 are living in foreign countries and 11, 000 returned to Japan in 1991) have begun to undermine the purpose of this exercise - maintaining their national identity. Since most parents of these international youth belong to the elite or managerial class, they have 12 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 succeeded in eliciting a special government response to the problem. When their children return, they take an entrance examination that is easier to pass than the one taken by the average Japanese youth. Moreover, after graduating from university or college, they can get a good job. (In the past, it was difficult to do so.) In conclusion, Japanese international youth have become a new privileged group. Together, these trends have begun to break the uniformity that formerly characterized Japanese youth culture. 3. 2: Youth Culture in the 1990s - Problems and Possibilities Although the two younger generations are not well received by the older generations, they are not bad. Indeed, they would serve as a rather good influence were it not for the lack of publicity (regarding civic mindedness and civic morals) on universalistic meaning. Let

me suggest some of their positive attributes. (1) Innovation of Tradition Japanese society appears to be changing drastically. However, the Japanese have long ignored Japan's native traditions, in part because the country was isolated historically, which restricted exchanges with other societies. The country remained more or less in control, but did not achieve a high status internationally. Within contemporary Japan, traditional powers such as the aristocrats in Kyoto, military culture in local districts, and rural culture in agricultural areas, survive. It is therefore essential for the Japanese to be aware of those traditions and to renew them for the following reasons. International cooperation has been demanded by external forces, while an awareness of indigenous culture is an internal imperative. Contemporary Japan has entered the second stage of advanced mass society, and it is therefore necessary to transform itself and to invent a social structure and social institutions. (2) The Human Species, Global Ethics, and Society In modern society, we share a history as the human species - economically, politically, socially, and culturally. If we use 1960 as the starting point for globalization, over 30 years have passed since we first experienced such a reality. An example of global consciousness is that Japan's middle class naturally perceived it as good to assist poor people in Asia and Africa. The Japanese government recently began to participate in the peace-keeping operations of the United Nations. Yet this is insufficient because it seems to be simply acquiescence to international pressure. With respect to consumer culture, the global consciousness of the Japanese remains at the level of charity concerts or fundraising activities. " Global ethics" may sound like an exaggeration, but it has already acquired some reality. It implies a duty for human beings; global society respects and supports the individual without

regard to national origin (e. g., Swedish assistance to Brazilian workers). The Japanese must draw upon the weak or soft individualism internalized by Japanese youth to actualize an ethical system appropriate to a global society and to learn universal values and ideas. To do that, it is necessary to strike a balance between weak individualism and traditional group mentality. The Japanese need not abandon their traditional group mentality. In Japan, civic consciousness is closely related to group consciousness. Consequently, it is essential to try to separate the former from the latter and to combine individualism with public consciousness. 13 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 Yet I believe the 50 years following World War II have prepared the social bases conducive to individualism. We shall be tolerant of selfish individualism and super-individualism. In addition, balancing group consciousness with individualism does not mean protecting group consciousness and suppressing individualism. There is an apparent contradiction between them. Thus, balancing them will result in institutional contradictions, behavioral oppositions, and psychological conflicts. It is important to face these anticipated realities and not to avoid them. Without a doubt, Japan's natural environment and social system have changed greatly, but the Japanese people have changed little. The older generations must cease controlling the new generations, who have been inundated by consumer culture, and assist them in bringing forward their inner voluntary spirit and help weak individualism become consistent with a public consciousness and global ethics. Conclusion Japan's youth (the shinjinrui and baby-boomer junior generation) and the yuppies share subcultures such as expressionism, an urban sense of style, and high educational attainment.

Since there are dissimilar patterns and processes whereby they are established, however, those subcultures have different social implications. In the U. S. and Britain, social class and ethnicity are factors, while in Japan, group consciousness and quasi-ageism are important. The most pressing problem for Japanese youth is to balance weak individualism with a public awareness and strong group mentality. It is also critical to forge links between local group consciousness and global ethics within the framework of contemporary consumer culture. Global ethics is quite different from group mentality, of course. In addition, it is necessary to pursue the possibilities of global ethics not only as an ideal, but also as a real policy goal. Table 1: Generational Contrast (in 1993) Japan Baby-boom generation (43-47 years old) (1946-1950) New Human Kind (29-35 years old) (1959-1964) Baby Boom Junior (17-21 years old) (1972-1976) America Baby boomer (28-45 years old) Yuppie (28-40 years old) Generation Flyers (13-25 years old) [TABULAR DATA OMITTED] NOTES 1. Showa (Enlightened Peace) is the era name for Emperor Hirohito's reign. 2. Other definitions of the yuppies are found in the New York Times and Piesman (1984), etc. 14 of 17 4/18/2013 11: 19 AM Youth culture in Japan. http://www. thefreelibrary. com/_/print/PrintArticle. aspx? id= 16654720 Whether the yuppies constituted a new class was also controversial. 3. According to Fukutake (1981), class differentiation persists, with capitalists and workers increasing, and the self-employed a constant feature in contemporary Japan. 4. See Wright and Martin (1987). REFERENCES Aries, P. 1973 L'enfant et la Vie Familiale sous L'ancien Regime. Paris: Edition du Seuil. Berque, A. 1982 Vivre l'espace au Japon. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France. Brake, M. 1985 Comparative Youth Culture. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Brint, S. 1984 "'New Class' and

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