

A Day in the Life

おこづかい O-kozukai Allowance

A Day in the Life introduces aspects of the cultural backdrop of daily life in Japan by focusing on topics that are often talked about, are considered essential to the culture, or otherwise loom large in the lives of Japanese. Part of the aim of this feature is to encourage readers to consider culture itself from a broad perspective, recognizing, for example, that any given culture, whether Japan's or your own, includes diversity; that different cultures have similarities as well as differences; that cultures evolve with the changing times; and that, while human behavior may be manifested in different ways, at the fundamental level there is a great deal about us that is universal.

The newsletter is printed alternately in full-color and two-color issues. In the full-color issues, **A Day in the Life** looks at the lives of Japanese people in general, while in the two-color issues (with feature articles) it focuses on topics essential to understanding the daily lives of Japanese school students.

photos: Hongō Jin/illustrations: Asayama Yuki

How much money do high school students use for daily expenses? Where do they get such money? In this issue, **A Day in the Life** takes a look at the allowance books of four Japanese high school students. We also collected data on the allowances of some students in high schools in the United States and Australia. What sorts of things do you notice from this information? This topic gives us a chance to zoom in the sorts of things high school students buy and the activities they are involved in. "The Way We Are" on pp. 8-9 show the things high school students spend their money on. Please refer to that information as well.

こうたろう
浩太郎

Kōtarō, 16, first-year, private high school, boy, Tokyo



I receive a monthly allowance (おこづかい *o-kozukai*) of ¥5,000 from my parents. My afternoons are busy with school club activities (クラブ活動 *kurabu katsudō*), so I don't have time to take a part-time job (アルバイト *arubaito*). Sometimes I help out with chores around the house and receive some extra cash. My birthday was this month, so I bought a DVD player, something I had wanted for a long time, using savings from my monthly allowance and money my parents gave me for my birthday. I also bought two DVDs.

What I'm really into now is martial arts. I'm a member of the jūdō club at school, and we have practice everyday after school. On Saturdays and Sundays we usually have matches. Two days a week, after judo club practice is over I go to the community sports gym for lessons in shōrinji kenpō. After that much exercise, I usually stop at the convenience store on my way home for *onigiri* and a drink. You know, you get really hungry!

photo: Ro Ei



convenience store



DVD player

おこづかい O-kozukai (allowance): High school students receive spending money from their parents in various ways. Some get a set amount from their parents on a specified day; others receive cash when they need it for particular expenses, and so on. According to one survey,* the largest proportion, or some 38.5 percent, of Japanese high school students receive an average monthly allowance of between 4,000 and 5,000 yen.

*Karaza Report '99 vol. 3, Kumon Children's Research Institute, 1999.

Details of Kōtarō's Accounts (¥)

日付 Mo./Day	項目 Item	収入 Income	支出 Expenses	残高 Balance
11/27	前月からのくりこし Savings from previous month	34,000		34,000
	誕生日祝金 Birthday present	10,000		44,000
	おこづかい Monthly allowance	5,000		49,000
	バリカン Electric hair clippers		3,980	45,020
	レモンソーダ Lemon soda drink		100	44,920
28	リンゴジュース Apple juice		100	44,820
30	レモンティー (あめ) Lemon tea candy		160	44,660
12/2	DVDプレイヤー DVD player		19,800	24,860
	PRIDE GP (DVDソフト) Pride GP (DVD)		6,800	18,060
5	こんにやくゼリー Konnyaku jelly snack		60	18,000
6	格闘技通信 (本) Kakutōgi Tsūshin (martial arts magazine)		640	17,360
8	0の殺人 (本) Zero no Satsujin (The Zero Murder) (book)		550	16,810
9	ゲームセンター Game center charges		300	16,510
10	ラーメン (外食) Rāmen (eating out)		800	15,710
11	リンゴジュース Apple juice		100	15,610
12	家の手伝いのお駄賃 Extra cash for household chores	500		16,110
	おにぎり、ラーメン、パン類 Onigiri, rāmen, pastries		700	15,410
	コーラ、きなこもち Coke, kinako-mochi		180	15,230
19	ミルクティー Milk tea (drink)		100	15,130
21	PRIDE-10 (DVDソフト) Pride-10 (DVD)		4,800	10,330

クラブ活動 Kurabu katsudō (club activities): One survey** found that more than 60 percent of Japanese high school students are members of school clubs, which are of a wide variety of types, including sports, culture-related, and science-related activities. Clubs provide the opportunity to pursue hobbies, receive training in skills and sports, as well as get to know students of other classes at school, establish relationships with all kinds of people, and make friends. (See the *TJF Newsletter*, No. 18, A Day in the Life).



advertisement for part-time student help

Excerpt from school code of two high schools (clauses about part-time work.)

特別な理由により、アルバイトを希望するときは、所定の許可申請用紙に必要事項を記入のうえ、速やかに担任に提出すること。

Those wanting to do part-time work for some reason should submit a form to obtain permission. Fill out the form and hand it to their homeroom teacher without delay.

アルバイトは原則として禁止する。

As a rule, working part-time is not permitted.

ゆう 優

Yū, 17, second-year, private high school, girl, Saitama prefecture



The amount of the allowance I get from my parents isn't set, but they give me money for food, stationery goods, supplementary textbooks (including drills and study guides), and such, and probably about 2,500 yen when I need it. I have to buy whatever else I want from my お年玉 *otoshidama* (New Year's gift). I received ¥80,000 as *otoshidama* this year and saved about ¥70,000. My cell phone is a family phone and my parents pay the bill, which is usually about ¥5,000 a month.

I spend most of my allowance on snacks—cookies, gum, candy, drinks—pens and paper, supplementary textbooks, and some clothing. The extra textbooks I buy are those for English, classical Japanese, etc. I don't attend extra classes at cram schools, but supplement my studies by working with these commercially available textbooks. After it got cold this winter, I bought a muffler and gloves. I also bought a fleece jacket to wear on a school trip. Clothing made of fleece fabric is lightweight and very warm, as well as inexpensive, so it is enjoying a big boom in Japan right now. Everybody around me seems to have at least one fleece jacket.



cookies, gum, and candy

お年玉 *Otoshidama* (New Year's gift): Cash gifts presented to children by parents, grandparents, relatives, or family friends at New Year's. The average *otoshidama* of high school students is about ¥40,000, and most students put it into savings accounts. They use it to supplement their monthly allowance or to purchase major items they want to buy.*
* *Karaza Report '99* vol. 3, Kumon Children's Research Institute, 1999.

携帯電話 *Keitai (denwa)* (mobile phone): As of March 31, 2000, there were nearly 57 million users of mobile phones (cellular or PHS) in Japan, which makes 1 phone for every two people in Japan, not counting preschoolers. About 59 percent of all high school students have cell phones, and of these 56 percent say that they feel closer to their friends as a result. On the other hand, 37 percent say they think that unnecessary phoning has increased as a result of the cell phone boom.

アルバイト *Arubaito* (part-time work): The Japanese word for part-time or casual employment derives from the German *Arbeit* (work), and refers to chiefly to work done by high school and university students in their free time in order to supplement the allowances given them by their parents. According to one survey,** about half of Japanese high school students have had part-time jobs at one point or another, commonly as waiter/waitress, kitchen helper or as attendants in convenience stores, supermarkets, fast food restaurants, and gas stations. Many utilize their longer vacations to earn money on part-time jobs. The hourly wage ranges from about 750 to 1000 yen.

Many public high schools have a rule prohibiting students from taking part-time jobs, on the principle that such work can prevent them from giving adequate time to their studies, but some schools will permit exceptions, if the reasons are persuasive or for extended holiday periods, and so on. Part-time work is valuable for gaining experience in adult society, for learning how to use the money you earn yourself skillfully and in cultivating self-reliance. Some students as well as parents, however, believe that there are certain things one can only do as a high school student, such as getting completely absorbed in study or devoting time to school clubs, that are just as important as earning extra money on part-time jobs.

** *Chūgakusei kōkōsei no nichijō seikatsu ni kansuru chōsa hōkokusho* [Survey on the Daily Lives of Junior High and High School Students], Japan Youth Research Institute, 2000.

Sample of Yū's Monthly Accounts (¥)	
Income	
1. Savings from previous months and <i>otoshidama</i>	10,000
2. Allowance (receive from parents when needed)	2,500
Total	12,500
Expenses	
1. Food and drink	515
2. Clothing	4,200
3. Hobbies	0
4. Other	
Supplementary textbooks	3,800
Stationery	530
Total	9,045

photo: Ganaha Asami



cell phone



fleece jacket

The appearance of multi-function cell phones that provide Internet access and e-mail services—the so-called *i-mode* phones—has made *keitai denwa* indispensable equipment for keeping in touch and for ordinary communication among young people. Service charges among the high school students average from ¥4,000 to ¥7,000. About 30 percent “pay all the charges myself,” 20 percent “share payment with parents,” and 30 percent “have parents pay all the charges.”

Criticism has recently focused on the lack of consideration of some cell phone users who disturb others by talking in loud voices on their phones in public places, such as on crowded trains.

Source: *Seishōnen to keitai denwa nado ni kansuru chōsa kenkyū hōkokusho* [Report of the Study on Youth and Mobile Phone Use], Management and Coordination Agency, December 2000.

しゅんすけ
俊介



Shunsuke, 18, third-year, public high school, boy, Chiba prefecture

My monthly allowance is ¥5,000. My parents also give me ¥2,500 for the train fare for commuting to school, and ¥2,000 for food, so about ¥9,500 in all. I started to commute to school by bicycle, in place of taking the train, so I use the train fare for other things (with all that footwork, I figure I earn it!).

As for expenses, I contribute ¥1,000 to payment of my e-mail account (my parents subtract it from my allowance!) As far as spending for food, I usually buy *onigiri* or a hamburger before I go to cram school after school twice a week, and that comes to about ¥2,000 a month. Then I spend about ¥2,000 per month on snacks—most of it is chocolate and Pepsi. I use the rest for novels, mainly fiction for young adults. I like writing fiction, so I sometimes buy classical literature of Europe and China. I go to the second-hand bookstores a lot. I almost never buy clothing myself. I wear a uniform to school, and at home, all I need are T-shirts, sweatshirts, and jeans.

Sample of Shunsuke's Monthly Accounts (¥)

Income	
1. Allowance (received every month)	5,000
2. Other	
Train fare	2,500
Food	2,000
Total	9,500
Expenses	
1. Food and drink	4,000
2. Clothing	0
3. Hobbies	
Fiction, <i>manga</i>	3,000
Video games	1,500
4. Other (e-mail account)	1,000
Total	9,500

Commuting to school: Public schools are usually located relatively close by, so most students commute by bus, bicycle, or on foot. Those who attend private schools, however, often commute from considerable distance, some changing trains more than once. Driver's licenses cannot be obtained until the age of 18, so almost no students drive to school (few are driven to school by car).



photo: Esaki Hiroyuki

bookstore



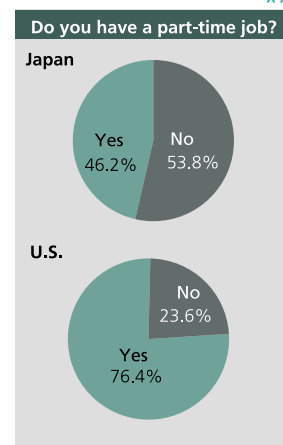
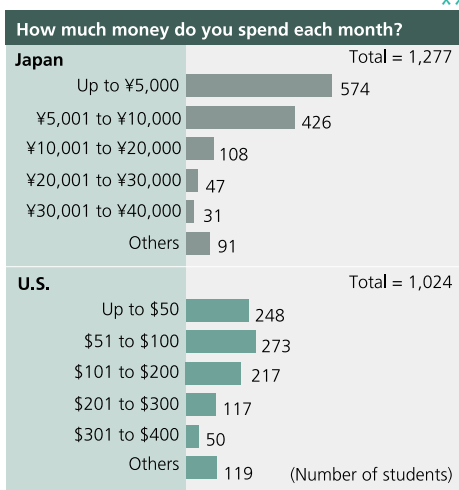
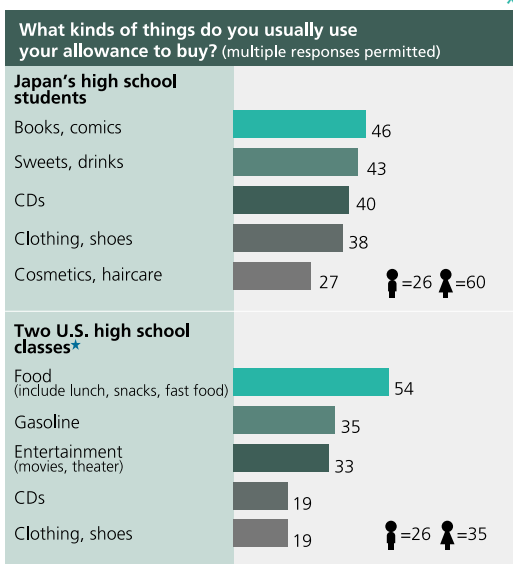
photo: Taki Eriko

commuting to school by train



chocolate and Pepsi

Data and activities



* Based on data from 61 students in 2 classes obtained with the cooperation of Joanne Shaver, Japanese-language teacher at a public school in the state of Virginia, U.S.A. In Virginia, students can get a driver's permit at 15 (allowing them to drive with a licensed driver in the car) and a license at 16 years. The average allowance in these classes was US\$200. Of 61 students 54 had part-time jobs.

* Karaza Report '99 vol. 3, Kumon Children's Research Institute, 1999.

** Chūgakusei kōkōsei no nichijō seikatsu ni kansuru chōsa hōkokusho [Report of the Study on Youth and Mobile Phone Use], Japan Youth Research Institute, 2000.

りょう

Ryō, 17, second-year, public high school, girl, Hokkaido



My monthly allowance is usually about ¥5,000. I also receive about ¥25,000 extra for meals. I also earn about ¥5,000 a month selling old clothes at the flea market and selling books to the second-hand bookstore. Sometimes I make a whole batch of handmade beadwork accessories and sell them to my friends. I often get special requests, and I can make pretty attractive cell phone straps with designs. I made a lot of money last year because beadwork accessories were in fashion.

I spend a lot of money compared to my friends. Of the ¥25,000 I get for eating, I actually only spend about ¥12,000 on meals. I buy cheap things to eat and keep as much as possible for other things. On weekdays I can buy lunch at the school shop, which is an average of about 500 yen. I buy a PET bottle of cold tea almost every day and have it with me all the time. We have all kinds of tea, but I like the bitter-tasting types the best. Maybe I picked up that taste in tea ceremony club. I also spend about ¥3,000 on the monthly

manga magazine, *Shūkan shōnen jampu* (I've been reading it since I was in elementary school), poetry collections, and such, and about ¥10,000 on CDs. Recently I got *The Greatest Hits: Love Psychedelico*. The songs are really cool, and so is their website. I also spend about ¥5,000 on movies and shopping. My parents will pay for my personal needs and clothing, and for my cell phone bill, too.

Sample of Ryō's Monthly Accounts (¥)

Income

1. Allowance (received monthly from parents)	5,000
2. Other	
Part-time work	5,000
Food (received monthly from parents)	25,000
Total	35,000

Expenses

1. Eating	12,000
2. Clothing	0
3. Hobbies	
CDs	10,000
Manga	3,000
4. Miscellaneous	5,000
Total	30,000

お茶 O-cha: Although demand for pekoe tea and coffee, and sports drinks has definitely increased, beverages based on traditional Japanese tea enjoy a strong market. You can purchase an immense variety of drinks, either canned or in PET bottles at convenience stores or vending machines.

photo: Miyata Sumie



flea market



magazines



CDs



o-cha

Let's Try!

Try taking a survey in your class, too, using Japanese, to ask about how much allowance you and your classmates receive and spend each month. Then think about questions like those below. (Even among high school students of the United States and Australia, there are likely to be differences in amount of allowance and money spent by region and from one person to another. The differences reflect the lifestyles of each individual person. We hope that this topic will also alert students to the diversity of lifestyles of Japanese students as well. There will also be similarities that transcend the national differences. In such cases, it is valuable to consider the reasons for such similarities.)

Q1. What are the top 5 items on which members in your class spend their allowance most often? Think about the background reasons and features of the data and compare them with those on p.12.

Q2. In the survey cited on p. 12, the proportion of high school students doing part-time jobs is more than 75 percent for the United States and about 50 percent for Japan. Looking at the diagrams, think about the similarities and differences in the purposes and significance of working part-time, the ways the money earned is used and the daily expenses needed that parents cover, and the various reasons. Refer to the information on *arubaito* and cell phones (p. 11) in your discussion.



I asked my friends about whether they were working, and of the five of us, all (including one girl) have jobs. We make an average of about AU\$140 a month. We use the money mostly on magazines about our interests, and food. The girl rides horses as a hobby, and spends a lot of her earnings on food for them. (12th grade student, public school in rural Victoria, Australia)

Data provided by Julia Clancy of Wangaratta, Australia.

TJF would like to express its special thanks to the four Japanese high school students, and to Joanne Shaver of the United States, and Julia Clancy of Australia for helping to collect data for this issue's A Day in the Life. The photographs in this feature are drawn from the TJF Photo Data Bank. Note that the four students featured in the text are not those appearing in the photographs.