ok sounds good. Here is what i have so far and we can expand on them after you send your story:

1. What did you mean when you said that you’re just “tired now”? Can you explain the causes of you losing your energy?

Working in Japan is incredibly draining. They've attempted to lessen the overwork deaths and the new buzzwords in Japanese businesses are "work-life balance," which is supposed to mean that they'll allow us more time off, leave work earlier, etc. However, because the work culture is so ingrained and a lot of it is caused by peer pressure and not controlled by administration anyway, it ends up being that it's just all lip service and nothing gets changed. So, you still end up working the 12-14 hour shifts that we've always worked. It leads to a life where all you do is go to work, go home and sleep, and then go back to work. In some cases, we just sleep at work.

Another cause is the repressive nature of Japanese society as a whole. There is massive peer pressure at all times to not stick out or cause a fuss, which leads to everyone not having an outlet to vent their frustrations. It's kind of hard to imagine for non Japanese, as pretty much every foreigner I've ever talked to has always said, "oh I'm sure it's fine! I'll be fine in Japan! I'm never sad!" only for them to come here and become clinically depressed when they had never had it before. It's a slow and compounding process that's hard to describe unless you experience it. The best analogy I've heard is the mosquito bite one in which it's described as getting a mosquito bite once isn't so bad, but when you start getting a mosquito bite once every hour without stopping, after time it starts to consume you.

2. What are some clear-cut differences between Japanese and American youth in their aspirations and goals? In your opinion, how do the two youth groups differ in terms of the possession of pipe dreams (i.e. becoming famous or rich)?

To explain the difference in youths, you have to understand that most other countries in the world are old world countries, meaning that they've had class systems in place for centuries, if not millenia which allows people to "know their place" in society at a glance. However, in America, classism as a concept was stamped out by American propaganda dating back to the first World War up until now. As a result, most Americans have no idea what classism even is, which allows for the greatest vertical potential I've seen in any country and the closest thing to a meritocracy in my opinion. This allows American youths to "dream big" because in their eyes, there literally is no limit to how far they can go.

Because of this lack of class stratification, instead of social status, individuality and money are valued above all, and often but not always, the two are tied together. This leads to American youths following the simplest logical path: need money -> celebrity rich -> how get money? -> become celebrity.

Japanese youths on the other hand, have different values. In Japan, class stratification is incredibly rigid. You can have money, but if you don't have the prestige, you're still nothing. This barrier, combined with the overbearing work culture that they know awaits them, leads them to seek out alternative lifestyles. In some cases, this leads to Japanese youths wanting to become internet famous and live off youtube revenue because they've seen it done in the west, even though the motivations are different. Other times, this leads to them having very simple goals such as living in a quiet small town community and getting a simple job. Even though the end goal may sometimes be similar to their western counterparts, the motivations behind it are usually different.

3. According to cultural psychological studies, Japanese society forms an “interdependent cultural system.” However, there seems to be a disjunction between reality and the aforementioned system. I believe you said before that Japanese students are incredibly competitive. Can you expand on that?

This is an easy question. It's all lip service. Really. Japanese culture is all about showing a good face, saving face, etc. If you tell them something is bad, they'll say "yeah it's horrible!" , if you tell them the very same thing is good, they'll agree "oh i love it it's good!" True story. Any chance they get to look good, they'll take it. Thus, you have your system of interdependency. Everyone wants to make it look like we all stand together, but in reality they're just saying that to look good.

As for the Japanese students, school is very competitive. For most students, it's the only time in your life in which you can move up the prestige ladder. Your prestige comes mostly from which university you graduated from. If you graduated from Tokyo U, you're set for life. You'll be hired for any job, anywhere you want. Our school system is so tied to the prestige system that we pretty much don't have majors in university. It doesn't matter what you study in school, all that matters is what school you go to. True story, a lot of my friends got into Waseda or Tokyo U and just did whatever classes they wanted: anthropology, art and history of film (just watching movies), glass blowing, etc. and after they graduated, they got hired immediately as engineers.

To get to that goal, you have to study hard in middle school because colleges only accept from prestigious high schools or extremely high scores and prestigious high schools only accept kids with good middle school scores. Middle school is the last point in your life in which you have the most control in your life. Some kids realize that too late and waste their chance by fooling around which leads to the high suicide rate amongst students because they realize they have no future.

4. What are your thoughts on the “lost generation”? Do you have any experience seeing contrasting mindsets between those who belong to the lost generation and those who do not?

The lost generation are comparable to the older millenials that grew up in the great recession during the late 2000's in the west. Their habits are different, and oftentimes more simple than their predecessors and successors. I believe that many of the lost generation are the ones that influenced the simple quiet small town dream that Japanese youths in turn found. Animal Crossing is a good illustration of that dream. This is in sharp contrast to the older generation who believed that hard work is above all, because for lost generation'ers there is no reward for doing so and so it lost its value.

Whereas for the youth that came after the lost decade, they're equivalent to the western zoomers. They were raised in a new age of excess and as a result, everything is fast paced and disposable.

5. Does there seem to be more importance in raising a family or work? Do you worry about the unhealthy Japanese population pyramid?

Work is still currently the number one priority for most people (in Tokyo at least), but there is a movement to shift priority to raising family. I do worry about it, but I'm seeing more and more children around the city nowadays so I'm actually happy to see that. A few years ago, there were 0 children at the parks and around the city but today there's a lot.

Summary:

I suppose my life in the briefest summary would go: born in the US to japanese national parents due to my father being on assignment there at the time, went to primary school in the US, moved back to Japan for middle and high school, decided to attend the first couple years of university in the US, then finishing in Japan at Keio. Finally, started working at my current job.

As for classism, I was actually pretty oblivious to it until college when I was in the US. I lived with and was friends with a bunch of international students from all over the world: europe, america, asia, and it was during our discussions on things that I realized the subtle differences between us; and not just related to classism. Things that some people took for granted as a universal human right or the motivations behind someone's decision would seem completely wrong to someone from a different background. For example, if someone was presented with a choice, the american would always tell them "just do it! it's easy!", but someone from elsewhere in the world where class stratification exists would say "it's not possible", and the funny thing is, they're both correct. In their respective societies and cultures, both of their advice would be correct, but if they were to follow the americans advice in china, for example, it would be completely wrong.

Could you please elaborate on what you want me to talk about regarding gaijin? It's getting a little better but still pretty bad lol.

That particular instance was just an isolated incident, and it wasn't exactly bullying (although the bullying in Japan is possibly the worst there is) but just light teasing. To paraphrase my gaijin friend from his own experience with japanese bullying, he said that what makes japanese bullying so bad is that japanese bullying doesn't end until you've killed yourself. They have no remorse, no other way to vent their frustrations, no other way to exert control over someone else given japans pressure to maintain harmony, and honestly nothing better to do. There was even a recent case in the news of a group of bullies who bullied a guy over an online game so hard, and harassed him so hard even into real life that he killed himself.

Ah, this is a complicated topic. It's true that japanese people see two distinct groups, i.e. "nihonjin" - those born and raised within japan and japanese culture, and "nikkei" - those who just have japanese blood but not from japan or raised in japanese culture. In the social hierarchy caste system, nikkei are seen as the lowest of the low. I hate to say it but just as low as southeast asians, sorry no offense intended, it's out of my control.

As for myself, because it's not that uncommon for japanese nationals to be sent away for long periods of time on business, there's a decently sized demographic of nihonjin like me who were born outside of japan but raised in a japanese household. We're not discriminated against as harshly as nikkei, but we ARE seen as being weird and eccentric.

Back in middle school when I returned to Japan, I was bullied for being different, but that's just how it is in japanese middle school. If you're different for ANY reason, you're bullied. If I introduced myself as being born in America today as an adult, I would receive comments such as "wow how do you survive eating only hamburgers every meal??" or "did you own a gun??" out of sheer ignorance but I wouldn't be outright discriminated against.