

GYARU







EDITORIAL

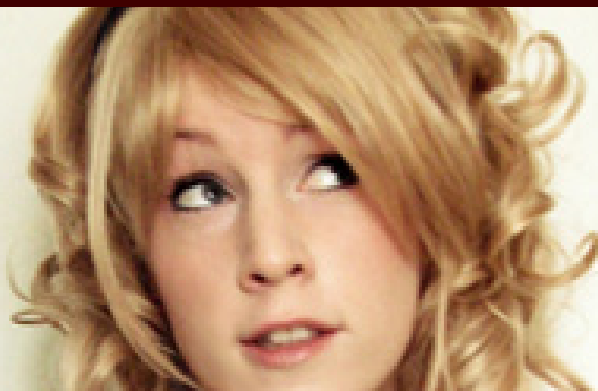
KENNETH BALLENEGGER
Editor and Designer

GYARU IS A JAPANESE TRANSLATION OF THE ENGLISH WORD “gal.” It refers to a subculture of Japanese street fashion: young girls who dress in what they believe to be the American ideals of beauty. Centered around the Harajuku and Shibuya districts of Tokyo, the movement grew in popularity in the ‘90s, and has been on the decline since. However, the movement still has a large following, though it has become less mainstream.

The term encompasses various subgroups such as: Gyarukei, the most general modern Gyaru style. They like to wear modern American fashion, and wear the same kind of style as a popular Hollywood starlet; Kogyaru, typically high school girls. They like to wear a transformed and sexualized version of the Japanese high school uniform; Ganguro, taking the American idea that an attractive girl should be tanned and have blonde hair to an extreme, they get an artificial dark tan and bleached hair, often adding lots of white makeup, making the style even weirder.

The purpose of this ‘zine is to explore and expose Gyaru culture in Japan, and the various substyles that make it up. Targeted towards an mainstream audience, the idea is to entertain and inform.

編集



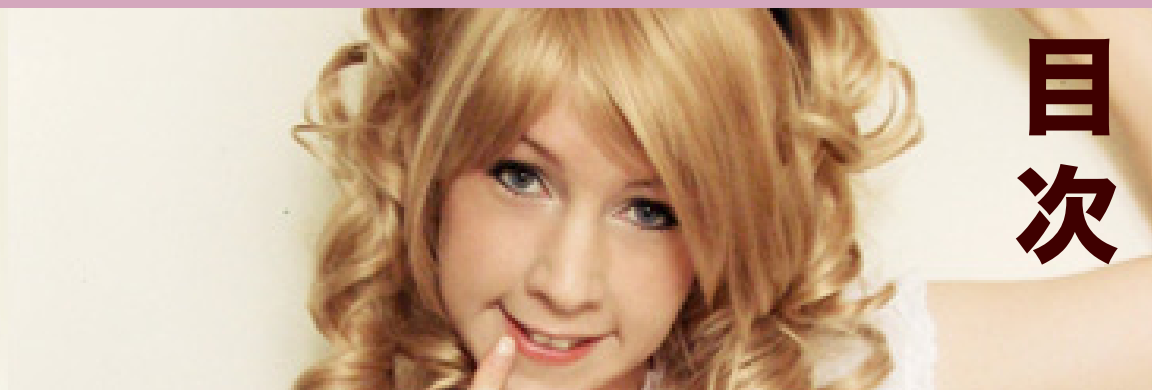
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Stateside Lingo Gives Japan Its Own Valley Girls

NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF

Originally published in the *New York Times*, October 9th, 1997

WITH THE FORCES OF GLOBALIZATION GAINING ground every day, perhaps it is not surprising that 15-year-old Japanese girls like Kaori Hasegawa use English expressions like “chekaraccho.” English?—Well, a version of English spoken by Japanese teen-agers. Chekaraccho is a corruption of “Check it out,

gal, and ko-gyaru-go roughly translates as “high school gal-talk.” It is used mostly among teenagers, as a secret code by which they can bond and evade surveillance by hostile forces, like parents.

“If I phone a friend, then I can’t say openly that I haven’t studied for a test, because then

“If a guy came up and used some English words, we’d think, ‘Wow, what a cool guy!’”

Joe,” and is a casual greeting, a bit like “Hi, there.”

Japan has always been quick to absorb foreign words along with foreign technology, and in the 19th century there was even serious discussion about whether the country should switch to English. This month, The Japan Times—one of Tokyo’s four major daily English newspapers—noted the pressures of globalization and suggested it might once again be time to consider a switch to English.

Already Japanese is a mishmash of Chinese, English, Dutch and German influences. But what is new this time is the way young people are manipulating English words to create their own hip dialect, known as “ko-gyaru-go.”

The “gyaru” derives from the English word

my parents will get upset,” explained Rie Nishimura, a 17-year-old girl with the trademark “roozu sokusu” (loose socks) of any cool Japanese teen-ager. “So I say the test will be very ‘denjarasu’”—or dangerous.

The popularity of ko-gyaru-go underscores the magnetic attraction of American pop culture around the globe and its ability to define what is hot even in breathtakingly different contexts. Some young people here seem to use English in the way a peacock spreads his tail feathers, to demonstrate their own magnificence and lure the opposite sex.

In this vein, two popular words are “wonchu” (I want you) and “gechu” (I get you). “If a guy came up and used some English words, we’d think, ‘Wow, what a cool guy,’” mused Yoko







Tago, 18, in the fashionable neighborhood of Shibuya. “I’d want to learn his English words.”

Ko-gyaru-go is not always a means of communication, and English words are thrown in simply as ornaments, without any attention to their meaning. “What does ‘rai-a’ mean in English?” asked 16-year-old Rie Naoi, giggly and willowy in a school uniform. Told what a liar was, she gasped. “Oh, no!” she moaned. “I called my English teacher a ‘rai-a’ the other day. I said, ‘Rai-a, rai-a.’”

Japanese grown-ups are almost completely lost when they encounter ko-gyaru-go. When a leading television commentator, Tetsuya Chikushi, described the phenomenon on his program, he began by knitting his brows and displaying a panel with the word “cho beri ba.” “You’re probably wondering which country the word I’ve written on the panel comes from,” he said.

In fact, as Mr. Chikushi noted, it is a ko-gyaru-go expression. The “beri” is very, while “ba” is short for bad. Since “cho” is a Japanese word meaning super, cho beri ba means ultrabad. There are variations, such as “cho beri gu” (ultragood) and “cho beri bu,” which can mean ultrablue, or depressing.

Japanese grammar is particularly well suited to adopting foreign words and making them into verbs. For example, in ko-gyaru-go, “deniru” means to go to a Denny’s restaurant, and “hageru” means to go to a Haagen-Dazs ice cream outlet.

Some of the new words are conjugated with remarkable sophistication. Ko-gyaru-go has adopted the expression “disu,” to diss, or show

“Workers are overwhelmed when told that to open the ‘ai-kon’ (icon) they must ‘daburu-kurikku’ (double-click) the ‘mausu’ (mouse).”

disrespect, which has a form, disareru, meaning “to be dissed,” and even a form meaning “should be dissed,” namely disarerubeki.

The enthusiasm for the new words seems partly based on the dominance of English in popular music and partly on the notion that it is more mellifluous than other languages. “Japanese seems very rigid,” scoffed Sato Yu, 16, who was strolling with her friend at dusk. “We don’t have much vocabulary in Japanese, so it’s just neater to use English.”

Jimmy, a 20-something television personality who says his Japanese name is a secret, is

about as cool as anybody in Japan, and he says that an essential element of this is his repertory of English. He uses lots of English words in his Japanese conversation, even though he cannot actually speak English. “Japanese and Korean are not fashionable in their sounds,” he explained in Japanese as he wore sunglasses the other night on a street, surrounded by adoring young women. “English is cool, it’s fashionable. I like the sound of it.”

Just then Jimmy spotted a teenybopper friend, somehow visible through his sunglasses. “Chekeraccho!” he shouted, and she melted. “Jimmy!” she gushed. “He’s so cool in every way!”

Some middle-aged Japanese are bothered by the profusion of English entering their language, but they seem less upset by ko-gyaru-go expressions than by those used in the workplace. Workers are overwhelmed when told that to open the “ai-kon” (icon) they must “daburu-kurikku” (double-click) the “mausu” (mouse).

The fascination with English is a bit odd in that Japan is probably the worst major country at picking up foreign languages—after the United States. Japanese students study English for about six years, but almost no young Japanese speak it.

Still, they do acquire nifty vocabulary to add to their ko-gyaru-go. “Now that I’m studying for my college entrance exams, I collect some words from school,” said Yuki Yutsudo, a high school gyaru. “Then I memorize them for use later when I’m chatting with my friends.”

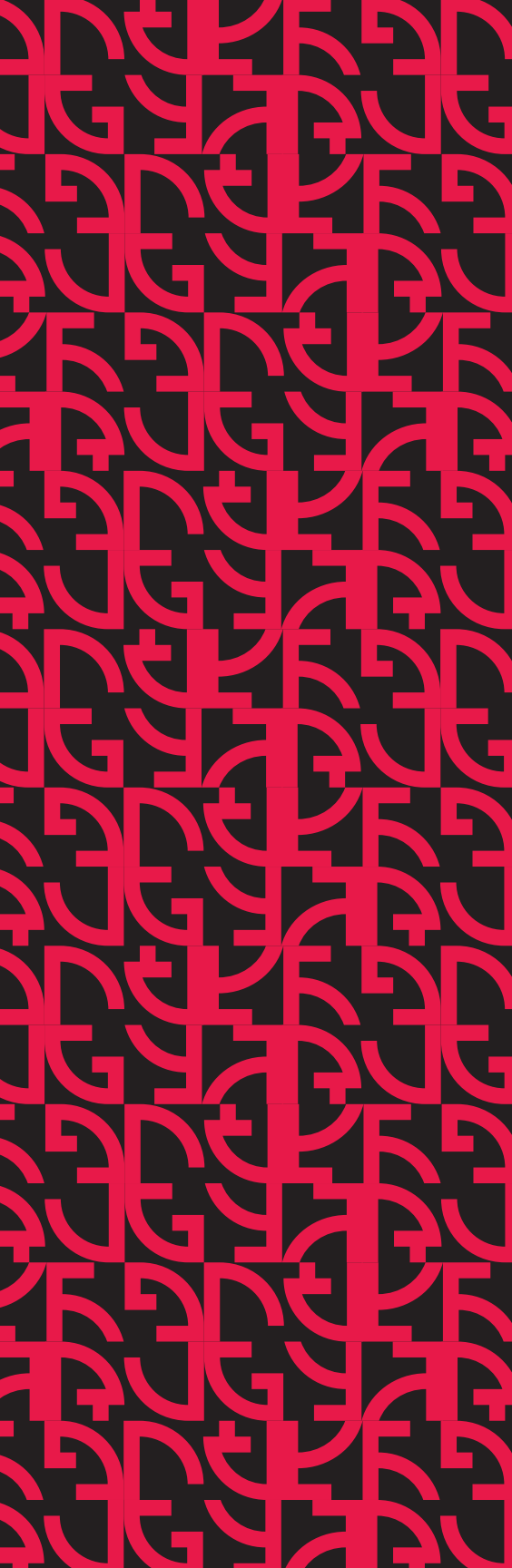




PROFILE

YUMI & AGEHA

19-year old Yumi and Ageha have been best friends since elementary school, and just graduated from the same Tokyo high school. They spend most of their extra money shopping at Shibuya 109, Tokyo's most famous Gyarū-dedicated mall.





Japan's Latest Fashion Has Women Playing Princess for a Day

YUKARI IWATANI KANE & LISA THOMAS

Originally published in the Wall Street
Journal on November 20th, 2008.

WHEN MAYUMI YAMAMOTO GOES OUT FOR coffee or window shopping, she likes to look as though she's going to a formal garden party. One day recently, she was decked out in a frilly, rose-patterned dress, matching pink heels with a ribbon and a huge pink bow atop her long hair, dyed brown and in pre-Raphaelite curls.

Ms. Yamamoto is a hime gyaru, or princess girl, a growing new tribe of Japanese women

**“some hime girls spend more
than \$1,000 for an outfit”**

who aim to look like sugarcoated, 21st-century versions of old-style European royalty. They idolize Marie Antoinette and Paris Hilton, for her baby-doll looks and princess lifestyle. They speak in soft, chirpy voices and flock to specialized boutiques with names like Jesus Diamante, which looks like a bedroom in a European chateau. There, some hime girls spend more than \$1,000 for an outfit including a satin dress, parasol and rhinestone-studded handbag.

Scores of Japanese women are emulating Marie Antoinette and other old-style European royals through their fashion

choices. “When they come out with a new item, I can’t sleep at night because that’s all I can think about,” says Ms. Yamamoto of the Diamante dresses. The 36-year-old housewife has amassed a collection of 20 princess dresses in the past eight months and even decked out her bedroom with imitation rococo furniture.

Japan has been famous for its extreme fashion fads, mostly among teenagers. These have ranged from the Lolita look, in which women dress up in baby-doll dresses and bonnets, to a tough-girl look called Yamamba, or mountain hag, which requires a dark tan, white eye shadow and shaggy, silver-bleached hair.

But the princess boom is seen as a more polished and sophisticated look that’s popular among working women in their 20s and 30s, perhaps as a bit of escapism from workaday stress and economic uncertainty. “There’s a longing for a happy-ending fairy tale,” says Asuka Watanabe, a sociology professor at Kyoritsu Women’s Junior College, who specializes in street fashion.

While it may be in style among fashionable women in New York and London, black isn’t an option for hime girls, who prefer pink and florals. They also have a doll-like sense of beauty that requires effort and practice to



UNO KANDA

Model Uno Kanda, born March 28th, 1975 in Kanagawa, Japan, started to model in high school. She then moved on to TV appearances and is currently trying to debut as a fashion designer in Paris, France. Her height is 5'6", she has O-type blood and weighs 110lbs.

attain. To create the ideal “supervolume hair,” curl only a few strands of hair at a time and alternate between inward and outward curls, advises *Vanilla Girl*, a fashion magazine for teenagers aspiring to become hime girls. Dyed hair extensions can help form more dynamic ringlets, while mascara applied on top of fake eyelashes plus black liquid eyeliner can really accentuate the eyes.

The princess boom has also taken off among an unlikely group of women: nightclub hostesses who also like the big-hair, glamorous look, though their dresses are often more revealing.

Jesus Diamante started the princess boom. Toyotaka Miyamae, 52, who had run an import shop specializing in evening gowns, set up the company in Osaka seven years ago to design feminine dresses tailored to Japanese women, whom he found to be shorter and to have smaller chests than Western women.

Mr. Miyamae’s knee-length dresses are studded with fake pearls and flowers and have names like Antoine (short for Marie Antoinette). They became popular among women who were looking for a cleaned-up look after the popularity of ripped jeans and layered casual clothing in the late 1990s. The chain’s sales have grown 20% a year, to \$13.4 million in the year ended March 2008, even though it has just four stores, including one in Tokyo’s trendy Harajuku neighborhood. It has



Inspired by his favorite actress, Brigitte Bardot, he created dresses in quality fabrics that mimicked the feminine and elegant style of her youth.

“What I wanted to do wasn’t that unique,” says Mr. Miyamae, who named the company after a Japanese musical. “I just made them to fit Japanese bodies.”

spurred a slew of rivals with names like Liz Lisa and La Pafait.

Mr. Miyamae has also hired customers as shop clerks, who spent time experimenting with makeup and hairstyles to go with the clothes, eventually coming up with the doe-eyed princess look. Diamante started stocking its own interpretation of regal-looking accessories, such as tiaras, elbow-length gloves and stiletto-heeled slippers adorned with ribbons.

Keiko Mizoe, Jesus Diamante’s top sales clerk and a former customer, says she sees the princess style as one befitting an elegant

woman from an upper-class family. The girls are “perfect, gorgeous and feminine,” says the 24-year-old, herself dressed in a red checkered dress, pink stockings in heart patterns and pink nails studded with crystals.

Ms. Mizoe, who the company says single-handedly sells about \$95,000 in clothing each month, has become an idol among Diamante customers, who try to imitate everything about her. On the store’s Web site, she keeps a regularly updated blog, in which she lists her favorite food (Godiva’s heart-shaped chocolates), favorite drink (cocoa at Tokyo Disneyland) and favorite expression (thank you).

Haruka Oohira, a 16-year-old hime girl, was so in awe of sales clerks like Ms. Mizoe that she made a flurry of purchases online before feeling confident enough to set foot in the Harajuku store. “Their cuteness is beyond human,” says Ms. Oohira. “I’d like to be like them.”

Of course, princess fashion isn’t exactly practical. Ms. Yamamoto, the housewife princess, says she gave up wearing the frilly dresses while she works opening cardboard boxes at an accessory store four hours a day.

Ms. Yamamoto says she has long adored pink and wanted to dress in feminine clothes, but felt shy about her plump figure. After losing about 33 pounds in recent years, she got hooked on Diamante’s tight-waisted dresses adorned with huge rose patterns, and estimates she may be spending \$2,000 or \$3,000 a month. Her husband, an architect who loves Europe, pays for most of her purchases. Her parents, who live nearby, send the couple food so they have more money for Ms. Yamamoto’s shopping sprees.

“I figure it’s OK as long as what I’m buying is pretty,” she says.

**“perfect,
gorgeous
and
feminine.”**



PROFILE

NIKO

Niko is a 16-year old high school student in Tokyo, Japan. She describes her interests as “pop music, fashion and more fashion.” She also likes to go to Karaoke bars and play Dance Dance Revolution in arcades.







人形のように見える女性

All Dolled Up

SARAH MASLIN NIR

Originally published in the New York Times weekly column "Nocturnalist," on October 6th, 2010.

OF THE FIVE PANELISTS ON STAGE AT the Fashion Institute of Technology on Tuesday night discussing the Japanese fashion culture known as Gothic Lolita, only one, a Japanese illustrator and designer, spoke no English. But to the uninitiated, the four others

cuteness. The event, held as part of a focus on Japanese fashion by the institute's museum, also explored the different tribes of those who dress in the Gothic Lolita style—an aesthetic reminiscent of a Hello Kitty doll come to life, only, if possible, more cutesy.

"Deco-den looks a bit like what might happen if Rainbow Brite were left alone with a glue gun."

might have been speaking a different language as well.

The group, two representatives from the h. Naoto brand (one

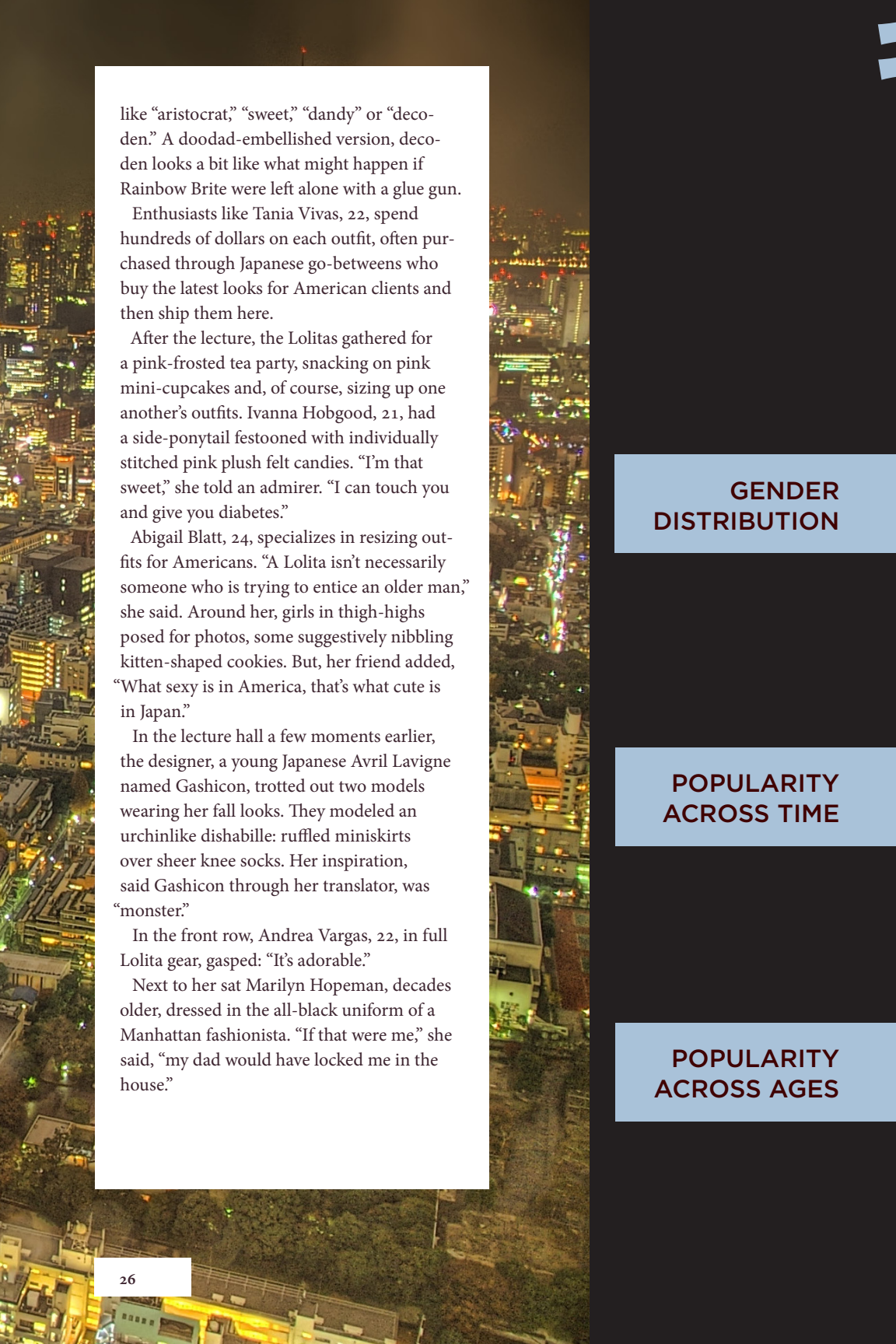
Those tribes were represented in the audience, many of whom who looked like animated American Girl dolls, in pastel pinafores

of whom served as translator), two owners of Tokyo Rebel, an East Village store that specializes in the style and a moderator, discussed the Japanese aesthetic of "kawaii," or

puffed with tutus, matching bow-covered socks and lacy wrist cuffs. Others wore versions in a Wednesday Addamsesque palette. Each subset of the Lolita style has a name,







like “aristocrat,” “sweet,” “dandy” or “deco-den.” A doodad-embellished version, deco-den looks a bit like what might happen if Rainbow Brite were left alone with a glue gun.

Enthusiasts like Tania Vivas, 22, spend hundreds of dollars on each outfit, often purchased through Japanese go-betweens who buy the latest looks for American clients and then ship them here.

After the lecture, the Lolitas gathered for a pink-frosted tea party, snacking on pink mini-cupcakes and, of course, sizing up one another’s outfits. Ivanna Hobgood, 21, had a side-ponytail festooned with individually stitched pink plush felt candies. “I’m that sweet,” she told an admirer. “I can touch you and give you diabetes.”

Abigail Blatt, 24, specializes in resizing outfits for Americans. “A Lolita isn’t necessarily someone who is trying to entice an older man,” she said. Around her, girls in thigh-highs posed for photos, some suggestively nibbling kitten-shaped cookies. But, her friend added, “What sexy is in America, that’s what cute is in Japan.”

In the lecture hall a few moments earlier, the designer, a young Japanese Avril Lavigne named Gashicon, trotted out two models wearing her fall looks. They modeled an urchinlike dishabille: ruffled miniskirts over sheer knee socks. Her inspiration, said Gashicon through her translator, was “monster.”

In the front row, Andrea Vargas, 22, in full Lolita gear, gasped: “It’s adorable.”

Next to her sat Marilyn Hopeman, decades older, dressed in the all-black uniform of a Manhattan fashionista. “If that were me,” she said, “my dad would have locked me in the house.”

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ギャルの統計情報

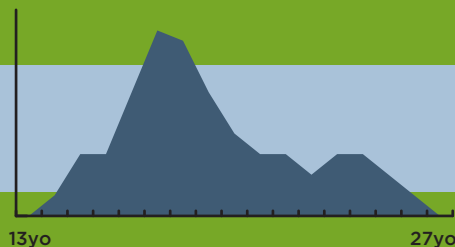
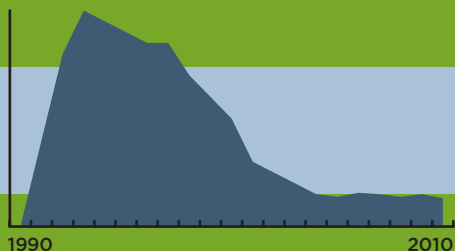
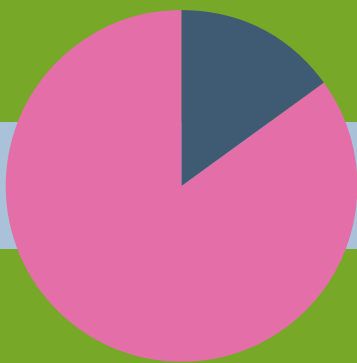
gyaru facts & statistics

what is a gyaru?

GYARU IS A JAPANESE TRANSLITERATION of the English word gal. The name originated from a 1970s brand of jeans called “gals”, with the advertising slogan: “I can’t live without men”, and was applied to fashion-conscious girls in their teens and early twenties. Its usage peaked in the 1980s and has gradually declined. The term gradually drifted to apply to a younger group, whose seeming lack of interest in work or marriage gained the word a “childish” image.

Gyaru subculture is still a large influence in Japan’s fashion economy with Gal brands branching out and becoming more accessible in rural areas. In Tokyo, more often than not, a shopping center at each main train station dedicated to offering the newest and trendiest items from popular Gal brands. Some brands are also reaching overseas by having their items easily accessible in webshops offering world-wide shipping services. Gal Circles are also a fun part of a gal’s life.

A Gal Circle is a group of gals that meet up and hold events promoting gal style, music, and parapara dancing.









東京は制限してメイクをと

Tokyo Takes Makeup to the Limit

KAORI SHOJI

Originally published in the New York Times on February 26th, 2000.

SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO BE A WOMAN, SO they say, but a Tokyo teen "gyaru," or gal, will tell you it is a grueling, double-shift job: shopping, dieting, marathon sessions at the hairdressers (it only took Marilyn Monroe 3 hours a day) and trips to the tanning salon for an ever deeper shade of brown or black face.

Gunguro is said to have originated from a combination of sistah rappers, Naomi Campbell and '70s surf culture. Indeed, a few dreadlocked girls in Hawaiian T-shirts still cruise the streets on skateboards, their makeup consisting of nothing fancier than

would wear if he suddenly turned into a 16-year-old Tokyo gal: an industrial-strength tan offset by several layers of white (or lavender) lipstick, blue eye shadow plastered

"I just want someone to notice me and freak out a little!"

all around the eyes, accented with stick-on lamé beads and, finally, the long, luxurious false eyelashes blinking under the weight of what seems like a tubful of mascara. Thanks to the advent of 100-yen shops (everything on the shelves goes for 100 yen, or just under dollars 1), cosmetics have never been so affordable and the gunguros are taking full advantage.

"Gunguro is what Arnold Schwarzenegger would wear if he were a 16-year-old Tokyo gal."

eyeliner and day-glo lipstick. But somewhere along the line, the rest of the populace got side-tracked. Now gunguro is a social phenomenon in which the competition is about who can load the most makeup on her face without keeling over.

It is not about improving one's looks as much as making an impact. It's about power and attitude, a facial bumper sticker that says: "Don't Mess With Me."

Gunguro is the teenybopper version of heavy ammo—what Arnold Schwarzenegger

Miho, 18, says her monthly makeup expenditure comes to about 8,000 yen, which leaves her with enough allowance for karaoke and pizza parties, two great venues for "meeting boys." In spite of this, Miho is not looking for a steady relationship. "I just want someone to notice me and freak out a little" she says.

To achieve this effect Miho spends hours at the mirror everyday and complains that cosmetics packages are just too small. She once went through a lipstick a week before her parents got fed up. Recently, she and a



自転車進入禁止

"We're a
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friend pulled off the biggest coup of their lives when a television variety show asked them for guest appearances. For this momentous occasion, Miho spent 10 hours in a hair salon getting “extensions”—false hair cleverly clipped to her own to make it look like real, long strands. Miho’s hair, by the way, is the

“I love the moment when I’m doing my eyes, there’s nothing like it; it’s better than sex!”

standard gunguro “hag” color: silvery white with streaks of gray.

The Japanese news media has come down on gunguros like a raging headmistress. “Creatures from another planet” is the common verdict. One religious organization accused them of being “emissaries from hell.” Others, like Miho’s variety show, have opted for fascination.

Cameras from all four major networks have staked out positions in front of the 109 building, a small mall in Tokyo’s Shibuya district, for footage of ever more outrageous samples of gunguro attire. The building’s tenant boutiques switched to gunguro mode long ago and offer items like tight-fitting, slinky mid-riff everything, not to mention a variety of microscopic skirts. Gunguro fashion has spawned an entire generation of nifty name brands like “Egoist,” “Me Jane” and “Love Boat” that are just as famous for the wearers as their affordable prices.

Also supporting—or taking advantage of—the gunguro cause is a fashion magazine called Egg,

catering to the Tanned Ones. Egg offers the usual round of makeup, fashion and dating tips as well as teenage sex confession stories. Egg’s boyfriend publication, Men’s Egg, operates on much the same lines but with more emphasis on tanning.

Gunguros admit that this particular makeup

works only on the very young. Miho, who has set 19 as the age limit, says: “I don’t want to be dark all my life. I have visions of myself in a white wedding dress with

baby smooth, white skin.”

For the moment, however, gunguro is her main source of an adrenaline rush. “I love the moment when I’m doing my eyes,” she says. “There’s nothing like it; it’s better than sex.” She and her friends have no plans for Life After 20 but hope that some new wave in the cosmetics world will see them through. “I look at the makeup on adult women and all I can say is, ‘Boring!’ Hey, at least we’re adding some color to the world, livening it up a little, how about giving us some gratitude?”

adding color to the
how about giving us
some gratitude?!”





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