

Japan's Beauty Market Boom

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. **ratio** (noun): a relationship between two amounts that shows how much larger one is than the other. Example: The ratio of men to women in higher management positions is roughly 3 to 1.
2. **soul** (noun): the spiritual part of a person, that is believed to exist after death; a person's inner moral or emotional character. Example: Sandra is very religious and believes her soul will go to heaven when she dies.
3. **makeover** (noun): a complete change in the appearance of someone or something. Example: All of our stores will be getting a makeover this year.
4. **vow** (verb): to promise that something will be done. Example: In 2021, France and Greece formed an alliance, vowing to support each other in the event of an attack.
5. **rouge** (noun): a red powder or cream used to add color to cheeks or lips. Example: I prefer neutral make-up colors but I sometimes apply a touch of rouge.
6. **conviction** (noun): a strongly held belief or opinion; the quality of showing that one firmly believes what one thinks or says. Example: My father has very strong political convictions, so it's very hard to argue with him!



Yoshiko Abe is about to turn 89, but that hasn't stopped her from going to the gym every day and trying the free-of-charge makeup course at her housing complex. "It was really helpful," she said, smiling after putting on foundation and pink lipstick, something she hadn't done in years. Japan is the fastest-aging society in the world, where more than a quarter of its population is 65

and older, at 36 million people. In about a decade, the ratio will be one in three. No wonder the young-at-heart are a growing target for business.

The market for older people is estimated to grow to more than 100 trillion yen (\$650 billion) in size this year, according to a study by Mizuho Bank. And that business isn't just about remedies for sicknesses and old folks' homes. Akira Shimizu, professor of business at Keio University, says older people remain sensitive to trends, including the latest luxury and health products. "They think about the clothing and makeup that express their style," he said. From luxury cruises and "oldies" rock concerts, companies know that older people these days remain active.

They go out with friends and on dates, so they want to dress up and look good, said Shimizu. The Japanese cosmetics company Shiseido Co. says that makeup is not just good for your physical well-being but also your soul. The company has been holding free makeup courses for older people across the country. "Putting on makeup works as a switch to turn on your energy at the start of your day," said Miwa Hiraku, the makeover class instructor from Shiseido. She vows to wear makeup even at 100.

"It's not just about looking beautiful. It's about living a long healthy life," she said. Yoshihiko Hotta, 85, the only man in the class of about 30 people, didn't try the rouge but happily put on the hand cream and went along with all the exercise routines. While acknowledging he felt some effects of aging like sore legs, he declared with conviction: "I don't think age is relevant." From luxury cruises and "oldies" rock concerts, companies know that older people these days remain active.

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DISCUSSION

1. Can you think of a time when you or someone you know behaved like a "cheeky monkey"? What happened?
2. How do you feel about the phrase "Monkey see, monkey do"? Have you ever seen this behavior in action?
3. Have you ever been told to "Stop that monkey business"? What were you doing at the time?
4. Do you think it's fair to "make a monkey out of someone" as a joke? Why or why not?
5. What is the most surprising fact you've learned recently that made you think "I'll be a monkey's uncle"?