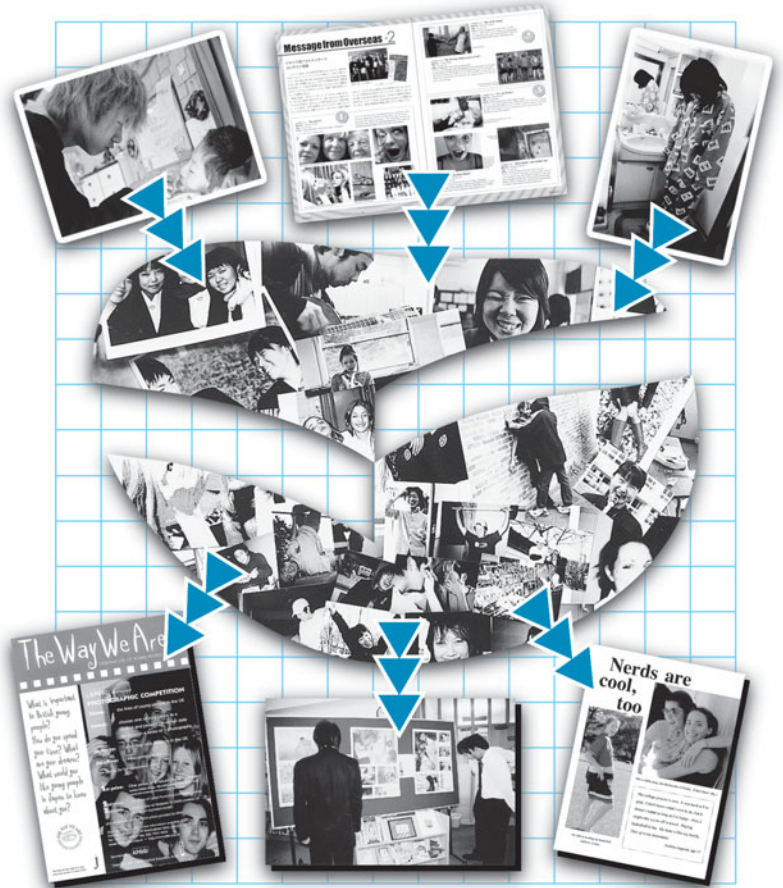


Feature:

## The World Meets Japanese High School Students: Responses and Messages from Young People Overseas

Through *The Way We Are*, an anthology of entries submitted to the "Daily Lives of Japanese High School Students Photo Contest," the Japan Forum seeks to transmit the messages of Japanese high school students about their daily lives and topics they think are important in life to their peers overseas. The year 2001 was the occasion for a number of large-scale events introducing Japanese culture in the United Kingdom, and among those that were part of the formal educational program was a series of exhibitions featuring photographs from this contest. Carrying the idea of this contest a step further, a British version was held, as "The Way We Are (UK)," in order to portray for Japanese young people an accurate image of English young people.

In this issue, we present some of the reactions of British young people to the photos of the Japanese students, and introduce the ways they portrayed their own lives. We also include messages from young people who have seen *The Way We Are* in other countries as well as some of the ways these photo collections have been put to use in the Japanese language classroom.



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Meet Shun'ichi

**Voices** —p. 12

The students worked hard at expressing their opinions

**Japanese Culture Now** —p. 13

わかもの  
若者ことば Young People's Language:  
Mirror of Their World

**TJF News** —p. 14

# Daily Lives of Japanese High School Students

## Photo Message Contest: U.K. Exhibition Tour

In early May 2001, a photo exhibition *The Way We Are: Japanese High School Student's Lives* toured the United Kingdom, starting at the Hendon School in London. In answer to requests from junior and senior high schools, libraries, and other educational institutions, the five sets of works prepared by the exhibition's organizer, Japan Festival Education Trust (JFET), traveled to a total of seventy-five locations, and were visited and viewed by about 100,000 people.

Each exhibit consisted of twenty-five photograph panels. To deepen viewers' overall understanding of Japanese culture and society, JFET produced an activity book for students, which included vocabulary lists and activities to go with the photo captions and photographers' messages.

The impressions of those who saw the exhibit included such comments as: "I saw a completely new Japan—a picture quite different from kimonos, temples, and such," "I realized how much we have in common with young people in Japan," "I could really relate to what was in the pho-

tographs." Comments like this suggest that the purpose of TJF and JFET's activities—to foster understanding by introducing the real faces of young people in Japan—was achieved through the exhibits. Some of the impressions sent in by students are introduced below.



Students viewing the photo exhibition

I saw the exhibition at my school and I was impressed by the diversity of people's personalities. It is true that often there is more that can be said by a photograph than any number of words ever could.

Laurie Aston

I think Sachiyo Tsuji's photos are really good because they manage to bridge the gap between documentary and fine art photos quite well. Her pictures of Hiroshi taking care of a boy in a wheelchair and feeding him food are poignant but also have an informative, documentary edge.

Kwasi Osei-Agyeman



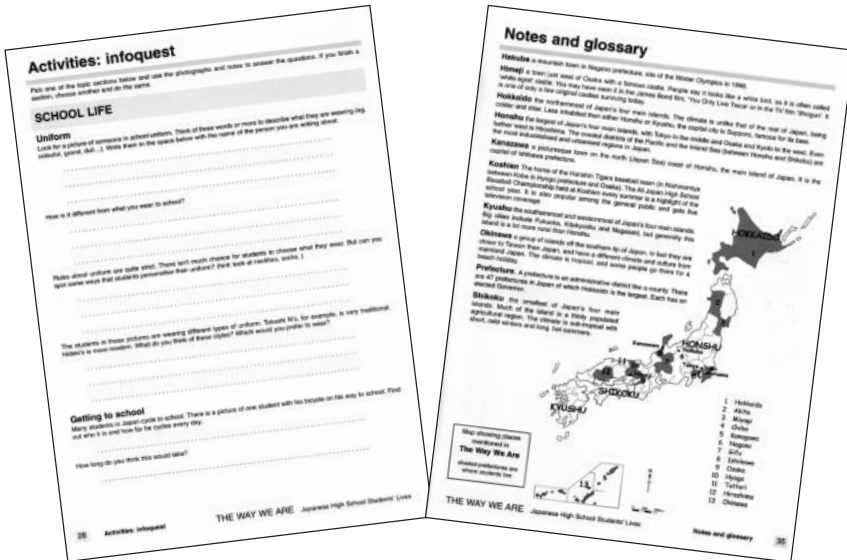
Photo: Tsuji Sachiyo, 1999.

I particularly enjoyed Noriko Oyama's photo of her friend who was trying to lose weight. I thought this portrays a universal issue.

Katie Nevison



Photo: Oyama Noriko, 1998.



The activity book designed to increase understanding about Japan



Article published in *Daily Express* (UK newspaper) weekend special magazine *Saturday*, May 5, 2001 edition.



Photo: Saeki Naotoshi, 1998.

I did see the exhibition and I thought all the photos were very good. My favorite one is of a girl eating *ozoni*, photographed by Naotoshi Saeki. I also particularly liked the photo of family life by Akiko Kuroda, which shows the grandfather and grandson. It shows warmth, friendship, and care for one another. [Angelique Ward](#)



Photo: Kuroda Akiko, 1998.

I was struck by how, although the pictures are from a different culture and society, they portray a very similar lifestyle to ours. [Anna Williamson](#)

I have seen the exhibition and was surprised by how many things we do the same. Shopping, putting on nail varnish, going out with friends, eating at McDonald's. My thoughts and expectations were changed. It gave me a greater understanding of young people in Japan. [Stacey Rowley](#)

# U.K. Photo Message Contest

## The Way We Are: Everyday Life of Young People in the U.K.

Supporting the aims of the TJF photo message contest, JFET launched a U.K. version entitled, "The Way We Are: Everyday Life of Young People in the U.K." in 2001. Following the TJF contest model, the U.K. contest aimed to "convey images of young people in Britain by photographs they took themselves to young people in Japan," soliciting entries made up of five photographs accompanied by captions and messages from the photographer.

From among the seventy-five entries submitted from all over the U.K., judges selected eighteen prize-winners. Charlotte Liddle (age 18) received the top prize. An awards ceremony was held 28 February 2002 in London. Liddle's photographs, in her entry entitled "Me and Co!," show her

family, her shoes, herself putting on her makeup, and her room. Liddle was presented with two round-trip tickets to Japan as a supplementary prize for her first-place entry, and she has plans to visit Japan in autumn 2002.

Entries by Michael Douglas (age 16) and Naomi Mellor (age 18) won second place. Douglas offers a picture of life in the city of London for young people, and Mellor expresses how young people's lives, like a rollercoaster, have their ups and downs, their good times and bad. The prize-winning works exhibit characters with a vitality and zest as only young people could capture on film, thereby vividly evoking the similarities and differences between young people in Japan and the U.K.

### "Me and Co!"

Charlotte Liddle (18), Queen Elizabeth's 6th Form College, \* Darlington

First Prize

My photos are an illustration of my everyday life. They show the things in my life that are important to me: my family, make-up, shoes, and my own space. I have this huge obsession about shoes and I had a great time photographing them—they really are the most beautiful things in the world—after my boyfriend!

\*A sixth form college is a school for students between seventeen and eighteen.



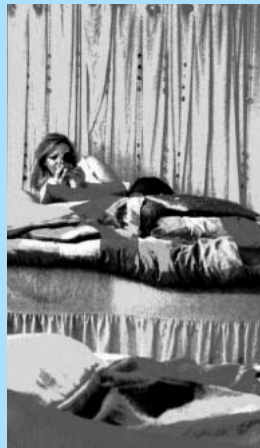
Owwwww!!!!



Me, mummy and mummy's mum!



I love shoes!



Welcome to my boudoir!



What would we do without make-up??!!!

**Japanese language education and teaching about Japan in the U.K.**

An increasing number of students are studying Japanese at the elementary and secondary school levels in the U.K. According to a Japan Foundation study, facilities offering Japanese language rose from 98 schools and 2,164 students in 1993, to 277 schools (including five elementary schools, of which one was planning to offer a Japanese language course) and 8,520 students (including 46 elementary school students) in 2002. In England and Wales, the national curriculum requires students at public junior high schools beginning at age eleven to study a modern foreign language, and Japanese has been designated one of the nineteen from which they can choose.

A language college system was also introduced in 1995 for public schools in England. Schools designated as language colleges receive a subsidy allowing them to purchase up-to-date language education equipment and hire language teachers. Students at these schools are expected to complete courses in three languages while enrolled, learn about the culture of the peoples whose languages they are studying, and actively par-

ticipate in exchange activities with other countries. At the language colleges, because the government encourages introduction of programs in at least one non-European language, interest in Japanese is high. At present (2002), 82 of the 141 accredited language colleges offer courses in Japanese.

Japanese language education in the U.K. is supported by the Japan Foundation London Language Centre, while the more general aspects of teaching about Japan, such as in social studies courses, are assisted by JFET.

Under the national curriculum as revised in 1988, students between the ages of 11 and 14 were required to study Japan in relation to the (then) Soviet Union and the United States in geography classes. (This was later revised and is now optional.) JFET offers a variety of supports to teachers engaged in teaching about Japan, supplying them with resources and providing advice. Its website provides services such as School Links, which offers a node at linking schools in Japan and the U.K., and "Japan-U.K. Live," a forum at which students in both countries can exchange views on various topics through their teachers. Japan-U.K. Live was established as part of "Japan 2001" and dissolved with the termination of the project.



**"Life of the Young"**

Michael Douglas (16), Christ the King 6th Form College, London

Life in the city of London for young people is a reflection of life in any city around the world. Not everything is the way it seems on the big screen.

**"The Teenage Rollercoaster of Life"**

Naomi Mellor (18), Withington Girls' School, Manchester

The message of the photographs is that universally, for teenagers in both Britain and abroad, there are both good times and very bad times. After the excitement of a night out comes the inevitable morning after and, despite the comradeship of a team sport, the disappointment of losing can seem over-powering.



Communication



Lancashire county Lacrosse Team, half time team talk



**"New Age Britain"**

Emma Burton (16)  
Christ the King 6th Form College, London

I am trying to show how times have changed by emphasizing that different races in today's world are capable and should be able to live together in peace and harmony, as we are all equal and should be treated with respect.



Me and Michael relaxing on my sofa, watching television

**"My Sister, Rachel"**

Amy Stephenson (18)  
Queen Elizabeth's 6th Form College, Darlington

I chose my sister, Rachel, as my subject as she is one of the people I know and love the most. Although she is younger than me, I have a lot of admiration and respect for her.



This is one of a series of close-up shots that I took when we were joking around

**"After College? Just Another Day"**

Stephanie Weekes (17)  
Christ the King 6th Form College, London

I wanted to introduce my friend, Linda. She is 16 years old and we have been friends for almost 6 years. I've tried to show what I see as her natural self.



Eating at the bus stop

# Reactions to *The Way We Are* from around the world

TJF makes the works of Japanese students submitted to the photo message contest available to their peers overseas by means of *The Way We Are* photo collection (see article on page 14), and the TJF website. Here we reproduce some of the letters and photographs sent in by students who have seen the entries. By introducing these responses from young people around the world to Japan, we hope this contest will move beyond the one-way transmission from Japan and encourage exchange that moves both ways.



## China (Original text in Japanese)

Student in a Japanese class at the Chaoxian-zu Zhongxue Secondary School, Heilongjiang

The photos make it easy to understand the way Japanese high school students live. We have a lot of things in common, such as knowing how to play hard when it's time to have fun, and how to work hard when it's time to study. On the other hand, at our school in China we have classes from 7:40 in the morning to 4:05 in the afternoon and we study after that until 11:00 at night. Since we only have one day off every two weeks, there's no time or opportunity for us to do part-time work. We study with our sights set on the university we want to enter. Competition is fierce, so we have to study hard.

Chun Bonghwa



A dormitory room. Many Chinese high school students live in dorms.

## New Zealand

Students in a Japanese class at Hutt Valley High School

Hi! Konnichiwa! We are all 16 years old. We enjoy learning Japanese, and especially enjoy Japanese cooking and crafts! There are only eight students in this class, but we know each other well and are all good friends. We all live in Wellington, the capital city of New Zealand. It's a great place to live! Wellington is famous as the windiest city in the country. We hope that you enjoy looking at our photos. They reflect what our lives are like, what we enjoy doing, and the beautiful scenery in New Zealand.



Here we are, enjoying the beautiful view. (Original text in Japanese)

## Canada

Student in a Japanese class at Burnaby Mountain Secondary School, British Columbia

I wanted to know more about the daily schedule, what courses the schools offer, and what courses students take. The publication would be improved if the pictures are all in color, and if it gave the students' e-mail addresses so we could ask questions of them. I think the students in the photo contest are all very brave to show their lives for others to see.

Ringo Wong (Grade 11)

## United States

Student in a social studies class at Campus Middle School, Colorado

My first reaction was that the people in the photos seemed a lot like individuals in the U.S. It seems that the Japanese work very hard, but play and have fun as well. It seems like lots of teens in the pictures are searching for themselves, like many teens here in the States. Their lives seem different because they seem to have many school customs different from ours, they dress differently than we do, and they eat differently. However, there are many similarities between our two countries.

## Our Japanese Class Project

Akashi Hideko  
Marin Academy

Akashi Hideko, teacher at a private high school in California, USA, has put *The Way We Are* to use in her Japanese classes. Her students have even embarked on a project to produce their own photo message project in both Japanese and English. We asked her to share with us just how she went about it.

I used *The Way We Are* during the final semester of a class for students in their fourth year of Japanese study as a tool to teach new and practical uses of grammar and sentence structure, especially the colloquial, casual speaking style of Japanese high school students. It is a great resource for fourth-year Japanese students, because it allows us to move away from textbook Japanese, and get a good look at real Japanese. My students were surprised and interested to see how different the speech in the passages is from textbook Japanese, even though they struggled with the many colloquial expressions. They enjoyed it when they were able to figure things out and learn on their own.

As my students' translation efforts proceeded, the Japanese students' stories came to life and took on a greater sense of immediacy. They were able to relate to many of the Japanese high school students' emotions and circumstances. Interestingly, the friends they interviewed for their own photo message project—even those who hadn't read any of the Japanese students' messages—often expressed anxieties and stresses in their lives concerning high school and the future that were quite similar to those of the Japanese students. Although it was a very long process, the students enjoyed creating their own photo essay project.

**>>>First stage:** After choosing one of the Japanese students and reading his/her passage together as a class, students were assigned to read some sections as homework, using kanji and Japanese-English dictionaries. In class, we also discussed some grammatical points.

**>>>Second stage:** Each student chose a Japanese student from the book and attempted to understand, as much as possible, the grammar and sentence structures in the passages and captions about their subject, striving to come up with suitable English translations.

**>>>Third stage:** Students were told to pick a friend whom they would like to portray in a photo essay project of their own. They began by interviewing their chosen friend in English on ten basic items (club activity, favorite food, etc.) noted for each of the subjects of the Japanese photo message contest. In addition, they asked them some general questions like, "What has been on your mind lately as far as your life in high school?" or "What have you been passionate about? What stresses you out? What have you been happy about?" The students would then translate their friends' responses into Japanese, as well as write up their own impressions of the friend, or discuss changes in their relationship. Using the school's digital camera, they took pictures of the chosen friend that best portrayed his/her lifestyle and activities.

In compiling the students' efforts and creating the photo essay project, we used AppleWorks drawing functions to set the page layout and the Japanese Language Kit for Macintosh to type in the Japanese. Students were also required to create the photo essay project's equivalent in English. Finally, we printed the completed project out on photo-quality paper, using the school's color printer.



From the photo collection put together by her students