



On streets throughout East and Southeast Asia
Japanese trends define the edge.



Is Asia Becoming Japanese? Or is the look deceive?

As Hakuholdo R&D Division researchers prepared for their third annual **Sei-Katsu-Sha** survey of consumer attitudes and behaviour in Asia, they couldn't help noticing the high penetration of Japanese celebrities and characters in other Asian countries. Some Japanese singers, TV and film stars are now almost as well known in Hong Kong and Taiwan as they are at home in Japan. Hello Kitty, Pokemon, and Doraemon are even better known. All over Asia, streets are filled with people whose styles would make them perfectly at home in Shibuya, the epicenter of teen fashion explosions in Japan.

What is going on here? To what extent has Japan become a leader in shaping the next generation of regional consumer culture? Do significant cultural differences still divide Japanese consumers from their counterparts in other Asian countries? Are we seeing the emergence of a pan-Asian consumer culture? Or do national cultures remain distinct? Or cluster in unexpected ways?

To answer these questions, the Hakuholdo R&D Division's researchers used their proprietary HABIT research methodology to study the attitudes and behaviour of 15 to 54 year-old, male and female consumers in 12 Asian cities. The results are the first data directly comparable with HABIT research in Japan and important new information for marketers throughout the region.

HABIT ASIA 2000 Research Design

CITIES

Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Taipei, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Bangkok, Seoul, Manila, Jakarta, Ho Chi Minh

SAMPLE

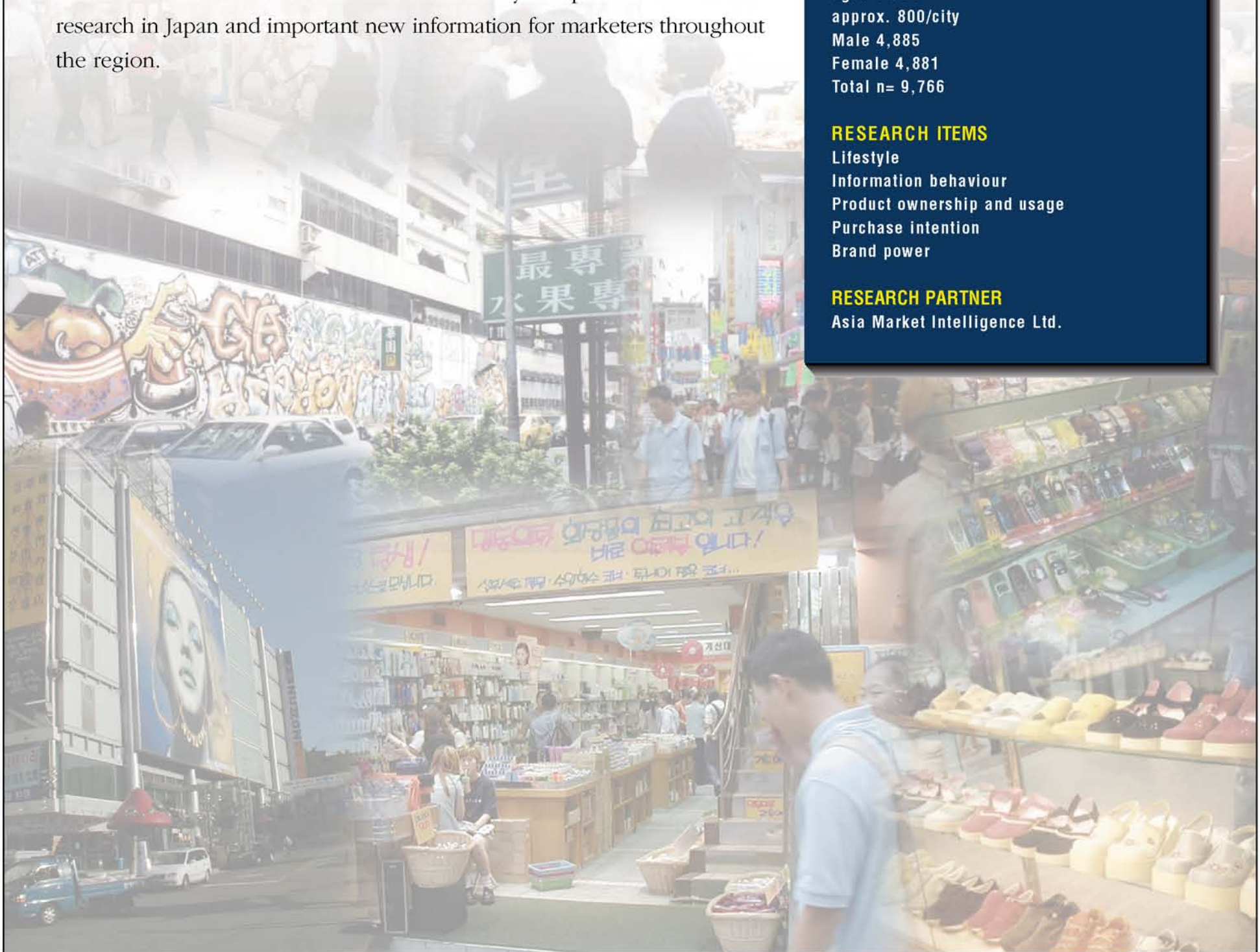
Male/female individuals
aged 15-54
approx. 800/city
Male 4,885
Female 4,881
Total n= 9,766

RESEARCH ITEMS

Lifestyle
Information behaviour
Product ownership and usage
Purchase intention
Brand power

RESEARCH PARTNER

Asia Market Intelligence Ltd.



Here, there, everywhere. Japanese influence.

ASIANS FEEL CLOSER TO JAPANESE CELEBRITIES

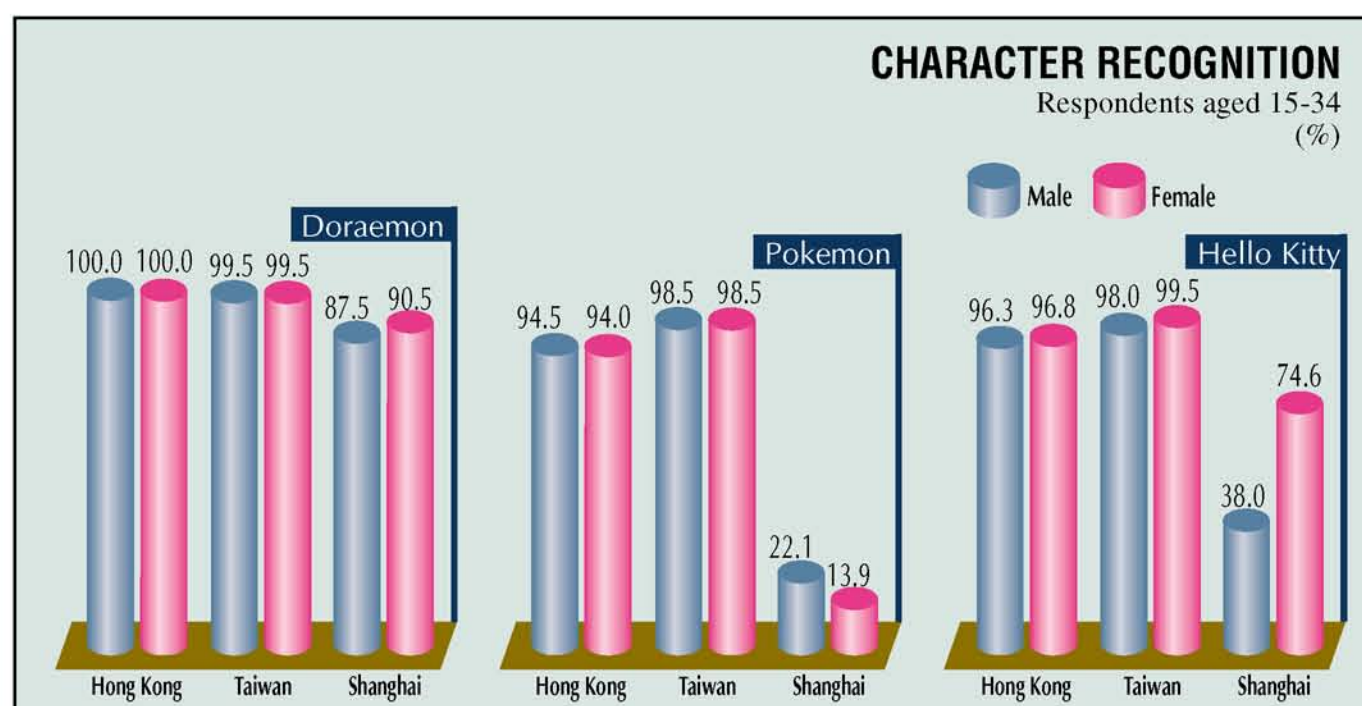
“Japanese celebrities and Japanese dramas are very popular. People who like Japanese celebrities describe themselves as stylish, picky and trend-conscious. In contrast to European or American celebrities, they feel closer to Japanese celebrities. It doesn't feel so unreasonable to try to imitate them.”

— Hong Kong magazine editor

JAPANESE CHARACTERS ARE MORE IN TUNE WITH ASIAN TASTES.

“Pokemon and Hello Kitty are in tune with the tastes of today's people. Compared to, say, Mickey Mouse, Hello Kitty feels more like me. The feeling and fit are better.”

— Hong Kong TV commercial director



JAPANESE PRODUCTS ARE HIGHLY REGARDED

To explore the image of Japanese, American and Korean products, subjects were asked to rate how well the following adjectives fit them: quality, stylish, established, energetic, international, unique, high-priced, safe and fun. As you can see in the following table, scores for Japanese products were very high everywhere except in the Philippines, where American products are highly regarded. Japanese products were clear leaders in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia. They also scored well in Korea, on a par with Korean products.

How Asia Sees Japanese Products

	Japanese products	American products	Korean products
Hong Kong	H+		
Korea	H		H
Taiwan	H+		
Singapore	H+		
Malaysia	H+		
Thailand	H	H	
Shanghai	H	H	
Beijing	H	H	
Guangzhou	H+	H	
the Philippines		H+	
Vietnam	H	H	
Indonesia	H	H	

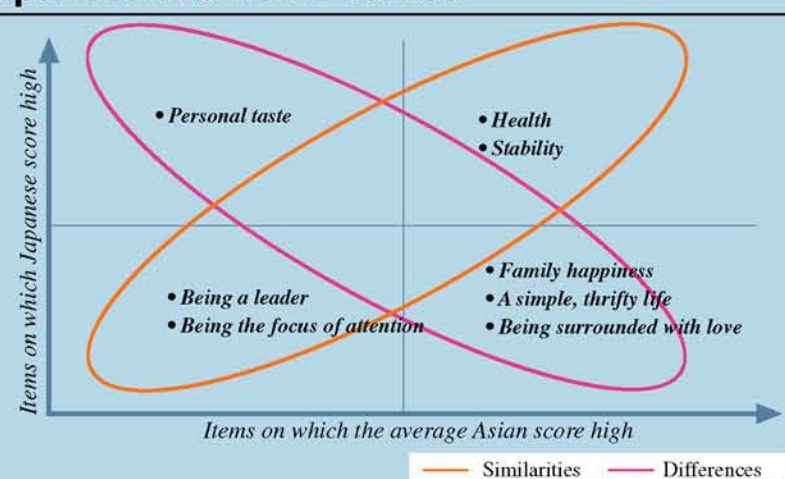
H+: Evaluated very high H: Evaluated high

Japan vs. Asia. Detached vs. Socially Embedded

LIFESTYLES

Both in Japan and in other parts of Asia, consumers are likely to prefer lives that are healthy and stable, but are also conformist and invisible. Scores for desire to be a leader and wanting to stick out are low. Differences appear in degree of social embedding. Japanese consumers give higher priority to personal feelings and tastes. They score low where other Asians score high, on family happiness, a simple life, and being loved.

Similarities and Differences between Japanese and Asian values



Attitudes toward Work and Leisure (%)

	Easy job vs Responsibility	Ample vacation vs High salary	Enjoy life vs Prepare for future
Japan	78.2	54.5	40.0
Korea	61.8	48.3	12.8
Hong Kong	55.5	38.4	15.9
Taiwan	65.1	33.9	9.2
Singapore	35.0	25.2	14.7
Malaysia	35.4	18.5	6.1
Thailand	77.3	25.8	10.3
Shanghai	57.9	31.1	21.7
Beijing	63.2	32.4	22.9
Guangzhou	78.7	28.1	9.0
Philippines	21.2	5.7	2.5
Vietnam	21.5	31.5	8.0
Indonesia	48.6	23.6	2.2

○ = higher than 50%

WORK AND LEISURE

In other parts of Asia, many people continue to work hard, preparing for the future and striving for higher salaries. Only in Japan do large numbers prefer more vacation and the chance to enjoy their current lifestyles.

While Asia is split fifty-fifty between countries where easy jobs are preferred and countries where responsible positions are preferred, Japan is in the easy job camp.

ATTITUDES TOWARD INFORMATION

Only 20 percent of Japanese consumers want fresh information quickly. Consumers in Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam all score higher. Similar patterns appear when the question is more information, selected information, or personalised information gathering.

Attitudes toward Information (%)

	Want it fast	Want it selected	The more the better	Gathered my way
Japan	20.0	22.3	16.9	14.4
Korea	35.0	50.5	56.1	19.8
Hong Kong	27.0	50.2	50.4	37.3
Taiwan	8.1	28.0	31.8	29.8
Singapore	21.9	49.5	36.7	26.2
Malaysia	35.9	73.7	66.9	50.7
Thailand	14.9	48.0	33.0	28.4
Shanghai	14.2	42.5	39.5	34.7
Beijing	15.6	48.3	50.6	40.2
Guangzhou	23.9	43.5	41.8	32.8
Philippines	38.9	42.1	30.6	14.1
Vietnam	26.0	56.5	62.6	31.0
Indonesia	14.9	33.3	56.4	27.8

○ = higher than Japan

MEDIA INFLUENCE

In the balanced pattern found in Japan, Hong Kong and Malaysia, mass media, advertising and word-of-mouth are all seen as important sources of information. In Singapore and Thailand, both advertising and word-of-mouth scored high, but mass media score lower. In China, the Philippines and Vietnam, advertising is the primary source of consumer information. Only in Indonesia are mass media and advertising both seen as important while word-of-mouth is not.

Charting the Asian Mosaic

THREE TYPICAL PATTERNS

Mainland China Type Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou

Here we find emphasis placed on

- Self-fulfilment
- Personal taste
- Doing things my way
- Stimulation and evaluation from others.

These are consumers striving to achieve affluence through their own efforts.

ASEAN Type Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia

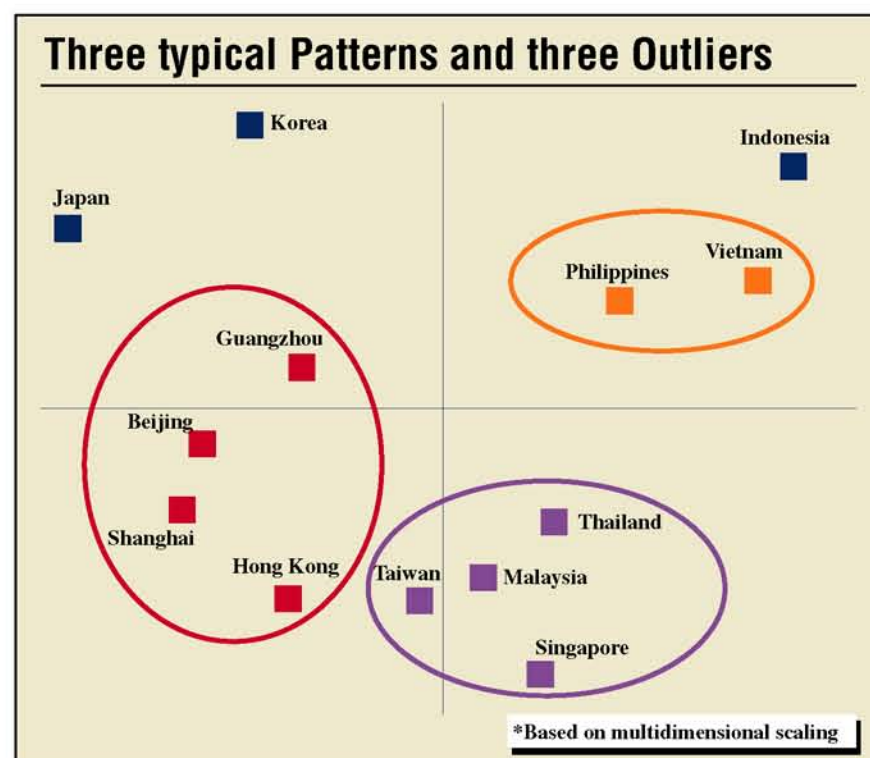
Here the key values are

- Stability
- Family happiness
- Hard work and success
- A simple, thrifty life
- Controlling desires

These consumers value harmony, stability and working steadily at their own pace.

Pre-ASEAN Type Philippines, Vietnam

Resembles ASEAN, but with two important differences. These are still consumers striving for affluence, who also place a high value on community and providing a helping hand to the weak.



THREE IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS

Indonesia

Here we find a slightly stronger commitment to pre-ASEAN values with markedly less emphasis on self-fulfilment and concern for the opinions of others. Communal values are strong.

Korea

Korean consumers are strikingly different from both Mainland China and ASEAN-type consumers. They are the only consumers in Asia with a strong desire to become leaders and are also the only consumers in Asia to reject a simple life as a value.

Japan

Japanese consumers score higher than any others on the value they assign to personal taste. They

score low on desire to be leaders (second lowest among the six types). Compared with other Asian consumers, they are more self-oriented, more individualistic in an inward-turning way. Relationships with others tend to be thinner.

Typical values at a glance

	Mainland China	ASEAN	Pre-ASEAN	Indonesia	Korea	Japan
Economic affluence	H		H+	H+	H+	
Self fulfilment	H			L		
Personal taste/self-cultivation			L	L	H	H+
Doing things my way	H					H
Recognition from others	H			L		
Stability		H+	H+	H+		
Family happiness		H+	H+	H+		
A simple, thrifty life		H	H+	H+	L	
Helping those in need			H+	H+		
Becoming a leader			L		H	L
Being surrounded with love						L

H+: Very high score H: High score L: Very low score

Where is Asia Headed?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Returning, then, to where we started: There are strong correlations between per capita GDP, information infrastructure, cultural penetration by Japanese celebrities and characters and preference for Japanese products. Per capita GDP is also correlated with patterns of media influence. Consumers whose lives combine high income with a highly developed information infrastructure favour balance in sources of information. Advertising is more important in countries with medium per capita GDP. Low per capita GDP means weak information infrastructure and low scores on all three forms of media contact studied.

Lifestyle attitudes display a similar pattern, with the outliers at the ends of the scale, Japan and Korea on the high end and Indonesia at the bottom. Overall, ASEAN lifestyles correlate with medium to high GDP, Mainland China lifestyles with medium GDP, and pre-ASEAN lifestyles with low per capita GDP. Hong Kong is an interesting exception, combining high per capita GDP with Mainland China lifestyle values.

Pan-Asia Consumer Diagnostics

	GDP per capita	IT infra	Japanese' perception		Media Influence	Lifestyle type
			Celebrities characters	Products image		
Japan	H+	H	—	—	balanced	Japan
Korea	H	H	H	Japan/Korea	balanced	Korea
Hong Kong	H	H	H+	Japan	balanced	Mainland China
Taiwan	H	H	H+	Japan	balanced	ASEAN
Singapore	H	H	H	Japan	ad / word of mouth	ASEAN
Malaysia	M	H	H	Japan	balanced	ASEAN
Thailand	M	M	H	Japan / America	ad / word of mouth	ASEAN
Shanghai	M	M	M	Japan / America	ad	Mainland China
Beijing	M	M	M	Japan / America	ad	Mainland China
Guangzhou	M	M	H	Japan / America	ad	Mainland China
Philippines	L	L	L	America	low influence	Pre-ASEAN
Vietnam	L	L	L	Japan / America	low influence	Pre-ASEAN
Indonesia	L	L	L	Japan / America	mass media / ad	Indonesia

H+: Very high score H: High score M: Moderate L: Very low score

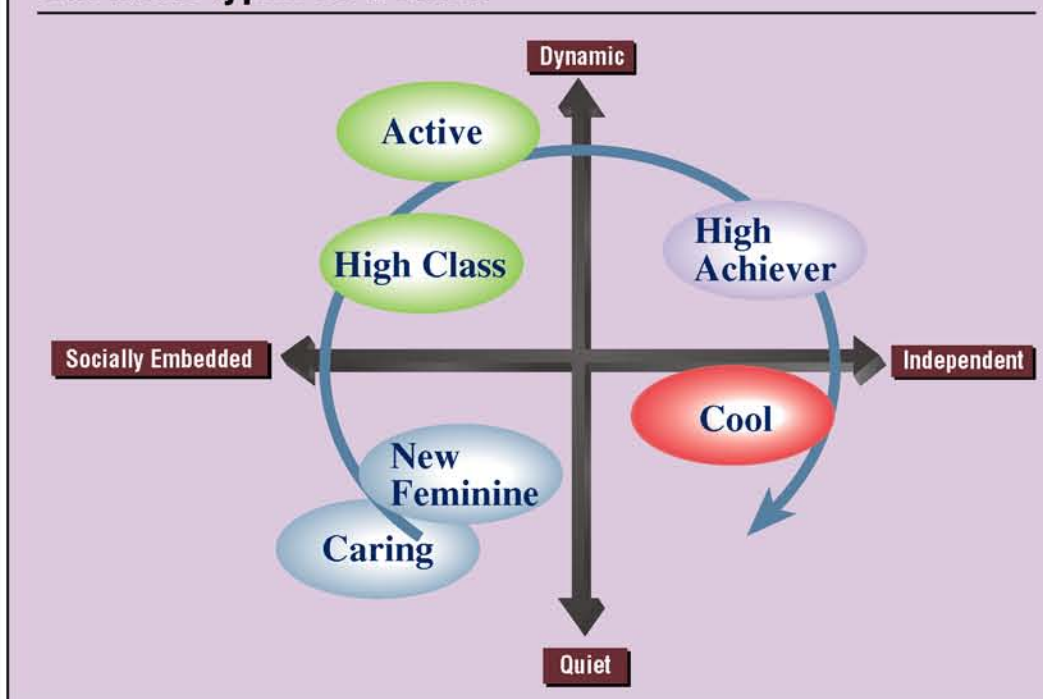
LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

In last year's study, *Asian Women, Their Lives, Their Dreams*, we found strong links between preferred lifestyles, average annual income and percentage of women in the work force. The socially embedded, quiet types that we labelled Caring and New Feminine were common where both annual incomes and percentage of working women were low. In mainland China, where incomes were a little better and the percentage of working women higher, we found socially embedded but dynamic types, High Class or Active. Where incomes were higher but the percentage of working women lower, the dynamic and independent High Achiever type was preferred.

Where incomes were highest, aspirations had shifted to the Cool, independent but quiet type.

In this year's survey, we find that Japanese consumers are more detached and less socially embedded than other Asian consumers, more likely to prefer an easy job to one with responsibility and more vacation to a higher salary, and also more likely to stress cultivation of personal taste and to care less about being loved or receiving recognition from those around them. *As Asian economies pick up again, will Japanese Cool be the future of Asia?*

Six ideal types of women



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