

# PATTERNS OF LIVING IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

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## I. INTRODUCTION

ARE THINGS ACCEPTABLE as they are?" It is not possible to refrain from asking this question when faced with the existing state of society. It must be said, however, that the income level of the general public has risen, consumer goods bringing convenience to everyday life have become available one after another, and the level of consumer living is increasing rapidly. The Japanese islands are now crisscrossed by expressways and high-speed railway systems and in the streets and avenues of the cities multistory buildings rise in steady succession while in the suburbs new housing is being constructed constantly. Overseas, artificial satellites are being launched for experimental trips into the regions of space.

In the shadow of the realization of this affluent society, a crisis of worldwide dimensions has quietly come upon the human race. Nature is being destroyed, air pollution is increasing and mechanisms causing the devastation of human qualities is progressing. In other words, the technological progress has raised the material level of life rapidly, but at the same time, an environment in which the human race may eventually be destroyed is being created. For example, while computerization has increased the extent of human knowledge to a dramatic degree on the one hand, on the other, it is taking away the qualities which make people human. Furthermore, automobiles and other new goods produced for the convenience of daily life have brought about a broadening of the sphere of life, but the virulent effluent exhausted by them has undermined the health of the population, the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has brought about the possibility of the melting of the north polar ice cap, and the accompanying rise in sea level of the world's oceans. In spite of the fact that the human race with its acute sensitivity is aware of this danger, it continues to develop headlessly its technology. Under the contemporary capitalistic system, centered as it is about massive amounts of capital, this may be a fatal course of development.

We have come to a point at which we must think about what progress in technology and what kind of national land-use planning will really lead to human happiness. The time has come when reflection at a fundamental level is required on matters such as the conditions under which the human race can lead a human-like existence, the way in which one ought to lead one's life, and the relationship which ought exist between the individual and society.

Man's desire for a better way of life is something which knows no bounds. However, the values of what constitute a better, more human way of life, and

the values governing the way in which the individual ought to live are undergoing a great change. In a similar way, standards of life in the so-called cultural sense must be rethought. As an example, standards for the effective use of natural resources must be rethought from the standpoint of cultural life in addition to economic efficiency which so far has dominated thought in this area.

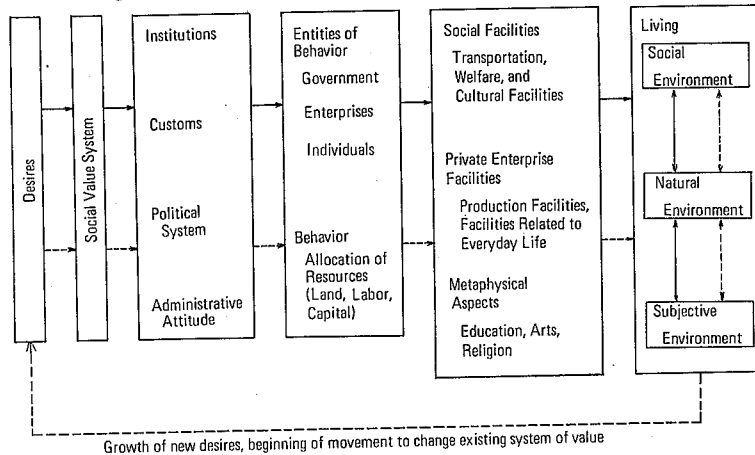
## II. THE SYSTEM OF FORMATION OF DESIRES, VALUE SYSTEM, AND LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Human beings essentially act according to their own desires, but desires, being in essence subjective, differ from individual to individual. Thus, if each individual acts purely in accordance with his own wishes, society as a whole will be reduced to a state of disorder, and the realization of a happy life for the individual and thus for society will become impossible. Consequently, in any society, being a collective body composed of individuals, each individual must exercise restraint over his or her desires in certain areas so that a system of values held in common by all members of the society may be formed. Obviously, this is not something which can be achieved in one stroke. When the number of individuals sharing the same desire increases, then a certain kind of social trend is formed. In a mass communication society, the mass media often intervene in the formation of these trends. Once a value system is created in this way, various arrangements, customs and precedents will also be created, growing from the system, and a new environment will have been shaped for the various groups within society. It is within this frame that the individual realizes his own desires, each in his own way.

Desires, however, may be divided into two main types: one type is the "relative desire" which changes adapting to the existing system of values and the social environment, and the other is the "absolute or fundamental desire" which does not alter with change of environment. Of these two, when the relative desire is fulfilled and reaches the level of satisfaction, dissatisfaction with the existing value system and the environment evolving from it occurs, so that movement toward a search for a new value system begins. On the one hand, in the process of development of both a value system built up from the experience and wisdom of great numbers of people, and the environment subsequently deriving from the system, the possibility of the development of a situation which directly conflicts with the absolute or fundamental desires of the population exists. Such a situation would be, for example, an environment which cannot but threaten human life. In such a situation, movement will occur to reform the social value system—the fundamental source of authority which has caused the formation of such an environment.

In other words, as can be seen in Figure 1, the flow of "desires → value system → environment → living" will be formed and developed by being fed-back through the following network. In this way, human living patterns, from the mode of life to the determination of aspects where emphasis is to be placed, will, along with the development of society, continue to change.

Fig. 1. System of Formation and Development of Desires, Value System, and Living Environment



### III. THE NEW POSTWAR VALUE SYSTEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

#### A. Three Conditions Which Have Brought About Change in the Mode of Life

In recent years, the mode of life of the Japanese people has undergone a great transformation. According to the 1971 edition of *Kokumin seikatsu hakusho* [The report on national life] published by the Economic Planning Agency of Japan, the national per capita income in 1969 was \$1,288, which is at the same level as Italy, but this figure is reached by a conversion at the old dollar-yen exchange rate of 360 yen to one dollar [2]. If the conversion is made at the more realistic present rate of exchange of 300 yen to the dollar, the national per capita income is then \$1,545, which is at a level comparable to the United Kingdom. Especially in the field of major durable consumer goods, in 1966-67, a standard had been obtained which has already surpassed Europe and was at a level similar to the United States. It goes without saying that Japan, with France, has the lowest standard of housing among the advanced nations, but in food, and of course clothing, a standard the same as that of other advanced nations had already been reached (Table I).

The period at the end of World War II was one when the realization of a material life of such abundance was something quite beyond the bounds of imagination. The standard of living now realized can be measured not only in terms of quantitative increase alone, but in terms of the change in quality of life, or more of life. It is possible to raise three factors as the fundamental causes contributing to this dramatic change.

- (1) *Change in supply condition*—the appearance of new products against a background of technological innovation.
- (2) *The income revolution*—the rapid increase in the income of the general

TABLE  
INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF

	Per Capita National Income	Engel's Coefficient	Education			Number of Dwellers per Room
			Percentage of Compulsory School Graduates Going to Upper Secondary Schools	Number of Pupils in Elementary School per Teacher	Number of Students in Higher Education per 1,000 Persons	
	1969 (\$)	1968 (%)	(% '70)	(% '69)	(% '69)	1968
Japan	1,288	(69) 34.2	(70) 82.1	(69) 26.0	(69) 16.2	1.03
U.S.A.	3,787	23.2	(67) 97.7	(68) 23.2	(68) 34.7	(60) 0.61
U.K.	1,523	33.0	(67) 53.5	(67) 29.9	(67) 6.2	(66) 0.60
West Germany	2,042	31.4	(65) 50.4	(66) 34.7	(67) 5.8	0.72
France	2,108	35.0	(67) 73.1	(67) 23.5	(67) 10.6	0.93
Italy	1,254	44.6	—	—	—	—

Source: [2].

public, inter alia, the increase in discretionary income.

(3) *The revolution in public consciousness.*

To begin with, as the first change in supply condition, it is possible to point to the realization of the mechanism by which new consumer goods were produced and sold in large quantities through technological innovation and induced great changes in the mode of life of the population.

Then, secondly, until the late fifties, a surplus of labor existed, the income level of the general public was low, and, for most people, there was no possibility of being able to purchase these new goods at the prevalent income levels. Subsequently, due to the rapid economic development which ensued, an excess demand for labor emerged, and the previously low income levels greatly increased. Especially, as will be dealt with separately, discretionary income, which is the basic fund from which high quality consumer goods are purchased, passed a level where it was half of the total income in 1964, and subsequently has grown steadily year by year.

However, this does not mean at all that at the time these goods, such as television sets, electric washing machines, refrigerators and so forth, appeared, in the late fifties, the general public had the purchasing power to buy them. Accordingly, people used their savings, or borrowed, in the form of the monthly installment system, in order to purchase the goods. In other words, at a stage where as yet the revolution in income had not been achieved, the urging of the public, through advertising, to buy these consumer goods constituted the revolution of public consciousness, the third condition. Thus it may be said that the society of the time was ruled by social trends and even a value system which

I  
LIVING STANDARDS

Population per Automobile	Durable Consumer Goods			Number of Telephones per 100 Persons	Daily Newspaper Circulation per 1,000 Persons	Number of Books (Titles) Published per 1,000 Persons
	TV Set 1966	Refrig- erator 1967	Washing Machine 1966			
1968	(%)	(%)	(%)	1970		1968
19.4	('71) 82.3 [color 42.3]	('71) 91.2	('71) 93.6	22.4	('68) 492	0.31
2.4	97.8	99.6	('67) 88.2	56.4	('67) 309	0.30
5.0	94.0	47.0	62.2	25.0	('66) 488	('67) 0.54
5.1	61.0	('66) 76.0	55.0	20.4	('68) 328	0.51
4.3	52.0	('66) 63.0	43.0	16.1	('67) 251	('67) 0.38
6.4	45.8	('66) 48.1	32.5	16.0	('66) 112	0.17

might well be expressed by the maxims, "To consume is a virtue," "Keeping up with the Jones is a good thing, and something to be desired," and "To imitate one's neighbor is not something shameful." Indeed, as Galbraith pointed out in *The Affluent Society*, desires and needs which were created by the manufacturers' advertising provided and built up a market for the goods produced [3].

In this way, the mode of life of the Japanese people was revolutionized. As examples, the change brought about in the housewife's work by the washing machine and the automatic rice cooker, the change in eating habits brought about by the refrigerator, and the change brought about in the average man's leisure and thinking caused by television may be raised. On the one hand, the increased demand for durable consumer goods due to the creation of consumer fashions in spite of limited purchasing power resulted in a succession of effects one after another. To meet the demand for the new goods, machinery and plant equipment was required and this in turn increased the demand for raw materials. In this way, an opportunity was provided for the bringing into existence of a materially affluent society.

B. *Revolution in Public Consciousness*

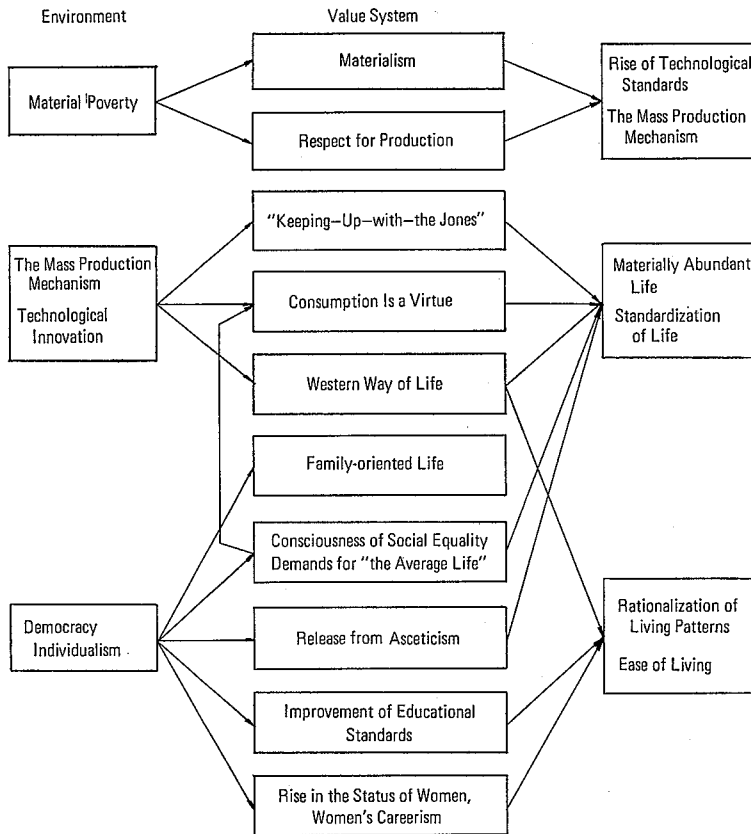
Among the three main conditions as mentioned above, attention should be drawn to the third condition, that of the revolution in public consciousness. "Consciousness" is a concept of subjective dimensions, but, differing from the similarly subjective concept of "desire," it implies the sharing of a common view of life, and a common way of thinking shared by a fixed group or community. Accordingly, if a common consciousness or awareness is shared by young people,

then there is also a particular consciousness shared by the "prewar faction" or those grown up before the war, and a differing awareness and view of the world shared by groups who grew up during and immediately after the war. Similarly, consciousness varies depending on occupation, white-collar workers differing from blue-collar workers, and the élite strata of the white-collar class differing from the average. It follows that consumer behavior differs according to the disparity between each group, but in the case when the consumer consciousness of one group demonstrates influential power of almost explosive dimensions, it crosses the boundaries of the group, and becomes the collective consumer consciousness of the general public, or perhaps of the majority of the nation. As has been said in previous section, it is then part of the system of values of society. Accordingly, it must be something which has been created with the desires common to the nation as a background. In other words, once these kind of social circumstances exist, then social trends and thus a system of social values will be created. In attempting to determine the factors which formed the social environment for the value system which has controlled postwar Japanese society up to the present day, it is possible to raise the following points: (1) poverty, (2) democracy and individualism, and (3) technological innovation and supply condition.

As far as material poverty was concerned, it goes without explanation that immediate postwar Japan was in a state of devastation exceeding the bounds of imagination. Consequently, the great majority of the people wanted material comforts, and were contemplating ways of increasing their income so that they could obtain the things they wanted. The production of consumer goods was thus considered most important, a system of values centering on material things and production was created, and a social structure centering around private enterprise came into being. Next, due to democracy, the people were released from the old totalitarian patterns of thought which were built around the emperor, and which were expressed in patriarchal system and an ascetic attitude to life. From this release came the development of the Western idea of the individual and individualism, and along with this, the quest for "my home," the positive pursuit of pleasure, and the equalization of differences in social station. In short, social trends toward "the average life," or, in other words, the ideal of a middle class society came into existence.

The third factor, the change in the supply condition caused mainly by technological innovation, can also be cited from the aspect of the influence brought upon public consciousness. Mass production systems need mass consumption, and to promote consumption, in the words of Galbraith, by the use of advertising, desires were created and the idea that imitating one's neighbor is not something to be ashamed of was deliberately spread. Further, the social value system in a period of material shortage, which held that extravagance was something bad was broken down and in its place, a value system holding that "consumption is a virtue" was built up. In addition, the mechanism of mass production came to be approved by society through the way in which living patterns were rationalized due to the standardization and also the growing convenience of life. Of course, it goes without saying that as factors contributing to the spread of

Fig. 2. Environment and Value System



these ways of thought, the women's careerism and the improvement of educational standards played a significant role. Figure 2 expresses in graphic terms the above changes in environment and both value system and social trends.

C. Growth of Discretionary Income

In the realization of the affluent society the supply of new goods and the change in consumer consciousness undoubtedly exerted a great influence, but this does not mean that the income factor did not play an important part. Of course, in the late fifties, a large disparity existed between the income of workers in big business and that of workers in small to medium scale enterprises, so-called disguised unemployment due to a surplus of labor was common, and the level of income of the nation was at an extremely low level. For example, in 1957, when the use of washing machines and television sets started to become widespread, the per capita income of the Japanese people was a mere \$249, which was 11 per cent of the American figure of \$2,132, and 35 per cent of the French per capita income of \$742, and 26 per cent of the English figure of \$954. However, due to the ensuing high rate of economic growth, the figure in 1970

TABLE II  
GROWTH OF DISCRETIONARY INCOME AND THE CHANGE  
IN PERCENTAGE OF DISPOSABLE INCOME

	Disposable Income (A) (Yen)	Discretionary Income (B) (Yen)	Increase over Previous Year		B/A
			Discretionary Income (%)	Disposable Income (%)	
1956	27,464	10,946	11.0	6.0	39.9
1957	29,810	12,325	12.6	8.5	41.2
1958	31,824	13,494	9.5	6.8	42.4
1959	34,122	15,213	12.7	7.2	44.5
1960	37,708	17,109	12.5	10.5	45.4
1961	41,807	19,923	16.4	10.9	47.6
1962	46,930	22,711	14.0	12.3	48.4
1963	52,116	25,436	12.0	11.1	48.8
1964	58,104	29,166	14.7	11.5	50.2
1965	62,340	30,694	5.2	7.3	49.2
1966	68,468	34,400	12.1	10.8	50.2
1967	75,388	39,211	14.0	10.1	52.0
1968	82,384	44,319	13.0	9.3	53.8
1969	92,406	50,544	14.0	12.2	54.7
1970	105,714	59,245	17.2	14.4	56.0

Source: [5, \*Special Issue, 1972].

for real personal income exceeded three times the 1955 figure.

Now, the realization of a materially affluent life style is closely related to what is called discretionary income, which is gained by deducting from the disposable income essential outlays, i.e., food and heating, and fixed commitments, i.e., rent, school tuition fees and life insurance premiums, and so forth.

According to George Katona, professor at the University of Michigan, a mass consumption society has been achieved when discretionary income is over a level of 50 per cent of the total income [4]. From results obtained by Nippon Research Center for the discretionary income of working class households in the cities, as can be seen in Table II, the discretionary income increased 5.4 times in the period of fourteen years from 1956 to 1970 [5, Special Issue, 1972]. The percentage of discretionary income to disposable income shows an increase from 39.9 per cent in 1956 to 56.0 per cent in 1970, so that as George Katona says, in the present decade, a mass consumption society in which discretionary income has exceeded 50 per cent, or, in other words, the income revolution, has been realized in Japan. With the increase of discretionary income, Japanese material life improved rapidly, to the level comparable to those of Europe and the United States in availability of fashionable clothings, and such expensive consumer durables as automobiles, color-TV sets, and air conditioners.

#### IV. NEW SOCIAL TRENDS IN LIFE STYLES

As there is no limit to the extent of the desires of men, when a wish or desire is fulfilled, it then is transformed into another form, or further desire. In this way,



once a materially adequate livelihood is assured, then the possession of durable consumer goods in suitable quantities becomes desirable, after which comes the desire for substantial housing, followed by that for leisure—in other words, as basic desires are fulfilled, desires become progressively more variegated. In other words, when one achieves or possesses something which was, until one actually possessed it, one's heart's desire, it proves to be of less value than first appeared, and the object of desire then becomes something totally different. This phenomenon is often referred to, and a good example is Thomas Mann's novel, *Buddenbrooks*, in which the desires of the three generations of the Buddenbrook family are transformed from father to son, and then to grandson. The first generation, born into a poverty-stricken household desires wealth, but the second generation, born of rich parents desires social position and status, whereas the grandson, born in a family possessing both wealth and prestige, is envious of, and is drawn toward a life devoted to music and the arts. Among the Japanese people, who have achieved a more than adequate standard of living in material terms at a rapid pace, a tendency toward the more spiritually orientated approach to life which was evident in the Buddenbrook grandson has begun to appear.

This phenomenon relates to the movement which began to actualize in America some years ago in which the pragmatic philosophy which has dominated society began to be questioned and held in distrust, and a revival of primitive life styles and a seeking after oriental culture appeared. It goes without saying that America is the most materialistically oriented nation in the world. However, it must be said that this movement toward change of the system of social values has not evolved simply from material abundance. It has also grown from, for example, the dissatisfaction and consequent reaction against a society controlled by rationality, functionalism, and efficiency. It is also due to the environmental disruption which grows out of, or results from the process by which the affluent society is created, and also grows out of social tensions. In other words, it may be said that this movement toward change is the sum of the tendencies born from each social trend, from democratic thinking and the growth of individualism. However, it cannot be said at the present time that these social trends have developed to a stage where they can be called a value system. Differing from society in the prewar and early postwar years, the creation of a value system to which the majority of people agree, in which they believe, and to which they can adhere in today's freer society where desires have become varied and differentiated is a task of extreme difficulty. However, recently the appearance of new conditions and perhaps an environment which were not apparent in the fifties and early sixties is obvious, and it may be said that various related social trends are in a process of actualizing.

#### A. *Reaction against the Established Value System*

Firstly, social trends which have grown out of the realization of a materially affluent society will be considered. It is evident that at least up to the mid-fifties the preoccupation of most people was to escape from postwar poverty and to have a materially adequate way of life. However, so high a rate of economic

growth and standard of living was achieved that the postwar period of peace and prosperity came to be called the Shōwa<sup>1</sup> Genroku Era,<sup>2</sup> after the similarly prosperous Genroku period in Tokugawa times, and called forth international criticism. Further, misgivings about the validity of such a materialistic way of thinking, and feelings of the growing emptiness of materialism have begun to appear, concern for the cultural and spiritual aspects of life, for creativity, aesthetics, and enjoyment—in general for those things which give life a purpose, together with a reaction against materialism has gathered strength, and in consumer behavior a trend away from mass consumption and a tiring of materialism has appeared. Furthermore, the life style which developed and matured due to the simultaneous development of the mutually interdependent mass production and mass communication systems caused a loss of autonomy and individualism in people's activities, a tendency to follow others, and increasing uniformity in people's living habits. From the reflection on and consequent reaction to this tendency, movement in the opposite direction has appeared, and people's activities have begun to regain lost individuality and independence, and demands and desires of increasing variety of life have grown in strength. It cannot be denied that this tendency has gained momentum due to the increase of spending power, which in turn depends on the increase of wages which grows from the latent growth potential and labor shortage in the Japanese economy. This conclusion may well be drawn from the results of continuous surveys done in 1968 and 1969 by the Nippon Research Center into households with high income levels of at least 5 million yen per year [5, Special Issue, 1972]. Of those interviewed, 35.1 per cent showed concern for a "spiritually rich life," whereas only 4.7 per cent showed concern for the material aspects of life. Also, from the results of a survey with futurists and social forecasters as subjects concerning the quality of life in the twenty-first century, it was thought that only a mere 13 per cent of the population would show concern for material affluence.

Next, the new social trends are related to social tensions which have grown from environmental disruption, urbanization, and changes in working environment. An abnormally high rate of economic growth over a period of fifteen years has, in one aspect, considerably raised the living standard of the people, but in other aspects, it has brought about air, water, and other forms of pollution. It has also resulted in the production of faulty medicines and foods injurious to human health and life, and caused destruction in many forms of the natural environment. Until the present time, people have taken for granted physical health and bodily safety, and neither has become a subject of concern, but to these important problems which will face future generations, attention on a worldwide scale has been drawn. These problems of environmental disruption are not limited to remote and distant areas but have occurred on a worldwide scale, scattered all over the globe, and have caused even the entertainment of

<sup>1</sup> The Shōwa Era (1926-) is the present one, the present emperor having been enthroned in 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Genroku Era, 1688-1704.

misgivings about the future of human life. On one hand, both the high level economic growth, and scientific technology which have brought this growth about are changing the social environment in various aspects. Firstly, the concentration of vast populations in the major cities may be cited, and secondly, the change in working conditions should be mentioned. The concentration of population in the cities has, on the one hand, provided the opportunity for contact with the unique cultural environment which occurs only in cities, but on the other hand, the loss of community sense, and the sense of insecurity and isolation which grows from the breakdown of traditional social units, in other words, loss of group identity, continues to grow stronger. Furthermore, progressive mechanization of the workplace, centering mainly on automation and computerization, is tending to increase the degree of man's slavery to the machine, and is creating a monotonous daily existence of mental vacuity. This kind of simple repetitive work causes the workers employed more than physical fatigue, and the majority of such workers want to find other employment, while those for whom the possibility of change does not exist, at the very least do not want their children to follow in their footsteps (Table III). This change in social environment has caused an increase in demands for mental stability and a quiet environment, for the release from simple repetitive work, and for work which gives a sense of satisfaction. For those for whom the possibility of finding such work does not exist, at the least, they tend to look for leisure to satisfy their creative impulses, or to seek recreational or sublimatory leisure pursuits.

Furthermore, a tendency to react against the scientific techniques which control the functionalism and rationalism of our social thinking, in other words, against technology itself has even begun to appear. This trend to rethink the value of bigness for its own sake and to regard skeptically the value of speed is developing into social trends which are exemplified by nostalgia for things simple and natural.

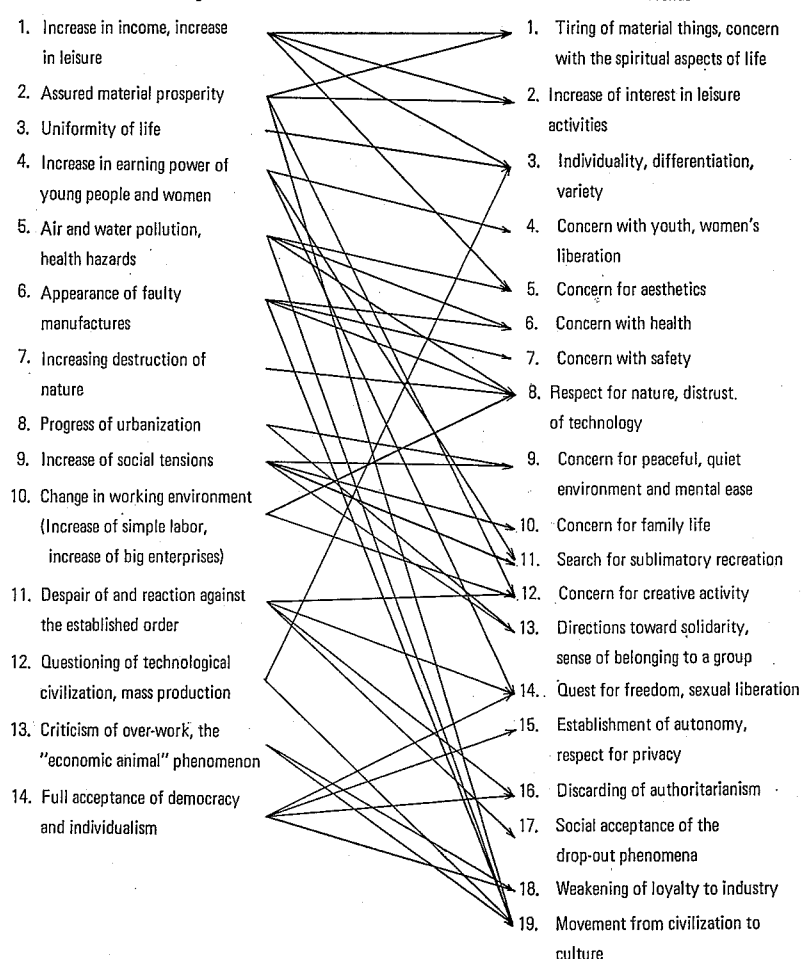
Finally, it is a movement of reaction against the established value system. It is not limited only to Japan, but is a phenomenon on an international scale, common to those affluent societies which are governed by principles of democracy and individualism. For example, the related social trends of "the drop-out phenomena" which come from despair of the established social order, the doubt

TABLE III  
ATTITUDES OF EMPLOYEES IN UNSKILLED POSITIONS

	Present Employment Disliked or Unpleasant	Change in Employment Desired	Desire Children to Find Other Work
Simple, repetitive work	85	39	91
Office work and machine operation	68	38	90
Measuring and inspection	54	15	78
Average	78	33	88

Source: T. Yasunaga, *Ningen seikatsu no tsuikyū* [Pursuit of human life], Tokyo, Tōyō keizai shimpō-sha, 1969, p.192.

Fig. 3. Recently Occurring Environmental Changes and New Social Trends



many salaried workers feel toward the principle of loyalty to employer and enterprise, the phenomena of the avoidance of hard work, the negation of authority and prestige, the tendency to place more emphasis upon actual ability than academic record, the tendency toward sexual freedom—these phenomena are all aspects of this movement of reaction.

The relationships between the above-mentioned changes in social environment and the newly formed demands-cum-social trends are expressed in Figure 3. It is expected that the tendencies and inclinations shown will become stronger as time passes.

#### B. *Tiring of Materialism as Seen in the Household Survey*

The above social trends have already found expression in concrete terms in various aspects of consumer behavior, as may be seen from changes in the house-

hold expenditure of working-class households in the cities. The figures are drawn from the housekeeping survey for the first half of 1972.

As shown in Table IV, which summarizes the trend of expenditures of urban workers' households, the growth of expenditure on furniture and utensils, including durable consumer goods had, except for the period from late 1970 until early 1971, when the boycott of color television sets occurred, increased at a rate of over 20 per cent each year, but in the first half of 1972, this growth rate decreased to a mere 3.4 per cent. Further, with regard to outlays on cars and related expenditure, in the second half of 1970, the increase was 50 per cent; in the first half of 1971, it was 40.3 per cent; then, in the latter half of 1971, these large scale increases continued with an increase at a marvelous rate of 23 per cent. However, in the first half of 1972, the until then large scale of increase dropped off suddenly to the small figure of 2.9 per cent. Similarly, in regard to clothing, although large scale price increases occurred at the time and taking into account the consequent effect, a considerable dropping off in the rate of growth may be seen. It may thus be considered that a tendency to growing disinterest in things material, due to the satisfaction of these and related consumer demands, has been reflected by this change in statistics. In direct contrast to this, expenditures related to leisure activities, i.e., dining out, transport and communication, educational, cultural, and entertainment activities, and social activities, increased at a steady rate. It may thus be seen that, in the ratio of elements in the total consumer expenditure, the amount spent on furniture and household goods, etc. is declining, although only slightly. From the first half of 1971 to

TABLE IV  
RATE OF GROWTH AND CHANGE IN COMPOSITION OF  
EXPENDITURE IN URBAN WORKERS HOUSEHOLDS

	Percentage Increase in Comparison with Previous Year					Composition	
	Jan. -June 1970	July -Dec. 1970	Jan. -June 1971	July -Dec. 1971	Jan. -June 1972	Jan. -June 1971	Jan. -June 1972
Disposable income	14.6	15.9	11.3	9.5	9.8		
Consumer expenditure	13.7	13.8	11.6	9.6	8.4	100.0	100.0
Food	12.0	11.7	8.9	7.1	7.4	31.6	31.4
Dining-out	(14.5)	(16.7)	(12.5)	(8.6)	(15.2)	(3.2)	(3.4)
Housing, rent	17.0	8.7	11.3	14.6	9.0	10.6	10.6
Furniture and appliances	(21.7)	(2.2)	(11.2)	(22.2)	(3.4)	(5.4)	(5.1)
Heat and lighting expenses	13.9	11.7	10.9	9.1	6.1	4.0	4.0
Clothing	9.3	12.8	12.7	9.4	7.1	10.2	10.0
Miscellaneous expenses	15.2	17.6	13.6	10.3	9.5	43.6	44.0
Transport and communication	(17.8)	(14.3)	(11.5)	(9.6)	(14.2)	(3.1)	(3.2)
Automobile expenses	(15.5)	(50.0)	(40.3)	(23.0)	(2.9)	(2.7)	(2.5)
Culture and entertainment	(17.6)	(20.8)	(9.3)	(4.6)	(9.5)	(7.6)	(7.7)
Social expenses	(17.4)	(21.8)	(16.3)	(11.9)	(12.7)	(7.1)	(7.3)
Average savings	14.8	14.3	14.5	14.4	15.6		

Source: [1].

the first half of 1972, expenditure on furniture declined from 5.4 per cent to 5.1 per cent, expenditure on automobiles and related fields declined from 2.7 per cent to 2.5 per cent, and clothing declined from 10.2 per cent to 10.0 per cent. As against this, expenditure on the above-mentioned leisure activities showed an increase of from 21.0 per cent to 21.6 per cent.

It should be mentioned that bank savings, in spite of an economic recession which reduced the growth rate of disposable income (the growth rate usually centers upon the two seasonal bonuses each year) from 11.3 per cent to 9.8 per cent, rose from a figure of 14.5 per cent to 15.6 per cent.

The tendency away from material things may to some extent be seen if the ways in which the summer bonus of 1972 was used are examined (Table V). From samples obtained by the Statistics Bureau from the household survey, the growth rate of the summer bonus dropped off somewhat, the rate of increase compared to the previous year being 23.1 per cent in 1970, 13.3 per cent in 1971, and in 1972, 9.8 per cent [1]. Usually, when the growth rate of seasonal income such as the biannual bonuses drops off, it would be expected that a propensity to consume would increase, and that a propensity to save would decrease. However, in the case of the 1972 summer bonus, the amount which went toward consumer spending not only dropped from the 1971 level of 23.8 per cent to 17.6 per cent, but the sum total decreased from 24,964 yen in 1971 to 20,353 yen in 1972. As a result, the amount deposited as savings grew from 80,115 yen to 95,336 yen, and as a percentage, the propensity to save grew by a big margin from 76.2 per cent to 82.4 per cent. Although the summer bonus is usually considered to be the one devoted to savings, and although, in addition, at the time the prospects of economic revival were uncertain, the depositing of over 80 per cent of the bonus as savings is a phenomenon without precedent. This is especially so when it is considered that until now, of both the summer and winter bonuses, a large part of the total amount used as consumer expenditure

TABLE V  
COMPARISON OF THE 1971 AND 1972 SUMMER BONUSES

	1971		1972	
	Amount (Yen)	Composition (%)	Amount (Yen)	Composition (%)
Summer bonus (take-home amount)	105,079	100.0	115,689	100.0
Consumer expenditure	24,964	23.8	20,353	17.6
Housing, rent	8,420	8.0	5,993	5.2
Furniture and appliances	6,566	6.2	5,203	4.5
Clothing	3,257	3.1	4,102	3.5
Miscellaneous expenses	13,175	12.5	10,080	8.7
Cultural and entertainment	1,856	1.8	1,234	1.1
Others	4,750	4.5	4,988	4.3
Social expenses	1,257	1.2	2,272	2.2
Savings	80,115	76.2	95,336	82.4

Source: [1].

has been devoted to the purchase of durable consumer goods. Consequently, the amount of furniture and household appliances has increased year by year. However, in the case of the 1972 summer bonus, the amount used was 5,203 yen, which was a 20 per cent decrease on the 1971 figure of 6,566 yen. The various points raised above indeed reflect a tendency to growing lack of interest in things material.

## V. GENERATION CHARACTERISTICS AND DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF FUTURE LIVING PATTERNS

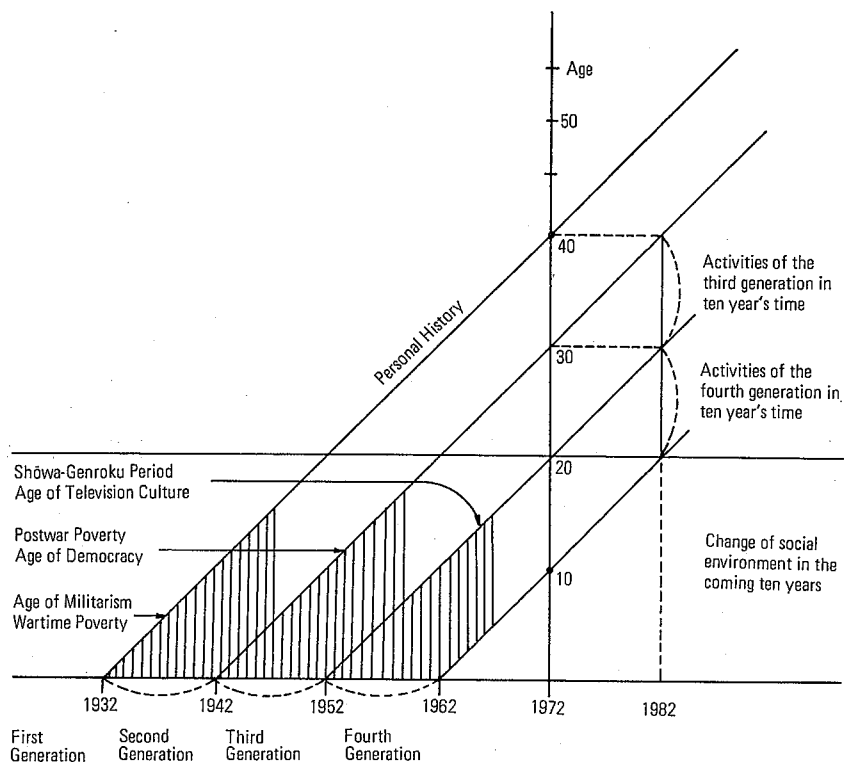
### A. *Influential Factors*

As will be clearly seen from a perusal of the above paragraphs, the life structure of the Japanese people is undergoing significant changes. This seems to be phenomenon which, beginning with the United States, is common to all economically developed nations. In this direction, in what aspects will the future life pattern of the Japanese undergo significant changes in quality?

It is necessary to consider this problem from two different viewpoints. The first is, which factor in the change of the overall environment which exerts influence on the social trends is the strongest in relation to the structure of life, and the second is the question of which generation will exert the greatest influence on future society. It is thus necessary to clarify the special characteristics of this generation. By considering these two aspects, the direction of change in living patterns in five to ten years from now may be predicted. When the relations between these two aspects are expressed in graphical terms, the result may be seen in Figure 4. The two aspects expressed are firstly, the sort of change which will take place in both social environment and people's desires and demands, and secondly, of four generations, the distinction between each generation being made by the environment in which youth and early maturity were spent, which generation possesses the greatest power to bring change to living patterns.

As changes in environment and desires affecting life in five to ten years from now, the tendency to distrust technological and materially-oriented civilization will grow stronger and stronger, and thus demands for sublimatory and worthwhile creative leisure, to achieve release from stress and relaxation in a quiet, natural environment, will also increase (see Figure 3). In addition to this, with continued high level economic expansion centering mainly on the proposal for remodelling the Japanese archipelago [6], labor shortage will continue and economic growth will be brought about by the growing employment of housewives and students on a part-time basis. On the other hand, another characteristic which may be raised is the growth of a tendency toward freer living, due to strengthening of demands for release from capsule-style living, which will grow from the adoption of a four and a half day working week, and the spread and acceptance of one-room-per-person apartment living. Furthermore, the tendency to inflation already to be seen in the rise in consumer prices, the recent rise of wholesale prices, and soaring land prices is obviously causing a shift in concern

Fig. 4. Effect of Change of Environment and Personal History upon Activities of Daily Life



from adequate flow consumption into the direction of high cost tangible assets.

### B. *The Four Generations*

In addition to this coming change in social environment, the structure of life will be influenced to a considerable extent by the younger generation born soon after the war, who are now reaching the age of leading independent lives. At this point, the main characteristics of the four generations mentioned above will be considered.

To begin with, the first generation, born in the Meiji and Taishō, and the early-Shōwa eras, numbers in all around 34 million people. This generation was born in a period when the virtues of diligence, industry and thrift extolled by the famed Sontoku Ninomiya,<sup>3</sup> controlled the social value system, and society

<sup>3</sup> Sontoku Ninomiya (1787–1856) was born into a poor farming family in the Tokugawa period, and by ability and diligent study of agricultural and administrative techniques restored his family fortunes. As a result, he was employed by the feudal authorities to attempt to restore the failing economies of their domains. Due to his efforts, Japanese farming techniques advanced to a level higher than those of Europe at the time (Reischauer), and the economic difficulties of the local feudal domains were alleviated, at least for a time. Along with farming techniques, he taught a personal philosophy of asceticism, frugality, and feudal loyalty. It was upon this teaching that the education



was organized around the principles of the imperial system, around a government policy of national prosperity and a strong international position, and around principles of thrift, economy, and asceticism. Accordingly, in the eyes of young people, this generation who takes great care of material things to an extent which seems absurd, has little flexibility in its habits of thinking, and generally seems to be extremely obstinate. However, it tends to have a consistent attitude to most things, has autonomy in its choice of consumer items, has a wide range of experience, and compared to other generations, possesses ability to distinguish between genuineness and spuriousness. In this last quality, this first generation stands head and shoulders above the other three generations. However, because women were raised in a spirit of meekness and submissiveness, they were strong in qualities of adaptability and compromise, and tended to be easily influenced by husband, children, and neighbors.

The second generation was raised at a time when the social value system underwent a 180 degree change of direction from militarism to democracy, and numbers about 23 million people. They grew up bewildered by the contradictions between the things taught to them by their parents and the things taught in the schools by teachers modelling their methods and approach after the American education system. Because this generation was raised in a period when the social value system was in a state of confusion, the characteristic quality is that, differing from the first generation, they are apt to doubt the validity of things and tend to lack opinions of their own. Furthermore, due to the spread of democratic ideas women have tended to grasp both the family purse strings and family leadership. Of course, they tend to have few independent ideas of their own, and because they usually follow after others, have little resistance to the hidden persuasion of the communication media. Due to the growth in the use of electricity, the labor involved in housework has decreased to a large extent, and they tend to spend the thus otherwise vacant hours gazing at the television set. In contrast to this, and in contrast to the third generation who actively enjoy their leisure hours and activities, the men of the second generation tend to be somewhat awkward and stiff, and although they seem to have passed all authority in domestic matters to their wives, at heart they are strong. This generation also tends to be fond of skeptical argument and discussion.

The third generation was born in conditions of material poverty in the immediate postwar period and was raised in the growing affluence of the late fifties and early sixties. They number roughly 20 million people. Of course, having been raised in a period in which democratic ideas were already well established, while in one aspect, they have well developed qualities of individuality; in other aspects, they tend to be easily influenced, and follow others blindly. It is often said that they have no strong moral fiber, but it may be said that because

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policy of the Meiji government was built, and a statue of Ninomiya was always to be found in the grounds of primary schools in prewar days. On this foundation was created the broad national policy of a powerful army and a prosperous country, and the ideas embodied in the education system tend to dominate the thinking of the first and second generations, even today.

they grew up at a time in which no value system deserving of belief existed, corresponding elements in their group character are lacking. However, they possess a high degree of flexibility in both habits of thought and actions, are very sensitive to, and move without resistance with the currents of change. They are often the initiators of changes, and to quote a trivial yet significant example, it was this generation who broke down the long-standing tradition of white shirts for businessmen, and plunged even the older generation into the colored shirt fashion. However, all the more for having been raised in a materially-oriented society, the third generation is unable to deny the unbalance between spiritual and material things. On the other hand, it was environmental disruption and the big enterprises which drew from them a reaction against the established value system, which expressed itself in such forms as anti-establishment attitudes, the student movement, the hippies, the trend away from fashion and toward simplicity

Fig. 5. "Attitude to Life" as Reflected by the Opinions of Young People

	Agree	Slightly Agree	Indifferent	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	No Answer	
Are you satisfied with having an average standard of living?	13.2	23.5	20.3	20.3	21.6		-1.1
	23.2	28.4	16.6	19.5	11.3		-1.1
Do you desire to have your own house and matching life style?	15.4	24.3	17.6	17.6	24.6		-0.5
	20.8	24.7	20.5	18.4	14.5		-1.1
Do you think actual ability is more important than academic record?					3.0	2.2	
		54.1		24.9	15.1		0.8
		48.2		27.9	18.4		0.8
					3.4	1.3	
Do you think that money rules the world?	11.9	20.0	25.4	14.6	27.8		-0.3
	10.8	19.7	25.0	19.7	23.9		-0.8
Do you think that consumption makes life easier?	24.6	28.4		32.2	8.4	4.6	-1.9
	25.0	33.2		32.9	4.7		-2.6
						1.6	
Do you think it advisable to economize and save?	11.6	24.3	30.0	18.2	14.3		-0.5
	14.7	30.0	28.2	17.6	8.9		-0.8
Do you think it natural for men to dandify themselves?		41.9	27.3	18.1	8.4	4.1	-0.3
		41.6	29.2	18.7	6.6	3.7	-0.8
Do you think it important to keep up with fashion?	18.9	31.4	25.7	12.2	11.9		
	24.7	36.1	25.0	8.4	5.8		

Notes: 1. The figure is based on the survey "Research on the Everyday Lives of Young People" conducted by Nippon Broadcasting System in 1969.

2. Subjects: men and women, age from 15 to 22 years, in the twenty-three wards of Tokyo.

and frugality. In these and other points, one is made aware of a wide gap between this and the first and second generations.

The majority of the fourth generation were born to the tunes of television commercials filling the air, and they number 29 million persons. They are truly children of a period of great prosperity, and they share with the third generation a mental structure, aspects of which are incomprehensible to the older generation. However, they make decisions in a cold, clearcut way more than their elders tend to think. Be that as it may, they tend not to be excessively attached to either possessions or money. If one looks at the survey carried out by Nippon Broadcasting on the attitudes of young people (see Figure 5), it may be seen that those who thought that money is everything were few, and that those who considered that actual ability was more important than academic record formed an overwhelming majority. Further, from early childhood, this fourth generation has received auditory education, and due to their having many opportunities to develop a good sense of color, in cultural aspects, their receptivity is far and away ahead of the other generations. Also due to a sharpness of perception and acute sensitivity which cannot be seen in the other generations, theirs is truly the age of sensation. Most of them consider that there is nothing at all strange in dandyism, and are so intuitively skilled in matters of color, pattern, and design that in consumer choice they already lead their parents. When this generation comes of age, the matters to which they will attach concern cannot be foreseen as yet, but there is no doubt that from the fact that they, even more than the third generation, possess flexibility and adaptability toward change, they will become the leaders in creating the form of new life patterns for the coming era.

To be brief, in all, each of the four generations possesses various distinguishing characteristics. At the least, it may be said that the foundations for the high rate of economic growth were mainly laid by the first generation, and the second generation were the leaders of the consumer revolution. However, from now, those who will exert the greatest influence on living patterns are the third generation, who are reaching the age when they will have households of their own, and the coming fourth generation.

In the sense that they are young and thus have the ability to adapt to the trends of a new age, or rather that they themselves are the creators of the new currents, their influence is very strong. As has been pointed out several times already, the present climate in society is tending to the antipathy toward technological culture, to the avoidance of materialism, and to a more spiritual, cultural civilization. The flow of social opinion to the respect of nature, to concern for freedom and for creativity is evident. However, simultaneously, there has been no attempt to change the emphasis on economics and technology of the established political and economic system. The way of thinking of the establishment, which is symbolically represented in the proposal for remodelling the Japanese archipelago, will further strengthen the above-mentioned movements in society. The opposition to materialism and technology will strengthen simultaneously to the tendency to seek a return to quieter, more relaxed living in an

environment close to nature, and the pursuit of the old rather than the new will develop. In addition, between the flexibility and adaptability to change of the third generation, and the contemporary and cultural sense of the fourth generation, the possibility that life will return to classic patterns is quite real. Although it is difficult to predict what forms these life styles will take, a return to the classic, frugal Japanese pattern, or, in other words, the classic Far Eastern pattern, or again, the medieval European pattern must be considered as strong and quite plausible possibilities.

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