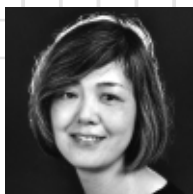




WHAT'S IN THE BAG?

—Learning about High School Students' Lifestyles from Their Personal Effects—



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PURPOSE

By looking at the items that high school girls in Japan typically carry around in their bags, we can develop a reasonable picture of their interests and hobbies, what they consider important, their personal relationships, and their social milieu. This lesson also provides a ground-level view of various aspects of the youth culture and popular culture of contemporary Japan, such as karaoke, "loose socks," and the great popularity of cellular phones among junior high and high school students. By learning about these aspects of Japanese youth culture, the students come to regard Japan as more familiar and accessible, and compare the daily lives of Japanese youth with their own, considering both similarities and differences.

POINTS TO BE STUDIED

LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES

TARGET FUNCTIONS

- ❖ Obtaining information
- ❖ Expressing one's own ideas

TARGET EXPRESSIONS

- ❖ ~は~です, ~は~ですか, ~に~があります
- ❖ 助詞「と」の使い方

TARGET VOCABULARY

- ❖ かばん, 教科書, ノート, 筆入れ, さいふ, ハンカチ, かがみ, くし, メモ帳, 化粧品, 携帯電話など物品の名称, ~さん, ~歳, ~年生

CULTURAL OBJECTIVES

- To learn about what high school students in Japan are interested in
- To express ideas about the social environment of Japanese high school students in comparison with one's own social

SOURCE MATERIALS

Article "Everyday People in Japan," from *Nipponia*, No. 7, Heibonsha, 1999 (Handout *)
 Wallet, handkerchief, hand mirror, comb, notepad, cosmetics, mobile phone
 Vocabulary cards
 Photographs of "loose socks" and karaoke singing

PROCEDURE

Preparation

1. Prepare vocabulary cards (e.g., with the German "Handtuch" written on one side and the Japanese ハンカチ written on the other)
2. Prepare a bag filled with items (wallet, lipstick, electronic pocket notebook, etc.) that will lead into the topic of the lesson.

1. Introduction (3 mins.)

First arouse the students' interest by saying: きょうは私のかばんの中を見せましょう。Take some items out of the bag—wallet, lipstick, electronic pocket notebook—and show and briefly describe them to the class.

2. Students' description of items (5 mins.)

Ask the students: では、みなさんのかばんに何がありますか。Have them take out some items from their bags, and ask a few to talk briefly about what they have chosen.

3. Reading handout (5 mins.)

Develop the topic by asking in Japanese: さて、日本の女子高生のかばんに何がありますか? Distribute the handout (which are in German) and have the students read them.

4. Answering in Japanese (5 mins.)

Ask questions about the content of the handout using the previously learned patterns, ~は (noun) です, ~は (noun) ですか, and ~は何歳ですか。The students answer in Japanese.

5. Explanation of new vocabulary (12 mins.)

Allow the students to handle actual items like those in the Japanese high school girl's bag, and uses vocabulary cards to teach them what each item is

called in Japanese. Explain such things as ルーズソックス and カラオケ using photographs.

6. Explanation of sentence structure (10 mins.)

Explain the sentence structures ~に (noun) があります and ~と~. The students practice them.

7. Summary (10 mins.)

As a recap, have the students fill out a worksheet and present to the class their own impressions of the content of the handout.

STUDENT RESPONSE

- German and Japanese high school students seem to have quite similar concerns and interests, which can be gleaned from the items they carry in their bags.

Remarks

- If time remains, play a game in which the students have to match the vocabulary cards with the actual items.
- From the handout "Everyday People in Japan," the students made various discoveries, which prompted them to consider their own social environment. Although on this occasion there wasn't enough time, the lesson can be expanded to include further discussion about such topics as why schools adopt fixed uniforms, why schools forbid students to bring cosmetics to school, and the pros and cons of cellular phones. Students could also be assigned to research data on such topics and conduct a debate in teams representing "Japanese students" and "German students."

From the committee

By simply changing the target expressions and vocabulary, teachers could adapt this lesson plan to students at any level. If the students are interested in the pop groups that appear in the materials used—in this case, Morning Musume and Speed—the lesson could include listening to some of those artists' songs. Similarly, if the students show interest in the *shodō* implements, they could be given a chance to try *shodō* themselves.

EVERYDAY PEOPLE IN JAPAN

"I used my cell phone too much, so I canceled the contract."

Ohara Yukiko (16) is in her first year at a senior high school, in Saitama Prefecture just north of Tokyo. She lives with her parents and her 22-year-old sister.

Many teenagers in Japan don't like school and try to avoid communicating with their parents. Yukiko is different. "I like being with my mother, father and sister and school is great because I have lots of friends there. Actually, all of my classmates get along with each other." Yukiko says she has never been late for school, at least not yet.

Her bag (1) is part of her school uniform, so every girl has the same kind. When she opened it for us, we first saw things she needs for class—her textbooks and scribblers (2), and her pencil case (3). She keeps a purse (4) and a commuter pass holder (5) in the bag, as well. She uses the small towel (6) to freshen up after physical education class. Her small notebook (7) is full of things she jots down—mostly her schedule, and a journal of events that happen each day. "I'm always busy, so I have a lot to write about. I have four very good friends (all girls, of course). We almost always go somewhere after school. On holidays we go shopping and stay over at each others' homes. We have so much to talk about that we can't



Ohara Yukiko and her friends rent a karaoke room several times a week. She likes to try out songs made popular by the female hit singers Morning Musume and Speed.



フツの日本人

Everyday People in Japan

possibly cover everything before the day is over."

But why does she need glue (8)? She uses it to hold up her heavy white "loose socks" which are all the rage among high school girls in Japan. The glue keeps the socks at the right height, showing off just the right amount of bagginess.

The pouch (9) holds cosmetics. Her school doesn't let the students wear cosmetics (in fact, it doesn't even let them bring cosmetic products to school). Hidden away in their pouch, the cosmetics have apparently increased in number over time. The small mirror and comb (10) are decorated with a popular creature called Kitty.

Yukiko's cell phone (11) has a history of its own. "I can't use it now. You see, my parents were paying the bill, on top of my monthly allowance. During the summer holidays I used the phone so much that the bill for one month came to 25,000 yen! I told them about it before they found out, to show them I was sorry. And I canceled the contract. In a way I'm glad I can't use it—my Dad can't phone me up and ask me where I am, or when I'll be home!"

Yukiko has a writing set (12) for her calligraphy club activities. The CD (13) contains songs she sings with her friends in a "karaoke box", a place for karaoke lovers to sing. She bought the CD to help her get the words and melodies right.

It's obvious that Yukiko is enjoying life to the fullest. But she has serious plans ahead: "I want to be a nurse. After I finish high school, I hope to enroll in a nursing school. They have a dormitory for students, and I want to live there. That way I'll be able to get away from home and live my own life."

Yukiko has a bright personality and plenty of energy. If she does become a nurse, her patients will certainly appreciate her.

Written by Tokunaga Kyōko
Photos by Hara Hirofum



—Photos and texts on page 3 and 4 are reprinted from "Everyday People in Japan," *Nipponia* No. 7, Heibonsha, 1999, pp. 18-19.