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## HOW LOOKISM APPEARS IN JAPANESE SOCIETY

In this paper I would like to focus on the situation whereby the phenomenon of Lookism has appeared in Japanese society, especially amongst the young generation.

Lookism is the practice of judging people based on their appearance or physical characteristics. It is often translated as “appearance supremacy,” and was first used in the 1970s in the U.S. to protest against discrimination on the basis of obesity.

In Japan, beauty and good looks have a strong influence on personal relationships at school and in the workplace, and the more attractive a person is, the more privileged he or she is likely to be. For example, it is mandatory to submit a photograph when looking for a job, and there are still many beauty contests and university beauty competitions where the participants are judged to be the most beautiful based on their looks alone. University beauty competitions, commonly known as Miss Contests, have been especially popular since the 1970s, about 50 years ago, and have been considered the gateway to becoming a female announcer. In fact, there was so much effort put into the Miss Contest that companies sponsored its operation. In this way, the women were judged according to their looks and competed with each other for looks, which often affected their career choices.

Furthermore, “fatness” is also a factor in judging the beauty and ugliness of one’s appearance. Being fat is often made fun of and blamed as evidence of one’s lack of effort and laziness. In this kind of Lookism, women are often the target of more judgments and the idea of lookism is deeply related to gender.

However, in recent years, there has been a gradual movement to criticize such kinds of Lookism. For example, in recent years, the organizations of Miss Contest have been questioned, and some universities have banned the contests. In addition, the creative director of the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Olympics resigned after being heavily criticized for his plan to make fun of a female celebrity by comparing her body shape to a pig.

While Lookism is gradually being criticized and more and more people think it is a bad thing, the idea that “looks are everything” seems to be spreading, especially among young people, on social networking sites such as Instagram and Twitter, and in media such as Youtube and Tiktok.

Now let’s consider why Lookism is a problem. In a society where Lookism is prevalent, the beauty or ugliness of one’s appearance is not at the individual’s discretion, but is the object of evaluation. Here, people of various races, cultures, and physical characteristics are caught up in a single value system, such as “cute” or “cool,” and those who do not fit into this system are excluded. In this regard, I believe that there is a problem in this unintentional judging of one’s appearance.

## CHALLENGES OF TODAY'S SOCIETY

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In recent years, issues such as race and gender discrimination have also come to be seen as similar social problems. These are not things that we can change at our own will. In the same way, our appearance is not something that we can change by intention.

To sum up, in today's society where diversity is emphasized, it would be preferable for us, the younger generation, to think about whether it is right to be stuck in one value system without acknowledging the diversity of our appearance.

### References:

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