

# The Keyword Is LOHAS

By Peo Ekberg

## Ever Heard of LOHAS?

Nominated as one of the most popular words during 2005, LOHAS products and services are popping up everywhere in Japan.

If you have been to Japan, there is a chance that you have been to a LOHAS coffee shop, eaten at LOHAS restaurants, read LOHAS magazines, and listened to LOHAS music and radio programs.<sup>1</sup> Or you may even know someone purchasing a LOHAS mansion apartment.

LOHAS is spreading fast in Japan and it is a word you definitely do not want to miss if you want to succeed with your business in Japan.

According to research by the Natural Marketing Institute (USA) and the envi-

ronmental consulting company E-Square Inc. (Japan) released in June 2005, approximately one in three Japanese adults (29%) have adopted a LOHAS lifestyle.

What is this new expression, then and what does it really mean?

## This Is LOHAS

*Lifestyles Of Health And Sustainability* (LOHAS) basically describes a lifestyle focused on health, the environment, social justice, personal development, a sustainable economy and sustainable living. All in one, it is an “evolved” expression for the United Nations definition of Sustainability: the balance between “nature” (environment), “people” (society) and “money” (economy).

For the last 30 years, the world has tried to come to terms with the problems of overexploitation of resources. While only 16% of the world’s population is living in developed nations like Japan, the United States or my country of birth Sweden, we, the 16%, are using 80% of the world’s resources to fulfill our standard of living.<sup>2</sup> We would need three more Earths, if every human being on this planet were to achieve the same living standards that the developed nations have.

The facts speak for themselves: forests the size of 5,000 sports arenas are disappearing from the Earth every day<sup>3</sup> because

we use “cheap” disposable paper products like paper cups in coffee shops. Animals like the Mountain Gorilla in Africa are declining in numbers because we want a new mobile phone every 18 months.<sup>3,4,5</sup> More than 100 million people<sup>6</sup> in the world are now suffering from asthma, partly because of exhaust gases from our cars.

The need for a sustainable lifestyle has been known since the 1970s when the world’s scientists and politicians held the first international environmental summit, though the big challenge has always been a lack of appropriate and “easy-to-digest” vocabulary. The official expression is “Sustainable Development,” which is not an attractive expression to be honest.

## Vocabulary Evolution

In the 1970s, the environmental movement spread in Europe and the United States with the help of citizens’ groups, but was often unable to bring all people on board with the phrase “Environmental Protection.” The word “Ecology” or “Eco” succeeded in involving an even wider population. The phrases “Slow life” and “Slow food” came next, another expression trying to describe sustainability, but they still did not really take off.

Now, we may have found a perfect word containing all three pillars for sustainability, and expressing happiness and

Photo : Yusuke Abe



A LOHAS Eco village in Stockholm, Sweden (left and right)

Photo : Yusuke Abe



Photos : Yusuke Abe



Old glass recycled into new and stylish LOHAS glasses

Note : 1) Three days a month, a popular Tokyo radio station, J-wave, broadcasts songs and programs powered by the wind rather than with the help of electricity generated from fossil fuels such as coal or oil.

2) The Tantalum-heavy metal in your mobile phone is most likely mined in the area where the Mountain Gorillas live, destroying their habitat.

style: LOHAS – Lifestyles Of Health And Sustainability.

LOHAS sounds good, feels fashionable and looks very stylish. It is a word that was first “invented” in the United States in 1998. Now the word has become popular in Japan.

Let us be honest. Most of us want to lead a positive, happy lifestyle. We do not want any negative news about the extinction of another animal (or even the human race).

So, if you can lead a positive, happy and healthy lifestyle, and thanks to this lifestyle you actually contribute to a fairer society and a better world for both you and the Earth. Now, that is not a bad deal, is it?

### ■ That Is LOHAS

LOHAS could be anything from drinking organic coffee, driving a hybrid car, or spending more time reading and doing Yoga for your own self-development as a human being. LOHAS affects everything and everyone, and you can start wherever you want. The only “rule” you need to remember is to make your lifestyle a little bit more healthy and to make sure you give back as much to nature as you have taken from it.<sup>7</sup> That is all.

Since all economies depend on a healthy environment (no nature = no resources, no resources = no business), there is also a chance your economy will become sustainable, too.

In my home, for example, we have reduced our household waste by more

Photo : Peo Ekberg



This is all the waste (3-4kg) thrown away once a month from the author's house, where he lives with his wife

3) United Nations 1997  
4) Vodafone  
5) United Nations 2005

6) World Watch Institute  
7) The law of nature created during the span of several billion years.

Photo : J-Wave

**“Walk the Talk!”**

**J-WAVE**  
81.3 FM

**The first Green Energy radio station in Japan**

**Established:** December 10, 1987  
**Program Types:** Music & DJ Shows  
**Target Group:** Youth up to 35  
**Reaching Area:** 40,000,000 people plus  
**Average Number of Listeners per Hour:** 350,000  
**Website (Page Views per Month):** 56,000,000

**Latest Guests**  
CYNDI LAUPER / STING / JACK JOHNSON / BLACK EYED PEAS / NORAH JONES / JAMIROQUAI / GOLDPLAY / SHERYL CROW / BABYFACE / UNDERWORLD / PAT METHENY / OASIS / etc...

**a No.1 environmental program in Tokyo**

**Broadcasting Time:** Sundays 0600-0900 (Live)  
**Share in Tokyo 12 Radio Stations:** 20%, peak: 25% (Aug 2005 rating)  
**Total Rating in Area:** No.1 in Tokyo  
**Navigators / Commentators**  
PEO EKBERG (Environmental Consultant)  
YURI NOMURA (Food Director)

**LOHAS SUNDAY**

An ad for one of the LOHAS movements, J-Wave's “Walk the Talk”

Photo : Yusuke Abe

than 80% compared to an average Japanese household, water usage by more than 40%, and we have a contract for 100% green electricity (wind and biomass). We often choose organic food, clothes and interiors made from natural fabrics. And this LOHAS lifestyle saves us at least ¥100,000 (US\$ 850) per year. That is not too bad? **JS**

Peo Ekberg is an environmental consultant and a LOHAS innovator. He is also a disc jockey for the Japanese radio station, J-Wave.

Photo : Peo Ekberg



The author during a J-Wave LOHAS broadcast. Many of the world's musicians visit J-Wave's studios in Tokyo.



Sustainable future