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# Blackburu and Kishiwada : Proletarian Towns and Middle-Class Towns



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# Blackburn and Kishiwada: Proletarian Towns and Middle-Class Towns

RONALD DORE
*The Technical Change Center*

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## 1. COMPARISON

Towns, their shape, their aesthetics, their atmosphere, their culture, may reflect a national civilization. They also reflect a local economy. Boom towns co-exist in the same society with declining towns. A Los Angeles can flourish as a Pittsburgh shrivels. The one can remain firmly entrenched in its nineteenth century ambience, the other can have one foot already into the twentieth century. Administrative cities, with the solid pomp of their governmental buildings designed to display power through opulence, create a different environment from a smoke-grimed industrial city with its functional factory boxes and its regimented rows of worker houses devoid of grace or decoration. Lille has arguably more in common with Birmingham, and Paris with London, than Lille with Paris or London with Birmingham. And, among industrial towns a pottery town will not look like a steel town, nor will its people think and feel like steel town people.

So, to try to compare like with like, this paper will concentrate on two towns which have, or in the past had, the same industry—indeed the same branch of the same industry, cotton weaving. They are Blackburn in Lancashire and Kishiwada to the south of Osaka.

## 2. HISTORY

Blackburn, with 106,000 inhabitants in 1980, is about 30 kilometers from Manchester and was little more than a village in the early eighteenth century when Defoe passed it by in his travels without a mention. By 1750 it deserved to be called a small market town, serving the farmers of surrounding areas and gradually expanding in size and worth as American cotton began to pour into Liverpool in increasing quantity and as the steady stream of inventions which provided the

foundation for Britain's industrial revolution brought steady growth, first in cottage manufactures and later in the new weaving factories.

When both Blackburn and the British weaving industry were at their peak, in 1912, the population was 137,000 and there were over one hundred cotton mills. Already, before World War I, there were signs of Japanese competition beginning to bite in China, and the Indian industry was growing to displace imports. After the war, the decline steepened. Textiles still employed three-quarters of the working population in 1929 and consequently the town was very badly hit in the depression of the 1930s: at one point 46 percent of the working population was unemployed.

The textile industry, of course, never recovered, but Blackburn remained a manufacturing town by dint of steady diversification. Some weaving mills survived, a dozen until 1980, seven today. But weaving is no longer a major industry. It employs less than seven percent of the town's workers, less than a sixth, even, of those engaged in manufacturing. It is still a working-town, a town of manual workers, with about one-half of the working population engaged in manufacturing, compared with a national average of one-third.

Kishiwada, of course, has a much older history, as an area of dense agricultural settlement, hinterland of the flourishing port of Sakai in the sixteenth century, and the location of a castle and center of a modest fief under the Tokugawa settlement. As cotton growing, spinning, and weaving developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Senshū, the area of which Kishiwada remains the central town, became a major center. By the end of the eighteenth century it was supplying nearly sixty percent of the cotton cloth shipped to Osaka—1.8 million yards of it. The production system varied from being the winter by-employment of a farmer who grew his own cotton and spun as well as wove it at home and sold it to intinerant village merchants, to the master weavers who grew cotton on a large scale, bought in more, and organized the weaving of a number of dependent contract weavers and even a handful of wage employees.

Both the weavers' and merchants' self-interest, and also the government's concern to control and tax, dictated the creation of cloth guilds. And, as in other such societies, there was a continuous shifting of coalitions among government, weaver, merchant, and consumer, with constant changes of rules and regulations resulting.

The Meiji Restoration, open trade, the end of guilds, and the coming of imported cotton and imported textile machinery changed all that. Cotton spinning was the first to be factory-based and steam-powered. Senshū had some of the new spinning mills but continued to be primarily a weaving center. By the end of the century weaving, too, was beginning to be mechanized. It looked as if the family weaver—weaving as a farm by-employment or as a small domestic workshop affair—was soon to be overwhelmed by the power-loom factory in Japan as he had been overwhelmed, slowly and inexorably, in Britain between 1805 and 1850.

But two things saved him. The first was the shortness of the reign of King Steam. By the mid-1920s, before capital had accumulated sufficiently for enough steam-engined factories to overwhelm the hand-loom competition, the electric motor

was well developed. Fractionally divisible, as available to the ten-loom domestic workshop as to the 1000-loom factory, it radically altered the economies of scale.

The second factor was the guild tradition. The end of the nineteenth century saw both weavers and government trying to revive the system which the Tokugawa town magistrate (*machi-bugyō*) had created. The weavers wanted cooperatives in order to establish the quality reputation of Senshū cloth. The government wanted them first as a channel to encourage small enterprise as part of its industrialization policy and secondly to introduce export quality control. The first effective modern cooperative was created in the first decade of this century and this too served to give, through collective support, some stability to the small domestic weaver.

And so Kishwada has remained a town with large numbers of small weaving establishments. Of 900 weaving establishments in the Senshū area as a whole (250 of them are in Kishiwada), only about 60 employ more than ten people; 660 hire fewer than five. Still, the cooperative plays an important part in making this small-scale enterprise viable, by conveying market and other information and by mediating government assistance and regulation.

Today Japan's weaving industry faces the same challenge as Britain's in 1920. Rising living standards have made Japan a high-cost producer compared with neighboring China or even Taiwan or Korea. The threat has been greater to Kishiwada weavers than to weavers in any other parts of Japan because, since the wartime rationalization of the industry, the area has come to specialize in plain grey cloth. Orders have been falling off and the price has stagnated. The number of weavers has dropped slowly, from 970 in 1977 to 830 today, but these "*jiba sangyō*" (local indigenous industries) are like farming: many of those engaged in them are older men and women who have no alternative livelihood. They will stay weaving, provided the price decline is not too steep, because the alternative is to be idle and to write off their looms —all their capital— as useless. And so they go on, and go on hoping.

Both Kishiwada and Blackburn, then, are textile towns, towns with a declining industry. Both have found some alternatives. In neither town does weaving any longer employ more than three percent of the working population. But the process of adjustment has been slow and painful. It has taken the form mainly of a shift to other branches of manufacturing, has been accompanied by population decline, and has left large numbers unemployed. In Kishiwada, it began more recently, and in a town of expanding population on the edge of an expanding metropolitan area, the employment loss has been rapidly compensated for—not the least in an expansion of the service industries.

## 3. LOCATIONS

Blackburn is only marginally further from the center of Manchester than Kishiwada from the center of Osaka, 30 and 25 kilometers respectively, but the difference in the significance of those locations is very great. Manchester, if one

includes Salford and Stockport, has something over a million population. It is a city where the grey-black stone buildings of its more glorious nineteenth century past still seem to dominate over its few tower-block and glass-and-concrete shopping centers, a city whose large central waste areas, where intended renewal has got stuck at the demolition stage, do not suggest a city in the grip of vigorous expansion.

British Rail will take you from Manchester Victoria to Blackburn about once an hour. You arrive at a station whose shabby desolation is relieved only by the display, on its one remaining all-purpose platform, of an ancient model of an ocean liner donated by a once-proud P & O, and by the warmth of the cafeteria in the new station entrance, now finally rebuilt to a quarter of its nineteenth-century size. The journey in a rattling, jolting, oil-smelly, two-car diesel take fifty minutes. Much of it is typical northern townscape, like the scenes painted by Lowry at the beginning of the century but now without the people, and a few spruce modern factory sheds, but for the most part Victorian pride has gone to rack and ruin, leaving factories and warehouses whose windows long since ceased to be cleaned, whose paintwork ceased to be painted.

But between Manchester and Bolton, Bolton and Darwen, Darwen and Blackburn, there are whole passages of country calm, rolling green fields picked out by blackened greystone walls, steep wooded valleys, sheep-grazing and pasture country punctuated by country halts where a single burdened housewife gets off with her shopping, or a cloth-capped pensioner gets on to go to his country club.

Osaka, by contrast, is a city of vaster size, warmer temperatures, and quicker tempos, a sprawling metropolis with two-and-a-half million people in its central city core, reaching out relentlessly from its coastal heart in the northeastern corner of the Inland Sea, reaching inland towards Kyoto, and westwards and southwards along the coast. Kishiwada is in the prefecture of Osaka but well outside the Osaka city limits. The electric railway line from Kishiwada to central Osaka, which runs north-south parallel to the coast, traverses three other cities in between. But only a map will give you an inkling of where once city begins and the other ends.

It is true that the neon lights, the department stores, and the shopping arcades tend to cluster around the main stations along the way. It is true also that here and there on the way one catches sight of the odd rice-field or market garden plot, and that between Kishiwada and the next main center there are even tracts of two or three hundred yards of open field on one side of the track or the other.

But for the most part the landscape between Osaka and Kishiwada is a huddle of densely packed housing and small-firm manufacturing. At first, still twenty kilometers from central Osaka, there are clusters of the new mixed Western-Japanese style middle-class terraces, three up and two down, built around a cul-de-sac on reclaimed rice land, their glistening blue tile roofs setting off the display of miniature trees in their tiny front gardens. There are drabber clusters of 1950s houses, single-storied with low-pitched tile and cedar-shingle roofs. Dotted here and there are former farmhouses of ample proportions, magnificently re-roofed and re-gardened from the profits made by turning an acre-and-a-half of paddy land into expensive

house sites.

Halfway between Kishiwada and Osaka is the city of Sakai, already a major industrial suburb in the 1920s, scene of some of the more stirring episodes in the birth of the Japanese labor movement (and in the sixteenth century the closest Japan had to a self-governing city-state). Here the factory sheds become more prominent among the huddle of housing; they look older, more darkened with smoke and age: dumps of scrap, glimpses of furnaces, a high lorry density in the road traffic, scrawny dogs in narrow streets. Westwards there are glimpses of what was once a shore. Now, all the way down to Kishiwada, it is a succession of oily barge harbors, landfill areas covered in factories, ship-repair docks, vast refineries and chemical plants.

There are in fact two railway lines running parallel down the coast, in many places less than two miles apart. The one further inland belongs to the National Railways. The Nankai, the prosperous one which runs through the densest centers of population, is a private line; the carving up of the state monopoly, giving the more profitable commuter lines to the private sector, happened in the "liberal 1920s." Not that people have much to complain of in the private railway's service. There are four express trains—three stops and 25 minutes from Kishiwada to Osaka—every hour throughout the day, and an equal number of stopping trains. In the 7:00 to 8:00 a.m. rush hour, seven- to eight-coach trains come every three minutes. The evening rush is less concentrated. Overtime, a bit of after-work shopping, or the sociable drink with workmates delay the commuter's return. Around the Osaka terminus, the vast complex of department stores, underground shopping arcades, theaters, bars and restaurants, the great model space rocket which is the milling rendezvous point where people arrange to meet their friends, all is abustle and aglitter throughout the early evening and the train service does not get back to midday frequencies until after 9:00 p.m.

For Kishiwada passengers the 25-minute ride is usually a standing ride, since the train has started from Wakayama, the central town of the next prefecture down the coast, and has passed through heavily populated areas on the way. But the rolling stock—clean, fresh, well air-conditioned and (no joke for the heavily smoking Japanese) all no-smoker carriages—is good enough, and the track well enough maintained, to make it no difficult feat to read a newspaper standing up (except when the rush-hour densities reserve that privilege to tall foreigners).

Mechanical maintenance, too, seems good enough to maintain time-table precision on all except the rarest occasions. Labor-saving devices include, at the Osaka exits, the ticket-swallowing machines which London Transport once installed and never used. But labor can still be spared for cleanliness. Regularly, once a day, a member of the station staff gets down onto the tracks in between trains to collect the cigarette butts with a pair of long metal chopsticks. Kishiwada's population is 180,000; the estimated number of passengers who daily go in or out of one of the five stations on its two railway lines is 110,000. Clearly, a lot of Kishiwada's population work elsewhere, predominantly in central Osaka. But Kishiwada is not just a dormitory suburb. The 1978 establishment census showed 55,000 people working

in the city, while the population census of 1975 showed 78,000 residents as being in employment. Clearly many people commute into Kishiwada to work, as well as out.

## 4. TOWNSCAPES

Kishiwada is all townscape, too flat in every direction to see the sea, while the range of low mountains ten miles in from the coast (Kishiwada is a narrow rectangle with their ridge forming the eastern side and the sea the west) is usually too hazy to be anything more than a distant backdrop.

In Blackburn, by contrast, one is never far from the green hills rising up on every side, topped here by woods, there by an isolated tower, monument to some landlord's folly. Blackburn's own monuments are rather monuments to its *industrial* history. True, one of its oldest if not most venerable buildings—now the town's soft-porn cinema, with a trendy boot shop in the basement—was once the *Corn* Exchange. But it is industrial Blackburn that one sees around in the chimneys, the often-derelict factory buildings, the recently rehabilitated Leeds and Liverpool canal, built so solidly to last a century-and-a-half ago. Its main church is hardly any older.

Kishiwada's few monuments belong to an older stratum of society. Apart from a few houses, which are hardly distinguishable in style from houses built ten years ago, the only buildings in Kishiwada which predate this century are a few shrines and temples, some of which go back a thousand years. Their gods are the gods of an agrarian society. They are honored not so much as monuments to antiquity, but as the centers of small parks, places for the children to play, convenient sites for toddlers' play schools and teenagers' flower-arrangement lessons; places to celebrate life's rites of passage as they have been celebrated for a thousand years.

For older farmers and their wives, they are places one visits to pray for better crops, easy childbirth for a daughter-in-law, for a "*pokkuri*" death from something quick like a stroke, rather than something cruel and protracted like cancer or senility. For up towards the eastern mountains where the plain ends and the slopes begin, there is a thousand hectares of cultivated land, and villages that look like villages, and 2700 farm households—if only 700 who get as much as half their income out of farming.

Then there is the castle. It is in fact a modern building, a twenty-year-old concrete replica of the original, nonetheless attractive in the setting of its broad moat. There are great curved dry-stone walls of massive granite pieces, topped by the three-story keep, a composition of white walls and grey tiles, curved roofs and painted gables, wooden balustrades and windows of carefully proportioned rectangular and oval shapes. This was the castle of the Okabe family which ruled the Kishiwada fief until 1870. It stands next to the town hall and the best residential area, where a few of the houses are still inhabited by descendants of Okabe's chief samurai retainers.

In some sense the castle, the town hall with its electronic campanile which chimes out a folk song at 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. every day, and the splendid auditorium

built opposite, represent the center of the town. For more people and for more purposes, however, the center is a half-mile away at the Nankai railway station. The real estate market knows the difference anyway. According to the town hall's posted price map (a device to curb real estate speculation), the 1983 price of land around the station was no less than 1,350,000 per square meter. In the residential area near the castle, land could be had for 100,000-160,000 yen in some of the new housing developments near a commuter station, and for 500 yen in the inland villages close to the mountains. Prime industrial sites in Blackburn could be had, already built on (if admittedly not very attractively) for 6000 yen a square meter.

Opposite the station on the most expensive land stand Kishiwada's three great pinball palaces, each one lit up like whole fairground. There stand bank after bank of devilishly ingenious machines (some with tiny TV screens in the middle so that you need not miss anything), the air filled with the clatter of thousands of steel balls running in and out of the pins, the stools filled with the young and the middle-aged, intent and zombie-faced, only the right thumb moving to flick ball after ball after ball.

Behind the pinball palaces lie both the "*sūpā*"—the newest and biggest supermarket with the keenest prices—and the covered arcade with its boutiques, its shoe shops, its camera shops, its record shops, its French patisseries, its American ice cream parlors, its Chinese restaurant and Korean fried cutlet shop. Stacked endlessly down the center are the bicycles which are the standard means of locomotion for Kishiwada's housewives with their regulation two children: a seat at the back for the four-year-old, a seat on the bar for the two-year-old, and a capacious handlebar basket for all of the shopping. Most often they are making for the cross-streets off the arcade for their daily visit to the fishmonger and the greengrocer. Although practically every home has a refrigerator, the daily shopping for fresh food is still de rigeur in most families.

Neither the frequency of rain nor the hilly terrain encourage the bicycle in Blackburn. It is buses and private cars that have to be depended on. But at least there is no doubt where the city center is. The old town hall and the modest glass tower which is its adjoining extension, the central multi-story car park and the brand-new covered shopping center, all are cheek by jowl in the place where the center of Blackburn has always been since it was a market town of 5000 people in the mid-eighteenth century.

A little up the road is a modest museum of Victorian solidity (renowned, oddly, for its Lewis collection of Japanese prints). Both building and collection are unpretentious, but a good deal more magnificent than the few rows of ancient documents which is all the museum in Kishiwada Castle can provide. Blackburn's library, too, recently rehoused in an old cooperative warehouse, though less light and airy and modern than Kishiwada's, is better stocked and better used by the town's adults, less the preserve of school children at their homework. (Kishiwada, on the other hand, has 27 book shops, three of them for second-hand books; Blackburn has only three.)

Another thing Blackburn has and Kishiwada does not, is a small specialist museum—of textile machinery dating back to the eighteenth century. It was here that, a couple of years ago, a former mill owner, later manager of his former mill for the large conglomerate that bought it, now ex-manager since the conglomerate closed it down, organized an exhibition of photographs of Blackburn in its weaving heyday. No one disputes that the glories of Blackburn's textile history lie in its past, not in its future.

But these nostalgias mean very little to most of the population of Blackburn. They flock into the center on Saturdays to enjoy the glitter of the new beshrubbed and fountained shopping center, to make their careful purchases at British Home Stores, Boots and Smiths. From the central arcade, they can move two ways, across to the new up-market Debenhams, or over the street for bargains in the great covered market. Here are the descendants of the old stall-holders, now housed in the dry, with power outlets for their naked light-bulbs installed, their rubbish automatically collected. There are cheap-jacks with their china, straw-hatted butchers and fishmongers, boisterous greengrocers and tens of clothing stores—agents in what Blackburn's textile people call the cheap and nasty market trade, very largely dominated by imported garments, or at least garments made from imported cloth.

Blackburn's new shopping center is build for the automobile age. Its central feature is the multi-story car park. Kishiwada is still in the center largely a bicycle, pedestrian, moped, and taxi town. The car culture is spreading only on the periphery: it is along the four-lane trunk highway inland, away from the town center, that we find the supermarkets and McDonald's hamburger stands with large parking spaces. Kishiwada's 180,000 people in 1979 had 17,000 mopeds, 11,000 motorcycles, 8,000 trucks, and only 21,000 cars.

Blackburn has a slightly larger number of cars for a considerably smaller population. Still (in 1981 at least) only 48 percent of households have one—a good deal less than the national average, but the car has nevertheless come to dominate how people think about and plan for their city. The authors of the 1977 Blackburn District Plan said for instance, "Whatever discussion there might be about the rate of increase in car ownership, there is no disputing that it is rising and this by itself will cause a reduction in the use of buses with the consequence that more services will be withdrawn."

And withdrawn they steadily are. Perhaps there would be more complaints if it were not the case that the car-owning middle-class and the clerical and skilled workers whom one sees carrying their rolls of wallpaper across to the multi-story car park from the do-it-yourself shop on Saturday morning, tend to live in the more outlying twentieth-century housing areas. The poorer carless families—the families of the 15 percent of the work force now unemployed, and of the immigrant community where unemployment is probably twice that level—live nearer the center of town, in the nineteenth-century back-to-backs (with some of the immigrants to be found in ample nineteenth-century middle-class areas which have been chopped up into smaller flats).

The nineteenth-century walk-to-work, walk-to-shop way of life has remained natural to many of them even through the half-century of the bus era. They have also come to take for granted the cramped discomfort of the houses they live in, and the bleak smoke-blackened aspect, the broken paving stones, the dereliction of the empty houses on the streets they live in. Half the housing stock in 1976 had been built before 1920.

Home ownership (here Blackburn's planners are good on their figures), though steadily decreasing elsewhere, declined in Blackburn from 66 per cent in 1961 to 59 per cent in 1976, largely as a result of the condemning and clearance of some of the worst (owner-dweller) housing tracts and the transfer of the inhabitants to rented council houses. In large and conspicuous areas of the town, the cleared land remains to be developed, a litter of brick rubble sprouting grass and rubbish, with here and there a corner pub left intact, or a Methodist Chapel now converted into a warehouse.

In some streets even of the older vintages, the houses are trim, the paintwork well kept, the doorsteps scrubbed, the windows opening directly onto the pavement, the curtains neatly parted to show a potted plant or a china shepherdess. There are enough people with enough gumption to "get onto the Council" for the derelict cars which disfigure other streets to be removed and the pavements kept up. A few streets have been spruced up by the Council, properly paved and closed to through traffic, with vacant lots grassed over and set with stone benches and tubbed shrubbery.

But still a lot of people live in streets where the onset of desolation has reached the stage at which it breeds passive resignation rather than resistance. The immigrant areas are largely segregated, but the proportion of neater and less neat streets is not an accurate guide to ghetto boundaries. The only distinguishing marks are the colors of the paintwork in the neat streets—more boldly garish in the immigrant areas—and the occasional sight of a former nonconformist chapel now identified as a mosque by its star and crescent, its Urdu notices, and its half-obliterated racist slogans.

Kishiwada too has its sleazier area, a block of bars and cabarets down near the harbor which cater to the manual-worker drinker rather than the white-collar or shopkeeping drinkers who frequent the bars near the station. Its central feature now is the "romance hotel" where the bar girls take their clients, a strange neon-glinting structure adorned with pointed windows and a forest of rococo turrets, rather like a Disneyland version of a Bavarian castle.

Somewhere in the town, too, must be a district primarily inhabited by the former outcast people thought to be the descendants of earlier immigrants captured and enslaved by later immigrants when Japan was being settled nearly two millennia ago. They are common in this oldest-settled part of Japan and the banners outside the city hall, with their oblique references to a "harmonization" campaign, suggest that there are local discrimination problems. But here the former outcast areas seem not to be visible by any external signs (as of course, physiognomically, the outcasts are not visible either). Indeed, "passing" must now be getting to be the norm. One of the banners outside a branch city office says, "Let us refuse to respond to all

inquiries about origins when applying for jobs: everyone has a right to his *puraibashii*." "Privacy," until recently an alien concept, can only be easily expressed in an alien word.

Kishiwada's housing statistics do not even appear in the city's statistical handbook because housing has never been fully admitted to the sphere of competence of local government in Japan, except in some of the metropolitan centers. Apart from five small old people's homes, Kishiwada city owns no houses. It even connects less than ten percent of the houses to main sewers, leaving the rest to be pumped out by the nightsoil service.

Kishiwada's housing stock is far newer than Blackburn's, thanks to the greater durability of brick than wooden houses, and there is still a good deal of house construction underway. In the older parts of town the houses are more tightly jumbled together than those in Blackburn, and there is almost certainly less space per person. When it was first made a city in 1920 and consisted of a mere 4.2 $km^2$—before it acquired its more rural hinterland, making it twenty times more extensive—it already had a population density of 7000 per square kilometer. The houses in what was already then the town area open straight on to the streets, not only without front gardens, as in Blackburn, but often without pavements (or, what are more common in Japan, pedestrian guard rails) either, the roads are so narrow.

And yet there is a difference. The Kishiwada houses usually have trim wooden grills outside their windows, and many have a row of pots of azaleas and begonias and dwarf trees. It helps, of course, to have a good growing climate. People in Kishiwada can already be picking their French beans when the allotment holders of Blackburn are still wondering whether theirs will ever come out of the ground.

## 5. DIFFERENCES

So what are we to make of these superficial comparisons? There are some obvious points of difference in the material basis of the two towns which constrain the differences in anything that can be called urban civilization.

First, although they have their textile history in common, Blackburn remains a manufacturing town whereas Kishiwada is partially transformed into a dormitory suburb of Osaka. Kishiwada is, in a sense, two towns. The old town has its center in the municipal office and in the center of traditional commerce and entertainment near the harbor. The new town's commercial center, together with its bars and restaurants, clusters rather around the Nankai railway station, with a newer and and more dispersed focus of the encroaching "my car" culture around the trunk highway, in the supermarkets and the hamburger and pizza restaurants with their car parks.

Secondly, in the loose sense in which one may use the terms cross-culturally, Blackburn is much the more "proletarian" a city. For the vast majority of Blackburn's population, the only life-style alternatives are seen to be wage employment in some manual occupation, if they are lucky, or unemployment if they are

unlucky. The new Kishiwada, by contrast, is predominantly white collar, the world of the salary man; the older Kishiwada is a town predominantly of manual workers, but a far higher proportion of them than in Blackburn are still self-employed or have been in and out of self-employment. And a majority in both the old and the new towns are only a generation or two away from peasant self-employment. Kishiwada has 44 independent enterprises (*jigyōsho*) for every thousand inhabitants, Blackburn only nine. Economic independence is more widespread and more highly prized in Kishiwada. A higher proportion of the population has to take that responsibility for budgeting their own lives which distinguishes the peasant from the agricultural laborer, the artisan from the proletarian.

A third constraining factor is population density. Kishiwada is a crowded town in a crowded land. As the vast difference in land values reflects, Blackburn by comparison is a town with space, with room to spare. The greater physical concentration of activity makes Kishiwada in spirit and atmosphere a more bustling, active town. There is more human contact than in Blackburn, where cheaper space and wider roads mean that far more movement is in cars and buses than on foot, bicycle, or moped. Higher temperatures and more sunshine in Kishiwada, combined with constricted housing and more exiguous gardens, as well as a far higher propensity to eat out (Kishiwada has several hundred eating establishments, Blackburn a few dozen) mean that more of life is lived outside the home.

And a fourth material factor: Blackburn builds in brick—to last. Kishiwada builds—or built, at least, until the recent decades of concrete and glass public buildings—in wood, and in the expectation of constant renewal. The result is plain in the appearance of the two towns. The great brick chimneys which celebrate the nineteenth-century reign of King Steam still stand, smokeless and empty of all phallic symbolism of regeneration; the old four-story spinning mills stand half-empty, the other half chopped up into the dingy premises of security companies and rubber-foam cutters and garment makers because their solid structures are still eminently serviceable and cheap. Kishiwada is a far newer town, a large part of it—even its castle—rebuilt in the last twenty years.

And these differences have implications for culture, for attitudes and life-styles. Blackburn people turn more to the past, Kishiwada people are more full of plans for the future. On every visit to Kishiwada one sees something new; only on every other visit to Blackburn does one find a new shop, or some long-standing public building project finally completed. The expectation of continuing economic growth, nourished by an astonishing pace of growth in the last twenty years, has made Kishiwada people confident about the future. The experience of much slower growth, of steadily declining job opportunities for the young, has prompted more people in Blackburn to look back with nostalgia on the past.

In a sense, Blackburn is a much more homogeneous town. One must be careful here because Blackburn is the more clearly class-divided. Its nineteenth-century past, when it was a town of gentry, of masters and men, is still not far behind it; the owners and managers of its firms, the officials of its civic organizations, still have

a high proportion of descendants of the "masters." Local politics are still an area of contention between Labour and Tories and their votes drawn in a predictable pattern from different parts of the city. Kishiwada politics are for the most part about clashes of local interests—the division of budgets between that school there and this playing field here. There are also clearer cultural differences in Blackburn—between the readers of the Mirror and the Express who watch the entertainment channel on television, and the minority Telegraph and Guardian readers who are more likely to tune to BBC for their less frequent viewing.

But in other respects Blackburn is the more homogeneous. Its commercial, entertainment, and culinary culture is much more exclusively British than Kishiwada's is Japanese, and much more undifferentiated by sex. Kishiwada's material culture is far more international. To match Blackburn's single Chinese restaurant, there is a plethora of Italian (or Italo-American) pizza houses, German bakeries, Chinese and Korean, French and Greek restaurants, coffee-houses with Dutch names and pictures of windmills. The boutiques are thick with incomprehensible brand names in Latin script; the hairdressers claim New York or Paris as the origin of their styles; the sweat shirts carry never a Japanese word, but incomprehensible legends like "The Energy of Fire" or "Bicycle Race." *Hakuraishugi*, the love of the exotic, began in the metropolis a hundred years ago and flourishes, still, in every town in the land. But it is a *homogeneous* cosmopolitanism: everyone wants the same Gucci bags. Everybody concurs that shoes should have Italian names and handbags French.

The other source of diversity—gender—is more deeply rooted. Blackburn too has its working *men's* clubs—but on Saturday nights they are full of married couples. The Pakistani areas apart, the pubs cater for women as well as men drinkers and dart players. Even some of the local authority's keep-fit classes are for either sex.

But Kishiwada is still much more a town of two cultures. Bars are places where women serve male drinkers and offer flirtatious conversation with their highly priced drinks. Men are never seen at flower arrangement classes. The ice cream sundae parlor is a resort for teenage girls, and housewives with their preschool children: men are rarely if ever seen indulging in such a feminine luxury. The bicycle is for women, school children, and older men: younger men walk.

The barriers are slowly coming down; mixed parties of workmates and sometimes teenagers can occasionally be found together in bars. Girls join martial arts classes other than those devoted to the traditional female weapon, the naginata. The special flowery "women's speech" is diluted to a closer resemblance to that of men. But change is slow.

So what does this descriptive essay amount to in terms of generalizations? Nothing very profound: only the familiar point that a town's appearance, its "feel," its atmosphere, its urban culture, is a product of both material and ideational factors, of constraints built into its physical shape and the way it earns its living, as well at into the attitudes and values it has inherited from the past.