

Pursuit of Affluence

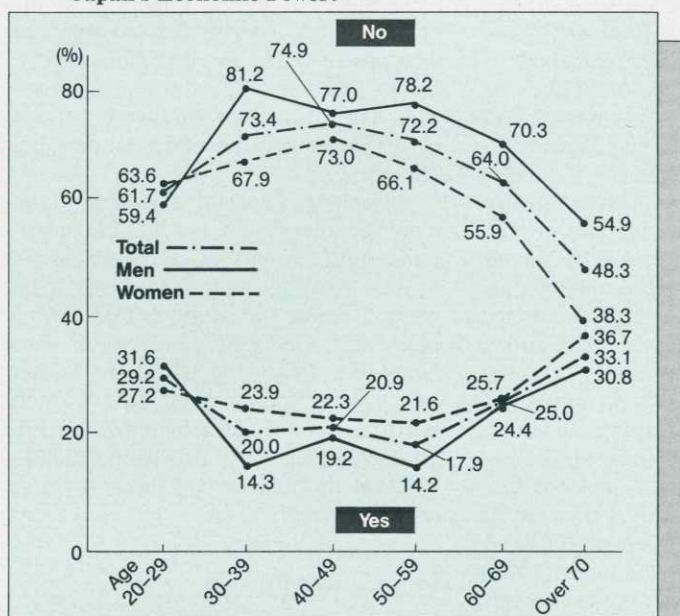
With a per-capita GNP that is one of the highest in the world, Japan is clearly an economic superpower, while most Japanese consider themselves upper middle class. Yet despite these gains, Japanese still work longer and take fewer holidays than their counterparts in other industrialized countries. While they and people in other countries may think they are rich,

the conditions they live with every day—exorbitant land prices, poor housing conditions, long commuting time and high prices—put them far from realizing an affluent lifestyle (Fig. 1).

Former French Prime Minister Edith Cresson likened the Japanese people to ants, and said the French would never live the way they do. But now even the Japa-

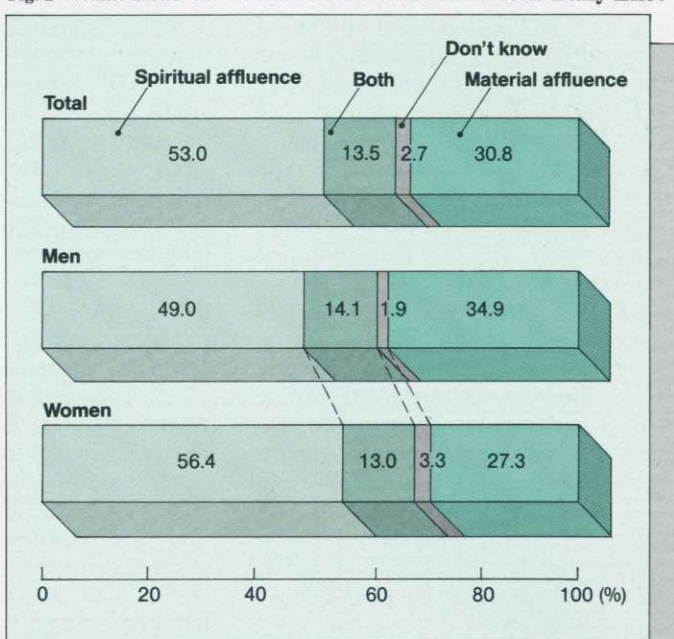
nese themselves are beginning to call for a new lifestyle that values spiritual as well as material needs. According to a government survey, more than 50% of the Japanese people now put the quest for spiritual richness ahead of material gains (Figs. 2 & 3).

Fig. 1 Does the Richness of Your Life Reflect Japan's Economic Power?



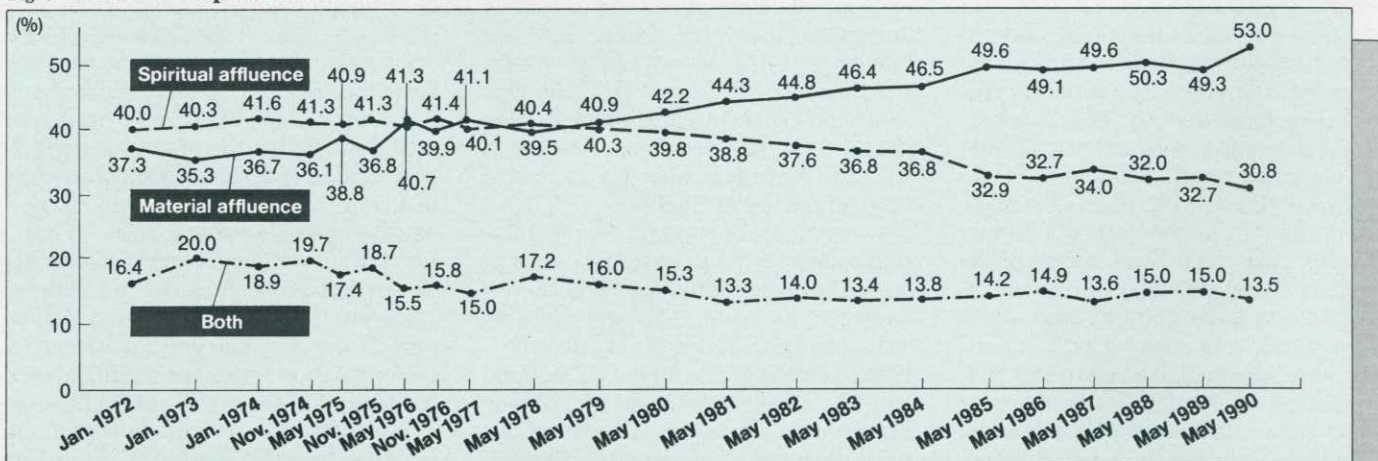
Source: September 1988 survey by Prime Minister's Office.

Fig. 2 What Kind of Affluence Do You Seek in Your Daily Life?



Source: Prime Minister's Office's Public Opinion Survey on People's Life, May 1990.

Fig. 3 Trends of People's Preference



Source: Prime Minister's Office's Public Opinion Survey on People's Life, May 1990.