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### JAPANESE SOCIETY AND POPULAR LITERATURE

From the Toyota Motor Corporation down, many Japanese corporations are doing business all over the world. The automobiles of Toyota, PlayStation of Sony, and Nintendo Switch are well-known products of Japan. Tokyo and Osaka are famous for their economic power, culture, and history. Moreover, many animated cartoons and computer games, such as Pokémon and One Piece, are also famous in the world. Furthermore, Japan is the third-largest economy in the world and is a member of the G7 summit.

However, viewed from the inside of Japan, Japan has many different problems.

First, there is a problem so-called ‘The Lost 30 years’ in Japan. Until the 1990s, Japan had experienced rapid economic growth and a bubble economy in 1990s. During the bubble economy, the price of real estate and the stock market was greatly inflated. However, in early 1992, the economic bubble burst and the price of real estate and the stock market plummeted. For 30 years since 1992, Japan has been suffering from economic stagnation. Japanese people call this ‘The 30 Lost years’ due to the fact that there has been no GDP growth since 1992.

Second, ‘KAROSHI’ (Death from Overwork) is one of the most serious problems in Japan. According to the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, more than 20,000 people committed suicide in 2019 alone (the number of work-related suicides reaching 1,949 in the same year). ILO Director-General Guy Ryder said that “The Japanese word ‘KAROSHI’ is notorious all over the world.

Third, you have to catch the mood in a room in Japan. Taking part in a conference for example, you have to say YES if everybody says YES. If you say no, you would not feel comfortable at work from the following week. There is pressure to say YES in Japan. But in the 21st century, which is a century of innovation, it has become an obstacle for the development of Japan. MANABE Syukuro, who won the Nobel Prize this year, said that “In Japan, if you ask some question, you get ‘yes’ or ‘no,’” “However, when the Japanese say ‘yes,’ it does not necessarily mean ‘yes.’ It could mean ‘no.’” But in the U.S., “I can do things I want. I don’t worry about what other people feel.” “I don’t want to go back to Japan, because I’m not capable of living harmoniously.”

As mentioned above, Japan has many different social problems. In such a social situation, some popular literature has gained popularity among Japanese people. ‘We Bubble-Economy Hires (Oretachi Baburu Nyukougumi)’ and ‘Colorful’ are among them.

‘We Bubble-Economy Hires’ is a story of a bank employee. HANZAWA (a bank employee) was a very talented bank employee and respected by his team members. One day, his superior ASANO approached HANZAWA with a proposal to accommodate a new loan customer with a big loan. HANZAWA did not want to accommodate the big loan to the new loan customer because the company of the new loan customer was not a reliable company. His superior ASANO made a promise to bear responsibility for the big loan and HANZAWA accepted

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the promise and proceeded with the loan. After a while, the company went bankrupt, and it became impossible to collect money from it. HANZAWA was made to bear full responsibility for the loss of the big loan by his superior ASANO. HANZAWA said NO to bear responsibility and found out the truth of the matter that his superior deceived him, and HANZAWA became determined to get revenge on his superior.

HANZAWA obtained clear evidence that his superior ASANO engaged in corruption and forced responsibility for the loss of a big loan to HANZAWA. HANZAWA did not bring criminal charges against his superior ASANO, and instead, made a deal with him to get a promotion in the bank in exchange for not revealing Asano's complicity. HANZAWA's story of revenge won the hearts of Japanese people who had been suffering from many different social problems for a long time.

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