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What is job hunting in japanese

These days, we find a lot of young people in black suits walking at stations in business districts. They check a mobile phone seriously and walk at a quick pace. They are students who will graduate from univesity and start working next year. They are looking for their job. In Japan, many companies start recruiting activities at the same time. This year, it started on Mar.1st. Now is the season of job-hunting for univcrsity students. Companies hold job fair, have interviews and do tests. When students visit companies, they wear business suits and most of them have the same appearance as below: They can choose any colours of clothes, shoes, and bags. But they choose what others choose; black. (In the past, deep navy was very popular so almost all students wore the colour). Japanese do not like to be outstanding. We think it's safe to conform to others. That's one of the reasons why Japanese people like to wear uniform at schools, shops and companies. In April, we find another type of young people wearing black suits. They are new employees. In Japan, fiscal year starts in April and companies train new employees to teach various things including their corporate culture. During the training period, new employees get close each other. Many students find their job before summer but some continue until next March. I hope all students find a good job and start working full of hope. Thank you for readingYou can send me a message to get a customized itinerary and quotation for an unforgettable experience.I'll be waiting for you, so please check my profile and get your trip plan now It's almost that time of year again when you'll see many recent graduates in their best black suits, roaming the streets to attend interviews and/or training sessions, and becoming indoctrinated into, and swallowed up by the infernal corporate machine. You see, Japan has a rather unique approach to Job Hunting, also called shukatsu, which is an abbreviation of shushoku (就職, finding employment) and katsudo (活動, activities), giving us (shuukatsu 就活). In Japan, there is only one time a year, usually around mid-late March/early April, when most companies open their doors to new recruits, so it is a very stressful, and nerve-racking time for the hopeful youngsters, freshly out of the comfy confines of University life. When their 3rd year of Uni rolls around, many students apply to as many as 100 (!!!), yep, you read that right!) companies only to get rejected by the majority of them. As you can probably already imagine, the whole process is incredibly competitive. This custom was unique to Japan and South Korea, however, a new law enforced in South Korea bans employers from discriminating against job-seekers who have recently graduated from high school or university. Now Japan is the only country practising this custom. Most students hunt for jobs before graduation from university or high school, seeking "informal offers of employment" (内々選 nainaitai) one year before graduation, which will hopefully lead to "formal offer of employment" (内定 naitei) six months later, securing them a promise of employment by the time they graduate. Japanese university students generally begin job hunting all at once in their third year. The government permits companies to begin the selection process and give out informal offers beginning April 1st, at the start of the fourth year. These jobs are mainly set to begin on April 1st the following year. Due to this process, attaining a good position as a regular employee at any other time of year, or any later in life, is extremely difficult. This "Shotgun Approach" was put into action by the Japan Business Federation, since most large companies have a very low turnover rate due to the lifetime employment style of Corporate Japan. It supposedly gives every upcoming graduate an equal chance to get a high-profile job with a top-tier company. Of course, the reality is often not quite so rosy. As mentioned above, in their Junior (3rd) Year of college, students start to prepare for this job-hunting madness by cutting and dying their hair black, purchasing an "Interview Suit" (black pants and jacket, white shirt, black tie), preparing incessantly for the company tests, and (everybody) rehearsing the exact same lines they'll use during the interview (should they pass the initial written tests). Since individuality is not a desirable quality in corporate Japan, this is the time when potential candidates seem to completely loose the qualities that make them unique. As the old saying goes: "The Nail that sticks out gets hammered down". There are a few exceptions, of course, but mostly this is the time where the individual gives way to, and subsequently becomes, the team member and company employee; putting his/her own needs and desires aside to satisfy the company. It is said that the employees tend to obey any and all unreasonable demands made by their companies so as not to be fired. Yuki Honda, a professor at the University of Tokyo's Graduate School of Education, has said: "Whether they get a job when they graduate decides their whole life" It is said that in Japan, you're married twice: Once to your Company, and once to your Wife/Husband. Between those two choices, the Company will always take precedence. Is this behaviour of repressing your own individuality psychologically healthy? Of course not! That is why each year, some students become so depressed that they commit suicide. As many of you reading this might already be aware, Japan has some of the highest suicide rates in the world. Last year in Japan, more than 25,000 people took their own lives - that's about 70 People per Day!!!! It should go without saying that young people these days are getting rather fed up with this one size fits all approach to job hunting, and are starting to rebel against corporate Japan and its strict rules and codes of conduct. How to best achieve this? Hold a protest and demand a change? Nope! Let the business leaders know their (student's) feelings? Wrong again! Join a Union?? A Union? What's that? :p This being Japan, it has to be cute-(lie!) and commercialised. So a new idol group aims to highlight all that's wrong with this process and bring more awareness of how counter-productive the whole system is. The group is called Kichohanakasha, and consists of young women, who try to juggle the demands of practicing, recording, performing, and job-hunting. There are only two strict rules in the group: 1) Each member has to wear the typical job-hunting suit for performances and 2) They have to apply for jobs. Once a member has been accepted by their first-choice company, she has to leave the group to work for that company. Their ultimate aim is to highlight all the problems associated with the unique job-hunting situation in Japan. According to the Band, "Even if we fail, at least we will have tried." As April rolls around, and the hordes of New recruits frantically roam the streets to get to their interviews or training posts on time, take a moment to remember the difficulties they had to go through in order to get to this stage. Will this one-size fits all, once you've removed your individuality approach continue? Well, it will certainly take a long time to change, since the ingrained job-is-more-important-than-yourselves mentality will take years, if not decades to change, but change is inevitable. This video illustrates the point perfectly: The younger people of today, having had more outside exposure than any other generation in Japan, don't all agree with this approach and some changes are already underway. If anyone, THEY will be the catalysts of change to the 90/10 work-life balance and the current corporate structure. Now we want to hear your thoughts on the issue. What do you think about the Japanese approach to job-hunting? Is it beneficial, or a burden? Leave your feedback and ideas in the comments section below. TAGSbeliefsbizarecultureemploymentGuidesJapanjob-huntingrealitysuicide For international students, the strict Japanese job-hunting schedule comes with many limitations. But change is on the horizon. What will the future bring? Find out here. Traditional job-hunting schedule in Japan If you have heard about how Japanese students search for their first job after university, you have probably heard of "shuukatsu" (就活, しゅうかつ). It's an abbreviated version of the term 就職活動 (しゅうしょくかつどう) - "job hunt". While this term describes the act of looking for a job in general, it also refers to the highly structured recruitment process specific to Japan. Everything has its time in Japan, students start their job hunt in their third year of university. Job-hunting season starts in March and can last until October, with even more time-specific periods for introductory events, tests, and interviews. Miss one part and you're out. This strict and drawn-out schedule makes it hard for many exchange students to find the job they want here. READ ON Guide to understanding Japan's classic job-hunting schedule to land a job Recently, I met with students from my former university. They asked me about job-hunting in Japan. Can you do it "out of season"? When should you start? What about this company in particular? Questions like these can be pretty hard to answer on the fly, especially since there have been some big shifts recently. So, I decided to create an overview. How are your plans going to pan out? Here's the short version: If you're planning to do your job hunt during this or next year, depending on the company you want to join, you have to play by the traditional rules. After that, searching for a job in Japan should become easier. The Keidanren Rules The traditional job hunt has been hugely influenced by the hiring rules that the members of the Japan Business Federation (日本経済団体連合会, にほんけいざいだんたいれんごうかい), also now as Keidanren, have imposed on themselves. While the number of Keidanren companies is relatively small (around 1,400 in May 2019), many of them are very popular with job seekers. Among the Japanese members, there are companies such as the Mitsubishi Group, NTT Docomo, Toyota, Sony, and various Japanese banks, insurance firms and publishers. However, you don't have to be a Japanese company to join Keidanren. Quite a few big players from overseas like Google, Apple Japan, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, and DuPont have joined the federation. The most important parts of the Keidanren hiring rules are the so-called "ban lifting dates" (解禁日, かいきんひ) for the different sections of the recruitment process. The first date is March 1st. From this day onward, companies are officially allowed to directly approach students (e.g. on job-hunting platforms) for recruitment-related PR activities (採用広報, さいようこうほう). They can also start holding company seminars (説明会, せつめいかい). The next date is June 1st. Companies are now allowed to enter the selection stage (選考, せんこう), carrying out tests or exams and holding job interviews. The final date is October 1st, the day from which tentative job offers (内定, ないてい) are allowed to be handed out to applicants. Despite the job offer being "tentative/unofficial", getting one means that you've secured yourself a job at the company (unless you do something really stupid). These rules are mostly a result of the effort to curb competition between companies in the years after the Second World War: They are also intended to let the students focus on their studies. If you're interested in knowing more about how this all came to be, check out our article on the chronicles of the Japanese recruitment system. Differences between company types Companies that haven't joined Keidanren naturally don't have to follow their rules. Over 99% of companies in Japan fall under the "small to medium-size" category (中小企業, ちゅうしょうきぎょう). In addition to that, there are startups as well as bigger Japanese and foreign companies that either can't clear the hurdles for Keidanren membership or have simply chosen not to join. Foreign companies with their HQ outside of Japan (外資系, がいしけい) are the quickest to hire. They have already given out most of their job offers for the following year by the time Keidanren members start carrying out tests and job interviews. For companies like this, there's no use in waiting for "Shuukatsu Season" to start - just go to their recruiting homepage and apply directly. Well-known companies from this category include HSBC, Oracle, IBM, Reuters, and McKinsey. Small and medium companies face strong competition from the big players during the main job hunt rush between March and May. As a result, many focus their efforts on the time before and after that period - starting around December and June respectively. Bigger Japanese companies also start their recruiting early, with aptitude tests and interviews being carried out from February onward. Job offers for the following year start being given out as early as April. It's these firms (as well as some big players from overseas) that you're most likely to encounter at job fairs like the Tokyo Career Forum and others. READ ON Job Fair Guide for Japan - Organizers, Dates, and Preparation Strategy Abolishment of the rules No more strict starting dates In October 2018, Keidanren announced that it would no longer uphold its hiring rules starting 2021. One of the main reasons that they are being done away with is that simply no-one playing by them in the first place. For example, under the Keidanren schedule, companies are only allowed to start doing "job interviews" (面接, めんせつ) from June 1st onward. However, many companies avoid this restriction by inviting students to "interviews" (面談, めんだん), "exchange meetings" (交換会, こうりゅうかい) or "symposia" (座談会, ざだんかい) instead. The only things that are different here are the names of the events and maybe the environment in which they take place. Their purpose - determining whether a student is a good candidate - remains the same. So, while companies are technically sticking to the rules, many of them are ignoring their spirit entirely by relying on semantics. ... but old habits die hard At the same time, a great number of students (and in turn, companies) still orient their activities by the Keidanren rules. For the students, a big reason is the fact that the big job portal sites like Rikunabi and MyNavi launch on March 1st. Uncertainty is another factor. For many, the beginning of the job-hunting season is the first time they start thinking about what kind of work they want to do. For the companies, it's about money - they can save resources by focusing their recruiting activities on one time slot. That being said, numbers from the HR company Recruit show that in 2017, about 60% of job seekers had already received their job offer by June. That's a pretty big number considering that Keidanren members can't officially start giving out offers until October (even when you take into account that a certain amount of these offers come from non-Keidanren companies). Another reason is competition. In the wake of the overall population decrease, the amount of freely available, young (and Japanese) talent is decreasing as well. Companies have to be more proactive now to prevent the most desirable human resources (優秀人材, ゆうしゅうじんざい) from joining the competition or even leaving Japan altogether. What will change? So, now the "shuukatsu rules" are being done away with - 2020 will be the last year they apply to. Will the Reiwa era also usher in a new era on the job market? What will change? Year-round recruitment The biggest change is that the big and popular Keidanren companies will be able to recruit year-round. To secure talent for themselves as early as possible, they will most likely attempt to "reach deeper" into the universities. That means they will hold introductory events, offer internships and test more students in their 2nd and 3rd years. For the students, that means they will have more freedom to "have a look" at different companies as well as more time to prepare for their career if they decide on a company (or an industry) early on. Almost paradoxically, however, this new freedom could lead to fewer Japanese students studying abroad, volunteering, etc. Students might fear that they will miss out on preparing for their careers if they don't approach and commit to companies early (especially if they're big and high-profile). Of course, fewer restrictions are good news for international students. Searching for (and finding) a job in Japan will become easier. If you want to join a Keidanren company, you'll no longer have to worry whether you'll be able to stay until the end of the shuukatsu season. Another result could be a more skill-focused approach during recruitment. Job adverts may become more specific and more alike to their mid-career equivalents. This is especially true for positions requiring "hard skills" (e.g. coding, data analysis, experience with industry-specific software, etc.). Remnants of the old system Looking back at the history of Japanese recruiting, the upcoming change is a big one. However, its effects will not be visible at once. Overall change (if it happens) is going to be slow - some companies may choose to simply keep to their regular schedule in the first few years. One reason for this are the costs. Until now, many Japanese companies were able to focus on one season for PR, event participation, etc. Extending the same degree of activity to the whole year simply won't be desirable or even feasible in some cases. While there will be more opportunities to establish contact with a company at an early stage and new forms of recruitment will gain popularity, most will want to keep a designated "hiring season". Another reason is the way the Japanese spend their years in university. Right now, the prevailing idea on both the student and corporate side is that you attend university for universal education, researching the things you're interested in even if they don't have much merit for a career. Once you enter a company - that's the point where you'll start learning the stuff you REALLY need. Because of this understanding, many Japanese companies have quite extensive "training on the job" programs. These become harder to organize (and cost more) when new people are joining all the time. Because of this, many companies will still limit starting dates to 1-2 times a year, even if they're hiring year-round. What should you do now? If you will do your job hunt in 2019 or 2020, start by looking up whether or not - or how many of - the companies you're interested in are members of Keidanren. (Search for their Japanese name in the member list). To apply to them, you'll either have to wait until the job-hunting season or establish early contact through a short-term internship or part-time job (look at their recruiting websites). If your companies are not on the list, you can more or less go about things the same way you would do in your home country. Either search for application forms and apply directly or look for dates for introductory events, company tours or internships. Be aware though: The way to a job in Japan will still be longer than what you're used to, and the starting dates for most positions will be well in the future. If you start searching last-minute, there will be fewer opportunities and many offers for "leftover positions". So, it's always a good idea to start looking as early as possible.

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