

# Status and Role of Younger Generations in Japan

KEN-ICHI TOMINAGA

## I. Generations as a Sociological Problem

What is generally referred to as generation is a kind of "social strata" partitioned by a biological property called age. Medically speaking, age denotes the stages through which man as a biological being matures and grows old, and in the field of genetic psychology it means the several stages involved in the formation of the mind. However, when a sociologist considers the problem of generations, unlike the case of medicine or genetic psychology, he views it not from the standpoint of individual growth nor from the standpoint of the chronological stages in human development, but rather he considers it along with the important spatial classifications he uses to explain differences in social behavior and attitudes, together with such indicators as education, occupation, income, and the like. For example, when a sociologist wants to examine the structural distribution of a public opinion poll, he takes age difference into consideration in the same sense he does differences in education, occupation, and income.

In contrast to these three obviously sociological categories, however, age is primarily a biological category. For this reason, while education, occupation, and income may be said to have direct relevance to sociological analysis, age may be said to be only indirectly relevant. In other words, unless society is equipped with a mechanism for transforming a biological category into a sociological one, it would be difficult to say that age is a basic variable whose significance in sociological analysis is considerable. If the mechanism acts forcefully, homogeneity within one generation and heterogeneity between generations appear to a conspicuous degree; if it works weakly, they appear only slightly.

The fact that in Japan today generational divisions such as "the prewar generation", "the wartime generation", "the postwar generation" and "the warless generation" are actually topics of daily conversation shows that the existence of this mechanism is widely recognized as the origin of such "problems" as confrontations and conflicts. Herein lies the significance of generations as a sociological "problem"<sup>1</sup>. In concrete terms, then, how can we describe the way this mechanism transforms the biological category of age into a sociological one?

Firstly, it occurs in societies undergoing rapid but lasting changes. An important and obvious example of such changes is economic growth and its attendant social

<sup>1</sup> Although a generation in the present connection is nothing more than a statistical group, much the same as the social stratification if internal unity and a feeling of solidarity within one generation become stronger, it can develop into an actual body corresponding to what Mannheim called "a generation unit". Mannheim, K., *The Problem of Generation*, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, London 1952, pp. 276-320.

changes. In a pre-industrial society, where a son usually succeeds his father and repeats the pattern of his life, people rarely become conscious of generational differences as a "problem". In an industrial society, however, new technological advances are constantly being made, new products appear, forms of labor change, the standard of living rises, education becomes widespread and urbanization advances; and along with these social changes, value standards held by people change. The younger generation usually adapts more easily to these changes, by reorganizing its frame of reference in recognition of and in accord with the changing society, and by creating a new set of symbols system; as one gets older, on the contrary, it becomes harder to readjust. Consequently, typically speaking, chronological change of the series of the dominant pattern of values tends to be converted into a spatial stripe-pattern consisting of generational differences with a value orientation. In fact, of course, a change in value orientation results not so much from the emergence of a new generation as it does from the tumultuous changes that overwhelm the older generation.

In Japan, where a late start in industrialization made necessary, as part of the nation's goals, a speedier economic growth than that of Western countries, generational difference has manifested itself all the more sharply. Symbolically speaking, while adjustment to a "non-affluent society" has been a matter of concern to those who belong to the present middle and older generations, the problem facing the younger generation today is adjustment to an "affluent society".

Secondly, the new behavior pattern and value system which the young create and maintain gradually acquires legitimacy among the older generations. It may be because the older generations feel the appearance of the new generation as a threat in some sense that the difference in the behavior pattern or the value standards among the generations is regarded as "a problem". If the behavior pattern or system of values created by youth seems to merely represent "a deviant culture" from a total societal viewpoint, the older generations can look upon the "strange" ways of thinking of the new generation as an indication of its premature socialization and thus minimize its significance. In this case, the difference between generations belongs to the genetic psychological dimension of immaturity vs. maturity. For example, when an older man comments that the student movement is "something like measles which everybody has to go through at least once when young", it reflects his confidence that the existing system of values has not been shaken. On the other hand, if he begins to think that what the young people are insisting on may really signal the future and that times may go on to move in that direction, youth's behavior pattern and system of values begin to acquire a certain degree of legitimacy. It is in such a situation that people begin to talk about "discontinuity between parents and children" or "the generation gap in the work groups". There are now few older people who, faced with the denunciation of extremist youth, could confidently try to persuade them that existing values are right while what they uphold is wrong. On the contrary, many of the older people try to show that they are on the side of the young and can "understand" them. This attitude indicates that they do not have much confidence in their own value standards.

Thirdly, each generation has a common experience of its own which acts as a nucleus in personality formation. For instance, those people who are now in their

sixties or over share the common experience of having grown up in the liberal atmosphere of "Taisho Democracy". Those in their fifties have in common a period of personality formation in an age of military dominance and war. Those who are now in their forties share the experience of having had to make a complete turn about in their value system at the most sensitive period in their lives because their period of personality formation extended from the midst of the war to the postwar period. For those in their thirties, it is their education on the basis of "postwar democracy" which serves as the common experience, and so on.

A cohort may be defined as "the aggregate of individuals who experienced the same event within the same time interval"<sup>2</sup>. Cohort is thus a collective body which shares a historical experience due to the fact that its members have the same period of birth in common, or in which a common biological quality is transformed into a common sociological quality. The fact that in Japan people in daily conversation frequently refer to the above-mentioned four generational divisions, from "the prewar generation" to "the warless generation", also suggests that the way people share this historical experience of war is a matter of great interest.

## II. The Social Status of the Younger Generations

How much sociological importance can be attached to generational divisions depends on how much the factor called a generation can explain differences among people, as measured against other factors such as education, occupation, and income, which are regarded as determinants of social strata.

In the adult world, because people are incorporated into the hierarchy of social strata according to differences in their education, occupation, income and so on, the degree to which they recognize their generation as a bond uniting them is limited. However, the world of the younger generation is exceptional in this regard. The income young people receive is uniformly low, and, apart from considering the social strata of their parents' families, they can be said to form, within the larger society, a relatively homogenous and internally harmonious small world of their own. Furthermore, they have not yet established "social status" for themselves. With possible exceptions in professional occupations or self-employed occupations it is difficult for a young person to get a chance for promotion before he reaches his forties, even if he has shown exceptional talents, because in a large organization it is, with few exceptions, age which strongly determines the order of advance.

Table 1 illustrates this. Income is given as an annual figure, and occupational ranking is indicated in mean value according to its prestige score. The data are based on the results of surveys jointly conducted in Tokyo and Chicago in 1967 and 1969 respectively by Joseph Gusfield of the University of California (San Diego) and myself<sup>3</sup>. The purpose of the surveys was to do comparative research on Japanese and American social stratification and social mobility.

<sup>2</sup> Ryder, N. B., *The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change*, in: *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 30, 1965, pp. 843-861.

<sup>3</sup> The Chicago data have not been published. The Tokyo data are analyzed in Tominaga, K., *Process Analysis of Social Mobility*, in: *Social Class and Community*, edited by Tominaga, K. and Kurasawa, S., Tokyo 1971, pp. 133-189.

Table 1: Social Status According to Age Groups, Tokyo and Chicago

## Tokyo

	Age group	Mean value	Standard deviation
Occupational ranking	A1	45.7	11.2
	A2	50.5	14.2
	A3	54.5	13.5
	A4	52.7	13.5
	Total	50.4	13.5
Annual income	A1	50.6	26.5
	A2	83.5	39.1
	A3	109.7	63.7
	A4	80.7	76.3
	Total	80.7	56.5

Notes: (1) The age groups are:

A1: 20 to 29

A2: 30 to 39

A3: 40 to 54

A4: over 55

(2) The occupational ranking scores (prestige scores) are:

Professional ← 72

Administrative ← 71

Clerical ← 50

Sales ← 37

Self-employed ← 50

Skilled

Semi-skilled or unskilled

Service

Agriculture

→ 46

→ 32

→ 42

→ 38

These scores are calculated from the results of the occupational ranking survey conducted by Nishihira (100 occupations) in 1965.

(3) Income is shown in units of ten thousand yen.

## Chicago

	Age group	Mean value	Standard deviation
Occupational ranking	A1	63.2	11.9
	A2	67.1	12.2
	A3	67.9	11.3
	A4	67.9	9.0
	Total	67.0	11.1
Annual income	A1	85.0	36.3
	A2	127.0	86.8
	A3	125.0	75.3
	A4	97.8	92.3
	Total	111.7	80.8

Notes: (1) The age groups are the same as in Tokyo.

(2) The occupational ranking scores (prestige scores) are:

Professional ← 82

Administrative ← 82

Clerical ← 67

Sales ← 65

Self-employed ← 67

Skilled

Semi-skilled or unskilled

Service

Agriculture

→ 67

→ 48

→ 51

→ 57

These scores are obtained from the results of "the NORC occupational ranking scores of 90 occupations 1947."

(3) Income is shown in units of 100 dollars.

Source: The Gusfield-Tominaga Survey.

According to the Tokyo survey, the average income of people in their twenties is less than half of the income of those in their forties. Furthermore, the standard deviation of the income of the twenties age group is much smaller than that of the older age groups. Likewise, the occupational ranking of those in their twenties is at its lowest lifetime level, and its standard deviation is also small.

The data gathered in Chicago are shown for the purpose of comparison: it should be noted that, while they show the same tendency toward lower income and occupational ranking for the twenties age group, the difference between this and the older groups is smaller than in Tokyo, and there is no significant difference between the thirties and forties age groups. In other words, these tables make clear that, although the United States of America and Japan both have a tendency for a lower age to be a lower social status, the degree to which this is so is more notable in Japan.

Why do young people in their twenties constitute a relatively homogeneous group with low income and low occupational ranking? By the time they reach their twenties, differences in income and occupation according to educational background as well as differences in income according to occupation have already begun to function; thus it would of course be incorrect to say that these young people are all equal. However, internal group differences are as yet not very evident at this stage. In other words, there will be differences in the future but during this period of youth they remain for the most part latent.

This may be seen from the data in Table 2, which is the result of computing correlation coefficients among variables according to age groups, using the same materials as in Table 1. What is notable is that education has no apparent influence on income in the twenties age group, and that differences in income according to occupation is also immaterial. The influence of education upon occupational status has already begun to appear to some extent in the twenties group, but the extent of influence is small when compared with the older age groups. That is to say, the effects of education and of occupation become more apparent as one grows older, remaining rather inconspicuous in the youthful period. Furthermore, a basic pattern of this kind of temporary equality among young people is common to both Tokyo and Chicago, but it is more marked in Tokyo.

The classic example of this process, in which allocation of social status slide in accordance with age, is the Japanese system of promotion: "the seniority order". Due to recent technological innovations resulting in the gradual disappearance of skilled-labor jobs, which had required accumulation of ten to twenty years' experience for one to become a full-fledged worker, it has become generally impossible to guarantee that the seniority sliding scale adequately corresponds to the substance of a person's contribution. However, since it would be difficult to radically change this distribution order, the principle of seniority distribution still remains in fact.

It is not unlikely that young people, feeling that such a distribution system is disadvantageous to themselves, are dissatisfied and see themselves as being oppressed. "The revolt of youth" witnessed in campus disputes, insofar as it aimed to destroy established authority, suggested a replacement of "class struggle" by a "generation struggle". However, it is unlikely that a generation could ever really become a struggling body with the internal unity of a class. In the first place, age

Table 2: Correlation Coefficients of Four Variables on Social Status, Tokyo and Chicago

## Tokyo

		Age group	U	W	Y
W	A1		.404		
	A2		.512		
	A3		.483		
	A4		.540		
	Total		.463		
Y	A1		.306	.669	
	A2		.373	.520	
	A3		.420	.430	
	A4		.480	.560	
	Total		.300	.545	
Z	A1		.002	.015	.060
	A2		.242	.266	.374
	A3		.337	.156	.434
	A4		.341	.302	.518
	Total		.147	.203	.430

Notes: (1) Age groups are the same as in Table 1.

(2) The symbols used for variables are:

U: Education (calculated according to the number of years of schooling received)

W: First occupation (calculated according to the prestige score)

Y: Present occupation (same as W)

Z: Annual income (according to monetary units)

(3) See Table 1 for occupational prestige scores.

## Chicago

		Age group	U	W	Y
W	A1		.442		
	A2		.530		
	A3		.502		
	A4		.645		
	Total		.519		
Y	A1		.540	.664	
	A2		.621	.522	
	A3		.618	.414	
	A4		.487	.315	
	Total		.544	.461	
Z	A1		.067	.121	.210
	A2		.500	.408	.394
	A3		.513	.419	.500
	A4		.595	.424	.433
	Total		.516	.367	.409

Notes: (1) Age groups are the same as in Table 1.

(2) Symbols for variables are the same as for Tokyo.

(3) See Table 1 for occupational prestige scores.

Source: Same as Table 1.

is essentially a biological category; thus, for example, a twenty-year old person will become fifty in thirty years' time. As the "seniority order" is merely a rule which distributes opportunities for obtaining a higher status with the passage of time, the present holder of the status is sure to turn it over to his younger counterpart if the latter waits a certain number of years. Secondly, since the young are not really equal in that differences in their social status remain dormant while they are young, it is inevitable that they will eventually compete with one another in order to acquire the few and rare social rewards. Thus there are limits to the realization of solidarity within one generation. Youth cannot be a class; at best it can try to remain a pseudo-class.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that youth in Japan, in contrast to the adult population, constitutes a group with relative internal homogeneity, and thus it may have an inherent chance of generational unity. In this sense, it may be permissible to regard youth as a social status in itself.

### III. Younger Generations and "New Ideas"

For a long time now, numerous statistical studies of political and social attitudes in Japan have affirmed that education and age are vital factors in determining differences in the attitudes. For instance, according to the "authoritarian attitudinal scale" formulated by Kotaro Kido and Masataka Sugi, the less education a person has had and the older his age, the more consistently higher is the degree of authoritarianism he manifests. Furthermore, the result of the multivariate regression analysis, which took the scores on the authoritarian attitudinal scale as a dependent variable, showed that the variables of education and age had the highest contribution rate among other independent variables to the scores on the scale<sup>4</sup>.

This leads to the following hypothesis: In a society like postwar Japan suffering social upheaval and violent changes in its value system, there is a tendency for the young and those with higher education to lead the direction of these changes, with the result that changes in political and social attitudes move in the direction of opinions with many supporters among these two groups. The results of the analysis by the study group on "The National Character of the Japanese People", led by Chikio Hayashi and Shigeki Nishihira, proves this hypothesis.

The Hayashi and Nishihira team collected varying views, each representing a Japanese sense of value, and asked people if they agreed with them or not. They then came to feel it should be possible to distinguish between "new views" and "old views" in the following manner. One selects out people between twenty and twenty-four years old (referred to as the young stratum) and those over sixty years old (the old stratum). Independently of this, one extracts university graduates (the higher education stratum) as well as those with only primary school education (the lower education stratum). For each of the many items in the questionnaire, one looks for a statistically significant difference in the percentages of agreement and dis-

<sup>4</sup> Kido, K., and Sugi, M., *The Structure of Social Consciousness*, in: *Shakaigaku, Hyoron (Sociological Review)*, Vol. 4, Nos. 1/2, 1954, pp. 74-100. (Reproduced in Kido, K., *Structure of Social Consciousness*, Tokyo 1970, pp. 94-134.

agreement both between the young and old, and between the higher education and lower education strata. Then one picks out those items with a significant difference. Of these question items, those views with many supporters in both the young and the higher education strata are defined as "new" while those with supporters in both the old and the lower education strata are defined as "old".

Beyond this, a look at the trend in the time series data, obtained through "The National Character of the Japanese People" survey conducted every five years since 1953, shows the following. During a period of fifteen years from 1953 to 1968, "new views" increased more and more in power while "old views" pursued a steady decline. From these facts, then, we can conclude that the public opinion of the nation has changed, drawn in the direction of those ideas with many supporters among the young and the higher education strata<sup>5</sup>.

Let us now take a look at a "new view" and an "old view". To the question, "... there are, to be sure, many ways of living. Which of the following is the closest to your own aspirations?", the following six possible responses were given:

- (1) "to work hard and get rich"
- (2) "to study diligently and become famous"
- (3) "to live according to one's own taste, without aiming for either money or fame"
- (4) "to live from day to day in a carefree way without undue worries"
- (5) "to live cleanly and honestly in all respects, while opposing the wrongs in the world"
- (6) "to devote oneself entirely to the cause of society, disregarding one's own interests."

This question above is unique in that it provides data for comparison of prewar and postwar. Now well-known, its original use was as a questionnaire item in the examination of conscripts<sup>6</sup>. Since this examination was given only to twenty-year-old

Table 3: "Life Styles" in Japan

	1953	1958	1963	1968
(1) "to get rich"	15	17	17	17
(2) "to become famous"	6	3	4	3
(3) "to live according to one's taste"	21	27	30	32
(4) "to live in a carefree way"	11	18	19	20
(5) "to live cleanly and honestly"	29	23	18	17
(6) "to serve society"	10	6	6	6
(7) others	4	3	3	2
(8) D.K.	4	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100
(figures in parentheses show the number of samples)	(2,254)	(920)	(2,698)	(3,033)

Source: Hayashi, C., Aoyama, H., Nishihira, S., and Suzuki, T., *The National Character of the Japanese People, II*, Tokyo 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Hayashi, C., Aoyama, H., Nishihara, S., and Suzuki, T., *The National Character of the Japanese People II*, Tokyo 1970, pp. 189–190, pp. 213–214.

<sup>6</sup> For the results of an attempted comparison of the prewar and postwar periods on the basis of sampling twenty-year old males, see Mita, M., *The Value of Living in Contemporary Society*, Tokyo 1970, p. 38. The study indicates that "new views" maintained a steady increase while "old views" pursued a constant decline throughout the period surveyed.

men, however, it becomes necessary, for our purposes, to omit the prewar figures from consideration of problems dealing with both older as well as younger generations.

In distinguishing between "new views" and "old views" according to the 1953 data and by means of the above-mentioned criteria, the third of the above six items, "to live according to one's own taste", emerges as a "new view", and item 5, "to live cleanly and honestly in all respects", fits the pattern of an "old view".

Table 3 which demonstrates the effect of time on these views over a period of fifteen years since 1953, clearly indicates a rapid upswing in the percentage of those who chose item 3, "to live according to one's own taste", and a correspondingly rapid downswing in the percentage of those who chose item 5, "to live cleanly and honestly in all respects". In other words, the "new view" has consistently gained in support, while the "old view" has consistently declined. According to the cohort analysis there can be no doubt that this clear contrast is the product of two simultaneous occurrences: The appearance during this period of a younger generation agreeing with the "new view", and numerous conversions to the "new view" of older people.

A content comparison between new views and old views produces a general description of the former as individualistic and rationalistic, and of the latter as collectivistic and traditionalistic. For example, on the topic of the relationship between man and nature, the new view holds that "man must conquer nature", while the old one maintains that "man must obey nature". Concerning the relationship between the individual and his country, the new view says that Japan as a whole can improve only when individuals are happy, while the old view holds that only when Japan is better can individuals be happy. As regards adoption for the sake of continuing a family line, the new view sees no need for it while the old view considers it preferable to continue the custom. In every example the pattern is similar: Over the past 15 years, new views have gained while old views have declined.

How might this relate to the question of political consciousness? There used to be a "common sense" notion that both the younger and higher education strata were reform, i.e. socialist-oriented. Indeed, the afore-mentioned Kido-Sugi poll of 1952 confirmed this notion. Thus, at least at this point in time, support of the Socialist Party could be defined as the "new view" while support of the conservative party was associated with the "old view". Indeed, many people felt that if the new view continued to gain while the old view continued its decline, the Socialist Party might eventually be able to ascent to power.

Surprisingly, however, every election over the past few years has resulted in splits and division among opposition parties, meaning in effect a decline in the fortunes of the Socialists as the major opposition party. Although during the 1950's the leftist vote was, if only gradually, on the rise, it began to shift downward around 1960 with the launching of the "Plan for Doubling National Income". It was Shigeki Nishihira who promptly analyzed the cause of this change, which he attributed to an "incipient tendency toward conservatism" on the part of the younger generation.

By investigating newspaper polls conducted over a period of time and studying the opinions and party affiliations of the twenties age group, he determined 1956 as the year of peak support for the "Left" among the younger generation. Thereafter, he

Table 4: Political Party Support in Japan  
(in %)

	Age	20—24	25—29	30—34	35—39	40—44	45—49	50—54	55—59	60—64	65—69	over 70
Liberal-Democratic Party	1953	30	42	32	31	34	39	37	37	39		
	1958	31	37	38	44		41		44		37	
	1963	27	38	38	40	51	45	48	55	57	50	52
	1968	29	34	35	42	43	48	52	48	47	56	52
Japan Socialist Party	1953	41	28	27	25	21	18	15	8		7	
	1958	40	36	40	24		30		22		14	
	1963	32	30	27	24	17	23	20	11	9	9	4
	1968	25	25	28	22	25	19	17	18	15	14	9

Source: Hayashi, Aoyama, Nishihira, and Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

found, support diminished gradually until about 1958 when the increase in political conservatism among Japanese youth began to manifest itself<sup>7</sup>.

Table 4, once again from the survey on "The National Character of the Japanese People" traces shifts in political party (Liberal-Democratic and Japan Socialist Parties) support according to age group, and at five year intervals starting in 1953. The table illustrates the rapid decrease in the Japanese Socialist Party (JSP) support among the young generation after 1958. The failure of the JSP to win support among new young voters figures as a central factor in the party's decline. Looked at diagonally, the table reveals a downward shift within individual cohorts, indicating an annual decrease of JSP support among established generations.

For instance, the cohort representing those in their early twenties in 1953, declines in JSP support, at five year intervals, from 41 per cent to 36 per cent, 27 per cent, and 22 per cent. At the same time, the percentage of Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) supporters increases from 30 per cent to 37 per cent, 38 per cent, and 42 per cent. A similar trend is recognizable for the cohort representing those in their early thirties in 1953. Thus it can be concluded that the steady decline of the "Left" stems from the JSP failure to obtain the support of new young voters as well as from a shift to conservatism on the part of the established generations.

The above analysis suggests a pattern in the process of shift as it occurs in public opinion. Change first takes place within the younger generation which adopts it as its own; it then spreads as it is accepted by the established generations. In this sense, it may be said that younger generations lead change. Taking the process of generalization a step further, the changes occurring now among the young might be seen as indicative of the future direction of changes in the Japanese society as a whole.

In contemporary Japan, where there has recently been considerable and wide-ranging interest in the problem of generations, and where there has been considerable social turbulence, there are signs of the emergence of a new generation which appears to be substantially different in quality from existing generations. One must be wary of hastily concluding that this generation's behavior pattern or standard of values will forthwith be adopted by all of Japan, but doubtless they will have a great influence. Let us now consider the implications of this.

<sup>7</sup> Shigeki Nishihira, *Opinions of Japanese People*, Tokyo 1963, pp. 140—149.

#### IV. Value Changes and the Generation Gap

There are numerous items available for demonstrating differences in value orientation between generations. Here we will confine ourselves to the following three items: attitude toward consumption, attitude toward work, and attitude toward trade unions.

##### 1. Attitudes toward Consumption

It is a well-known fact that the savings ratio in Japan is at an astonishingly high level compared with other countries. It is also true, however, that there are many people, especially among the twenties age group, who value accelerated consumption, and that their number has recently been increasing. The National Life Center took four polls between 1962 and 1970 on the following view: "It is better to spend one's money and live in comfort than to deprive oneself in order to save money." Each poll showed those in favor of the idea increasing the lower the age of the group; likewise, the overall percentage of those in favor went up during the eight years from 34 per cent to 41 per cent.

Conversely, the number of those against the idea increased as the age of the group got higher, and the overall percentage went down from 50 per cent to 36 per cent during the period. Here too it is notable that the changes occurring in opinion distribution tend to follow the lead of views prevalent among youth. When a similar poll was conducted on the view "One should stop wasting money, and even scrimp and save and build one's fortune", the pros decreased from 67 per cent to 53 per cent, and the cons increased from 18 per cent to 27 per cent<sup>8</sup>.

##### 2. Attitudes toward Work

No one doubts that Japan's high rate of economic growth is the product of her people's diligence, a trait which can be said to have remained constant to the present day. Nonetheless, research done by the National Life Center on people's consciousness of work suggests that the younger generation is becoming more leisure-oriented, and that the entire nation is gradually being drawn in that direction.

The National Life Center conducted four surveys between 1962 and 1969. The polled question was: "If one were to divide attitudes toward work in the following manner, which one would come closest to your own feeling or idea about your work?" The choice was to be made from the following six items:

- (1) "Work is man's duty."
- (2) "Work is work, pleasure is pleasure. Of course, I work during working hours but when I get off I forget all about work and have fun."
- (3) "Work is a means in order to eat."
- (4) "Work is a pleasure."
- (5) "I like work, but I just want enough time for rest and pleasure to replenish my strength."
- (6) "Life is such that it is no use sweating and drudging. I want to live as I please, doing what I like."

<sup>8</sup> National Life Center, *Studies of Life Consciousness*, mimeograph, 1971, pp. 20-35.

As the percentages of answers concentrate upon items 1, 2, and 5, I shall disregard the other three. Between 1962 and 1969, the percentage of those in favor of number 2, i.e. the "strong leisure enjoyment" type, was respectively 41 per cent, 40 per cent, 43 per cent, and 40 per cent, showing no marked fluctuation. The "weak leisure enjoyment" type (number 5) increased from 22 per cent to 24 per cent, 29 per cent and 29 per cent. The "work first" type (number 1) declined from 16 per cent to 15 per cent, 11 per cent and 11 per cent. The "strong leisure enjoyment" type (number 2) was more popular the younger the age group, and conversely, the "work first" type (number 1) was more successful with older respondents.

There is thus a clear contrast between 1 and 2, but there is not much difference between generations concerning 5. Consequently, in this case it is not possible to explicitly define a "new view" and an "old view", but it is certain that the "leisure enjoyment" type is gradually increasing and the "work first" type is similarly decreasing<sup>9</sup>.

### 3. Attitudes toward Trade Unions

According to the study by Hideaki Okamoto, which compared attitude surveys among union members conducted independently by such local industrial unions as the "All Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers' Union", the "All Forestry Workers' Union", "National Railway Workers' Union", the "All Japan Federation of Electric Machine Workers' Unions", the "Japanese Federation of Iron & Steel Workers' Unions" and the "All Japan Federation of Automobile Workers' Unions", a marked difference among generations is discernible with regard to feeling a sense of belonging to a trade union, loyalty to one's company, attitudes toward striking, and support of political parties<sup>10</sup>. The main tendencies may be summed up as follows:

(a) In most cases, support of the union is stronger than criticism, but in all instance, the younger the workers, the lower the percentage in support of the union and the higher the percentage criticizing it.

(b) A similar tendency was observed in the survey of attitudes toward companies. 65 per cent to 70 per cent of those over forty expressed satisfaction, as opposed to 40 per cent or so of those in their early twenties. Thus, it can be concluded, young people seem to have little sense of belonging to either the enterprise or the union.

(c) The reason the younger generation is critical of the union is not because they lack consciousness of their right to strike; indeed, the younger they are the higher they tend to value striking. Their inclination to be disenchanted with unionism stems both from their feeling that unions do not relate to their own interests, and from their increasing disinterest in organizations as such.

(d) Trade unions have generally given support to the JSP, and this holds true even now. However, the level of support invariably goes down the younger the age of the members. In spite of this, there is no discernible increase of younger supporters of the Liberal-Democratic Party, the Democratic Socialist Party, or Komeito. There is an increase in the number of those supporting the Japanese Communist Party, but it seems unrelated to the factor of age. Thus there is a definite lack of interest among young people in political parties; there is no party that inspires them. In many unions the percentage of those in

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Hideaki Okamoto, *Social Change and Worker Consciousness*, in: *Journal of Nihon Rodo Kyokai* (The Japanese Institute of Labor), No. 142, 1971, pp. 14-29.

their twenties who hold this view amounts to as much as 35 to 40 per cent. This increase may be attributed in part to a conservative trend, but also in part to the importance they attach to "direct action", stemming from their lack of faith in the established political parties.

Thus, the present young generation is disassociating itself from enterprises, unions, and political parties, which, in short, might be said to indicate a proclivity toward nihilism. The appearance of radicals inclined to "direct action" may also be seen in relation to this tendency. However, this is not to say that the entire younger generation is moving in this direction. There are also those who remain loyal to their enterprises, as well as those who revert to the union fold. There are young people who enthusiastically support the Socialist or the Communist Party, as there are also Conservatives. In this sense, to borrow Okamoto's term, a "multipolarization tendency" is visible among the younger generation of Japan.

## V. Summary and Conclusions

It is because rapid economic growth produced a succession of changes in the environment and circumstances of an individual's life that generational differences in Japan frequently become the topic of conversation in families, offices, trade unions, and of scientific studies. Since adaptation to change is easiest for the younger generation, the new pattern of adaptation is first created and supported by them. The established generations often resist the new behavior pattern and value standard, producing "generational conflict or opposition". However, even the established generations cannot resist social change, and will eventually have to acknowledge the legitimacy of the youth culture which they first tried to dismiss as "deviant".

Several time series analyses of Japanese values show that it is possible to distinguish "new views", which consistently rose in support after 1953, and "old views" which steadily lost its adherents in the same period, by means of two factors: the amount of education and the generation. Combining the results of various public opinion polls on such questions as the relationship between nature and man, the relationship between the individual and his country, customs, politics, the economy, occupation, etc., and collating them with the time series change analysis and the generational cross-section analysis, it can be shown that a view which gains supporters through time is upheld by the younger generations while one that declines tends to be supported by the older generations.

In Japan the youth, unlike its adult counterpart, is still relatively homogeneous in terms of the distribution of social resources. Any differences in occupational status or income it may contain are not as yet very apparent. Though it is true that youth have already effectively entered into the world of inequality, in comparison to adult generations they tend to achieve to a high degree of what Mannheim called a "generation unit". Thus I have tried to explain in terms of concrete facts that the younger generations, which can be considered as having a single social status in itself, have a role as leaders of "new views" and as guides of value changes in contemporary Japan.