TJ Sipin

Option A: “Life Story” Project Proposal

I made a friend online a few years ago when I tried learning Japanese on my own. She was born in Japan but moved to Hawaii due to family reasons and then moved back to Japan for college. She has experienced both cultures and was very headstrong in her opinions toward her desire for reformation of Japanese culture regarding the unfair treatment of emerging adults in school and the workforce. I get the feeling that an interview conducted over text would be easier and more beneficial as she responds very quickly and with great detail. Once I have all the questions I need, I will ask when she can do the interview, since she has already confirmed that she can do it.

Questions:

1. What did you mean when you said that you’re just “tired now”? Can you explain the causes of you losing your energy?
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)?
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?
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?
5. Does there seem to be more importance in raising a family or work? Do you worry about the unhealthy Japanese population pyramid?

Referenced readings:

1. Cook – Aspirational Labour and Masculinities
2. Allison – Ordinary Refugees: Social Precarity and Soul in 21st Century Japan